

Stalag Luft III



Model of the *Stalag Luft III* compound
at the nearby museum

Stalag Luft III (**Stammlager Luft**, or Permanent Camp for Airmen #3) was a Luftwaffe (German Air Force) prisoner-of-war camp during World War II that housed captured air force service members. It was in the Province of Silesia near Sagan, now Żagań in Poland, 100 miles (160 km) southeast of Berlin.

The site was selected because it would be difficult to escape by tunneling.

However, the camp is best known for two famous prisoner escapes that took place there by tunneling, which were depicted in the films *The Great Escape* (1963) and *The Wooden Horse* (1950) and the books by former prisoners Paul Brickhill and Eric Williams from which these films were adapted.

The camp ...

Despite being an officers-only camp, it was referred to as a Stalag camp rather than Oflag (**Offizier Lager**) as the Luftwaffe had its own nomenclature. Later camp expansions added compounds for non-commissioned officers. Captured Fleet Air Arm (Royal Navy) crews were considered Air Force by the Luftwaffe and no differentiation was made. At times non-airmen were interned.

The first compound (East Compound) of the camp was completed and opened on 21 March 1942. The first prisoners, or kriegies, as they called themselves, to be housed at Stalag Luft III were British RAF and Fleet Air Arm officers, arriving in April 1942. The Centre compound was opened on 11 April 1942, originally for British sergeants, but by the end of 1942 replaced by Americans. The North Compound for British aviators, where the Great Escape occurred, opened on 29 March 1943. A South Compound for Americans was opened in September 1943, USAAF prisoners began arriving at the camp in significant numbers the following month, and the West Compound was opened in July 1944 for U.S. officers. Each compound consisted of fifteen single story huts. Each 10 feet (3.0 m) x 12 feet (3.7 m) bunkroom slept fifteen men in five triple deck bunks. Eventually the camp grew to approximately 60 acres (24 ha) in size and eventually housed about 2,500 Royal Air Force officers, about 7,500 U.S. Army Air Corps, and about 900 officers from other Allied air forces, for a total of 10,949 inmates, including some support officers.

The prison camp had a number of design features that made escape extremely difficult. The digging of escape tunnels, in particular, was discouraged by several factors. First, the barracks housing the prisoners were raised several inches off the ground to make it easier for guards to detect any tunneling activity. Second, the camp itself had been constructed on land that had very sandy subsoil. The sand was bright yellow, so it could easily be detected if anyone dumped it on the surface (which consisted of grey dust), or even just had some of it on their clothing. In addition, the loose, unconsolidated sand meant the structural integrity of a tunnel would be very poor. A third defense against tunneling was the placement of seismograph microphones around the perimeter of the camp, which were expected to detect any sounds of digging just below the surface.

The first successful escape occurred in October 1943 in the East Compound. Conjuring up a modern Trojan Horse, the kriegies constructed a gymnastic vaulting horse largely from plywood from Red Cross parcels. The horse was designed to conceal men, tools, and containers of dirt. Each day the horse was carried out to the same spot near the perimeter fence, and while prisoners conducted gymnastic exercises above, from under the horse a tunnel was dug. At the end of each working day, a wooden board was placed back over the tunnel entrance and recovered with surface dirt. The gymnastics not only disguised the real purpose of the vaulting horse, but the activity kept the sound of the digging from being detected by the microphones. For three months three prisoners, Lieutenant Michael Codner, Flight Lieutenant Eric Williams, and Flight Lieutenant Oliver Philpot, in shifts of one or two diggers at a time, dug over 100 feet (30 m) of tunnel using bowls for shovels and rods of metal to poke through the surface of the ground to create air holes. No shoring was

used except near the entrance. On the evening of October 29, 1943, Codner, Williams, and Philpot made their escape. Williams and Codner were able to reach the port of Stettin where they stowed away on a Danish ship and eventually returned to Britain. Philpot, posing as a Norwegian margarine manufacturer, was able to board a train to Danzig (now Gdansk), and from there stowed away on a Swedish ship headed for Stockholm, and from there repatriated to Britain. Accounts of this escape, long overshadowed by *The Great Escape*, were recorded in the book *Goon in the Block* (later retitled *The Wooden Horse*) by Williams, the book *The Stolen Journey* by Philpot, and the 1950 film *The Wooden Horse*.

Camp life ...



Kommandant Friedrich
Wilhelm von Lindeiner-
Wildau, Kommandant of
Stalag Luft III.

