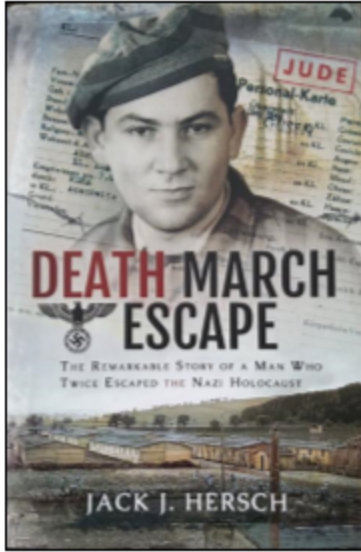


Death March Escape:

The Remarkable Story of a Man Who Twice Escaped the Nazi Holocaust by Jack J. Hersch

Book report submitted by: Christine Phillips, granddaughter of Felder Phillips (261HQ2)



We've been blessed as an Association to have a treasure trove of stories by and about the men of the 65th Infantry Division. Though our own Veterans may not be personally mentioned, or may not have personally written their own accounts, in these books and stories we're able to learn about the collective division as a whole, and piece together their experiences. I've read a few and enjoyed reading

each. Every personal account has a different writing voice and gives us insight into the soldier who drafted it. Some are humorous, most have some heart wrenching moments. Each teaches me something new.

In early 2019, my husband Steve Schell, and I were contacted online by Jack J. Hersch who we shared stories with. Not a veteran or family of the 65th Infantry Division, but the son of a Holocaust survivor. Jack Hersch's father Dave had the unique distinction of being a two-time survivor of a Death March from Mauthausen and is recognized as such at the Mauthausen Museum. Though we have no way of knowing who was there that day, Jack and his father

Dave credit the 261st Regiment of the 65th Infantry Division as having been the ones who saved his father.

Jack was kind enough to send Steve and I a copy of his book. I wanted to share my thoughts with the rest of you . . .

Death March Escape captivated me from the moment I started reading it. Jack writes in an easy style and instead of inserting only facts and figures, he interweaves his personal journey of uncovering his father's story along with the story itself.

Like my own journey of learning about my grandfather's history in the war, he thought he knew the "facts" only to find that he didn't know nearly enough. Questions were not asked, answers were not given. Though Jack had grown up hearing the story of his father's two-time escape there was so much more to the story he couldn't have guessed.

As I read the story, I found myself in tears at moments, in awe at others and cheering on the advance of Patton's 3rd Army. Dave was truly a man with a strong will to survive. Like Jack, I found myself wondering how so many veterans and survivors got through their experiences and then moved on from it, each with their own emotional and physical wounds.

I invite you to purchase Jack's book (available on Amazon) and let us (and him) know what you thought of the story. We hope Jack will keep in touch with us and maybe we'll see him at a future reunion.