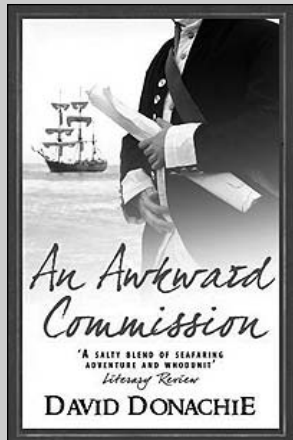


# ★ QUARTERDECK

A PUBLICATION OF MCBOOKS PRESS - NOVEMBER 2006

## SCUTTLEBUTT



### DAVID DONACHIE

*An Awkward Commission* by David Donachie, the sequel to *A Shot Rolling Ship*, will be available in a UK hardcover first edition in December. The author will be featured in the December issue of *Quarterdeck*.

### BROOS CAMPBELL

*The War of Knives* by Broos Campbell will be available in a signed hardcover first edition in April. It is the sequel to *No Quarter*, and features Matty Graves.

### JOHN BIGGINS

*Tomorrow the World* by John Biggins, the fourth title in the Otto Prohaska novels, will be released in a new trade paperback edition in April. It is the sequel to *The Two-Headed Eagle*.

### JAMES DUFFY

*The Fight for Rome* by James Duffy, the sequel to *Sand of the Arena*, will be published in May 2007 in a U.S. hardcover edition.

## WILLIAM H. WHITE

*“A new slant on maritime fiction ...”*

William H. White continues the adventures of young American naval officer Oliver Baldwin during the War of 1812, with the launch this month of his new novel, *In Pursuit of Glory* (see page 3), a sequel to *The Greater the Honor*.

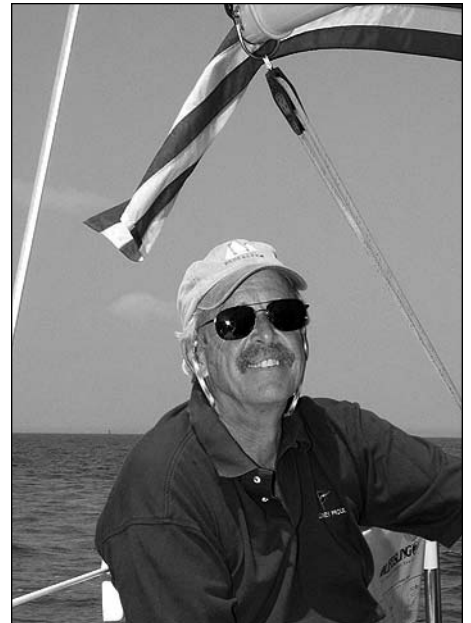
White, a former United States Navy officer with combat service, is also an avid, life-long sailor. As a maritime historian, he specializes in Age of Sail events in which the United States was a key player, and lectures on the impact of these events on our history.

White recently responded to questions from *Quarterdeck* about his writing career and his new book:

**What motivated you to write your first novel, *A Press of Canvas*? What had you written up to that point in your life?**

Prior to the publication of *A Press of Canvas*, I had written magazine articles, reviews of other authors' books, and the like – nothing of book length. I did attempt a

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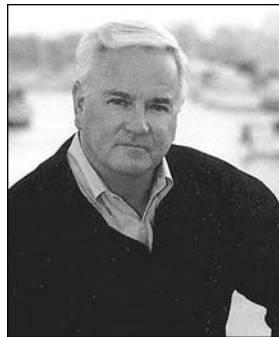


William H. White aboard his ketch, *Journey Proud* ...

## JOHN J. GOBBELL

### *Hooked on World War II*

John J. Gobbell's "sea tales ... will have you looking up your nearest Navy recruiter," says highly acclaimed novelist W.E.B. Griffin. Gobbell's stories about the United States Navy during World War II allow armchair admirals to slip back in time to the 1940s, as America fights back after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.