The recommended dietary intake for a normal healthy inactive man is 2,150 calories. Luft III issued "Non-working" German civilian rations that only allowed 1,928 calories per day, with the balance made up from British Red Cross parcels and items sent to the POWs by their families. As was customary at most camps, both Red Cross and individual parcels were pooled and distributed to the men equally. The camp also had an official internal bartering system called a *Foodacco* — POWs would market any surplus goods for "points" which could be "spent" on other items.

The Germans paid captured officers the equivalent of their pay in internal camp currency (*lagergeld*) which was used to buy what goods were made available by the German administration. Every three months a weak Beer was made available in the canteen for sale. As NCOs did not receive any "pay" it was the usual practice in camps for the officers to provide one third for their use but at Luft III all *lagergeld* was pooled for communal purchases. As British government policy was to deduct camp pay from the prisoner's military pay, the communal pool avoided the practice in other camps whereby American officers contributed to British canteen purchases.

Luft III had the best-organized recreational program for any POW camp in Germany. Each compound had athletic fields and volleyball courts. The prisoners participated in basketball, softball, boxing, touch football, volleyball, table tennis, and fencing with leagues organized for most. A pool 20'x22'x5', used to store water for firefighting, was available "occasionally" for swimming.

A substantial library with schooling facilities was available where many POWs earned degrees such as languages, engineering or law. The exams were supplied by the Red Cross and supervised by academics such as the Master of King's College who was a POW in Luft III. The prisoners also built a theatre and put on high quality bi-weekly shows featuring all the current West End shows. The prisoners used the camp amplifier to broadcast a news and music radio station they named *Station KRGY*, short for Kriegsgefangener, a term used for POWs and also published two newspapers, the *Circuit* and the *Kriegie Times* which were issued four times a week.

To avoid infiltrators, newcomers to the camp had to be personally vouched for by two existing POWs who knew the prisoner by sight. Any who failed this requirement were severely interrogated and assigned a rote of POWs who had to escort him at all times until he was deemed to be genuine. Several infiltrators were discovered by this method and none is known to have escaped detection in Luft III. The German guards were referred to as "Goons" and, unaware of the western connotation, willingly accepted the nickname after being told it stood for "German Officer Or Non-Com". German guards were followed everywhere they went by prisoners who used an elaborate system of signals to warn others of their location. The guards' movements were then carefully recorded in a logbook kept by an assigned rote of officers. Unable to effectively stop what the prisoners called the "Duty Pilot" system the Germans allowed it to continue and on one occasion the book was used by Kommandant von Lindeiner to bring charges against two guards who had slunk away from duty several hours early.

The camps 800 Luftwaffe guards were either primarily civilians too old for combat duty or young men convalescing after long tours of duty or wounds. Because the guards were Luftwaffe personnel the prisoners were accorded treatment far better than that granted other POWs in Germany. Deputy Kommandant Major Gustav Simoleit, a professor of history, geography and ethnology before the war, spoke several languages including English, Russian, Polish, and Czech.

Transferred to Sagan in early 1943, he was sympathetic to allied airmen and ignored the ban on military courtesies to POWs by providing full military honors for Luft III POW funerals which included one for an airman who was a Jew.

Liberation ...

Just before midnight on 27 January 1945, as Russian troops approached, the POWs were marched out of camp with the eventual destination of Spremberg. After a 34 mile (55 km) march the POWs arrived in Bad Muskau where they rested for 30 hours before marching the remaining 16 miles (26 km) to Spremberg. On 31 January the South Compound prisoners plus 200 men from the West Compound were sent by train to Stalag VII-A at Moosburg followed by the Centre compound prisoners on February 7. The North, East, and remaining West Compound prisoners at Spremberg were sent to Stalag XIII-D at Nürnberg on February 2. With the approach of U.S. forces on April 13, the American prisoners at XIII-D were marched to Stalag VII-A. While the majority reached VII-A on April 20, many had dropped out on the way with the German guards making no attempt to stop them. The U.S. 14th Armored Division liberated VII-A on April 29.

Notable prisoners ...

Notable military personnel held at Stalag Luft III included Squadron Leader Phil Lamason of the RNZAF, who was also the senior officer in charge of 168 allied airmen initially held at Buchenwald concentration camp. David M. Jones, Commander of the 319th Bombardment Group in North Africa, was an inmate at Stalag Luft III for two and a half years. According to his biography, he led the digging team on *Harry*. In early 1942, Jones took part in the Doolittle Raid undertaken in retaliation for the December 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor. Robert M. Polich, Sr. of the United States Air Force, who won the Distinguished Flying Cross, later featured in the short film *Red Leader on Fire* which was submitted for the Minnesota's Greatest Generation short film festival in 2008.

