

the great escape the TRUE story

The Great Escape: The TRUE Story

the great escape the TRUE story is far more intricate and gripping than most people realize. While the 1963 movie "The Great Escape" brought this World War II event into popular culture with its thrilling narrative and star-studded cast, the actual story behind the escape from Stalag Luft III is filled with remarkable acts of ingenuity, courage, and tragedy. Let's dive into the real events, the men behind the escape, and how their daring plan unfolded in a high-security German POW camp.

The Setting: Stalag Luft III

During World War II, Stalag Luft III was a prisoner-of-war camp located near the town of Sagan in Nazi Germany (now Żagań, Poland). It was specifically designed to house Allied airmen. What made this camp unique was the high level of security measures implemented by the Germans, including raised huts with shallow foundations to prevent tunneling and guards watching for any suspicious activity.

Despite these challenges, the prisoners, mainly British and Commonwealth airmen, were determined to escape. Their goal was not just freedom but to disrupt the German war effort by forcing the enemy to divert resources to search for escapees. This determination laid the foundation for one of the most famous POW breakouts in history.

The Planning and Preparation: Ingenious Tactics Against the Odds

The great escape the TRUE story reveals a level of meticulous planning that rivaled military operations. The masterminds behind the escape were a group of officers led by Squadron Leader Roger Bushell, known by his codename "Big X." Bushell was a charismatic and resourceful leader who orchestrated what would become an extraordinary breakout.

Tunneling: The Lifeline to Freedom

Three tunnels—codenamed "Tom," "Dick," and "Harry"—were dug simultaneously to increase the chances of success and confuse the German guards. These tunnels were more than just holes in the ground; they were engineering marvels, complete with wooden supports, ventilation systems, and electric lighting powered by stolen wiring.

The prisoners had to be incredibly creative with limited resources. They fashioned tools from bed boards and cans, disposed of vast quantities of dirt covertly by hiding it in their trousers and scattering it during outdoor exercise, a method famously called "penguinning." The sheer effort involved was staggering, with over 600 men contributing in various capacities.

Forging Documents and Creating Disguises

Escape plans required more than just tunnels. The prisoners forged German identification papers, maps, and travel permits. Tailors and artists among the prisoners crafted civilian clothes and uniforms from scavenged materials. Every detail was scrutinized because one slip could lead to immediate recapture or execution.

This aspect of preparation highlights the diverse talents of the POWs, from artists to linguists, all working together toward a common goal. Their resourcefulness under dire conditions is a testament to human resilience.

The Escape Night: A Moment of Hope and Heartbreak

On the night of March 24-25, 1944, the escape attempt was launched. The plan was for 200 prisoners to flee through the tunnels, but due to delays and increasing risk of discovery, only 76 men managed to make it out before the tunnel was discovered.

The Aftermath: Pursuit and Retribution

The escapees scattered across Europe, hoping to reach neutral countries or Allied lines. However, the German response was swift and brutal. Of the 76 escapees, 73 were recaptured. Tragically, 50 of these men were executed by the Gestapo on Hitler's orders, a war crime that shocked the international community and underscored the high stakes involved.

The remaining escapees were sent back to POW camps or managed to evade capture. The mass execution became a significant piece of post-war investigations, leading to war crime trials.

Legacy and Lessons from the Great Escape

The great escape the TRUE story is not just about a daring breakout; it's about the spirit of resistance, solidarity, and hope under the harshest conditions. The event has inspired countless books, documentaries, and films, but understanding the real story adds depth to the legend.

What Made the Escape So Remarkable?

- **Teamwork:** Over 600 prisoners contributed to the planning, digging, forgery, and logistics, showing an incredible level of cooperation.
- **Ingenuity:** The use of rudimentary tools, makeshift ventilation, and covert dirt disposal demonstrates creative problem-solving.
- **Risk and Sacrifice:** The escapees and planners risked their lives, fully aware of possible consequences.
- **Impact on the War:** Although the escape didn't free many men permanently, it forced the Germans to allocate resources to hunt escapees,

indirectly aiding the Allied war effort.

Modern Reflections and Historical Importance

For historians, the great escape represents a fascinating case of resistance within captivity. It also serves as a reminder of the harsh realities of war and the courage individuals can summon in the face of oppression. Many of the men involved continued to serve with distinction after the war, carrying the lessons of perseverance and leadership.