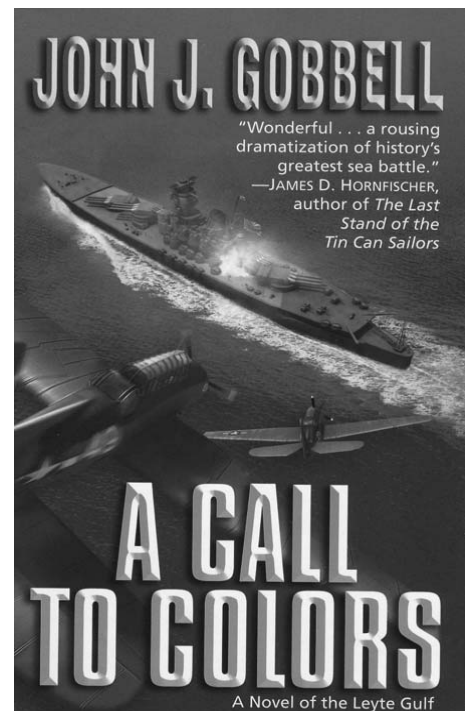
John J. Gobbell

This month, Gobbell's new novel, *A Call to Colors*, introduces his new U.S. Navy hero, Commander Mike Donovan, against the backdrop of the Battle of Leyte Gulf in the Pacific.

Gobbell kindly responded to questions from *Quarterdeck* about his writing career:

**What drew you to World War II as the setting for your Todd Ingram novels and your new novel, *A Call to***

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## BY GEORGE!

*“Boys of common virtue ...”*

On Wednesday mornings, Orvin Yeoman slips into his navy blue windbreaker with a U.S. Navy corpsman insignia on the left breast, and tugs a matching cap down over his eyes. The hat proudly proclaims in gold embroidered thread, “U.S. Navy CPO [Chief Petty Officer] Retired.” Then he waits for his ride in a folding aluminum lawnchair in the open door of his garage.

I am his ride, rain or shine. On Wednesdays we have breakfast at Marilyn’s Cafe in nearby Cascade, Iowa, one of the state’s countless farming communities, with neat, well-kept homes and lawns.

Marilyn’s is a typical American diner, with dark blue, vinyl-covered booths along one wall, square tables with paper placemats in the center, and a counter with swivel stools.

As we enter the cafe, the aroma of freshly brewed coffee fills the air. In the back is a table surrounded by a group of gray-haired men – some of it quite sparse – who are engrossed in conversation and sipping coffee.



CPO Orvin Yeoman

“Well, look who’s here!” proclaims the heavy-set fellow with suspenders on the end. It’s the same greeting we receive every Wednesday. These men are all in their eighties. Orvin will turn eighty-nine this month. Over sixty years ago, each of them left the rolling farmland of eastern Iowa to serve their country.

They represent Tom Brokaw’s “Greatest Generation.” I treasure these mornings with Orvin. Over steaming bowls of Marilyn’s oatmeal, slices of sourdough toast, and endless cups of coffee, I listen to the stories of his life, which began in a small prairie town in 1917, during World War I.

As a young high-school student, he spent his summers working farms around Monticello, plowing fields behind a team of horses, slopping pigs, and, by early autumn, harvesting corn and soy beans. “I’d work two weeks into the new school year,” he recalls. “The football coach didn’t like it much.”

After graduating from high school, he attended Iowa State Teachers College, working nights in a John Deere plant to earn tuition and living expenses. The Great Depression affected nearly everyone and these times are indelibly etched in his memory, as he remembers. “Sometimes I’d only have a few cents in my pocket,” he says.

In the summer of 1941, with some parts of the world already at war, he enlisted in the U.S. Navy. With a first aid course among his college credits, he was immediately assigned as a pharmacist’s mate. On December 7, 1941, he was home hunting rabbits when

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## ★QUARTERDECK

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**Coming in December ...**

- David Donachie chats about his new novel, *An Awkward Commission*, the sequel to *A Shot Rolling Ship*, in the John Pearce naval adventure series.

**BOOKSHELF**

*In Pursuit of Glory*

By William H. White

Once again, yankee author William H. White sets sail with the fledgling United States Navy with *In Pursuit of Glory*, as America and Britain draw closer to conflict at sea in the War of 1812.

Young Oliver Baldwin, recently back from the Barbary Wars (White's *The Greater the Honor*), is aboard the frigate USS *Chesapeake*, as she leaves Hampton Roads, Virginia, on a routine patrol.

The patrol turns out to be anything but routine as *Chesapeake* is confronted by the 50-gun British warship *Leopard* outside the Virginia Capes.

*Leopard's* captain is seeking Royal Navy deserters. When American Commodore James Barron refuses orders to produce them, the British ship fires into the ill-prepared American frigate with disastrous results. The lopsided fight, infamously known as the *Chesapeake/Leopard Incident*, was one of the major contributors to the War of 1812, which started five years later.