Flight Lieutenant (F/L) George Harsh RCAF was a member of the Great Escape's executive committee and the camp's "security officer." He was one of the 19 "suspects" transferred to Stalag VIII C shortly before the escape. Born in 1910 to a wealthy and prominent Georgia family, Harsh, a medical student, was sentenced to life imprisonment in 1929 for the self-confessed thrill killing of a grocer. In 1941, he saved the life of a fellow prisoner by performing an emergency appendectomy for which the Georgia governor granted him a pardon. He then joined the RCAF as a tail gunner and, after being shot down in 1942, was sent to Stalag Luft III. In 1971 he published his autobiography which has since been translated into German and Russian.

Some held at Stalag Luft III went on to notable careers in the entertainment industry. British actor Rupert Davies had many roles in productions at the theatre in the camp; his most famous roles on film and TV may have been Inspector Maigret in the BBC series *Maigret* that aired over 52 episodes from 1960 to 1963 and George Smiley in the movie *The Spy Who Came in from the Cold*. The actor Peter Butterworth and the writer Talbot Rothwell were both inmates of Stalag Luft III; they became friends and later worked together on the *Carry On* films. Singer Cy Grant, born in Guyana (then British Guiana), served as a Flight Lieutenant in the RAF, and spent two years as a prisoner of war including at Stalag Luft III. After the war, he qualified as a Barrister at Law, but went on to be a singer/actor/author. He was the first black face to be regularly seen on British television, singing tropical calypsos on television on the BBC *Tonight* programme. Wally Kinnan, one of the first well known U.S. pioneer television broadcast meteorologists, was also in the camp.

Stalag Luft III inmates also developed an interest in politics. Justin O'Byrne, who spent more than three years as a POW, represented Tasmania in the Australian Senate for 34 years, and served as President of the Senate. Professor Basil Chubb, author and political science lecturer, spent 15 months there after being shot down over Germany. Peter Thomas, Baron Thomas of Gwydir, a Welsh Conservative politician, and cabinet minister under Edward Heath, spent four years as a prisoner of war including at Stalag Luft III.

Importantly for the historical record, Australian journalist Paul Brickhill was an inmate at Stalag Luft III from 1943 until release. In 1950 he wrote the first comprehensive account about *The Great Escape*, which was later adapted into the famous film, and went on to chronicle the life of Douglas Bader in *Reach for the Sky* and the efforts of 617 "Dam Busters" Squadron.

The "Great Escape" ...



Roger Bushell in his Royal Air Force uniform shortly before his capture.

In the spring of 1943, Sqn Ldr Roger Bushell (RAF) conceived a plan for a major escape from the camp, which occurred the night of March 24-25, 1944.

Bushell was held in the North Compound where British aviators were housed. He was in command of the Escape Committee and channeled the effort into probing for weaknesses and looking for opportunities. Falling back on his legal background to represent his scheme, Bushell called a meeting of the Escape Committee and not only shocked those present with its scope, but injected into every man a passionate determination to put their every energy into the escape. He declared,

"Everyone here in this room is living on borrowed time. By rights, we should all be dead! The only reason that God allowed us this extra ration of life is so we can make life hell for the Hun... In North Compound, we are concentrating our efforts on completing and escaping through one master tunnel. No private-enterprise tunnels allowed. Three bloody deep, bloody long tunnels will be dug - Tom, Dick, and Harry. One will succeed!"

The simultaneous digging of these tunnels would become an advantage if any one of them were discovered by the Germans, because the guards would scarcely imagine that another two could be well underway. The most radical aspect of the plan was not merely the scale of the construction, but the sheer number of men that Bushell intended to pass through these tunnels. Previous attempts had involved the escape of anything up to a dozen or twenty men, but Bushell was proposing to get in excess of 200 out, all of whom would be wearing civilian clothes and possessing a complete range of forged papers and escape equipment. It was an unprecedented undertaking and would require unparalleled organization. As the mastermind

of the Great Escape, Roger Bushell inherited the codename of "Big X". The tunnel "Tom" began in a darkened corner of a hall in one of the buildings. "Dick's" entrance was carefully hidden in a drain sump in one of the washrooms. The entrance to "Harry" was hidden under a stove. More than 600 prisoners were involved in their construction.

Tunnel construction ...

In order to keep the tunnels from being detected by the perimeter microphones, they were very deep — about 30 feet (9 m) below the surface. The tunnels were very small, only 2 square feet (0.2 m²), though larger chambers were dug to house the air pump, a workshop, and staging posts along each tunnel. The sandy walls of the tunnels were shored up with pieces of wood scavenged from all over the camp. One main source of wood was the prisoners' beds. At the beginning, each had about twenty boards supporting the mattress. By the time of the escape, only about eight were left on each bed. A number of other pieces of wooden furniture were also scavenged.