Visiting the site of Stalag Luft III today, now a museum in Poland, offers a poignant look at the conditions and bravery of those involved. It's a powerful tribute to human endurance and the unyielding desire for freedom.

The great escape the TRUE story continues to inspire not just as a thrilling adventure but as a profound example of hope, ingenuity, and the human spirit's refusal to be broken—even in the darkest times.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is 'The Great Escape' true story based on?

The true story behind 'The Great Escape' is based on the mass escape by Allied prisoners of war from Stalag Luft III, a German POW camp during World War II in 1944.

Did the real Great Escape happen exactly like the movie?

No, while the movie captures the spirit of the event, many details and characters were fictionalized or dramatized for entertainment purposes.

How many prisoners escaped during the real Great Escape?

Seventy-six prisoners escaped through the tunnel during the actual Great Escape.

What happened to the prisoners who escaped?

Of the 76 escapees, 73 were recaptured, and 50 of them were executed by the Gestapo on Hitler's orders, violating the Geneva Convention.

Who organized the real Great Escape?

The escape was organized primarily by Squadron Leader Roger Bushell, known by his codename 'Big X,' who was a Royal Air Force officer.

Where was Stalag Luft III located?

Stalag Luft III was located near the town of Sagan, in Lower Silesia,

Germany, which is now Żagań, Poland.

What methods did prisoners use to dig the tunnels in the true story?

Prisoners used makeshift tools, concealed tunnel entrances, and disposed of dirt by scattering it discreetly around the camp to avoid detection.

Why was the Great Escape significant in WWII history?

The Great Escape demonstrated the resilience and ingenuity of POWs, boosted Allied morale, and exposed German war crimes after the execution of recaptured prisoners.

Are there memorials or museums dedicated to the Great Escape?

Yes, there are memorials at the former site of Stalag Luft III in Poland and museums dedicated to POW experiences and the Great Escape story worldwide.

Additional Resources

The Great Escape: The TRUE Story Behind the Legendary WWII Breakout

the great escape the TRUE story is a fascinating account of one of the most daring and meticulously planned prisoner-of-war (POW) breakouts during World War II. Immortalized by the 1963 film "The Great Escape," this event has captivated audiences worldwide with its portrayal of bravery, ingenuity, and resilience. However, the real-life events behind this legendary escape differ in significant ways from the Hollywood depiction. This article delves into the authentic history of The Great Escape, examining the facts, the participants, and the aftermath of this extraordinary wartime episode.

Understanding The Great Escape: Background and Context

The true story of The Great Escape took place in March 1944 at Stalag Luft III, a German POW camp specifically designed to hold captured Allied airmen. Located in the province of Lower Silesia (now in Poland), the camp was considered escape-proof due to its location and security measures. However, the prisoners' determination to regain freedom sparked one of the most elaborate escape attempts in military history.

Unlike many other escapes during the war, The Great Escape was not a spontaneous act of desperation but a calculated, large-scale operation. It involved extensive tunneling, coordination among hundreds of prisoners, and the creation of forged documents and civilian clothing. The primary goal was to disrupt German resources by forcing them to divert significant manpower to recapture the escapees.

The Reality vs. The Movie

The 1963 film, while iconic, takes creative liberties that diverge from the authentic narrative. In reality, the escape involved 76 men, not dozens as portrayed, and the plan was far more complex and less action-packed than Hollywood dramatized. The movie's characters are composites of several real individuals, and many aspects, such as the dramatic motorcycle chase, are fictionalized for entertainment purposes.

The true escape was marked by strategic patience and meticulous planning rather than cinematic heroics. The prisoners operated under constant threat of discovery, with tunnel digging complicated by sandy soil and extreme security measures including seismographs and guard towers.

Key Elements of The Great Escape the TRUE Story

Planning and Preparation

The escape plan was spearheaded by Squadron Leader Roger Bushell, known as "Big X," who masterminded the operation. Bushell organized the prisoners into specialized groups responsible for different tasks:

- **Diggers:** Responsible for excavating the tunnels, working in shifts to avoid detection.
- **Tailors and Forgers:** Created civilian clothes and forged identity papers essential for the escapees' survival outside the camp.
- **Scroungers:** Gathered necessary materials, including tools, maps, and food supplies.
- **Security Teams:** Monitored German guards and ensured the secrecy of the operation.

