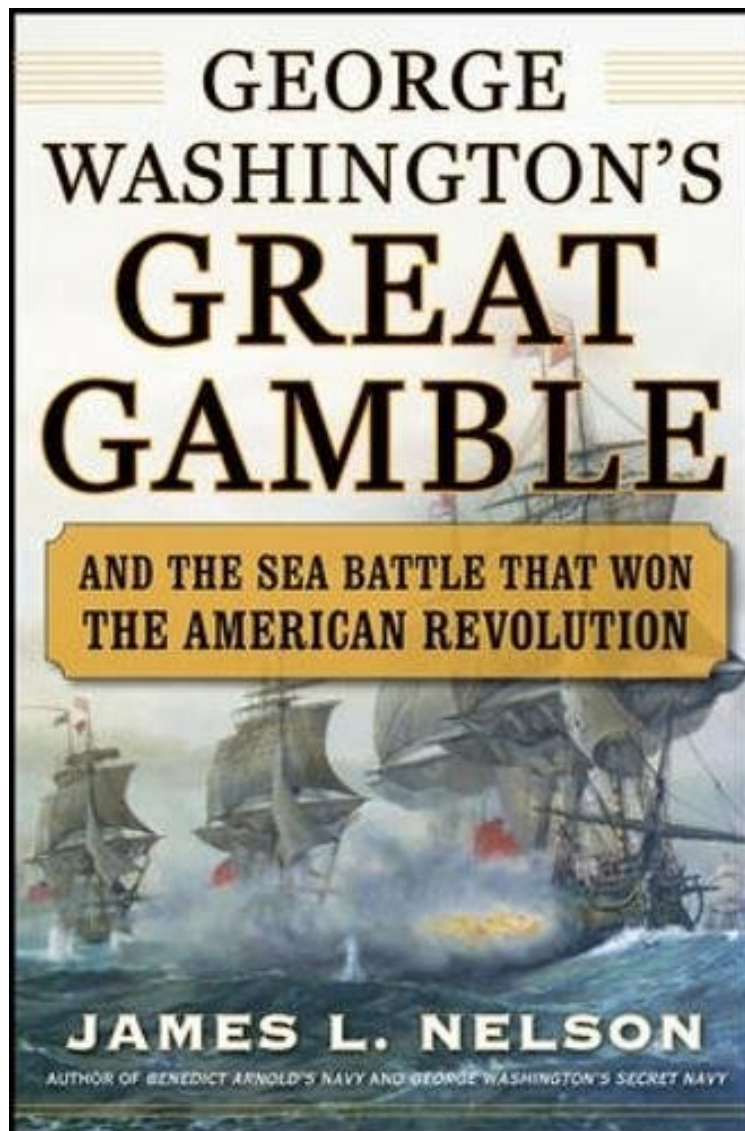


(Download free pdf) George Washington's Great Gamble: And the Sea Battle That Won the American Revolution

George Washington's Great Gamble: And the Sea Battle That Won the American Revolution

James L. Nelson

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James L. Nelson : George Washington's Great Gamble: And the Sea Battle That Won the American Revolution before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised George Washington's Great Gamble: And the Sea Battle That Won the American Revolution:

