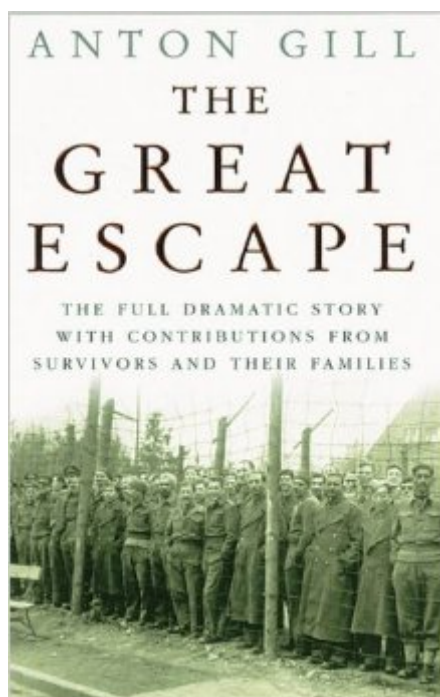


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The Great Escape: The Full Dramatic Story With Contributions From Survivors And Their Families



Synopsis

On the night of March 24, 1944, 76 Allied RAF officers escaped from Stalag-Luft III, Nazi Germany's most secure POW camp. It was the biggest, most daring break-out of World War II. The tenacity and ingenuity of the prisoners has become the stuff of legend, as they carried out their plan to dig the longest and most sophisticated tunnel ever conceived. But the men paid a high price for their bravery; of the 73 men recaptured, 50 were brutally executed on Hitler's direct orders. The tireless RAF investigation into the atrocity offers a chilling insight into the last hours of the victims and the actions of the killers. Drawing on the meticulous research carried out for the war crimes trial, as well as interviews with survivors and families of the murdered men, Anton Gill gives us the definitive account of the escape and its shocking aftermath. Among the author's many books are *The Journey Back from Hell* and *Art Lover: A Biography of Peggy Guggenheim*.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

There are quite a few books out on the Great Escape. This one repeats most previously-written information, but also has some novel items. A fair amount of biographic detail is devoted to "Big X"-Roger Bushell. There is a picture of him on the British ski team in 1932. Several other pictures, apparently not found in any other book on the Great Escape, are also in Gill's book. This book is also relatively unique in that it has short blurbs of paragraphs, written by individual ex-POWs, interspersed within the main text. There are also brief commentaries by some of the relatives of the 50 murdered escapees. Much detail is devoted to the processes wherein documents and papers were forged. It is amazing to read that the camp artists could actually paint letters to closely resemble typewritten ones, complete with typos and other typed idiosyncrasies. The need to

construct a makeshift theodolite (surveying telescope), as opposed to using a real one, is identified as a major source of error in measurement of the distance that the tunnels had to go in order for their exits to be in the woods. This helps explain why Harry was some 20 feet short of the pine treeline. The discovery of the escape in progress from tunnel Harry, at just before 5 AM on March 25, 1944, is presented as one that took place when a German guard patrolling the wire perimeter noticed one of the escapees moving through into the forest. According to other versions of this event, the guard was initially attracted to the column of steam coming out of the exit shaft of tunnel Harry, and only noticed the escapees when one of them yelled "Don't shoot!" in German. Mention is made of the fact that the stiff wind periodically helped dissipate the column of steam through the night.

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