Three tunnels were dug simultaneously and codenamed "Tom," "Dick," and "Harry." The prisoners hoped that if one tunnel was discovered, the others might still be usable. Ultimately, the tunnel "Harry" was the one used for the escape.

The Escape Night

On the night of March 24-25, 1944, 76 prisoners crawled through the 336-foot tunnel and emerged outside the camp perimeter. The prisoners had planned to send groups of ten at a time, but delays led to fewer men escaping before the tunnel's exit was discovered by German guards.

The escapees split up, intending to reach neutral or Allied territories through various routes. Unfortunately, the vast majority were recaptured within days or weeks, a testament to the extensive German manhunt that

followed.

The Aftermath and Consequences

One of the most tragic aspects of The Great Escape is the reprisal executed by Adolf Hitler. Infuriated by the mass breakout, Hitler ordered the execution of 50 recaptured prisoners as a warning. This brutal response violated the Geneva Conventions and remains a dark chapter in the history of POW treatment.

The executions sparked outrage among the Allied forces and were investigated after the war, leading to the prosecution of several Nazi officials responsible for the killings.

The Legacy of The Great Escape

The Great Escape the TRUE story is not only about the physical act of breaking out but also about the spirit of resistance and camaraderie among POWs. The operation demonstrated remarkable ingenuity, with prisoners adapting to limited resources and harsh conditions.

Impact on POW Treatment and Military Strategy

The escape highlighted the importance of vigilance and security in POW camps, prompting the Germans to tighten controls. For the Allies, it underscored the value of psychological warfare—forcing the enemy to expend resources on recapturing escapees rather than frontline combat.

The event also boosted morale among Allied forces and civilians, symbolizing hope and defiance against oppressive forces.

Historical Documentation and Survivor Accounts

Much of what we know about The Great Escape comes from firsthand accounts by survivors, official military reports, and post-war investigations. Books such as Paul Brickhill's "The Great Escape," written by a former prisoner, provide detailed insights that influenced the film adaptation.

These sources offer a more nuanced understanding of the complexities and human stories behind the breakout, contrasting with dramatized versions that focus primarily on entertainment.

Comparing The Great Escape With Other Wartime Breakouts

While The Great Escape is the most famous, it was one among several notable POW escapes during World War II. For example:

- **The Colditz Escape:** Another high-profile breakout from Oflag IV-C Colditz Castle, known for its repeated and inventive escape attempts.
- **The Wooden Horse Escape:** A 1943 escape involving the construction of a vaulting horse used to conceal tunnel digging operations.

What sets *The Great Escape* apart is its scale and impact, involving hundreds of prisoners in a single, coordinated effort, rather than smaller, isolated attempts.

Analyzing *The Great Escape*'s Historical Accuracy and Cultural Significance

The enduring popularity of *The Great Escape* stems from its embodiment of universal themes—courage, ingenuity, and the quest for freedom. Yet, understanding the true story reveals the complexities behind these themes. The prisoners faced not only the physical challenges of escape but also the harsh realities of war, including betrayal, loss, and the high stakes of resistance.

Today, the site of Stalag Luft III is commemorated by memorials honoring the men who participated and those who lost their lives. The story continues to inspire military historians, filmmakers, and audiences alike, serving as a powerful reminder of human resilience under extreme adversity.

In exploring the great escape the TRUE story, one gains a deeper appreciation for the sacrifices and strategic brilliance that defined this extraordinary chapter in World War II history. The legacy of these men endures, reminding us that even in captivity, the human spirit strives for liberty and dignity.

[The Great Escape The True Story](#)

the great escape the true story: *The True Story of the Great Escape* Jonathan F. Vance, Simon Pearson, 2019-08-30 The real history behind the classic war movie and the men who plotted the daring escape from a Nazi POW camp. Between dusk and dawn on the night of March 24th-25th 1944, a small army of Allied soldiers crawled through tunnels in Germany in a covert operation the likes of which the Third Reich had never seen. The prison break from Stalag Luft III in eastern Germany was the largest of its kind in the Second World War. Seventy-nine Allied soldiers and airmen made it outside the wire—but only three made it outside Nazi Germany. Fifty were executed by the Gestapo. In this book Jonathan Vance tells the incredible story that was made famous by the 1963 film *The Great Escape*. It is a classic tale of prisoners and their wardens in a battle of wits and wills. The brilliantly conceived escape plan is overshadowed only by the colorful, daring (and sometimes very funny) crew who executed it—literally under the noses of German guards. From the men's first days in Stalag Luft III and the forming of bonds among them, to the tunnel building, amazing escape, and eventual capture, Vance's history is a vivid, compelling look at one of the greatest "exfiltration" missions of all time. "Shows the variety and depth of the men sent into harm's way during World War II, something emphasized by the population of Stalag Luft III. Most of the

