

BOOK REVIEWS

Selection of books for review is based on the editors' opinions regarding possible reader interest and on the availability of the book to the editors. Occasional selections may include books on topics somewhat peripheral to the subject matter ordinarily considered acceptable.



SORRY ABOUT THAT

Title One of Our H-Bombs Is Missing

Author Flora Lewis

Publisher McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1967

Pages 270

Price \$5.95

Reviewer Robert M. Jefferson

At 10:22 AM on January 17, 1966, high above southern Spain, an episode in the unceasing history of man triggered a series of events that affected the lives of almost everyone in the world. This book is an attempt to review that tragedy and its consequences through the eyes of the hundreds of Spanish and American citizens involved. The story begins with 11 airmen, their backgrounds and personalities, and ends with a description of some of the changes wrought in the lives of the villagers of the Palomares region. Between these end points the author reports experiences of the individuals who participated in these events. Unfortunately, the tendency for some individuals to color and enlarge upon their experiences, and the need for others to observe security regulations, have led to some distortion. Within these recognizable difficulties of personal recollection and official secrecy, Miss Lewis amassed a broad collection of information on the events surrounding the tragedy of the accident and the adventure of the search, finding, and recovery of the missing weapons. The entire episode, from beginning to end, is a story more engrossing than any fiction, and Miss Lewis has written an

engaging account which should find a wide and interested audience. In most cases, the errors contained in the narrative are of minor importance, but in some instances the misinterpretations are condemning.

The narrative skillfully reveals the nature of the intimate, almost inseparable, marriage between ignorance and fear. The secretive attitude of both the Spanish and American governments and the fear that it generated are developed with the same degree of subtlety as the incident itself developed. This observation, coupled with the fact that, like it or not, everyone the world over is a part of the complex political-military machinations of mankind, appears to be the most pertinent point of the book. This being the case, it seems to this reviewer that Miss Lewis had an obligation to counter ignorance with fact, thus effectively overcoming unreasoning fear. Instead, the author counters many factual explanations by introducing a nagging shadow of doubt in an attempt to dramatize an already dramatic situation.

In a technical sense, the book offers only the barest of information. For example, the specific techniques of ocean recovery are overshadowed by the dramatic incidents encountered in the "inner space" of the Mediterranean. From this standpoint, the reader who expects to find useful information will be disappointed even though entertained.

Miss Lewis' book should be of interest to a great number of people, for it gives a personal glimpse of an event of our time. On the other hand, this reviewer thinks the technically educated reader will find some aspects of the book either amusing or irritating, depending upon his viewpoint. From the standpoint that it will represent an

authoritative review of the Palomares incident and thus serve in some ways to introduce new doubts into the minds of uninformed readers, it is recommended that the book be reviewed by those in informed positions, so they might eventually counteract some of the questions it will generate.

Robert M. Jefferson, Supervisor of Reactor Applications for Sandia Laboratory, is a graduate of Michigan Technological University and of the University of New Mexico. Active for the past ten years in the design and operation of nuclear facilities and equipment, he had been involved previously in the special weapons program with the US Air Force. He chaired a special session at the 1966 Winter Meeting in Pittsburgh on the recovery of the missing bomb with special emphasis upon the remote handling techniques involved.

A HIGHLY PERSONALIZED ACCOUNT

Title Thermal Stress and Low Cycle Fatigue

Author S. S. Manson

Publisher McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1966

Pages xi + 404

Price \$16.50

Reviewer L. F. Coffin, Jr.

To this reviewer's knowledge, this is the first book by a single author to appear on the important subject of thermal stress and low cycle fatigue. This area of inquiry