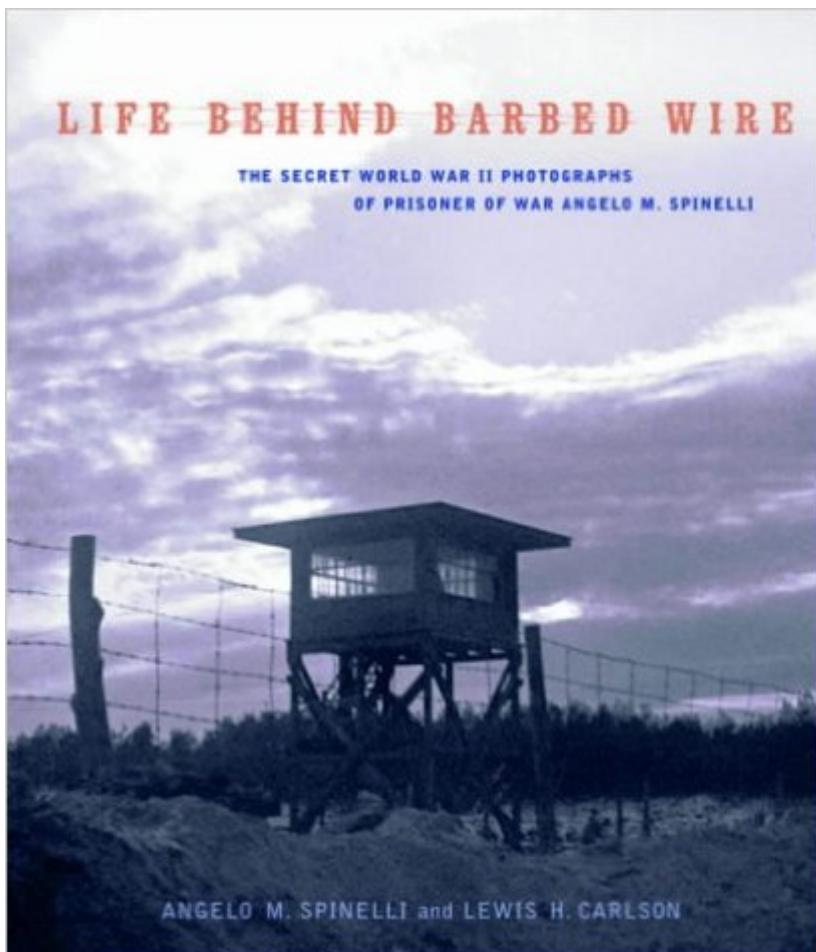


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Life Behind Barbed Wire: The Secret World War II Photographs Of Angelo M. Spinelli (World War II: The Global, Human, And Ethical Dimension)



Synopsis

Sergeant Angelo Spinelli was captured in North Africa by the Germans on Valentine's Day, 1943, and shipped to Stalag IIIB near Furstenburg, Germany. Using cigarettes obtained from the Red Cross, Spinelli bribed a camp guard to procure a Voitlander camera and film. Life behind Barbed Wire features photographs Spinelli took during his time in prison camp. Of the more than one thousand photographs Spinelli risked his life to take, more than one hundred appear in this book. The remarkable photographs, enhanced by Lewis H. Carlson's explanatory text, feature prisoners trading with the guards' combating ticks, lice, and other vermin, preparing meager rations on ingenious cooking contraptions, fighting off boredom by playing baseball, soccer, and football, putting on musical and dramatic theatre presentations, and worshiping in a chapel the prisoners themselves built. These snapshots give us a window on camp life, where catastrophe was normal and normalcy was often catastrophic. In addition, there are dramatic shots of liberation from Stalag IIIA, where Spinelli and some thirty-eight thousand other Allied prisoners had been moved during the final months of the war. Mounted as a traveling exhibit by the National Prisoner of War Museum in Andersonville, Georgia, 92 of these photographs are currently on display at the Italian American Museum in New York City.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The collaborative work of decorated combat photographer Angelo M. Spinelli and Lewis H. Carlson (Professor Emeritus of History at Western Michigan University), *Life Behind Barbed Wire: The*

Secret World War II Photographs Of Prisoner of War is the amazing and original collection 100 impossible to forget images that preserve a portrait of what an American soldier's life was like when held in captivity by German forces in World War II. The text goes in fascinating and informative detail concerning ways the prisoners struggled to survive, ranging from attempts to cook what delicacies they could from red cross rations, snow, and margarine; to coping with vermin infestations; even trading with their captors. Life Behind Barbed Wire is a very highly recommended photo history of enduring through difficult times and circumstances.

This book and collection of photos is a miracle. Most of the photos that Angelo Spinelli took while he was a prisoner in a German P.O.W camp were taken in secret. (For you younger people, cameras were much bigger than cell phones in those days and a lot harder to hide.) Full disclosure, my father was a prisoner in this same camp, and I found out about Spinelli from Eric Reinert, Curator of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Museum. He had previously worked at Andersonville Prison National Historic Site, which has an excellent museum devoted to prisoners of war. So I am very grateful for this well-written history and its accompanying photos of prison life during World War II.

My dad was in the same camp as Spinelli so I was interested to see his book. The photos are really, really good. It's amazing Spinelli was able to get away with taking so many. I never thought that there were that many prisoners in the camp. I really enjoyed the text too. It is sparse, but it is well-written and contains lots of details of life in a German prison camp. It's amazing how inventive the soldiers were at creating plays, musical performances, and a camp newspaper. All this, with the drama of World War II raging in the background. My dad used to say that the Germans told the Americans they would be in Germany the rest of their lives re-building the country. So it had to be devastating to be a POW with that uncertainty hanging over you. Spinelli's book is well worth the price. It's something I'll treasure as a memento of my father's 26 months as a POW in Germany.

One of a kind...most riveting and causes such great appreciation of written (and photograhed history) that would have never been known. Truly honors the American WWII G.I. and the American spirit.

This book documented much of what occurred at Stalag 3B, a German prison camp in WWII where my father was held for over 2 years so it had special appeal to me. There are many photographs of the prisoners in the book and I was hoping to see my father but he wasn't in any of them,

unfortunately. It seemed to me that the hardships endured by the prisoners were not emphasized enough by the author. My father ended up being a totally disabled veteran who had a seizure disorder from the maltreatment that he suffered at the hands of his captors and spent his remaining years in Veterans' hospitals.

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