Allied POWs were flyers, with all the technical, tactical and planning skills that profession requires. Such men are independent thinkers, craving open air and wide-open spaces, which meant that an obsession with escape was almost inevitable.” —John D. Gresham

the great escape the true story: *The True Story of the Great Escape* Jonathan F Vance, 2019-01-30 It shows the variety and depth of the men sent into harms way during World War II, something emphasised by the population of Stalag Luft III. Most of the Allied POWs were flyers, with all the technical, tactical and planning skills that profession requires. Such men are independent thinkers, craving open air and wide-open spaces, which meant than an obsession with escape was almost inevitable' - John D Gresham Between dusk and dawn on the night of March 24th-25th 1944, a small army of Allied soldiers crawled through tunnels in Germany in a covert operation the likes of which the Third Reich had never seen before. The prison break from Stalag Luft III in eastern Germany was the largest of its kind in the Second World War. Seventy-nine Allied soldiers and airmen made it outside the wire - but only three made it outside Nazi Germany. Fifty were executed by the Gestapo. Jonathan Vance tells the incredible story that was made famous by the 1963 film *The Great Escape*. The escape is a classic tale of prisoner and their wardens in a battle of wits and wills. The brilliantly conceived escape plan is overshadowed only by the colourful, daring (and sometimes very funny) crew who executed it - literally under the noses of German guards. From their first days in Stalag Luft III and the forming of bonds key to such exploits, to the tunnel building, amazing escape and eventual capture, Vance's history is a vivid, compelling look at one of the greatest 'exfiltration' missions of all time.

the great escape the true story: *This Great Escape* Andrew Steinmetz, 2013-09-18 SHORTLISTED FOR THE \$60,000 HILARY WESTON WRITERS TRUST PRIZE FOR NONFICTION “What the hell kind of great escape is this? No one escapes!” —L.B. Mayer, on the 1963 film He had fifty-seven seconds of screen time in the most lavish POW film Hollywood ever produced. He was blond. A Gestapo agent. Sauntering down the aisles of a speeding train, he speaks in terse German to Richard Attenborough, Gordon Jackson, David McCallum. The film is *The Great Escape* (by John Sturges, starring Steve McQueen); the actor, though uncredited, is Michael Paryla. He was part Jewish. Shortly after filming he died. In *This Great Escape*, Andrew Steinmetz tenderly reconstructs the life of a man seen by millions yet recognized by no one, whose history—from childhood flight from Nazism to suspicious death twenty years later—intersects bitterly, ironically, and often movingly with the plot of Sturges’s great war film. Splicing together documentary materials with correspondence, diary entries, and Steinmetz’s own travel journal, *This Great Escape* does more than reconstruct the making of a cinema classic: it is a poignant and moving testament to the complexity of human experience, a portrait of a family for whom acting was a matter of survival, and proof that our most anonymous, uncredited, and undocumented moments can brush against the zeitgeist of world history.

the great escape the true story: *Stalag Luft III* Charles Messenger, 2019-03-30 In early 1942 the Third Reich opened a maximum security prisoner-of-war camp in Lower Silesia for captured Allied airmen. Called Stalag Luft III, the camp soon came to contain some of the most inventive escapers ever known. The escapers were led by Squadron Leader Roger Bushell, codenamed 'Big X'. In March 1944, Bushell masterminded an attempt to smuggle hundreds of POWs down a tunnel built right under the noses of their guards. In fact, 76 Allied airmen clambered into the tunnel and only three made successful escapes. This remarkable breakout would be immortalized in the famous Hollywood film *The Great Escape*, in which the bravery of the men was rightly celebrated. Behind the scenes photographs from the film are included in this definitive pictorial work on the most famous POW camp of World War II.

