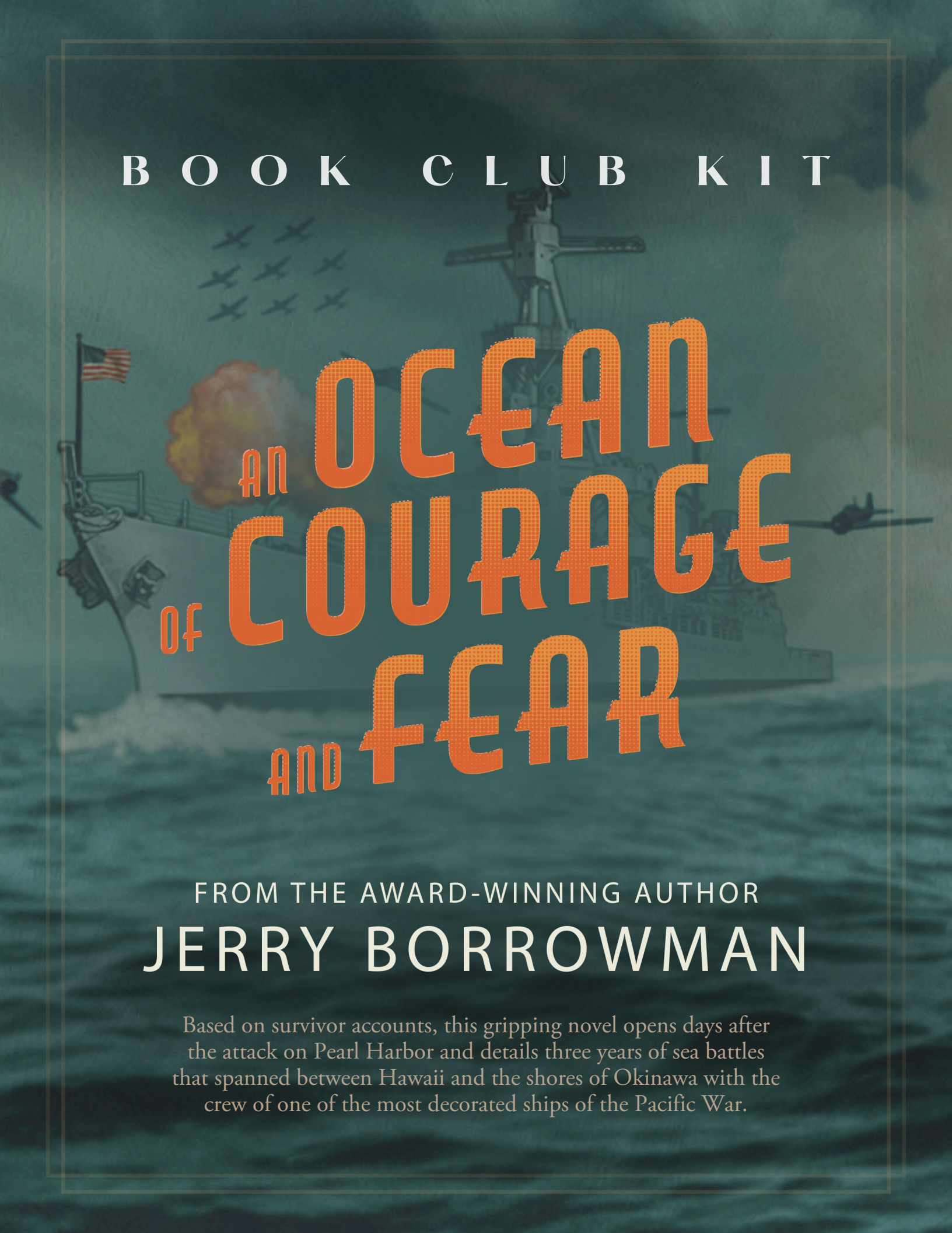


B O O K C L U B K I T



AN OCEAN
OF COURAGE
AND FEAR

FROM THE AWARD-WINNING AUTHOR
JERRY BORROWMAN

Based on survivor accounts, this gripping novel opens days after the attack on Pearl Harbor and details three years of sea battles that spanned between Hawaii and the shores of Okinawa with the crew of one of the most decorated ships of the Pacific War.

