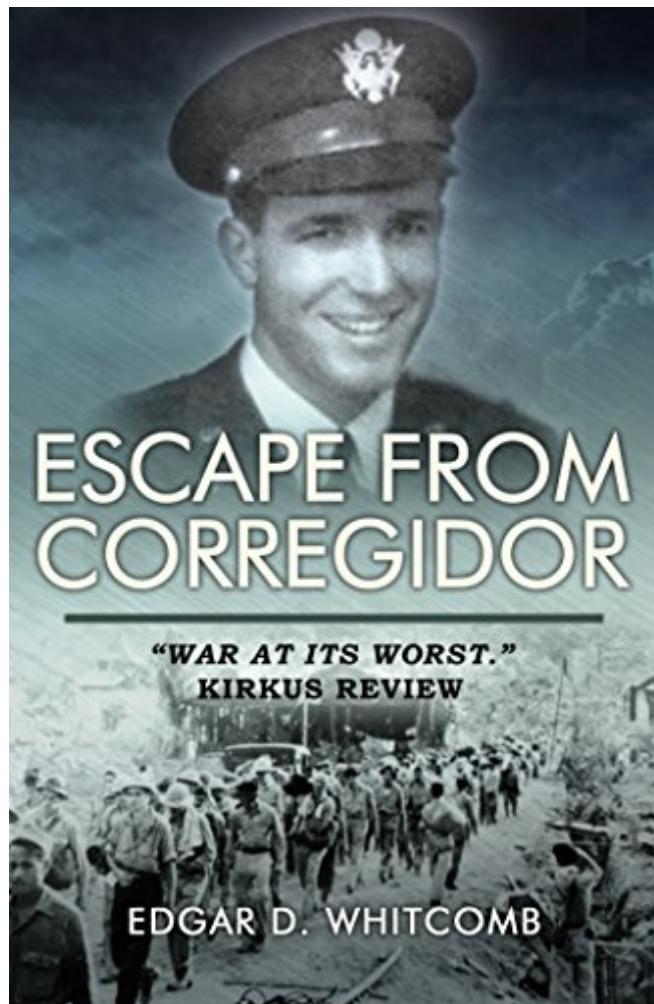


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Escape From Corregidor



Synopsis

'This is a story of one man's effort for survival - an incredible, fascinating account' - Kirkus Reviews

Escape from Corregidor, first published in 1958, is the harrowing account of Edgar Whitcomb, a B-17 navigator who arrives in World War II Philippines just before its capture by the invading Japanese. Whitcomb manages to evade the enemy on Bataan by travelling to Corregidor Island in a small boat. However, his efforts to escape eventually fail and he is captured but later manages to escape at night in an hours-long swim to safety. After weeks of struggle in a snake-infested jungle, he sailed by moonlight down the heavily patrolled coast, only to fall, once again, into the clutches of the enemy. Facing captors, Ed Whitcomb took a desperate chance for freedom. Clenching his fists, he said: "My name is Robert Fred Johnson, mining employee." This is the story of a man who vowed never to give up. He assumed the identity of a civilian and lived another man's life for almost two years. Neither hunger, nor beatings, nor the long gray hopelessness of prison life could shake Ed Whitcomb's determination to escape the enemy and return home to Indiana.'

One of the most frank, and readable personal narratives of service in the Philippines, and escape from Japanese captivity' - Pacific Wrecks

Edgar Doud Whitcomb (November 6, 1917 – February 4, 2016) was an American politician, who was the 43rd Governor of Indiana. He enlisted in the United States Army Air Corps in 1940 and was deployed to the Pacific Theater. He was commissioned as a Lieutenant in 1941 and made an aerial navigator. He served two tours of duty in the Philippines and was promoted to Second Lieutenant. During the Philippines Campaign, Whitcomb's base was overrun; he was captured by the Japanese and was beaten and tortured by his captors, but was able to escape. Recaptured a few days later, he escaped a second time and was hunted for several more days but was able to evade his pursuers. He escaped by swimming all night through shark-infested waters to an island unoccupied by the Japanese army. He was eventually able to secure passage to China under an assumed name where he made contact with the United States Army and was repatriated in December 1943. Escape from Corregidor, his memoir of war-time experiences, was first published in 1958. He was discharged from active duty in 1946, but he remained in the reserve military forces until 1977 holding the rank of colonel. In retirement Whitcomb still sought adventure, with a six-year, around-the-world sailing trip.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Gripping autobiographical intrigue on the life of an American WWII B-17 Navigator, Lt Edgar Whitcomb. The suspense and quick flowing narrative was a real pleasure to read. Ed cheated death on so many occasions and ultimately lives to fight another day. First he must survive the Japanese onslaught of multiple bombings and strafing's at Clark AB, Republic of the Philippines. Once accomplishing that, he eventually finds himself fighting with US Army Infantry troops on the southern peninsula of Luzon, (Bataan). On April 9, 1941 the Americans raise the white flag, capitulating the peninsula to the Japanese. Ed refuses to surrender and escapes by hitching a ride on a not-so seaworthy boat to Corregidor Island. One month later Corregidor falls to the Japanese and he along with 11,000 allies are taken prisoner. During a work detail Lt Whitcomb, and a USMC comrade, Bill Harris, sneak out of their POW campsite, and in the middle of the night, swim the strong currents of Manila Bay for 8 hours, finding themselves back on Bataan. Well from these adventures to what happens next is just downright fantastical. From commandeering sailboats provided by friendly locals, to ultimately being betrayed by some not-so friendly Filipinos. He and two of his civilian, (American), mining companions are taken prisoner by the Japanese, thus reverting back to POW status. He convinces his captors that he too is a civilian miner. Due to his "civilian status" he is

