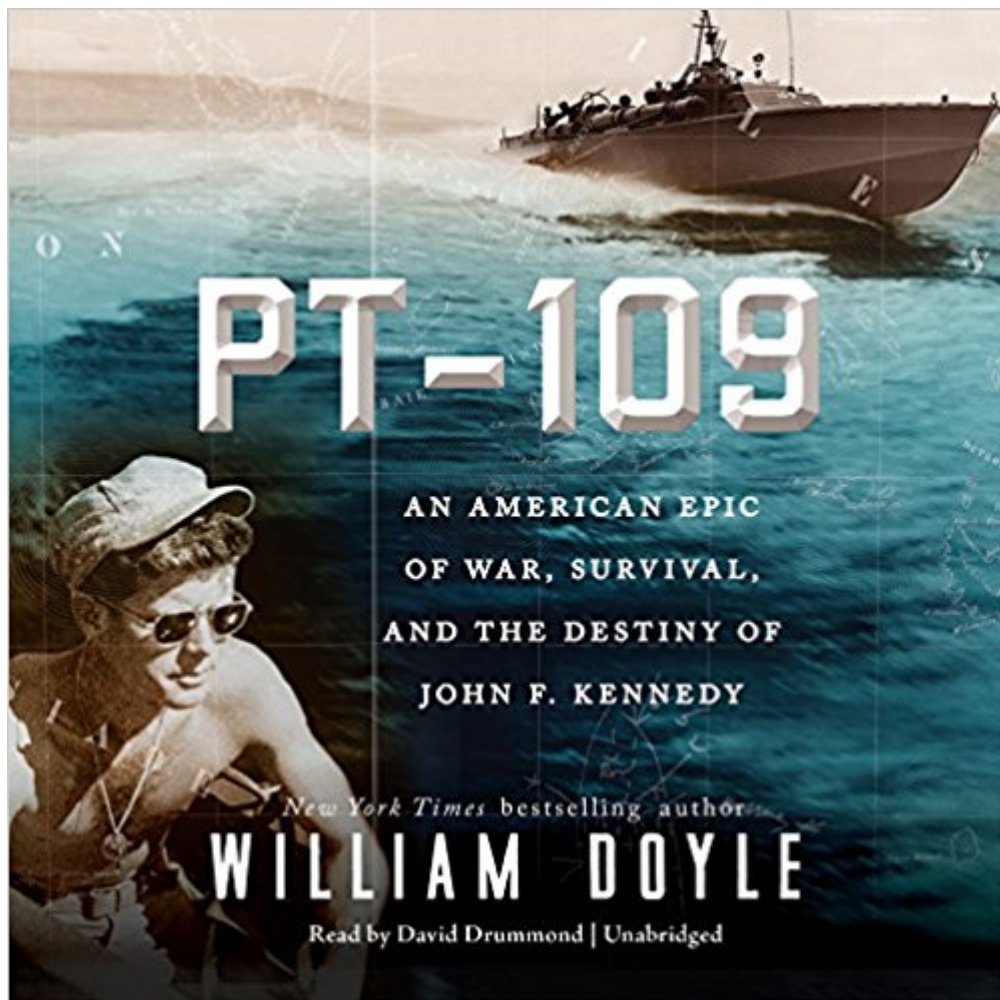




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# PT-109: An American Epic Of War, Survival, And The Destiny Of John F. Kennedy



