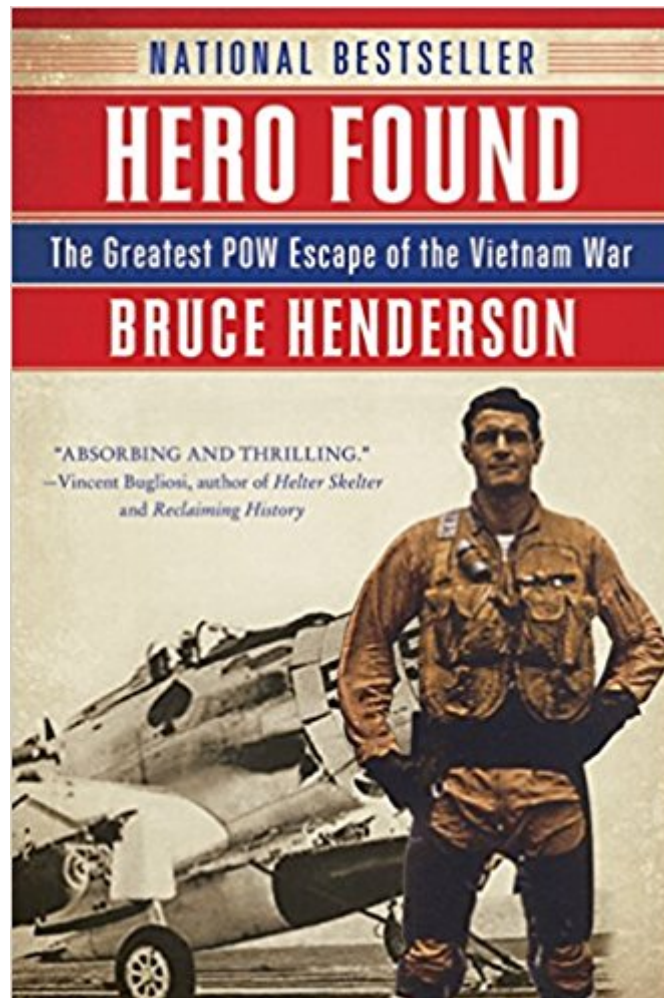




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# Hero Found: The Greatest POW Escape Of The Vietnam War



## Synopsis

From the #1 New York Times bestselling coauthor of *And the Sea Will Tell* comes *Hero Found*: the incredible but true story of Dieter Dengler, the only pilot to escape captivity from a POW camp in the Laotian jungle during the Vietnam War. This amazing story of triumph over seemingly insurmountable odds has been filmed by Werner Herzog as both a documentary (*Little Dieter Needs to Fly*) and a motion picture (*Rescue Dawn*, starring Christian Bale), and now receives its book treatment from Bruce Henderson, who served with Dengler in Vietnam.

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## Customer Reviews

Only a handful of Vietnam War POWs escaped captivity. One of those was Dieter Dengler, a German-born navy Skyraider pilot shot down on his first mission over Laos in 1966 and taken prisoner by the Pathet Lao in a remote jungle camp. Tortured and nearly starved to death, Dengler led his fellow prisoners in a daring escape, and he miraculously survived 23 days in the jungle before an inexperienced pilot spotted him frantically signaling from the dense jungle just over the border in North Vietnam. Dengler's harrowing and amazing story has been told before : in his 1978 memoir, *Escape from Laos*, and in two films, Werner Herzog's documentary *Little Dieter Needs to Fly* and a feature film, *Rescue Dawn*. Henderson, who served as a navy weatherman aboard Dengler's aircraft carrier, has crafted a worthy narrative that adds new material based on interviews with Dengler (who died in 2001) and his navy comrades, friends. and family, along with newly unearthed archival records. These include the official 78-page military Dengler Debriefing, which Henderson (coauthor, *And the Sea Will Tell*) obtained through the Freedom of Information Act. This

often riveting account sheds new light on an oft-told true story. (June) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

"[McLaren's] animated involvement adds a special spark to a work already compelling from beginning to end." ---AudioFile --This text refers to the Audio CD edition.

