



Journey Out of Darkness: The Real Story of American Heroes in Hitler's POW Camps--An Oral History (Praeger Security International)

Hal LaCroix, Jorg Meyer

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Journey Out of Darkness is a poignant collection of portraits, in words and photographs, of 19 former prisoners of war who bravely endured captivity in Nazi Germany in World War II. Through these men, one can learn essential truths about the POW experience during that war?truths that counter many popular myths and misconceptions. The men featured here gather every week in offices of the Veterans Administration in Boston and Brockton, Mass. to talk about their experiences and find comfort in each other. In their eighties and nineties, they are unique individuals with unique wartime experiences, but also representative of the more than 120,000 American POWs held in Nazi Germany. They are men who fought a double war, in combat and then as POWs. Using both oral histories and photographs to tell their stories, LaCroix and Meyer humanize a terrifying aspect of war, redefining how we think about these men as POWs, survivors, patriots, and members of the Greatest Generation.

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Until the men in this book began meeting in VA support groups, few had spoken of their POW experiences. Some were told by the military not to talk; others were coerced by military intelligence into signing non-disclosure papers called security certificates. With little exception, they received no recognition for enduring as POWs, even as they struggled with traumatic memories and shame for having been held captive, for losing power over their fate, and for surviving combat when friends died. These portraits also illuminate another little-known story: the plight of Jewish-American POWs. Two of the men featured in the book were Jews who concealed their religious identities from the SS.

LaCroix and Meyer have crafted a powerful exploration of the struggles of these brave veterans. Using both oral histories and photographs, *Journey Out of Darkness* humanizes a terrifying aspect of war, redefining how we think about these men as POWs, survivors, patriots, and members of the Greatest Generation.

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