

# The Not So Great Escape

By Zak Wheeler

It is the middle of World War 2 and Hilts, Heir MacDonald and 'The Big X' are planning their escape. They were sent to this concentration camp after Hitler had the idea of putting all the escape artists in the one camp.

"We will dig out three tunnels. We will code name them Bill, Bob and Joe. Bill will be in Cabin A, Bob will be in Cabin C and Joe will be in Cabin D. We will start digging Bill in the morning," said 'The Big X'.

They went to bed that night dreaming hopeful dreams.

They woke up at 6 o'clock that morning thinking hopeful thoughts. They built Bill under the cabin heater. They built a mini mine cart in the tunnel. They had fifteen feet left to dig when they faced a massive cave-in.

"MacDonald," called Hilts. "MacDonald," he called again.

There was no reply. "I'm going in after him" announced Hilts.

After ten minutes Hilts still wasn't back. 'The Big X' was starting to get worried. Just then, a filthy but alive Hilts crawled out of the tunnel with MacDonald in his arms.

"He's unconscious but alive," exclaimed Hilts.

"We need a medic," cried 'The Big X'.

Immediately, German soldiers swarmed the cabin.

"Oh no," groaned Hilts.

They were each sent to the cooler except McDonald, who was hospitalised until he made a complete recovery.

They tried to build Bob but they ran out of rope to pull the mine cart. Hilts was assigned to get more rope but the only bad thing was that the rope was in the guards' room. He tried to sneak in but he was caught and, of course, sent to the cooler. This is how he got his nickname as 'The Cooler King'.

They tried one last time to build a tunnel. This time it was Joe that they tried to dig. They spent two weeks deciding on how to build it without a disaster. They finally came to a conclusion that they would wait until the Oktoberfest and they would cause a diversion to distract the guards. Oktoberfest was in two weeks.

Those two weeks passed excruciatingly slowly. They had to plan out exactly what they were going to do to avoid being caught. They decided to build it with a wooden frame to avoid cave-ins. 'The Big X' was thinking for hours on end of every detail he could possibly think of. He didn't want this to go wrong.

The day finally came. They made sure that all of the guards were distracted by the festive celebrations. It took them five hours to dig twenty feet. They took an hour off. Hilts tried to relax by having a cigarette. He lit it with a match. A door slammed and he got a fright. He dropped the match down the tunnel. It all happened in slow motion. He hoped it wouldn't ignite the wooden frame. But, of course, it did.

The fire slowly spread as guards desperately tried to battle the blaze. It was a losing fight. It reached the watch towers and the guards had to evacuate. It burnt the fence down. 'The Big X' had spotted the hole and was telling the others. They had never been as excited as they were now, even when they were kids. As a British officer it was their duty to try and escape so they took the opportunity and ran through the fence. After four days of walking they came to the border and off they walked. They were not the best escape artists in the world but they did escape and it was a not so great escape.