Following the ensuing court martial, which results in Barron being relieved of command in the U.S.

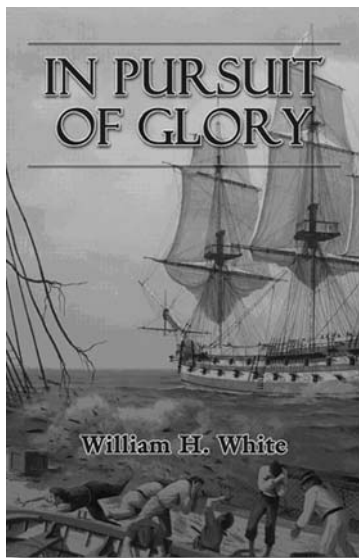
Navy for a period of five years, Stephen Decatur takes command of *Chesapeake* to enforce the Jeffersonian Embargoes on the Atlantic seaboard with Oliver, Henry Allen, and others from *The Greater the Honor*.

Oliver will experience more – though less disastrous – encounters with ships of the Royal Navy, and ultimately, the start of the War of 1812.

In October of that year, sailing in the American frigate USS *United States*, Oliver, now a lieutenant, and Henry Allen, under the command of Barbary Wars hero Decatur, cross tacks

with HMS *Macedonian*. A bloody battle ensues, concluding with the capture of the British frigate.

White's portrayal of the significant early naval encounters of the war, brings to life a period not well known, but of crucial importance to the development of the United States and her young Navy.



**\$29.95** - 352 Pages

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*In Pursuit of Glory* (USHC)  
by William H. White

*A Call to Colors* (USPB)  
by John J. Gobbell

*The Captain's Vengeance* (USTPB)  
by Dewey Lambdin

*The Two-Headed Eagle* (USTPB)  
by John Biggins

**December**

*An Awkward Commission* (UKHC)  
by David Donachie

**April**

*Heart of Oak* (USHC)  
by Alexander Kent

*Command* (USHC)  
by Julian Stockwin

*The War of Knives* (USHC)  
by Broos Campbell

**May**

*The Fight for Rome* (USHC)  
by James Duffy

*Tomorrow the World* (USTPB)  
by John Biggins

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## JOHN J. GOBBELL

From page 1

### Colors?

I lived through World War II as a boy in Long Beach, California – a major naval port at the time. Somehow, those images remain – the people, the tension (yes there was a lot), the shortages, the stars in the windows, my dad's absence (the South Pacific), and yes, the comfort of a solid home and loving family. Our very essence in those days was 24/7 beat the enemy. My mother worked in the Long Beach Naval Shipyard, and we were constantly surrounded with things military, from ships offshore, to P-38s zipping overhead (who can ever forget the sound of those Packard engines?), to uniforms everywhere. Later, at USC, I was in the NROTC and from there, off to destroyers as an antisubmarine warfare officer in the early days of Vietnam in the South China Sea. How can that not influence one's writing? I'm hooked.

### Did your experiences in the Navy assist in shaping the writer that you were to become? In what ways?

As in life, a writer draws upon three things to perform his craft: 1) his research, 2) his experience, and 3) his imagination. Constantly, I draw upon my Navy experiences to fill in sections of my novels, whether it's the bridge layout aboard a Fletcher-class destroyer or firing the five-inch main battery.

### What motivated you to write your first novel? What had you written up to that point in your life?

Since college, I've always wanted to write. Early on I tried,

but it was terrible. Thirty years later, I tried again, and things began to come together. I suppose there was some seasoning in the meantime that helped things out. Other writers are more fortunate and can crank out really great stuff in their twenties and thirties. I had to wait much longer.

### Did you read maritime fiction and history as a boy growing up in California?

All the time. I couldn't put them down. Also, my dad spoke a lot about "the war" – always the funny stuff, incidentally, never the bad stuff. Occasionally, he and his buddies would tell stories and I would sit there open-mouthed, taking it all in. I don't think they embellished that much. They would trip each other up if that happened. It was pretty motivating stuff.

### How do you name your characters?

I try to pick uncomplicated names for the main characters. A good rule of thumb is a last name with a long vowel – like Tom Clancy's Jack Ryan. As Max Perkins loved to say, "Don't ask me why it works. It just does." Minor characters, or throwaway characters, should have non-complicated names that don't conflict with the main characters – Oates is a good name for a Butler. On the other hand, don't name the parking lot attendant Johnny Hollywood lest the reader's expectations rise needlessly.

