

Joseph Callo, **John Paul Jones; America's First Sea Warrior**. Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 2006. 250pp., illustrations, maps, appendixes, notes, bibliography, index.

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John Paul Jones certainly had a varied career, at least as far as historians are concerned. Praised as the savior of the American Revolution by some, and dismissed as a glory seeking blow-hard by others, Jones has always been a persona that inspires extremes. One work that happily falls in the middle of all this mess is **John Paul Jones; America's First Sea Warrior**. Rear Admiral Joseph Callo (retired), an expert on the age of sail, has produced a solid, up to date biography of this often elusive character. This title does an admirable job of stripping away the myth in front of the man, and is an excellent life study America's first naval hero.

Although he died in obscurity in 1792, living in Paris and near penniless, Jones has never suffered from want of biographers. Indeed, there is a virtual plethora of his life's history. Since 2000, he has been the subject of at least three new biographies. Even such luminaries as Samuel Elliot Morrison have tackled the subject. Morrison wrote a massive biography of Jones a few decades ago. For many reasons, not the least of which was Jones very real contributions to the Continental war effort, he has always been a fascinating subject for biographers. Callo's **John Paul Jones; America's First Sea Warrior** is a solid, detailed examination of Jones's career. Although hardly the final word on Jones, it is an excellent starting point.

Callo's biography is divided into thirteen chapters, with the preponderance of the book addressing Jones far flung, albeit brilliant, service in the American Revolution. From the early days of the war, when Jones spent most of his time jockeying for position and rank, to his brilliant exploits raiding British commerce and villages, Callo illustrates Jones career with skill and flair, especially the famed Battle of Flamborough Head, where Jones defeated HMS Serapis with the Bonhomme Richard. Jones strange relationship with Captain Pierre Landais, the psychotic French skipper of the USS Alliance plays a special role in this section of the book. Callo also offers a detailed, and much needed, examination of Jones service in the fleet of the Czarina Catherine the Great. Despite his victory at the Second Battle of Liman, Jones proved no match for various Russian courtesans, who stole his credit and reputation. The book also has five detailed appendixes, containing numerous original battle accounts and reports. These are a useful and colorful addition to the book. There are numerous maps and a few illustrations as well.

Despite his success as a fighting sailor, Jones' reputation has been somewhat marred by his reputation as an inveterate womanizer. Also, Jones spent a great deal of his time involved in petty squabbles with various officials, squabbles that Jones lost more often

then not. Although hardly alone in these categories, many of Jones biographers have spent a seemingly inordinate amount of time overly emphasizing his character flaws. Fortunately, Callo chose a different tack. Jones, warts and all, was ultimately a patriot, dedicated to the American cause, and a sailor who pledged his life and sacred honor in pursuit of American independence. This makes the last chapter of the book, dealing with the strange post mortem story of Jones corpse, all the more poignant.

Callo's biography is an excellent starting point for those interested in the life of America's first great naval hero, chock full of good information. The detailed appendices are also welcome, as they offer a nice "period flavor" to the work as a whole. This is altogether a fine effort, and one that should grace the shelf of anyone interested in the Continental Navy.

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