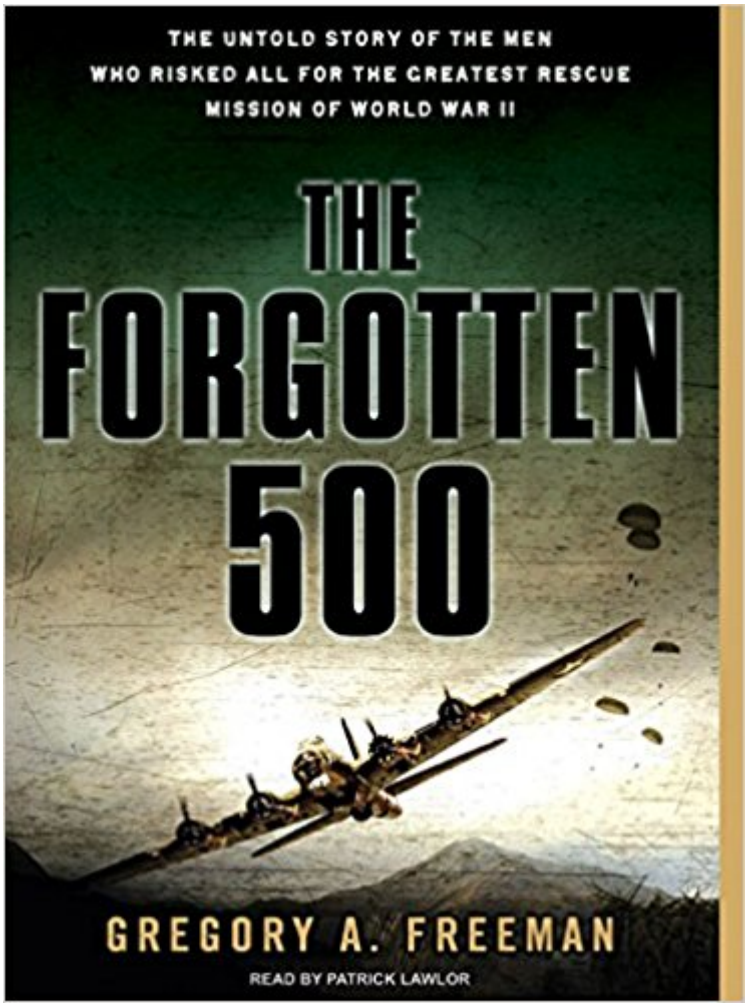
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The Forgotten 500: The Untold Story Of The Men Who Risked All For The Greatest Rescue Mission Of World War II



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Synopsis

The astonishing, never-before-told story of the greatest rescue mission of World War II-when the OSS set out to recover more than 500 airmen trapped behind enemy lines... During a bombing campaign, hundreds of American airmen were shot down in Nazi-occupied Yugoslavia. Local Serbian villagers risked their own lives to give refuge to the soldiers, and for months the airmen lived in hiding, waiting for rescue. In 1944, Operation Halyard was born. The risks were incredible. The starving Americans in Yugoslavia had to construct a landing strip-without tools, without alerting the Germans, and without endangering the villagers. And the rescue planes had to make it through enemy airspace and back-without getting shot down themselves. Classified for over half a century for political reasons, the full account of this unforgettable story of loyalty, self-sacrifice, and bravery is now being told for the first time. The Forgotten 500 is the breathtaking, behind-the-scenes look at the greatest escape of World War II.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Bombing of the Ploiesti, Romania, oil refineries, a key German resource, started in 1942. Allied pilots sustaining damage frequently bailed out over Serbia in German-occupied Yugoslavia, where the resistance and others hid them. By 1944, more than 500 were stranded and slowly starving. The OSS concocted the daring Operation Halyard to airlift them, but they had to construct a landing strip without tools and without alerting the Germans or endangering local villagers, and then the rescuers had to avoid being shot down themselves. The operation’s story is an exciting tale, but it was kept from general knowledge for decades; the resistance leader most responsible was a rival to Tito.

