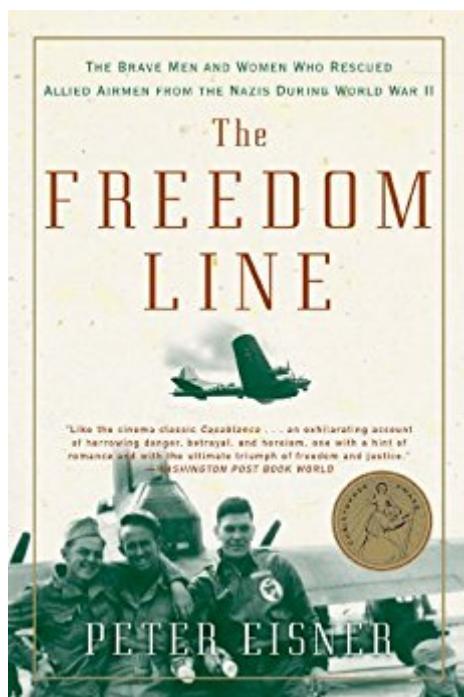


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# The Freedom Line: The Brave Men And Women Who Rescued Allied Airmen From The Nazis During World War II



## Synopsis

The romance of Casablanca ... the gripping narrative of Eye of the Needle ... both come together in this enthralling true story of World War II resistance fighters and the airmen they saved. As war raged against Hitler's Germany, an increasing number of Allied fliers were shot down on missions against Nazi targets in occupied Europe. Many fliers parachuted safely behind enemy lines only to find themselves stranded and hunted down by the Gestapo. The Freedom Line traces the thrilling and true story of Robert Grimes, a twenty-year-old American B-17 pilot whose plane was shot down over Belgium on October 20, 1943. Wounded, disoriented and scared, he was rescued by operatives of the Comet Line, a group of tenacious young women and men from Belgium, France and Spain who joined forces to recover Allied aircrews and take them to safety. Brought back to health with their help, Grimes was pursued by bloodhounds, the Luftwaffe security police and the Gestapo. And on Christmas Eve 1943, he and a group of fellow Americans faced unexpected danger and tragedy on the border between France and Spain. The road to safety was a treacherous journey by train, by bicycle and on foot that stretched hundreds of miles across occupied France to the Pyrenees Mountains at the Spanish border. Armed with guile and spirit, the selfless civilian fighters of the Comet Line had risked their lives to create this underground railroad, and by this time in the war, they had saved hundreds of Americans, British, Australians and other Allied airmen. Led by an elegant young Belgian woman, Désirée de Jongh, the group included Jean-François Nothomb, an army veteran who became the group's leader after Désirée was captured; Micheline Dumont, code-named Lily, who wore bobby sox to appear as a teenage girl; and Florentino, the tough Basque guide who, when necessary, carried exhausted refugees on his back over the mountains to save them from the Nazis. All the while, the Gestapo and Luftwaffe police were on their trail. If caught, the airmen faced imprisonment, but their helpers would be tortured and killed. Based on interviews with the survivors and in-depth archival research, The Freedom Line is the story of a group of friends who chose to act on their own out of a deep respect for liberty and human dignity. Theirs was a courage that presumed to take on a fearfully powerful foe with few defenses.

## Book Information

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## **Customer Reviews**

My mother and I both read this book and neither of us could put it down. She, having lived through WWII, enjoys the memories. My family lived outside of Paris in the late 50s and loved stories from the French neighbors who worked with the Resistance and were forced from their chateaux by the Nazis. I was born in Paris during their time there and have heard those stories all my life. We visited in the early 80s and I got to see for myself the history of the place. This book was like taking another trip there.

Great read on courageous people who risked their lives helping allied airmen escape Nazi held territory. One of those books you do not want to put down. I have an extensive library of WW II history. This ranks up with the best. Ties in nicely with works on the OSS and SOE spy networks.

Great book about a little known piece of resistance movement in Belgium, France, Spain and Gibraltar. The courage of people during that time to risk their lives to save allied pilots who parachuted out of planes being shot down is truly amazing

This is a well-researched and well-written book. The author writes it almost as though it is a novel, with conversation taken from interviews, journals, and other source documents. This is an amazing story of how some regular people from all walks of life risked their lives and the lives of their family members to rescue allied airmen who had parachuted to safety over occupied France and Belgium. This is a must read for anyone who is interested in the French or Belgian Resistance, the Allied air

war over Europe, or general WWII history in the ETO. Recommended.

Great story about some very brave people in occupied territory during WWII who saved many American airmen from spending the remainder of the war in a POW camp, or worse. It's a page turner.

Good story that reads like fiction. If you liked the Nightingale then this is better because the real story was better than the fictional one.

I first became aware of WW2 escape organizations and The Comet Line in particular from the excellent historical novel, NIGHT OF FLAMES, by Douglas W Jacobson. I was intrigued by the bravery and sacrifice made by these very ordinary people in Belgium (many of them young women and teenagers). THE FREEDOM LINE is an excellent historical account of this remarkable chapter in WW2 complete with detailed stories of the Belgian agents as well as the Allied pilots who were rescued. It is an inspiration for everyone.

Extraordinary. Couldn't put it down. True stories of courageous, ordinary citizens who helped allied airmen to safety.

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