



Conrad Elroy, Powder Monkey: The Role of the Navy in the Civil War (Reading Essentials in Social Studies)

Alvin Robert Cunningham

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The book begins with an introduction to the Civil War- its causes, the two sides, and the conflict that led to the bloodiest war in America's history. The historical fiction chapters tell the story of Conrad Elroy, a 13-year-old powder monkey for the Union navy. Conrad is aboard the U.S.S. Hartford as it prepares for the Battle of Mobile Bay. It is Conrad's job to supply his gun crew with gunpowder. During the battle, another powder monkey drops his powder cartridge. In order to save the ship from a powerful explosion, Conrad picks up the flaming cartridge and hurls it into the sea. For this act of bravery, Conrad is awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor. The medal, however, is no comfort to Conrad, who lost a friend in the battle. The book's nonfiction chapters detail the role of the navy in the Civil War- the Northern blockade, the Southern blockade-runners, the Confederate commerce raiders, the ironclads, and the Confederate submarines and torpedoes. It also describes the life of a powder monkey and the role these young soldiers played in the war.

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