### Are your characters based on a specific person or persons from history? Are there any aspects of you or other individuals you know within them?

My last five novels are historical fiction. Accordingly, well-known military and political figures are portrayed to some extent. Admirals Nimitz, Spruance, and Yamamoto are heavily portrayed in at least two of my novels. Elsewhere, there are cameo appearances by FDR, General MacArthur, and his aid, Major General Richard Southerlin, German Admirals Canaris and Doenitz, Admiral Halsey, and then Commodore Arleigh Burke.

My fictitious characters are either imagined or are composites of real-life figures. Yes, they may, on occasion, exhibit characteristics of somebody known to me in real life. But nothing that could be traced back to a real-life individual in the whole.

### Do you work out your plots in advance, before beginning each novel?

Yes, I try to. Then I build a ten- to twenty-page synopsis from the basic idea, and once polished, turn it over to my agent who takes it to market. Fingers crossed from then on in.

### Do your characters ever take on a life of their own and influence the direction of your stories?

Absolutely. Things change as you get into writing the work. Events seem to take over – or the characters do. Things get out of control sometimes. *When Duty Whispers Low* began as a novel based on the introduction of the proximity fuse in the Solomons campaign. St. Martin's Press gave the go ahead on the basis of my synopsis. Ten chapters into it, I was confronted with the events

of the shoot-down of Japanese Commander-in-Chief Isoroku Yamamoto. All this happened in the same place at the same time as what I was writing. It was too good an opportunity to pass up. So I brought Yamamoto in and the whole situation increased tension immeasurably and moved the novel along

### How important is historical credibility in creating engaging fiction for readers?

Historical accuracy is of critical importance. Many readers know this stuff better than I ever will. Either they've been there or they're experts in the genre, or both. Either way, historical accuracy is critical. I've seen authors who have pushed events or real-life characters around to fit their plots. When that happens, things turn sour. As good as their plot may be, it just doesn't feel right, and I put the book down. And I just don't like or maybe appreciate alternative history books.

When I seem to be painted into a corner and am confronted with a historical reality, I change the plot and go with the event. Later, I discover that it was a great opportunity to write a much better piece, trying to figure out how your hero is going to get out of his predicament.

### When you are working on a novel, do you find yourself falling into the past?

As mentioned earlier, I try to do that as much as possible. I can still smell the hamburgers with grilled onions and French fries at the Long Beach pike, where sailors in dress whites strut about with their girl

**JOHN J. GOBBELL**

From page 4

friends as the roller coaster roars overhead. I can see the electro-mechanical wig-wag traffic lights up on Ocean Boulevard, and hear the tinkling glass of dark, sleezy bars. I sometimes feel I can more easily recall what happened when I was in the Navy over forty years ago than what I had for dinner last Sunday.

**Do you write specifically for your readers or do you write the sort of novel you would like to read?**

Always, the latter. The byword is: to write about what you know and follow your passion. Without passion, your stuff falls flat.

**Why do you think novels set against World War II have been popular over the years?**

The fiction lasts, I believe, because there is less polarization with the events of the World War II period than with subsequent times. By that, I mean, the bad guys were really bad. I repeat, they were really bad – collectively, the Axis accounted for over 54,000,000 casualties, according to a Vatican survey. A maxim in fiction is for the bad guy to really get it at the end. That's easy in World War II fiction.

Thus, one has an opportunity with exotic settings, high adventure, and the fact that a bad guy is really going to get it. No polarization. No political or religious or racial imperatives. That bad guy is basically bad,

and he's going down in flames,

But there's another opportunity here. For some of the bad guys were solid basic characters with good backgrounds. Field Marshall Erwin Rommel or his exact counterpart in the Pacific, Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto, were highly respected and worthy opponents admired by the allies. Unfortunately, they were loyal members of very sick systems.

**Would you describe where you write?**

I've managed to set up an office in my home with a pretty good PC and peripherals that serve me well. A patient, loving wife, and lots of exercise are my keys to keeping going.

**How important is your reference library?**

Like old friends, I use it a lot. The Internet is good, and often a time-saver, if not a life-saver. But there's simply no substitute for a book. There, one finds the life and basic fabric of a subject, not just a quick consolidation.

