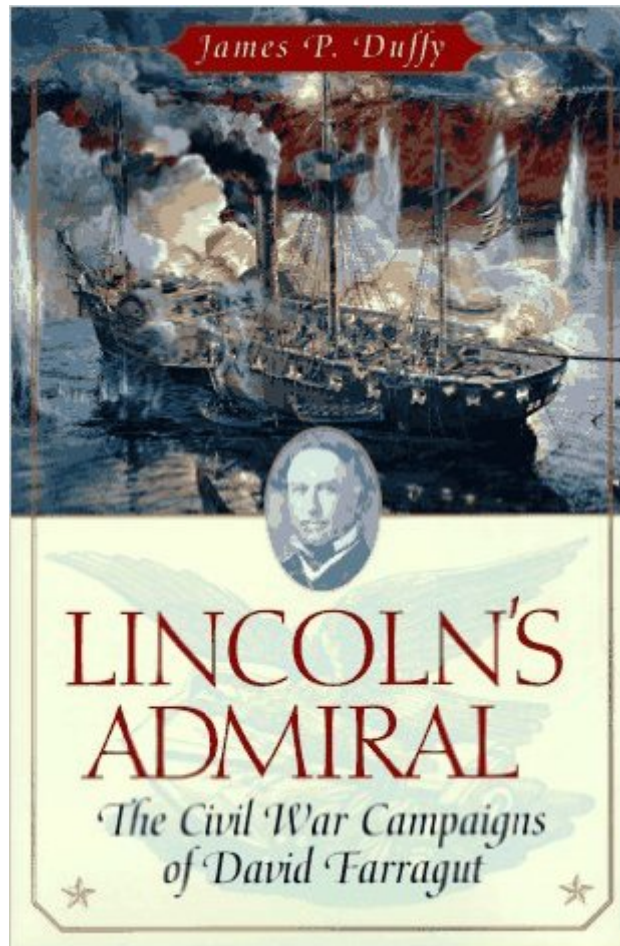


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# Lincoln's Admiral: The Civil War Campaigns Of David Farragut



## Synopsis

"Damn the torpedoes. . . . Full speed ahead." Admiral David Farragut's bold order at the Battle of Mobile Bay has served as a rallying cry for the United States Navy for a century. Described as "urbane" and "indomitable" by contemporaries, and lionized as an "American Viking" by the Northern press during the Civil War, Farragut was considered gallant, brilliant, and humane by friend and foe alike. Recently discovered primary source material sheds new light on Farragut's life and times. The first full admiral in American naval history, he was small in stature and almost sixty years old at the outbreak of the Civil War. Yet Farragut possessed enormous courage and stamina. He led by example and became an inspiration to the entire nation. At the start of the Civil War, many thought Farragut--a southerner by birth--would join the Confederate cause. But he had spent almost five decades serving aboard ships that flew the American flag. His unwavering loyalty to the Northern cause was founded in the belief that the South's secession was a first, fatal step toward national collapse. Thoroughly researched and compellingly written, *Lincoln's Admiral* examines Farragut's command of the most daring and important assignment of the Civil War: the mission to recapture the vital Southern port of New Orleans. With meticulous detail, Duffy deftly retraces the steps that led up to that critical campaign. New Orleans's defenses against attack from the Gulf were formidable. In the dead of night, Farragut ordered men to board rebel barrier ships stationed in the river and plant explosives. "In the rigging of his flagship, the *Hartford*, high above the mantle of smoke, stood sixty-three-year-old Rear Admiral David Farragut. It was the only location aboard ship that afforded a panorama of the battle. He held a spyglass firmly in one hand, and a megaphone in the other. Bound securely to the mast, Farragut deftly directed the action of his fleet in what would be one of the most important naval engagements of the Civil War. He periodically raised the spyglass toward the bay, keeping a watchful eye on the *Tennessee* and her able commander and his old friend, Confederate admiral Franklin Buchanan. Had a rebel shell struck the *Hartford*'s mast, a prized target of every Confederate gunner, Farragut would have crashed to the deck, or been catapulted overboard." - from *Lincoln's Admiral*

Farragut positioned his boats and prepared his men for battle, carefully planning every detail of the fleet's advance. The fleet passed Fort St. Philip and Fort Jackson single file as both forts opened fire with a deafening roar and covered the river with dense smoke. Navigating the treacherous Mississippi and bypassing the defenses, Farragut eventually recaptured the South's largest port, while losing only thirty-seven men. *Lincoln's Admiral* also offers new insights into the Battle of Mobile Bay, arguably Farragut's most famous campaign. Farragut launched an attack against one of the forts in Mobile Bay as a ploy to fool the enemy into thinking that he was preparing to capture Mobile itself. His goal was to keep as many troops in and

around the city as possible so they weren't diverted north to defend against Sherman's final offensive. It was at Mobile--as the fleet moved into the bay with Farragut's Hartford in the lead--that Farragut uttered his famous command. Unsure of where the enemy torpedoes were, but knowing that to hesitate would mean defeat, Farragut gambled and gave the famous order: "Damn the torpedoes. . . . Go ahead, Jouett, full speed ahead." An expansive and compelling chronicle of Farragut's career, Lincoln's Admiral traces the brilliant decisions and wartime strategy of one of history's greatest military leaders.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

