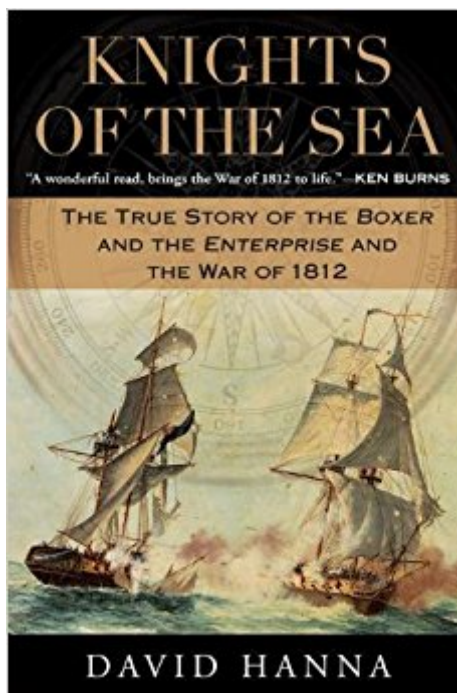




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Knights Of The Sea: The True Story Of The Boxer And The Enterprise And The War Of 1812



Synopsis

On a September day in 1813, as the Age of Fighting Sail was coming to an end, two maritime warriors faced each other in the waters off Pemaquid Point, Maine... Samuel Blyth was the youthful commander of His Britannic Majesty's brig Boxer, and William Burrows, younger still, commanded the USS Enterprise. Both men valued honor over life and death, and on this day their commitment would be put to the ultimate test. The battle between the Boxer and the Enterprise would be the only major sea engagement of the War of 1812 witnessed by people on land, and, though it lasted less than an hour, was a brutal contest whose outcome was uncertain. When the cannon smoke cleared, good men had been lost, and the U.S. Navy's position in the war had changed. In *Knights of the Sea*, David Hanna brings to vivid life a lost era—a time when sailing vessels exchanged broadsides and naval officers considered it the highest honor to harness the wind to meet their foes. This history pays tribute to the young commanders on either side, a vanishing breed who would come to be standard bearers of courage and fortitude, and would be immortalized in words by the poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. Includes Illustrations Throughout The battle between the Boxer and the Enterprise came to represent for those who witnessed it, lived through it, and remembered it something more than a military turning point—it became emblematic of a maritime era that would soon be gone forever.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

New York Magazine "High Brow, Brilliant" - Approval Matrix Ken Burns "A wonderful read, brings the War of 1812 to life." George C. Daughan, author of *1812: The Navy's War* "Beautifully

written, *Knights of the Sea* delves deeply into the lives and motivations of the two young, but experienced captains who dueled to the death in the famous sea fight between the HMS Boxer and USS Enterprise, shedding new light on the British and American navies during a critical period in their histories.

— Captain Philip Kasky USN (Ret), former commander, USS *Suribachi*

David Hanna establishes his credibility both as a writer and with the quality and depth of his historical research in *Knights of the Sea*. His capturing of a little-known maritime battle during the War of 1812 is surprisingly relevant in modern-day exploration of military strategy." *Portland Press Herald*

"In a compact, well-organized and carefully illustrated book, Hanna propels the reader both general and scholarly with sure, swift and colorful prose.

— Bangor Daily News

"In Hanna's skilled storytelling, heroic seamen and stout ships come alive in this rousing tale and converge on the Maine coast for a short, bloody sea battle... The well-illustrated *Knights of the Sea* is a great read for folks interested in Maine or maritime history. Hanna does his heroes and their forgotten war justice." *Down East Magazine*

"When wars two hundred years in the past sound eerily like today's contemporary events, it's time to sit up and take notice. And even when that history is about a relatively obscure naval engagement off the coast of Maine, the lessons it offers about individual sacrifice can be far-reaching, compelling—and also a bit unsettling. In his newly-published book, David Hanna has taken a potentially dry subject and given it new life with a modern perspective and sympathy for the men directly involved in the forgotten Maine conflict." *Library Journal*

"Highly readable, this book will appeal to those interested in naval warfare and the War of 1812 as well as those with any interest in early U.S. history. Strongly recommended." *A Latter-Day Bluestocking*

Knights of the Sea: The True Story of the Boxer and the Enterprise and the War of 1812 stands out amongst history books in that it was a page-turner. David Hanna has the gift for making history come alive, there is not a dull moment throughout the narrative."

