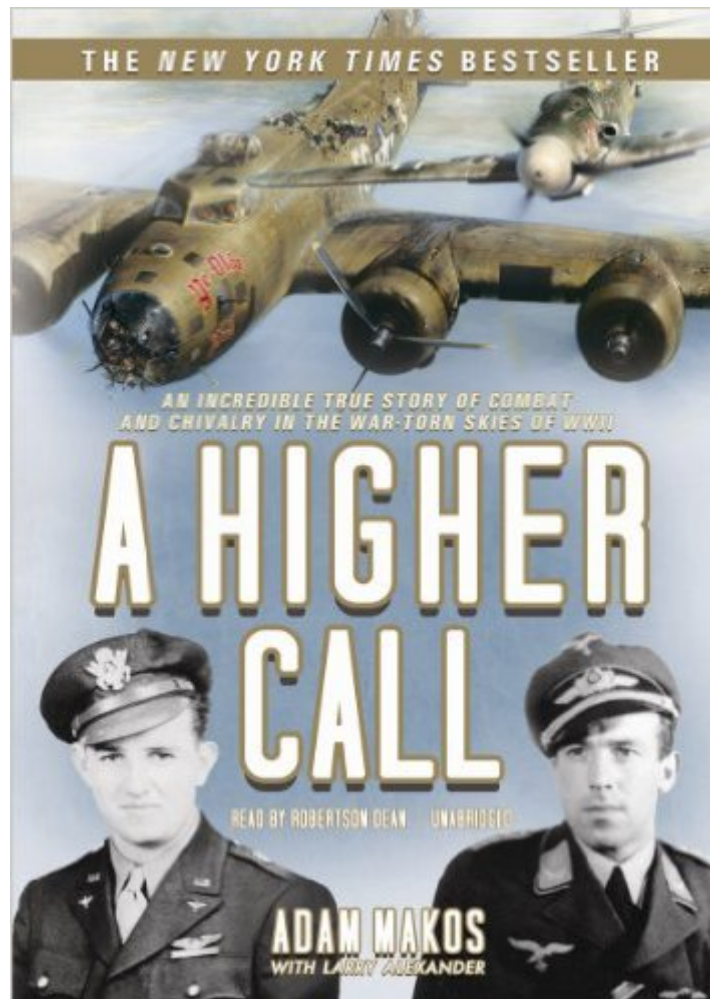


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A Higher Calling: An Incredible True Story Of Combat And Chivalry In The War-Torn Skies Of World War II



Synopsis

[Read by Robertson Dean] The story of two enemy fighter pilots who met in the skies in the midst of a bloody war. Four days before Christmas in 1943, a badly damaged American bomber struggled to fly over wartime Germany. At its controls was a twenty-one-year-old pilot. Half his crew lay wounded or dead. It was their first mission. Suddenly a sleek, dark shape pulled up on the bomber's tail - a German Messerschmitt fighter. Worse, the German pilot was an ace, a man able to destroy the American bomber with the squeeze of a trigger. What happened next would defy imagination and later be called the most incredible encounter between enemies in World War II. This is the true story of the two pilots whose lives collided in the skies that day - the American - Second Lieutenant Charlie Brown, a former farm boy from West Virginia who came to captain a B-17 -- and the German - Second Lieutenant Franz Stigler, a former airline pilot from Bavaria who sought to avoid fighting in World War II. A Higher Call follows both Charlie and Franz's harrowing missions. Charlie would face takeoffs in English fog over the flaming wreckage of his buddies' planes, flak bursts so close they would light his cockpit, and packs of enemy fighters that would circle his plane like sharks. Franz would face sandstorms in the desert, a crash alone at sea, and the spectacle of one thousand bombers, each with eleven guns, waiting for his attack. Ultimately, Charlie and Franz would stare across the frozen skies at one another. What happened between them, the American Eighth Air Force would later classify as top secret. It was an act that Franz could never mention without facing a firing squad. It was the encounter that would haunt both Charlie and Franz for forty years until, as old men, they would search for one another, a last mission that could change their lives forever.

