



About the Author



about this author

Full text biography:

Jack Campbell

Nationality: American

Occupation : Novelist

Table of Contents:

Awards

Personal Information

Career

Writings

Sidelights

Related Information

Awards:

AnLab Award for best short story, *Analog Science Fiction and Fact*, 2006, for "Kyrie Eleison"; AnLab Award for best novelette, *Analog Science Fiction and Fact*, 2006, for *Lady Be Good*; *Analog* AnLab Award for Best Short Story, 2013, for "The War of the Worlds, Book One, Chapter 18: The Sergeant-Major."

Personal Information:

Son of Jack M. Hemry (a naval officer); married; children: three. **Education:** Graduated from U.S. Naval Academy, 1978. **Military/Wartime Service:** On active duty, was assigned as a navigator and gunnery officer, USS Spruance; a production control officer, Defense Intelligence Agency; a watch officer and operations officer, Navy Anti-Terrorism Alert Center; a staff intelligence officer/NC, Amphibious Squadron Five; a readiness division officer, Navy Operation Intelligence Center; and the Chief of Naval Operations Staff NC/N5, assigned to plans, policy, and operations.

Addresses: Home: MD. Agent: c/o Author Mail, Penguin Group (USA), 374 Hudson Street, New York, NY 10014. E-mail: John-g-hemry@sff.net.

Career Information:

Writer, retired naval officer.

Writings:

SCIENCE FICTION NOVELS; "STARK'S WAR" SERIES

- *Stark's War*, Ace Books (New York, NY), 2000.
- *Stark's Command*, Ace Books (New York, NY), 2001.
- *Stark's Crusade*, Ace Books (New York, NY), 2002.

OTHER

- *A Just Determination* (science fiction novel; "Paul Sinclair" series), Berkley Publishing (New York, NY), 2003.
- *Burden of Proof* (science fiction novel; "Paul Sinclair" series), Ace Books (New York, NY), 2004.

Also author of *Rule of Evidence*, another novel in the "Paul Sinclair" series, 2005, and the novelette *Lady Be Good*. Contributor of short stories to publications such as *Analog* and *Amazing Stories*. Contributor of nonfiction articles to *Analog* and *Artemis*.

Sidelights:

John G. Hemry is a retired naval officer who has parlayed his military experience into several successful science fiction novels with a military flavor. His first book, *Stark's War*, is set on the Moon, where the United States Lunar Colony is engaged in removing all the foreign bases. Don D'Amassa, writing in *Science Fiction Chronicle*, said that Hemry's protagonist, Sergeant Ethan Stark, is "an intriguing character" and noted that he was "impressed and pleased" with the story.

Hemry followed this initial effort with two sequels, *Stark's Command* and *Stark's Crusade*. These works follow Stark as the Lunar Colony rebels against an America that has essentially been bought by corporations. In *Stark's Crusade*, mercenaries have been hired to attack Stark's people, and Stark is forced to lead defenders of the colony against several enemies, including a group of robot soldiers. Stark learns to work with the civilians in the Lunar Colony, fighting off threats from within and without. Rich Horton, writing on the Web site *SF Site*, criticized the book for its "cliché characters, stilted dialogue, and generally unconvincing working out of the plot" but noted that "the book is at its best during the battle scenes." Kelley Rae Cooper, writing in *Romantic Times*, praised the book's "strong characterization and well executed action" and called it "a gripping patriotic space opera."

With *A Just Determination*, Hemry began a new series, this time about Ensign Paul Sinclair, who is serving on a military spaceship. After making a decision that mistakenly causes the destruction of a civilian ship belonging to another country, the captain is faced with a court-martial, and Sinclair gives important testimony. According to a review by D'Amassa in *Science Fiction Chronicle*, Hemry provides "a nice, absorbing story." Writing on the *SFreviews.net* Web site, T. M. Wagner called the book "one of the more worthwhile and provocative novels to come my way." Peter Tillman, a contributor on the Web site *Talkaboutabook*, dubbed Hemry's writing style "serviceable" and "workmanlike," calling the book a "nicely done" naval procedural with a gripping court-martial drama.

