



The Baltic Gambit: An Alan Lewrie Naval Adventure

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January 1801, and Captain Alan Lewrie, RN, known as “St. Alan the Liberator” for freeing (stealing!) a dozen black slaves on Jamaica to man his frigate years before, is at last being brought to trial for it, with his life on the line. At the same time, Russia, Sweden, Denmark, and Prussia are forming a League of Armed Neutrality, to Napoleon Bonaparte’s delight, to deny Great Britain their vital exports, even if it means war. England will need all her experienced sea dogs, but ... *even Alan Lewrie?*

Ultimately Lewis is acquitted, but he’s also ignored by the Navy, so it’s half-pay on “civvy street” for him, and with idle time on his mischievous hands, Lewrie is *sure* to get himself in trouble---again!---especially if there are young women and his wastrel public school friends involved...and they are! A brawl in a Panton Saint brothel, a drunk, infatuated young Russian count, precede Lewrie’s summons to Admiralty and the command of the *Thermopylae* frigate to replace an ill captain as the fleet gathers to face down the League of the North, and its instigator, the mad Tsar Paul.

Lewrie must take the *Thermopylae* into the Baltic in the dead of winter, alone and with no support, to scout the enemy fleets and iced-in harbours, deal with a fellow officer who is less of a friend than he thought, and be saddled with a pair of Russian noblemen as a last-minute peace delegation, but if the wily Foreign Office spy-master, Zachariah Twigg, sent them, what *else* might their mission be?

All that and the Battle of Copenhagen, too, and it’s broadsides at close quarters, and treachery for Lewrie, forcing him to use all his wiles to survive!

The Baltic Gambit: An Alan Lewrie Naval Adventure Details

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Jeffrey says

Dewey Lambdin's Alan Lewrie Naval Adventure series is a great work of writing. Each book follows the exploits of Alan Lewrie, a Naval Officer in the late 1700 early 1800's when England ruled the world and Horatio Nelson was a great leader. Similar to the Bolitho novels of Alexander Kent a/k/a Douglas Reeman, but more bawdy these novels capture the essence of shipboard life and life of an English officer in war and on shore.

In this latest adventure, the novel opens up with Lewrie on trial for his part in freeing some slaves during the prior book. Through the deft work of his counsel, Lewrie is freed but the Admiralty is not interested in hiring him so he spends his days on shore where he is being pursued by two fetching ladies, a Russian and a Greek, one of whom has been waging an underhanded war of words against him. Lewrie, who has the sobriquet of the Ram Cat, and not only for his actions asea, is also involved with the young Tess, a doxy from Madam Baston's house.

Much of the early action in this novel takes place ashore, and if you like the vernacular and the verisimilitude of this England, you will like this part of the novel.

It could have been a little less of the novel.

Finally, Lewrie is granted captaincy in a frigate, where he is sent on a secret mission to drop off some Russian nobles, who are supposedly to negotiate a peace with the Tsar as well as check the harbors in the Baltic to see what ships are there.

Finally, in the end, Lewrie takes his crew and meets up with Nelson and fights in the Battle of Copenhagen.

Lambdin is a master of shipboard life and his language and dialogue of the main characters and all of the others is just spot on.

I would have liked to have spent more time at sea (as I like the Naval part) to predominate, but if you are a fan, you will like this book.

Eric says

Flowed easier than prior book in series.

Jim says

This is the 15th book in the Alan Lewrie series of naval adventures written by Dewey Lambdin, and it is the first that I have rated less than five stars. Generally this is because this is the first novel that has not had a lot of action, is rather slow at times. The author appears to be using this novel as a bridge between those that

have gone before and those to follow. A number of issues that have plagued Lewrie are resolved and the stage is set for more twists and turns to come in the series.

