

# ★ QUARTERDECK ★

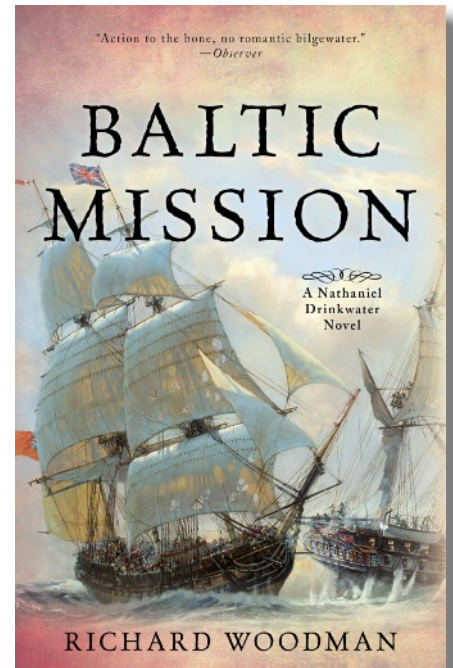
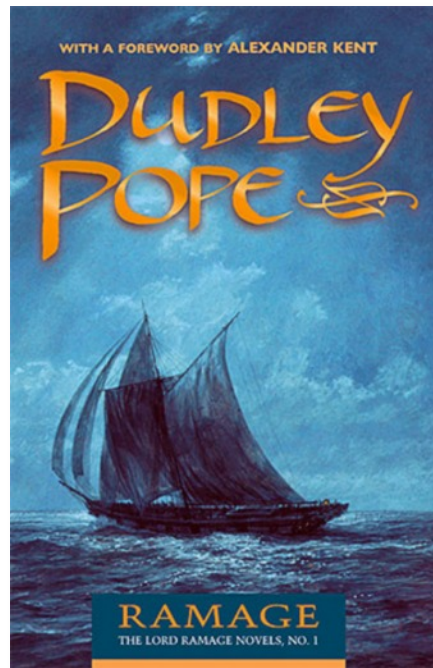
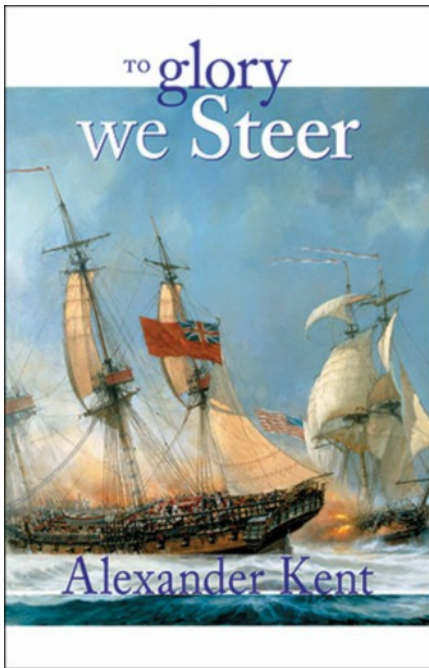
MARITIME LITERATURE & ART REVIEW



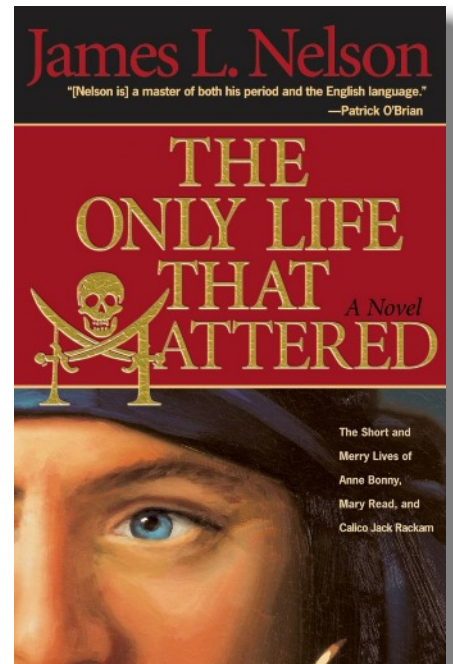
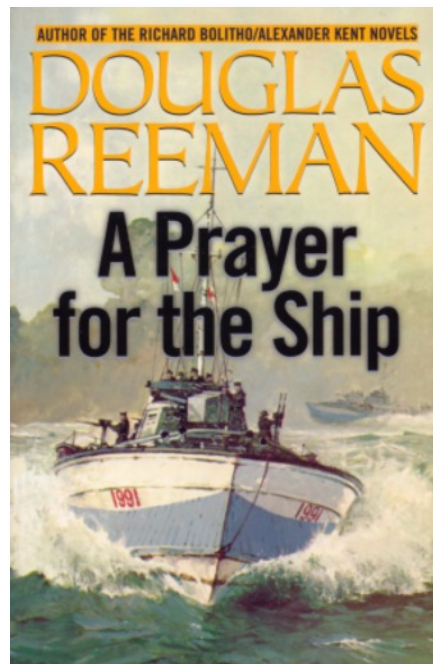
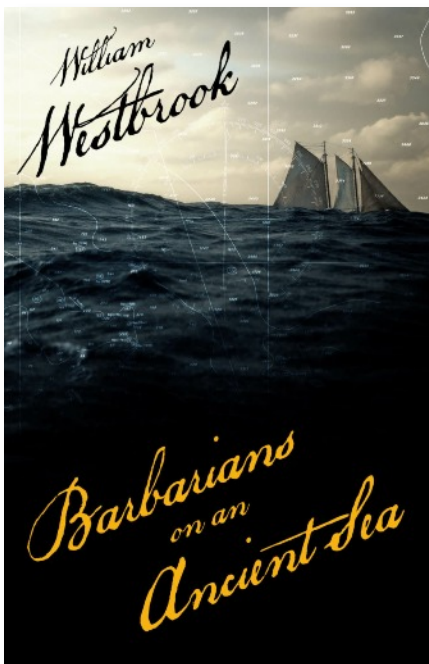
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#### ON THE COVER:

Detail from "HMS Captain," an oil-on-canvas  
painting by American marine artist  
Paul Garnett.  
© Paul Garnett

© Tall Ships Communications



## ROBERT N. MACOMBER



Robert N. Macomber

Photo courtesy of Robert N. Macomber.

**R**OBERT N. MACOMBER, the author of the Honor Series featuring United States Navy Captain Peter Wake, recently received two literary honors.

The Florida Writers Association named Macomber Florida Writer of the Year for 2020. His latest book *Honoring the Enemy* won the Patrick D. Smith Award for the best fictional novel based on Florida history.

Macomber's "literary acclaim, prolific writing, and communication skills make him the perfect honoree," said Chrissy Jackson, FWA's Director Emerita and Conference Director. "FWA looks for an author based in Florida each year who

exemplifies our motto of "Writers Helping Writers" while providing us with riveting reads. Macomber is just that person."

The author's next Peter Wake novel, *Word of Honor*, will be published in October by the Naval Institute Press.

## WILLIAM C. HAMMOND



William C. Hammond

Photo courtesy of William C. Hammond.

**M**CBOOKS PRESS has acquired the rights to the award-winning Cutler Family Chronicles by American novelist William C. Hammond. The historical fiction saga features American naval officer Richard Cutler in the years from the country's War for Independence to the War of 1812.

"I am pleased and honored to be associated with McBooks Press, an esteemed publisher of nautical and historical fiction that is giving new life to my Cutler Family Chronicles series," said Hammond. "I look forward to a long, strong, and meaningful relationship."

*No Sacrifice Too Great*, the sixth title in the series, will be published in hardback in the fall of

2021. He is currently working on the seventh entry in the chronicles. The first five titles – *A Matter of Honor*, *For Love of Country*, *The Power and the Glory*, *A Call to Arms*, and *How Dark the Night* – will be published in new trade paperback editions beginning in spring 2021.

Hammond, a lifelong student of history and a sailing enthusiast, lives and writes in New Zealand.

NEW BOOK  
RELEASES

2020 - 2021

US (United States)  
UK (United Kingdom)  
TPB (Trade Paperback)  
PB (Paperback)  
HB (Hardback)  
EB (Ebook)  
NF (Nonfiction)

## MAY

*Rocks and Shoals* (USTPB)  
by Chris Durbin

*An Eye of the Fleet* (USTPB)  
by Richard Woodman

*The Darkening Sea* (USTPB)  
by Richard Woodman

## JUNE

*Matthew's Prize* (USTPB)  
by Marcus Palliser

*The Hooligans* (USHB)  
by P. T. Deutermann

## AUGUST

*Deep Strike* (USHB)  
by Rick Campbell

## SEPTEMBER

*Devil of a Fix* (USTPB)  
by Marcus Palliser

## OCTOBER

*Balkan Glory* (UKHB)  
by Julian Stockwin

*Word of Honor* (USHB)  
by Robert N. Macomber

By George!



# England's HISTORIC FOOTPRINTS

VISITING ENGLAND over twenty-three years, we've trod on the historic ground with nearly every step we've taken. On occasion, following the footprints of those that came before us, we've stumbled upon hidden treasures or real-life scenes from the pages of maritime literature.

On a brilliant autumn morning in 2018, Amy and I boarded a train at London's Euston Station bound for Harwich, the ancient seaport on the English Channel in Essex, to spend the afternoon with Captain Richard Woodman, author of the Nathaniel Drinkwater novels, and his wife, Christine.

Richard has lived in Harwich for many years, based there during his time working for Trinity House, the official authority for lighthouses in England, Wales, the Channel Islands and Gibraltar. Retiring in 1997, he turned to writing maritime fiction and history full-time.

Disembarking at Colchester, we met Richard in the car park and drove to Harwich. The small town, which dates back to the twelfth century and possible to Roman times, is located near the North sea. Its rich maritime tradition stretches over one thousand years. The town's name means "military settlement," from the Old English *here-wic*.

Captain Christopher Jones, part owner and master of the *Mayflower*, lived a stone's throw from the waterfront. In 1652, the Kingdom of England established a Royal Dockyard there eight years before officially creating the Royal Navy. The dockyard converted to private ownership in 1713 but maintained a naval presence until 1829.

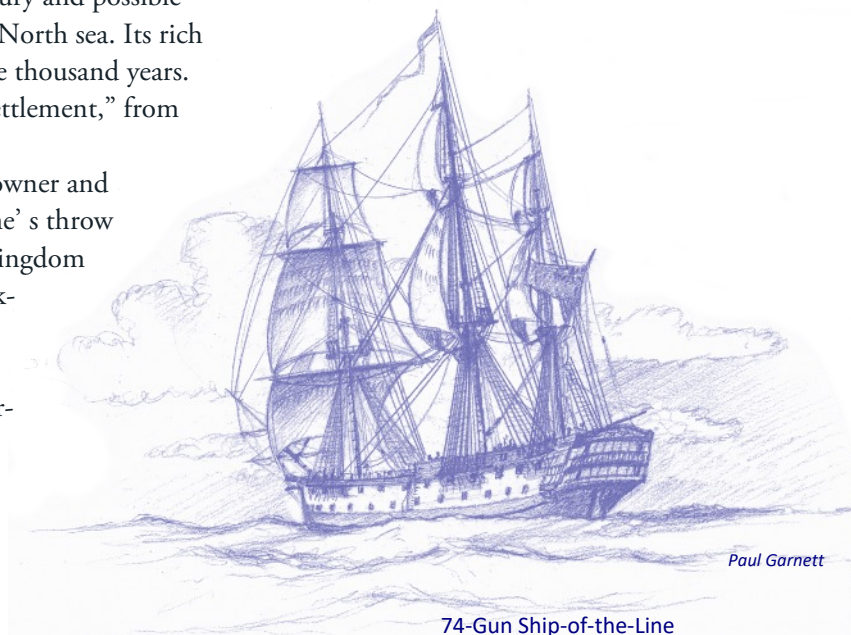
During Britain's wars with the French and Dutch up until 1815, the shipyard built and repaired many warships. HMS *Conqueror*, a

74-gun ship-of-the-line launched at Harwich in 1801, captured French Admiral Pierre-Charles Villeneuve at the Battle of Trafalgar in 1805.

Chatting over a pub lunch near the waterfront, Richard revealed that he had arranged for us to visit the local Guildhall. We're always interested in learning about local history, but knew little about the surprises that lay ahead.

The red-brick, three-story building stands on Church Street, a narrow lane in the center of the historic old seaport. It was initially the site of an inn called "The Bear," before the Council purchased it in 1673. The present structure, which dates from 1769, is the administrative home and meeting place for the Harwich Town Council.

The current mayor, Charles Powell, and one of the councilor members, Gary Calver, who is blind, greeted us at the entry. After our introductions, these gentlemen led us up the stairs to a room where we viewed the town's original Royal Charter granted by King James I in 1604. ➤



Paul Garnett

74-Gun Ship-of-the-Line





The large two-page document was beautifully written in magnificent, closely-spaced calligraphy and decorated with elaborate designs around the edges. The instrument is in a remarkable condition after more than four centuries.

On the main floor, our hosts opened the door into what is now called the Carvings Room. At first glance, it appeared to be only another office, but we soon realized that it harbors a once-hidden treasure dating back to the late eighteenth cen-



**ABOVE LEFT** The Harwich Guildhall which dates in its present design from 1769 and remains the meeting place and administrative home for the Harwich Town Council. **ABOVE** Two examples of ship carvings created by prisoners of war held in the Guildhall in the late eighteenth century. **LEFT** The Harwich Royal Charter granted by King James I in 1604.