**Is there anything else you would like to say?**

Thank God for your readers. Keep it up. Anything and everything. Readership is down, and literacy rates decline due to influences of electronic media. But so much is lost in these things. Only the example set by your readers will help preserve our heritage and rich culture.

**NAVAL FICTION**

*A Call to Colors*

By John J. Gobbell

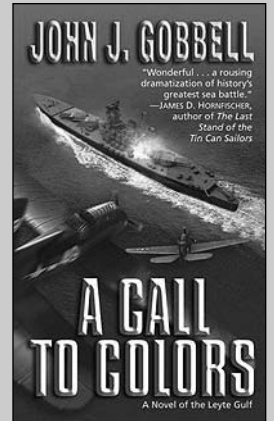
"I shall return" is General Douglas MacArthur's promise to the Filipinos, when he is evacuated from the Philippines to Australia in early 1942. It will take 165,000 troops and 700 ships in the bloody battle of Leyte Gulf to do it.

Among the ships is the destroyer USS *Matthew* and her skipper, Commander Mike Donovan, a naval veteran haunted by earlier savage battles. What Donovan doesn't know is that Vice Admiral Takao Kurita of Japan has laid an ingenious trap as the *Matthew* heads for the treacherous waters of Leyte Gulf.

But Donovan faces something even deadlier than Kurita's battleships – explosives secretly slipped on board American ships by saboteurs are set to detonate at any time. Now the *Matthew's* survival hinges on the ability of Donovan and his men to dismantle a bomb in the midst of the panic and the chaos of history's greatest naval battle.

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**HISTORICAL FICTION**

*The Two-Headed Eagle*

By John Biggins

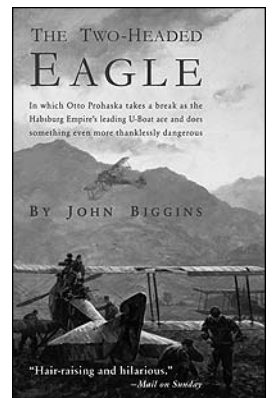
This is the third book in the acclaimed series featuring Naval Lieutenant Otto Prohaska in the waning years of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

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## WILLIAM H. WHITE

### From page 1

book (modern time period, sailing adventure), but I had neither the time or knowledge of writing at the time and it fell by the wayside. About ten or a dozen years ago, I realized I not only had the time to pursue a project of this magnitude, but the ability to do so, and I thought I had a new slant on maritime fiction – the War of 1812 from the American seamen’s point of view.

### Did you read maritime fiction and history during your youth?

Absolutely! All the Forester books, as well as Alan Villiers and others. I spent a fair amount of time hanging about in Mystic Seaport. It wasn’t a big trip so whenever the opportunity arose to “pick a place to go for the day” I voted for Mystic. As a youth on Cape Cod, I pretended my sailboat was a square rigger, and fought mock battles with boats in the harbor (of course, they didn’t know they had fought with my ship, or that they had been captured or sunk!)

### What drew you to ships and the sea as the setting for your novels?

The sea has been my love and life whenever possible, and there was never anything else even considered.

### How do you name your characters?

An interesting question – and, I might add, one I have never been asked before. Of course, historical characters get written with the names their parents gave them; no difficulties there! The fictional ones have to have the right ring to them, be geo-

graphically realistic (You couldn’t very well name an Irishman Ivan Smoskey, now could you?), and be easy for me to remember while I am writing. It is interesting to note, that the three main characters (fictional) in my books (War of 1812 Trilogy, *The Greater the Honor*, and the new sequel to it, *In Pursuit of Glory*, as well as the book I am currently writing, *When Fortune Frowns*) all have names that begin with B. A complete coincidence, I assure you, but interesting to contemplate. I am sure a psychologist would find something causing it, but it just happened.

### What was the genesis of Oliver Baldwin, your hero in *The Greater the Honor* and *In Pursuit of Glory*?

Oliver is an amalgam of the names of two people I met on a trip. I had never known anyone with the given name of Oliver until I met a gent sporting that name, who was remarkably proud of it. Baldwin was the surname of another chap on the same trip. They (the names) seemed to fit nicely together and my character was born. Interestingly, I did incorporate some of both of their personalities into my fictional character. As to his basis, I think he is representative of the myriad young boys who took to the sea during the Age of Sail, seeking adventure, perhaps a trade, or an escape from the humdrum shore life they saw as an alternative.

