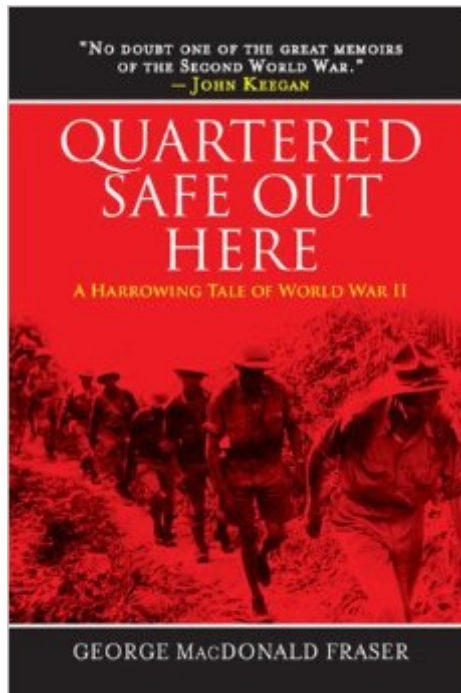


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# Quartered Safe Out Here: A Harrowing Tale Of World War II



## Synopsis

George MacDonald Fraser's beloved for his series of Flashman historical novels offers an action-packed memoir of his experiences in Burma during World War II. Fraser offers a firsthand glimpse at the camaraderie, danger, and satisfactions of service. A substantial epilogue, occasioned by the fiftieth anniversary of V-J Day in 1995, adds poignancy to a volume that eminent military historian John Keegan described as "one of the great personal memoirs of the Second World War." In this rattling-good memoir, novelist, historian, and screenwriter Fraser vividly recounts the nerve-racking frontline action he saw while serving as a nineteen-year-old soldier during what turned out to be the last great land campaign of World War II; the British army's ferocious campaign against the Japanese in Burma. The realism of his story, combined with the skills of a talented novelist, create a book of sentiment and excitement. This is unforgettable reading, both for fans of Fraser's novels and for anyone interested in one of the great battles of World War II. Skyhorse Publishing, along with our Arcade, Good Books, Sports Publishing, and Yucca imprints, is proud to publish a broad range of biographies, autobiographies, and memoirs. Our list includes biographies on well-known historical figures like Benjamin Franklin, Nelson Mandela, and Alexander Graham Bell, as well as villains from history, such as Heinrich Himmler, John Wayne Gacy, and O. J. Simpson. We have also published survivor stories of World War II, memoirs about overcoming adversity, first-hand tales of adventure, and much more. While not every title we publish becomes a New York Times bestseller or a national bestseller, we are committed to books on subjects that are sometimes overlooked and to authors whose work might not otherwise find a home.

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## Customer Reviews

George MacDonald Fraser, who has written many successful fiction books based on well researched history quite often starring his very British Flashman character, writes a chronicle of his own personal experiences in the final stages of WWII fighting the Japanese as a 19 year old member of a rifle company that is composed of a handful of men run by a sergeant and a corporal. Fraser, who just recently passed away, writes of his first hand experiences in a very descriptive personal way, capturing the various English dialects of his fellow citizen soldiers expressing all their frustrations of life in harsh conditions in the jungle dealing with swamps, leaches, mosquitoes, questionable orders but generally good leadership although sometimes well questioned by the troops. Fraser gives you an excellent description of what it was like in the field, mixed with the real humor from the men who bonded close together, although having their differences with occasional culture clashes; they generally endure their punishment with a delightful sarcasm. And Fraser gives you the full flavor of the different troops in the field such as the courageous Gurkha soldiers, Indians and native tribesmen that fight with the British while also interacting with the tribes inhabiting the Burma jungles often caught between the two sides. Fraser does not write a political correct book and he is quite clear about that, which makes the book a realistic read, he echoes what the troops in the field really felt and he makes no bones how they felt about their enemy. An excellent picture of very young and veteran soldiers in the field that gives you the feel for the tremendous challenges and conditions they faced.

Fraser's is one of the finest war memoirs I've ever read, and for so many reasons. He has a gift for illustrating the life of the combat soldier in ways that are at once terrifying, hilarious, and sometimes just plain bizarre. His discovery in the field that he had a gift for brewing tea is unforgettable, as is his account of falling down a well in the middle of a battle, his comrades cracking jokes about it as the chaos and noise of battle rages all around them. Among the most remarkable things about Fraser's book are his comparisons between the official histories of what happened with what he actually experienced; the official history of one engagement, for example, records only that a tank was destroyed and so many men killed or wounded on each side, but Fraser describes what that burning tank SMELLED like and how it attracted the attention of Japanese soldiers throughout the night. These are the things we rarely get from ordinary histories of battles and wars. His book does not reduce the soldiers to a list of statistics. One learns to care about them or loathe them almost as much as Fraser did. The final few chapters are particularly sobering. We owe so much to the men and women who fought and served in this war. Fraser's book has many important and enduring

lessons for all of us, but particularly for those of us born in the postwar boom. Highly, highly recommended!

As a young man, George MacDonald Fraser was a "ranker" (enlisted man) assigned to the 17th (Black Cat) Division of the British 14th Indian Army as it pursued the Japanese south through Burma after the latter's resounding defeat at the gates of India, at Imphal. Fraser's narrative history of his personal contribution to this campaign is *QUARTERED SAFE OUT HERE*. Written decades after the fact, this book does not pretend to be a comprehensive history of the Burma Theater in the last months of World War II. Rather, it's the war from the perspective of Nine Section in which Fraser fought, first as a Private, then Lance Corporal. (A "section" is the smallest operating unit of an infantry platoon, i.e. 8-10 men.) Besides being a vivid retelling of the author's recollections to the extent that he remembers, it's also an intimate portrait of the organization, weapons, tactics and camaraderie of the British Army at section level at that time, place, and conflict. It's a story told with the humor, intelligence and introspection that comes with maturity and hindsight. And, though some of Fraser's bitterness towards his old foe occasionally shows, age does dull the sharp edges. "I remember watching, a year or two ago, televised interviews with old Japanese soldiers who had fought in the war ... sitting in their gardens in their sports shirts, blinking cheerfully in the sunlight, reminiscing in throat-clearing croaks about battles long ago. It crossed my mind: were any of you on the Pyawbwe slope, and lived to tell the tale? Well, if they did, at this time of day I don't mind." Fraser is a truly gifted writer. After VJ Day, he applied for, and was awarded, a commission as a subaltern (2nd Lieutenant) in a Scottish Highland division posted to the Middle East. In this capacity, his experiences served as the basis for his quite wonderful and comedic McAuslan series of fictional stories (collected and available from .co.uk in *THE COMPLETE MCAUSLAN*). I unreservedly recommend both of these two books to anyone who has ever served in any branch of the armed forces, no matter what country. I myself was in the U.S. Navy, and Fraser's works are in the "can't put down" category.

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