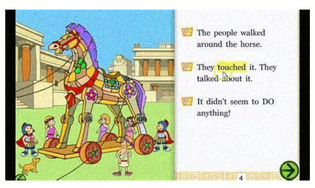


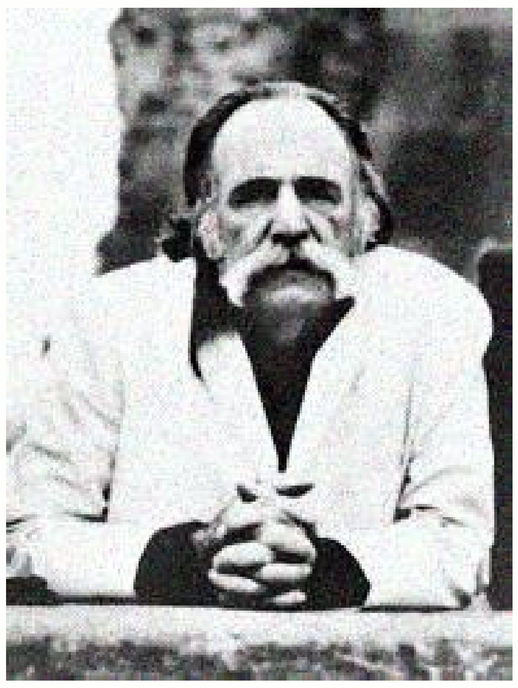
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The wooden horse summary

1950 film by Jack Lee This article is about the 1950 film. For other uses, see Wooden horse (disambiguation). The Wooden HorseDVD coverDirected byJack LeeWritten byEric WilliamsProduced byIan DalrympleStarring Leo Genn David Tomlinson Anthony Steel CinematographyC. M. Pennington-RichardsEdited byPeter Seabourne John SeabourneMusic byClifton ParkerProductioncompanyLondon FilmsDistributed byBritish Lion Film CorporationRelease date 16 October 1950 (1950-10-16) Running time101 minutesCountryUnited KingdomLanguagesEnglish German French DanishBox office£266,545 (UK)[1] The Wooden Horse is a 1950 British Second World War war film directed by Jack Lee and starring Leo Genn, David Tomlinson and Anthony Steel. It is based on the book of the same name by Eric Williams, who also wrote the screenplay.[2] The film depicts the true events of an escape attempt made by POWs in the German prison camp Stalag Luft III. The wooden horse in the title of the film is a piece of exercise equipment the prisoners use to conceal their escape attempt as well as a reference to the Trojan Horse which was also used to conceal men within. The Wooden Horse was shot in a low-key style, with a limited budget and a cast including many amateur actors. Plot This section needs an improved plot summary. You can provide one by editing this article. (January 2022) (Learn how and when to remove this template message) The somewhat fictionalised version of the true story is set in Stalag Luft III — the same POW camp where the real events depicted in the film The Great Escape took place, albeit from a different compound – and involved Williams, Michael Codner and Oliver Philpot, all inmates of the camp. In the book and film, the escapees are renamed "Flight Lieutenant Peter Howard", "Captain John Clinton" and "Philip Rowe". The prisoners are faced with the problem of digging an escape tunnel despite the accommodation huts, within which the tunnel entrance might be concealed, being a considerable distance from the perimeter fence. They come up with an ingenious way of digging the tunnel with its entrance located in the middle of an open area relatively near the perimeter fence and using a vaulting horse (constructed largely from plywood from Canadian Red Cross parcels), to cover the entrance.