### Do you work out your plots in advance, before beginning each novel?

Well, as far as the main story is concerned, the history is the history. It doesn’t change, and I

have to be mindful of that when I am writing. I generally pick an event that occurred in history, and people it with my fictitious characters. Any subplot involving the fictitious players is carefully scripted to fit the history about which I write. So, to answer the question, I would have to say yes, I work out plots for the added people in the story, but the history takes care of itself.

### Do your characters ever take on a life of their own and influence the direction of your stories?

Absolutely! And when it happens, it is a wonderful thing. Sometimes a character says or does something I don’t expect – it just happens – and then I may have to rethink where that takes the story. An example of this is in the duel scene in *The Greater the Honor*. I wasn’t sure how that was going to play out and I thought, “Just write it, and see where it goes.” It worked for me and, based on comments from the readers I have heard from on that subject, seems to work for them as well. Makes the story and the interaction of characters more real and lifelike.

### How important is historical credibility in creating engaging fiction for readers?

Vital – at least to me it is. There are too many writers out there who modify the history to fit the story. I refuse to do that, except with a minor detail, which I generally annotate in the notes. It may involve changing a date to make the story flow more evenly or something of that nature. But I always make mention of it in the author’s notes at the end of

the book. As I said earlier, I make the fiction fit the history, not the other way around.

### When you are working on a novel, do you find yourself falling into the past?

When this happens, it is truly a wonderful thing! If I have enough time to totally immerse myself in the writing, it can happen, and when it does I become simply an observer, hearing, smelling, seeing, and feeling the events surrounding me. Then all I have to do is write it down. My writing environment is conducive to this experience, and while I can’t force it, it happens frequently enough, in my opinion as well as several of my reviewers, to make the story more credible.

### Do you write specifically for your readers or do you write the sort of novel you would like to read?

Yes to both. The genre in which I write is clearly not for everyone, but the devotees of it deserve the best I can do to both recreate the history and make a story that is both accurate and fun to read. I find, when reading for pleasure I can become attached to the characters, care about what happens to them, and when I finish the book, sometimes find my self thinking about them and what happened to them after the story ended. Weird, isn’t it? But I hope some of my readers feel the same way about my characters.

### Would you describe where you write?

My office is a room in my house that is sacrosanct. It is

WILLIAM H. WHITE

From page 6

decorated with some of the original paintings from my covers, some wonderful historical engravings that are contemporary to the events they depict (my wife says I should issue life jackets to anyone coming into it), a few awards I have been blessed with, and, of course, my reference library. The only non-marine art displayed are two stunningly enlarged photos taken by my oldest son, a semi-professional photographer. I use two five-foot tables put together in an “L” as my work table, so as to spread out research material, my laptop, a good light, and my two volume set of the Oxford English Dictionary on their stands. Of course, I also have a comfortable chair to use when I am reading something longer than a couple of pages. It sounds neat and tidy, but I assure you, when I am working on a project (which seems to be most of the time) it looks like a tornado went through it!

**How important is your reference library?**

Vital! While it is not as extensive as I might like, it is pretty good, and I have been lucky enough to acquire quite a few long-out-of-print titles, as well as some really neat books on subjects of interest published as long ago as 1812. I have an edition of the *Congressional Acts* passed by the first and second sessions of the twelfth Congress (1811-12), which is original, as well as the following volume of the 13th Congress. I also have the *Correspondence Between James Barron and Stephen Decatur Which Led to the Unfortunate Meeting of the 22nd of March*. This paper-bound volume – a pamphlet, actually – was published in

1820 by Barron in an attempt to justify his killing Commodore Decatur in a duel. Needless to say, it is a bit fragile, but I am planning to do an article on the subject for *Sea History* magazine later this year. Anything I can't find in my own library, I can generally find in archives or specialized libraries elsewhere.

