



Desert Shield at Sea: What the Navy Really Did (Contributions in Military Studies)

Marvin Pokrant

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Naval forces have not yet received the attention they are due for their role in Operation Desert Shield. This chronological account offers a unique, and as yet, unseen level of detail regarding the Navy's contribution throughout the operation. Relying on primary sources whenever possible, this book discusses naval decisions in terms of information available to decision-makers at the time and presents the pros and cons for alternative courses of action, as argued at the time of the original decision. It details the Navy's role in planning for successful operations, its constant vigil against surprise attack, and its daily contribution to the maritime interception effort to enforce U.N. economic sanctions against Iraq.

Naval forces upheld the sanctions at sea in such a way as to avoid disabling a civilian ship and provided the glue that helped create and maintain the multi-national coalition. The complexity of the situation required the naval forces to adapt their command and control to a highly centralized operation which placed unprecedented demands on the Navy's communications systems. This study provides an insider view of the various plans, even those that were not carried out, and valuable insights into the personalities of the leading officials. Sources include first-hand observations of the events at ComUSNavCent, where the author had access to nearly all events and decisions; hundreds of thousands of messages and other briefing materials; the post-war analysis done by the Center for Naval Analyses; and interviews with almost all of the key players.

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