## Synopsis

A thrilling, moment-by-moment account of one of the most famous events of World War II--the sinking of PT-109 and John F. Kennedy's heroic actions that saved his crew--and a fascinating examination of how that extraordinary episode shaped the future president's life. At 2:00 a.m. on the moonless night of August 2, 1943, United States patrol torpedo boat PT-109, captained by Lieutenant John F. Kennedy, was struck by the Japanese destroyer Amagiri near the Solomon Islands. The American ship was cleaved in two and rocked by an explosion. Two crew members died instantly, and the remaining eleven survivors clung to the sinking wreckage, adrift in enemy waters. Despite injuring his back, Kennedy--towing a severely burned sailor by the strap of a life jacket--led his battered and exhausted men on a harrowing three-and-one-half-mile swim to a tiny, uninhabited island. Desperate for food and water, Kennedy set off on a solo reconnaissance mission, scouting two larger islands two-and-one-half miles away. Discovering water and coconuts, he returned for his men. For six days they lived off coconuts and kept out of sight of passing Japanese patrols until they were rescued. Drawing on new information from the American rescuers and recently released archives in both Japan and the United States, PT-109 recounts this event in breathtaking detail and explores the incident's remarkable aftermath on JFK's life and legend. William Doyle reveals that, while the incident transformed JFK into a "war hero" and helped propel him to the US Senate and the White House, the wounds he suffered during that harrowing week continued to haunt him physically and psychologically.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

“Cinematic. ... Doyle expertly... brings this remarkable saga back to life.” (Christian Science Monitor)

“A revealing and breathtaking account about what happened to John F. Kennedy’s Patrol Torpedo boat 109, and the famous war story’s engrossing aftermath.” (James Patterson)

“William Doyle’s PT 109 is a masterfully written book on John F. Kennedy’s World War II service. Every page sparkles with keen insight and fresh research. Highly recommended!” (Douglas Brinkley, author of *Cronkite*)

“I have to say, William Doyle’s PT 109 is the finest book I’ve ever read on the subject: the best written; the most well-researched and accurate. It covers every aspect and brings many new things to light. Doyle has done a wonderful job.” (William Liebenow, Lt. Commander, USNR (ret.), skipper of PT 157, John F. Kennedy’s tentmate, battle colleague and boat commander of the mission that rescued Kennedy behind enemy lines in August 1943)

“Impressive. ... [An] engrossing combination of adventure and analysis. ... Doyle’s work has all the makings of a definitive account -- the last word on the story. And as such, it’s a tale few are likely to forget.” (USA Today)

“A cinematic story of survival.” (Boston Globe)

“This one is exceptional--an intimate, blow-by-blow account of the saga of PT 109 and its young skipper who was destined to later take the helm of the nation. A fascinating read.” (Dick Couch, author of *When Honor Bound* and *Navy SEALs: Their Untold Story* (with William Doyle))

“Fast-paced, gripping, and superbly researched, William Doyle’s PT 109 conveys the dramatic story of JFK’s wartime service and its surprising aftereffects with a refreshing, brisk authority. Doyle’s gift for details and vivid descriptions put the reader squarely in the middle of this epic tale.” (Dan Hampton (USAF, Ret.), New York Times bestselling author of *The Hunter Killers*)

“Compelling. ... Explosive.” (Daily Mail (London))

“A gripping account of John F. Kennedy’s monumental test of leadership and survival during World War II, and how his actions set him on the path to political greatness.” (Library Journal)

“[A] fast-paced narrative. Dramatic and revealing.” (Kirkus Reviews)

“A terrific history. ... William Doyle’s PT 109 infuses an iconic tale with new information and insights, and in the telling deepens our understanding of the young John F. Kennedy’s courageous origin story.” (David Rensin, co-author with Louis Zamperini of the New York Times bestsellers *Devil at My Heels* and *Don’t Give Up, Don’t Give In*)

“William Doyle’s PT 109 not only provides a highly accurate and researched account ... but it also brilliantly charts how those six days of survival, being alone, isolated and at times thought to be abandoned, transformed Kennedy’s very fiber--and his destiny.” (Bridgeman

Carney, PT boat historian and author of *First Up: Chronicles of the PT 157*) "A gripping, well-told story of courage in the face of disaster." (Booklist) "Powerful. ... Today, our candidates should read this account to learn from Kennedy's leadership skills." (American Thinker) --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