Photos by George D. Jepson except for the Royal Charter which is courtesy of the Harwich Town Council.

tury when Britannia ruled the seas. During this period, the room was a holding cell for prisoners awaiting trial or sentencing. Among those detained were sailors captured by the Royal Navy, including Americans taken during the War for Independence.

Detailed carvings by prisoners adorn the walls, including ships, gallows, and symbols warding off evil spirits. One image depicts a vessel flying the Stars and Stripes, most likely the work of a Yankee seaman. At some time in the past, the walls were plastered. A few years ago, during remodeling, the plaster was stripped away, revealing the wooden boards covered in prisoner-etched images.

Standing before the walls, I wondered what these Jack Tars thought as they scratched away. Each etching details ➤



# Infamous Dartmoor

Spending time in the Harwich Guildhall Carving Room rekindled memories of a visit to southern Devon some years ago when we traversed the moorland in Dartmoor National Park, scene of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes mystery, *The Hound of the Baskervilles*.

## *The* LIVELY LADY



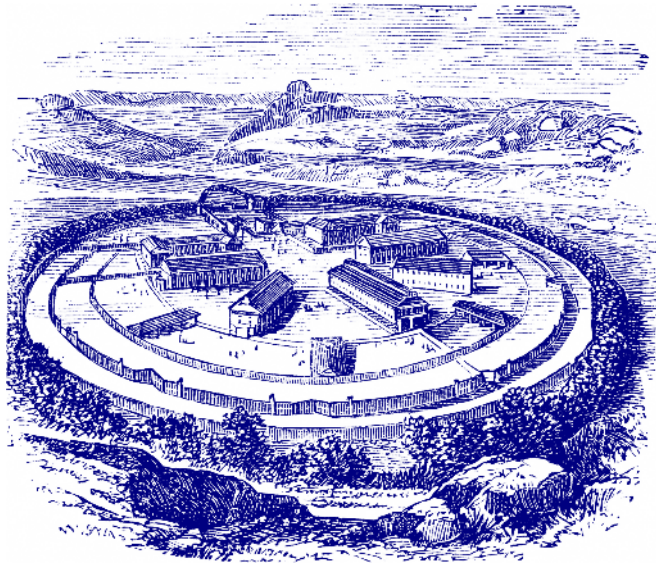
A CHRONICLE OF ARUNDEL  
Kenneth Roberts

Approaching the village of Princeton high on the moor, we came upon Her Majesty's Prison Dartmoor, the infamous penal institution that opened in 1809, accepting French prisoners during the Napoleonic Wars.

During the War of 1812, captured Americans, primarily seamen, were also incarcerated. The prison population reached nearly 6,000 during this period. At the war's end in 1815, approximately 270 Yankee prisoners had died.

In 1931, New England's preeminent novelist Kenneth Roberts portrayed Dartmoor in his novel *The Lively Lady* when Yankee Captain Richard Nason and the crew of his privateer are seized by the British. In Nason's words:

*"The shape of that miserable place . . . was vaguely the shape of a monstrous millstone or cartwheel. The outer rim of the wheel was a stone wall a mile in length and twelve feet in*



© Can Stock Photo / Morphant

Dartmoor Prison, circa 19<sup>th</sup> century

*height; and thirty feet from it was the inner rim of the wheel: a similar wall twelve feet in height as well. Around the top of each wall was stretched a wire to which bells were hung, and if any part of the wire were touched, no matter how lightly, the bells set up a clangor; and every guard in hearing came running with his loaded musket."*

Two centuries on, the Harwich Guildhall gaol and Dartmoor Prison, which still operates today, each remain a small remnant of American history. ■

— GDJ

## *By George*

a distinctive vessel. It is unknown what tools were employed to create the rough art. Knives, which most sailors carried, would have been confiscated.

After our visit to the Guildhall, we strolled through the historic district in the footsteps of luminaries like Christopher Jones, Sir Francis Drake, Horatio Nelson and Emma Hamilton, and American President John Adams and his wife, Abigail. All lived or spent time in Harwich.

Jones was born in the town. The Three Cups Inn, which opened in the sixteenth century and is now a private home, hosted England's two great seafarers, Drake and Nelson, as well as the Adams. "Better is not to be had," John Adams wrote on August 5, 1786.

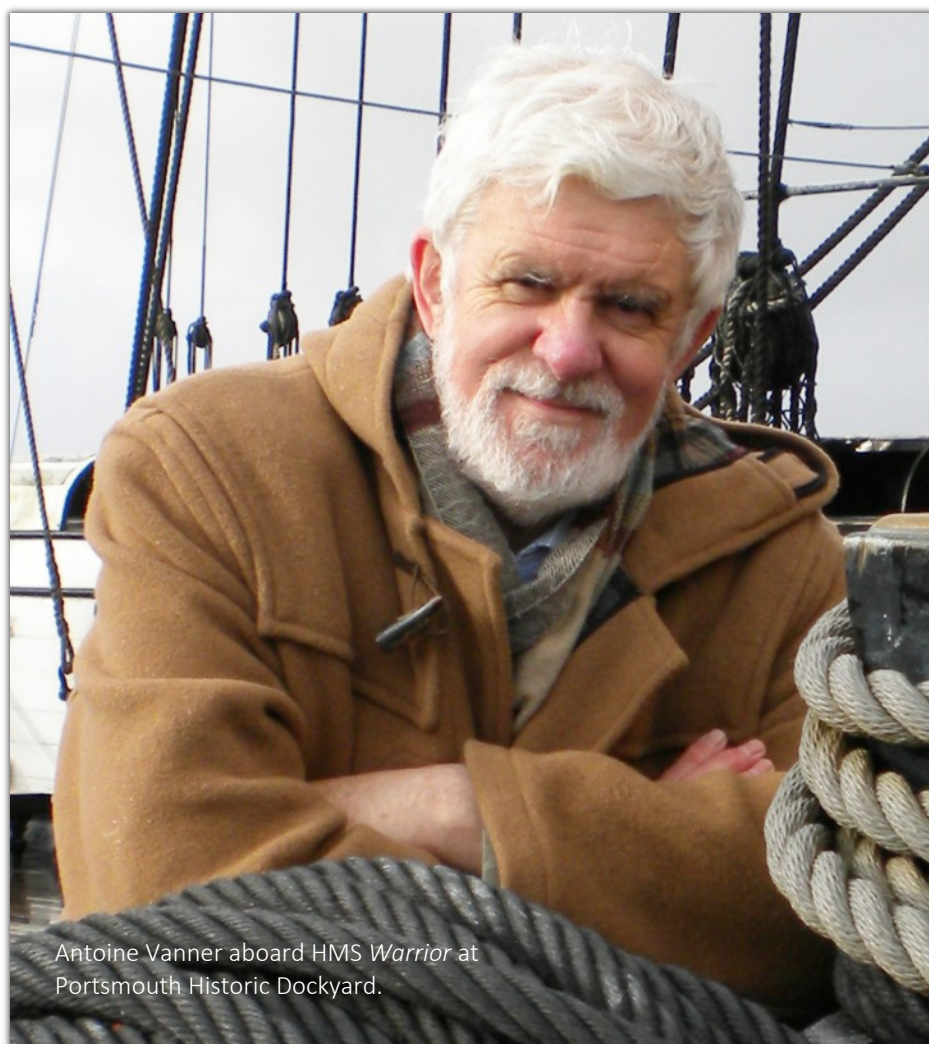
Our tour ended at the Harwich Redoubt, part of the

string of circular Martello towers and other forts built along the southeast coast in the years 1807 to 1809 as a defense against a possible French landing.

Richard added a footnote to the town's history: "In the bad old days," he said, "it was regarded as a Rotten Borough, sending two MPs to Parliament. These in the late 1600s were the great shipbuilder Sir Anthony Deane and Samuel Pepys, the diarist, Naval Administrator, and Chief Secretary to the Admiralty."

Steeped in Harwich's rich past, we spent a lovely late afternoon with Richard and Chris, who is an artist, in their garden, which has a clear view of the sea. ■

— George Jepson



Antoine Vanner aboard HMS *Warrior* at Portsmouth Historic Dockyard.

Photo courtesy of Antoine Vanner.

# *Antoine Vanner*

Britannia's Victorian Royal Navy  
Comes Alive in the Dawlish Chronicles

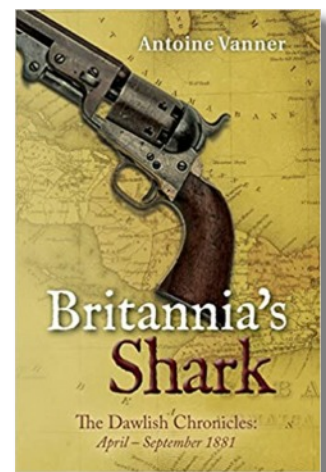
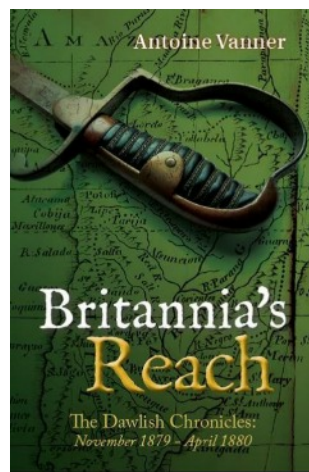
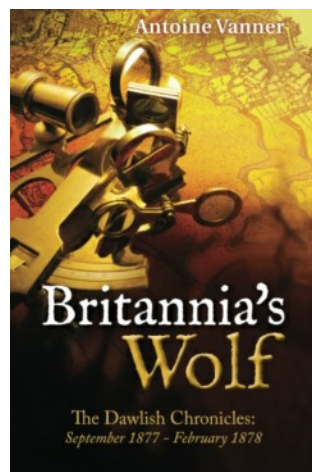
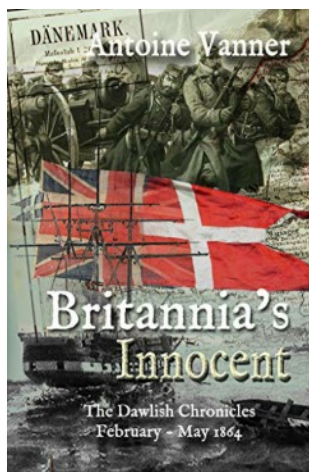
**A**NTOINE VANNER's real-life adventures rival those of his fictional Victorian British naval hero, Nicholas Dawlish. The novelist has settled in England with, he says, "a wife, a dog, six horses, and my laptop" in the wake of a distinguished international business career spanning eight countries and all continents, except Antarctica. Along the way, he endured military coups, treacherous seas, an armed insurgency, and cut-throat corporate boardrooms.

A passion for naval history and sea stories, among

them those written by English novelist Douglas Reeman, inspired the next chapter in Vanner's life when he left the business world and embarked on a new course as an author. The dearth of naval fiction set during the "Dawn of Fighting Steam" in the second half of the nineteenth century drew him to the British Victorian Royal Navy.

Creating Nicholas Dawlish, Vanner launched an engaging new saga, with eight volumes published to date by Old Salt Press. The latest title in the Dawlish Chronicles, *Britannia's Innocence*, is a prequel to ➤





the series, as the young midshipman returns to England from service in the West Indies.

The author recently shared his story with *Quarterdeck*.

— George Jepson

*What drove you to write about this period?*

The passage of time and the changes to which we must adapt in our lives fascinate me. The 1860 - 1914 period was notably challenging in terms of politics, science, technology, industry, and medical advances. It was decisive in making the sort of world in which we now live. When I combined this with my interest in naval history, I discovered a man creating himself in my imagination. Dawlish emerged as a Royal Navy officer born in 1845 and killed in 1918.

Like others of his generation, most notably Admirals “Jacky” Fisher and Charles Beresford, he would have joined in his teens a navy still commanded by veterans of the Nelsonic Age, but who would create the Grand Fleet that would face Germany in 1914. In the intervening years, such officers had to cope with the end of sail and the introduction of armor, big guns, turbines, torpedoes,

electricity, submarines, radio, and aircraft.

*How would you characterize The Dawlish Chronicles?*

It’s a series in which men and women face not only military and political challenges, and conflict ashore and afloat, but self-doubt and ghastly ethical dilemmas. Some of these characters are successful, some fail, some compromise, and some remain true to what they stand for. They’re similar to people of our own time and the to those who have inspired me. I’ve met them all over the world in the course of my own somewhat adventurous life; they’re the ones who grit their teeth, face the storm, and are never conquered even if sometimes beaten.

*Your protagonist, Nicholas Dawlish, seems to be a real person to you. Is this so?*

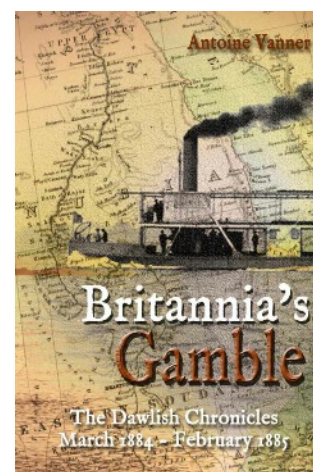
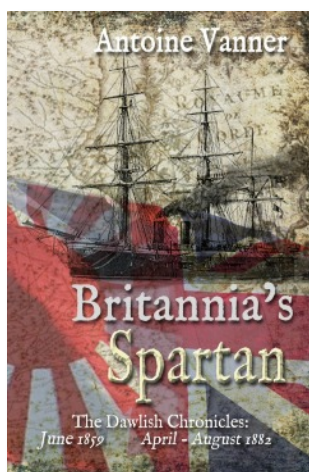
He became real very early on. I’ve known his birth and death dates and many of the main events of his career. That essential biography expands with each new volume, or short story, exposing some unique aspect of his life. He first sees action at fourteen in China in 1859. Called back from retirement, he’ll die at Zeebrugge in 1918. He’s fiercely ambitious, and he’s ready

to take on challenges that others won’t if it will gain him advancement. He is frequently faced with moral ambiguity and ethical dilemmas. He’s “earnest,” a quality the Victorians prized – and he is a Victorian, with many hang-ups, particularly social ones, but also some freedoms which we don’t have today. He develops as a man who will not shirk responsibility, whether moral or material, but he remains self-critical.

