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Quarter-deck and Fo'c's'le

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Lawson, Richard. *Strange Soldiering*. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1963. 176p.

This is a true adventure story of the events in the Congo during the height of the internecine warfare between the factions of Gizenga, Tshombe, Kalonji, and Mobutu. It is told by Major Richard Lawson, British Regular Army officer on 'exchange' duty with a Nigerian brigade keeping the peace in Kasai Province of the central Congo. Major Lawson's hair-raising escapades during his four-month tour are too unbelievable to be anything but true. Written matter-of-factly and with wry humor, the book is a graphic portrayal of the disintegration of social and administrative order under the guise of 'independence.' It is a story of unreasoned, savage violence by undisciplined, illiterate troops; of incredible suffering and courage displayed by the missionaries and nuns who stayed behind; of self-styled generals, kings, and prime ministers; and of efficient and methodical leadership and organization by UN troops from dozens of countries. Though one may suspect that Major Lawson took far more liberties with his superior's instructions than the normal British officer is wont to do, the foreword by his commander substantiates the validity of the stories the Major tells. The book has no grandiose message for the world—far from it. Instead, it is an excellent reflection, from a primary source, of the dangers of independence to a people unprepared to assume the responsibilities that independence entails.

F. Kozaczka, Lieutenant Colonel, U.S. Air Force

Merrill, James M. *Quarter-deck and Fo'c's'le*. Chicago: Rand McNally, 1963. 509p.

This is indeed a unique volume of naval history that will quicken the pulse of every patriotic American reader. It certainly holds special significance for all those who have ever served under the 'blue and gold.' *Quarter-deck and Fo'c's'le* takes advantage of a rich, little-known reservoir of naval writings by the very men who served. This stirring book contains edited letters, essays, eyewitness accounts, ballads, journals, logbooks, and war diaries, written by officers and men who served from the Revolution to the present day. The purpose of the volume is to let the sailors of the United States Navy tell their own story, and tell it they do, in a most commendable manner. The reader will get a sense of continuity, and of the ultimate brotherhood of all those who have ever served, from the lowest to the highest in the fleet. The reader will meet Midshipman Fanning on John Paul Jones's *Bonhomme Richard*; Seaman Shaw and his mates, held for

ransom by the Barbary pirates; newly enlisted Carpenter's Mate Holbrook, shocked by the appalling conditions aboard a gunboat in New York Harbor; Chaplain Taylor at the court martial and hanging of a seaman; and many others. In addition, one will be stirred by twentieth century epics such as the loss of the dirigible *Akron*, the rescue of a submarine crew trapped for 37 hours, and the Battle of the Java Sea as seen by a naval aviator aboard the intrepid *Houston*. In few other books are the illustrious traditions of the United States Navy related with such striking impact by the men best qualified to tell the story.

J. H. Koach, Lieutenant Commander, U.S. Navy

Tregaskis, Richard. *Vietnam Diary*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1963. 401p.

Richard Tregaskis has written another 'Diary' about another war. He discusses in typical Tregaskis style his observations and experiences during the time he spent with the Marine and Army helicopter units, the Special Forces, the MAAG personnel, and the Junk fleet. Of special interest is his description of the strategic hamlets. The book presents a firsthand account of the kind of war that Americans are fighting today in Vietnam. It is a war considerably different from any war they have fought before; the author makes this point vividly. In his closing lines, Tregaskis predicts, 'War will be going on in Vietnam, and other countries like Vietnam, for many years, all over the world.' And you are somehow left with the distinct feeling that Americans will be involved in these wars.

R. C. Rosacker, Lieutenant Colonel, U.S. Marine Corps

Fleming, Thomas J. *Beat the Last Drum*. New York: St Martin, 1963. 375p.

This is an extremely interesting and readable account of the last great battle of the American Revolution. The author takes particular pains to provide a great amount of detail and background of events leading up to the siege of Yorktown. The French contribution to victory, especially the efforts of French commanders, is carefully depicted. The British position is also clearly set forth, with emphasis on the Clinton-Cornwallis dispute, and the failure of the British Admiral Graves to view the campaign in its full perspective. The American forces are well handled by the writer,