

Escape and Evasion

David Gaynes

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Ya know, the Army's pretty neat. They even write special books that the Army guys can read if they get bored.

Of course, with all the salutin' and peelin' potatoes and killin' the enemy they gotta do, the soldiers are probably pretty busy, but I bet they enjoy reading the Army books and comic books when they get the time.

I came across one of these here books at a friend's house, and he let me take it home and read it.

At first I wasn't too sure that I liked it, because it had a really poor plot. In fact, it had no story at all, except for a story at the beginning about how and why and when the book was written, and even that didn't have no interesting characters.

I guess the book is mostly to tell the soldiers how to do their job. It's kind of like a Boy Scout manual, only more serious.

The name of the book is *Evasion and Escape*.

It's about how you can avoid being captured by the enemy, or how you can get back to your friends if you're put in a prisoner-of-war camp. The enemy is the communists. It says so right in the book.

They give many handy hints in the book about how to do this. Some of the things in the book would be good for cowboys and Indians, but other things, like hiding in the mountains for a whole winter, are mostly for grownups.

The book is divided up into chapters, so you can find what you are looking for without fumbling around.

This is good, because there are no pictures to tell you what they're talking about. Using the table of contents, everything you need to know is right at your fingertips.

For example, suppose you had to jump off a moving train to escape the enemy. Right on pages 66–67, they tell you how to do it the right way. What you do is "Before jumping from a train where there are double tracks, note on which side of the right-of-way the train is traveling. In some countries rail traffic moves on the left side and in others on the right side. Exits must be made from the appropriate side; otherwise, PW may jump into the path of an oncoming train. If feasible, exits should be made from the right side of the train forcing guards to fire from the left shoulder which would normally result in less accuracy."

The way I figure, about the last thing, you could offer to shake hands with the guard before you jump off the train. If he puts out his left hand, you could jump off the left side of the train, and that way, since he's left-handed, he would have to put his gun on his right shoulder, and he might miss hitting you.

The one thing they don't say in that chapter is about how to tell right from left, but I think they got that in another Army book.

I guess when you're evading and escaping, you might run into problems because there's a war going on. They say "The evader may be confronted with the problem of crossing areas which have been contaminated as a result of enemy or friendly CBR operations." I didn't understand this part, but somebody told me that CBR means chemicals like the one that killed all those sheep a while back. I don't get it how they can call those "friendly" operations but they must know what they're talking about.

One of the things that's so good about the book is that it tells you almost everything you could need to know. If some enemy guy hit you on the head with a rock, and when you woke up you didn't even know who you were, all

you'd have to do is read the book. You'd just turn to the part that said "I am an American fighting man, I serve in the forces which guard my country and our way of life. I am prepared to give my life in their defense." What could be simpler?

One of the things the book is supposed to do is to tell you how to keep from being put in a communist prisoner-of-war camp. If you forget to read that part, they have another part that tells you how to get out once you're in.

Most of this section sounds like it was taken out of another book, *The Great Escape*. They tell you all about how to make -disguises and guns and stuff out of bars of soap and old pajamas. You can make real good fake rubber stamps out of potatoes if you're not too hungry to eat them. Actually, I'm not sure if this part of the book was taken from the other book or not, because they don't say anything about jumping over fences on motorcycles, like Steve McQueen did in the movie. Anyhow, I heard the communists use bicycles.

It seems, according to *Escape and Evasion* that the Communists are tricky devils who will try to fool you once they have you in their clutches. For instance, the book says that they might try to convince you that "PWs are merely innocent civilians who have been drafted to fight a capitalistic or imperialistic war." If you read the part in the book first, even a tricky commie couldn't make you believe that.

There is a lot more in the book that I didn't mention, but some of it is dull, and some of it I don't understand.

What I don't understand most is why anyone would want to mess around with some of the things they tell you to do in the book. A couple of times, they even say that you could get killed.

AUTHORS' NOTE: With the world in the kind of shape it's in, I can hardly be frivolous about an example of what brothers and sisters are dying about. This manual, Army FM 21-77, is but one minute example of the barbarity that is imperialism. The inhumanity that marks this approach to war (i.e. daily life) preys upon our own misbegotten army, the NLF and Vietnamese People (there is no distinction) and the entire world. As long as America is an imperialistic, militaristic third -world overlord, no one is safe from suffering. Let's end the war, let's bring it home, and as Snappy Sammy Smoot once said, "DON'T FORGET TO SMASH THE STATE."

ENGLISH

I AM AN AMERICAN. I DO NOT SPEAK YOUR LANGUAGE. MISFORTUNE FORCES ME TO SEEK YOUR ASSISTANCE IN OBTAINING FOOD, SHELTER AND PROTECTION. PLEASE TAKE ME TO SOMEONE WHO WILL PROVIDE FOR MY SAFETY AND SEE THAT I AM RETURNED TO MY PEOPLE. I WILL DO MY BEST TO SEE THAT NO HARM COMES TO YOU. MY GOVERNMENT WILL REWARD YOU.

* VARIOUS TRANSLATIONS OF THE- ENGLISH TEXT IN LANGUAGES INDIGENOUS TO THE OPERATIONAL AREA.

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