A variety of other materials was also scavenged. One such item was the Klim can, a tin can that originally held powdered milk, supplied by the Red Cross for the prisoners. The metal in the cans could be fashioned into a variety of different tools and items such as scoops and candleholders. Candles were fashioned by skimming the fat off the top of soup served at the camp and putting it in tiny tin vessels. Wicks were made from old and worn clothing. The main use of the Klim tins, however, was in the construction of the extensive ventilation ducting in all three tunnels.

As the tunnels grew longer, a number of technical innovations made the job easier and safer. One important issue was ensuring that the person digging had enough oxygen to breathe and keep his lamps lit. A pump was built to push fresh air along the ducting into the tunnels - invented by Squadron Leader Bob Nelson of 37 Squadron. The pumps were built of odd items including major bed pieces, hockey sticks, and knapsacks — as well as Klim tins.

Later, electric lighting was installed and hooked into the camp's electrical grid. The tunnellers also installed small rail car systems for moving sand more quickly. The rails were key to moving an estimated 140 cubic meters (200 tons) of sand in a twelve-month period; they also reduced the time taken for tunnellers to reach the digging faces.

With three tunnels, the prisoners needed places to dump sand. The usual method of disposing of sand was to scatter it discreetly on the surface. Small pouches made of old socks were attached inside the prisoners' trousers. As the prisoners walked around, the sand would scatter. Sometimes, the prisoners would dump sand into small gardens that they were allowed to tend. As one prisoner turned the soil, another would release sand while the two appeared to carry on a normal conversation. The prisoners wore greatcoats to conceal the bulges made by the socks and were referred to as penguins because of their supposed resemblance to the animal. More than 200 were recruited who were to make an estimated 25,000 trips.

The Germans were aware that something major was going on, but all attempts to discover tunnels failed. In an attempt to break up any escape attempts, nineteen of their top suspects were transferred without warning to Stalag VIII C. Of those, only six were heavily involved with tunnel construction.

Eventually, the prisoners felt they could no longer dump sand on the surface as the Germans became too efficient at catching prisoners using this method. After "Dick's" planned exit surface became covered by a camp expansion, the decision was made to start filling the tunnel up. As the tunnel's entrance was very well hidden, "Dick" was also used as a storage room for a variety of items such as maps, postage stamps, forged travel permits, compasses, and clothing such as German uniforms and civilian suits. Surprisingly, a number of friendly guards co-operated in supplying railway timetables, maps, and the large number of official papers required to allow them to be forged. Some genuine civilian clothes were also obtained by bribing German staff with cigarettes, coffee, or chocolate. These were used by escaping prisoners to travel away from the prison camp more easily — by train, if possible.

The prisoners later ran out of places to hide the sand and snow cover now made it impractical to scatter it over the ground. Underneath the seats in the theatre was a huge enclosed area, but the theatre had been built using tools and materials supplied on parole and the parole system was regarded as inviolate - such equipment was never used for other purposes. Internal "legal advice" was taken, and the SBO's decided that the theatre itself did not fall under the parole system. Seat 13 was hinged and the sand problem solved.

As the war progressed, the German prison camps began to be overwhelmed with American prisoners. The Germans decided that new camps would be built specifically for the U.S. flyers. In an effort to allow as many people to escape as possible, including the Americans, efforts on the remaining two tunnels increased. However, the higher level of activity drew the attention of guards, and in September 1943, the entrance to "Tom" became the 98th tunnel to be discovered in the camp after guards hiding in the woods watching the penguins dispersing the sand noticed sand was being removed from the hut where Tom was located. Work on "Harry" ceased and did not resume until January 1944.

Tunnel "Harry" completed ...

"Harry" was finally ready in March 1944, but the American prisoners, some of whom had worked on the tunnel "Tom," had been moved to another compound seven months earlier. No American prisoners of war actually participated in the "great escape." As previously, this escape attempt had been planned for the summer, as good weather was a large factor of success. However, in early 1944 the Gestapo had visited the camp and ordered increased efforts in detecting possible escape attempts. Bushell ordered the attempt be made as soon as the tunnel was ready.

Of the 600 prisoners who had worked on the tunnels, only 200 would be able to escape. The prisoners were separated into two groups. The first group of 100, called "serial offenders," were guaranteed a place and included those who spoke German well or had a history of escapes, plus an additional 70 men considered to have put in the most work on the tunnels. The second group of 100, considered to have very little chance of success, had to draw lots to determine inclusion. Called "hard-arsers" these would be required to travel by night as they spoke little or no German and were only equipped with the most basic fake papers and equipment.