I was not sure whether I wanted to read a biography of Farragut after having read Loyall Farragut's biography of his father, but I enjoyed Duffy's book. He does not blindly glorify Farragut's memory, but clearly shows why David Farragut's long career in the Navy and perceptive intellect made him one of the most effective military leaders during the Civil War. Duffy is also one of the few authors/historians to portray Adm. David Dixon Porter in a negative light by shedding light on Porter's attempts to upstage and undermine Farragut's accomplishments via his connections in Washington.

I read this book when it was first published in 1997 and although I had never heard of Admiral David Farragut I had heard "Damn the torpedoes..." from some where (I'm an Australian!). I found this book to be a very easy to read biography of a very interesting man. I have very limited knowledge of

naval matters (I was a grunt) but I thoroughly enjoyed this book. It was enjoyable to read and the battle scenes were vivid and easy to follow. I would recommend this book to anybody who has an interest in the American Civil War.

James Duffy's biography on Admiral David Farragut proves to be interesting and easy to read. The book basically summarized Farragut's career without going into great details. The book deals more or less with Farragut's military career with few insights to his personal life. The book gives a pretty clear understanding of Farragut's role in the Civil War and the amazing amount of the time he spent on the Mississippi River after capturing New Orleans. His pet project of taking Mobile had to wait two years. The book was also reflective in revealing his relationship he had with his stepbrother, Admiral David Dixon Porter, another famed Union naval leader. The author believes that Porter was quite jealous of Farragut and tried his utmost to undermined him. If there was a singular weakness, the book doesn't covered much about Farragut's life during the peace time but then, the subtitle of the book is "Civil War Campaigns of David Farragut" so that where the main focus remains. Overall, I found this book to be pretty well researched, well written and easy to read. Its easy to introduced this book as a nice introductory book on the career of Farragut and no doubt, helped put him among the great seamen of our nation's history.

I enjoyed this book. It is well written and moves at a good pace. I was not very familiar with naval campaigns from the Civil War, and I thought this book was a good introduction to the topic. I came away with a new appreciation for Admiral Farragut's talent and character. I held back a star because I thought the book could have used more maps and diagrams to illustrate the battles and the campaigns. The maps in the book are mostly reprinted from other books, and some of them are difficult to read. I recommend this book to those who enjoy reading about the Civil War, especially if you desire to learn more about the naval efforts during the war.

I'm familiar with Farragut as well as the Battle of Mobile Bay in which Farragut is reputed to have said, "Damn the torpedoes! Full Speed Ahead." He said something to that effect in real life, but I wasn't so familiar with the taking of New Orleans or all the naval activity south of Vicksburg during 1863. This book answers those questions and gives a detailed analysis of the following: (1. The taking of New Orleans (which this book claims was the turning point of the Civil War) - I would agree with a caveat- Antietam in September 1862 was necessary too, just like Vicksburg and Gettysburg are traditionally thought of as the turning points of the Civil War- I could see an argument that after

the fall of New Orleans and the Battle of Sharpsburg, MD (Antietam) the South was never the same again. (2. The book also covers a frustrating time during 1863 when the fleet could do little south of Vicksburg, Mississippi except close up the Red River and finally, (3. The beginning of the end- The fall of Mobile Bay and the defeat of the Confederate Ram Tennessee. If you want to familiarize yourself with American naval operations around the Mississippi River during the American Civil War, this wouldn't be a bad place to start.

This book is not a biography, but details Farragut's exploits during the Civil War, particularly the capture of New Orleans and Mobile Bay, as well as his actions to clear the lower Mississippi River. The author also effectively covers his childhood, which was spent mostly at sea as a midshipman from the age of 9, and how the lessons he learned during this period (including violent confrontations at sea with British warships and privateers during the War of 1812) prepared him for his future success as the finest naval leader in the Union. These lessons included the benefits of treating naval crews well and tactics in defeating enemy ships and coastal forts and batteries. It's interesting to note that he also had to overcome the suspicions and stigma of being a Southerner, as well as attempts by David Dixon Porter (whose father actually raised Farragut at sea) to undermine him. This book is well researched, organized, edited, easy to read, and includes very good photographs and maps that are appropriately placed.

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