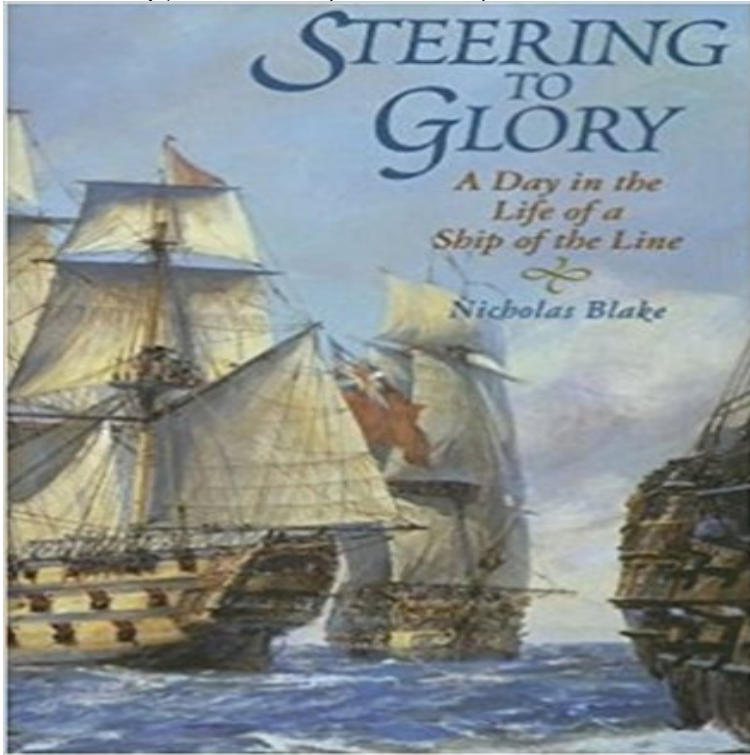


Steering to Glory: A Day in the Life of a Ship of the Line



In the summer of 1805 the Mediterranean Fleet made a 6,686-mile round trip to the West Indies. The Franco-Spanish fleet it was chasing buried a thousand men at Martinique, but Nelson reported his fleet in the most perfect health, except some symptoms of scurvy. This was the Royal Navy standard that was maintained until Napoleon was defeated, and not surpassed until the post-modern era. Drawing extensively on previously unpublished letters, reports, court-martial records, and other contemporary RN and enemy documents, as well as published memoirs and reminiscences, the narrative uses the model of a twenty-four-hour day to show how everyone on board a ship-of-the-line contributed to this unprecedented survivability and fighting ability and reveals the organization, feeding, equipping, training, punishment, recreation, and motivation of up to 875 officers, men, and boys from all walks of life and five continents. Also explained are the roles of the non-naval personnel on board, from wives and guests to soldiers, supernumeraries, and prisoners. Appendices include complete establishments of carpenters and boatswains stores, the complement and pay of a ship-of-the-line, and complete listings of the ships-of-the-line 1793-1815. This is essential reading for historians, naval novel lovers, and all who have wondered how such complex communities achieved this unprecedented efficiency.

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