the great escape the true story: *The Grand Escape* Neal Bascomb, 2018-09-25 “A grand adventure,” this story of the Allied POWs who staged one of history’s greatest escapes from prison camp is “narrative non-fiction at its finest” (Booklist). At the height of World War I, as battles raged in the trenches and in the air, another struggle for survival was being waged in the most notorious POW camp in all of Germany: Holzminden. A land-locked Alcatraz of sorts, it was home to the most

troublesome Allied prisoners—and the most talented at escape. The Grand Escape tells the remarkable tale of a band of pilots who pulled off an ingenious plan and made it out of enemy territory in the biggest breakout of WWI, inspiring their countrymen in the darkest hours of the war. “Page-turning suspense and colorful detail. . . .” —Booklist, starred review “Suspenseful reading . . . A fine escapade.” —Kirkus Reviews, starred review “A fantastic pick for avid history readers.” —School Library Journal, starred review

the great escape the true story: Stanford Tuck Helen Doe, 2023-11-30 This new volume corrects the previous faults and presents the story of a pilot who was the right man at the right time. — Air Classics The first full reappraisal of one of Britain’s great fighter aces, this book examines the truth behind Tuck’s 1956 biography, *Fly for Your Life*. It looks at the evidence behind the myths, checks out some of the exaggerated stories and reveals the real Stanford Tuck. In January 1942 Bob Tuck was the top-scoring British fighter ace with an official score of 29 enemy aircraft destroyed. With film-star looks he was the glamorous role model for the RAF publicity machine and an eager press and public wanting wartime heroes. He had joined the RAF in 1935 and quickly showed his excellent flying skills. In 1940 his Spitfire squadron was fighting over Dunkirk where he proved himself an expert shot. During the Battle of Britain his legendary prowess grew and he was posted to command a leaderless and demoralized squadron, this time flying Hurricanes. He continued to prove he was an outstanding fighter ace, gaining the rare distinction of three DFCs and then the DSO for his leadership. He was shot down over France in January 1942. Imprisoned in Stalag Luft III. His room-mate was Roger Bushell, the mastermind of the Great Escape and Tuck worked with him on the committee and was to be his partner in the escape. In January 1944 however, around 20 POWs, including Tuck, were purged to a new camp. Still determined to escape, when his camp was moved out on the Long March westwards, Tuck and a Polish officer took a risky chance and made their way east to Russian forces and thence to England. This book reveals a more complex man than the one-dimensional hero of the previous biography. Post war, he became good friends with the Luftwaffe ace, Adolf Galland, and was a key advisor with him on the film, *Battle of Britain*, and, often with his other friend, Douglas Bader, made many media appearances. His health suffered in later years from the impact of his war service and his imprisonment and he died aged 70 in 1987.

the great escape the true story: Homeland Security Guide Donald Chiarella, 2006-04-07 Homeland Security Guide tells the citizen what he needs to know about the current state of terrorism and national defense and natural disaster defense. The layered defense system is featured as well as defense in depth.

the great escape the true story: Hollywood and History Jem Duducu, 2023-09-15 There is no shortage of Hollywood films about historical events, but what do the movies actually get right, and why do they get so much wrong? Hollywood loves a story: good guys versus bad guys, heroes winning the day, and the guy gets the girl. But we all know real life isn't exactly like that, and this is even more true when we look at history. Rarely do the just prevail and the three-act story cannot exist over continents and decades of human interaction. So, when Hollywood decides to exploit history for profit, we end up with a wide array of films. Some are comedies like *Monty Python and the Holy Grail*, others are little more than action films playing dress up like *Gladiator*, and many are Oscar contenders burdened with an enormous sense of self-importance. But very few are historically accurate. From *Cleopatra* to *Da 5 Bloods*, the reality is no matter what Hollywood's intentions are, almost all historical films are an exaggeration or distortion of what really happened. Sometimes the alterations are for the sake of brevity, as watching a movie in real time about the Hundred Years War would literally kill you. Other additions may be out of necessity, since nobody thought to write down the everyday conversations between King Henry VIII and his second wife, Anne Boleyn, for *The Other Boleyn Girl*. And some projects twist the facts to suit a more sinister purpose. In *Hollywood and History*, Jem Duducu takes readers through thousands of years of global history as immortalized and ultimately fictionalized by Hollywood, exploring many facets of the representation of history in movies from the medieval times to the wild west and both World Wars. Along the way, readers will also better understand Hollywood's own history, as it evolved from black and white

silent shorts to the multiplex CGI epics of today. As studios and audiences have matured through the years, so too have their representations of history. Armies will clash, leaders will be slain, empires will fall, and a few historical inaccuracies will be pointed out along the way. A must-read for film and history fans alike.