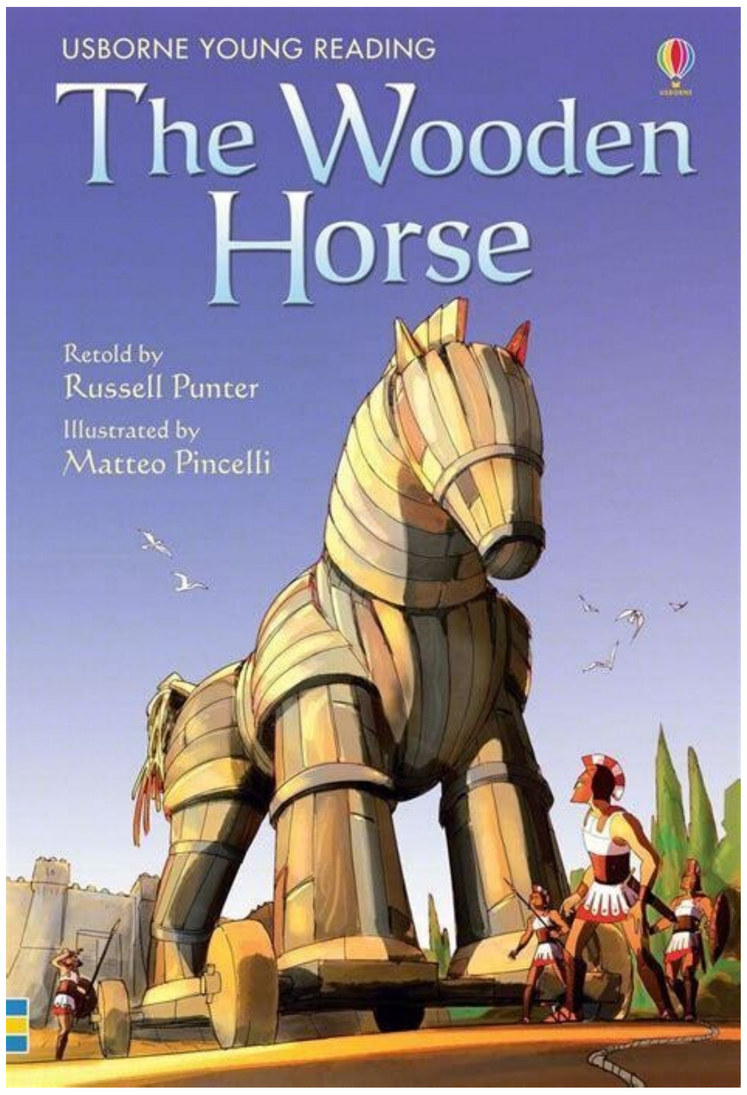
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Recruiting fellow-prisoners to form a team of vaulters, each day they carry the horse out to the same spot, with a man hidden inside. The prisoners begin gymnastic exercises using the vaulting horse, while the concealed man digs down below it. At the end of the session, the digger places wooden boards, cut to fit the aperture, in the hole, and fills the space with sandbags and dry sand kept for the purpose – wet sand taken from below the surface would be darker and hence give away the tunneling activity. As the tunnel lengthens, two men are eventually hidden inside the horse while a larger group of men exercise, the two men continue to dig the tunnel. At the end of the day, they conceal the tunnel entrance once more and hide inside the horse while it is carried back to their hut. They also devise a method of disposing of the earth coming out of the tunnel. They recruit a third man, Phil, to assist them, with the promise that he will join the escape. At the final break-out, Clinton hides in the tunnel during an Appell (roll call), before three men are carried out in the horse: the third to replace the tunnel trap.
Howard and Clinton travel by train to the Baltic port of Lübeck; (in fact, they travelled via Frankfurt an der Oder to Stettin). Phil elects to travel alone, posing as a Norwegian margarine salesman and travelling by train via Danzig (now Gdańsk).
He was the first to get to neutral territory. On the docks Howard and Clinton are forced to kill a German sentry who surprised the hiding men;[3] and they contact French workers, through whom they meet "Sigmund", a Danish resistance worker who smuggles them onto a Danish ship. They then have to transfer to a fishing boat and arrive in Copenhagen, before being shipped to neutral Sweden. There they are reunited with Phil, who arrived earlier. Some details from Williams' book were not used in the film, e.g. the escaped POWs discussing the possibility of visiting potentially neutral brothels in Germany, an idea that was abandoned because of the fear that it might be a trap.



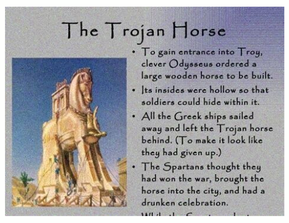
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PennyngtonRichardsEdited byPeter Seabourne John SeabourneMusic byClifton ParkerProductioncompanyLondon FilmsDistributed byBritish Lion Film CorporationRelease date 16 October 1950 (1950-10-16) Running time101 minutesCountryUnited KingdomLanguagesEnglish German French DanishBox office£266,545 (UK)[1] The Wooden Horse is a 1950 British Second World War war film directed by Jack Lee and starring Leo Genn, David Tomlinson and Anthony Steel. It is based on the book of the same name by Eric Williams, who also wrote the screenplay.[2] The film depicts the true events of an escape attempt made by POWs in the German prison camp Stalag Luft III. The wooden horse in the title of the film is a piece of exercise equipment the prisoners use to conceal their escape attempt as well as a reference to the Trojan Horse which was also used to conceal men within. The Wooden Horse was shot in a low-key style, with a limited budget and a cast including many amateur actors.



