

The History Press

PRESS RELEASE

Perhaps the last survivor of the infamous Long March of 1945 finally tells his story

Nothing prepares a man for war and Private Charles Waite (Queen's Royal Regiment) was ill-prepared when his convoy took a wrong turn near Abbeville, France and met 400 German soldiers and half a dozen tanks.

He lost his freedom that day in May 1940, and didn't regain it until April 1945 when he was rescued by Americans near Berlin, having walked 1,600km from East Prussia.

Silent for almost 70 years, Charles, with the help of his good friend Dee La Vardera, finally put pen to paper and documented the five years he lost.

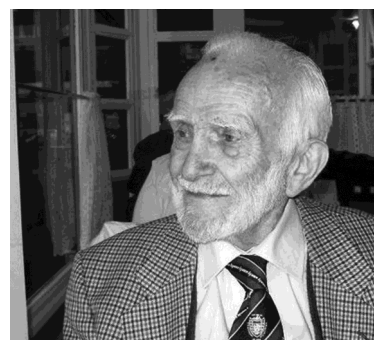
First published in 2012, *Survivor of the Long March* describes the terrible things Charles saw and suffered; his forced work in a stone quarry and on farms; his period in solitary confinement for sabotage; and his long journey home in one of the worst winters on record, across the frozen river Elbe, to Berlin and liberation.

His is also a story of friendship, of physical and mental resilience, and of compassion.

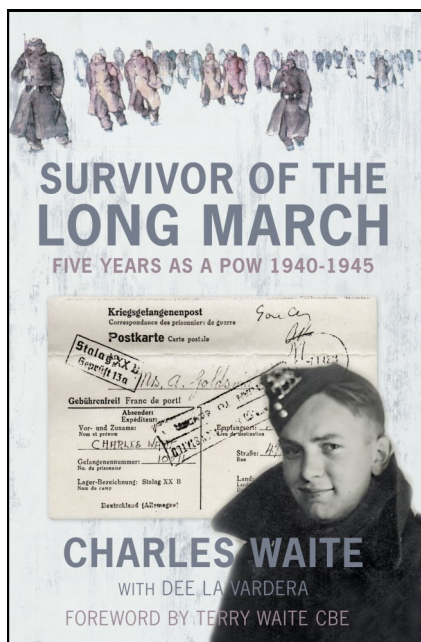
This is a unique account from one of the forgotten soldiers who undertook that terrible trek.

We can all learn a lesson from the quiet heroism of WW2 POW Charles Waite who in serving his country, suffered but survived.

*"When I got back I couldn't tell anybody about what had happened during my years as a POW. I was ashamed. I hadn't won any medals; I had no stories of brave deeds. How could I be proud of breaking rocks for 12 hours a day or pulling cabbage out of a frozen ground at gunpoint? Would they have wanted to hear about the wounded soldiers dying in my arms, or the acts of cruelty I witnessed and the terrible hunger and fatigue suffered on the Long March? Everybody wanted to forget the war and get on with re-building their lives" - Charles Waite, extracted from *Survivor of the Long March**



CHARLES WAITE (now sadly deceased) tells his harrowing story with the help of author, journalist – and friend – **DEE LA VARDERA**. Dee is the author of several books and many articles for publications such as *The Guardian* and *The Lady*. She has painstakingly recorded and authenticated Charles' experiences.



Survivor of the Long March

Five Years as a POW 1940-1945

Charles Waite
With Dee La Vardera,
foreword by Terry Waite CBE
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 Out in Paperback, £14.99

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