The prisoners had to wait about a week for a moonless night so that they could leave under the cover of complete darkness. Finally, on Friday, March 24, the escape attempt began and as night fell, those allocated a place in the tunnel moved to Hut 104. Unfortunately, for the prisoners, the exit trap door of Harry was frozen solid, and freeing the door delayed the escape for an hour and a half. An even larger setback was that the tunnel had come up short. It had been planned that the tunnel would reach into a nearby forest, but at 10.30 p.m., the first man out emerged just short of the

tree line and close to a guard tower (according to Alan Burgess, in his book *The Longest Tunnel*, the tunnel reached the forest, as planned, but the trees were too sparse to provide adequate cover). The temperature was below freezing and snow still lay on the ground, any escapee would leave a dark trail as they crawled to cover. Because of the need avoid sentries, instead of the planned one man every minute, the escape was reduced to little more than ten per hour. Word was eventually sent back that no prisoner issued with a number higher than 100 would be able to escape before daylight. As they would be shot if caught trying to return to their own barracks these men changed into their own uniforms and got some sleep. An air raid then caused the camp's (and the tunnel's) electric lighting to be shut down slowing the escape even more. At around 1 a.m., the tunnel collapsed and had to be repaired.

Despite these problems, 76 men crawled through the tunnel to initial freedom. Finally, at 4:55 a.m. on March 25, the 77th man was seen emerging from the tunnel by one of the guards. Those already in the trees began running while Squadron Leader Leonard Henry Trent VC, who had just reached the tree line, stood up and surrendered. The guards had no idea where the tunnel entrance was, so they began searching the huts, giving the men time to burn their fake papers. Hut 104 was one of the last huts searched and despite using dogs, the guards were unable to find the entrance. Finally, German guard Charlie Pilz crawled the length of the tunnel but found himself trapped at the other end. Pilz began calling for help and the prisoners opened the entrance to let him out, finally revealing the location.

An early problem for the escapees was that most of them were unable to find the entrance to the railway station until daylight revealed it was in a recess in the sidewall of an underground pedestrian tunnel. Consequently, many of them missed their nighttime trains and either decided to walk across country or wait on the platform in daylight. Another unanticipated problem was that this March was the coldest recorded in 30 years and snow lay up to five feet deep, the escapees had no option but to leave the cover of woods and fields and use roads.

After the escape ...

Following the escape, the Germans took an inventory of the camp and found out just how extensive the operation had been. 4,000 bed boards had gone missing, as well as the complete disappearance of 90 double bunk beds, 635 mattresses, 192 bed covers, 161 pillow cases, 52 20-man tables, 10 single tables, 34 chairs, 76 benches, 1,212 bed bolsters, 1,370 beading battens, 1219 knives, 478 spoons, 582 forks, 69 lamps, 246 water cans, 30 shovels, 1,000 feet (300 m) of electric wire, 600 feet (180 m) of rope, and 3424 towels. 1,700 blankets had been used, along with more than 1,400 Klim tins. The electric cable had been stolen after being left unattended by German workers; as they had not reported the theft, they were executed by the Gestapo. From then on each bed was supplied with only nine bed boards which were counted regularly by the guards.

Of 76 escapees, 73 were captured. Hitler initially wanted to have not only the escapees shot as an example but also commandant von Lindeiner, the architect who designed the camp, the camp's security officer, and the guards on duty at the time. Göring, Feldmarschall Keitel, Maj-Gen Westhoff and Maj-Gen von Graevenitz, who was head of the department in charge of prisoners of war, all argued against any executions as a violation of the Geneva Conventions. Hitler eventually relented and instead ordered Himmler to execute more than half of the escapees. Himmler passed the selection on to General Artur Nebe who selected all the Poles and eastern Europeans among the POWs before apparently choosing the rest randomly. Fifty were executed singly or in pairs.

Prior to being sent off to other camps with the remaining 23 escapees— Prisoner Bob Nelson is said to have been spared by the *Gestapo* due to his surname, possibly believing that he had been related to his namesake *Admiral Nelson*. His friend Dick Churchill was similarly spared, probably due to his namesake as well. Seventeen were returned to *Stalag Luft III*, four were sent to Sachsenhausen concentration camp where they managed to tunnel out and escape three months later but were recaptured several weeks later and returned to Sachsenhausen. Two were sent to Oflag IV-C Colditz.

Nationalities of the 50

-  21 British
-  6 Canadian
-  6 Polish
-  5 Australian
-  3 South African
-  2 New Zealander
-  2 Norwegian
-  1 Belgian
-  1 Czech
-  1 French
-  1 Greek
-  1 Lithuanian

Successful escapes:

- Per Bergsland, Norwegian pilot of No. 332 Squadron RAF
- Jens Müller, Norwegian pilot of No. 331 Squadron RAF
- Bram van der Stok, Dutch pilot of No. 41 Squadron RAF

Bergsland and Müller made it to neutral Sweden first, by boat, while Van der Stok travelled through France before finding safety at a British consulate in Spain.