In the next novel, *Burden of Proof*, Sinclair is now a lieutenant junior grade. Writing in *Booklist*, Roland Green called this story "another absorbing and credible novel of space navies and justice." The plot develops around a petty officer accused of causing an explosion that led to his own death and destroyed a section of the ship. Many in the crew, however, insist that a cover-up is in progress to protect Lieutenant Scott Silver, the son of an influential admiral, who actually gave the orders that led to the accident. Sinclair uncovers evidence that implicates Silver, and a court-martial ensues. In a review in the *Science Fiction Chronicle*, D'Amassa called this book "very interesting indeed," and Harriet Klausner on the *Allscifi* Web site said that the legal aspects are "brilliantly intertwined" within the drama. She also wrote that Hemry "has pioneered a new subgenre" she called "space ship military legal thrillers." Wagner, again writing on *SFreviews.net*, called the series "one of the most relevant and intelligent adult drama series being published" in science fiction.

Hemry told CA: "I've been interested in writing all of my life. Most people are, I think. I made a few stabs at writing through the years but never got anywhere because I thought my stories lacked something. About the time I retired from the navy, I decided it was time to buckle down and see if I could tell the stories I had within me. I collected the usual raft of rejection letters but eventually learned enough to start selling.

"A major influence on my work is my life experience. I try to tell stories that convey things I've experienced or learned or just found fascinating. I've read a great many writers, and they all influenced me in one way or the other because I learned how to (and sometimes how not to) tell stories from them. In many ways I feel a connection to Robert Heinlein, with whom I share some major experiences (Naval Academy graduate, surface warfare officer in the navy).

"One of the most surprising things is what a great community exists among science fiction and fantasy writers. It's not utopia, but from the first I was impressed by the camaraderie and helpfulness of more experienced writers. My favorite of my own books is probably always the one I just wrote. At that point it's new and full of unlimited promise. From that point on, though, reality intrudes with qualms about cover designs, editorial decisions, sales figures, and critical reviews. Before then, when the book is freshly done, I can just enjoy having completed it and figuring it's not half bad.

"The primary purpose of my books is to entertain readers. To tell stories. Beyond that, I want to convey things I've experienced. In the 'Sinclair' series, for example, I tell what life is like for a junior officer on a warship so people who've never gone near such an experience will get a feeling for it. And if anyone learns anything along the way, things like

how people in the military think and act or how the military justice system works or what mysteries exist in history or what possibilities exist in the future, that's a nice bonus."

Related Information:**PERIODICALS**

- *Booklist*, April 15, 2003, Roland Green, review of *A Just Determination*, p. 1456; March 1, 2004, Roland Green, review of *Burden of Proof*, p. 1146.
- *Romantic Times*, May, 2002, Kelley Rae Cooper, review of *Stark's Crusade*.
- *Science Fiction Chronicle*, June-July, 2000, Don D'Amassa, review of *Stark's War*, p. 57; May, 2003, Don D'Amassa, review of *A Just Determination*, p. 47; April, 2004, Don D'Amassa, review of *Burden of Proof*, p.37.

ONLINE

- *Allscifi.com*, <http://www.allscifi.com/> (August 12, 2004), Harriet Klausner, review of *Burden of Proof*.
- *John G. Henry Home Page*, <http://www.sff.net/> (August 12, 2004).
- *SFreviews.net*, <http://www.sfreviews.net/> (October 1, 2004), T. M. Wagner, reviews of *A Just Determination* and *Burden on Proof*.
- *SF Site*, <http://www.sfsite.com/> (August 12, 2004), Rich Horton, review of *Stark's Crusade*.
- *Talkaboutabook*, <http://www.talkaboutabook.com/> (August 12, 2004), Peter D. Tillman, review of *A Just Determination*.

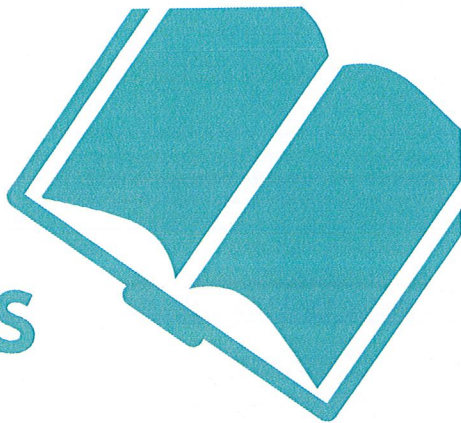
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BOOK CLUB QUESTIONS

GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. What did you like best about this book?
2. What did you like least about this book?
3. What other books did this remind you of?
4. Which characters in the book did you like best?
5. Which characters did you like least?
6. If you were making a movie of this book, who would you cast?
7. Share a favorite quote from the book. Why did this quote stand out?
8. What other books by this author have you read? How did they compare to this book?
9. Would you read another book by this author? Why or why not?
10. What feelings did this book evoke for you?
11. What did you think of the book's length? If it's too long, what would you cut? If too short, what would you add?
12. What songs does this book make you think of? Create a book group playlist together!
13. If you got the chance to ask the author of this book one question, what would it be?
14. Which character in the book would you most like to meet?
15. Which places in the book would you most like to visit?
16. What do you think of the book's title? How does it relate to the book's contents? What other title might you choose?
17. What do you think of the book's cover? How well does it convey what the book is about? If the book has been published with different covers, which one do you like best?
18. What do you think the author's purpose was in writing this book? What ideas was he or she trying to get across?
19. How original and unique was this book?
20. If you could hear this same story from another person's point of view, who would you choose?
21. What artist would you choose to illustrate this book? What kinds of illustrations would you include?





BOOK CLUB QUESTIONS

FOR FICTION

- 22. Did this book seem realistic?
- 23. How well do you think the author built the world in the book?
- 24. Did the characters seem believable to you? Did they remind you of anyone?
- 25. Did the book's pace seem too fast/too slow/just right?
- 26. If you were to write fanfic about this book, what kind of story would you want to tell?

FOR NONFICTION

- 27. What did you already know about this book's subject before you read this book?
- 28. What new things did you learn?
- 29. What questions do you still have?
- 30. What else have you read on this topic, and would you recommend these books to others?
- 31. What do you think about the author's research? Was it easy to see where the author got his or her information? Were the sources credible?

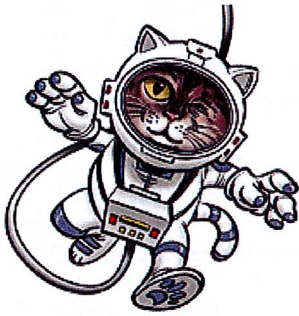
FOR MEMOIR

- 32. What aspects of the author's story could you most relate to?
- 33. How honest do you think the author was being?
- 34. What gaps do you wish the author had filled in? Were there points where you thought he shared too much?
- 35. Think about the other people in the book besides the author. How would you feel to have been depicted in this way?
- 36. Why do you think the author chose to tell this story?

FOR SHORT STORIES/ESSAYS

- 37. Which short story/essay did you like best?
- 38. Which short story/essay did you like least?
- 39. What similarities do these stories share? How do they tie together?
- 40. Do you think any of the stories could be expanded into a full-length book?




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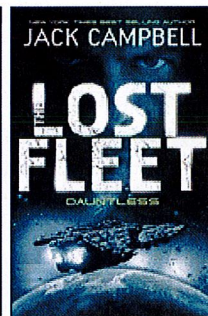
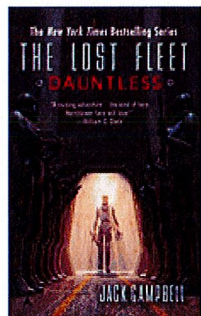
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THE LOST FLEET: DAUNTLESS 2006

JACK CAMPBELL

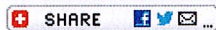


Book cover art by Pat Turner (1st)

Review © 2006 by Thomas M. Wagner

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Jack Campbell is John G. Henry, whose previous series for Ace was the tremendous but only fair-selling Paul Sinclair series of military legal thrillers.

In an e-mail exchange, Henry explained to me the reasons for using a pseudonym for his newest opus. In addition to wanting to get away from the pigeonholing authors endure when they're known for writing one type of book, e.g. military SF, there's this: "The pen name was primarily driven by bookstore buying software. I've been caught (like so many others) in the decreasing orders death spiral. Based on prior sales, the chains order fewer copies, so they sell fewer, so they order even fewer, so they sell even fewer . . . The pen name short-circuits that because the software just sees the pen name and doesn't assign any sales history to it."

I'm not sure if there's a word for how infuriating and depressing this is, that the fate of a writer's career is determined by *software*. Surely there have been armed insurrections over less. Okay, perhaps not, but there ought to be. After all, the notion of being consigned to oblivion by a computer seems a little too close to some of the bleaker visions of dystopian SF to me.

