



Beyond Courage: Daring Escapes of Captured Airmen in the Korean War

Clay Blair Jr.

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Beyond Courage recounts several inspiring feats of escape and evasion by downed airmen during the Korean conflict. The airmen endured incredible hardships, first at the hands of their captors, then as they managed, by one means or another, to make their way back to the safety of U.N. lines. As preparation for the book, author Clay Blair researched the military's incident records, then interviewed the survivors themselves to fill in any gaps in the accounts told to Air Force officers shortly after their rescue, and to recapture their personal reactions to their arduous adventures.

The stories include members of the U.N. forces in Korea—not solely Americans—but also Turks and Greeks and 'ROKs' (Republic of Korea soldiers), and friendly North Korean Christians, who risked their lives to help downed airmen. In addition to enemy soldiers, the terrain and climate posed terrible challenges to men without adequate food, clothing, or shelter. In the story Cold, for example, one can feel the sub-zero temperatures as the escapee struggles to walk for miles with frozen feet (doctors would later be forced to amputate both feet to save the airman's life).

Challenges were also psychological, as portrayed in the first story, Robinson Crusoe of MiG Alley. There, a downed airman recounts his shattering loneliness of a month spent on a deserted island—with friendly planes flying over almost daily but ignorant of the plight of the stranded airman below them.

Despite the passage of 60 years since the cessation of this 'forgotten war,' the stories in *Beyond Courage* remain a testament to the power of human endurance and will in the face of extreme, life-threatening challenges.

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