*His wife, Florence, seems almost as important in the series as Dawlish himself. How did that come about?*

Largely because she demanded it herself! She’s an equally real person to me since Dawlish first encountered her in *Britannia’s Wolf*, in which she played a key role. She’s a presence in all the later novels and a very pro-active one in *Britannia’s Shark*. She pleaded with me for a volume in which she’s the main protagonist – *Britannia’s Amazon* – and she got it. It plays out in Britain contemporaneously with her husband Nicholas’s service in Korea in *Britannia’s Spartan*. Loyal, compassionate, clever and courageous, she’s the moderating influence on the harder aspects of Dawlish’s character while still helping to advance his career.

*You’ve linked your books very firmly to ►*



*events and personalities of the period. Why?*

Dawlish's life happens against a background of the growth of the British and German Empires, the blundering progress of Russia, the decline of Austro-Hungary, French defeat followed by colonial expansion, and the emergence of Japan as a major industrial, military and naval power. And the United States was developing, almost unnoticed elsewhere, into an industrial and economic titan, though not yet a military one. There was little direct confrontation between these powers, but their rivalries were often played out by proxies, just as the Communist and Western blocks did during the Cold War. That's why we see volumes related to events in countries as diverse as Denmark (*Britannia's Innocent*), Turkey (*Britannia's Wolf*), Paraguay (*Britannia's Reach*), Cuba (*Britannia's Shark*), Korea (*Britannia's Spartan*), East Africa (*Britannia's Mission*) and the Sudan (*Britannia's Gamble*). In some cases, the action is dovetailed on a day-by-day basis to more significant historical events. Real-life personalities influence the plots strongly. These include Hobart Pasha, the British head of the Turkish Navy; Sultan Abdul Hamid II; John Philip Holland, inventor of the submarine; Queen Min of

Korea and the quintessential Victorian hero, General Charles Gordon.

*A large part of the action in several of the novels takes place ashore. Does this reflect the realities of the period?*

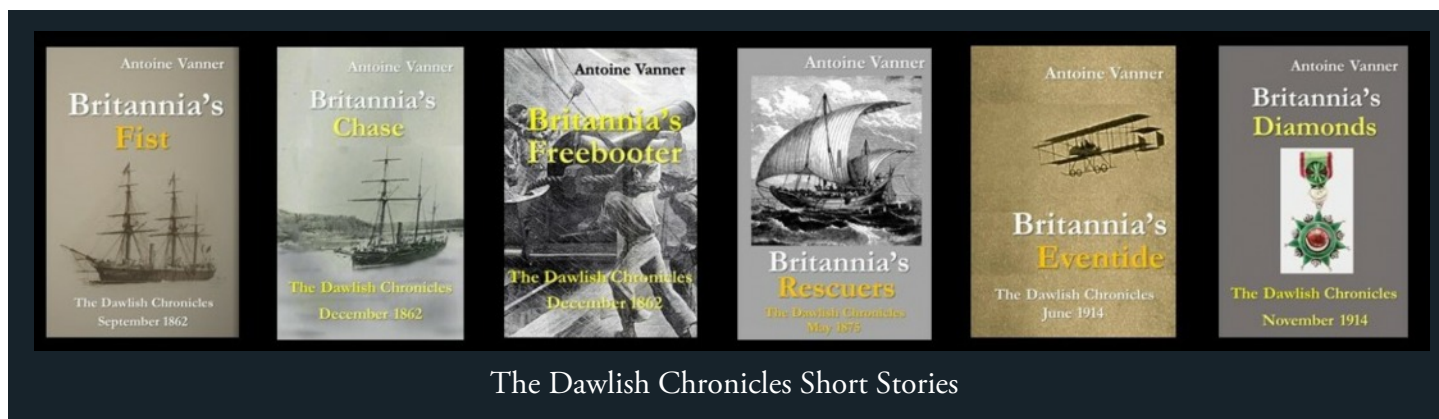
Other than shore bombardments in the Crimean War, 1854-56, and at Alexandria in 1882, the Royal Navy's main battle fleets fought no actions with hostile forces between the fall of Napoleon and the outbreak of World War One. The Navy was, however, almost continuously employed as what today we call "a rapid reaction force." Trouble often flared up in remote locations, to which it would be too slow and difficult to send Army units. The Navy was in a position to land ad-hoc forces made up of marines and "bluejackets" (sailors fighting as infantry). Most ships carried light field-guns, typically seven-, nine-, or twelve-pounders, designed to be broken down into their components (barrel, wheels, etc.) for transport and to be easily reassembled for action. The Navy was ahead of the British Army in use onshore of early semi-automatic machine guns: Gatlings, Nordenvelts and Gardners and, later, the fully automatic Maxim. The traditional "handiness" of British seamen made them valuable for bridging, construction of armored trains,

and transporting heavy guns over difficult terrain. Such naval brigades were deployed in locations as varied as China, Zululand, the Gold Coast, Nigeria, Egypt, and New Zealand, and sometimes as deep inland as Delhi, in Central India. Much of the action in *Britannia's Gamble* relates to the actual role played by Royal Navy units in the deserts of the Sudan in 1884-85.

*What's the most significant challenge in writing about Nicholas Dawlish's career?*

Dawlish was a man of his time – 1845 to 1918 – and as such, his views and attitudes are very different not just to my own, but to anybody's nowadays in the Western World. He's not a twenty-first-century man in fancy dress. He grew up in a Britain that had endless optimism and endless energy, which over the previous century and a half had moved from being a second-rate European power to being the dominant global one. He would have been confident that Britain had a civilizing mission in the world, even though how to execute that mission wasn't always clear. But by his middle years, doubts were creeping in about what had previously been certainties: Darwin and Herbert Spenser and Matthew Arnold being only a few of those challenging accepted wisdom. So Daw- ➤





lish would have been aware of the moral ambiguities involved in implementing British policy and would be faced with some tough choices. You get a sense of that in all books of the series, reflecting the fact that Victorians took ethics and religious belief – and disbelief – very seriously indeed.

But regardless of challenges, Dawlish would have two things, in addition to his splendid wife, to fall back on. The first would be the Royal Navy, with its pride in professionalism, the comfort of being part of a larger team, and reliance on the loyalty of all ranks to the death. And the second thing would be fast-evolving technology and the delight that it always provides to creative minds and the opportunities it offers for solving problems in ways never hitherto considered. Dawlish, and many like him, operated on a global scale, made possible by the steamships and telegraph cables that shrunk distance so rapidly in the second half of the 19th century.

*Do Nicholas Dawlish and Antoine Vanner help each other in creating the Chronicles?*

Well, Antoine Vanner was born a century later when the certainties Dawlish had taken for granted were gone, and the world had become smaller still. Britain was in decline after World War II, a drop of the spirit as well as a loss

of Empire and economic power, not recovering pride or assurance until the 1980s.

Although never a naval officer, Antoine Vanner shares with Nicholas Dawlish a love of technology and a challenge in “marginal areas”: parts of the world where the comfortable certainties of daily life in Europe, North America, and Australasia don't apply. These include the rule of law, respect for human rights, government accountability, provision of medical services, corruption, and social justice. My career in international business involved amazing contrasts between working in such marginal areas and functioning in more sophisticated environments: construction in a mangrove swamp or offshore on one extreme and negotiating at a ministerial level on the other.

And the bridge between Dawlish and Vanner was my interest in nineteenth-century history and technology, resulting in myself asking “What if...?” about certain times in history. So a Victorian Naval Officer, a job I'd have liked to have had myself had I been born a century earlier, gave me a peg on which to hang the “What if...?” stories. And these are the *Dawlish Chronicles*.

*What's the best volume with which to start?*

I suggest commencing with the latest,

*Britannia's Innocent*, when Dawlish is nineteen years old, and continuing to *Britannia's Wolf* when we meet him in his thirties. *Reach, Shark, Spartan, Amazon, Mission*, and *Gamble* follow. In two of these books, there are flashbacks to formative experiences in his early youth.

*You mentioned short stories too, but they don't seem to be available for sale.*

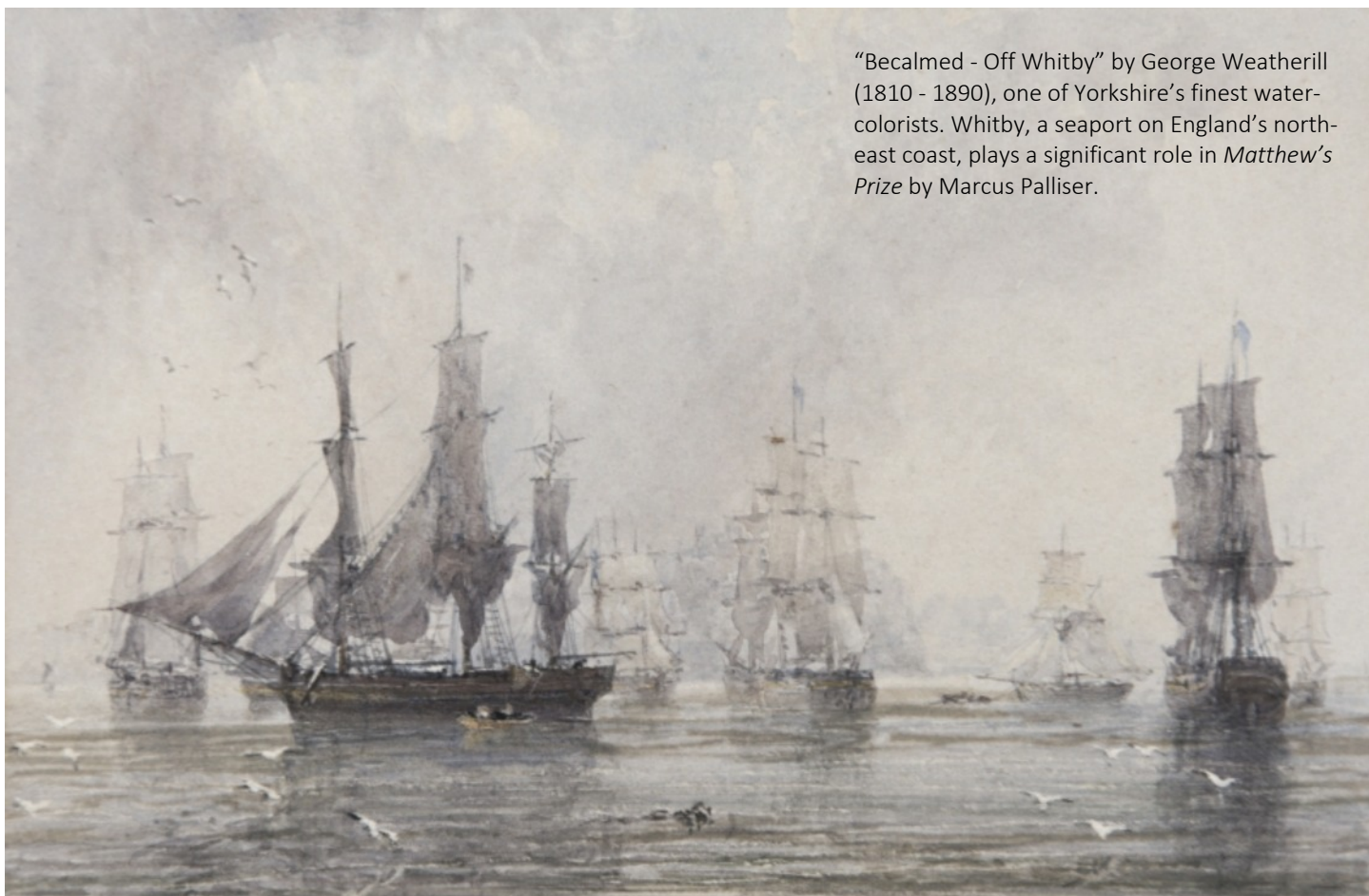
The short stories are sent free to anybody who joins my mailing list. They're formatted for reading on Kindles or tablets, and downloading is easy. They cover significant events which do not, however, provide enough material for a whole book, and they range in time from the 1860s to 1914. Sign-up details are available on my website.

*Have you a message for new readers?*

As it says on my website: “Welcome to the Adventure!” Dawlish's career still has a long way to go before he has his final appointment on the Zeebrugge Mole in April 1918. ■

Visit Antoine Vanner online at [www.dawlishchronicles.com](http://www.dawlishchronicles.com) and on Facebook.

"Becalmed - Off Whitby" by George Weatherill (1810 - 1890), one of Yorkshire's finest watercolorists. Whitby, a seaport on England's north-east coast, plays a significant role in *Matthew's Prize* by Marcus Palliser.



PD - Art

## Marcus Palliser

American-born author fulfills a passion for the sea

ON AN EARLY AUTUMN DAY IN 1999, I received an email from Douglas Reeman's editor at Random House in London, singing the praises of a new author in maritime fiction.