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Cast Leo Genn as Peter Howard David Tomlinson as Philip Rowe Anthony Steel as John Clinton David Greene as Bennett Peter Burton as Nigel Patrick Waddington as the Senior British Officer Michael Goodliffe as Robbie Anthony Dawson as Pomfret Bryan Forbes as Paul Dan Cunningham as David Peter Finch as the Australian in hospital Philip Dale as Bill White Russell Waters as 'Wings' Cameron Ralph Ward as the Adjutant Lis Løwert as Kamma Production The film was based on a book by Eric Williams which was published in 1949.[4][5] The book was re-issued in 1980.[6] Ian Dalrymple and Jack Lee read the book and bought the film rights. They out-bid John Mills who also wanted to make it. "I expect John would have been very good in it also," said Jack Lee "probably better than Leo Genn, who was very stolid as an actor."[7] Leo Genn played the Eric Williams character while Anthony Steele played a character based on Michael Codner.[8] Codner was later killed in 1952 in an ambush during the Malayan Emergency.[9] "We are not inventing anything," Lee said during filming. "It isn't necessary. The whole book is dynamite as a film script."[8] Shooting Three-quarters of the film was shot in Germany. The Stalag was rebuilt in the British zone near where the Germans surrendered at Lüneburg Heath.[8] In the film the escapees go to Lübeck, not Stettin, which is what happened in real life. This was because the producers did not want to have to deal with the Russian Occupied Zone.[8] The film went over budget, for several reasons: the weather was poor and several scenes had to be done again. "A lot of it was my fault, taking too long to shoot and shooting too much stuff," said Lee.[7] He added "there was indecision on my producer's part about the ending; Ian said we should shoot things in two different ways. The ultimate ending was a perfectly reasonable one but I was off the film by then. Ian shot it himself."[7] Filming was finished in Germany by January 1950 after which studio work was done in London.[10] At least two future film directors, Bryan Forbes and David Greene, were in the supporting cast. The film was a breakthrough role for Anthony Steel.[11] "Tony Steel was fine to work with – just a physical type, a young chap who could do certain things," said Lee.[7] According to Filmink "he is clearly meant to be "the cute one" of the trio, spending a considerable amount of the film's running time walking around in shorts bare-chested."[12] Comedian Peter Butterworth had actually been one of the POWs at the camp, and auditioned for a part in the film, but the producers said he didn't look convincing enough. Reception Critical Variety said "a commendable degree, of documentary fidelity has been established in this picturization. of the escape of three prisoners of war from a German camp* The long and torturous period of preparation is faithfully recaptured. Inevitably, treatment rules out a fast-moving production, and although this won't harm it as a boxoffice attraction at home, it may have a limiting appeal when it eventually reaches the US."[13] Box office The film was the third most popular film at the British box office in 1950.[14] According to Kinematograph Weekly the 'biggest winners' at the box office in 1950 Britain were The Blue Lamp, The Happiest Days of Your Life, Annie Get Your Gun, The Wooden Horse, Treasure Island and Odette, with "runners up" being Stage Fright, White Heat, They Were Not Divided, Trio, Morning Departure, Destination Moon, Sands of Iwo Jima, Little Women, The Forsythe Saga, Father of the Bride, Neptune's Daughter, The Dancing Years, The Red Light, Rogues of Sherwood Forest, Fancy Pants, Copper Canyon, State Secret, The Cure for Love, My Foolish Heart, Stromboli, Cheaper by the Dozen, Pinky, Three Came Home, Broken Arrow and Black Rose.[15] It led to a series of stories about POWs, including Albert R.N. (1953), The Colditz Story (1955), The One That Got Away (1957), The Camp on Blood Island (1958) and Danger Within (1959).[16] Reality The Wooden Horse plan itself was previously thought to be conceived and entirely thought through by Williams and Michael Codner in equal measures. In Oliver Philpot's later book The Stolen Journey, the author made it clear that he initially thought the plan was "crackers", telling its inventors "I give it a couple of days!" Nevertheless, Philpot helped with the sand dispersal and later with the actual digging – at which point he was invited to take part in the escape.