Investigations and repercussions ...



Memorial to "The Fifty" down the road toward Żagań

Gestapo carried out an investigation into the escape. While the investigation uncovered no significant new information, the camp Kommandant Von Lindeiner was removed and threatened with court martial. However, he feigned mental illness to avoid imprisonment. He was wounded by Russian troops advancing toward Berlin while he was second in command of an infantry unit. He surrendered to advancing British forces as the war ended. He was imprisoned for two years after the war at the British prison known as the "London Cage." He testified during the British SIB investigation concerning the murder of the 50 escapees.

Originally one of Hermann Goering's personal staff, after being refused retirement, Von Lindeiner had been posted as Sagan Kommandant. He followed the Geneva Accords concerning POWs and won the respect of the senior prisoners. Von Lindeiner was released in 1947 and died in 1963 at the age of 82.

On 6th April, the new *Kommandant*, Oberstleutnant Erich Cordes informed the Senior British Officer that he had received an official communication from the German High Command stating that 41 of the escapees had been shot while resisting arrest. Cordes was later replaced by Oberst Franz Braune. Braune was appalled that so many escapees had been killed, and he allowed the prisoners who remained at the camp to build a memorial, to which he also contributed. It still stands today.

The British government learned of the deaths from a routine visit to the camp by the Swiss authorities as the "Protecting Power" in May; the Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden announced the news to the House of Commons on 19 May 1944. Shortly after, the Senior British Officer of the camp, Group Captain Herbert Massey, was repatriated to England due to ill health. Upon his return, he informed the Government about the circumstances of the escape and the reality of the murder of the recaptured escapees. Eden updated Parliament on 23 June, promising that at the end of the war, those responsible would be brought to exemplary justice. One of the crimes charged in the Nuremberg Trials was of the murder of the 50.

Artur Nebe, who is believed to have selected the airmen to be shot, was later executed for his involvement in the July 20 plot to kill Hitler. Several Gestapo officers responsible for the executions of the escapees were tried and executed or imprisoned by the Allies after the war. A large manhunt was carried out by the Royal Air Force's investigative branch.

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stalag_Luft_III

List of Allied airmen from the Great Escape



Memorial to "The Fifty" Allied airmen executed after the "Great Escape"

Camp	Rank	Name	Unit	Method	Date	Notes
Stalag Luft III	Sergeant	Per Bergsland	RAF	Tunnel	24 March 1944	Great Escape. Home run via Stettin
Stalag Luft III	Flight Lieutenant	R.A. Bethell	RAF	Tunnel	24 March 1944	Great Escape
Stalag Luft III	Flight Lieutenant	E. Gordon Brettell	RAF	Tunnel	24 March 1944	Great Escape. Executed by Gestapo
Stalag Luft III	Flight Lieutenant	Leslie C.J. Brodrick	RAF	Tunnel	24 March 1944	Great Escape
Stalag Luft III	Flight Lieutenant	Lester J. 'Johnny' Bull	RAF	Tunnel	24 March 1944	Great Escape. Executed by Gestapo
Stalag Luft III	Squadron Leader	Roger Bushell	RAF	Tunnel	24 March 1944	Great Escape. Executed by Gestapo
Stalag Luft III	Flight Lieutenant	Mike J. Casey	RAF	Tunnel	24 March 1944	Great Escape. Executed by Gestapo
Stalag Luft III	Flight Lieutenant	R.S.A. 'Dick' Churchill	RAF	Tunnel	24 March 1944	Great Escape
Stalag Luft III	Flying Officer	Dennis H. Cochran	RAF	Tunnel	24 March 1944	Great Escape. Executed by Gestapo
Stalag Luft III	Squadron Leader	Ian K.P. Cross	RAF	Tunnel	24 March 1944	Great Escape. Executed by Gestapo
Stalag Luft III	Wing Commander	Harry M.A. 'Wings' Day	RAF	Tunnel	24 March 1944	Great Escape
Stalag Luft III	Major	Johnnie Dodge	British Army	Tunnel	24 March 1944	Great Escape
Stalag Luft III	Flight Lieutenant	Sydney H. Dowse	RAF	Tunnel	24 March 1944	Great Escape
Stalag Luft III	Flight Lieutenant	Bedrich 'Freddie' Dvorak	RAF	Tunnel	24 March 1944	Great Escape
Stalag Luft III	Flight Lieutenant	Brian H. Evans	RAF	Tunnel	24 March 1944	Great Escape. Executed by Gestapo
Stalag Luft III	Flight Lieutenant	Bernard 'Pop' Green	RAF	Tunnel	24 March 1944	Great Escape
Stalag Luft III	Flight Lieutenant	William Grisman	RAF	Tunnel	24 March 1944	Great Escape. Executed by Gestapo
Stalag Luft III	Flight Lieutenant	Alistair D.M. Gunn	RAF	Tunnel	24 March 1944	Great Escape. Executed by Gestapo