Nazi-baited by a Stalinist mole in British intelligence, he was executed in 1946 with the consent of Britain and America, which thereafter refused to acknowledge having been snookered (the State Department kept many details classified more than 50 years). Evoking the rescuees' successive desperation, wild hope, and joy, and their gratitude to the Serbians who risked their lives to help, Freeman produces a breathtaking popular account. Murray, Frieda --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

"A master storyteller" ---Doug Stanton, bestselling author of In Harm's Way

Great story, and a good effort by the author to attempt an engrossing novel-like read, but ther were too many loose ends for that. As a history, the research seemed light, and too much was invested in single anecdotes or quotes. The result was that you walked away with the impression that the author had too little background that he was earnestly trying to streeeeettttcchh out into a respectable book length. The lack of first-hand evidence was inevitable, since ithe story was uncovered when the whole WWII war generation was dying. Add in the overwhelming Cold War paranoia, the dissolution of the OSS, and the secrecy of the mission, and it becomes clear that gathering recorded evidence of the breathtaking courage and defiance demonstrated as the story unfolded would have been a Herculeann task.It was frustrating and painful to read the unrelenting misinformation that was circulated at the time and long after about Tito and Mihailovich, but the intentional cruelty of Great Britain and the U.S. in refusing all humanitarian aid to the peasants who kept the pilots safe, was abhorrent, shameful and infuriating.This could have been a great book, but I guess journalistic writing really is very different from historical or literary writin. The great story boosted the rating I would otherwise have given the writing.

An incredible true story that sheds light even more light on a terrible time in history as well as the heroic efforts to save US and British WWII pilots by people/a region of the world that were suffering their own internal political terrible and injustices alongside the nazi regimes!Fantastic read and insightful history that should never be overlooked.

Freeman writes a thorough and very readable account of the largest, riskiest, and most successful rescue of U.S. Servicemen behind enemy lines in history. He respectfully discusses backgrounds of many of the airman who were downed in Yugoslavia during bombing runs and the behind the scenes activities within the US and the British intelligence services. He provides context for the

internal politics of Yugoslavia, particularly the animosity between Draza Mihailovich, the nationalist commander who was abandoned by the U.S. and Great Britian and yet was a loyal ally that risked his life and those of the Serbian people to protect the downed airmen, and the corrupt communist Tito, who ended up allowing the Russians to take over the country after the war. He brings to light the corruption, petty bickering and politics that occured among the allies, with serious consequences. If you enjoy history, this is a great and moving read.

This was a good read overall. The only thing I have against it is some of the information in the chapters felt unrelated to the point of the book. The escape experience of the George Vjunovich (if I remember correctly) was interesting in its own; however, it did not really add to the story of the Airmen escaping. Overall though, a good pace was kept; I was intrigued the whole time and could not wait to start the next chapter. The way the story was presented was also excellent. For any WWII history readers, this is a nice addition to a collection. From now on, I'll be more wary of Aunt Jemima.

At the heart of this book is a terrible injustice, one that makes the blood boil. Behind the injustice was a cast of unseemly characters that included a high-placed Communist mole within the ranks of British intelligence, other assorted Communist sympathizers within British intelligence and the American OSS, a spineless State Department more interested in assuaging our enemies than honoring a true ally, and, finally, two cold-blooded Communist tyrants- Joseph Stalin and Josep Broz Tito. Yet, the story is so much more than this. There are harrowing tales of American bombers attacked in the sky over Rumania and Yugoslavia, crew members bailing from burning planes, and downed fliers racing across bridges while under fire from German troops. There is the epic Yugoslav leader, his daring band of Chetniks and the courageous villagers who risk all to save the fliers. Of course, the singular event of the book is the final exciting rescue.

Very interesting story for me, but hard to follow, the story was imbedded with the intricate politics of Pre-WWII to the modern day and jumped around a bit. Still it was a untold story that deserved to be told. I managed to acquire a smoldering hatred for the British SOE and their ilk along with our own State Department. If you read the book I think you will latch on to the same resentment. The actual rescue was a marvelous feat, very exciting and suspenseful as you did not really know it's outcome except from the book title. People who have served in the Balkans would certainly agree with bits and pieces, parts and possibly parcels in the book, It does jump from the 90's to the 20's to the 40'

to the 30’s to the 50’s and to modern day and back and forth till your mind is completely jumbled. The research and subject deserve five plus stars, but you have to dedicate yourself to paying attention, a quality I lack.

Such a great dive into history and politics during WWI. The story is well filled with personal stories and the compassion of the Yugoslavian people for downed American airman and the brave "secret" agents who pushed, pulled, and risked their lives to coordinate such a daring mission - and then had the good fortune to pull it off!

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