



To Glory We Steer

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Portsmouth, 1782. His Britannic Majesty's frigate, Phalarope, is ordered to assist the hard-pressed squadrons in the Caribbean. Aboard is her new commander—Richard Bolitho. To all appearances the Phalarope is everything a young captain could wish for, but beneath the surface she is a deeply unhappy ship—her wardroom torn by petty greed and ambition, her deckhands suspected of cowardice under fire and driven to near-mutiny by senseless ill-treatment.

Alexander Kent is the nom-de-plume of Douglas Reeman.

To Glory We Steer Details

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From Reader Review To Glory We Steer for online ebook

Studebhawk says

For Duty & Glory

In this the fifth in the Bolitho series, our hero moves onto a ship encumbered by a bad reputation. With this new command, our hero has to rally the crew to his leadership. This is quite a feat at a time when the British Navy relied on men recruited by "press gangs" to man their fleet. Bolitho has to depend on these men of mixed loyalties to carry out his mission in the Caribbean sea during wartime. This theatre is interesting since the enemy is the French Navy which has come to the aid of the upstart American rebel colonies. On a Caribbean cruise last year I had the opportunity to visit Antigua. The historic British Admiral Nelson boatyard is well worth the visit. It was strategic in scope, a large safe harbor for the British fleet during the period of time of this novel. You can appreciate the value of this safe harbor to the British during the war against the French and the Americans.

The action builds steadily right up to the final chapter that wraps up this installment in the Bolitho series. We learn a little more about our hero in this one, but, what we really learn here is a lesson in command. With the sacrifices and the suffering that occurs during the story, what stands out here is the Captain's duty to the men under his command, the skill, the strategy and tactics on a wooden ship at war on a hostile unforgiving sea.

Jim says

This is a superlative novel in Alexander Kent's Richard Bolitho series. I have read many books of the British Navy historical fiction genre based on fighting ships of sail in the Napoleonic era, and few, if any, match this one for descriptive naval battles, the poignancy of losses of good officers and men and the thrill of naval action.

Actually, this novel takes place shortly before the Napoleonic period - actually in the last year of the American Revolution. Captain Bolitho is assigned to command HMS Phalarope, a frigate that has just experienced a near mutiny while standing blockade duty off the French coast. Bolitho is ordered to take his ship and its questionable crew to the Caribbean to join the battle against the French Admiral de Grasse.

This novel has it all - cutting out action, capture by the Americans, a second mutiny, and it ends at the Battle of the Saintes. There is gripping drama, there is sadness and there is the rewarding feelings of victory.

Jerry says

Another enjoyable read.

Robert says

The book that got me started on naval fiction.

David says

Great characters, lots of action, rich period detail. Excellent!

Tim says

One of the many imitators of Hornblower. Pretty good, but not up to the original. I'd maybe give this 3 1/2 stars if I could.

It's certainly better than many, though, so if you are starved for 18th century sea yarns, this is a good choice.

My favorite of the Hornblower imitators is Jay Worrall, with books like Any Approaching Enemy.

Bob Cantrell says

This book was a treat this time Bolitho has gotten command after his success in Sparrow, as Captain of Phalarope a frigate. But he has a troubled ship. Phalarope has a bad reputation: shy in battle, a nice way of saying it is a coward and a crew in almost mutiny. Bolitho manages to turn the bad reputation around and have a successful ship and crew. How he does it is the heart of this story so you will just have to read to find out.

Betsy says

A great book and the one that got me reading about Richard Bolitho and Thomas Herrick.

Alonzo Church says

This is probably as good as this type of book gets. Characters are the finest cardboard — stock villains, cowards, officious officers, devoted officers. The plot, while fast moving, is merely a thread to string together the lovingly described naval actions. The cruelty of the 18th century naval life is alluded to, but not felt. And the narrative arc — a new captain turns his mutinous crew to an exemplar of naval discipline — is a good one, but the novel falls short of the material. Wanted to like this. Ultimately, I didn't.

Mike says

Really good read. Plenty of action which kept you on the edge of your seat throughout. Best of his novels I've read so far.