BOOK CLUB KIT

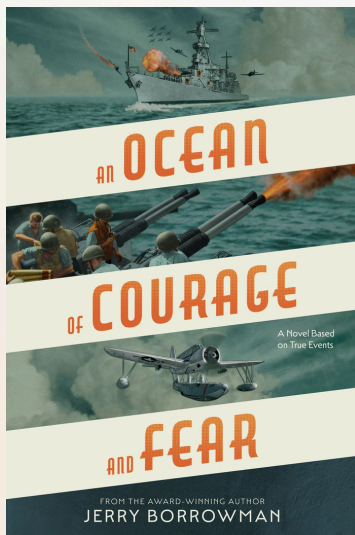
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A LETTER FROM THE AUTHOR

Dear Reader,

In 2022 I had the opportunity to attend the annual reunion of the USS Salt Lake City CA-25 Association in Alexandria Virginia, where I met three veterans who served on the heavy cruiser *Salt Lake City* in World War II. What an awesome opportunity to hear firsthand accounts of the men who put their lives at risk to defend the United States in the South Pacific in actions against the Japanese Fleet capital ships, anti-submarine warfare, and in support of beach landings in virtually every major theatre of the war. I included many of their stories in the book, with their permission and using their names. Additionally, the Association has collected more than 100 recollections of those who served, but who have since passed away, who informed the writing of this story.

The statistics of the ship are easy to find – 11 battle stars, two movies that featured the Salt Lake City, and captains who became admirals in prosecuting the war. But it's the everyday lives of the sailors that bring the history alive. And that was my job in writing this novel, based on true events, for readers like you who want to feel (as much as possible) what those who served in the war felt and experienced.

Once you read the book you share a bond with those who served, because you will keep their memory alive and honor their service. I hope you enjoy the story as much as I did in researching and writing it. What a magnificent ship and what a compelling story. Thank you for choosing to read *An Ocean of Courage and Fear*.

Jerry Borrowman
Jerry Borrowman

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1.

Commander Justin Collier served faithfully and with courage throughout the war. But the story also reveals that he quietly suffered from anxiety and what today we would call post-traumatic stress after his experience in hand-to-hand combat. What are your thoughts on the emotional price that combat soldiers and sailors are asked to pay in service to our country?

2.

Captain Riley Bracken is a pilot seriously injured and loses his legs. How did the other characters in the book help him transition back into civilian life and to regain a sense of meaning in his life? How does this relate to those who serve in the military today?

3.

Al Jowdy shared his true stories of serving on the Salt Lake City during the war, including the experience of his mother writing to the War Department to find out why he hadn't written her any letters for many months. Al was summoned to the bridge to answer to the captain for this lapse. What are your thoughts on the emotions felt by the people back home as well as the role of military chaplains in supporting both the active duty person as well as the people they love?

4.

In the Battle of Cape Esperance the Salt Lake City charged into battle to support the USS Boise, which earned the nickname "The One Ship Fleet" by the admiral in charge. How do you think the captain of a ship balances the needs of protecting the people who serve against the needs of bold action to defeat the enemy?

5.

Now that you know that the John Wayne movie, "In Harm's Way" is based on the USS Salt Lake City, which you can watch on Amazon Prime or other services, discuss the difference between reading a book and watching a movie on the same topic – what are the pros and cons of each?

6.

Justin Collier's wife Heidi is a nurse who serves during the war and who tries to support her husband without being resentful. Do you think that Americans fully appreciate the struggles of the families of military personnel and how we support them?

7.

