

Sea Stories: A Memoir of a Naval Officer (1956-1967)**Gary Slaughter**

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(283pp)

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Anyone with ties to the navy or an interest in the Cold War will want to experience Sea Stories.

Shedding light on some of the most infamous conflicts in United States history during the Cold War, Gary Slaughter shares his recollections of his direct involvement in *Sea Stories: A Memoir of a Naval Officer (1956-1967)*, a gripping collection of vignettes fusing the optimism, morality, and patriotism of the era with hard facts and grim realities of naval warfare.

From his early years as an NROTC student at the University of Michigan, thankful for a monthly stipend of fifty dollars, through to an eventful rise to lieutenant with tours in Caribbean and Mediterranean waters, Slaughter details the highs and lows of life aboard naval destroyers, stateside and abroad, revealing formerly classified information while upholding the values and tradition of an officer and a gentlemen.

Compiled somewhat chronologically, with a few all-encompassing topical forays that jump backward and forward, each chapter paints a complete picture or slice of life during Slaughter's twelve years of naval service. Subjects range from idyllic convertible drives along the west coast to up-close encounters with the severe poverty of the Azores in the 1960s. Using dry humor and tact, Slaughter recounts with equal aplomb tales of stumbling into a Mexican red-light district and playing a round of golf at the Guantanamo Bay Country Club, complete with sand trap land mines.

Reminiscent of the times, the language and tone are occasionally dated with phrases such as "whale of a time" and "ye gads" peppering the dialogue. A few black-and-white pictures, including of the submarines, warships, and a young Ensign Slaughter's commissioning photo, are featured, although the colorful nature of the characters begs the inclusion of more.

Gaining notoriety, through recent publications and documentaries, is Slaughter's role in preventing a nuclear launch during an exchange with a Russian submarine while aboard the USS *Cony*, which he describes in dramatic detail. The controversy surrounding the Bay of Pigs, as well as hot topics such as desegregation and Kennedy's assassination, are explored from a unique perspective while maintaining an emphasis on respect, honor, duty, and friendship.

Anyone with ties to the navy or an interest in the Cold War will want to experience *Sea Stories*, particularly those familiar with the documentaries *The Man Who Saved the World* and *The Silent War*, both mentioned along with Peter Huchthausen's *October Fury* as relevant and relating to Slaughter's account. Taken as a collection of short stories or altogether, *Sea Stories* is sure to capture the attention of historians everywhere.

PALLAS GATES MCCORQUODALE (August 5, 2016)

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