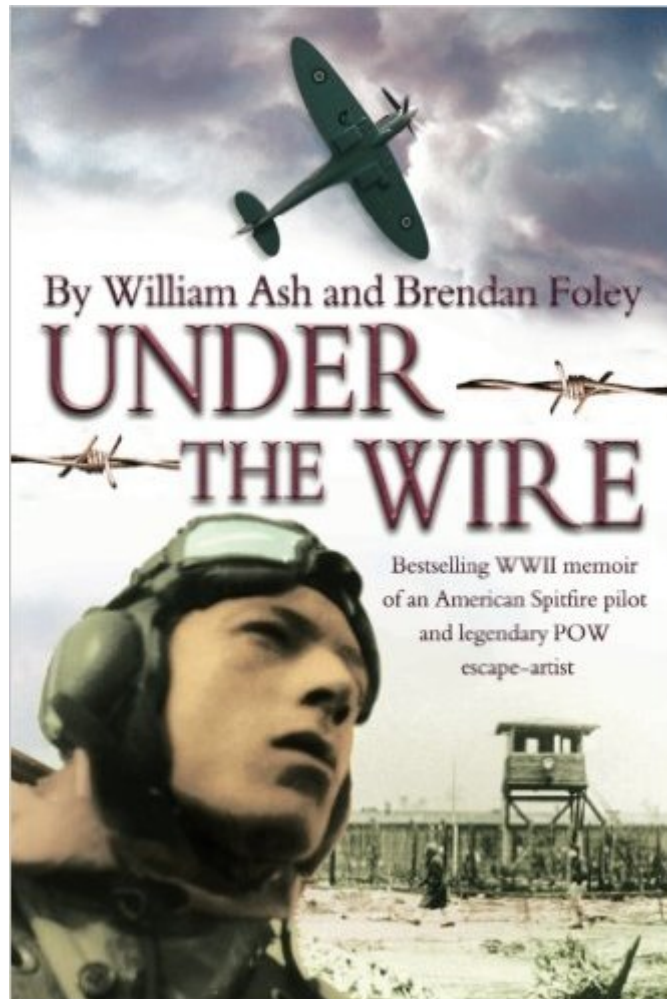


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Under The Wire: The Bestselling Memoir Of An American Spitfire Pilot And Legendary POW Escaper



Synopsis

The bestselling WWII memoir of an American Spitfire pilot and legendary Prisoner of War escape artist. American Bill Ash went from Hobo to hero as he joined up to fly Spitfires for the RAF in 1940, before the United States entered the war. Shot down in 1942, the French Resistance helped him on the run until the Gestapo caught and tortured him, then sentenced him to death as a spy. He was saved by the Luftwaffe and put in legendary Great Escape camp Stalag Luft III, thanking them by escaping a dozen times, over the wire, under it or straight through it. He became one of the great 'escape artists' of the war, risking all for that elusive 'home run'. This is the first North American paperback, but *Under the Wire* is already a bestseller in the UK, topping UK's History, WWII and Biography charts. It has gained 33 reader reviews on UK, 32 five-star and one four star. Here are a few excerpts:

***** Enthralled! By R.B. Lee Being ex-forces, and in my 40's, the daring-do books about the SAS and the Gulf Wars have been high on my agenda. I happened to see 'Under the wire' and thought "I'd give it a go". My opinion - absolutely brilliant! I couldn't put it down. I'd love to meet Bill Ash, shake him by the hand, and know I've met one of the most inspirational characters that ever walked this earth.

***** Inspiring By Jim Sells It is Story that makes this book so amazing: all at once it manages to be incredibly moving, heart-warming, hilarious, disturbing and inspiring. To come out the other side of these experiences with the deep love for people that Bill Ash clearly has, just goes to show what an amazing human being he must be.

***** Exceptional By Timothy De Ferrars This book is exceptional. Ash is candid about his motives for fighting; he reveals hot-headed fury at those who had started the war. Never afraid to reveal his feelings, Ash is always witty and ironic. The book is thoroughly modern and easy to read, yet it evokes wartime life as vividly as if it were yesterday.

***** A blockbuster of Escapology By Joanne Isaak Breathtaking! Riveting, exciting, and spellbinding! Mr. Ash lived it, Mr. Foley brought it alive. Don't begin reading late in the day or you'll lose a whole night of sleep.

