

For every naval officer, in fiction or reality, the frigate was the most sought after command. As dashing as a modern destroyer, the frigate offered the excitement of independent service with the prospect of a glorious single-ship battle or a fortune to be made in prize money. Their actions have been the stuff of history and sea fiction for generations, but the ships themselves are hardly documented at all. This book fills that gap with comprehensive descriptions of the design, construction, armament and fitting of individual classes, as well as the factors that influenced their development and the roles they were expected to perform. Supporting the narrative are detailed lists on all classes, including the prizes captured from opposing French, Spanish, Dutch, Danish, and American navies and comparative aspects like performance under sail. Based on extensive new research, the author goes beyond the frigates specifications to background issues like the construction experiments prior to the adoption of the Seppings diagonal system, and the improvements to guns, mounting, and powder during the wars of 1793-1815. This handsome large-format volume is fully illustrated with original plans, photographs of models, and contemporary prints. It will be a rich addition to any maritime bookshelf and provide first-time readers of this genre with an in-depth look at a sailing vessel steeped in naval lore.

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