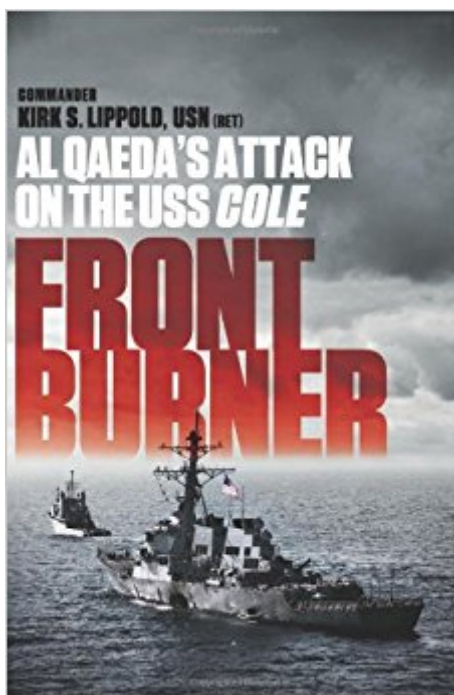


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Front Burner: Al Qaeda's Attack On The USS Cole



Synopsis

On October 12, 2000, eleven months before the 9/11 attacks, the USS Cole docked in the port of Aden in Yemen for a routine fueling stop. At 1118, on a hot, sunny morning, the 8,400-ton destroyer was rocked by an enormous explosion. The ship's commander, Kirk Lippold, felt the ship violently thrust up and to the right, as everything not bolted down seemed to float in midair. Tiles tumbled from the ceiling, and the ship was plunged into darkness, beginning to sink. In a matter of moments Lippold knew that the Cole had been attacked. What he didn't know was how much the world was changing around him. The bombing of the Cole was al Qaeda's first direct assault against the United States and expanded their brazen and deadly string of terrorist attacks throughout the Middle East. In this gripping first-person narrative, Lippold reveals the details of this harrowing experience leading his crew of valiant sailors through the attack and its aftermath. Seventeen sailors died in the explosion and thirty-seven were wounded—but thanks to the valor of the crew in the perilous days that followed, the ship was saved. Yet even with al Qaeda's intentions made clear in an unmistakable act of war, the United States government delayed retaliating. Bureaucrats and politicians sought to shift and pin blame as they ignored the danger signaled by the attack, shirking responsibility until the event was ultimately overshadowed by 9/11. Front Burner captures a critical moment in America's battle against al Qaeda, telling a vital story that has—until now—been lost in the fog of the war on terror.

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Customer Reviews

Often overlooked between the embassy bombings in Africa and the events around September 11 is the attack on the USS Cole, then refueling in Yemen. A garbage scow approached the ship on its mooring and blew a hole in the port side, killing many crew members and, in the years ahead, sinking the career of the captain, Commander Kirk Lippold, whose story is told here. After the attack, Commander Lippold and his crew managed to save the ship, with heroic acts of bravery, but they were less successful in keep afloat the naval career of the captain, who to certain U.S. senators looked as though he had been asleep on the bridge. In fact, as the book explains clearly and in page-turning detail, the Navy had no idea that in sending its ships to refuel in Yemen they were ordering them into the crosshairs of al-Qaeda operatives, intent on kamikaze missions against U.S. ships. The fate of the Cole was no different that what happened to other Navy ships in the battle of Okinawa, the difference being that the U.S. government, instead of learning from the attack on the Cole, decided that the captain was the cause of the embarrassment, and in the months and years that followed, his career was mothballed. Had the lessons he learned in Aden harbor, however, been drilled more competently into other branches of the government, it's possible that 9/11 could at least have been mitigated. Instead they had to be relearned at the World Trade Center and in Washington, without the benefits of Commander Cole's insights into the enemies over the horizon. The writing here is clear, engaging, riveting at times, and direct. No doubt the Naval Academy will use it for years to teach its midshipmen about dangerous waters, but it's a shame that Commander Lippold's book has serve as proxy for what he could have been explaining in person to the Navy and other branches of government about what he had learned under fire from a determined enemy.

As a crew member on board during that fateful day, I and many others have waited a long time to have this story told. CDR Lippold did an amazing job with this. It was an honor to serve with him. If you are interested in the truth of what happened in yemen, definatly read this book.

THIS IS A MUST READ BOOK! Both for historical reasons and for insights into gross failures on the part of the Intelligence community, 'Big' Navy, DOD and the Administrations of Clinton and Bush. This book does not read like a thriller or like a superbly crafted novel from Clancy or the like. It reads like a warrior wrote it, trying to tell the story of not only what he went through, but what Officers, Chiefs and Enlisteds who served as his crew went through. It reads like what it is - a real view of what the man went through, and what he saw his crew went through. Kirk's narrative comes across genuine and real. He doesn't seem like a monolithic hero carved of granite. He comes across as

what he is - a GOOD CO who got put into a bad situation and brought his crew through. And THAT, ultimately is what this book is about - a recording of what his crew did and a memorial to what they went through and what they did. I am in a unique position to comment on Front Burner. At the time of the Cole murders (the attack in Yeman) I was assigned as the Strike and Surface Warfare assistant at Commander Destroyer Squadron TWO TWO - the Cole's Immediate Superior In Command (ISIC). I knew and know Kirk Lippold and I was not only privy to many of the events described in the book, I knew and know several of the crew of the Cole. Part of our duty as ISIC was to arrange, facilitate, oversee and certify the training and inspections she and the rest of COMDESRON TWO TWO's 8 ships went through during the workups and preparations for deploying. As a result I had dealt with Kirk and a number of the people mentioned in Front Burner. We (slowly) found out some of what was mentioned, but I've even learned some things about the attack that I did not know. I cannot do this book, or that crew of the COLE justice. You must read it. This was the first salvo in the 'long war' and their story NEEDS not only to be told, it MUST BE HEARD!

Just finished reading this riveting account of the Cole bombing. Excellent book and a hell of a Commander. Most importantly, he tells the story of the crew and the real heroes of the Cole. Read this book. Well worth it.

Accurate account of what happened to our ship in Yemen. This is the true start of the "war on terror"....and should have been a wake up call as a precursor to 9/11. As a part of the crew of USS Cole, Commander Lippold will always be MY Captain! And should most definitely have been promoted to Captain which he was categorically denied because of politics.

Outstanding read- impossible to put down. Most impressive was Lippold's brutally honest self assessment. After reading in painful detail what the outstanding crew of the Cole endured in the aftermath of the attack I convinced more than ever that the Al-Queda mastermind of the plot- al-Nashiri- cannot meet his maker soon enough. Commander Lippold and the brave dedicated crew of the Cole won a victory for all Americans through their brave struggle, thankfully the likes of which most of us will never have to endure. This American owes a debt of gratitude to the brave Captain and crew of the USS Cole including those 17 brave sailors who made the ultimate sacrifice while protecting our nation in a land far away. This should be required reading for all Americans.

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