At long last, Lewrie's case regarding the "theft" of property (i.e., 12 black slaves from Jamaica) comes to trial, and he is totally acquitted. That notwithstanding, he is left ashore on half pay, presumably because no one in the Admiralty wants to touch him with a 10 foot pole. Meanwhile, he finally discovers, with the help of Mr. Twigg of the Foreign Office, who is the anonymous writer who has been telling his wife of all his amorous affairs.

Out of the blue, Lewrie receives orders from the Admiralty, assigning him as captain of HMS Thermopylae, a 38 gun frigate and is ordered to the Baltic on a reconnaissance mission. That is the naval part of his assignment. Thanks to Mr. Twigg, who is with the Foreign Office's Intelligence Bureau, there is also a diplomatic side of Lewrie's mission aimed at upsetting a putative alliance between Denmark, Sweden and Russia.

Just because I gave this book 4 stars does not mean I did not like it. All is relative in one's ratings.

M_latimer says

I'll keep reading this series as long as Dewey Lambdin keeps writing them. He is not Patrick O'Brian, but the books are quite entertaining.

Eytan Yammer says

not his best

I am partial to the stories with more time at sea and less on shore.

I felt that the side story with Tess was less than interesting. Nonetheless well written and somewhat interesting.

I learned something of the history of the Russian involvement.

Jerome says

A rather mediocre swashbuckler. One of a series of about 15 books by the author. If they are all as boring as this, I'm surprised he got them published.

Michael Rhode says

Not much action, but it wrapped up a lot of earlier plot threads which had been dragging on and culminated in the Battle of Copenhagen, which is good.

J. says

Now working my way through the latter books in this generally entertaining series after a long absence.

As a "naval adventure" it comes up fairly short, as it takes Lewrie half the book to get out of London and onto a ship. And the only naval action occurs way at the end. So, if you like the main character, you will probably enjoy this entry, even though it feels more like an interlude than a full story. If you are looking for the usual, straight forward naval adventure, like Alexander Kent's, you are likely to be disappointed.

Patrick Fennelly says

The latest in a rollicking sea adventure featuring title character Captain Alan Lewrie.

D.w. says

I have spent many years enjoying the adventures of Ram Cat Lewrie. He is a no holds barred man of the times, perhaps one that would not sit well in a typical regency romance, and his sexual escapades taking him further than any other Age of Sail protagonist we have come to know.

That said, in this volume, we are let down a tad following the man. We are present at the battle of Copenhagen, yet it takes more than 80% of the book to get there. And the first half of the book is far more concerned with time on land than life aboard ship. Further, Lambdin seems to have taken every opportunity to use the dictionary of Cant from the times to inflect such into all the writing, which causes some switching back and forth between modern narration and then a faux period dialogue. Even with Russian translation as footnotes in the latter half.

As another reviewer points, out, the reader is also presented with what stands today on the site of a coffee house that Lewrie was visiting in the 18th century. A factoid that Lewrie wouldn't know but of course Lambdin certainly does.

Lewrie as a hero exists to have adventures and be a fighting captain, making an enemy or two, who are not particularly French, along the way, whilst being heroic on one hand and on the other getting further embroiled in trouble. A hero who if he had not found the sea would have no skills he could exploit and long since would have been skewered in a duel on land for little or no reason. That essence is what makes Lewrie a character with legs! Here, away for far too long from the sea, with a minor subplot that Lambdin wanted to develop, and loose ends from previous books to tie up, the saga looses its steam. So much so that I had to start this story 3 times before being able to push on to the end.

For fans of the series, but not a good place to start.

jallioop says

Most of book is on land, then a section on a naval reconnoiter of the Baltic and then a few hours' worth of naval battle. Land portion is entertaining because Lewrie is up to his usual antics, but the book only slightly qualifies as nautical fiction.

Aspen Junge says

I read the entire series largely back-to-back (my local public library is well-stocked). One of the great things about this series is that we get to watch Alan Lewrie, the main character, grow up from a callow, self-indulgent teenager to a mature, thoughtful, and responsible adult.
