



Colditz: The Full Story

P.R. Reid

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In Colditz: The Full Story, first published in 1984, Major Pat Reid has for the first time been able to bring together all the dramatic discoveries resulting from research that has covered the five continents. There were more than 300 escape attempts at Colditz in the four and a half years of its war history and Major Pat Reid vividly describes a unique interlude in Second World War history that contains the mythical qualities which cause a legend to live forever. Men from all over the world and from all walks of life were incarcerated in suffocating intimacy for five years in an alien and hostile land. Under these conditions they proved that men could live together, and that loyalty and generosity could thrive, transcending the natural prejudices of race, creed, language and intellectual diversity.

Colditz: The Full Story Details

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Author : P.R. Reid

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Robert says

I have read number of war books and never ceases to amaze me the bravery of the men in that period. This no exception. If a novel you would never believe what went on.

Sherwood Smith says

I first read this as a thirteen year old who craved dashing stories about spies and great escapes. The disarmingly humorous and self-effacing tone made this a favorite.

I got a copy decades later, and found it interesting for all the assumptions about the soldier's life and purpose, and the assumptions about men of different cultures, all in this artificial situation fraught with peril. Read concurrently with Reinholt Eggers' view, it becomes fascinating.

Maggie says

Two and a half stars. Tells of the time during WW2 when Colditz Castle was used by the Germans as a POW camp, mainly for prisoners who had a record of attempting to escape. Being in Colditz did not stop the escape attempts, and this book is about 80% recounting the various escape attempts. I felt it could have gone into more details of the hardships they faced on a daily basis. At times this reads a bit like a boys own adventure with even the Germans represented in a benign light.

J. Carroll says

Rollicking old school tale of escape told with typical British understatement. As with many of these tales. the retelling is devoid of any emotional complexity. Military heroism is always an interesting subject.

Tracey Wilde says

If this had been billed as fiction I would have thought it was far fetched. Absolutely fascinating and highly recommended.

David Mitchell says

In Colditz: The Full Story, P.R. Reid delivers "the full history" as part memoir, part researched history and part anecdote. Castle Colditz was a POW compound that the Germans used for special prisoners -- those

having shown a propensity for escaping and those with a high hostage value, in particular. Reid himself was a prisoner there for about 2 years, up until his escape into Switzerland in 1942.

Reid (1910-1990) was not a polished writer or historian but he did personally experience Colditz and the realism that he conveys is compelling. Somewhat oddly, the realism is not of the horrors that one usually associates with being a prisoner. If anything, Reid presents a somewhat civilized incarceration with a German hierarchy that generally respected the prisoners and their right to try to escape. Admittedly, some who were caught escaping were shot by the Gestapo, but the more common experience was seemingly much better than any combat troops might have experienced and it was certainly remarkably nice when compared to anything that an Allied prisoner in the PTO would have experienced. (Indeed, in one instance, the German Commandant at Colditz sent an escaped POW's possessions back to the escaped prisoner after he returned to Allied territory. In another instance, an escaped prisoner sent real coffee to a German Dentist who had unwittingly aided in the prisoners escape.)

Colditz does drag in places so the reader should be willing to consider skimming some sections. On the whole, however, this book gave me insight into aspects of the war that I have not really studied in the past and I will value this book as part of my library. A very good read.

Richard says

At the 70th anniversary of the liberation of Colditz, the time was right to revisit this book.

Escape Organiser Pat Reid not only spent much of 1940-42 in Colditz, but helped organise many of the escapes from the supposedly escape-proof castle in Germany, finally escaping successfully himself in late 1942. Reid shares much of the meticulous planning and amazing ingenuity of the POW's from Colditz, which included officers from many nations (habitual escapers all).

Reid successfully captures the suspense, friction and even humour of the inmates as they seek to outwit the German guards. Many POW's of course lost their lives trying to get back home, and this is a fitting memorial to them too.

Jack Gibson says

Great book. Drawn to this, of course, from the great John Mills film. This book really does bring out the pain-staking brain power that the boys put into escaping from Germany's imprisonment...well done lads.

P B Starling says

Gold its: The Full Story

This was an excellent book. I was very interested and could not put this book down. The accounts written in this book are something to be read by people, to understand what these POWs went through at Colditz Castle.

Debbie says

Reid tells the amazing feats of courage and creative escapes and escape efforts from Germany's WWII highest security prisoner of war camp, a location they considered escape-proof. The stories have been the inspiration of multiple television shows and movies.