the great escape the true story: The Blitz, A Very Peculiar History David Arscott, 2012-01-18 Taking a unique look at how Britain survived the bombing of its major cities, 'The Blitz, A Very Peculiar History' tells a story of blackouts, Bletchley Park and bravery during the darkest (literally) period of World War II. From Dunkirk to Dad's Army, explore the many ways in which Britain tried to foil the incoming bomber planes, featuring quirky stories and fascinating trivia about this period of history. Were German paratroopers really dropped disguised as nuns? Find out the answer to this question and many more even more bizarre ones throughout the course of this amazing tale of sacrifice and survival in the face of adversity.

the great escape the true story: Daily Life in Nazi-Occupied Europe Harold J. Goldberg, 2019-10-25 Daily Life in Nazi-Occupied Europe provides readers with information about political and military affairs, economic life, religious life, intellectual life, and other aspects of daily life in those countries occupied by Nazi Germany during World War II. By the end of 1940, the Nazis controlled most of Europe, and in 1941 they invaded the Soviet Union to complete their mission of domination. The pattern of human resistance to the occupation was equally widespread-in every country, at least a significant minority of the population fought for human dignity. Why did so many risk their lives and refuse to accept defeat? This book goes beyond the impact of the occupation on different European countries, examining that impact on individuals who, regardless of what country they lived in, faced a desperate search for food and the constant threat of death. This volume is intended to help readers to see the variety of struggles that contributed to the defeat of the oppressive occupation imposed by the Nazis. Readers will come away with an appreciation of the fact that there were as many types of daily lives as there were individuals under the occupation and that every person in the war had a unique experience.

the great escape the true story: Secret Agent, Unsung Hero Peter Dowding, Ken Spillman, 2023-12-30 Young Australian teacher Bruce Dowding arrived in Paris in 1938, planning only to improve his understanding of French language and culture. Secret Agent, Unsung Hero draws on decades of research to reveal, for the first time, his coming of age as a leader in escape and evasion during World War II. Dowding helped exfiltrate hundreds of Allied servicemen from occupied France and paid the ultimate price. He was beheaded by the Nazis just after his 29th birthday in 1943.

the great escape the true story: Prisoners of War Harold Mytum, Gilly Carr, 2012-09-14 The archaeology of war has revealed evidence of bravery, sacrifice, heroism, cowardice, and atrocities. Mostly absent from these narratives of victory and defeat, however, are the experiences of prisoners of war, despite what these can teach us about cruelty, ingenuity, and human adaptability. The international array of case studies in Prisoners of War restores this hidden past through case studies of PoW camps of the Napoleonic era, the American Civil War, and both World Wars. These bring to light wide variations in historical and cultural details, excavation and investigative methods used, items found and their interpretation, and their contributions to archaeology, history and heritage. Illustrated with diagrams, period photographs, and historical quotations, these chapters vividly reveal challenges and opportunities for researchers and heritage managers, and revisit powerful ethical questions that persist to this day. Notorious and lesser-known aspects of PoW experiences that are addressed include: Designing and operating an 18th-century British PoW camp. Life and death at Confederate and Union American Civil War PoW camps. The role of possessions in coping strategies during World War I. The archaeology of the 'Great Escape' Experiencing and negotiating space at civilian internment camps in Germany and Allied PoW camps in Normandy in World War II. The role of archaeology in the memorial process, in America, Norway, Germany and France Graffiti, decorative ponds, illicit saké drinking, and family life at Japanese American camps As one of the first book-length examinations of this fascinating multidisciplinary topic, Prisoners of War merits serious attention from historians, social justice researchers and activists, archaeologists, and

anthropologists.

