

Nicky Barr, An Australian Air Ace: A Story of Courage and Adventure

Peter Dornan

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Nicky Barr was not a man who sought danger or adventure, but when he was confronted with it he had the courage to face it - and survive. In 1939, at the age of 23, Nicky Barr was chosen to represent Australia in the national rugby world tour. The day after the squad arrived in England, war was declared and the tour was cancelled. Nicky immediately signed-up to become a fighter pilot in the RAAF and quickly rose through the ranks to become a squadron leader while fighting Rommel's famed Afrika Korp in North Africa. In the space of 12 months, Nicky shot down over 12 enemy planes, as well being shot down three times himself. The third time, he was seriously wounded and captured. Sent to Italy as a prisoner of war, he managed to escape four times - once from a moving train. After the fourth escape he successfully evaded recapture and, together with a group of British commandoes, took part in a series of clandestine operations in enemy territory while helping fellow prisoners of war escape. Barr earned a reputation amongst allies and enemies alike for his acts of bravery, his selflessness, his dogged determination and his infectious sense of humour. His is a story of adventure, war, courage and mortality, and the love for his wife that sustained him through it all.



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