The extraordinary World War II story of shipwreck and survival that paved John F. Kennedy's path to power is hailed as a "breathtaking account" by James Patterson, "masterfully written" by historian Douglas Brinkley, and "the finest book ever written on the subject by Lt. Commander William Liebenow, the man who rescued JFK and the PT 109 crew in August 1943. In the early morning darkness of August 2, 1943, during a chaotic nighttime skirmish amid the Solomon Islands, the Japanese destroyer *Amagiri* barreled through thick fog and struck the U.S. Navy's motor torpedo boat PT 109, splitting the craft nearly in half and killing two American sailors instantly. The sea erupted in flames as the 109's skipper, John F. Kennedy, and the ten surviving crewmen under his command desperately clung to the sinking wreckage; 1,200 feet of ink-black, shark-infested water loomed beneath. "All hands lost," came the reports back to the Americans' base: no rescue was coming for the men of PT 109. Their desperate ordeal was just beginning—so too was one of the most remarkable tales of World War II, one whose astonishing afterlife would culminate two decades later in the White House. Drawing on original interviews with the last living links to the events, previously untapped Japanese wartime archives, and a wealth of archival documents from the Kennedy Library, including a lost first-hand account by JFK himself, bestselling author William Doyle has crafted a thrilling and definitive account of the sinking of PT 109 and its shipwrecked crew's heroics. Equally fascinating is the story's second act, in which Doyle explores in new detail how this extraordinary episode shaped Kennedy's character and fate, proving instrumental to achieving his presidential ambitions: "Without PT 109, there never would have been a President John F. Kennedy," declared JFK aide David Powers. Featuring castaways on a deserted island, a spy network of Solomon Island natives, an Australian coast watcher hidden on the side of a volcano, an S.O.S. note carved into a coconut, and a daring rescue attempt led by Kennedy's fellow American PT boats, *PT 109* is an unforgettable American epic of war and destiny. --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

I was only 3 when president Kennedy was assassinated. Too young to remember this, my attitude toward him was why continue the farce in Viet Nam, wasting lives of both countries in a war that

never should have been? This book has changed my perception of him. I believe now, he was at heart a good man who wanted to be a scholar, not a politician, but that the mysterious death of his elder brother put his feet, at his domineering bootlegger of a father's demand, on the road to politics. Well written and interesting, this was a worthwhile read.

A story of an inspirational captain and heroic crew caught in a perilous situation. How can anyone not like such a tale of war and survival? It goes beyond a retelling of Robt J. Donovan's earlier "PT 109" book. Over the passing years this story has been told and retold so many times that it is amazing Doyle was able to come up with some new information and insights. Hopefully, this book will bring this adventure that helped make a great president to a new generation of readers.

Not the original version, but contains information not presented in the original version. This version portrays the incompetence of the commanding officer and other decisions that set the stage for this story. JFK was an extraordinary person with a unusually broad knowledge of world affairs, and a highly developed sense of responsibility.

Was a very interesting read. The book told the real story of what happened and what the men experienced while being stranded on an island. Also told of Kennedy's bravery and indurance to find help to be rescued from the island.

This book not only provided detail on the sinking of PT 109 and the fate of the crew but provided detail on the motivation behind JFK becoming a PT captain. It also shows the connection between his naval experience and his becoming president. Lots of detail I have never heard before.

Doyle obviously has an affinity for Kennedy and bases his telling of the PT-109 story on extensive research. He presents both the critical and laudatory sides of the story. Kennedy may not have made all the right decisions, but once disaster struck, he heroism was beyond question.

I saw the movie many years ago but this beyond that. Not only the lost and rescue but how this effected the rest of his life. Covers the good and bad things that Kennedy did. One gets a better view of the man behind the story. Even though I know what happen I wanted to keep reading to find out how things happen.

Unlike many other books about Kennedy and his wartime exploits, this book deals just in the facts, without any of the fluff or mythology that has come to surround the story. Dealing with the aftermath and his rise to power, there's none of the gossip about his Affairs or womanizing, but it does deal bluntly with Joe Kennedy's overwhelming desire for power for his family. All in all a well researched and written book

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