[17] However, it has been argued that Flt Lt Dominic Bruce (the 'Medium Sized man') and Squadron Leader Peter Tunstall are the original innovators of the wooden horse escape technique. Along with Eustace Newborn and Peter Tunstall, Bruce came up with the escape plan now known as "the Swiss Red Cross Commission." Tunstall, wrote that in 1941, prior to he and Bruce planning an escape with the famed 'Swiss Red Cross Commission,' he and Bruce had been digging an escape route with a wooden horse tunnel from inside the gymnasium, the wooden horse was placed roughly four feet from the wall that separated the gym from the moat. The digging was a very slow process, it required the removal of spoil, bricks and stone work,and was aided by other prisoners distracting the guards. They were later joined by Douglas 'Sammy' Hoare and a syndicate who were promised a second go if they escaped undiscovered. Other members of this syndicate were also named as: Harry Bewlay, John Milner and Eustace Newborn. When Bruce and Tunstall noted the slow process they began examining the rest of the castle and left the digging to the other team involving Sammy Hoare. The tunnel almost reached completion but unfortunately the digging team got caught when a guard become suspicious at the large stones that were accumulating outside of the gym. The guard then called a search, and then found the escape tunnel.[49] When the guards found the shaft they called an Appell and Hauptmann Schmidt confidently stated to the prisoners, "It is impossible to escape by tunnel or any other way." This wooden horse gym escape tunnel was two years prior to the famed Sagan wooden horse escape.
Tunstall stated that he would like to think some of the watchers and workers who helped on their original wooden horse escape may have mentioned it from time to time; and would like to think that their idea contributed to the success of the effort at Sagan. See also Dominic Bruce References ^ Vincent Porter, 'The Robert Clark Account', Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television, Vol 20 No 4, 2000 p492 ^ Williams, Eric, The Wooden Horse (Collins, 1949) ^ In the book the two POWS are forced to kill a German sentry who surprised them as they tried to cross the German/Denmark border ^ "The Wooden Horse". The Sunday Herald (Sydney). New South Wales, Australia. 10 April 1949. p. 1 (Novel). Retrieved 27 June 2020 – via National Library of Australia.
^ "The Wooden Horse". The Sunday Herald (Sydney). No. 13. New South Wales, Australia. 17 April 1949.
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"The Emasculation of Anthony Steel: A Cold Streak Saga". Filmink. ^ Review of film at Variety ^ "BOB HOPE BEST DRAW IN BRITISH THEATRES". The Mercury.
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p. 233.
^ Thumim, Janet. "The popular cash and culture in the postwar British cinema industry". Screen. Vol. 32, no. 3. p. 258. ^ Philpot, Oliver, Stolen Journey (Hodder and Stoughton, 1950), p. 215 Further reading Laplander, Robert J. (2014). The True Story of the Wooden Horse. Barnsley: Pen & Sword. ISBN 978-1-78383-101-2. External links The Wooden Horse at IMDb The actual story – WOODEN HORSE ESCAPE KIT PRESENTED TO IMPERIAL WAR MUSEUM The Wooden Horse at Screenonline Retrieved from " Jump to ratings and reviewsBased on true events in which the author, calling himself Peter, was involved, this is the story of a successful escape from Stalag Luft III in German-occupied Poland, by British prisoners of war, during WWII.The title is well chose, for it was by means of a wooden vaulting-horse that Eric Williams and his two companions made their way out of the captivity of a German prison camp, into freedom.This vaulting-horse was four feet six inches high and its base covered an area of five feet by three feet. When it was carried into the courtyard the German guards thought it was simply a vaulting-horse, similar to that used in any gymnasium.It is true that the prisoners vaulted over it. But unknown to the German guards, two men were always concealed within the horse and while the prisoners vaulted, these two men were busy underground burrowing a tunnel.When's the day's work was over the hole was boarded up, earth placed over the boards, and the horse with the two men inside taken back into the camp.
