

= Final Blackout =

Final Blackout is a dystopic science fiction novel by author L. Ron Hubbard . The novel is set in the future and follows a man known as " the Lieutenant " as he restores order to England after a world war . First published in serialized format in 1940 in the science fiction magazine Astounding Science Fiction , Final Blackout was published in book form in 1948 by The Hadley Publishing Co .. Author Services Inc. published a hardcover edition of the book in 1988 , and in 1989 the Church of Scientology @-@ affiliated organization Bridge Publications said that a film director named Christopher Cain had signed a contract to write and direct a movie version based on the book .

The novel was generally well received by literature critics , and is seen as an early classic of the Golden Age of Science Fiction . It has received positive mention in the Chicago Sun @-@ Times and the Daily News of Los Angeles , and has been used in a science @-@ fiction writing class at California State Polytechnic University , Pomona .

= = Publication history = =

The story appeared in print in a 3 @-@ part serialized format , beginning with the April 1940 issue of Astounding Science Fiction . Final Blackout was first published in book form in 1948 by The Hadley Publishing Co. in an edition of 1 @,@ 000 copies and with a new preface by Hubbard . The book was re @-@ released in a hardcover format in 1988 by the Church of Spiritual Technology subsidiary company Author Services Inc .

In 1989 , Young Guns film director Christopher Cain optioned the rights to Final Blackout and developed a script for a possible film @-@ version of the book . The film was not made . According to the Church of Scientology company Bridge Publications , Cain signed a contract to write a screenplay based on the book and to direct the film . " The book is massive in scope and transcends time . It 's a powerful look at the idiocy and futility of war . I look forward to making ' Final Blackout ' into a major movie , " said Cain in a press release put out by Bridge Publications . An audiobook was released by Bridge Publications in 1991 and read by Planet of the Apes actor Roddy McDowall , who also voiced audiobook versions of Hubbard 's novels Battlefield Earth and Fear .

= = Plot = =

Set in the future , the novel follows the rise of a Lieutenant (known in the book only as " The Lieutenant ") as he becomes dictator of England after a world war . The Lieutenant leads a ragtag army fighting for survival in a Europe ravaged by 30 years of atomic , biological and conventional warfare . As a result of the most recent war , a form of biological warfare called soldier ? s sickness has ravaged England , and America was devastated by nuclear war . At the start of the novel , a quarantine placed on England due to the soldier ? s sickness prevents The Lieutenant from returning to England from his encampment in France . The Lieutenant commands the Fourth Brigade , which is composed of one hundred and sixty @-@ eight soldiers from multiple nations , leading them throughout France in search of food , supplies , arms and ammunition . Soon , Captain Malcolm informs The Lieutenant that all field officers are being recalled to General Headquarters (G.H.Q.) with their brigades to report to General Victor , the commanding officer at G.H.Q.

Upon the brigade 's arrival at G.H.Q. , The Lieutenant is informed by General Victor and his adjutant Colonel Smythe that he is to be reassigned and will be stripped of his command . He is confined to his quarters and is told his entire brigade will be broken apart and assimilated into another brigade . Meanwhile , in the barracks at G.H.Q. , the Fourth Brigade learns of crucial news through back channels : a vaccine exists for the soldier 's sickness , and General Victor ? s plans for their brigade . The men decide to rebel , and break through the defenses of the barracks , free The Lieutenant and kill Captain Malcolm . The Fourth Brigade successfully escapes G.H.Q. in France and begins to make their way to London , along with other soldiers who are dissatisfied with General Victor 's command . A battle ensues between General Victor 's men and The Lieutenant 's troops . The Lieutenant and his expanded Fourth Brigade eventually successfully take control of London and

subsequently all of England and Wales .

The Lieutenant 's government runs smoothly for years , until the battleship U.S.S. New York arrives from the U.S. carrying two United States Senators and Captain Johnson , captain of the New York and commander of the U.S. fleet . Under threat from the U.S. battleship , The Lieutenant negotiates terms to transfer power to the Senators ' associates ? General Victor and Colonel Smythe . If anything happens to General Victor and Colonel Smythe , the country would be controlled by its officer corps. chaired by the Lieutenants confidant Swinburne . In addition , The Lieutenant requests that immigration of Americans to England be kept to no more than 100 @,@ 000 per month , and demands that a favorable price be set for the purchase of land from their English owners . After these terms are established , The Lieutenant opens fire on General Victor and his men and a battle ensues . General Victor , Colonel Smythe and The Lieutenant and several of his men are killed . Years later The Lieutenant ? s men still control England , and a flag flies honoring his memory . A memorial plaque at Byward Gate on Tower Hill reads : " When that command remains , no matter what happens to its officer , he has not failed . "

= = Reception = =

Final Blackout is seen as an early classic of the Golden Age of Science Fiction . In his book The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction and Fantasy , Donald H. Tuck described the book as " Hubbard 's masterpiece " . Thomas D. Clareson writes in Understanding Contemporary American Science Fiction that prior to formalizing Dianetics and Scientology , Hubbard was " perhaps best known for Final Blackout " . In his book Scientology : The Now Religion , George Malko writes that Hubbard 's works including Slaves of Sleep , Kingslayer , Typewriter in the Sky , Fear , Death 's Deputy , and Final Blackout " were eagerly welcomed by devoted fans " . In his 1967 book Seekers of Tomorrow : Masters of Modern Science Fiction , Sam Moskowitz writes that the book " ... was a stunning achievement , certainly the most powerful and readable ' warning ' story that had appeared in science fiction to that date . " Moskowitz comments : " The progress of today 's events has made much of Final Blackout prophetic " . Astounding reviewer P. Schuyler Miller described the book as one of the most " memorable " serials the magazine had published , saying it would be a " lasting volume . "

Roland J. Green of the Chicago Sun @-@ Times called the book " One of the highwater marks of his [Hubbard 's] literary career " , and " perhaps the best single novel yet of what the Pentagon once so charmingly christened ' the broken @-@ backed war ' after a nuclear exchange " . Jon Stone of NewsNet5.com described Final Blackout and Fear as " pulp in composition and not great in length , they are straight stories with few or no elements of Hubbard 's other career " , and compared the " pages of battles and tactics " in Final Blackout to Hubbard 's later work Battlefield Earth .

Final Blackout and Fear are often cited by critics as the best examples of Hubbard 's pulp fiction works . Chuck Moss of Daily News of Los Angeles called the book " extremely good science fiction " . The book has been included in the curriculum of a science @-@ fiction writing class at California State Polytechnic University , Pomona . Cal Poly Pomona professor Steve Whaley told The Press @-@ Enterprise that he thinks Hubbard was a " damn good storyteller " . Karl Edward Wagner cited Final Blackout as one of the thirteen best science @-@ fiction horror novels .