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Decision at the Chesapeake

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BOOKS

Larrabee, Harold A. *Decision at the Chesapeake*. New York: Potter, 1964. 317p.

For the student of sea power this is interesting reading, indeed. It has been written: 'The Battle of Chesapeake Bay was one of the decisive battles of the world. Before it, the creation of the United States of America was possible; after it, it was certain.' The author sets out to explore this thesis, and brings together from many sources—some of them obscure—most of what is known about this battle of the American Revolution. War, certainly, can and must be viewed from many perspectives, and the author is not unmindful of this. Accordingly, he goes to some length to set the stage properly, and succeeds in giving the reader sufficient background to enable him to draw his own conclusions. The first third of the book is devoted to sketching the actors, both on the stage and behind the stage. Then follows a discussion of why and how Cornwallis got to Yorktown in the first place. Next, attention is directed to de Grasse in the West Indies and his decision to come north. Then the author describes the sea battle off the Virginia Capes, and finally, the land battle at Yorktown, where we find Washington stating to de Grasse: 'You will have observed that, whatever efforts are made by the land armies, the Navy must have the casting vote in the present contest.'

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Blond, Georges. *Verdun*. New York: Macmillan, 1964. 250p.

For the person who likes to read about the gory details of trench warfare, and unbelievable mistakes in tactics of field commanders when such tactics are compared to modern concepts, this book will be a treat. This narrative is considered an excellent effort to follow the development of the Battle of Verdun—the attempt of the Germans to break through the center of the strong defensive position of the French during World War I. Altogether, it appears to make a special effort to avoid presenting a case against any of the responsible and highly recognized commanders. Coverage begins with the troop build-up on the German side and then depicts additional preparation and the conduct of the Battle of Verdun, primarily during the