



## The Commodore

*P.T. Deutermann*

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## **The Commodore** P.T. Deutermann

P. T. Deutermann's previous novels of the US Navy in World War II - Pacific Glory, Ghosts of Bungo Suido, and Sentinels of Fire - have been acclaimed by reviewers and readers for their powerful drama and authentic detail.

In *The Commodore*, the Navy in 1942-1943 is fighting a losing battle against Japan for control of the Solomon Islands. Vice Admiral William "Bull" Halsey is tasked to change the course of the war. Halsey, a maverick, goes on the offensive and appoints a host of new destroyer commanders, including a wild-card named Harmon Wolf. An American Indian from a Minnesota reservation, Wolf has never fit in with the traditional Navy officer corps. But under Halsey, Wolf's aggressive tactics and gambling nature bring immediate results, and he is swiftly promoted to Commodore of an entire destroyer squadron.

What happens next will change Wolf's life, career, and the fate of his ships forever. An epic story of courage, disaster, survival, and triumph that culminates in the pivotal battle of Vela Gulf, *The Commodore* is a masterful novel of an unlikely military hero.

## **The Commodore Details**

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Author : P.T. Deutermann

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## From Reader Review The Commodore for online ebook

### **Donna Herrick says**

Historical fiction can reveal the emotion as well as the facts of events. This story is a masterpiece of WWII historical fiction because it gives us insight into how Adm Halsey conducted the war in the Pacific and how the USN struggled to develop tactics to fight the Japanese Navy, and of logistical struggles in the early days of operations in the South Pacific.

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### **nicholas m. lacetera says**

#### **High drama on the high seas**

Great read. You feel like you are in the battle and can't stop reading until the end. I highly recommend reading this novel.

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### **John Purvis says**

“The Commodore” eBook was published in 2016 (August) and was written by P. T. Deutermann (<http://www.ptdeutermann.com>). Mr. Deutermann has published more than a dozen novels.

I received a galley of this novel for review through <https://www.netgalley.com>. I categorize this novel as ‘PG’ because it contains scenes of Violence. The novel is set during the early years of World War II. In 1942 the Americans were fighting the Japanese for Guadalcanal. In the sea around the island, the US Navy was doing all that they could to stop the flow of supplies and reinforcements headed to the island.

When the story begins, one of the US destroyers in the conflict is commanded by Commander Harmon “Sluff” Wolf. Though a US Naval Academy graduate, Wolf does not fit the normal mold of a Naval Officer. As a Native American from rural Minnesota he is far outside the circles of most of the other officers.

But Wolf’s outside-the-box thinking enables him to survive encounters with the Japanese and begin to make them pay for their attack on the US. Wolf’s actions catches the eye of Admiral Halsey. Halsey puts Wolf in charge of a destroyer squadron, promoting him to Commodore.

Wolf leads his men and ships into action with the Japanese. They suffer high casualties, but continue to confront the Japanese. Wolf finds that some of his enemies are fellow naval officers and must deal with that distraction. Wolf also meets a pretty nurse when he is recuperating in the hospital for injuries suffered during action at sea.

I really enjoyed the 8.5 hours I spent reading this 304 page World War II Thriller. I thought that it painted a very real picture of the surface combat going on in the Pacific. I give this novel a 4.5 (rounded up to a 5) out of 5.

Further book reviews I have written can be accessed at <https://johnpurvis.wordpress.com/blog/>.

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### **David says**

I was honestly disappointed in the romantic portions of this book of the nurse married to the Annapolis Classmate who died on the Arizona at Pearl Harbor, as well as trying to track to different characters as the other two Naval Academy Classmates of the one who died on the Arizona. Just to much jumping back and forth for my liking. I also picked this book to read after reading an earlier one of his "PACIFIC GLORY" which was truly amazing. Having said that when it comes to writing of WWII Naval Battle at Sea this author is among the very best. He obviously has first hand knowledge of ships and our Navy and I enjoy reading his books of this genre. But I would strongly prefer he stick to that and leave all the touchy feely romantic stuff to others. In this book he even gets into investigative stuff with the Hawaiian Police like a detective. Had the actual at sea naval parts of this book not been so fantastic I would have only given this book 1 or 2 stars!

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### **Jean says**

I was introduced to Deutermann's books by a fellow Goodreads' member.

A Native American, Harman Wolf, is a Navy Destroyer Commander, fighting in the Pacific Theatre. His aggressive tactics brought him to the attention of Adm. William F. Halsey who promotes Wolf. He becomes the de facto commodore of a division of destroyers fighting the naval battle around Guadalcanal. The author describes Wolf's command of his ship and his division as he develops tactics to combat the Japanese.

The story is a historical fiction but I wonder if the author took some of the experiences and tactics of some real-life U.S. Navy destroyer captains such as Arleigh Burke, Ernest Evans and Frederick Moosbrugger. I have read their biographies and find similarities to battles and tactics in Deutermann's story. The book is well written and meticulously researched. The story might be fiction but it is historically accurate. Deutermann has great descriptions of naval battles that are very realistic and easy to read.

