



The Influence of Sea Power Upon History, 1660-1783 - The Original Classic Edition

A.T. Mahan

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Mahan uses some detail and technical language to demonstrate particular naval engagements from 1660-1783, but apart from being just a lecturer on naval warfare and an analyst on tactics, he demonstrates how the use of the general navies, or the strategy of using a strong navy to protect the fleet of an aggressive merchant marine, is the single most important root cause of advancing economic and therefore military prosperity in any nation.

Using Great Britain as his main example, he also details the Dutch fleets to demonstrate their reason for becoming a European superpower in their own right. Later he identifies the presence of the French navy, apart from any material success in its engagements, as one of the determining reasons why America had a chance to win its independence. Finally, as he hints of the supreme commercial and military importance of the proposed (Panama) canal, against the declining state of the American navy and the paltry condition of its merchant fleet, he urges that Americas prosperity if not survival depends on the powerful revival of its sea power.

In this book, U.S. Navy Captain Alfred T. Mahan presents what he considers the six key elements of sea power and shows the impact their application or misapplication has had on history. Citing numerous historical examples, he shows how nations have prospered or suffered through use or misuse of their naval assets. His book is rightfully considered essential reading for any historian of naval warfare. However, its impact does not stop there.

Mahan shows how nations thrived or declined during the 17th and 18th centuries through prudent or imprudent application of naval power. He contends France, Holland, Spain, et al. prospered until they allowed their naval power to dissipate. Meanwhile, Britain became mistress of the seas. British colonies provided raw materials for her industries, while her armed fleet insured uninterrupted commerce.

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