Within the week, a copy of *Matthew's Prize* by Marcus Palliser arrived in the post. Over several evenings by the fireside, I was captivated by the story of young Matthew Stalbone, a ship's apprentice sailing aboard a collier from Whitby on England's north-east coast.

The 18<sup>th</sup> century is about to dawn, with Britain on the cusp of Empire. The Dutch



Marcus Palliser

© J.J. Rowe

trade wars are at an end, and England's naval conflicts with France are on the horizon. Matthew longs for a life at sea, when his hopes and dreams are dashed on the Essex shoals.

A fresh voice in nautical fiction, Palliser's debut novel was a welcome addition to the genre. Two more titles soon followed: *Devil of a Fix* in 2000, and *To the Bitter End* in 2001.

In February 2000, I interviewed Palliser, who was living and writing in Truro, Cornwall, for *Quarterdeck's* predecessor, *Bowsprit*. Although born in Massachusetts, he and his brother, best-selling novelist ➤



Charles Palliser, moved to England with their mother early in life.

Marcus left southwest England to attend university and pursue a career in corporate communications, living in various locations around the world, but in the early 1990s he returned to Cornwall. Unattached, he indulged his passion for sailing and the sea, which eventually led to *Matthew's Prize*.

Late in 2002, while anticipating the fourth story in the series, news arrived that Marcus had died unexpectedly in Truro at age 53.

Nearly two decades later, the Palliser stories remain as engaging and fresh as a sea breeze. In June, McBooks press will publish *Matthew's Prize* in a new trade paperback edition. *Devil of a Fix* publishes in September 2020, and *To the Bitter End* in June 2021.

To introduce the author to a new generation of readers, we're publishing excerpts from my original interview with Marcus.

— George Jepson

*At what stage in your life did the sea and sailing become important?*

Late in life, I regret to say. It was 1986 before a mountain walking friend got me out on a yacht, which till then I thought were the preserve of the rich and snooty. How wrong, I was! After that one weekend I was hooked and signed on for a course of sailing lessons. I began reading about sailing, learning that people actually lived on boats and traveled the world having marvelous adventures, often for less than the cost of living ashore. Within eighteen months I had learnt the rudiments of sailing, mortgaged the house, bought a 34-foot footer, arranged an unpaid sabbatical from work and set off on what became a year-long, six-thousand-mile sojourn across the Bay of Biscay to Spain and Portugal, into

the Mediterranean and then on to the Canaries and back again to Falmouth. Many people said it was “easy” for a single person to arrange to do this, yet most of the long-term sailors I met were couples, and many had children aboard. One or two even had aunts and grannies. Jobs, mortgages, school . . . they overcame all these “impossible” obstacles and went off to enjoy the seaborne life.

*Did you grow up reading sea stories?*

Yes, but not just sea stories. Luckily,

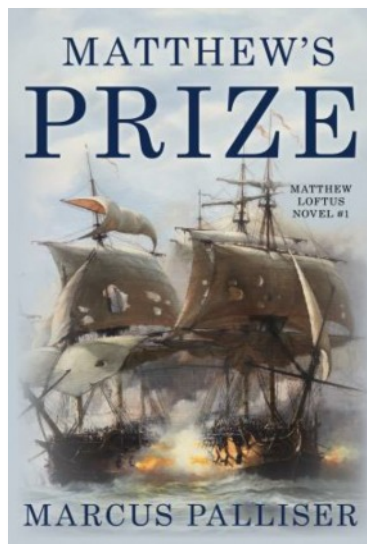
my family members were great readers, so I was also on Dickens, et al., from about eleven years old onwards. I had read most of Hornblower by fifteen, and remember loving Robert Louis Stevenson (*Treasure Island*, etc.) and R. M. Ballantyne (*Coral Island*, etc.) more than anything.

*Have other authors influenced you?*

Very much, both in making me want to write in the first place, as well as making me think harder about how I write. In general fiction, it's the great ►

## Matthew's Prize

BY MARCUS PALLISER



In the final decade of the 17<sup>th</sup> century in England, the Dutch trade wars are coming to a close, and the struggles with the French for naval supremacy are just starting. Meanwhile, young Matthew Loftus has no intention of spending his life underground in the coal mines of Whitby.

Living in a seaside town, he studies navigation and yearns to go to sea, following in his late father's footsteps. Matthew eventually leaves the port of Whitby, expecting a short voyage, but after he risks his life to save a man who fell overboard, he is rescued by a passing Dutch trader that turns out to be a pirate ship.

The Dutch vessel sweeps Mathew to the Spanish Main where he, surprisingly, plunges into a bloody life of pillage and prize money. Struggling to adhere to his code of honor yet seduced by life at sea, he carries in his heart the hope of reclaiming his rightful legacy. Furthermore, he longs to be worthy of the woman he loves and left behind in Whitby, who was on the brink of marriage to another man. Fierce sea battles, lawless privateers, naval skirmishes, and ruthless slave traders combine in this dramatic adventure.

McBooks Press, \$18.95

US Trade Paperback

JUNE

storytellers I like best. In specifically nautical writing, I love nonfiction adventures – true seafaring and mountaineering stories. Henry Dana's *Two Years Before the Mast* is profoundly wonderful, and writers like Slocum, Tilman, Villiers, and the rest are seminal. Today my favorite by a sea-mile is Jonathan Raban. Looking at mountaineering writers, I particularly admire Joe Simpson and Stephen Venables.

### *What else do you read for pleasure?*

All of the above, as well as literary fiction from Daniel Defoe to Cormac McCarthy. My preference is for strong narrative. One great present-day novelist is William A. Boyd (*A Good Man in Africa, An Ice-Cream War, Brazzaville Beach*, etc.) Then there's William Golding's wonderful sea trilogy, *Rites of Passage*. For work, as it were, naturally I read loads of history.

### *How did you select Cornwall as your home base?*

I've lived in the US, Switzerland, Spain, and the West Indies, but for me Britain's got it all – such varied landscapes, civilized traditions, a half-intelligent media, It's more amenable in every way, simple as that.

I was born in Massachusetts, but my mother came to live in Cornwall when I was ten, so I grew up here until university. About six years ago, when I was forty-four and between boats, houses, jobs, and everything else, my roots drew me back and I bought a small house here. Still footloose, I promptly rented it out and spent another three years sailing my current boat, a thirty-two-foot long-keeler.

I achieved an ambition by crossing the Atlantic alone, taking twenty-five days from Gran Canaria to Barbados, an average speed of about five miles an hour, even slower than an early eigh-

teenth-century warship. Three years ago, I settled back in Cornwall, though my boat remains in the Caribbean, which is idiotic. She should be here, but since beginning my writing career I simply haven't found the time to sail her back.

Cornwall is a long, narrow peninsula jutting into the ocean, with a rugged northern coast battered by Atlantic gales, and a softer southern shore indented with fishing villages, coves, and beaches. All two-hundred and fifty miles of coast have a public footpath, and in a short ramble you are likely to walk over three-hundred million years of geology and ten-thousand years of human history.

Cornwall lived for centuries on farming, mining of tin and copper, and vast seasonal harvests of pilchards and herring. Even today, the fishing industry is important, though stocks are disappearing. Two Looe (a small coastal town on the English Channel) luggers were once named after my grandmother Eileen and her sister Kathleen, and at least one still exists.

### *What was the genesis of Matthew's Prize?*

I settled on a seafaring tale, because of my sailing, my love of sea stories, and also, frankly, because there is a market for it. No one but a blockhead writes except for money, said Dr. Johnson. What's the point of your novel lying unread in a bottom drawer? The next decision was historical period. The Napoleonic / Nelsonian era is so well trodden I set my story about a century earlier, when piracy was rife, colonialism in its infancy, the Dutch rule of the seas only recently ended and England's naval supremacy very much a thing of the future. It was also when France and England embarked on their century-long rivalry for sea power.

Because most series writers' heroes

are in the military, whether army or navy, I chose an outsider. In the military, your hero fights for his nation, right or wrong, but I thought it would be more interesting for Matthew to make up his own mind about wars, colonialism and slavery.

The reader can either go along with him or disagree. Matthew falls amongst pirates, as it were, so readers get a different viewpoint from that of an officer high on a warship's quarterdeck. I also gave him an interest in the science of navigation, which brings him to the privateer captain's attention in *Matthew's Prize*.

The theme continues in the second book, a *Devil of a Fix*, when various elements want to get their hands on a secret almanac Matthews possesses, containing observations for the Lunar Distance Method.

In the third book, *To the Bitter End*, there's an important role for chart work and surveying, at which Matthew excels. This was a time when traditional navigation (chiefly dead reckoning and latitude sailing) held sway with many sailors, and it was widely believed that the longitude problem could never be solved.

### *Did you begin writing Matthew's Prize with the idea that it would be the first book in a series?*

Well, I sincerely hoped it would become a series! Even so, each book stands entirely on its own.

### *Can you imagine a way of life that would better suit you than writing, sailing, and living near the sea in beautiful Cornwall?*

Not really, except that where many people dream of winning a lottery and having one house here and another there and a third somewhere else, with me it's boats. One boat is simply not enough. ■



*Kathy and Julian Stockwin work closely together as a creative team producing the much-loved Thomas Kydd naval adventure titles. A former magazine editor-in-chief, Kathy reflects on the autobiographical elements of the books in this sixth installment in a series of special features for Quarterdeck.*



## Where Life MEETS ART

BY KATHY STOCKWIN

**I**N KYDD, the young wigmaker from Guildford Thomas Kydd, is cruelly press-ganged and finds himself lost in the alien environment of a Royal Navy man-o'-war, sailing off to fight the French. Yet there comes a moment when he discovers his true vocation:

*Still befuddled with sleep, he emerged up the main companionway to the open deck. As soon as his head topped the coaming he was into the full force of the gale, a turbulent streaming wind hammering and lashing at him, wild and fearful. In the darkness he could see by the light of the binnacle that now there were four men on the wheel, leaning into it hard, grappling, straining. Spray whipped past in spiteful blasts as he staggered in the hammering wind to the binnacle, where an unknown figure shouted in*

*his ear, jabbing with a finger.*

*He was expected on the main deck, down in the waist. He turned to go back down the ladder, but something made him pause. The length of deck forward was barely visible, but there was a furious grandeur about it, seeing and feeling the entire length of deck rise and fall, an eager and responsive coupling of the ship with the wildness of the sea. A mounting exhilaration replaced Kydd's fear, and instead of returning down the companionway he staggered forward along the side of the deck, holding on tightly as he went. It was impossible to see out to the sea itself, but waves*

*smashed on the ship's bluff sides and he tasted the salt spray on his lips.*

*Looking up he saw that only some of the sails were still in place, each pale and taut as a board. A strident chorus of thrums and musical harping in the rigging gave a dramatic urgency to the scene. He hung on at the mainchains, reluctant to leave.*

*Something in him reached out and was answered. A fierce joy touched his soul. It didn't matter if the situation was perilous or the ship doomed. From that moment on Kydd knew in his heart that he would be a sea-man. He clung to this revelation, taking* ➤





Julian Stockwin, who is never far from the sea, overlooks Plymouth Sound in Devon, with Drake's Island in the background.

*the bursts of spray in his teeth and grinning madly. The bows would rise, then smash down, flinging the seas apart, shuddering and racking, then gloriously rise again.*

Readers often wonder how much of an author is in his or her writing. Of course, this depends on the genre and personal circumstances. Julian calls on a great deal of his some three-score-and-ten life experiences to create the authentic and vivid eighteenth-century world, which appeals to so many readers.

### *Formative Years*

Julian wanted to go to sea ever since he

way a boy. His mother used to recount that as a toddler, he went up to sailors on the street, and on one occasion dragged home a dead sea bird, because it smelled of the sea. His uncle Tom Clay, a seaman in square-rigged ships, who sailed around Cape Horn in *Cutty Sark*, took him over his ship and was a great influence on him. But no one else in his family had any connection with the sea; his father served in the army during the Second World War. As a young boy, Julian read everything about the sea, and remembers being especially terrified by a description of a great storm, but longed to experience a real one!

Attending a decent grammar school was wasted on him; on the school bus, he'd gaze out across the Channel at the

low, grey shapes slipping away over the horizon, taking his imagination with them. In the hope of having the nonsense knocked out of him, his father sent him at the tender age of fourteen to Indefatigable, a tough sea-training school. This only strengthened his resolve for a life at sea, and he joined the Royal Navy at fifteen. His family emigrated Down Under, and he transferred to the Royal Australian Navy.

### *Naval Service*

Over the years, Julian has personally witnessed both the majesty and grandeur of the ocean and the darker side of Neptune's Realm. He served in the Vietnam War and was present at ➤



the tragic collision between HMAS *Voyager* and HMAS *Melbourne*, in which 82 souls lost their lives. Uniquely for a maritime novelist, he has been both a seaman before the mast and an officer on the quarterdeck.

## A “Chippy”

On visits to maritime museums around the world, we often linger at exhibits of shipwrights’ tools where Julian, who qualified as a naval shipwright, inspects various implements of the chippys’ trade. I can now readily identify an adze, an augur, or a caulking maul. And if we could undertake time travel, no doubt Julian would opt to be transported back to an eighteenth-century wooden warship and be quite at home both on the quarterdeck and in the carpenter’s store.

## Academia

After leaving the navy, Julian enrolled for a university degree, and two subjects, in particular – psychology and history – would later be deployed in his books in his portrayal of life aboard and ashore. Although he writes about the Georgian period, in many ways different to modern times, the psychological underpinnings of human motivations and relationships have many constants.