One of the author's favorite scenes in the book is during the Komandorski Islands when water floods an oil tank and all the boilers are extinguished. This event occurred in real life, including purging the lines and reigniting the boilers in a remarkably short period of time. Had you ever thought about all the people it takes to keep a ship running, including those working in the engine room below the waterline, like those featured in this story?

8.

What was your biggest surprise in reading the book?

9.

If you could expand on any part of the story, what would you like to know more about?

10.

How can we continue to honor the legacy of those who served in America's wars and show respect for their sacrifices?

“

A gripping narrative that combines history with personal drama and heroism”

—Library Journal



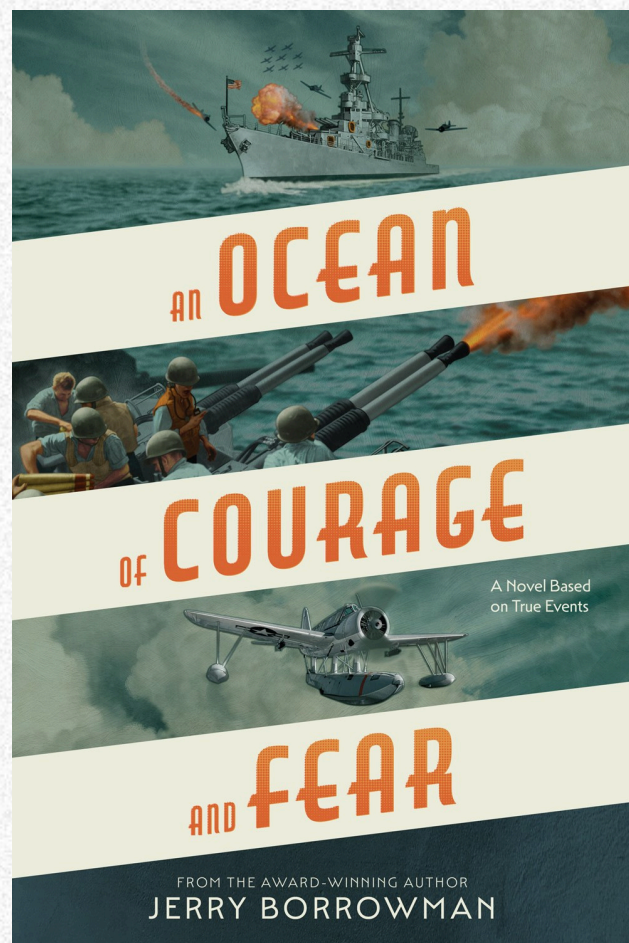
"Interweaving fictional characters with real-life sailors, the novel follows Justin Collier (a lieutenant commander on the Salt Lake City), Lieutenant Riley Bracken (Collier's cousin and a talented naval pilot), and sailor Al Jowdy (a 15-year-old who lied about his age to enlist, as they defend the United States in the Pacific following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor). Collier's coolheadedness allows him to order strategic maneuvers that outwit and overpower the Japanese forces, while Bracken's aviation expertise keeps the Salt Lake City abreast of their no-holds-barred opponent...For historical fiction buffs with knowledge of World War II's Pacific theater of operations."

—Library Journal

author of *The Paper Daughters of Chinatown*

"Mr. Borrowman has done an excellent job here of drawing the parallel between the life of a Navy man, his family, and his duty to his ship and his country. The depiction of a sailor's life at sea and the fact that life still goes on at home have been detailed with a touch of deep realism."

—Col. Herrick M. Drake, USAF



*Watch the Short documentary
with Survivors from the story!*

ShdwMtn.com/AlJowdyInterview

About the Author

JERRY BORROWMAN



Jerry Borrowman is an award-winning author of historical fiction and nonfiction. He has written about World Wars I and II, the Great Depression, and the Vietnam War, and about how four feet of plywood saved the Grand Canyon. He is the recipient of the George Washington National Medal from the Freedoms Foundation at Valley Forge. Jerry and his wife, Marcella, raised four children and live in the Rocky Mountains.

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