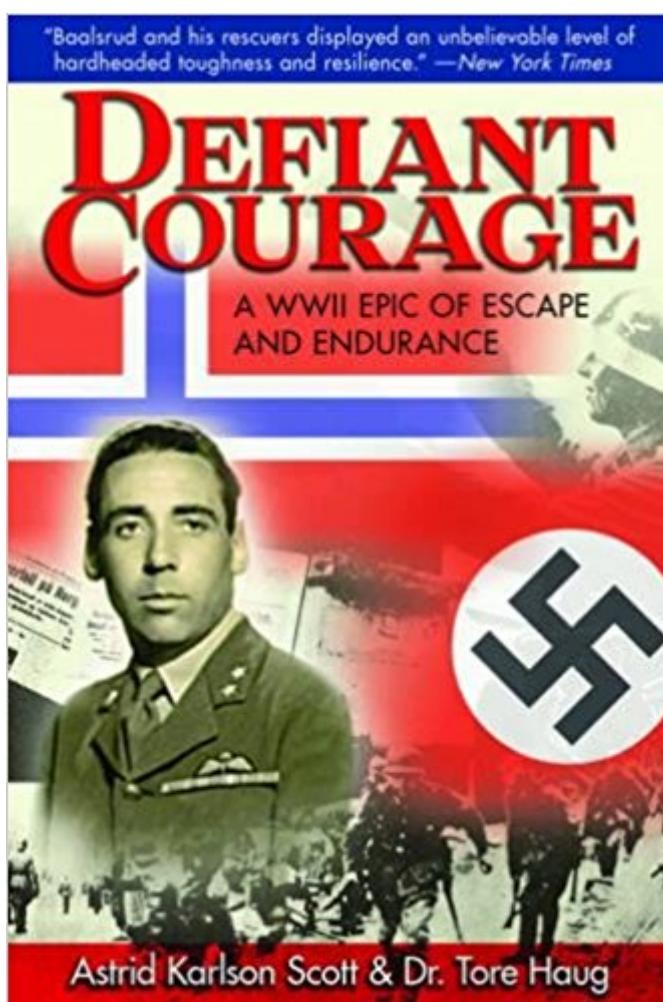


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Defiant Courage: A WWII Epic Of Escape And Endurance



Synopsis

"I remember reading *We Die Alone* in 1970 and I could never forget it. Then when we went to Norway to do a docudrama, people told us again and again that certain parts were pure fiction. Since I was a Norwegian that was not good enough; I had to find the truth. I sincerely believe we did," writes author Astrid Karlsen Scott. *Defiant Courage* is the true story of what Jan Baalsrud endured as he tried to escape from the Gestapo in Norway's Troms District. In late March 1943, in the midst of WWII, four Norwegian saboteurs arrived in northern Norway on a fishing cutter and set anchor in Toftefjord to establish a base for their operations. However, they were betrayed, and a German boat attacked the cutter, creating a battlefield and spiraling Jan Baalsrud into the adventure of his life. The only survivor and wounded, Baalsrud begins a perilous journey to freedom, swimming icy fjords, climbing snow-covered peaks, enduring snowstorms, and getting caught in a monstrous avalanche. Suffering from snowblindness and frostbite, more than sixty people of the Troms District risk their lives to help Baalsrud to freedom. Meticulously researched for more than five years, Karlsen Scott and Haug bring forth the truth behind this captivating, edge-of-your-seat, real-life survival story.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"This is a must-read book for anyone who enjoys reading true historical, well-researched stories of intrigue, suspense, and adventure." The Norwegian American "My colleagues and I have read [The 12th Man] with great interest...we have been impressed with the way [the authors] make this truly remarkable story come alive, focusing not only on Jan Baalsrud, but showing the quiet

courage and determination of his many helpers.";Jan Gerhard Lassen, Norwegian Royal Ministry of Foreign Affairs "A welcome and much appreciated contribution to the growing library of World War II memoirs and eye-witness accounts. [The 12th Man] is a compelling story of courage and triumph against incredible odds, and set against the backdrop of the war that was to forever change the world.";The Midwest Book Review