Henry/Campbell's space operas (and I'll refer to him as Campbell from here on) have always sought to add new layers to the conventions of military SF, and this new series is no exception. The only complaint I have with *Dauntless* is that it takes too long getting going — not in the action department, certainly, but in adding the intellectual and moral dimension that makes Campbell's military tales stand apart from the pack. It isn't until you're almost halfway into the book before the characters begin to feel like people, and even then they never really shed their archetypal qualities. But the book's second half makes up for the quibbles I have over its first. *The Lost Fleet* may take another volume or two before it matches the excellence of Campbell's work under his own name. But at least this one has a chance to rescue his career from the Big Brother software that has sent so many undeserving writers packing.

The hero of this saga is Captain John "Black Jack" Geary, a soldier for the Alliance. He was believed lost in space and long dead after a nasty battle with the Syndicate Worlds. However, Geary is located and revived from cold sleep by an Alliance fleet a century after he went missing. He is dismayed to discover that he is now regarded as a valiant war hero, his accomplishments and valor wildly exaggerated so that the Alliance can have an unrealistic standard of perfection toward which to aspire. It's not that Geary wasn't brave at the time. But he now finds himself having to live up to an unrealistic image several generations of Alliance soldiers have been brought up to revere.

The Alliance is doing badly against the Syndic. As Geary is being revived, a major Alliance fleet is trying to get itself out of a trap set by a traitor. Geary suddenly finds himself fleet commander when the Admiral and most of the other top officers are massacred while trying to negotiate terms. Immediately Geary is in a quandary. He disdains the way so many of the sailors under his command gawk at him with pitiful hero-worship, certain he'll find a way to save them, even perhaps a magical

one. He also realizes that to fail to live up to his reputation could cause a quick collapse of morale and disillusionment. Mainly, he must turn the weary Alliance fleet into a decent fighting force. A century of warfare has dulled its edge. There is more bureaucratic time-wasting, and a greater emphasis on individual honor than on working as a unit. Alliance ships have a tendency toward rash action, and they get their asses handed to them for their trouble.

At first it's a little hard to swallow the whole hero-worship angle. (Let alone that the whole Alliance navy appears to be led by utter idiots!) Then it becomes more plausible when it's explained that the majority religion in the Alliance is one of ancestor worship. In such a culture it's easy to see how a revived war hero might be viewed by a devout bunch of soldiers as not far from the Second Coming of Christ. Also, Campbell has Geary forced to deal with all of his fleet's ship captains, many of whom revere him, others who simply respect him, and still others outright skeptical and scornful. This brings a nice balance to the drama and gives Geary some weight as a character.

Trouble is, Campbell doesn't get into the meat of all that until we're about halfway into the book. The first half strictly focuses on Geary's helping the fleet escape the star at which they were ambushed. So the action kicks in very quickly. But we don't really know, and thus feel for, the principals yet. These scenes will appeal mainly to military SF fans enamored of straightforward accounts of battle technique. But the necessary dramatic tension isn't as strong as it could be, because we don't yet have a personal stake in everyone's fates.

Eventually, Campbell gives us that stake, and the second half contains both better drama and action. Perhaps the most sobering and relevant section of the book comes when Geary discovers, to his horror, that over the years the Alliance, for all its talk of honor and valor, has abnegated many of the rules of war. Geary has to stop some of his ships from leaving Syndic prisoners to die on captured vessels set to self-destruct. That the Syndic would do the same thing to Alliance prisoners is not a justification Geary is willing to accept. No matter your victories in battle, if war allows you to become as evil as your enemy, to dispense with the moral high ground in the interest of expediency and petty vengeance, then you have already lost. Today, when we see how our own country has been shamed — or at least, anyone in it with a conscience has been shamed — by our government's actions in Gitmo and Abu Ghraib, this is the most chilling section of the book by far.

The characters become more fleshed out as the story progresses, though not all Campbell's choices are good here. For one thing, he relies too heavily on letting us hear Geary's every inner thought in italicized text. This is an old convention, I know, but it's best used sparingly. Campbell gives us entire paragraphs of Geary's inner turmoil, which has the ironic effect of making the whole affair seem shallow rather than deep. A little subtext often goes a longer way than simply laying everything a character is thinking and feeling right out there on the nose. Also, there's a civilian character, Co-President Rione of the Callas Republic (an Alliance ally), who essentially takes on the role of Geary's Conscience. It did get to the point where, after seeing her pop up once too often to give Geary one of her smug "do you really know what you're doing?" lectures, I was ready for him to tell her to get the fuck off his bridge. But mostly, I did grow to like this crew, if not as well as those of the *Michaelson* from the Paul Sinclair books. So it is that a fair first half followed by a strong second half means a good book overall and a very promising series to come.