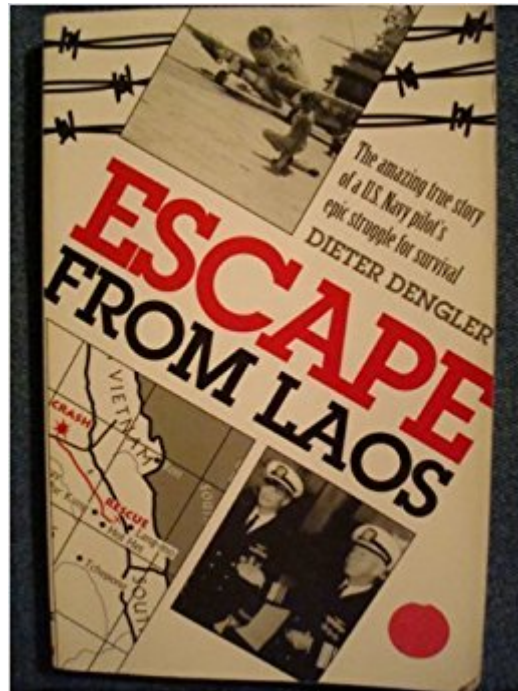




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Escape From Laos



Synopsis

Dengler's story is a valuable contribution to the literature of survival as well as to the literature of the war.

Book Information

Paperback: 228 pages

Publisher: Presidio Press (January 14, 1997)

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Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars 35 customer reviews

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Customer Reviews

This reviewer has read several P.O.W. tales. Each is disturbing yet stirring. Each paints a picture of physical and mental courage in face of overwhelming physical, military, personal odds. What sets "Escape from Laos" apart is the sheer mystery surrounding the Indochina war in that mysterious landlocked country. Even those of us who served in Vietnam (but were spared combat) can at least relate geographically to many stories. We could locate Cu Chi, An Khe and Khe Sanh on a map. But Laos? To orientate ourselves, EFL is the tale of a Navy Pilot, Dieter Dengler and his escape from a Pathet Lao POW camp in eastern Laos. My edition's one map shed no further geographical light on the situation. Inferior maps no longer surprise this reviewer. Dengler escapes his surprisingly undisciplined guards easily enough. But what amazes the reader, almost boggles the mind, is the sheer geographical challenge he faced. Could remotest and wildest Vietnam be so brutal? And how did the guy feed himself in the bush and deal with the "animal creatures" encountered along the way. I wasn't aware-but surprised! - That the PL and VC tried to lure rescue choppers to their doom with phony escapees signaling for rescue. I also wasn't aware -but was surprised -that POWs ATE the rats they captured! We gave them to our mamasan to dump. Dengler (obviously) made it to freedom but his good news opens up another unpleasant subject. Over 500 men went missing in Laos. We know that our sniveling Ambassador to Vientiane, one William Sullivan, actively

discouraged rescue operations. But only 10 men emerged alive from the 500! One was Dengler. 9 more were released but via HANOI! Where are the others? At the time of this review, 377 men remain unaccounted for in Laos. It is sad and strange that such a wonderful tale has to share such an unpleasant spotlight but we simply cannot ignore the other MIAs. Yet the bottom line here is Dengler. His heroic escape should be an inspiration to all of us. He is a shining credit to this country and to the Navy. Period!

Mine will be the eleventh review of this book and consistent with my reviewing colleagues, I too give this masterpiece a 5-star rating. So, Dieter, wherever you are, you are 11 for 11. Not too shabby. (For those of you who didn't know, Dieter passed away in 2001 from ALS.) But what's so good about it? In a word, honesty. He simply told it like it happened, confident the story would do the work. No bluster, no bravado, and best of all, it does not read like a medal citation the way so many first-hand accounts of this genre do. Just simple honesty. A collateral benefit of this story is how different we modern westerners are from the Third World. Today, we struggle over dealing with unsavory characters, whether torture can play a valid role in the 'War on Terror,' whether it's okay to incarcerate someone without due process. People of the Third World would think those issues are absurd, they have no such issues, might is right. I hope we continue to struggle and I hope we ultimately get the right answer because I shudder to think what kind of a nation we would become if we allow ourselves to lapse into the Third World's law of the bush. Third worlders aren't all bad. Dieter himself was surprised at the impact the occasional act of kindness had on him as he moved through his gauntlet of horror. And these acts were by no means casual. If the perpetrators had been caught, they would have been severely punished, possibly executed. Bottom line: if you have a copy, keep it safe. This book is not likely to be reprinted anytime soon.-- Ejner Fulsang, author of "A Knavish Piece of Work," Aarhus Publishing

Well written and a real page turner.

What a tale of human endurance.

In the item description they stated it had an "author's signature". The signature was clearly a stamp that was printed on the book and not a real signature. It wasn't advertised as a signed copy or anything like that. But I felt a little bit misled by the description.

This is the real story of Dieter Dengler's experiences in Laos. When compared to the movie RESCUE DAWN, it becomes obvious that the movie is a lot closer to the truth than it's critics advocate.

This is a first hand account of Mr. Dengler's experience as a POW during the Viet Nam war. He writes like a man without a lot of "fluff" and just the facts. It reads fast. I enjoyed it but then read the other book of the same story written by another author and enjoyed that more because it included more about his younger life and his personality. Still a great read and full of action.

This is a true story about a navy pilot shot down in Laos - his capture - his struggle - his torture - his escape - his recovery. He is a real hero - I highly recommend this book to read.

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