**What can you tell us about Oliver Baldwin's latest adventure, *In Pursuit of Glory*?**

The time frame follows his return from the Barbary Wars, beginning in 1807 with the Court Martial of James Barron (*Chesapeake/Leopard* incident), which goes through the early months of the War of 1812. I had not planned on a sequel, but several of my readers suggested to me that I had set the stage in the Epilogue of *The Greater the Honor* when Mrs. Baldwin mentions the capture of the British frigate *Macedonian* by Decatur in October of 1812. It seemed logical then, to write it. (Perhaps another example of a character saying something unexpected that leads me off in a new direction!) Between the court martial and the battle with *Macedonian*, Oliver, Henry Allen, Stephen Decatur, and others, including some from the previous book, enforce the Jeffersonian Embargoes in USS *Chesapeake*, and experience the build-up to the war. And Oliver will meet his future wife at a grand ball in Newport, RI. The story includes some fun references from some of my earlier stories, which my readers will enjoy.

**Are you presently working on a new writing project?**

Indeed I am! The current proj-

ect involves a major departure from my previous five books; I am writing the story of HMS *Pandora*, the vessel sent, in 1790, by the British Admiralty to fetch the mutineers from HMAV *Bounty*. It is an amazing story of which few people are aware. I mentioned previously that my research library was pretty good, but it's mostly American references. Since this story is British (Royal Navy) through and through, I had to go to England and do research there. I read the original log of HMS *Pandora*, as well as journals, letters, court martial ver-

dicts, and such. It was inspirational for me! I imagine that project will be about two years in the writing.

**Is there anything else you would like to say?**

Well, I hope you enjoy my new story and, if you haven't managed to discover the earlier ones, you might enjoy them as well. Check out my website, [www.seafiction.net](http://www.seafiction.net), for reviews, new projects, links to interesting places on the Web, and a fun quiz. You can also contact me through the website.

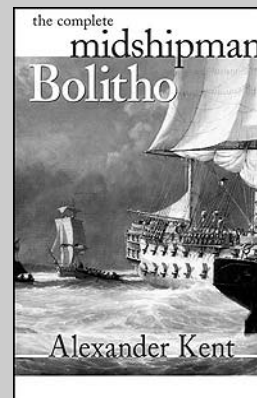
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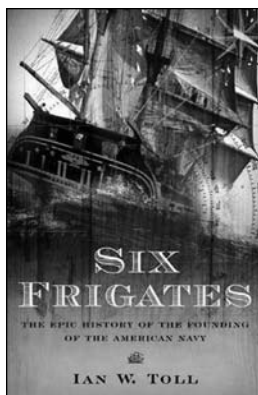
## NAVAL HISTORY

### *Six Frigates*

By Ian W. Toll

Before the ink was dry on the U.S. Constitution, the establishment of a permanent military had become the most divisive issue facing the new government. Would a standing army be the thin end of dictatorship? Would a navy protect American commerce against the Mediterranean pirates, or drain the treasury and provoke hostilities with the great powers? The founders – particularly Jefferson, Madison, and Adams – debated these questions fiercely and switched sides more than once. How much of a navy would suffice? Britain alone had hundreds of powerful warships.

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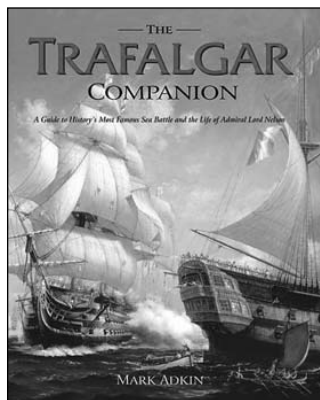
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## HISTORICAL FICTION

### *Sharpe's Fury*

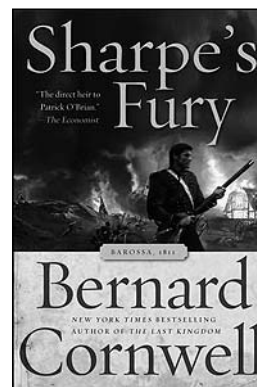
By Bernard Cornwell

The year is 1811. With the British army penned into a small part of Portugal, and all of Spain fallen to the invader except for the coastal city of Cádiz, the French appear to have won their war. Captain Richard Sharpe has no business being in Cádiz, but when an attack on a French-held bridge goes disastrously wrong, Sharpe – accompanied by Harper, his loyal Irish sergeant, and the obnoxious Brigadier Moon – finds himself in a city under French siege. It is also a town riven by political rivalry.

Some Spaniards believe their country's future would be best served if they broke their alliance with Britain and forged a friendship with Napoléon's France; their cause is only strengthened when some letters written to a prostitute by the British ambassador fall into their possession. They resort to blackmail, and Sharpe, raised in the gutters of London and taught to fight, is released into the alleys of Cádiz to find the woman and retrieve the letters.