P.T. Deutermann retired from the navy after 26 years as a Captain. He is also the son of Admiral H. T. Deutermann. As in a typical military family both his son and daughter are Naval Officers. After retirement, he began his writing career.

Dick Hill does an excellent job narrating the book. Hill is a multi-award winning audiobook narrator and also won the Golden Voice award.

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### **Stephen Hoyt says**

#### **Will put you on the bridge**

One of the very best sea stories of the war that I have ever seen. Like Deutermann I have been "on the bridge" and this returned me to those times. If you want to know what happens "up there" this is the book. I've read all of the books Deutermann has written and this is definitely one of his best. If I were teaching this would be required reading for all Navy manager's. They won't understand much of it but it will teach them

the concept of "chaos" called war.  
Please continue to write, Commodore.

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### **Lee says**

Would have been 5 stars, but I had to subtract half a point for several technical errors that I spotted often. I guess I know too much about the Guadalcanal campaign.

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### **Keith says**

An excellent novel of naval combat in the Pacific during World War Two. Deutermann is ex-navy and is expert at conveying the terror of sea battles against the Japanese navy in 1942. His main character, "Sluf" Harmon rebels against the top down use of destroyers in naval encounters, basically to shield the bigger ships. Harmon, who is part Chippewa, invents a maneuver called the Comanche circle which tries to move round the Japanese ships, firing torpedoes, then moving quickly away, and then coming from another direction firing every gun on the ship, stopping, circling around some more and repeating the process. Despite this innovation a million things can go wrong and they do, ships are sunk, hundreds die and every move is subject to criticism. The battles described in the book are based on similar encounters between the coasts of Guadacanal and Savo Island. Three thousand US sailors died in this small space appropriately called Ironbottom Sound.

Deutermann brings these violent battles to pulse pounding life and honors the men who held the line in these early days of the war. This is the fourth book in Deutermann's "World War Two Navy" series. I've also read *Pacific Glory* which, with a larger canvas, tells more of this horrific period in history.

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### **Tony Taylor says**

Really, really enjoyed it... I think this is one of the best from Pete Deutermann! Those who are Surface Warfare veterans and are up on their history of the war in the Pacific will truly appreciate his attention to detail when it comes to ship handling and the fighting capability of the old Fletcher Class destroyers and the cruisers available at the outbreak of the war. Pete is a great writer and keeps the reader's attention from the start... it is definitely a worthwhile read!

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### **happy says**

With this forth entry into his World War II Navy series, P.T. Deutermann once again demonstrates that he is one of the best novelists currently writing on WW II. This novel is set in the horrifying seas in the Southern Solomon Islands as the US Navy is getting stuffing beat out of it in night actions against the Imperial Japanese Navy. Capt Deutermann has a way of writing battle sequences that is positively riveting and brings the reader into the middle of the action.

The novel opens with a new destroyer, the USS John B King, arriving in Tulagi on the second day of the

Naval Battle of Guadalcanal and the crew and more importantly the ship's commander seeing the damaged ships of the first night still smoking in the harbor – I thought it a very evocative scene. The King is immediately dispatched to join the destroyer screen for the 2 US battleships and is involved with the actions of the second day of the battle. It is this action that the readers get to know the captain of the King, Cdr Harmon "Sluff" Wolf - a half Native American graduate of the USNA, and his extraordinary tactical abilities as he comes up with a way to deal with the Japanese Long Lance torpedoes that have been causing havoc with the US escorting ships. Unfortunately he has no time to relay his ideas to the other ships in the screen. When he executes these new tactics, it appears he is running away and he has to explain this to his superiors. He does and also come to the notice of the Adm Halsey, for the right reasons and this relationship helps him navigate the jealousy and racism of other naval officers.

As the American destroyers are continually be whittled down by the Japanese, Cdr Wolf is promoted first to a destroyer Division and then a Destroyer Squadron commander. As he advances he uses his tactics against the Japanese to great effect. However, the Japanese are also shown to be adaptable and they devise tactics to use against him and he falls into their ambush, getting his ship sunk beneath him.

This leads to the section of the novel that I find the least believable. After his ship sinks, he makes it to shore and is rescued by a coast watcher. While exciting and well researched, this part of the novel is just too coincidental for me. It seem as if the author thought that since I am writing about the Solomon's, I have to have a section on the Coast Watchers. The plot line for this section looks at just what dangers the Coast Watchers faced. In spite of a serious head injury, he eventually returns to the US control after the Coast Watcher is discovered and killed.

After returning to US control, the Navy bureaucracy, including Halsey's COS, try to get rid of him and it is only through Halsey's intervention he stays in the battle. As his injuries pile up, he is finally returned to Pearl Harbor and given command of a special training squadron that all destroyers joining Nimitz fleet must pass.