15 of 16 people found the following review helpful. Another winner by James L. Nelson
 By derrickAfter reading Nelson's incredible book "With Fire and Sword," which I highly recommend to anyone interested in American history at all, I was greatly looking forward to this book. I knew next to nothing about the siege of Yorktown, so I was counting on learning a lot from here. And I was not disappointed. This book gave great information about Yorktown, but also gave so much more. This book spoke of the entire Southern strategy by the British, gave valuable insights in General Greene that I have never had before, and even spent an incredible amount of time discussing what Benedict Arnold does after defecting to the British army! I got way more than I bargained for, and loved it. I thought I was just going to learn about the very last battle of the Revolution. Instead, I thoroughly enjoyed being immersed in the details of the last year-and-a-half of Revolutionary fighting. What a treat!So, why do I only give four stars and not five? By necessity, a large portion of this book is devoted to naval matters, for the siege of Yorktown was largely a naval operation. I like boats, but I am not a sailor. The author is, and I think that he assumes that his audience knows more about naval matters than they actually might. He does explain some naval matters (for example, he takes time to make sure that his audience understands what makes ships sail faster or slower than other ships). But for a non-sailor like myself there is still a lot of naval matters he does not explain which I did not understand. That aside, though, this book is still worth the read. I definitely enjoyed it and look forward to exploring history with this author again.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Interesting (but poorly titled) early American history book
 By F. MoyerIn 1781, George Washington, with the aid of the French navy, accepted the surrender of Lord Cornwallis and his troops at Yorktown (effectively ending our Revolutionary War with England) -- and that's about all I remembered about Yorktown before reading this book. There was lots of interesting background information. For example, since the British had a mighty navy (and the American navy was nearly non-existent), the British could quickly ferry troops anywhere along the eastern coast to raid American goods and to destroy American manufacturing capability. The Americans, who could only move troops via overland routes, subsequently had no means to rapidly redeploy their forces in response. And, of course, key questions are answered. How did Lord Cornwallis wind up in Yorktown? Why was the mighty British navy unable to prevent the French navy from supporting Washington? But what was Washington's Great Gamble? Almost as an afterthought, the book says that it was Washington's decision to move his troops from outside NY to Yorktown. But since the British were well entrenched in NY (and had more troops inside NY than Washington had outside NY), an American attack on NY was simply not possible. So Washington redeploying his troops to a place where they might actually impact the outcome of the war seemed smart rather than chancy. Bottom line: Very much a history book -- so contains lots of interesting information, though not wrapped in particularly exciting prose.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Good analysis of a coordinated campaign
 By Steven PetersonThis is a work that explores the evolution of George Washington's military thinking as the French entered the Revolutionary War. Talking about his "Great Gamble," I think, rather overstates things. A key point of this book is how Washington began to appreciate the potential value of naval superiority. After the French entered the War, he had hoped for some collaborative successes between the French navy and the American-French infantry. It did not happen. The book also notes Washington's fixation on New York as the proper focus of his military strategy. British General Clinton was hunkered down in New York City and its environs--making it difficult for Washington to "get at him." The book also considers Lord Cornwallis' retreat from the Carolinas to Virginia. Poor strategic thinking by the British left Cornwallis and his forces tied to the coast, to allow for the British fleet to communicate with him. However, a large French fleet set out from the Caribbean. Circumstances conspired to lead Washington and the French General, Rochambeau, to target Cornwallis rather than Clinton. The march of these two forces south and the confluence with the French navy threatened Cornwallis' position. Then the story of the naval battle and the French victory and the doom of Cornwallis' forces. The book concludes that Washington's evolution in thinking about the importance of control over the waters was a key part of the signal victory at Yorktown. Well done. . .

One shining yet overlooked moment that changed the course of the Revolutionary War In the opening months of 1781, General George Washington feared his army would fail to survive another campaign season. The spring and summer only served to reinforce his despair, but in late summer the changing circumstances of war presented a once-in-a-war opportunity for a French armada to hold off the mighty British navy while his own troops with French reinforcements drove Lord Cornwallis's forces to the Chesapeake. The Battle of the Capes would prove the only time the French ever fought the Royal Navy to a draw, and for the British army it was a catastrophe. Cornwallis confidently retreated to Yorktown, expecting to be evacuated by a British fleet that never arrived. In the end he had no choice but to surrender. Although the war sputtered on another two years, its outcome was never in doubt after Yorktown. General Washington's Great Gamble is the story of the greatest naval engagement of the American Revolution. It is also a study in leadership, good and bad, political machinations and the wild, unpredictable circumstances that led to the extraordinary confluence of military and naval resources at that time and place. Topics include: Looking South; Sea Power for the General; Arnold; Copper Bottoms; Head of Elk; The Battle of Cape Henry; An Attempt to Conquer Virginia; Greene and Cornwallis: Looking North; The American Command; The Battle of Guilford Courthouse;

Pyrrhic Victory; Reinforcing the Chesapeake; "[T]he enemy have turned so much of their attention to the Southern States..."; The Battle of Blandford; The British War at Sea; Juncture; "I am inclined to think well of York..."; The Promise of a Fleet; The Battle of Green Springs; The March on New York; An Operation to the Southward; The Arrival of De Grasse; The Battle of the Capes; Cornwallis Surrenders

About the Author James L. Nelson is the author of 15 works of fiction and nonfiction. His novels include the five books of his "Revolution at Sea" saga and three in his "Brethren of the Coast" series. His novel *Glory in the Name* won the American Library Association's W.Y. Boyd Literary Award for Best Military Fiction. *Reign of Iron: The Story of the First Battling Ironclads*, 2003, was his first work of nonfiction, and he has since authored two other histories of naval warfare in the American Revolution: *Benedict Arnold's Navy* and *George Washington's Secret Navy*, which earned the Samuel Eliot Morison Award from the Naval Order of the United States. The Morison Award is one of the top honors accorded maritime historians in the U.S., and past winners include David McCullough and Patrick O'Brian.