## Other Influences

As a writer, Julian draws inspiration from external things, too: his collection of eighteenth-century sea artifacts, contemporary music, diaries and recollections from those serving at the time, and ships’ logs. And he acknowledges his debt to artists such as Dominic Serres, Nicholas Pocock, and J. M. W. Turner, who eloquently visually capture the many moods of the sea and

the majesty of a ship under sail.

## Kydd and Renzi

Nicholas Renzi and Thomas Kydd, his two central characters, form a very close bond. Kydd is the wigmaker who eventually achieves command of his own ship (and will go on to become an admiral). Renzi is the aristocratic, highly intelligent individual who sentenced himself to a period at sea on the lower deck to make amends for what he saw as a family sin.

I have always seen aspects of both Kydd and Renzi in Julian’s character. Kydd is a man of action who leads from the front, who is “true north.” Renzi is a thinker with a deep appreciation of culture and the legacy of history, with a capacity for involvement in danger and the dark arts for a cause in which he strongly believes.

Re-reading reviews of Julian’s books ahead of writing this piece I came across these comments in the American newspaper, *The Toledo Blade*:

*You won’t fall asleep reading a Kydd title. Action and adventure is one thing, but all Stockwin’s books have a genuinely authentic feel to them, and there’s a reason for that. Julian Stockwin is a man of the modern era – but he really did go off to sea as a boy.*

*Not impressed into service, as was the fictional Kydd. Instead, he joined Her Majesty’s Navy. Stockwin seems to have been born with saltwater on his veins. He*



Photo courtesy of Julian and Kathy Stockwin.

Julian and Kathy Stockwin pause outside Buckingham Palace in 1988, after he received the prestigious MBE (Member of the Order of the British Empire) from Queen Elizabeth II.

*went off to sea-training school at 14 and joined the Royal Navy at 15.*

*Later, he transferred to the Royal Australian Navy and became a petty officer. But he was a great deal more complex than your average swabbie; he later dove into university studies and did post-graduate work in psychology; became a software and computer manufacturer designer, joined the Royal Naval Reserve, became a lieutenant commander, and was awarded the prestigious MBE – Member of the Order of the British Empire.*

*Having accomplished all that, what else was left but to become a novelist? ■*

Visit the Stockwins online at  
[www.julianstockwin.com](http://www.julianstockwin.com)

HMS *Victory* (center right) battered the French 80-gun ship of the line *Bucentaure* with carronades at the Battle of Trafalgar on 21 October 1805.



Detail from "The Battle of Trafalgar" by English artist Clarkson Frederick Stanfield (PD - Art).

# The "Smasher"

BY PHILIP K. ALLAN

**D**URING THE AGE OF SAIL, the design of naval cannon hardly changed for the best part of three centuries. Improvements over time included more reliable metal casting and better gun tackles, but the basic arrangement barely altered from the sixteenth to the end of the eighteenth century. Warships carried long, muzzle-loading guns mounted on movable carriages.

If gunners from Henry VIII's flagship *Mary Rose*, which sank in 1545, were transported two and a half centuries through time to the lower deck of HMS *Victory* at Trafalgar in 1805, they would have had little difficulty recognizing the weapons around them. But they might have been puzzled by the carronades mounted on the first rate's upper deck.



Philip K. Allan

The carronade – a short, smooth-bore, cast iron cannon – was the invention of the British General Robert Melville. He was an artillery officer with a keen interest in scientific improvement. In the 1750s, he investigated how merchant ships might protect themselves from attack by privateers or pirates trying to board them.

The standard ship's cannon was a large piece of ordnance weighing several tons. It required a substantial crew to operate, plenty of room for its powerful recoil, and strong timbers to absorb the stress when it fired. Unfortunately, none of this fitted the majority of civilian ships. Melville decided to completely redesign the naval cannon so that it could operate within these constraints.

His first step was to reduce the weight of the gun by giving it a much shorter barrel, ➤



drastically decreasing its range. Since he saw its primary use as helping a merchant vessel battle an attacker trying to come alongside, this was a minor disadvantage. He soon realized that giving his weapon a short barrel produced other benefits. It only needed to throw its ball a limited distance, requiring a third of the usual powder charge of a conventional cannon for the same size ball. Using a smaller charge meant that the barrel needed much thinner walls to contain the blast, saving yet more weight.

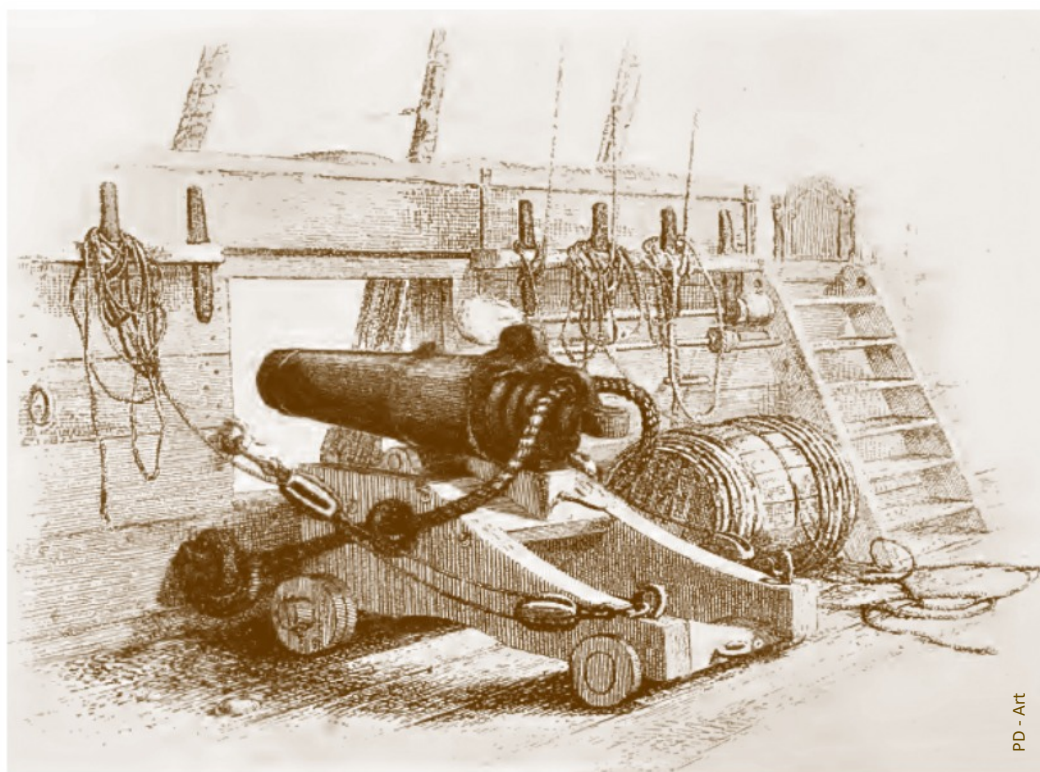
Mounting carronades on a slide, instead of a traditional gun carriage, took up much less space in action. A gun crew ran out a cannon after loading by heaving it on its wheeled carriage across the deck. A carronade's lighter barrel on a slide could be run out by fewer sailors.

Melville had the first of his new weapons cast at the Carron Company ironworks in Falkirk, Scotland. The firm was managed by Charles Gascoigne, who has also been credited with development of the carronade.

Melville liked to refer to his invention as a “smasher,” but it became known as a “carronade,” named for the foundry that built them. Their first demonstrations were successful, and merchantmen operating in waters with a high likelihood of a pirate attack, such as in the Indian Ocean, purchased them.

The weapon's popularity increased and drew notice from the Admiralty during the American War of Independence when an over-stretched Royal Navy struggled to protect Britain's extensive commerce from American and French privateers.

At the heart of the Navy's interest in the carronade was a paradox between how traditional naval cannons were designed and deployed in practice. A ship's gun, with a long barrel, could



A 12-pounder carronade aboard a brig-o'-war

*“After initial trials, the Royal Navy began to deploy carronades on the upper decks of their warships . . .”*

throw a ball with reasonable accuracy for up to a mile. But captains rarely employed this capability.

The Royal Navy's preferred tactic in battle was to engage an opponent at close range, firing quickly into their hull and knocking the fight out of them.

In these circumstances, how rapidly a ship could fire its guns and the weight of its projectiles was more critical than the need to fire accurately at long range. Carronades scored well in both regards. Not only could they be fired more quickly, but a carronade of the same overall weight as a cannon could fire a much bigger ball.

After initial trials, the Royal Navy

began to deploy carronades on the upper decks of their warships to replace the small cannons that were traditionally mounted there. Aboard the 38-gun frigate *Diana* nine-pounder guns on her quarterdeck and forecastle were replaced by 32-pounder carronades.

Early encounters with the enemy quickly showed the benefit of such armament, and by 1800, apart from specialist long-range chase guns, most upper deck cannons had been similarly changed.

One of the French Navy's earliest exposures to the new weapons came in September 1782 against HMS *Rainbow*, a frigate equipped entirely with carronades as an experiment under ➤

Captain Trollope. The aging ship carried massive 68-pounder carronades on her main deck, replacing 18-pounder long guns, creating a four-fold-heavier broadside than might be expected of a ship that size.

Trollope was operating off the coast of Brittany when he came across a small French convoy under the protection of the frigate *Hébé*. The two frigates spent over an hour maneuvering, as *Rainbow* attempted to close the range before opening fire. When she finally succeeded, a single broadside brought down the *Hébé*'s foremast and wounded her captain. He surrendered, fearing the next barrage would sink his ship.

After several such encounters with carronade-armed Royal Navy ships, other navies began to develop their versions of the new weapon, which took time.

During the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, these guns were more prevalent in the Royal Navy. Carronades gave the British a distinct advantage over their opponents in close-range encounters. When HMS *Victory* passed astern of *Bucentaure* at Trafalgar, she fired 68-pounder carronades on her forecastle, unleashing canister rounds containing over five hundred musket balls along the enemy's gun deck. Smashers, indeed!

Although carronades could be highly

Photo by Brian Jenkins (CC BY-SA 3.0).



A 68-pounder carronade aboard HMS *Victory* at the Portsmouth Historic Dockyard in Hampshire, England.

effective, their short range meant that ships overly reliant on the weapon could be defeated by cannon-armed opponents who kept their distance. Such was the fate suffered by the US Navy frigate *Essex* during the war of 1812.

She was almost exclusively armed with 32-pounder carronades and sent into the Pacific to attack British whalers operating there. In 1813, she fought the Royal Navy frigate *Phoebe*. Both ships were of almost identical size, and both had a smaller sloop to support them. The decisive difference was that the *Phoebe* had a main armament of 18-pounder cannons and skillfully kept her distance, battering *Essex* until she surrendered.

Despite their effectiveness, the age of the carronade was short-lived. The quickening pace of naval gunnery development rendered the weapon and the smooth-bore cannon redundant. In the 1820s, the French

artillery General Henri-Joseph Paixhans developed an exploding shell for warships, replacing the solid cannonball. The shell's fuse lit when a gun fired, and the projectile exploded soon after it penetrated its target.

The French Navy asked the general to demonstrate his invention in 1824. A redundant two-decked warship, the *Pacificateur*, served as a target. After a brief bombardment, the ship broke up and sank, shocking the watching naval officers.

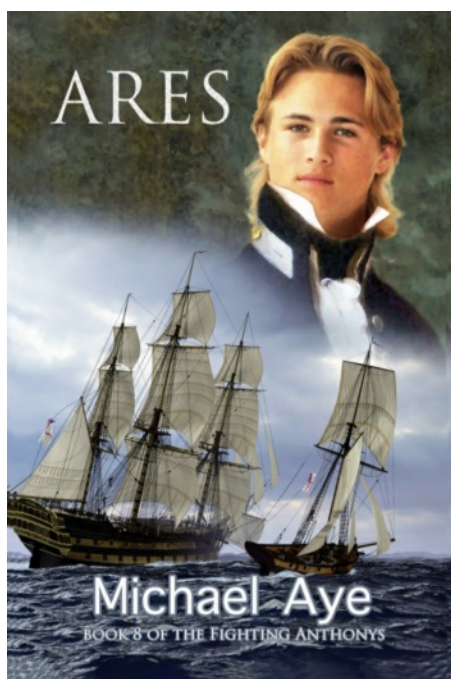
Subsequently, Paixhans worked with American Colonel George Bomford to design a gun to fire his projectile. The French, US, British, and Russian navies quickly adopted the new weapons for decades to come. ■

*Philip K. Allan is the author of the Alexander Clay naval adventure novels.*

Visit Philip K. Allan online at:  
[www.philipkallan.com](http://www.philipkallan.com).







## *Ares*

BY MICHAEL AYE

Boson Books, US Trade Paperback

\$20.99

AVAILABLE NOW

An ill wind sweeps across the Caribbean in *Ares*, the eighth chapter in Michael Aye's Fighting Anthony naval adventure series, with Britain facing increasingly daunting odds in the War for Independence with her American cousins.

As 1781 dawns, French, Spanish, and Dutch naval forces, who have sided with the Colonies, are at large in the islands, along with privateers, threaten His Majesty's Royal Navy.

Aye's breezy, character-driven yarn splices intrigue ashore with action at sea, from the dramatic end to a hanging to romantic interludes to thundering ship-to-ship battles.

Captain Gabriel Anthony, based at English Harbour, Antigua, commands HMS *Ares*, a 44-gun frigate, in his brother Vice-Admiral Lord Gilbert Anthony's squadron.