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Customer Reviews

A Higher Call by Adam Makos: Review by Tom Gauthier
How often do you have trouble reading the last page of an action packed war story because of the blur of tears? First time for me, as I finished Adam Makos new book A Higher Call. After eight years of painstaking research, Makos has produced a singular piece of work: the true and incredible story of two pilots who locked eyes--and I feel locked souls--across a span of deadly sky over Nazi Germany in 1943, changing the fortunes and the futures of all who were there. Adam Makos provides us a close-up of the American experience, before during and after this incident. But he also, and in marvelously rich detail, gives us a rare look into the machinations of the Luftwaffe, again, before the war and through to the very end..... Engines failed, damage was extensive to flight surfaces, yet under the strong hands of their young pilot, Charlie Brown, the ship remained precariously in the air. Back in the plane's fuselage the crew was bravely caring for each other--some with grievous wounds. As they approached the European coastline, Charlie knew that any moment the coastal flak guns would open up and finish them off. Suddenly, from behind and below them a FW-109 climbed up from the treetops and began its attack run on the helpless Pub. With all guns frozen the crew could only watch with the resignation of pending death. At the controls of the 109, Franz Stigler, an experienced ace saw the target that would raise his "kill" count. But he didn't kill. I will not herein tell you what transpired in the minds of the American airman or the German pilot. It is something you must read for yourself and let it sink in to your soul, as I did. Charlie Brown and Franz Stigler survived the war.

First, I need to let all readers know that I worked on this book, supplying Adam with some of my research and interview materials. When I reviewed the manuscript, he had already created a solid work. The book is completely factual, all parties and events mentioned are depicted as they were, and I knew and interviewed all the persons mentioned with exception to Charlie Brown. Franz was an excellent pilot, a great man, a humanist, who hated the war and despised the Nazi Party, but loved flying. His Catholic background and his having been exposed to the honorable men he flew with, such as Ludwig Franzisket, Gustav Rodel, Werner Schroer, Johannes Steinhoff, Eduard Neumann, Emil Clade, Friedrich Korner, Adolf Galland, and especially Hans-Joachim Marseille reinforced that sense of chivalry, and code of honor among these airmen that is often overlooked in the post war propaganda and the maelstrom of uneducated bias. I suggest that this book, which is ironically in competition with The Star of Africa, written by my wife and I, be read in public schools and by the average American. Even if you are not an aviation or history enthusiast, the human element and drama should be enough to justify your time. What the readers will also learn is that

Franz, despite his humanist streak, was not that unusual among the men of the Luftwaffe. His experiences with JG-27 in North Africa, and the exposure he had to the previously mentioned men, especially Marseille, and the impressions left upon him, helped mold his attitude. I highly recommend this book, and I hope that this work receives all of the positive recognition that it deserves. Franz and Charlie were not unique men, but they were both very fortunate to have crossed paths. Their post war friendship, much like that of Col.

A Higher Call is mostly the story of Franz Stigler, an ace WWII German fighter pilot who came upon a heavily damaged and helpless American B-17 bomber struggling to return to England. Stigler could have easily shot down the bomber and its crew, but instead he escorted them past an anti-aircraft battery and flew along side them for a while out over the North Sea. Stigler knew he would be court-martialed if anyone found out what he had done. For years he wondered if the bomber had made it home safely and he wondered, "Was it worth it?". It took 46 years for Stigler to find out that the bomber did return home safely and to finally meet the American bomber pilot, Charlie Brown. Author Adam Makos provides all the descriptions of battle, dog-fighting and heroism you would expect in a book of this nature but he really focuses on the human side, on the losses. Character after character are introduced only to die. The story of one young German flier is heartbreaking. In the last days of the war he told Stigler that he was going to return home, surrender and that he hoped to study engineering. Stigler asked if he wanted to take just one flight in an Me-262, the world's first operational jet fighter. The boy said yes. Since American bombing had stopped two days before, Stigler thought it would be a safe, quick flight, but the jet's engines cut out and the plane went down. Stigler raced to the crash sight and was able to arrive in time for the boy to ask Stigler to say goodbye to his mother and sister for him. The boy died in Stigler's arms. So many wasted lives.

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