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Road To Valor: A True Story Of World War II Italy, The Nazis, And The Cyclist Who Inspired A Nation



AILI AND ANDRES McCONNON



Synopsis

Gino Bartali is best known as an Italian cycling legend: the man who not only won the Tour de France twice, but also holds the record for the longest time span between victories. During the 10 years that separated his hard-won triumphs, his actions, both on and off the racecourse, ensured him a permanent place in Italian hearts and minds. In *Road to Valor*, Aili and Andres McConnon chronicle Bartali's journey, starting in impoverished rural Tuscany where a scrawny, mischievous boy painstakingly saves his money to buy a bicycle and before long, is racking up wins throughout the country. At the age of 24, he stuns the world by winning the Tour de France and becomes an international sports icon. But Mussolini's Fascists try to hijack his victory for propaganda purposes, derailing Bartali's career, and as the Nazis occupy Italy, Bartali undertakes secret and dangerous activities to help those being targeted. He shelters a family of Jews in an apartment he financed with his cycling winnings and is able to smuggle counterfeit identity documents hidden in his bicycle past Fascist and Nazi checkpoints because the soldiers recognize him as a national hero in training. After the grueling wartime years, Bartali fights to rebuild his career as Italy emerges from the rubble. In 1948, the stakes are raised when midway through the Tour de France, an assassination attempt in Rome sparks nationwide political protests and riots. Despite numerous setbacks and a legendary snowstorm in the Alps, the chain-smoking, Chianti-loving, 34-year-old underdog comes back and wins the most difficult endurance competition on earth. Bartali's inspiring performance helps unite his fractured homeland and restore pride and spirit to a country still reeling from war and despair. Set in Italy and France against the turbulent backdrop of an unforgiving sport and threatening politics, *Road to Valor* is the breathtaking account of one man's unsung heroism and his resilience in the face of adversity. Based on nearly 10 years of research in Italy, France, and Israel, including interviews with Bartali's family, former teammates, a Holocaust survivor Bartali saved, and many others, *Road to Valor* is the first book ever written about Bartali in English and the only book written in any language to fully explore the scope of Bartali's wartime work. An epic tale of courage, comeback, and redemption, it is the untold story of one of the greatest athletes of the 20th century.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

A fabulous read and well written. It was like you were there in time with Bartali. The descriptions of the poverty pre war and the deplorable destruction of Italy by the fascists and the waste of lives and property were horrendous. Bartali was not only a great champion but a great humanitarian. Many passages brought streams of tears. My mother and father and their mothers and fathers are from this era. I have read Coppi's story and his was also one of tragedies but dare I say nothing as brave or daring as Bartali. Who was the greatest? Bartali missed his greatest years during the turmoil of WW Two, but both were incredibly great cyclists. I recommend all cycling tragics to read Road to Valour.

Fascinating book that is not about a likable person, but someone who showed true courage and determination. The sacrifices of that generation dealing with war, non-stop training, sticking by your ideals in wartime, and support of his church makes for compelling reading.

So many books on cycling are written too soon. A social history as much as a story of cycling and a very brave person. Well written, and provides a balanced account of where Bartali (and Coppi, and Italy) sit in the history of cycling. Bartali was extraordinary by any standards, but me, I'm still a Coppi man.

This is an amazing story. If you have made it this far, buy it and read it. I recommend it to anyone with even a passing interest in history and cycling.

an excellent read, Gino Bartali is a true hero and his story is written in a very engaging and compelling way.

Golden times of cycling. Surrounded by the dark WWII period.

Fantastic read a must for all those people who enjoy cycling!

I enjoyed this moving story of before, during and after the war in Italy. The story is well researched and very readable. I gave it 5 stars.

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