Although Gabe harbors doubts about Britain's prospects in the war, a

thought that privately gladdens his American-born wife, Faith, his duty to King and Country, and the officers and Jack Tars aboard *Ares*, remains steadfast.

When HMS *Storm*, a 38-gun frigate, drops anchor at English Harbour, Captain Joseph Galicky delivers details of Admiral George Rodney's "bloodless victory" over the Dutch-held island of St Eustatius.

Rodney's incursion draws piercing criticism within the Admiralty and halls of Parliament when he sends a convoy to England with plunder from the island, rather than sailing to the Colonies with his fleet to support the British cause.

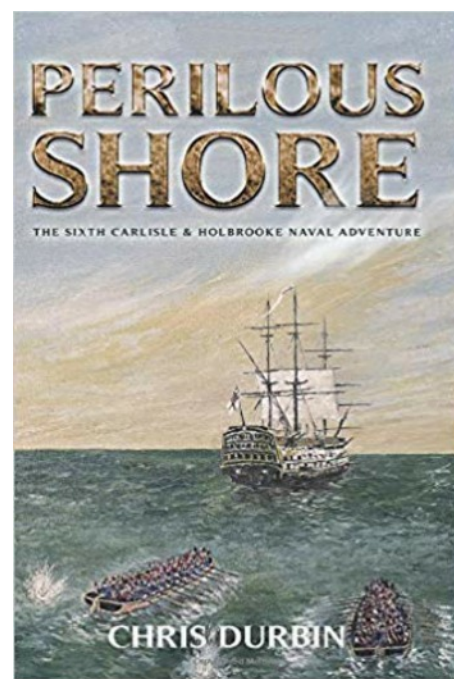
This latest entry in the Anthonys saga stretches from English Harbour to Spithead off Portsmouth in England to Gibraltar and back again across the Atlantic.

Gabe Anthony lives up to his family's moniker, sailing into harm's way against a two-deck Spanish man-of-war in the Caribbean, defending the British sloop *Pickle* being chased by a Dutch brig and French corvette, and protecting a merchant convoy en route to Gibraltar.

Carrying two Foreign Office agents to England, *Ares* anchors off Portsmouth, allowing Gabe and Faith a few days respite from the turmoil in the Caribbean – or so they believe.

On a visit to Deal, a band of brigands falls upon Gabe along a narrow lane, with one waving a blade and declaring, "Once 'e's down, it's 'is 'eart I'm after . . ." In an instant, a young boy leaps into the fray to thwart the attack and is gravely wounded, leading to an astonishing discovery.

*Ares*, like preceding titles in the Fighting Anthonys saga, is a scintillating sea story infused with the scent of powder smoke and tarred rigging, and chock full of memorable characters.



## *Perilous Shore*

BY CHRIS DURBIN

Old Salt Press, US Trade Paperback

\$14.28

AVAILABLE NOW

Commander George Holbrooke faces several weeks ashore in early spring 1758, as His Britannic Majesty's sloop-of-war *Kestrel* undergoes repairs and refitting in the Royal Dockyard at Portsmouth.

While his ship rests in drydock, Holbrooke's thoughts turn to the lovely Ann Featherstone, a winsome young lady in Wickham, a small village in Hampshire near Portsmouth.

Durbin's splendid Seven Years' War narratives – which now number six with *Perilous Shore* – dramatize a period in world history, specifically the hostilities at sea, little written about in maritime fiction.

The conflict – known as the French and Indian War in North America – is moving into its third year. At the Admiralty in London, First Lord George Anson grapples with William Pitt the Elder's plan to carry out *descents* – or assaults – on French ports. ➤

During an earlier attempt to land British soldiers at Rochefort, ship's boats built primarily for their seaworthiness proved inadequate for ferrying an army ashore, and the operation failed much to Pitt's dismay.

Summoned aboard the 64-gun *Essex* anchored in the Solent, Commander Holbrooke meets youthful Commodore Richard Howe, who explains the Prime Minister's strategy: "Put the army ashore, take a port, hold it or sack it and re-embark."

In the wake of the debacle at Rochefort, the Admiralty orders the Navy Board to commission a fleet of custom flat-bottom boats to accommodate half a company each of soldiers during amphibious landings.

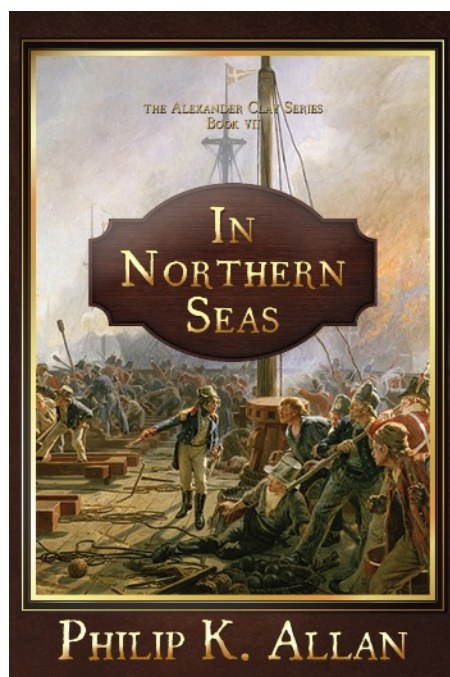
Howe directs Holbrooke to oversee tests of the new landing craft and then orders the young officer to sail for Saint-Malo and Cancale Bay along the French coast to locate fortifications and a suitable landing site.

With Ann Featherstone on his mind, Holbrooke believes that he must reach post-captain if he is to win her hand. The current amphibious operations offer an opportunity to prove himself in the eyes of his superiors.

His relationship with David Chalmers, chaplain aboard *Kestrel*, is especially stirring. Although commanding a warship, the young officer is naïve in matters of the heart and looks to his friend for guidance.

When a landing on a French beach goes wrong, Holbrooke is surrounded by "white-clad figures thrusting their glinting bayonets toward him." And suddenly his future is in doubt.

Durbin enriches his rousing sea stories with exacting attention to historical details while drawing on his career as an officer in the Royal Navy. The Carlisle & Holbrooke naval adventures continue to cast a light upon a momentous era in British naval history.



## *In Northern Seas*

BY PHILIP K. ALLAN

Penmore Press, US Trade Paperback

\$19.50

AVAILABLE NOW

In the wake of a court-martial acquittal after the loss of His Majesty's ship *Titan*, Captain Alexander Clay receives a new command, the 38-gun frigate *Griffin*, during a meeting with Earl Spencer, First Lord of the Admiralty.

By early 1801, Napoleon Bonaparte, frustrated by France's inability to "defeat these damned English" after nearly eight years of war, seeks to "ingratiate himself with the Russians," to sever British trade with the Baltic and Scandinavian states.

Thwarted by England's naval blockade, the French are unable to acquire necessary naval stores – timber, tar, hemp, and canvas – for its ships. Tsar Paul, once a British ally, formed the second Northern League of Armed Neutrality with Denmark, Sweden, and Prussia.

The compact threatened the supply of timber and naval stores necessary for

the Royal Navy to maintain its blockade off France. "No Baltic trade means no ships in the Channel to keep the Frogs on their side of it," says Spencer. "If it means war, then so be it."

*Griffin*, under Admiralty orders, carries British diplomat Nicholas Vansittart north to Copenhagen where he hopes to meet with the Danish Crown Prince to negotiate a peaceful agreement over the League, averting hostilities in the region.

A Royal Navy fleet commanded by Sir Hyde Parker and Horatio Nelson sets sail for Denmark from Yarmouth to enforce the British position should diplomacy not succeed.

Arriving in the neutral port bristling with armed warships and evidence of preparations for war, *Griffin*, much to Clay's surprise, is assigned a mooring next to the French 44-gun frigate *Liberté* unsettling Clay and the ship's company.

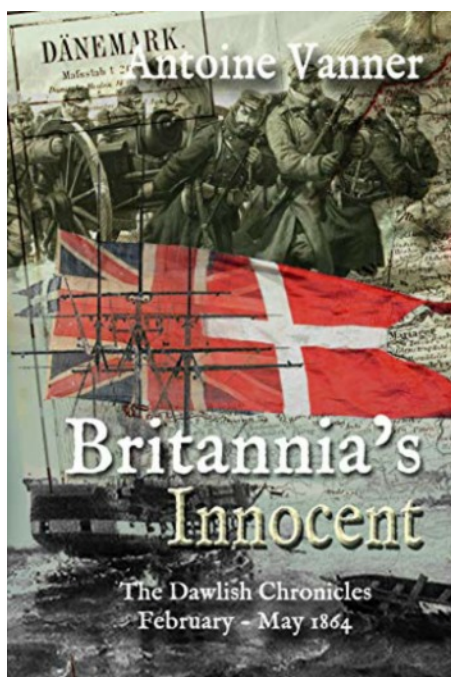
The Griffins at once become entangled in a deadly game of espionage and intrigue that reaches from the Danish capital's cobblestone streets across the Baltic to the Russian court in St. Petersburg.

When negotiations with the Danes flounder, Vansittart insists that the solution to the "sorry mess" in the Baltic is to convince Tsar Paul to leave the League of Armed Neutrality, with the expectation that the other members will follow his lead.

Clay drives *Griffin* through icy seas to the Russian shore, stalked by *Liberté*, which is intent on foiling the British mission. Arriving in the Russian capital, Vansittart and Clay find themselves caught up in a murderous plot in the corridors of the Palace of Mikhailovsky.

*In Northern Seas* is another brisk naval thriller from the pen of Philip Allan, blending vivid historical episodes with a provocative narrative. ➤





## *Britannia's Innocent*

BY ANTOINE VANNER

Old Salt Press, US Trade Paperback  
\$12.49

AVAILABLE NOW

Nicholas Dawlish, a midshipman in Her Britannic Majesty's Royal Navy and barely turned eighteen, returns home to Shrewsbury from service in the West Indies, anticipating confirmation of his promotion to sub-lieutenant.

It's 1864. Across the Atlantic, America is alight with the war between the North and South, while in Northern Europe hostilities rage between Denmark and military powers Austria and Prussia during the Second Schleswig War fought for control of the duchies of Schleswig, Holstein, and Lauenburg.

After a letter arrives from Albemarle FitzBaldwin, a fellow midshipman but hardly a close friend, Dawlish accepts an invitation to visit the FitzBaldwin estate for a fortnight near Taunton.

Over several days, FitzBaldwin's father, a captain in the Royal Navy on half-pay, receives several strange friends, including a British army colo-

nel, a man involved with the court, and a close-mouthed American with ties to his country's navy.

At breakfast one morning, Captain FitzBaldwin begs a word with Dawlish in his study and persuades him to join a band of British volunteers to fight for Denmark aboard a new steam-driven ironclad ship with a brig sailing rig.

The *Galveston*, ultimately bound for the Confederate Navy in America to break the Union blockade, is on loan to the Danish Navy for three months between February and May. Commanded by an ex-officer of the United States Navy, she is "crewed by British seamen lured by high pay."

Appointed gunnery officer, Dawlish realizes that this is "a sudden moment of self-realisation . . . the transition from youth to manhood, that would set the course of his life, and maybe death."

Sailing as the *Odin* – a false name while in Danish service – the ironclad steams into the North Sea, the mission, according to Captain FitzBaldwin, is to seek and destroy merchant trading vessels "to put the fear of God in them" and "Keep the rascals in port . . ."

*Britannia's Innocent* is a masterful chronicle of the Victorian period told by Antoine Vanner in vivid, sobering terms. Dawlish realizes his naiveté when confronted with war's raw reality. With *Odin* briefly crippled, he is among volunteers going ashore to fight in the redoubts with a company of British ex-regulars.

All the while, the Union steam frigate USS *Conewago* lies outside Denmark's territorial waters, waiting to intercept CSS *Galveston* before the ironclad raider can cross the Atlantic and enter the American Civil War.

This is a brilliant prequel to Vanner's *Dawlish Chronicles*, which bring *Britannia's* Victorian Navy to life. ■

– George Jepson



## ONLINE BOOK SOURCES

McBooks Press  
[www.mcbooks.com](http://www.mcbooks.com)

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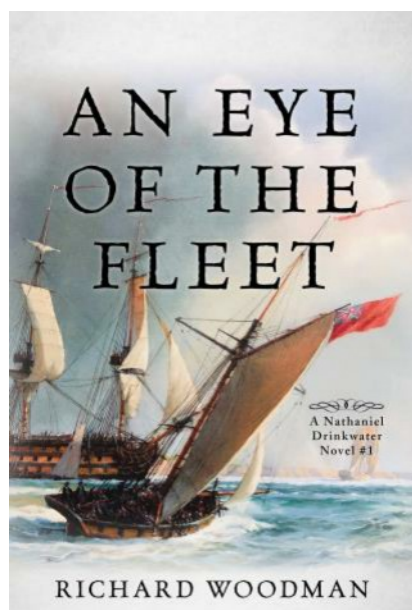
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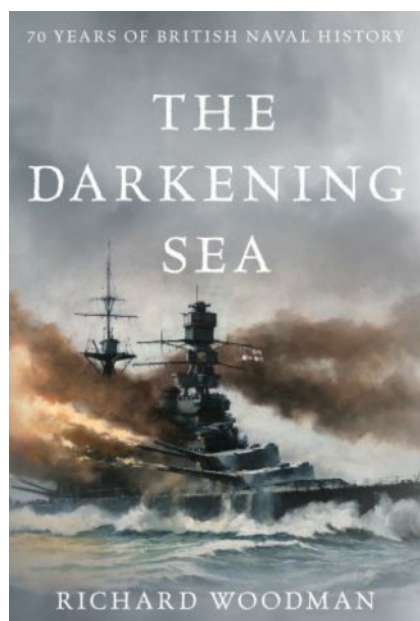


## *An Eye of the Fleet*

BY RICHARD WOODMAN

Nathaniel Drinkwater's life at sea begins with HMS *Cyclops*' capture of the *Santa Teresa* during Admiral Rodney's dramatic Moonlight Battle of 1780. Subsequently, Drinkwater's courage and initiative are put to the test as *Cyclops* pursues American privateers threatening British trade and is later dispatched to the swamps of South Carolina, where many lives are lost both at sea and ashore. Gradually, Drinkwater matures into a capable and self-assured sailor. As he contends with enemy forces, the tyranny of the *Cyclops*' midshipman and the stark contrast between the comfort of home life and the brutality of naval service, he finds strength and sustenance in the love of his beloved Elizabeth.