This work of tunnelling went on for several months, until the tunnel was over 120 feet long and extended beyond the barbed wire which bounded the camp. Eric Williams, MC was a former Second World War RAF pilot and prisoner of war who wrote several books dealing with his escapes from prisoner-of-war camps.At the end of the war, on the long sea voyage home, Williams wrote Goon In The Block, a short book based on his experiences. Four years later, in 1949, he rewrote it as a much longer third-person narrative under the title The Wooden Horse. He included many details omitted in his previous book, but changed his name to 'Peter Howard'.Displaying 1 - 30 of 82 reviewsJuly 26, 2015'Wooden Horse' is a fictionalized narration of the true events behind one of the most ingenious and daring escape made by POWs from a German prison camp during World War II. Written by RAF Flight Lieutenant 'Eric Williams', who was one of the escapees this book is an absorbing narration of how perseverance, bravery and ingenuity helped the prisoners to break from a POW prison camp which was specially designed to be escape-resistant. Eric Williams was shot down over Germany in 1942 and was initially imprisoned in the 'Oflag XXI-B' prisoner-of-war camp in Occupied Poland. A failed attempt at escape from that prison resulted in him being transferred to one of the most escape-proof POW camps of the time, 'Stalag Luft III', the Luftwaffe-run prison camp for captured airmen, in Zagan, Poland. Those readers who are familiar with the Paul Brickhill book from 1950 or the 1963 Steve McQueen smash hit movie, both titled The Great Escape will remember 'Stalag Luft III' as the infamous prison camp specifically designed to prevent prisoners from tunneling out of the camp with both natural and man made defensive measures. 'Wooden Horse' is the detailed accounts of how a bunch of prisoners beat all the odds stacked against them by punching through each of the camp's defenses with tenacity and a genius of a plan. The book narrates these tense events separated in to three different sections. It is in the first phase of the narration that the reader gets introduced to the 'Wooden Horse' – a wooden vaulting horse meant for exercise with a hidden hollow inside which was made by the prisoners to camouflage the entrance of an escape tunnel, which was under construction- and this explains the title of the book. The hollowed out wooden vaulting horse was a brilliant invention just like the real 'Trojan Horse' and it allowed Williams and two other officers conceal themselves while engaged in the tunneling operation and to hide the large quantities of sand, which they dug out. The second phase of the book describe their escape from the prison through the tunnel dodging search dogs, sentries and searchlights and the third phase narrates their pulse racing journey across German occupied territories engulfed in the desperations of war on foot and on train with the ever present danger of getting captured again. After some real close shaves with danger they finally manage to stow away themselves in two different ships to reach the safety of a neutral Sweden.Though based on true events, since the book was written just after the war in 1949, the military censorship, which was still in existence over the matters, prevented the author from using the real names of the escapees and he portrays himself under the fictitious name of 'Peter Howard'. The author's attempt in recreating the mental attitude of the prisoners and their conversations, which reflect their contempt towards the German guards show the true doctrine which is instilled in a soldier during any war, the doctrine of "In total war one despises one's enemy, and as a prisoner of war one's only weapon is derision���. 'Wooden Horse' is a classic tale of escape and evasion, which can excite and inspire the reader and keep him glued to the book like a thriller.historical-fiction military-history war-fictionSeptember 15, 2014There are two significantly different versions of this book.
