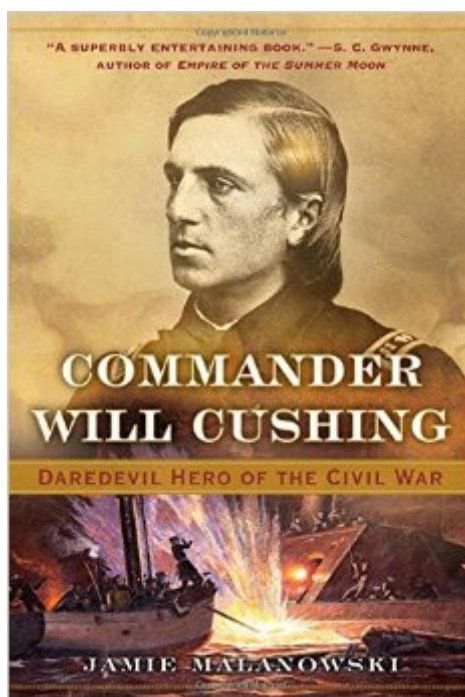


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Commander Will Cushing: Daredevil Hero Of The Civil War



Synopsis

“Superbly entertaining.” —S. C. Gwynne, best-selling author of *Empire of the Summer Moon*

October 1864. The confederate ironclad CSS Albemarle had sunk two federal warships and damaged seven others, taking control of the Roanoke River and threatening the Union blockade. Twenty-one-year-old navy lieutenant William Barker Cushing hatched a daring plan: to attack the fearsome warship with a few dozen men in two small wooden boats. What followed, the close-range torpedoing of the Albemarle and Cushing’s harrowing two-day escape downriver from vengeful Rebel posses, is one of the most dramatic individual exploits in American military history. Theodore Roosevelt said that Cushing “comes next to Farragut on the hero roll of American naval history,” but most have never heard of him today. Tossed out of the Naval Academy for “buffoonery,” Cushing proved himself a prodigy in behind-the-lines warfare. Given command of a small union ship, he performed daring, near-suicidal raids, “cutting out” confederate ships and thwarting blockade runners. With higher commands and larger ships, Cushing’s exploits grow bolder, culminating in the sinking of the Albemarle. A thrilling narrative biography, steeped in the tactics, weaponry, and battle techniques of the Union Navy, Commander Will Cushing brings to life a compelling yet flawed figure. Along with his three brothers, including one who fell at Gettysburg, Cushing served with bravery and heroism. But he was irascible and complicated—a loveable rogue, prideful and impulsive, who nonetheless possessed a genius for combat. In telling Cushing’s story, Malanowski paints a vivid, memorable portrait of the army officials, engineers, and politicians scrambling to win the war. But he also goes deeper into the psychology of the daredevil soldier—and what this heroic and tragic figure, who died before his time, can tell us about the ways we remember the glories of war. 8 pages of illustrations

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Customer Reviews

Commander William B. Cushing is best known for his leadership in the sabotage effort which sank the CSS Albemarle during the night of October 27-28, 1864. Born in Wisconsin and raised in western New York provided with a both down to earth view of life and the ability to create fun where every his lived and worked. He was expelled from the U.S. Naval Academy for poor study habits and a surfeit of demerits during his final year. He was forced to resign from the academy just 90 days before graduation. Jamie Malanowski describes Cushing throughout his early years as having a talent for buffoon. Cushing's friends and relatives in Washington, D.C, lobbied the secretary of the navy who had been in the post for just 16 days. Gideon Welles met with Cushing and informed him that his appeal would not be accepted. Then came the bombardment of Fort Sumter and the pleading of Benjamin Butler to Gustavus Fox, assistant secretary of the navy. In the emergency of the moment, Cushing reentered the navy as a acting master's mate and joined the crew of the U.S.S. Minnesota. Cushing found opportunities to create adventures. In 1862 Cushing was promoted to lieutenant and later in life to commander. The Confederacy's ironclad ram, Albemarle, dominated the frequently contested region of the Roanoke River and its major port, Plymouth. During the late summer of 1864 considered various plans for destroying the Albemarle; two of the plans were submitted by by Cushing. Cushing's daring plan and heroic execution earned him a reputation and fame that lasted his lifetime. Malinowski offers a witty portrait of Cushing and his adventures. With some very short captures and some very extensive chapters, he briskly moves the story forward from Cushing's childhood and to his death.

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