

At the crossroads of history and the future...

MS COMMANDER

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From the best-selling award-winning book that helped change America's policy toward women on submarines...

BENNINGTON



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By Don Napolitano & Jeff Napolitano & Manuel Freedman
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A precocious eleven year old girl, a navy brat with no siblings and a Navy career father, has been raised with the attitude: "...always be a lady and perfection every time..." Even though he is strict with her, she loves her dad and wants to emulate him in every way.

Young Jodi is always curious about the Navy with endless questions for her dad. Born with perfect pitch, she plays the violin and is passionate about sailing. During a father-daughter sailing event she falls overboard and her father jumps into the water to save her only to find he needs help himself because of a heart attack. Jodi tries to rescue him but she is too small to lift the big man back into the sail boat.

Jodi is heartbroken over his death for the next several years. She sets her goal to join the Navy and follow in her father's footsteps. Along the way she builds a makeshift sail boat and tries to leave home. Her mother calls the Coast Guard and they rescue her at sea.

Jodi advances to college and is enrolled in the Navy college officers program. Along the way she meets Mark Alexander an older student whose mind is set on joining the Coast Guard. They have limited contact and go their separate ways, only to cross paths over the next several years and keep in touch with each other.

Jodi is dedicated, focused and smart. She excels in all of her endeavors, wanting to honor the memory of her dad that she is a lady and perfect every time. She later finds she is challenged by her goals and realizes that the responsibility of a career in the Navy may be more than she can manage.

She advances in her rank and responsibilities and is chosen to be the first woman to be a submarine commander by the head of the Navy and Department of Defense, because for years they pressured Congress to change the policy and put a woman in command of a nuclear attack submarine. A trial mission is approved and a sub is retrofitted to accommodate sleeping quarters for just three lady officers.

Commander Jodi's first voyage as Captain of the Shark Fin and her crew of 116 submariners is mandated by the Atlantic Fleet Admiral to be routine war exercises with American allies. She loses an early round to the Australians and later is lured into in a deadly game of chicken with a rogue British submarine bearing nuclear weapons. The confrontation takes place in the north Atlantic 680 miles north of Bermuda in the area known as the Hatteras Abyss, where in 1986 the Russian nuclear submarine K-219 caught fire and sank. Along the way she encounters a mysterious third submarine of unknown origin and the Shark Fin and crew are forced to defend themselves.

Jodi finds herself challenged by her assignment, the gender gap between herself and her crew, a hostile male board of inquiry and her fateful decision. She is compelled by circumstances to use weapons that cause her to sink her 1.3 billion dollar submarine the Shark Fin, lose nine of her crewmen and an F-18 fighter jet. Jodi realizes she has to prove her decisions were correct, making Peace with herself that she is not perfect every time. She will prevail.

From nineteen-sixty-eight to two-thousand, three Russian nuclear submarines sank with more than two hundred lives lost.

During that same time, three American nuclear submarines put in for repairs.

