



Vol. 3, No. 11, March 12, 2021

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From the Editor



Happy Friday! And the year keeps marching on as we head towards Spring coming up soon. Our Bradford Pears (an ornamental tree, not fruit bearing – drats!) is the earliest bloomer and all three are packed thick with buds. Some of the trees on the street are already bursting into bloom, with ours just waiting. Another day or two of this warmer weather and they'll join the crowd.

There are lots of new releases also bursting onto the scene, along with the burgeoning buds in our yards. Ellie Midwood just released her newest book – *The Girl Who Escaped from Auschwitz*. There are also four or five others that I know of coming up in the next few weeks too. Lots of new historical fiction coming our way!

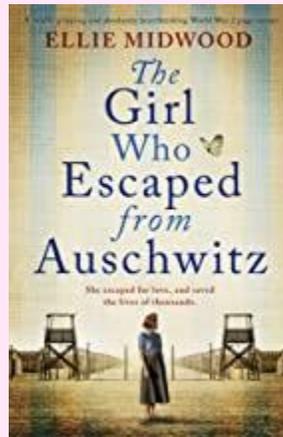
Stay tuned for future issues –In the weeks ahead we have author interviews scheduled with Peter Turnham, Carmen Radtke, Florence Kraut, Alexa Kang, Rachel Zolotov, JJ Toner, Clare Flynn, Ellie Midwood, and lots more!

Trisha

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New Release!



[The Girl who Escaped from Auschwitz](#)

Ellie Midwood

Millions of people walked through Auschwitz's gates, but she was the first woman who escaped. This powerful novel tells the inspiring true story of Mala Zimetbaum, whose heroism will never be forgotten, and whose fate altered the course of history...

Nobody leaves Auschwitz alive.

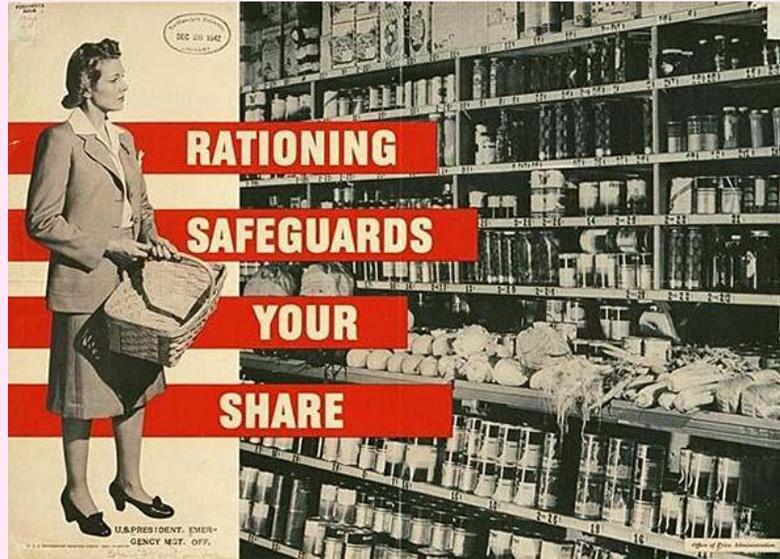
Mala, inmate 19880, understood that the moment she stepped off the cattle train into the depths of hell. As an interpreter for the SS, she uses her position to save as many lives as she can, smuggling scraps of bread to those desperate with hunger.

Edward, inmate 531, is a camp veteran and a political prisoner. Though he looks like everyone else, with a shaved head and striped uniform, he's a fighter in the underground Resistance. And he has an escape plan.

They are locked up for no other sin than simply existing. But when they meet, the dark shadow of Auschwitz is lit by a glimmer of hope. Edward makes Mala believe in the impossible. That despite being surrounded by electric wire, machine guns topping endless watchtowers and searchlights roaming the ground, they will leave this death camp.

A promise is made—they will escape together or they will die together. What follows is one of the greatest love stories in history...

Diets for the POW's



As World War 2 continued, resources began to be scarce. To compensate for the lack of resources on the home front and to allow for what America needed to supply its armies with for fighting, many items such as clothing, shoes, gasoline, tires, and fuel oil were rationed. Besides these items, many food products were rationed also.

Sugar was the first rationed and lasted the longest of all the products. Below are some of the foods that were rationed for different periods throughout the war:

Sugar: May 1942 – 1947

Coffee: November 1942 – July 1943

Processed foods: March 1943- August 1945

Meats, canned fish: March 1943 – November 1945

Cheese, canned milk, fats: March 1943 – November 1945

This lack of available goods affected American countries from coast to coast. But now, America also had many POW camps on their own land. The prisoners needed to be fed too. How could we feed ourselves, and also the prisoners that we housed in the many camps?

On January 9, 1947, the Cam[Commander at the Algona POW Camp, Colonel Lobdell, sent a memo to Iowa's Governor Dwight Griswold. In in he included many details about the camp while under his command.

