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Book Report: Gone for Soldiers -

As Civil War Reenactors, we often spend a lot of time focusing both our research and pleasure reading on a very short period in history between the years 1861 and 1865. How America arrived at the conflict and what happened after it ended had a significant impact on our nation as well, and makes for an equally interesting read. The book, "Gone for Soldiers" by Jeff Shaara is a stand alone book about America's War with Mexico between 1847 and 1848, but it can also be seen as a prequel to his civil war books and is an enlightening window on the characters who would later prosecute that conflict. Gone for Soldiers follows the exploits of General Winfield Scott and his trusted engineer, Robert E. Lee as they fight multiple battles on the long march to Mexico City. Jeff Shaara convincingly weaves historically accurate information along with deeply personal characteriza-

tions. He explores the relationships of many of the young West Point officers who would ultimately later stand across the battlefields from each other during the civil war with these close friendships being severely tested. Seeing Lee as a young captain, with Longstreet and Jackson as inexperienced lieutenants is particularly fascinating. Lee's hair-raising reconnaissance mission deep into enemy territory that lands him hiding for his life under a log for the better part of a night and a day, while Mexican troops linger only feet away, was especially exiting and added to an already engrossing page-turner. This book only added to my already fanatical appreciation of Robert E. Lee as an unparalleled man of character. I would highly recommend it to my fellow civil war reenactors as an enjoyable source of additional insight to those characters we esteem and represent.