McBooks Press, \$16.95  
US Trade Paperback  
MAY

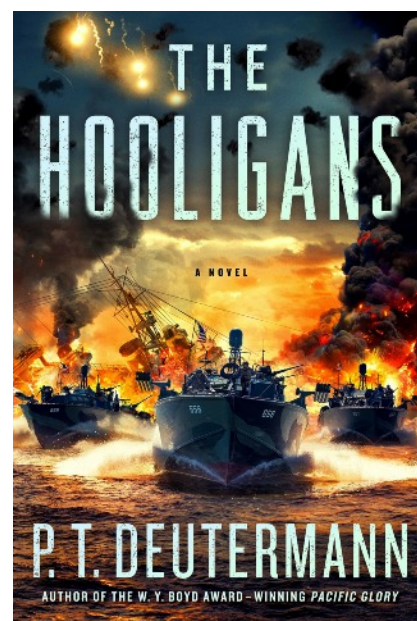


## *The Darkening Sea*

BY RICHARD WOODMAN

This modern seafaring epic follows the Martin family through nearly 70 years of British maritime history, from the clash of mighty battleships at Jutland in 1916 to the cold splendor of the present-day Arctic. James and John Martin see varied action from service on battle-cruisers in the North Sea during the Great War to cargo-passenger ships on the exploited coast of 1930s China; from the war of corvette vs. U-boats in the North Atlantic to the long slog of Pacific Fleet protection in a World War II destroyer. Along the way, they find love, disillusion, and fulfillment. The women in their lives – sisters, wives, and lovers – also have their ambitions in an ever-changing world.

McBooks Press, \$18.95  
US Trade Paperback  
MAY



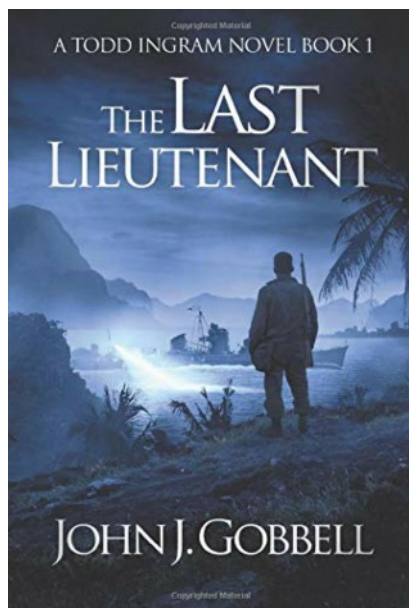
## *The Hooligans*

BY P. T. DEUTERMANN

Loosely-organized swift PT (patrol torpedo) boat squadrons were dubbed “devil boats” for their daring raids against Japanese ships during World War II in the Pacific. After the Pearl Harbor attack, young surgical resident Lincoln Anderson enlists in the Navy medical corps. His first deployment comes in August 1942 at Guadalcanal, triaging hundreds of casualties under relentless Japanese air and land attacks. But with the navy short of doctors, Anderson is transferred to a PT boat squadron. From Guadalcanal to the climactic, tide-turning battle of Leyte Gulf, Anderson and his boat's crew confront submarines and surface ships, are attacked by the dreaded Kawanishi flying boats, and hunted by destroyers.

St. Martin's Press, \$27.99  
US Hardback  
JUNE



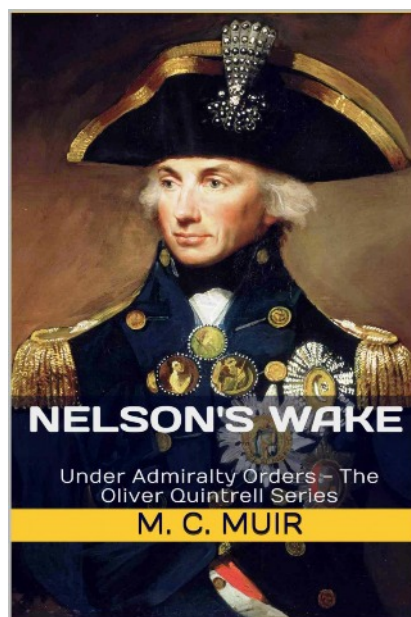


## *The Last Lieutenant*

BY JOHN J. GOBBELL

In the spring of 1942, Bataan falls to the Japanese. The Philippines seem sure to follow. When an American general surrenders the country's last outpost in the West Pacific, US Navy Lieutenant Todd Ingram refuses to give up the fight. Taking to sea under cover of darkness, he leads his ten-man crew to accomplish the impossible: slip through Japanese naval blockades, travel 1900 miles to Australia, and single-handedly stop a ruthless Nazi spy. There are no reinforcements. There will be no rescue. And if Ingram fails, he won't just lose his crew; he'll lose the woman he loves. This is a heart-pounding thriller brimming with raw courage, non-stop action, and an unforgettable villain.

Severn River Publishing, \$19.99  
US Trade Paperback  
**AVAILABLE NOW**

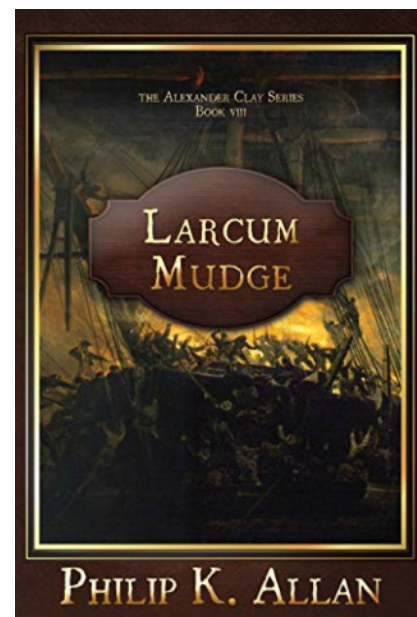


## *Nelson's Wake*

BY M. C. MUIR

On 21 October 1805, the British fleet under the command of Admiral Lord Nelson defeats the French and Spanish fleets at the Battle of Trafalgar. But at an enormous cost – Nelson's death. After witnessing HMS *Victory* limp back to Portsmouth, Oliver Quintrell joins other officers and men mourning the loss of Britain's greatest seaman. The funeral at St Paul's Cathedral is an awful spectacle. But the ramifications of the battle are far reaching and many post captains find themselves without a commission. Surprised by his good fortune, Captain Quintrell is granted a command, a 50-gun ship anchored in Cork Harbour. Within days he departs Ireland and heads south but without the support of his regular crew.

Amazon.com Services, \$4.99  
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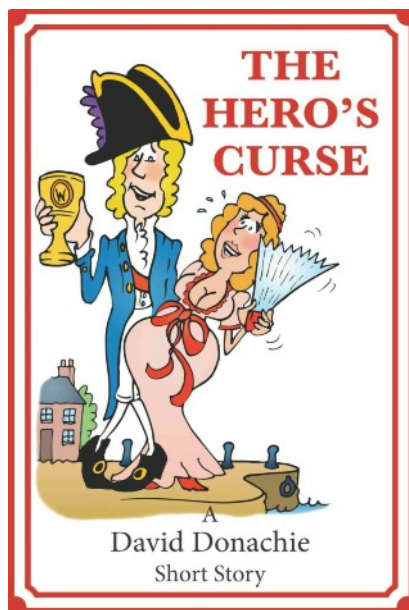


## *Larcum Mudge*

BY PHILIP K. ALLAN

On a hot night in the Caribbean, a lone Royal Navy ship commanded by a sadistic captain, succumbs to bloody mutiny. With the Peace of Amiens imminent, Captain Alexander Clay and the crew of HMS *Griffin* are sent to track down and recapture the rebel ship. But when they arrive in the Leeward Islands, they find that much more is at stake. Smuggling and corruption seem to be rife in those sunlit waters, while ghosts from the past stir in the shadows. The discovery of a hidden French ship of the line, threatening to cut loose and devastate British commerce, will test Clay and his crew to the limit. And who is Larcum Mudge, the mysterious new recruit who has joined the crew of the *Griffin*?

Independent, \$26.99  
US Trade Paperback  
**AVAILABLE NOW**



## *The Hero's Curse*

BY DAVID DONACHIE

1793 . . . Fresh from the first engagement of a new war with Revolutionary France, Lord Charles Wormwood, though he has no real idea why, is hailed as a hero. Fame brings the midshipman into the sphere of Admiral Sir Andrew Braeburn. It also makes him deeply attractive to the man's daughter Kate, a rampant nymphomaniac with a ruthless addiction to getting her way. She has set her heart on marrying Wormwood, with the support of her adoring father, but first he must pass the examination for lieutenant, one set up by his Uncle Harry Hamilton, with the questions and answers provided in advance. How can a man as ignorant of the sea, and sailing a warship, pass such a test? Divine intervention?

*Two Fingers Books, \$3.93*  
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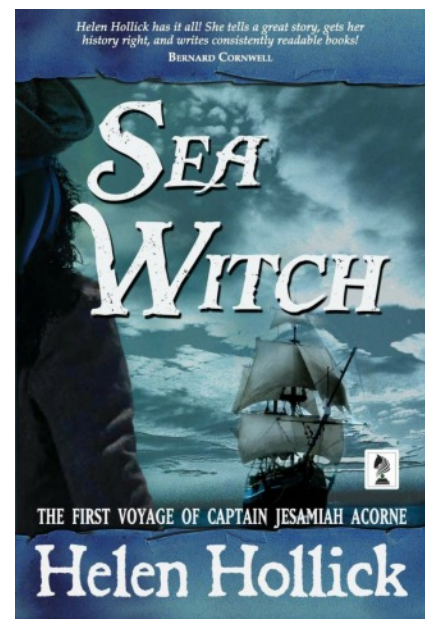


## *Fast Attack*

BY WILLIAM WALLACE & DON KEITH

A belligerent Russian president seeks to reunite the Soviet Union – beginning with Lithuania. But before the US can send military support, Russia's navy forces a dangerous face-off in the Atlantic. As a Russian fleet maneuvers into a blocking position, a pair of spies attempts to sabotage the American navy. With a hurricane bearing down on the Atlantic and the US fleet ordered to port, two American submarines and a small team of Navy SEALs are all that remain. Together, Commander Joe Glass and his fast attack submarines must defeat the Russian forces, or risk losing the global balance of power for good.

*Severn River Publishing, \$24.99*  
US Hardback  
**AVAILABLE NOW**



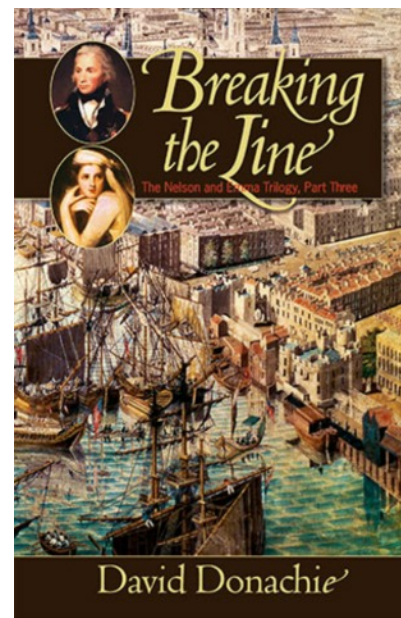
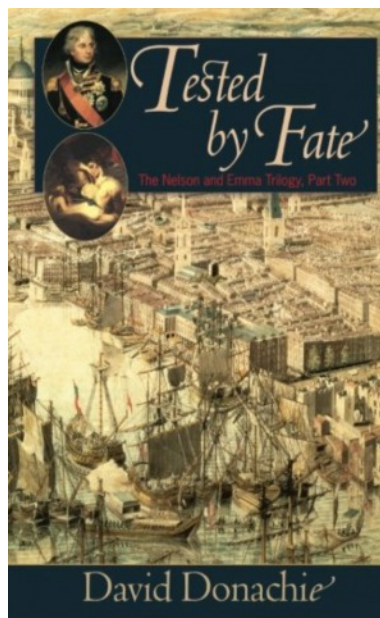
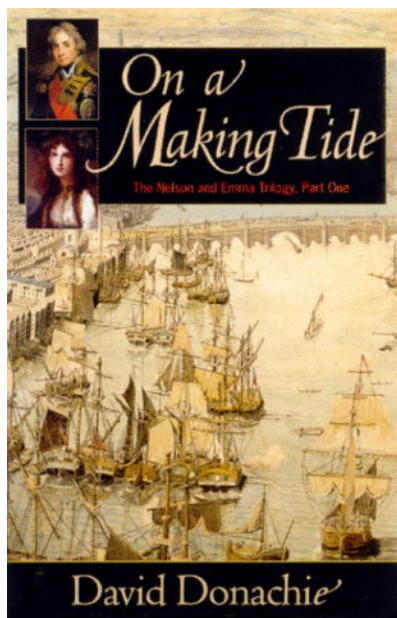
## *Sea Witch*

BY HELEN HOLLICK

The Time: The Golden Age of Piracy, 1716. The Place: The Pirate Round, from the South African Coast to the Caribbean. Escaping the bullying of his elder half-brother, from the age of fifteen, Jesamiah Acorne has been a pirate with only two loves - his ship and his freedom. But his life is to change when he and his crewmates unsuccessfully attack a merchant ship off the coast of South Africa. He meets Tiola Oldstagh, an insignificant girl, or so he assumes, until she rescues him from a vicious attack, and almost certain death, by pirate hunters. And then he discovers what she is: a healer, a midwife, and a white witch.

