



From Interrogation to Liberation: A Photographic Journey Stalag Luft III - The Road to Freedom

Marilyn Walton, Michael Eberhardt

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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 Nürnberg. 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.



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