Stalag Luft III	Flight Lieutenant	Charles P.Hall	RAF	Tunnel	24 March 1944	Great Escape. Executed by Gestapo
Stalag Luft III	Flight Lieutenant	Anthony R.H.Hayter	RAF	Tunnel	24 March 1944	Great Escape. Executed by Gestapo
Stalag Luft III	Flight Lieutenant	Edgar S.Humphreys	RAF	Tunnel	24 March 1944	Great Escape. Executed by Gestapo
Stalag Luft III	Pilot Officer	B.A. 'Jimmy' James	RAF	Tunnel	24 March 1944	Great Escape
Stalag Luft III	Flight Lieutenant	Antoni Liewarski	RAF	Tunnel	24 March 1944	Great Escape. Executed by Gestapo
Stalag Luft III	Squadron Leader	Thomas G.Kirby-Green	RAF	Tunnel	24 March 1944	Great Escape. Executed by Gestapo
Stalag Luft III	Flight Lieutenant	Roy B.Langlois	RAF	Tunnel	24 March 1944	Great Escape
Stalag Luft III	Flight Lieutenant	Thomas B. Leigh	RAF	Tunnel	24 March 1944	Great Escape. Executed by Gestapo
Stalag Luft III	Flight Lieutenant	James L.R. 'Cookie' Long	RAF	Tunnel	24 March 1944	Great Escape. Executed by Gestapo
Stalag Luft III	Flight Lieutenant	Roma 'René' Marcinkus	RAF	Tunnel	24 March 1944	Great Escape. Executed by Gestapo
Stalag Luft III	Flight Lieutenant	H.C. 'Johnny' Marshall	RAF	Tunnel	24 March 1944	Great Escape
Stalag Luft III	Flight Lieutenant	Alistair T. McDonald	RAF	Tunnel	24 March 1944	Great Escape
Stalag Luft III	Flying Officer	Henry J. 'Hank' Birkland	RCAF	Tunnel	24 March 1944	Great Escape. Executed by Gestapo
Stalag Luft III	Flight Lieutenant	Patrick W.Langford	RCAF	Tunnel	24 March 1944	Great Escape. Executed by Gestapo
Stalag Luft III	Flight Lieutenant	Bill Cameron	RCAF	Tunnel	24 March 1944	Great Escape
Stalag Luft III	Flying Officer	Gordon A.Kidder	RCAF	Tunnel	24 March 1944	Great Escape. Executed by Gestapo
Stalag Luft III	Flying Officer	A. Wlodzimierz Kolanowski	RCAF	Tunnel	24 March 1944	Great Escape. Executed by Gestapo
Stalag Luft III	Flying Officer	Stanislaw Z. 'Danny' Krol	RAF	Tunnel	24 March 1944	Great Escape. Executed by Gestapo
Stalag Luft III	Flight Lieutenant	Reginald V. 'Rusty' Kierath	RAAF	Tunnel	24 March 1944	Great Escape. Executed by Gestapo
Stalag Luft III	Squadron Leader	James Catanach	RAAF	Tunnel	24 March 1944	Great Escape. Executed by Gestapo
Stalag Luft III	Flight Lieutenant	Albert H. Hake	RAAF	Tunnel	24 March 1944	Great Escape. Executed by Gestapo
Stalag Luft III	Flight Lieutenant	Arnold G. Christensen	RNZAF	Tunnel	24 March 1944	Great Escape. Executed by Gestapo
Stalag Luft III	Pilot Office	S. 'Nick' Skanziklas	RHAF	Tunnel	24 March 1944	Great Escape. Executed by Gestapo
Stalag Luft III	Lieutenant	Rupert J. Stevens	SAAF	Tunnel	24 March 1944	Great Escape. Executed by Gestapo
Stalag Luft III	Flight Lieutenant	Alfred B. Thompson	RCAF	Tunnel	24 March 1944	Great Escape
Stalag Luft III	Squadron Leader	Len Trent	RNZAF	Tunnel	24 March 1944	Great Escape
Stalag Luft III	Flight Lieutenant	James C. Wernham	RCAF	Tunnel	24 March 1944	Great Escape. Executed by Gestapo
Stalag Luft III	Flight Lieutenant	George W. Wiley	RCAF	Tunnel	24 March 1944	Great Escape. Executed by Gestapo
Stalag Luft III	Squadron Leader	John E.A. Williams	RAAF	Tunnel	24 March 1944	Great Escape. Executed by Gestapo
Stalag Luft III	Sergeant	Haldor Espelid	RNAF	Tunnel	24 March 1944	Great Escape. Executed by Gestapo
Stalag Luft III	Lieutenant	Nils Fugelsang	RNAF	Tunnel	24 March 1944	Great Escape. Executed by Gestapo
Stalag Luft III	Lieutenant	Johannes S. Gouws	SAAF	Tunnel	24 March 1944	Great Escape. Executed by Gestapo