Eric Williams' original 1949 edition was written while military censorship was still in force, and is a simpler story, built around simpler characters.In the 1979 edition, Williams sets the records straight on (particularly) one event that was invented to make a better ending for the 1949 book. The rest of the book is significantly revised and expanded, also, and the PoWs' language becomes less "comic-book" and more (one assumes) true to life.Read the 1979 revision if you want the actual story - the 1949 is more like a Boys' Own adventure.history-factual needs-cover-art needs-fixup December 30, 2007My first escape story from a POW camp. I loved it! The ingenuity of it all. Speaking with second world war veterans, they tell of amazing things the prisoners got up to and how they all felt it was their duty to try and escape.October 15, 2016Amazing story of life in a stalag and escaping from it. Hogan's Heros isn't quite as far fetched as we might think. Men can be amazing in their kindness to each other under adversity. I am so glad that I decided to read this.February 8, 2011A daring tale of escape from the eyes of a British soldier in a German POW camp... Told with a flowing style, underlying humor, and quick dialogue. Good Book!May 31, 2016One of the great escape books of all time about RAF flyers imprisoned in an infamous German POW camp during World War II. March 27, 2018This is an intriguing story of the hardship, challenges and horror of WW II as prisoners in a camp try to escape. The story is based on fact and is one to grab.August 5, 2013I read a 1959 mass market paperback edition from Berkley Books. In the introduction, it says that it's a special edition for teens.This is a fictionalized account of an escape from a prisoner of war camp run by the Germans, written by one of the escapees. The camp is surrounded by barbed wire, and buildings inside the compound are placed on piles so that guards can see under the buildings. It's hardly a prime location for POWs to build a tunnel, but build a tunnel they do. The ingenuity of the prisoners, not just for the tunnel, but for other tasks, is inspiring. The way the men deal with each other and the indignities and dangers of their imprisonment is interesting, as are the difficulties faced by the escapees as they try to get out of German-controlled territory. The story is well written. The switch to the fictionalized format let the author insert more points of view.I saw that a reviewer at Amazon said that later editions of the book left out a fabricated deadly encounter with a German soldier that the original publishers wanted put into the book to punch up the ending. My book is apparently an early one, because it has the incident. In my opinion, it wasn't the least bit needed. The story was interesting enough, and suspenseful enough, without it.May 26, 2017An old friend revisited!Great read! I first read this in the mid 1960's, and enjoyed it hugely. When I saw it, I knew that a re-read was in order. The understated British manner is captivating. Mr. Williams was a true cousin to our own greatest generation.May 13, 2020October 14, 2017Very gripping story. I enjoyed it.December 13, 2016A fascinating read on prisoner of war life and the strong need to escape; after all, that is the prisoners duty - to escape. And knowing that this is a true story made it all the more interesting to me. I love reading the survival stories of World War II. I read from a 1950 printing in which Eric Williams wrote he could now freely write of the Escape and had used a little of the material he had originally written in his 1943 book "Goon in the Block".December 24, 2007Very good 2 cassette audio book that I read in February 2007 even though this book was published in 1984. This is a true 2 hour story about how two English pilots were shot down, captured, imprisoned at Stalag-Luft III on December 17, 1942, and how they escaped to freedom using a very clever deception, and a lot of determination. June 23, 2009This book was like a rollercoaster ride. Sometimes the action zipped along quickly and others it slowly ascended towards the climax. Written about an escape from a World War Two German camp, detailing how three British officers hid the entrance to their tunnel under a wooden vaulting horse. I enjoyed this book even in the slow parts and wood recommend it to anyone who enjoys war stories.Iris (The Sheep and the Wolf)April 9, 2015Not really my style of book (I picked it up because it's one of my dad's favourites), but an amazing story! I guess it really is acquired taste though: Williams obsesses over the smallest details and therefore the main part of the story feels very slow at times, whereas the ending to me was very sudden and abrupt.October 19, 2016This is a true story about escape from a German Prisoner of War Camp by three British soldiers during WWII.. It involves the use of a Wooden Horse but quite different from the famous horse used by the Greeks at Troy. It is a good story highlighting the ingenuity of the English prisoners at the camp and the daring successful escape from the camp and return to Great Britain. July 27, 2010An interesting and amazing story especially knowing that it is a true story. It is the story telling and not the story that is the reason for three and not four stars, but being written as a novel instead of a non-fiction story it somehow fails to really capture me.December 5, 2012I really enjoyed this book. I have wanted to read it for a long time and eventually I got round to doing just that. I like reading books based around the second world war and it helps when you know it really happened.July 21, 2019UnremarkableThe escape processes was pretty interesting. Once they got out there really was not much suspense during their flight out of Germany to home. It wasn't totally boring, but it was not compelling either.August 2, 2015DutyHonor CountryCourageFriendshipDedicationPerseveranceI could go on. This book encompasses all of the above and more. A great tale , well told by the author. This story grips your attention while reading and it won't let go.Excellent.February 18, 2016Novelization of a true WWII escape story. Three British prisoners use a vault horse with a false bottom to dig a tunnel under the wire. It was a clever plan that worked and two of the prisoners were able to escape all the way back to England.March 23, 2016I was engrossed from the first chapter. I could not imagine being in the position of being a POW.
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