*Penmore Press, \$19.50*  
US Trade Paperback  
**MAY**





# Nelson and Emma Trilogy

BY DAVID DONACHIE

## *On a Making Tide*

A chronicle of the fascinating early years of Horatio Nelson and Emma Lyon. Both determined to rise from obscurity, they set about making their ways through the world with corresponding recklessness and precocious ambition. Nelson enters the Royal Navy at the age of twelve and is made post captain at the age of twenty. Emma, luscious but penniless, cannily confronts her limited prospects to rise through the social ranks from teenaged bawd to noblemen's courtesan to celebrated artist's model. Rich in historical detail, this novel offers authentic sea action and a rare peek into London's demimonde, where the lives of a beautiful courtesan and Britain's greatest naval hero collide.

McBooks Press, \$23.95  
US Trade Paperback  
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## *Tested by Fate*

It's 1784 and Nelson is sent to the Caribbean to enforce the hated Navigation Acts. While there, he marries Fanny Nisbet. Ordered next to the Mediterranean, he engages in a string of spectacular naval battles: Cape St Vincent, Tenerife, and the Nile. The ravages of war take their physical toll on Nelson, even as he gains the fame and honor he desperately craves.

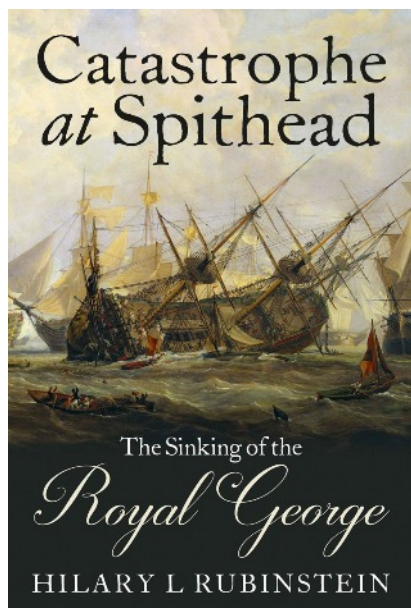
At the same time, Emma, mistress of Charles Grenville, sits as an artist's model, her pictures selling briskly. When Charles's uncle, Sir William Hamilton, joins them in Naples, Emma finds herself the object of Hamilton's desire, and when the mercurial Nelson pays them a visit, she is drawn to the brash sea captain.

McBooks Press, \$22.95  
US Trade Paperback  
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## *Breaking the Line*

In 1799, having evacuated the King and Queen of Naples ahead of Napoleon's advancing army, Nelson must now await developments in Sicily. In the meantime, he and Emma savor their passionate affair, and when Nelson travels back to Britain with the Hamiltons, he finds he is the toast of Europe. To the British elite, however, Nelson is a dangerous upstart, and his love for Emma is his weakness. With rising resentment, Nelson and Emma must keep up appearances, unable to acknowledge their love. As the war with Napoleon drags on, Nelson engages the Danish fleet at Copenhagen with stunning results. Finally, he is given the chance he's been waiting for: off a Spanish cape, called Trafalgar.

McBooks Press, \$22.95  
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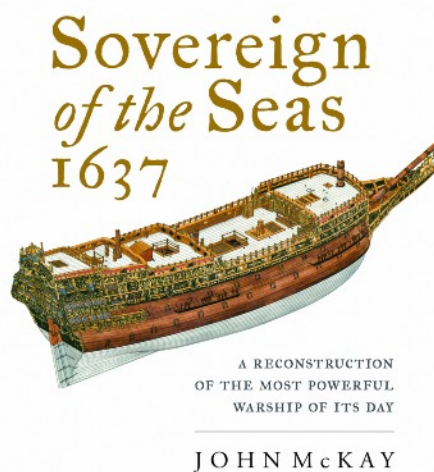


## *Catastrophe at Spithead*

BY HILARY L. RUBENSTEIN

In one of the most sensational and perplexing incidents in naval history, Rear Admiral Richard Kempenfelt, a much-voyaged veteran and outstanding officer, drowned along with more than 800 crew and many civilian visitors on a calm summer's morning and in a familiar anchorage. This new work examines that tragedy, the sudden capsizing at Spithead on 29 August 1782 of the mighty British flagship *Royal George*. This is the first comprehensive account of the calamity and is based on a wide variety of contemporary sources, including reports by survivors and eyewitnesses.

Naval Institute Press, \$38.95  
US Hardback  
**AVAILABLE NOW**

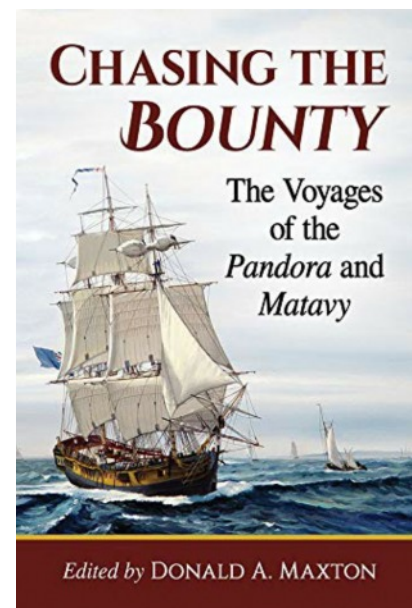


## *Sovereign of the Seas*

BY JOHN MCKAY

*Sovereign of the Seas* was the most spectacular, extravagant, and controversial warship of the early seventeenth century. Her armament was increased by the King's decree to the unheard-of figure of one hundred guns. The ship finally cost the equivalent of ten conventional warships. In this book, John McKay analyzes the data and reconstructs the design and appearance of the ship in a degree of detail never previously attempted. The results are presented as a folio of superbly drafted plans, isometric drawings and colored renderings.

Naval Institute Press, \$68.95  
US Hardback  
**AVAILABLE NOW**



## *Chasing the Bounty*

EDITED BY DONALD A. MAXTON

Popular films about the *Bounty* mutiny only scratch the surface of its history. The rebellion on a British vessel in 1789 spawned a sequence of engrossing, sometimes tragic, events during the voyages of HMS *Pandora*, dispatched to track down the mutineers and return them to England for court-martial, and *Matavy*, a schooner built by the mutineers in Tahiti. This is the first book to include eyewitness accounts from five men who endured these voyages. The captain of *Pandora*'s official reports have been corrected from an older, inaccurate version, and his complete, unedited statement on the loss of *Pandora* appears for the first time in book form.

McFarland Publishing, \$39.95  
US Hardback  
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## PAUL GARNETT

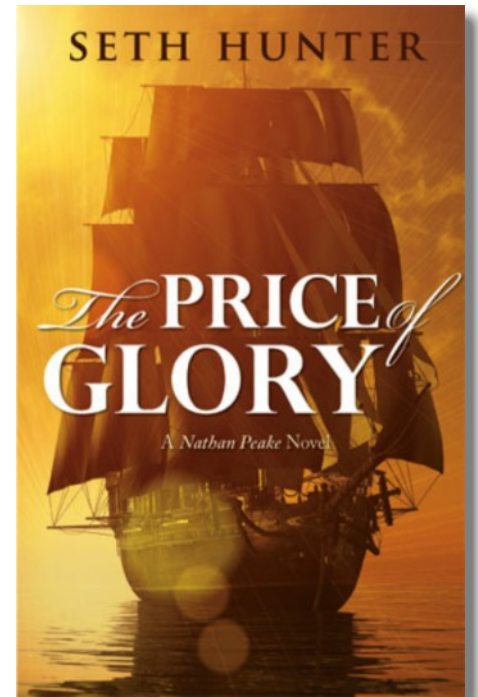
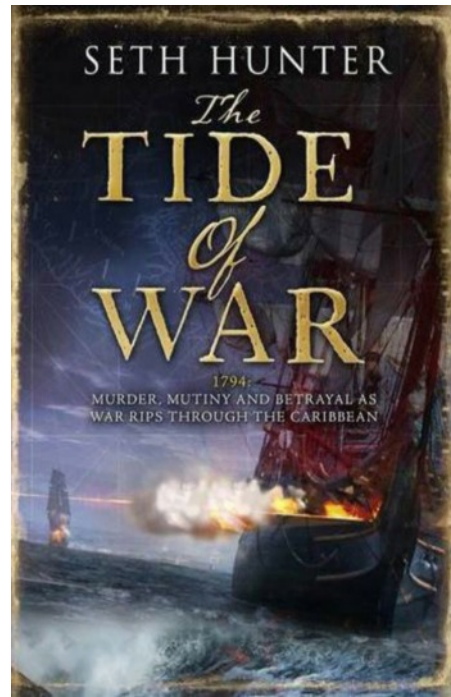
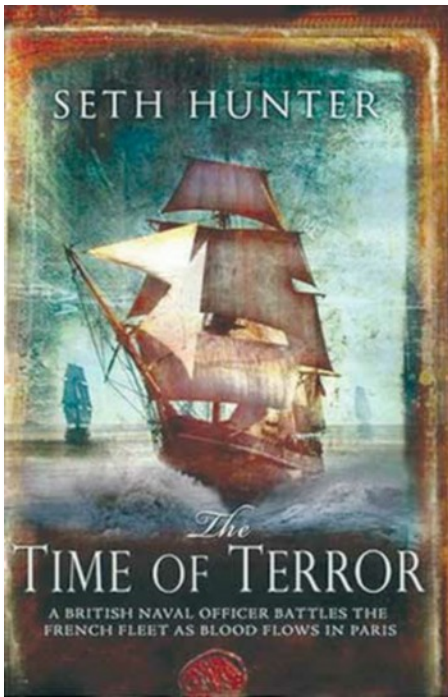
“Witch of the Wave” – Boston Harbor, 1851

15” by 21” oil on canvas

**T**his extreme clipper, considered the masterpiece of Portsmouth, New Hampshire, ship-builder George Raynes, was commissioned by Salem ship owners Glidden & Williams. Launched in the spring of 1851, her elegant lines and rigging were described by many at the time to be amongst the most beautiful ever seen in a clipper. On her maiden voyage, she carried 1,900 tons of cargo. After rounding Cape Horn, *Witch of the Wave* arrived in San Francisco 120 days after leaving Boston. She is seen here at dawn off Boston Light in the summer of 1851, her bow pointing toward the Atlantic.

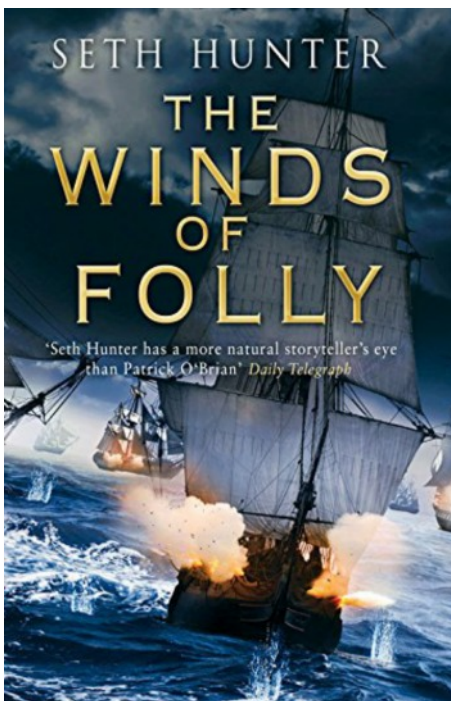
– Paul Garnett, ASMA



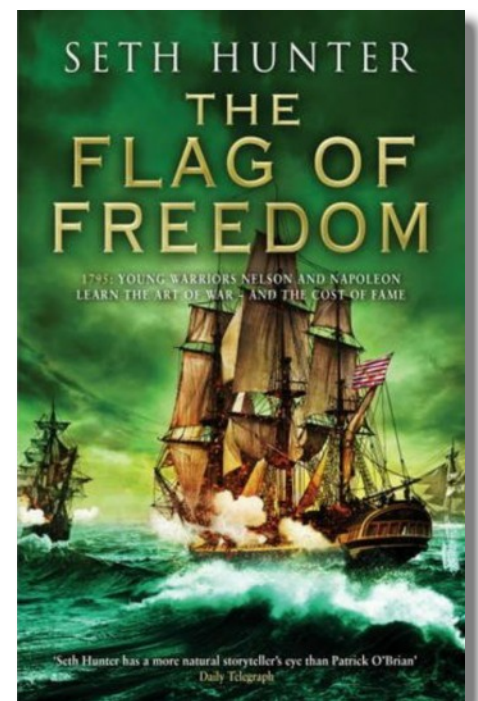


# NATHAN PEAKE NOVELS

BY SETH HUNTER



THE DESTINATION FOR  
NAUTICAL FICTION



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