Stalag Luft III	Lieutenant	Clement A.N. McGarr	SAAF	Tunnel	24 March 1944	Great Escape. Executed by Gestapo
Stalag Luft III	Flight Lieutenant	George E. McGill	RCAF	Tunnel	24 March 1944	Great Escape. Executed by Gestapo
Stalag Luft III	Flight Lieutenant	Harold J. Milford	RAF	Tunnel	24 March 1944	Great Escape. Executed by Gestapo
Stalag Luft III	Flying Officer	Jerzy T. Mondschein	RAF	Tunnel	24 March 1944	Great Escape. Executed by Gestapo
Stalag Luft III	Second Lieutenant	Jens E. Müller	RAF	Tunnel	24 March 1944	Great Escape. Home run via Stettin
Stalag Luft III	Lieutenant	Alastair D. Neely	Royal Navy	Tunnel	24 March 1944	Great Escape
Stalag Luft III	Flight Lieutenant	T.R. Nelson	RAF	Tunnel	24 March 1944	Great Escape
Stalag Luft III	Flight Lieutenant	A. Keith Ogilvie	RAF	Tunnel	24 March 1944	Great Escape
Stalag Luft III	Flying Officer	Kazimierz Pawluk	RAF	Tunnel	24 March 1944	Great Escape. Executed by Gestapo
Stalag Luft III	Flight Lieutenant	Henri A. Picard	RAF	Tunnel	24 March 1944	Great Escape. Executed by Gestapo
Stalag Luft III	Flight Lieutenant	Des L. Plunkett	RAF	Tunnel	24 March 1944	Great Escape
Stalag Luft III	Flying Officer	Porokoru Patapu 'Johnny' Pohe	RNZAF	Tunnel	24 March 1944	Great Escape. Executed by Gestapo
Stalag Luft III	Lieutenant	Douglas A. Poynter	Royal Navy	Tunnel	24 March 1944	Great Escape
Stalag Luft III	Pilot Officer	Paul G. Royle	RAF	Tunnel	24 March 1944	Great Escape
Stalag Luft III	Lieutenant	Bernard W.M. Scheidhauer	FFAF	Tunnel	24 March 1944	Great Escape. Executed by Gestapo
Stalag Luft III	Flight Lieutenant	Michael M. Shand	RAF	Tunnel	24 March 1944	Great Escape
Stalag Luft III	Flying Officer	Robert C. Stewart	RAF	Tunnel	24 March 1944	Great Escape. Executed by Gestapo
Stalag Luft III	Flying Officer	John G. Stower	RAF	Tunnel	24 March 1944	Great Escape. Executed by Gestapo
Stalag Luft III	Flying Officer	Denys O. Street	RAF	Tunnel	24 March 1944	Great Escape. Executed by Gestapo
Stalag Luft III	Flying Officer	Pawel 'Peter' Tobolski	RAF	Tunnel	24 March 1944	Great Escape. Executed by Gestapo
Stalag Luft III	Flight Lieutenant	Ivo P. Tonder	RAF	Tunnel	24 March 1944	Great Escape
Stalag Luft III	Flight Lieutenant	Arnost 'Wally' Valenta	RAF	Tunnel	24 March 1944	Great Escape. Executed by Gestapo
Stalag Luft III	Flight Lieutenant	Robert van der Stok	RAF	Tunnel	24 March 1944	Great Escape. Home run to Utrecht.
Stalag Luft III	Flight Lieutenant	Raymond L.N. van Wymeerssh	RAF	Tunnel	24 March 1944	Great Escape
Stalag Luft III	Flight Lieutenant	Gilbert W. 'Tim' Walenn	RAF	Tunnel	24 March 1944	Great Escape. Executed by Gestapo
Stalag Luft III	Flight Lieutenant	John F. Williams	RAF	Tunnel	24 March 1944	Great Escape. Executed by Gestapo

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Allied_airmen_from_the_Great_Escape