***** Bravo Mistery Ash and Foley! By Jane Rosen I have Mistery Ash and Foley to blame for 2 nights of lost sleep reading this riveting tale. I simply could not put it down. This is an amazing story. I admire Mr. Ash's heroism as well as his humor and humility and ultimately his humanity. Highly recommended!

***** Among the top five escapes books ever! By R. Laplander As a military historian and author, I search out good books. It has been years since I have come across such a wonderful story that has held my attention from start to finish as 'Under the Wire' has. It now has a spot on my top shelf alongside favorites I have revered for years.

***** Humbly I give thanks By Brett The book brought out so many emotions in me...I laughed, I seriously shed a tear and I ended the book feeling totally humbled. I've gone on about it so much that my wife is reading it now!

***** A Wonderful read By A. R. Hancock Took it up on holiday and couldn't put it

down. A true story and a wonderful read. ***** Loved it By C. Martin As they waited in those tunnels for the right moment to escape, I found myself holding my breath slightly as I waited with them so as not to use up their oxygen.

Book Information

Paperback: 398 pages

Publisher: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform (November 29, 2012)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1481088858

ISBN-13: 978-1481088855

Product Dimensions: 6 x 0.9 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.5 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 starsÂ Â See all reviewsÂ (89 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #1,111,629 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #96 inÂ Books > History > Military > Prisoners of War #8224 inÂ Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Leaders & Notable People > Military

Customer Reviews

At the time of this writing William Ash is 95: his story is told with the enlightened assistance of Brendan Foley who just happens to be writing the screenplay for the film that has been optioned that will make this incredible story a thriller of a film. From the advanced information about the release of this book comes the following information that in many ways summarizes the book well: `Born in Dallas in 1917, WILLIAM ASH worked his way through school and college during the Great Depression, graduating from the University of Texas at Austin, to the heights of elevator operator, then Hobo. At the outbreak of war in Europe he rode the rails to Canada and enlisted in the Royal Canadian Air Force in 1940. A Spitfire pilot, he saw action over England and France. He was shot down near Calais in March 1942 and evaded the German forces for months with help from the French Resistance but was captured and badly beaten by the Gestapo and sentenced to death as a spy. Bill was sent to a succession of POW camps in Occupied Europe from which he escaped on a regular basis, becoming one of the greatest escapers of the war. At war's end, he was awarded an MBE for his escaping activities and went on to work for the BBC in India and Britain. He became a writer and a past Chair of the Writers Guild (GB). Married to the academic Ranjana Ash, he lives in London where he stayed after the war.' Given the background of the story (which everyone has noted by now) the beauty of this book is the manner in which it is written. There is a fine balance

between fact and embellished humor and the authors (Brendan Foley's keen skills polish the prose well) understand the arc and flow of a suspense thriller well.

"Under The Wire" by William Ash (with Brendan Foley). Sub-titled, "The World War II Adventures Of A Legendary Escape Artist And `Cooler King'". St. Martin's Press, New York 2005. William Ash was raised in Depression-Era Texas, where he learned the hard way that life is rough. Those lessons stood him in good stead when he became an expert escape artist from the POW camps of Nazi Germany. As he said, on page 22, his "twilight actives" prepared him by: "...being an unwelcome nonpaying passenger, learning how to avoid the attention of guard dogs or the authorities, sharing food and political discussions with men just as badly off as myself, and sometimes just learning to laugh in the face of everything the world could throw at me." He calls his younger days as "An Apprenticeship In Escapology". Building on the first two chapters, he then relates the story of his decision to fly for the RAF, his aviation training, first in Canada, and then in the actual combat zone in England during the Blitz. Because of his flying for the RAF, he had to renounce his American citizenship. There are vivid descriptions of London under the bombs, with destruction and fire seemingly everywhere. Then comes the chapter that changes everything: "The Day Of Reckoning". (page 85): "I cut my engine, since it was clearly full of holes and not doing much good". Shot down over occupied France, William Ash is helped by some French farmers, who struggle with his high school French but help him to find the underground resistance. He is, however, captured in Paris in June 1942, but not before he was able to enjoy the city of Paris as any tourist would do.

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