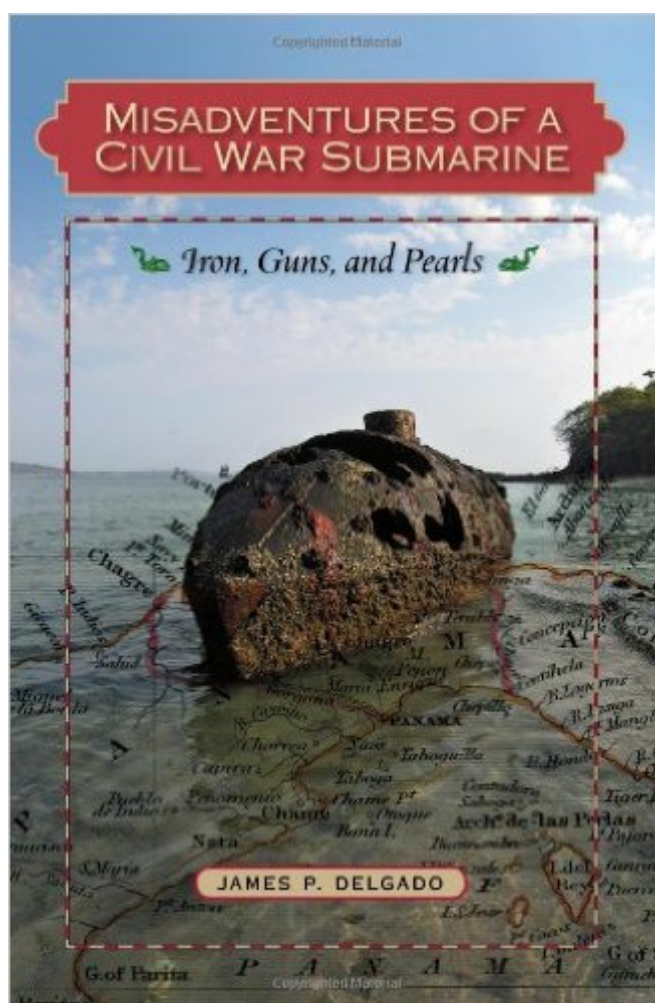


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Misadventures Of A Civil War Submarine: Iron, Guns, And Pearls (Ed Rachal Foundation Nautical Archaeology Series)



Synopsis

In 2001, while vacationing on Panama's Pacific coast, maritime archaeologist James P. Delgado came upon the hulk of a mysterious iron vessel, revealed by the ebbing tides in a small cove at Isla San Telmo. Local inquiries proved inconclusive: the wreck was described as everything from a sunken Japanese "suicide" submarine from World War II to a poison-laden "craft of death" that was responsible for the ruin of the pearl beds, decades before. His professional interest fully aroused, Delgado would go on to learn that the wreck was the remains of one of the first successful deep-diving submersibles, built in 1864 by Julius H. Kroehl, an innovator and entrepreneur who initially sought to develop his invention for military use during the Civil War. The craft's completion coming too late for that conflict, Kroehl subsequently convinced investors that it could be used to harvest pearls from the Pacific beds off Panama, in waters too deep for native pearl divers to reach. In *Misadventures of a Civil War Submarine*, Delgado chronicles the confluence of technological advancement, entrepreneurial aspiration, American capitalist ambition, and ignorance of the physiological effects of deep diving. As he details the layers of knowledge uncovered by his work both in archival sources and in the field excavation of Kroehl's ill-fated vessel, Delgado weaves the tangled threads of history into a compelling narrative. This finely crafted saga will fascinate and inform professional archaeologists and researchers, naval historians, students and aficionados of maritime exploration, and interested general readers.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Being a retired archaeologist who has excavated several historic period, western american sites, the background research was excellent. The data as presented is sound with background research explained and data sources identified. In other words a professionally prepared document with enough information, asides and humor for the lay reader. I learned alot about Civil War Period maritime technology which has led me to explore the works of other authors' who have done work on submersibles of this period. Another kudos is the explanation of the problems, dangers, and frustrations of doing professional research in remote places. The health hazards of this time period in the S.E. U.S. and in Central America adds to other works concerning death rates etc. of peoples who were not adapted to local disease vectors. U.S. imperialism was explained as a background source for the development of submarine technology and its potential for commercial use.

This is an interesting and well written book. It is interesting because of the subject, a submarine that almost no one knew existed with a surprisingly complex story to be told. And the story is interesting not just because it's about the submarine, its inventor and the story of its construction, use and eventually "misplacing", but also how the author found out about it and was able to interest people into researching and documenting this relic. And the book is well written too. While the author is an academic, he make the narrative easy to read for the general reader. And he also expands the tale to include more general information of the period in which the sub was build and used and I found that to be something that added to the story. Very highly recommended!

Excellent

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