Yet defeating the blackmailers will not save the city. That is up to the charismatic Scotsman, Sir Thomas Graham, who takes a small British force to attack the French siege lines. Sir Thomas's outnumbered army is trapped between the devil and the deep blue sea, and on a March morning, at Barrosa, Richard Sharpe finds himself embroiled in one of the most desperate infantry struggles ever fought. Sir Thomas has his own reasons for revenge, as does Sharpe, who goes into battle seeking the French colonel who precipitated the disaster that stranded Sharpe in Cádiz.

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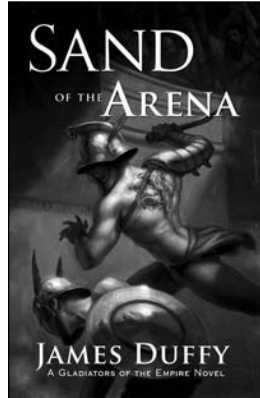
HISTORICAL FICTION*Sand of the Arena*

By James Duffy

In the arena, violent death is a way of life . . . In 63 AD, the long arm of the Roman Empire stretches across the European continent and the gladiatorial games are awash in blood and glory. For Quintus Honorius Romanus, son of one of the richest men in Rome, everything is as it should be – as long as he can sneak off to the arena for a little entertainment.

Things go drastically wrong, however, when Quintus loses his family, his social standing, and his name to an imposter. Faced with a life of menial slavery, Quintus joins a gladiatorial school instead and begins a game of unimaginably high stakes, as he vows to bring down the usurper who stole his life. But first he must survive training.

Together with the deadly African hunter Lindani and the lethal gladiatrix Amazonia, Quintus learns the hard way what it means to live – and die – in the arena. Rough-and-tumble, fast-paced, and unremitting, *Sand of the Arena* brings the Roman Empire to life.

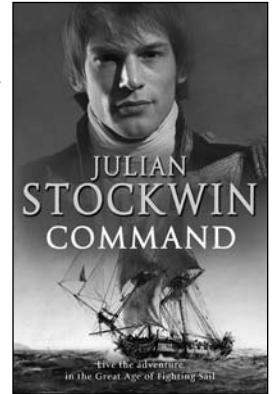
**\$16.95 - 416 Pages****US Trade Paperback**NAVAL FICTION*Command*

By Julian Stockwin

Thrilled at his first command, a little brig-sloop called *Teazer*, Thomas Kydd must race to bring his ship to battle readiness – he is desperately needed to defend Malta against Barbary corsairs, ferocious privateers, and the French who are frantically trying to rescue the remnants of their army in the Levant. But peace is declared and Kydd is ashore on half pay.

A rare chance gives him the opportunity to once again go to sea. He sets sail as captain of a convict transport for the penal colony in New South Wales – and challenges that will test both his seamanship and humanity to the limit.

In addition to the standard hardcover, Hodder & Stoughton has published a special limited collector's edition of *Command*, which is embossed, numbered, and signed by Julian. It has maps on the endpapers and a ribbon marker.



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**BY GEORGE!**

From page 2

Pearl Harbor was attacked. Racing back to Great Lakes Naval Training Center near Chicago, his life was about to change forever. "We got to the gate and the Marine guard asked us where we'd been," he says. "We mumbled something and he waved us through. There wasn't much else to do, so I went to bed. The next day things were really moving around there."

February 1942 found Orvin in Pearl Harbor, assigned to the naval hospital. "One day I took a sack lunch and sat on the shore, watching them raise the (battleship) *California* out of the mud," he says. "That was really something."

Months later, now assigned to a Marine unit as a corpsman, he made a beach landing in the Pacific, after climbing down the rope netting, hanging over the side of a transport, and dropping into a landing craft. "Oh, I was scared," he confesses. "It was 3:30 AM and pitch black. We lost a few in the water."

As I listen to these stories, and sip my coffee in Marilyn's, I look around the room and wonder about the experiences of the others. Lines from *Flags of Our Fathers* by James Bradley, whose dad raised the Stars and Stripes on Iwo Jima, come to mind:

"They were boys of common virtue.

"Called to duty.

"Brothers and sons. Friends and neighbors.

"And fathers."

Orvin – my father-in-law – was one of those boys.

**George Jepson**

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