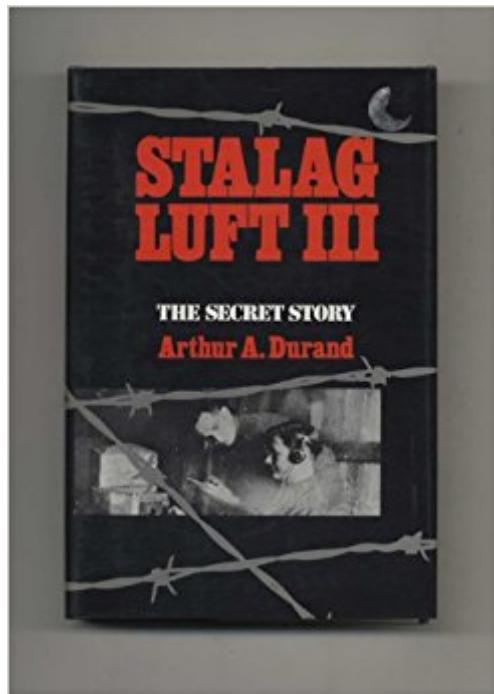


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# Stalag Luft III: The Secret Story



## **Synopsis**

Based largely on a coded history secretly kept by the prisoners of Stalag Luft III, this in-depth examination shows the main priority of the POWs was the planning and execution of escapes which would aid the war effort by undermining German military resources. 22 black-and-white photographs. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

Stalag Luft III, a POW center in Germany, will be familiar to readers who remember the film The Great Escape. Historian Durand here writes a comprehensive history of the camp (some 10,000 prisoners at one point) from its beginning in April 1942 until its chaotic evacuation in February 1945, much of the material based on an ingeniously coded log kept by three officers in one of the compounds. The author covers every conceivable aspect of daily life including prisoner-generated educational and cultural programs, relations with the German administrators, and the obsessive planning, preparation and execution of various escapes and escape attempts. The book is crowded with interesting characters, primarily American and British, but the most memorable is Col. Friedrich-Wilhelm von Lindiener, the commandant, whose professional code and personal kindness ensured that conditions at the camp were as good as possible under the circumstances. Illustrated. History Book Club alternate. Copyright 1988 Reed Business Information, Inc.

\$29.95. hist Stalag Luft III was the site of the mass escape attempt described by Paul Brickhill in The Great Escape (1950). Unlike David Foy's more comprehensive study of German POW camps,

For You The War Is Over ( LJ 4/15/84), this work is devoted to a single military prison for allied officers and pilots. Durand describes POW life, carefully researched and written to academic standards. There were few Hogan's Heroes- type hijinks and even fewer escapes, but the Stalag's inmates accomplished wonders in providing for their own welfare and survival. The book belongs in public as well as military collections. Raymond L. Puffer, U.S. Air Force History Prog., Los AngelesCopyright 1988 Reed Business Information, Inc.

As the daughter of one of its inmates, I search for credible accounts of this prison. This is well researched and well written. It's a book I can include in my bookshelf. It's amazing that Stalag Luft III still arouses such interest more than 60 yrs later. I think Paul Brickhall's book is still my favorite. My dad liked it.

My father, who recently passed away, was in Stalag Luft III for a year. Hearing the nitty gritty, day-to-day lives of these men, mixed with historical information, makes for a great read. The story of the hardships they endured brings light to many of the demons the men of that generation suffered and the wherewithal it instilled in them to overcome them.

This is a fascinating book about life in a certain POW camp in Germany during World War II. Its authenticity is unquestioned, as it is based upon a diary of events that was written down at the time, rather than later, after memories faded. The book is as detailed a look at life behind barbed wire as one could want. This is a very comprehensive book. Stalag Luft 3, the camp, is where the actual "Great Escape" occurred, but that is only a small part of this book, which concentrates on detailing the POW experience from capture and interrogation to the war's end. The interesting thing that I derived from the book was that although the Germans were not completely scrupulous about living up to their obligations under the Geneva convention, they at least paid attention to these rules, and most allied POWs who made it alive to a camp did make it home alive after the war. That is more than can be said, by a wide margin, for those American and Allied soldiers who were POWs of the Japanese. Part of this, the book speculates, is because the Luftwaffe held these POWs (this was a camp for airmen POWs) and it knew that England was holding large numbers of shot-down Luftwaffe pilots. Both sides wanted their men to be treated well. It is probably accurate to say that most of the outrages that the Germans committed against allied soldiers occurred before the captured soldiers reached the German camp system. The massacre of American GIs at Malmady comes to mind. Also, when escaped POWs fell into the hands of the Gestapo, this was never

good. Despite this, however, the book makes clear the shortcomings of the German treatment of the men. The food ration amounted to slow-motion starvation, unless the men supplemented their rations in various ways including the famous "Red Cross parcels." Sanitation was rudimentary until the POWs themselves took a hand in designing a latrine system. On the other hand, the book also makes clear that the German staff of the camp got pretty lean rations too--the fact appears to be that Germany was having a hard time as the war progressed feeding anyone, let alone POWs. The most fascinating part of the story, to me at least, was the interaction between the POWs and the German camp staff. There were collaborators on both sides, and many of the German staff evidently felt that Germany was likely to lose the war, and this appears to have encouraged some collaboration. Pretty interesting. Another fascinating facet of the book is how the POWs at Stalag Luft III organized what amounted to a college, which actually conferred credit hours which, after the war, were accepted by many British and American universities as good credit towards a degree. Courage and hope amidst adversity! Good for them! The degree of detail in this book is startling, and may be more than some readers want to know about camp life, but I found that this detail gave a gritty and realistic comprehension to the reader about what camp life was like. An excellent piece of history that retains its relevance to the present day.

First few pages are filled with a lot of lead up facts, then it takes off for a good epic history read following these heroes in an extraordinary true tale of WW2. also recommend, "Moonlight Over England" by Eric P. Donald, true story of a fighter pilot and "From Interrogation to Liberation", stories from individuals at Stalag Luft 111.

Excellent view of the treatment of flyers and Luft Stalags in Europe.

An excellent account of what life in captivity was for RAF and USAAF pilots, and how Stalag Luft camps were organized. Highly recommendable!!

this was not for me but my nieces husband who lives in Scotland...

Very insightful - made the movie the Great Escape come alive

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