



The True Soldier

Paul Fraser Collard

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In *The True Soldier* by Paul Fraser Collard, roguish hero Jack Lark - dubbed 'Sharpe meets the Talented Mr Ripley' - travels to America to reinvent himself as the American Civil War looms... A must-read for fans of Bernard Cornwell and Simon Scarrow. 'Enthralling' - *The Times*

'This ain't the kind of war you are used to. It's brother against brother, countryman against countryman'

April, 1861. Jack Lark arrives in Boston as civil war storms across America.

A hardened soldier, Jack has always gone where he was ordered to go - and killed the enemy he was ordered to kill. But when he becomes a sergeant for the Union army, he realises that this conflict between North and South is different. Men are choosing to fight - and die - for a cause they believe in.

The people of Boston think it will take just one, great battle. But, with years of experience, Jack knows better. This is the beginning of something that will tear a country apart - and force Jack to see what he is truly fighting for.

The True Soldier Details

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From Reader Review The True Soldier for online ebook

Ian Langham says

This series in a way is turning into a bit of a world tour of 19th century battle fields. This is not a bad thing as the titular hero Jack Lark gets to pit brawn and brain against many different foes. From the Crimea to India, Persia, back to Europe and beyond. In this volume Jack finds himself embroiled in the opening exchanges in the American civil war. After delivering on a promise made at the end of JL 5, Jack finds his only option to keep body and soul together is to accept a job body guarding the youngest son of a wealthy Boston family. In the course of this, which is the main plot hook. Jack discovers a (potential) love interest from an unusual source. Thrown into guarding the aforementioned son, Jack joins a local Boston regiment here he discovers, that the american officers are just like the others he has served alongside in the past. In that they are a mix of good, bad, heroic and cowardly. As the (1st) battle of Bull Run looms closer and closer Jack tries to whip his new comrades into some kind of battle order. One thing just before the battle Jack discovers his new employer, while he has grand visions and noble designs, has his own personal prejudices which come to light. Along with the other (later) tales in the series the writer paints vivid scenes of carnage along with the horror and confusion of mid 19th century battlefields. As opposed to the earlier volumes where the battlefields were portrayed as exciting if dangerous places. Of course as Jack has matured he has come to learn just what both massed and single combat really is. Overall while Jack's travels and adventures have taken a young green, red coated recruit to a somewhat cynical veteran who appears to be resigned to his fate of death at some point on a battlefield. So where does Jack go next??

David says

Hard to believe that this is already book #6 in Paul Fraser Collard's Jack Lark series: a series which (when it began) was probably best described as a Victorian Sharpe.

Over time, however, the series has grown its own character, with Jack Lark now at the stage where he is no longer assuming other's identities but is now living (and employed) under his own name, with this latest instalment seeing Jack caught up in the early days of the American Civil War, fighting for the North against the South in the first battle of Manassas (or Bull Run). Yes, I did see shades of Bernard Cornwell's other less-popular and less-well-known Starbuck in that last sentence.

As this is early days of the war, Collard takes great pains to show us just how fervent the belief was at the time that this would be 'all over by Christmas', and just how strongly the Northerners (and, by extension, the Southerners) believed in their cause, and that the enemy would run at the first sight of trouble. He also shows the lackluster preparations made by those in charge, even down to the fact that - at this stage - there was no clearly defined uniform, so how would you know who the enemy was?

In a change from the previous, however, Jack does not lose everything by the end of this particular novel - even if, once again, things do not go fully his (or, by extension, his employer's) way, with the Northern forces defeated in this particular instance.

Mark Baker says

Wowwww. Just finished The True Soldier.. Loved the Civil War backdrop.. What a thrilling ride to the end to read about Jack's journey in the Union Army. Once again regiments charge; halt and fire, bayonets attach for a bloody and gruesome ending. As you read on you can picture the landscape of the Bull Run battlefield. Praise for this great novel of historical fiction. Paul has done a great job capturing the first major battle of the American Civil War; Union vs Confederates, so enjoyable to read.. his best work yet.

Calvern says

Excellent as was expected!!!

From the first few lines I was captured in Jack's world. As always in trouble from day one, and uncontrollably heading for more!!! Can't wait for the next adventure .

David says

Well. It took Collard only five novels and three short stories to produce an entertaining and enjoyable book. I wrestled with the previous books because I sensed there was more to the story and the storytelling, and finally I was proven right. a gripping and fun read, Jack Lark has finally grown up to be a likeable character.

Robin Carter says

Review

I have to be transparent from the start, i'm a HUGE fan of this series, If any writer has managed to capture the spirit and adventure of Sharpe and the daring of his character then it's Paul Collard, but he has done it in his own unique way with his own unique character, Jack Lark. (Jack Lark v Sharpe).

Full review: <https://parmenionbooks.wordpress.com/...>

steven devenport says

Jacks back !

Best one yet must admit Jack does get around well rewritten a very believable story couldn't put it down very good read

Andrew says

Jack Lark gets better with every outing. From the battlefields of Europe, Lark finds himself arriving in Boston just before the outbreak of the American Civil War. Delivering the letters of a dead comrade, Lark is caught up in the patriotic fervour, and ends up marching to war with a Boston volunteer unit. At

Manassas/Bull Run, everything is going to change. Except Lark's ability on a battlefield. He hasn't forgotten how to fight.

'The True Soldier' is fantastic. Fraser-Collard is ably filling the gap between the end of the Sharpe novels and the start of the Simon Fonthill adventures. Always been fascinated by the American Civil War, and this is a good fictional entry on the conflict. A great read!

Paul Bennett says

I have followed Jack Lark to many places and events about which I knew very little; The Crimean War, trouble in Persia, revolt in India, Solferino, Italy, and the stews and gin palaces of London. Now, because of a promise made to a dying man, Jack is in my neck of the woods; Boston, Massachusetts and just in time for a war I do know about; The Civil War. Through the influence of the father of the dying man, Jack becomes not only a sergeant in the army, but also the protector of the dying man's brother. You could say that Jack is less than underwhelmed by the readiness and experience of this newly formed unit, and in his own lovable brusque manner attempts to make that point. You could say that his new comrades are less than enthused by his doom and gloom attitude. The author has crafted an engaging tale focusing on the early days of the war with all the pomp and ceremony as the crowds cheer their sons, husbands, fathers, and sweethearts onto what they all believe will be a short, victorious campaign. He has also presented those early days in a well researched manner; I especially enjoyed the riot in Baltimore. It's not one of those familiar bits of the era and the author portrays it in admirable fashion. Along with that and the 1st Battle of Bull Run the reader is brought into the action in all it's sound and fury. Jack, at times not knowing what to do with his life, rediscovers the plain facts; he can lead men into that maw of death and destruction, and he can still become a perpetrator of that death and destruction. A marvelous tale indeed with well rounded characters, entertaining plots, and the promise of more Jack to come.

5 stars

Kate says

I love this series and now Jack Lark takes us into the heart of new territory indeed - 1861 and the early months of the American Civil War.

Leonard White says

Enjoyed the book. Not as much action as the first five but still a good story. Scene moves from Europe to the U.S. as Jack Lark takes part in the Battle of Bull Run during the U.S. Civil War. Actually this was my introduction to the U.S. Civil War and I may further my reading in this area.

John Nino says

Jack adapts to America

Well written book in keeping with the remainder of the series. Maybe the curse will be broken in the good Ol' USA.