We live in an age of celebrity as created by an immense media industry. Lawrence of Arabia embodied the word celebrity; in fact he may have been the 20th century's first real celebrity as Lindberg came after him. This book cries out to be read by a readership that understands that heroes do in fact exist. This word hero has been much misused in modern day America to apply to people that the word was never intended for. Lawrence was very much a hero, as well as many other things. He was a military genius on a level with Napoleon. He also possessed a genius for guerilla warfare and his techniques are taught at West Point as we speak. Possessing a talent for writing, his *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* is considered a literary masterpiece. His direct actions changed the entire map of the Middle East, and the inability of politicians to adjust to the realities of this region that Lawrence saw so vividly have led to the chaos that we see in the Middle East today. Sheikh Hamoud had it right when he wrote so many years ago of Lawrence: My heart was iron, but his was steel. If you love great, gifted, writing on an immense topic describing a man that truly impacted and changed the world that he saw, than Michael Korda's biography of Lawrence of Arabia is for you. This is a 700 page narrative before footnotes and biography. The quality of the paper used in the book is fabulous, and this is due to Korda's lifetime in the publishing industry. The selection of the font and the feel of the book left nothing to chance. Korda thought through every aspect of this project and brought it off with flair, and panache. He is a master storyteller and he has demonstrated considerable scholarship in creating this page turner which is so sweeping in scope covering one of the giants of the 20th century. Here are just a few of the things you will learn about Lawrence of Arabia: \* In his early 30's he translated Homer's *The Odyssey* which then became accepted as the classic account of Homer's work. \* Why King George on Lawrence's untimely death in 1935 said his name will live in history? \* He possessed a dazzling display of knowledge, almost Einstein like in the topics he could converse in. Lawrence never did anything halfway. If he was in, he was in all the way. \* As a young man, an illegitimate son, along with 4 other brothers, he managed to do amazing things at Oxford. He studied and more importantly absorbed the works of every great military tactician including Admiral Mahan, and Creasy's *15 Decisive Battles* of the

World. Lawrence's own thesis, *The Influence of the Crusades on European Military Architecture* was recognized as an act of genius when he presented it.\* Liddell Hart considered to be one of the truly eminent military writers of the 20th century compared Lawrence to Napoleon, and used the term Napoleon coined "le coup d'oeil de genie" which means quick glance of genius. What this describes is that Lawrence had the scarce ability to look at a map (remember he was also a master mapmaker) and immediately know where to attack based on a unique ability in a glance to know intuitively how to attack. This is still studied at West Point, and is very rare in generals throughout history.\* If you want to know the depth of his influence on all who came after him, than consider this. Mao Zedong led a revolution in China based on his writings and theories. Ho Chi Minh forced the United States out of Viet Nam based on Lawrence's theories of guerilla war. I haven't even mentioned Castro and Che in Cuba using Lawrence as a blueprint for winning in Cuba. Lawrence is the original creator of the road side bomb we now see in Iraq and Afghanistan. He knew how to strike light, and disappear into the night. The term turn weakness into strength is his.\* The story of the making of the David Lean movie, *Lawrence of Arabia* which was nominated for 10 Academy Awards, and won 7 is told here in a beautiful fashion. Only Sam Spiegel, the producer at Columbia Pictures could have gotten this movie done. You will learn how the part was first offered to Leslie Howard, Lawrence Olivier, and then Albert Finney, until settling on newcomer Peter O'Toole. In conclusion, if you love history and the grand expanse of extraordinary people doing extraordinary things then you are going to love this book. Lawrence was Hollywood handsome with a magnetic personality and charisma to match. His influence directly led to the creation of the modern Jordan, and the UAR (United Arab Republic). Iraq and Syria now owe their modern boundaries to Lawrence. Since the 1960's England has opened up its secret historical files on Lawrence. We now know that all the wild stories about Lawrence are true. It actually comes down to this. Lawrence did what he said he did, and even downplayed his own role in the affairs of which we know about. I promise you that if you begin reading this book, you will not put it down, and you will be transfixed by what a gifted writer like Korda can do with a legendary impactful figure like Lawrence of Arabia. Thank you for reading this review. Richard C. Stoyeck

This a very well written and interesting book about a facinating man who lived and was a major player during a critical period in our history. However, there are 1-3 typos on almost every page of the book I have read so far and I'm on chapter 4. Almost all of the typos involve one, two or sometimes three words bunched together to form word-abominations such as: "himhave" "timewas" "anadventure" "discribinghis" etc. I guess these errors were introduced when the book was digitized.

I also guess that the book was not proof-read after this procedure. These errors are beginning to distract from my reading pleasure. A corrected version would be appreciated.