the great escape the true story: *From Interrogation to Liberation: a Photographic Journey Stalag Luft Iii* Marilyn Jeffers Walton, Michael C. Eberhardt, 2014-03-05 During World War II, 300,000 United States Army Air Corps airmen were shot down. Of that number, 51,000 were prisoners of war or listed as missing in action. Bombardiers, positioned in the vulnerable bombardiers compartment at the front of the aircraft, were in high demand. The authors fathers were two such bombardiers, one on a B-17 and the other on a B-24. Like so many of the post-war generation, the authors traveled on their own emotional journeys to reconstruct their fathers WWII experiences. Their fathers fought in the flak-ridden blue battlefield, and like thousands of other airmen shot out of the sky, became prisoners of war. They would endure deprivation, loneliness, and great peril. Held at Stalag Luft III, where the Great Escape of movie fame took place, they, along with the British, were eventually force marched 52-miles in the dead of winter to Spremberg, Germany, and loaded onto overcrowded, filthy, boxcars, the Americans to be taken to Stalag VIIA in Moosburg, Germany, or to Stalag XIII-D in N rnberg. Languishing until their liberation in barbaric conditions with nearly 120,000 international POWs, they witnessed the death throes of the Third Reich. With many sons and daughters trying to explore the wartime histories of their loved ones, the authors supply crucial information and insight regarding the World War II POW experience in Europe. Often times, by necessity, that experience reflects the co-existence and tenuous relationship with the Germans holding them. In this book, there are stories that up until now have not been heard, and there are hundreds of pictures, many previously unseen, illustrating the prisoners plight. This book is a documentation of riveting history and a chance to vicariously live the war, told through their voices --echoes now fading with time. Their sacrifices to ensure precious freedom should never be forgotten.

the great escape the true story: It's a Matter of Trust Jim Callner, If you are looking for empathy, compassion, kindness, hope, and practical tools for living with obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD), this book will help inspire you on your journey to recovery. In 1982, author James Callner suffered a devastating mental breakdown and the onset of severe OCD. He was hospitalized for six weeks. He felt broken, lost, and terrified about what was happening to his life. He felt trapped with no way out. But there was a way out ... This hopeful and inspirational memoir is warm and casual and shares his recovery process. His care was multifaceted, including hospitalization, cognitive behavioral therapy, exposure response prevention therapy, and an array of innovative approaches. With compassion, empathy, humor, and wisdom, James chronicles his more than three decades of getting the right help while living with OCD. He found that OCD robbed him of trust and infused him with fears and phobias about people, places, and things and debilitating anxiety. He simply didn't trust life. He regained that trust by using helpful tools to reclaim his power—to trust himself again. In this book, he shares those tools to help with your recovery. This is a memoir and a self-help book for anyone who struggles with OCD. As James Callner often reminds people with OCD, "There is always hope."

the great escape the true story: Australian Perspectives on Global Air and Space Power Nicole Townsend, Kus Pandey, Jarrod Pendlebury, 2023-03-01 This book surveys historical and emerging global air and space power issues and provides a multidisciplinary understanding of the application of air and space power in the past and present, while exploring potential future challenges that global air forces may face. Bringing together leading and emerging academics, professionals, and military personnel from Australia within the field of air and space power, this edited collection traces the evolution of technological innovations, as well as the ethical and cultural frameworks which have informed the development of air and space power in the 20th and 21st centuries, and contemplates the future. It covers topics such as the insurgents' use of drones, the ethics of air strikes, the privatisation of air power, the historical trajectory of air power strategy, and the sociological implications of an 'air force' identity. While many of the chapters use Australian-based case studies for their analysis, they have broader applicability to a global readership, and several chapters examine other nations' experiences, including those of the United

States and the United Kingdom. This accessible, illuminating book is an important addition to contemporary air and space power literature, and will be of great interest to students and scholars of air and space power, air warfare, military and international history, defence studies, and contemporary strategic studies, as well as military professionals.

the great escape the true story: *The Encyclopedia of Best Films* Jay Robert Nash, 2019-10-23 This all-inclusive A-Z encyclopedia by one of the world's foremost experts on cinema provides comprehensive annotations of the best films produced from 1914 on. The work offers more than 5,000 three- to five-star entries (three stars=good; four stars=excellent; five stars=masterpiece), and yes, author Jay Robert Nash has viewed every single one of them as well as many more that did not make the cut. In addition to a precis, each film's entry also includes a listing of the cast as well as the key principles involved in production, from the director to the hair stylist. Especially unique to this book is a rating system that helps parents determine whether or not a film is appropriate for their children. Unlike the industry rating system which can be influenced by studio lobbying, Nash objectively evaluates each film and confers upon it one of four recommendations for viewing: recommended, acceptable, cautionary, and unacceptable. Backmatter includes a list of top films by genre (i.e. animated, drama, sports, mystery, adventure etc.) as well as an annotated name index listing all persons mentioned along with their dates of birth and death. Rounding out this essential volume for the film buff are over 500 still photos from the author's private collection.

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