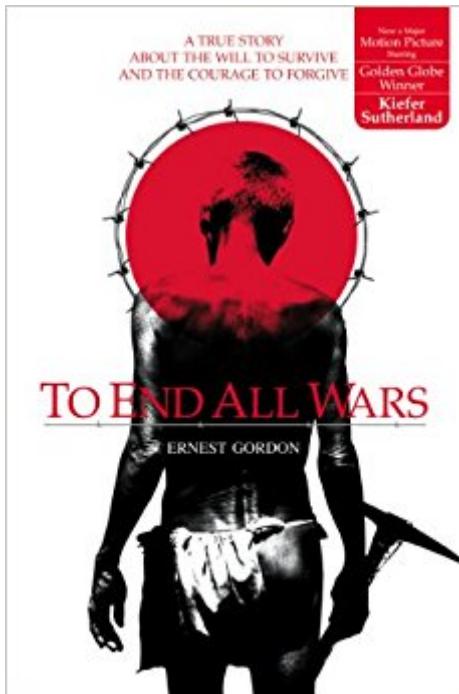


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TO END ALL WARS



Synopsis

Now A Major Motion Picture Starring Robert Carlyle and Kiefer Sutherland 'Waking from a dream, I suddenly realized where I was: in the Death House--in a prison camp by the River Kwai. I was a prisoner of war, lying among the dead, waiting for the bodies to be carried away so that I might have more room.' When Ernest Gordon was twenty-four he was captured by the Japanese and forced, with other British prisoners, to build the notorious 'Railroad of Death', where nearly 16,000 Prisoners of War gave their life. Faced with the appalling conditions of the prisoners' camp and the brutality of the captors, he survived to become an inspiring example of the triumph of the human spirit against all odds. To End All Wars is Ernest Gordon's gripping true story behind both the Academy Award-winning film The Bridge on the River Kwai starring Alec Guinness and the new film To End All Wars directed by David Cunningham.

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Customer Reviews

Now A Major Motion Picture Starring Robert Carlyle and Kiefer Sutherland 'Waking from a dream, I suddenly realized where I was: in the Death House--in a prison camp by the River Kwai. I was a prisoner of war, lying among the dead, waiting for the bodies to be carried away so that I might have more room.' When Ernest Gordon was twenty-four he was captured by the Japanese and forced, with other British prisoners, to build the notorious 'Railroad of Death', where nearly 16,000 Prisoners of War gave their life. Faced with the appalling conditions of the prisoners' camp and the brutality of the captors, he survived to become an inspiring example of the triumph of the human spirit against

all odds. To End All Wars is Ernest Gordon's gripping true story behind both the Academy Award-winning film The Bridge on the River Kwai starring Alec Guinness and the new film To End All Wars directed by David Cunningham.

I had actually feared reading this because of the suffering and death that I knew was so much a part of that war. But thankfully, I did not let that keep me from reading Gordon's book. True, the suffering and death were there, but in the worst of the enemy's wickedness, God met Gordon and so many of his fellow prisoners, and love not only prevailed in their souls, but enabled them in turn to love. Faith won. They laid down their lives to serve others, and in so doing came forth victorious. A very encouraging book!

This was an inspiring book. Through extreme deprivation and cruelty British Prisoners of war learn how to love one another. Ernest Gordon was a POW in Thailand during the Pacific struggle against the Japanese in WWII. He recounts the amazing transformation that occurred in three different camps. They went from fighting each other to survive the harsh conditions to sacrificially laying down their lives for one another. The main catalyst of the transformation was Jesus. By reading the gospels many became Christians and imitated Christ's suffering and sacrificial life. Stories of sacrifice abound such as one man's determination to save a friend who was gravely ill. He gave his meager ration of rice to him everyday. Upon his friend's recovery he collapsed. The doctors determined he died of starvation. Highly recommended.

The way Gordon recounts - with brutal honesty - the horrors of his captivity is radically different than what I was expecting. Nothing gratuitous. The author was deliberate in steering away from sensationalism that would detract from his purpose. This very unusual book is one I will read again and again for the sheer beauty of the language, but especially for the beauty of the author's metamorphosis. Gordon gently guides readers through his stunning transformation with a remarkable gift for words - to say nothing of his keen insight into man's deepest issues. As is typically the case, the movie 'To End All Wars' can't hold a candle to the book, but nonetheless, I will be purchasing a copy. Movies have different attributes than ink-on-paper version. Let me say it another way, this book is a keeper!

"To End all Wars" is a recent republish of the late Ernest Gordon's story of survival and finding Christian faith while enduring the hell of the Thai Burma Railway. Gordon (who later became a

college chaplain in the U.S.) starts off describing an unsuccessful ocean escape attempt from the Dutch East Indies which led to his capture by the Japanese in 1942. Then came the forced labor camps in the jungle, brutality, starvation, malaria, etc. From a general bleakness the story eventually transitions into one of forgiveness and the strength of faith. The book has its share of memorable scenes and lessons to be learned. One memorable scene was the destruction of the Bridge over the Kwai by an allied air raid. Another part that may stick with readers was where Gordon learned the fate of the man who probably more than any of the others led him to a deeper Christian faith (a Japanese officer crucified him on a tree). The descriptions of Gordon's return to England were rather fascinating as they highlighted challenges of returning to civilian life. One of the few drawbacks was that I would have personally been interested to have heard more about the author's combat experiences prior to his captivity and after his release how his POW experiences influenced his chaplain capacity in more detail. Overall though I can't complain. This book was excellent. It was well-written, powerful, and has the potential to inspire. I should warn readers that it is also quite graphic in its depictions of the squalor and mistreatment endured by POWs and other slave laborers. In conclusion, I recommend it.

My wife and I had watched the movie a couple months ago (be warned: it is incredibly brutal) and been moved by the power of the story. Unfortunately, as it turned out, the book and the movie are not the same story. In fact, other than the similarity of the major premise (a British officer in a Japanese POW camp during WW2), they had almost nothing in common. However. . . That was only disappointing inasmuch as I kept waiting for certain events from the movie to show up. The movie had colored my expectations for the book, which meant I couldn't take the book on its own merits. Which is too bad, because, upon completing the book, I would say it is as powerful as the movie, perhaps even more so. But you have to let the book speak for itself. The story is truly miraculous, as this band of prisoners devolve into a wild bunch of animals at the hands of their captors, only to be transformed by the Spirit of Christ into a true Community of compassion and care. Somehow, in the midst of hell, these men found the power to love each other, to care for each other, to even forgive their Japanese tormentors. When people ask "Does Christianity work?", the story of this book says "absolutely!" And in a day and age of spiteful attacks, divisive language, polarized religions and selfish money-grubbing politicians and religious leaders, there is a real lesson here about what being a True Follower of Christ is all about.

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