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AMERICANS IN THE ROYAL NAVY: IN SERVICE TO THE KING

PROFESSOR AUTHORS BOOK ON A HISTORIC TWIST.

by [Jim Hanchett](#) | July 13, 2020*Above: Sean Heuvel**Read time: about 1 min*

If the face of the 18th century navy captain on the cover of Sean Heuvel's new book looks vaguely familiar, there's a good reason – they're family. Captain John Loring is a distant cousin to Heuvel, a professor in the [Department of Leadership and American Studies](#).

Heuvel is the co-editor of a newly published book about Loring and other Americans who served in the Royal Navy during its wars against France. *From Across the Sea: North Americans in Nelson's Navy* is a compilation of biographical and thematic essays that explore the varied contributions Heuvel's cousin and other Americans made to Great Britain's military just a few decades after the American Revolution.

The book answers a puzzling and rarely considered question: Why did the Americans go to war on behalf of their young nation's former tormenter and enemy? The essays reveal a range of answers, including a version of "show me the money:" a significant number of them volunteered for service of their own free will, lured into the Royal Navy by visions of adventure and prize money. Others, like Loring, were loyalist exiles – driven out of America during the American Revolution – who sought redemption and status by pursuing naval service.

"My interest in this topic originated several years ago after conducting some family history research," Heuvel said. He discovered that his cousins John Loring as well as Admiral Sir John Wentworth Loring both served in the Royal Navy. "I grew fascinated by this and wanted to explore why their lives took them on this particular path."

Heuvel's co-editor on the book is John A. Rodgaard, a retired Navy captain who served for 41 years, followed by work with several agencies including the CIA. Heuvel was assisted by several faculty members from Christopher Newport's [History Department](#) in his research, including Phil Hamilton, Sheri Shuck-Hall and Sarah Chace.