One of the best stories I've read about man's extraordinary will to live, and how this helped bring about rescue during escape as a POW. In the same league as "Into the Mouth of the Cat," (the story of, Vietnam, POW Lance Sijon and his refusal to submit to his captors demands while being held prisoner in North Vietnam's, ill-famed, Hoa Lo Prison and his subsequent heroics leading to his being awarded, posthumously, the Medal of Honor), and "Code of Honor" (Col. John Dramesi's story of his time held as a, Vietnam, POW, and of his strict adherence to the 'Code of Conduct'

The title HERO references Michael Korda's contention that T. E. Lawrence (T. E. Shaw, Lawrence of Arabia) wanted to become a hero and had the opportunity to become one and succeeded beyond his expectations. Thus he became one of the 20th Centuries first "celebrities" mostly due to the promotion of Lowell Thomas's highly successful lectures, films and book. Korda maintains that Lawrence was the Princes Diana of his time. (This comparison being a good way to provide today's reader with an idea of the impact Lawrence had on the media culture of his own time.) Despite the book being a bit uneven I found HERO a wonderful read. The first part through page 114 is a rather dry telling of Lawrence's major accomplishment in World War One. It covers Lawrence's meeting with Prince Feisal the background of the Arab revolt against the Turks and the Arab taking the port city of Aqaba. (The actual events are significantly different than shown in the great David Lean film.) This early flashback section contains important information and sets the tone for what follows but I doubt many will find it to be page turning reading. But keep going and don't give up. Because then the book takes off and is quite an enjoyable ride as Korda goes back in time to Lawrence's childhood, family, education (at Oxford), and his interest in archeology, the middle east, and crusader castles. Korda frames all this so we can see how Lawrence swept himself along with heroic self images (and many self doubts). As if Lawrence knew he was preparing himself for something big for he became one of a few who understood the Middle East. (In fact after the war Lawrence had Middle East solutions that if implemented may have minimized many of the events we see today.) Korda narrative provides an interesting analysis as he often presents the conflicting views about controversial observations of Lawrence by prior biographers and Lawrence's contemporaries. Lawrence was not a loner as many think, but a people person (and to a certain degree a people user) who had many friends and developed vital relationships. This he did through an uncanny ability to change his own personality and stories to suite that of his listener thus

providing different views of his personality thus providing history with the fuel that formed the enigma that is the Lawrence legend. I especially liked the fact the Korda spent a lot of time covering the creative side of Lawrence's character. How he wrote and rewrote SEVEN PILLARS OF WISDOM and went about publishing it. This and many post war events are most interestingly told by Korda. For the most part Korda explains away the controversial questions about Lawrence as being nothing more than media hype. Taking things out of context and making more of normal human reactions than they deserve. Yet we see the influences on what may have created the real, human and complex person Lawrence was. His short stature although he did not appear to have the stereotypical short man complex. At 5 foot 5 inches Lawrence was very thin mostly around 130 pounds, but at one point in the war he was down to 88 pounds. He was illegitimate (a big negative in the class structure of the country in the early 1900s). His mother was extremely religious and his father walked away from title, property, and a family (a wife and four daughters) to run away with Lawrence's mother. Korda provides the reader more with emphasis and credence on Lawrence's relationship and feelings about his father than other biographers do. I could go on and on about many interesting things Korda does in bringing Lawrence to life on the page but I suggest you discover the book on your own. As an FYI, I have had an almost life long interest (hobby) in Lawrence and have collected many books and articles about him. This started when father took my brother and me to see the film a week after he had seen it in 1962 as he had been intrigued by Lawrence as a boy. If you're interesting in reading or learning more you might consider exploring the following. In several places Korda references Jeremy Wilson's book, LAWRENCE OF ARABIA: THE AUTHORIZED BIOGRAPHY OF T. E. LAWRENCE (1990). This is an exceptionally fine and very detailed and well documented work which may contain more military details than many readers want to know. (Unfortunately I don't believe it is currently in print.) Mr. Wilson and his wife Nichole now own Castle Hill Press where they have edited and published very limited, fine copies of Lawrence's works and letters. I own several of these volumes and they are wonderfully produced. Their most recent publication is Lawrence's THE MINT. (Castle Hill Press can be found on the internet.) I also greatly admired John E. Mack's A PRINCE OF OUR DISORDER, THE LIFE OF T. E. LAWRENCE (1976) which won the Pulitzer Prize. It is a psychological study with emphasis on how one's world view impacts relationships. (Mack went on later to do very controversial studies with people who claimed to have been abducted by aliens.) I recommend a reading of many of Lawrence's letters. The volume I most enjoyed is THE LETTERS OF T. E. LAWRENCE OF ARABIA (1938, my Spring Books volume is 1964), edited by David Garnett with a forward by Captain B. H. Liddell Hart.

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