ultimately moved from the staging/interrogation area at Fort Santiago prison camp, (Manila), to other internment centers; Santo Thomas University, Manila, and the last internment center was in Chapei, China. After one year in China, he and several hundred other prisoners are traded for hundreds of American-Japanese civilians for repatriation. So once back in the States, Ed gets re-certified for navigation duty and eventually finds himself back in the fight, flying bombing missions from the Philippines. This was an exceptional book on so many levels, and just down right fun to read. I highly recommend this suspenseful book for the masses. It will have you on the edge of your seat! Seriously, read this book, you'll be glad you did!

The true story of a true American hero, though through no fault of his own, he came to the battle late in the day. My hat is off to Edgar Whitcomb for his courage, after all he had gone through, to fight successfully to return to WWII. Thank you to Mr. Whitcomb for helping us to remember the many who died before they had the chance to live their dreams. Thank you for giving meaning to the names we would never read in a history book, but who were real people who gave the ultimate sacrifice for us who live in America today.

A well written interesting true story of escape and survival during the Japanese invasion of the far east during WW2. Much of Mr. Whitcomb's sequential meanderings from prisoner to return to the US appear providential, some reflect choices with little fore-knowledge. Of equal interest was the social interplay of the native peoples, the Japanese soldiers, the allied prisoners, and the escapees during the phases of Mr. Whitcomb's escape..

Governor Edgar D Whitcomb of Indiana died February 4, 2016 at age 98. This is an intriguing World War II story set in the Pacific theater never put on the big screen. It's a riveting story beginning pre-Pearl Harbor invasion when life as an aerial navigator was more like a vacation in the Philippines. It quickly changes after the invasion. The story told through the eyes of a young military man is fascinating and should be read by all!

As a resident of Indiana I was particularly interested in the life of one of our greatest governors. The book was very interesting and even though it was not a literary masterpiece it was well worth the read. I recommend this book to anyone who would like to know more about Edgar Whitcomb and how his life experiences most likely shaped his thinking into becoming one of the great leaders of his time.

Ed Whitcomb's personal story of the war in the Pacific makes fascinating reading! He tells his story from a honest perspective, giving the reader a clear view of how America was blindsided by the Japanese at Pearl Harbor. Whitcomb walks the reader through what it was like to be a young airman who was stranded in Corregidor when his plane was shot up on the runway, what it was like to be defending Corregidor when he was pressed into service as a foot soldier, and how it felt to be told he had to surrender when it was apparent that the United States was not going to send any relief support to the starving island. The reader is drawn into the aura of hopelessness that pervaded all who surrendered, many against their will, and how some soldiers refused to follow orders and instead decided to attempt to escape. Not wanting to give the ending away, I can say that Whitcomb's story gave me an understanding of this time that I have never achieved by reading many other WW II pacific stories. Ed Whitcomb's story rates right up there with the writing of W.E.B. Griffin, except that it is more realistic because he was there. His intense determination to survive to fight again is astounding. I know Governor Ed Whitcomb personally, and he is a modest man. He never bragged about his exploits, and but for this book, I would never have known of the trials and triumphs that he and his fellow soldiers went through. He was a brave soldier who triumphed against odds against which most men would have surrendered. Yet he persevered. Yet, through it all, he shows an amazing empathy and understanding of the Japanese nation and its soldiers. Amazingly to me, hatred does not rear its head in this book. Not only was he a brave, passionate soldier, but he also was a great Governor for the State of Indiana. And to this day he is still a great man, a friendly, humble friend who has never looked upon himself as a hero or a person out of the ordinary. I would recommend this book to anyone who wants to know what the beginning of WW II in the Pacific was like, how it felt to be a prisoner of war, how brave all our young men were, and how some were fortunate enough and determined enough to escape and then re-enter the fight, facing possible recapture. A fascinating read!

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