Astrid Karlsen Scott first became acquainted with Jan Baalsrud;s story in 1970. In 1997, she began serious investigation of the details of the story. Scott has returned to Norway eight times in a period of three years in her efforts to find the truth. She met Dr. Tore Haug in 1997; they decided to combine their work and made many joint and separate trips to the Troms District to research this book. To gain a complete understanding of this magnificent drama, the coauthors explored the sites where the events took place, hiking up mountains and examining landmarks. Scott and Dr. Haug also met and interviewed all the survivors who helped Jan or who were indirectly involved and had knowledge of his story. Astrid, a native of Norway, is internationally known for her books on Norwegian culture. Her award-winning video, Christmas in Norway, has been shown on television in the United States and in Europe. She is also president of Nordic Adventure, a company dedicated to the promotion of Norwegian culture. She and her husband, Melvin McCabe Scott, Jr., live in Olympia, Washington. They have three children and thirteen grandchildren. Dr. Tore Haug is a second cousin of Jan Baalsrud. He has been fascinated with Baalsrud's escape story since meeting Jan once as a boy in 1956. In 1995, after much research, he traveled with his family to the Troms District in northern Norway to further investigate Jan;s story. He found many people whose efforts on Jan;s behalf had not been acknowledged in previous accounts. Dr. Haug wanted to accurately tell the entire story of Jan and his incredible escape from the Gestapo, and of the undaunted courage of his many benefactors. Today, he is the person who knows the story better than anyone else in Norway. Haug is an M.D., a specialized general practitioner with a private practice in Norway. He studied and received his medical degree from Johannes Gutenberg University in Mainz, Germany. He has practiced medicine in Germany and Norway, and is fluent in German, Norwegian, and English. In 1976, Dr. Haug obtained his professional pilot;s license in the United States and Norway and flew as an executive pilot for five years. He and his wife, Wenche, live in Jessheim, Norway, with their daughter, Carolin.

The hero of this true story is almost too heroic, tenacious, persistent and patient to be real. I cried out loud while reading of the consistent courage and endurance of this young Norwegian man

during World War II. Those who helped Jan through his ordeals also deserve kudos. There would have been no other way to escape the insane grasp of the German Gestapo through the gripping, life-sapping cold of Norway. Who's to say whether we might be tempted to save our own lives and that of our loved ones by revealing the whereabouts of Jan to the Gestapo. Everyone was in need of food, clothing, shelter and warmth. The gripping events in this revealing book will break your heart. We can't afford to go through events like this--ever again!

This sets the record straight - if you want the amazing true story of Jan Baalsrud, you need to read this. The Norwegian author did the painstaking research with the original witnesses. The English prose is a little clunky at times, but the story is well told, and is better than any fiction.

Although meticulously long in its telling of one man against nature, I could not stop reading the book. Yes, this is the story of a Norwegian soldier and his horrendous wounds and how he persevered, but more importantly it tells the story of the many men and women who risked their lives and their children's lives to get this man to safety. Helping others in time of any need seems to be bred into these Norwegians. Amazing people. Would we Americans of today have the emotional strength, physical endurance, and steadfastness to be like these Norwegians? I wonder.

I selected this book as it was suggested in the Sons of Norway newsletter. Just returned from 28 days in Norway so the areas were more meaningful. The book captures the spirit, strength and fortitude of the Norwegian people. Their warmth and kindness comes out in the book, as I experienced. One can appreciate the extreme physical and mental cost of all the participants in the two month hiding and moving of the very sick and drastically disabled warrior. Highly recommended!

I read "We Die Alone" by David Howarth some years ago and loved it - I was glad to see this book with its meticulous research on Jan Baalsrud's incredible journey and the people in each area who helped him accomplish (well, and the few folks that were not helpful). All the anxiety and thrills of Howarth's book, with a heck of a lot more background. Very glad to have found this narrative.

This is a story of a brave man. Through determination, perseverance and the help of many good patriotic citizens of Norway and Sweden he walked, swam and crawled to escape capture by the Nazis. Then with their help he was transported over the mountain ranges to Sweden and freedom. How did he/they manage it? For that you will need to read this story. Don't expect edge of

your seat suspense or tension. It isn't that kind of book. But it is the story of a man's will to survive and the people that would give everything to help him.

What will to live! And to be helped by so many! The book shows the care from the authors to put into it facts backed by witnesses, because the whole experience by this injured soldier during Norway's Nazi occupation was so, so difficult that it just was enveloped in a tale-like shroud. Has plenty of maps showing positions and distances. Also, what I find a treat: photos of actual witnesses who put their own (and their families') lives in danger so as to help out a brave stranger. This stranger had a gargantuan-sized love for his country and had to escape after a failed attempt to create mayhem and confusion in the midst of the enemy. His will to live helped him through physical pain and mental anguish.

I thought this a great story showing strength, determination and the human condition that existed in Norway during WWII. Being occupied by Germany they had a small resistance force that risked their lives regularly to help fugitives escape the horrors of the Nazi occupiers. Well researched and written to breath life into the characters and bring stark reality to the story. I would highly recommend this book to history buffs, biography readers and anyone wanting an inspirational story of human courage, intrigue and suspense.

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