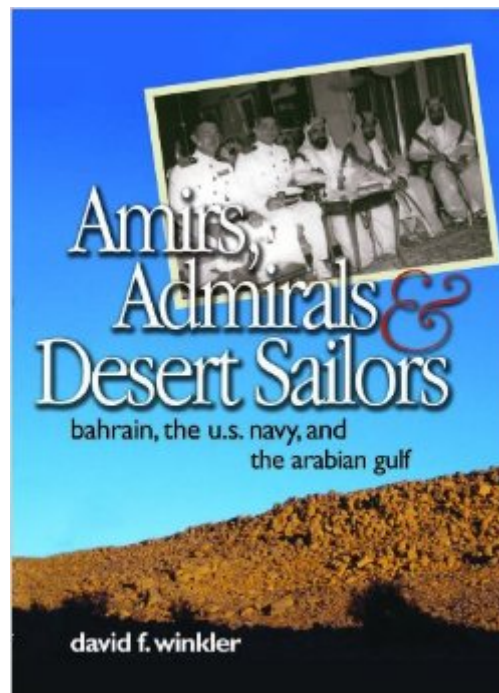


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Amirs, Admirals & Desert Sailors: Bahrain, The U.S. Navy, And The Arabian Gulf



Synopsis

Host to the U.S. Navy for nearly six decades, Bahrain has been a steadfast American ally in the turbulent Middle East. Its unique relationship with the United States evolved through a series of friendships between Bahrain's ruling Al Khalifa royal family and top U.S. Navy flag officers assigned to the fleet in the Gulf. Over the years it has become a strategic partnership critical to global security. As naval historian David F. Winkler examines these developing relationships, he offers a fascinating overview of Bahraini history, the entry of American humanitarian and economic interests, the establishment of an American naval presence in the Cold War, the Arab-Israeli conflicts, and the downfall of the Iranian shah, among other subjects. The author tells the story from both Bahraini and American perspectives. Given U.S. commitment to the region and its concurrent objectives of combating the global war on terrorism and establishing democracy, this book provides an important historical context for those interested in a crucial facet of American foreign relations. While many works describe the history of U.S. diplomatic and military involvement in the Gulf, this is the first to cover in depth the history of the U.S. Navy in Bahrain.

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Customer Reviews

Written as a history of the U.S. Navy's relationship with Bahrain, as Dale Eikmeier of the U.S. Army War College stated, and aimed at naval historians, Winkler's book fills a void for scholars of U.S. Middle East policy. Winkler, director of programs and development at the Naval Historical Foundation in Washington, D.C., chronicles the history of the U.S. naval presence in the Persian Gulf from the mid-twentieth century's petroleum and shipping offices to the present-day headquarters of the Fifth Fleet. He reveals how a series of naval officers with scant foreign policy experience forged productive relationships with Bahrain's rulers based on mutual respect, the Navy's need for oil, and Bahrain's need for security. As Sheikh Essa is quoted saying to an American, "Your men and women, the ships and aircraft of the Fifth Fleet, are a mountain of fire that separates us from the Iranians, and that presence of naval forces is what has given us peace and prosperity." This mutually beneficial relationship became the foundation for the U.S. military presence in the Persian Gulf and helped shape U.S. policy in the region. Winkler also provides a glimpse into the occasional tensions between the Navy's strategic view of the region, driven by its need for secure access to fuel oil, and the U.S. government's more complex and bipolar Middle East policies. Readers will find many examples of how simple courtesies, honors, and personal relationships influenced strategic decisions and how something as seemingly inconsequential as a Department of Defense school for military and international children played a critical role in tough negotiations.

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