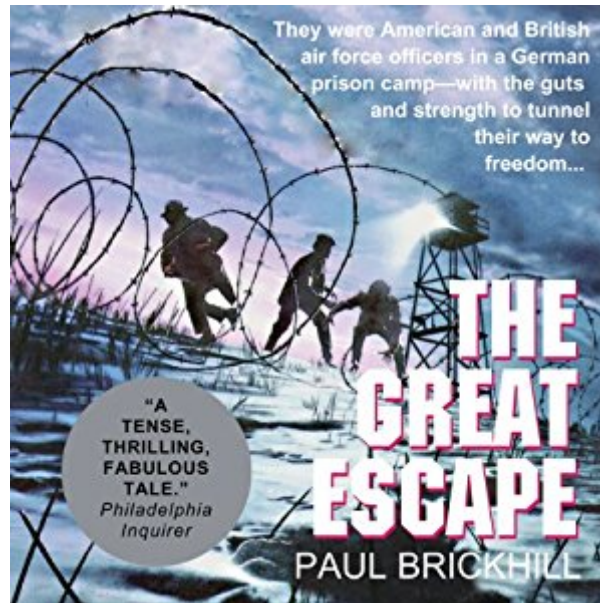


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The Great Escape



Synopsis

One of the most famous true stories from the last war, The GREAT ESCAPE tells how more than six hundred men in a German prisoner-of-war camp worked together to achieve an extraordinary break-out. Every night for a year they dug tunnels, and those who weren't digging forged passports, drew maps, faked weapons and tailored German uniforms and civilian clothes to wear once they had escaped. All of this was conducted under the very noses of their prison guards. When the right night came, the actual escape itself was timed to the split second - but of course, not everything went according to plan... --This text refers to the Preloaded Digital Audio Player edition.

Book Information

Audible Audio Edition

Listening Length: 7 hours and 35 minutes

Program Type: Audiobook

Version: Unabridged

Publisher: Blackstone Audio, Inc.

Audible.com Release Date: June 19, 2009

Language: English

ASIN: B002E04D8E

Best Sellers Rank: #6 in Books > History > Military > United States > Veterans #20 in Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Leaders & Notable People > Military > World War II #27 in Books > Audible Audiobooks > History > Military

Customer Reviews

This is the (true) story of the efforts of a multinational group of POWs to escape during WW2, and led to what is one of my favourite films. I anticipated the book to be a bit of a let down after seeing the movie, but it really wasn't. They emphasize quite different aspects, and some parts of the movie were clearly made up with entertainment value in mind (people jumping motorcycles over fences for instance!). I can't blame the movie makers of course, because the compelling essence of this story is the daily slog of tunnelling set against the backdrop of the mind-numbing drudgery of incarceration. No movie could be long enough to get this point across, but the book allows one to build up a better picture of what captivity was like, particularly because it provides such incredible details. I was really struck by the ingenious ways the prisoners found to fake German uniforms and official passes, improvise tools, and build radios and other vital pieces of equipment. The book provides sufficient descriptions to allow you to get an impression of the main characters and camp

layout, though I personally would have enjoyed a few photographs of the people involved (good and bad), though I realise these wouldn't have been easy to obtain. The author has a relatively dry style typical of a historian rather than a dramatist, and at times relates key events remarkably passionately. The book ratchets up the tension without having to try too hard however, and I could sense the tension that existed whenever the guards entered the barracks to check for tunnels. The depression that accompanies every uncovered tunnel jumps out of the page, as does the resolve to keep trying to escape without ever accepting captivity.

By now, everyone knows the story. I bought the film version on DVD a while back. I laughed a lot and enjoyed the film greatly (I think it's well done). The tale is immense in scope, so I figured I'd read the book. I was in for a huge surprise. Half of the film's ideas come from Brickhill's prelude, and have nothing to do with the actual escape (or camp!). This meant only one thing: Brickhill's tale, thick as it is, is going to be completely original and that much more satisfying a read. Paul Brickhill was the boss of a small group of prisoners who worked as stooges (watching out for Germans spying on their prisoners' doings). He writes fluidly and very well, and his obvious post-war research is superb (he tells the German angle in some parts). The book is easy to read, has moments of humor, and the descriptions are fantastic and there is never, ever, a dull moment from page one. Little did I realize how much the film throws out the horrors of Nazi Germany (or seemingly takes it in stride). The film plays out escaping as a game, and even in the book, characters try to escape constantly. While the Geneva Convention includes a clause that states escaping should not be prosecuted severely, as it is a logical reaction to imprisonment, the reader will recall that Nazis don't necessarily believe in anything other than the word "kill." Therein lies the terror. There is no Steve McQueen here, and, while there is a cooler, it's the least of the prisoners' fears. There isn't a small group of characters that the story revolves around. There are hundreds of people, and Paul introduces them at varying and strategic places within the story. You learn about new escapees up to the very last chapter. Everyone is a hero in his own way.

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