He reported:

Food – The Convention provided “the food ration of ration of prisoners of war shall be equal in quantity and quality to that of troops in a base camp.” In 1943 and partly through 1944 we fed the Germans the same food as we fed Americans. When food began to get scarce in 1944, Grade A beef, butter and fresh vegetables were harder to get. Someone conceived the idea that quality would be equal if the food was pure and the quantity would be equal if the food contained the same number of calories as the American soldiers received. In 1944 this was put in effect, and although truck drivers continued to

deliver fresh meat and butter to our camp they were served to the Americans. The P.W.'s got brains, intestines, fish and bones to an amount of 15 lbs. per 100 P.W.'s per day. The principal food was dark bread baked by Germans in our camp, then in addition macaroni, noodles, spaghetti, soy beans, peas, beans and other non-rationed foods. Clerical workers got from 2500 to 3000 calories per day. P.W.'s on hard labor got 3700 calories per day, which cost not to exceed 25 cents per PW. Per day."

In a 50-year anniversary publication with Algona POW Camp memories, George W. Hughes shared what he recalled from those war time years.

He wrote: "The food at the camp was adequate for those who worked. Those who refused to work had to get along on 1500 calories a day. The food consisted of many bulk vegetables such as beets, carrots, rutabagas, and potatoes. This was supplemented by some fresh fruit and the poorer cuts of pork and beef. They received special dinners at Christmas and Thanksgiving."

In the same publication, Sgt. Eldred J. Harman, shared a memory he had regarding the Germans and their food. He wrote: "One day in August the food service sent in a truck load of the finest sweet corn grown around Algona. They went on strike saying they weren't going to be treated like swine and chickens."

I chuckled when I read that. It coincides with something my ex-sister-in-law told me many years ago. She's from Germany originally, and had a restaurant in southern Arizona. When we were talking food one day, I mentioned corn, which happens to be one of my favorite vegetables, at least in my top five. She told me how in Germany they never ate corn. Corn was considered a crop solely for the livestock.

I think after all this research and discussion about diets and food rationing during World War 2, I'm going to head to the kitchen and bake up a batch of fresh cookies. Just thinking about having to ration a family to half a pound of sugar a week stirred my sugar dipstick into the terror range. I think I need to go get a dose of a fresh sugary food while I appreciate the days I live in and that we don't have these shortages dictating our lives.

Well, except for the recent Covid example that tossed our grocery stories into disarray as we couldn't get the food or supplies we needed, and toilet paper became the new-almost-black market item. I wonder how that's going to far fifty years from now when 2020 becomes a historical 'back in the day' era to write about. But I won't be around then, so I'm not going to put too much thought or effort into that.



Author Spotlight: Tom Palmer



Welcome Tom Palmer! Pages of the Past is excited to chat with you today about your writing. What drew you to write historical fiction?

Thank you for chatting to me. It's good to meet you. It was definitely reading historical fiction – by the likes of British authors, Rosemary Sutcliff and Bernard Cornwell – that made me want to write history. Historical fiction has the perfect blend of dramatic fast-paced action and learning about the past for me. You get to enjoy a story and learn about the past at the same time.

Do you have a favorite era to write in? What do you enjoy most about that era?

I write mostly about the First and Second World Wars because I find it so hard to imagine what ordinary people went through in those times. From those who had the Holocaust inflicted on them by Nazi German to young men from all over the world becoming soldiers and airmen and sailors when it was probably the last thing they wanted to do with their young lives. Saying all that I would most like to write about Iron Age Europe but have yet to get that right.

Do you have any favorite methods you use in researching your books?

Yes. Total immersion. Books. Films. Websites. Private interviews. Site visits. Everything. But I do find that listening to the primary source interviews with those involved is the most reliable form. With *After the War*, my book about child Holocaust survivors I based every scene on the testimony of the survivors. This to get it right and not corrupt their story. www.tompalmer.co.uk/after-the-war

It seems that most of your historical books are written for the younger crowd. How did it happen that you started writing for the younger readers?

I just find it more satisfying. Or more natural, I think. Writing for children is about telling a story first and foremost. I have done some books for adults too and I found myself veering into worrying too much about being meaningful at the expense of the story. Of course, books have to be meaningful, but not at the expense of story. For children, certainly.

From your Facebook page, I see that you do talks at schools. (Well, at least in pre-Covid days!) What is it like speaking to children about the past and the historical events that shape the settings for your books?

It's great. I love it how children want to know about a historical period through the eyes of one or two child characters. In fact, I usually test my books on classes of children and ask for their feedback. With *Armistice Runner*, a story about the First World War and cross country running, I went to a school that had a big running culture and the children helped me finesse the descriptions and conflicts.

Do you have a current historical fiction work in progress? Can you give us a little teaser about it and let us know when we can look for it?