David Hanna teaches history at Stuyvesant High School in New York, and is an adjunct instructor at NYU. He lives with his family in Morris County, New Jersey.

David Hanna has truly made an historic moment of our American experience come alive. Hanna - a literary talent wove a tapestry of human endeavor about two good men. David Hanna's proximity to the classic battle of the sea permeates his very being-as he lived at Pemaquid Point, Maine as a youngster and could visualize the ships "Boxer" and "Enterprise" engaged in a death defying struggle of captains and ship-as Monhegan Island sat silently in the distance. David Hanna's

research and writing skills of the war of 1812 have set a tone of non-fiction brilliance as his apt descriptions bring critical moments to life. "Knights of the Sea" is a compelling historical narrative. Mark E. Mason

I bought this book to help round out my knowledge of USS Enterprise (#3). There be little in the way of new revelations, but it does a good job in bringing together some of the diverse elements to give the reader an overall understanding of this event. The author examines the countries, the War of 1812, the local community, the commanders, the ships, and the backdrop that lead up to the meeting of HMS Boxer and the USS Enterprise. The author also relates the post-battle activities.

Bought the book thinking it would be about the engagement between the Boxer and Enterprise. Turns out is is that, but more about the causes, perspectives, and effects of the War of 1812. Writer is competent if not brilliant. I found the book easy to read and very informative if you are interested in the time period.

This book is more than the description of one small naval battle but is an insight into the motivation and values of sailors of that age. However it is more than that. It is an outstanding analysis of the causes and consequences of the War of 1812.

Well written engaging look at the time and factors leading up to and contributing to the battle and the effects it had on the surrounding communities.

The book rambled too much just to fill some pages. However it was evident the author did a great deal of research.

As we are in the celebrations of the 200th anniversary of the War of 1812, this book gives a perspective of this famous battle off of the coast of Maine.

Note, this review is based upon the Kindle edition of the book. David Hanna's Knights of the Sea is an illuminating and enjoyable read, at times provocative and inspiring. Despite having studied history as an undergraduate and even teaching the subject at the beginning of my thirty plus year career as a teacher, I am far from a scholar. I still love reading history, especially when it is driven by story, whether it is in the biographical style of Ambrose's Undaunted Courage or the fiction of

Shaara's *The Killer Angels*. Weaving together threads of historical and social context, the lives of the two central figures - the American Burrows who captains the *Enterprise* and the Briton Blythe who captains the *Boxer* - from childhood to their fateful meeting, and the actual battle itself is Hanna's strength. Through the story he crafts, Hanna illuminates. He sheds light on the era by vividly revealing its violence. He provides a relevant introduction into a time and event of U.S. history that is so often neglected, something I was looking for in the bicentennial of the war. Additionally, Hanna's metaphoric characterization of Burrows and Blythe as "knights" helps him to communicate the power of the honor code these and so many other military men of the day followed. As a gifted storyteller, Hanna imagines and speculates. He uses the available evidence, his knowledge of history, and his understanding of humanity to help readers imaginatively fill in the gaps. One fine example of this is in constructing Blythe's childhood: "His Britannic Majesty's ship *Bellerophon* would have risen like a floating castle above eleven-year-old Samuel Blyth's eyes as he came aboard his first man-of-war. All of his young life he had dreamed of this day: donning midshipman's blues and looking ahead to a life full of perils he would conquer, adventures he would seize, and battles from which he would emerge blooded but not bloodied. What else could reasonably be expected to go through an eleven-year-old boy's mind...? Perhaps what I appreciated most through the reading of *Knights* and as I turned the last digital page were the questions that Hanna raises throughout, often revealing the leanings of his own conclusions but leaving room for the reader to continue pondering. Near the end of the story, Hanna contemplates the grave markers of Burrows and Blythe, sitting side by side: "Did those three men buried in that hill die for something worthy? Is any death in war worthwhile, or are they all so many wasted souls?" Hanna continues by speaking of their valor and the pride their countrymen, past and present, can feel. Yet, such questions are crucial for us to ask of the past and in the present.

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