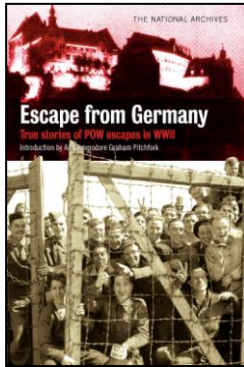




The National Archives



ESCAPE FROM GERMANY **True stories of POW escapes in WWII**

Introduction by Air Commodore Graham Pitchfork

Published by The National Archives, £12.99 paperback original

13 August 2009

Features a new selection of original photographs of WWII camps and prisoners from The National Archives and elsewhere

**** Published to commemorate the 65th Anniversary of the Great Escape from Stalag Luft III in 1944 ****

This once-secret commission by the Air Ministry is the definitive account of the life, experiences and methods of escape by RAF prisoners of war during World War II, based on unique records held at The National Archives. **ESCAPE FROM GERMANY** presents this account in its original, unedited format, compiled by a former fighter pilot, POW and highly respected journalist, Squadron Leader Aidan Crawley, who spent two years after the war gathering information from airmen who had been imprisoned in Germany's notorious camps.

ESCAPE FROM GERMANY explores the psychological challenges facing a prisoner of war and the mindset that drove them to escape, as well as revealing the ingenious planning behind daring attempts, be they over, through or under the perimeter wires. Also described in detail are the innovative methods devised for gathering intelligence, forging documents and producing maps – as well as the practicalities of providing food and clothing for the escape attempt. Sixty-five years after the Great Escape from Stalag Luft III, and the murder of fifty of the escapers, the book portrays the success and failure of journeys outside the camps, including the famous Wooden Horse escape, break outs from Colditz Castle and attempts to steal aircraft, as fugitive POWs struggled to freedom inside refuse carts, leaping from trains or hidden in ships' coal bunkers.

The book's final section focuses on the weeks when the war came to an end, with the Allies advancing to the moment of official surrender, reporting on the logistics of evacuation and release.

“So ended captivity. There can be few who would willingly live through it again, but there must be many who still draw inspiration from the knowledge that much can be endured and that to those who have once lost it, freedom has a value which is worth all the sacrifices which have been made for it.”

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ESCAPE FROM GERMANY'S dramatic stories and powerful illustrations celebrate the spirit and ingenuity of all those who battled to be free.

Graham Pitchfork served in the RAF for 36 years, as a navigator, commander of a Buccaneer squadron and a Director of Military Intelligence at the Ministry of Defence. He is the author of *Shot Down on the Run* and *Shot Down in the Drink*, both published by The National Archives (2007). His other books include *Royal Air Force Day by Day* (2008), *The Buccaneers* (2002) and *Men Behind the Medals* (1998).

For further information, or to arrange an interview with
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About the National Archives

The National Archives is a government department and an executive agency of the Ministry of Justice (MoJ). As the official archives of the UK government, it cares for, makes available and 'brings alive' a vast collection of historical records, including the celebrated Domesday Book.

The National Archives' publishing list draws on over 170km of documents held at Kew in southwest London, spanning over one thousand years of Britain's history.

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