Chris Shockey says

High Adventure in the Age of Sail

Captain Bolitho unexpectedly encounters his older Brother Hugh and battles the French fleet on the high seas in the West Indies in this latest installment of the acclaimed series. Taking command of a frigate accused of cowardice, Captain Richard Bolitho, RN must restore the self respect and pride of its ill-treated crew and put down a mutiny in time to intercept the enemy

Matimate says

I like naval fictions and saucy sailors in any shape and any environment as far as the age of sails is concerned and the historic setting is masterfully entwined in the plot. The worst case scenario is some too obvious glitch in naval books, that can be pain. The plot line is again Dick will rule all aka Richard Bolitho was again pushed in the painfully hard situation when all odds were against him but you know very well that he will come out with laurel on his head. The Phalarope was unhappy ship led by tyranic captain who had enough sense to pass to the Hades and captain Bolitho was lucky or rather unlucky to take his place. The ship on the verge of mutiny, the admiral who hated him to the bone plus American Revolution to deal with. Yes, Mr. Kent is utter sadist when it goes about family matters and clash of the brothers was imminent spiced the plot with something more then plain swashbuckling. The Caribbean swirled with the French, new American nation ships and english man-of-wars begs for action. Heads are smashed, limbs are amputated and ships are sunk. Bolitho beat the odds and came out victorious, which made female readers swoon.

Chris Gager says

Next up... picked up from the town transfer station of course. My paperback is from 1978 and not pictured in the lookup. No cover anyway...

Finally got into it last night. Pretty darned "meaty" so far!

And now the meat has gotten well-bloodied as the first encounter with a privateer has taken place and it was nasty. Very violent and well described.

Cruising along in the action-filled tale. Ups and downs and ups for Bolitho. No romance though. Fighting(lots), bravery, luck, cowardice, treachery, and the frustration of chain-of-command all come into play.

- Two dead French sentries - reminds me of The Last of the Mohicans!

- This book just races along - a true can't-put-downer.

- The nasty flogging makes it difficult to root for the nasty Brits who do it - even unto arbitrary and needless death. Totally barbaric!

All done now after staying up too late - as usual. As one reviewer has pointed out the Bolitho-is-an-English warrior/god gushing gets to be a bit much a times, but this is not enough to lower the rating. Everything ends with another orgy of blood, death and destruction at the Battle of the Saintes by the Dominica Passage. Bolitho survives badly wounded but a LOT of others don't. Fortunes of war...

- NO women(virtually) in this tale!

Bill says

Still in his twenties, but now a captain, Richard Bolitho has returned to Portsmouth, England with his captured sloop, the *Sparrow*. Vice-Admiral Sir Henry Langford gives Bolitho command of a frigate, the *Phalarope*, a ship whose reputation has been marred by its captain and a near mutiny. Orders are to set sail for the Caribbean immediately with no shore leave for Bolitho or his new crew. Before leaving England they stop at Bolitho's home town of Falmouth where he sees his father and learns that his older brother, once a lieutenant in the Royal Navy, has joined the Americans. The primary reason for the visit was to press men into service on the ship, essentially kidnapping them - apparently an earlier form of what we know as the draft.

On their way to the Windward Islands they come across an English ship and are almost along side before Bolitho smells a rat - the ship, captured by privateers, intends to capture the *Phalarope*. Both ships are severely damaged and the privateer flees after Bolitho does the unexpected to win the upper hand.

Their victory does not impress the brass at Antigua. The *Phalarope* is placed on a lonely patrol where Bolitho manages to find a supply lugger carrying supplies to the damaged privateer hiding in an island cove. Naturally Bolitho goes after it.

The formerly mutinous crew has become a loyal, fighting machine. All because of their respect for their courageous young captain.

Eric_W says

Kent ranks right up there with Forester (perhaps even better) and O'Brian (not quite as good as Patrick) in the realm of nautical fiction. There are still other authors out there I am only now discovering, as publishers — bless their souls — have discovered the market for this wonderful genre following in the wake of the very successful Aubrey/ Maturin series. McBooks Press and the Naval Institute have both begun "classic naval books" series to reissue titles that have been long out-of- print. Kent's hero is Richard Bolitho.

Unfortunately, I was unable to begin with the first volume in the series, a shortcoming that I will have to remedy. Bolitho is the son of a seafaring family. We learn in this volume that his black-sheep brother, Hugh, has fled to America to seek his fortune (it's 1782). Hugh has also become the captain of an American privateer. Richard is given command of the *Phalarope*, a ship beset with a mutinous crew, an ex-cowardly captain, and a vicious first lieutenant. He is sent to the West Indies where he and Hugh unintentionally stumble into each other's way during a battle. Richard is later captured and becomes the prisoner of his brother. Through a fortuitous change in the weather, Richard escapes. Much to the consternation of the service, he fails to kill his brother in the process, the theory being that perhaps he had shown leniency to an enemy. The *Phalarope*, Richard's ship, almost succumbs to a mutiny — hard to believe that might happen to Hornblower — but of course Richard manages to redeem himself in the eyes of the admiral and participate in

a rather vicious battle against the French. An excellent read.