In addition to the battle sequences being excellent, Capt Deutermann does an outstanding job of showing just how important radar was becoming. The use of radar not only gave the Americans much earlier warning as well as the location of the enemy, radar control allowed much more accurate shooting, both with guns and torpedoes. The advantages of this are very well done.

All in all an excellent novel that I found a joy to read. I finished it in 2 days. I would have rated this 5 stars, but I've dropped this 3/4s of a star because of the Coast Watcher section. On good reads I've rounded to rating of 4 stars. Still I highly recommend this to anyone interest in World War II or the Navy

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### **Chuck says**

No one, in my opinion, tells a naval war story as well as Mr. Deutermann. Once again he takes us to the South Pacific during WWII. He, along with half a dozen family members, served extensive tours with the U.S. Navy so you can feel the authenticity of his work. We are on board the destroyer USS John B. King in 1942 off the coast of Guadalcanal. The U.S. Marines have just moved inland after establishing a successful beachhead and are clinging tenaciously to a very valuable airfield. The Japanese want that airfield just as badly as we do and their navy is giving special attention to the mission of supporting their ground troops with additional troops, ammo, food, fresh water, medical supplies and other needs. Our navy is working just as hard to see that the Japanese troops do not receive these supplies. Our hero, Harmon Wolf, is the King's commander and figures out the tactics necessary to combat the Japanese.

Mr. Deutermann's writing puts the reader on board ship and he/she feels the emotional roller coaster of naval warfare; the excitement, uncertainty, exhilaration and raw terror. There is nothing romantic about Deutermann's description of warfare.

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### **Rob Roy says**

I have enjoyed Deutermann books over the years, but this is probably his best to date. Often you have to get through a couple of chapters to really get into a book. In this case half way through the first page. While World War II Destroyer tactics may not interest many, this book is about leadership, and doing the right thing. It has lessons for every reader, along with a darn good tale.

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### **Dave Hoff says**

A fiction based on fact book, by an author who "has been there" Main character's destroyer, J.B. King was lucky to escape serious hits during engagements. The Skipper, after being named Commodore, not quite so. Few unnecessary words.

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### **Jim says**

I have read two prior books by Peter Deutermann featuring the United States Navy in WWII and its men and women. My favorite uncle served in the U.S. Navy in WWII landing on Guadalcanal with the First Marine Division thus my passion for books such as this. The author comes from a U.S. Navy family. His father was a senior Navy officer in the Pacific Theater serving in destroyers. Peter Deutermann knows of what he is writing. And he does it very well.

Commander Harmon Wolf, his main character in this stand-alone novel, is a Native American from a Minnesota reservation. He is an outsider even though he graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy. The story takes place in 1942-43 around Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands (SW Pacific Ocean) not far from Australia.

The U. S. Navy is hopelessly out gunned by the Japanese Navy, having had most of its battleships destroyed at Pearl Harbor Dec. 7, 1941. The fleet is mostly composed of antiquated destroyers and cruisers with a scattering of the new Fletcher Class destroyers with a secret weapon - surface and aerial radar. Wolf uses that invention to create new tactics for the Navy and especially the "tin cans", the destroyers.

The battle scenes are spectacular. The relationships between the men and women with whom Wolf serves is poignant and frustrating. Great characters. Deutermann's historic references are accurate and educational. This is a MUST READ for WWII and nautical fiction fans.

**GO! BUY! READ!**

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## **Larry says**

Peter Deutermann, like David Poyer, Nicholas Monserrat and C. S. Forester, writes movingly and excitingly about the sea. In this particular book, he writes about the struggle between the outnumbered and outgunned US Navy and the Imperial Japanese Navy for control of the waters off Guadalcanal in the first year of the Pacific war. (Read James Hornfischer's five-star "Neptune's Inferno" for a factual grounding, but Deuterwmann doesn't take many liberties.)

Harmon Wolfe, the central character, is an Annapolis graduate with sixteen years' service in the US Navy as of his appointment as skipper of a new destroyer, the "J. B. King." Due to the high rate of attrition among officers, men and ships ("Ironbottom Sound, the main area in contention, earned its name from the number of ships sunk in its depths, many of them American) and Wolfe's willingness to be aggressive and innovative (both dreaded in the prewar Navy), he finds himself in command of more than a single ship. The fact that he is Chippewa adds to his burdens, but he is able to connect with Admiral Bull Halsey, who is looking for officers like Wolfe.

The novel's action is constant. The demands made on Wolfe and his shipmates and the dangers they face increase regularly, for the Japanese navy is highly effective and its leaders learn quickly. The advantage held by the US is shipboard radar systems, both navigational and gunnery control types. Learning about how the intelligent use of radar permitted new tactics to evolve is continually interesting. Deuterwmann's earlier book, "Sentinels of Fire," dealt with the life of a destroyer crew assigned picket duty during the Okinawa campaign. In that book, as in "The Commodore," destroyers frequently were used to shield bigger ships, cruisers and battleships, from enemy planes and torpedoes. Wolfe represents a generation of officers who put destroyers to more significant uses.

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