I am just finishing a book about the Arctic Convoys. It is called *Arctic Star* and is about how the Allies delivered tanks, planes and other war materiel to the Russians via its Arctic ports, while the Germans tried to sink them. It is not unlike Tom Hanks' recent film, *Greyhound*. Just with more ice and a visit to Soviet Russia. www.tompalmer.co.uk/arctic-star

What does a typical writing day look like for you?

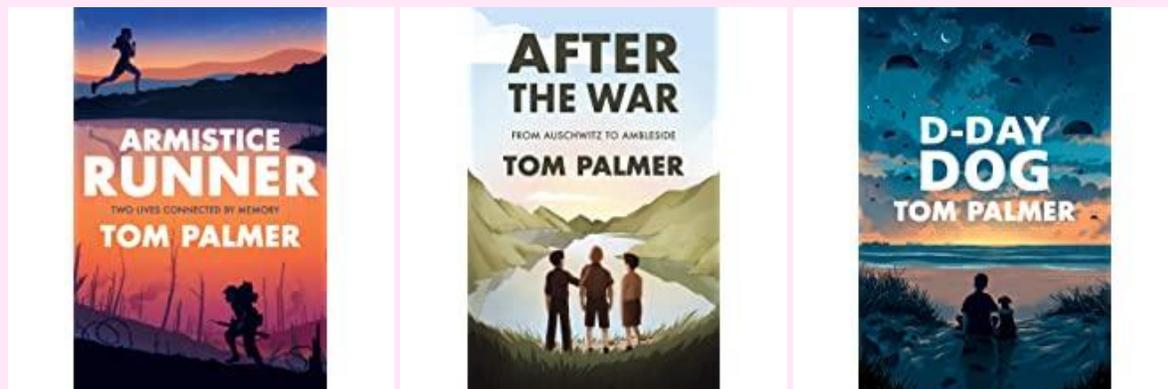
It's unpredictable. Every day throws up domestic challenges and I do a few virtual visits in schools. They take priority because they pay better than writing the books, to be candid. But – in an ideal day – I would write 8 a.m. to midday, then do admin in the afternoon. That rarely happens. But you have to be flexible.

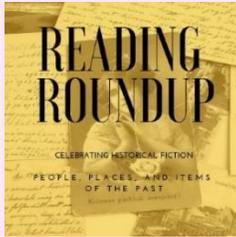
Out of your many books, is there one that is a 'favorite child'? Can you tell us about it?

Armistice Runner. Because it is about a girl who runs and is based loosely on my daughter who did a lot of competitive fell running when she was 12 to 15. Happy days with my daughter and wife. That's what it is all about deep down, isn't it? Also, it was my first book to win awards which came as a surprise. www.tompalmer.co.uk/armistice-runner

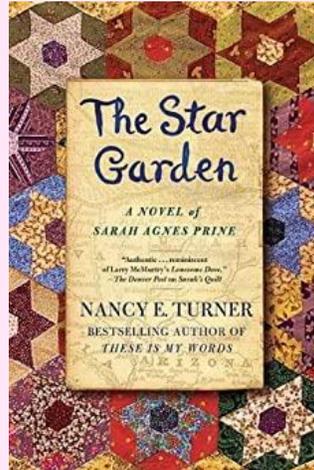
Tom Palmer is the author of 50+ books for children. His books are mostly about sport and history, often through the prism of crime, spy and thriller fiction as well as ghost stories. He lives in Yorkshire in England with with wife and daughter.

[Amazon.com: Tom Palmer: Books, Biography, Blog, Audiobooks, Kindle](https://www.amazon.com/author/tompalmer)





The 1900s/1910s



The Star Garden

Nancy E. Turner

It is winter 1906, and nearing bankruptcy after surviving drought, storms, and the rustling of her cattle, Sarah remains a stalwart pillar to her extended family. Then a stagecoach accident puts in her path three strangers who will change her life.

In sickness and in health, neighbor Udell Hanna remains a trusted friend, pressing for Sarah to marry. When he reveals a plan to grant Sarah her dearest wish, she is overwhelmed with passion and excitement. She soon discovers, however, that there is more to a formal education than she bargained for.

Behind the scenes, Sarah's old friend Maldonado has struck a deal with the very men who will become linchpins of the Mexican Revolution. Maldonado plots to coerce Sarah into partnership, but when she refuses, he devises a murderous plan to gain her land for building a railroad straight to Mexico. When Sarah's son Charlie unexpectedly returns from town with a new bride, the plot turns into an all-out range war between the two families.

Finally putting an end to Udell's constant kindnesses, Sarah describes herself as "an iron-boned woman." She wants more than to be merely a comfortable fill-in for his dead wife. It is only through a chance encounter that she discovers his true feelings, and only then can she believe that a selfless love has at last reached out to her. . . .

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