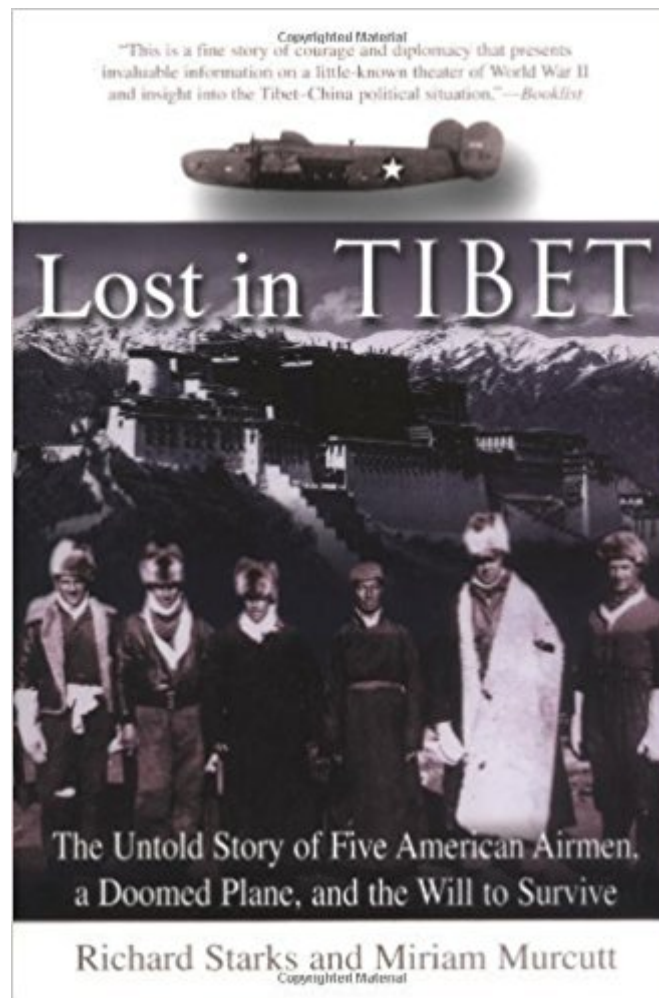




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# Lost In Tibet: The Untold Story Of Five American Airmen, A Doomed Plane, And The Will To Survive



## Synopsis

Caught in a violent storm and blown far off their intended course, five American airmen - flying the dangerous Himalayan supply route known as "The Hump" - were forced to bail out just seconds before their plane ran out of fuel. To their astonishment, they found they had landed in the heart of Tibet. The five were among the first Americans ever to enter the Forbidden City and among the last to see it before the Chinese launched their invasion. While in Tibet, the five Americans had to confront what, to them, seemed a bizarre - even alien - people. At the same time, they had to extricate themselves from the political turmoil that even then was raging around Tibet's right to be independent from China. "Lost in Tibet" is an extraordinary story of high adventure, cultural conflict, and political intrigue. It also sheds light on the remarkable Tibetan people, just at that moment when they were coming to terms with a hostile outside world. It is a classic tale of World War II, and an extraordinary story of high adventure.

## Book Information

File Size: 2323 KB

Print Length: 232 pages

Publisher: Lyons Press; 1st Lyons Press Paperback Ed edition (November 1, 2005)

Publication Date: August 1, 2004

Sold by:Ã Â Digital Services LLC

Language: English

ASIN: B00352KPG4

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Not Enabled

Word Wise: Not Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Enhanced Typesetting: Not Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #373,756 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #82

inÃ Â Books > Travel > Food, Lodging & Transportation > Air Travel #97 inÃ Â Kindle Store >

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## Customer Reviews

Starks and Murcutt have written a fascinating, nail-biting account of something so rare that few lived

to tell about it: bailing out of a lost, fuel-starved military transport aircraft over forbidden--and foreboding--Tibet. They masterfully chronicle a 'lost' theater of war and an operation so complex that it spawned the modern USAF Air Transport Command, yet the young men that flew the dangerous route over the Himalayas courageously attacked the mission with scant training themselves--the exigencies of hurried war time training. The authors examine the backgrounds of the crew, the dangers of flying the Japanese controlled airspace between India and China, and the political intricacies of this high mountain kingdom at the unfortunate intersection of the great powers of the time--Russia, India and China. This is that rare find in narratives today--an in-depth examination of the geopolitics of wartime Asia coupled with a breathtaking account of endurance and survival in a theater that was all but forgotten as the war focused attention on defeating the Axis in Europe. The authors themselves are no strangers to dangerous places and harrowing treks...a must read... Bill Jordan, author "The Return of the Lost Aircrew", Smithsonian Air & Space Magazine

A true and exciting story of bravery and hardship for five Americans bailing out of their airplane during WWII in a foreign land virtually isolated from the modern world. Held by Tibetans who had feared foreigners, they were eventually able to be escorted back to India. Includes an interesting history of why Tibet was so coveted by Great Britain and China.

The story of five WWII American airmen, their plane crashed into a Tibetan mountainside, has appeal for those interested in the War, in Tibet, and in good adventure/survival stories. Since these are three of my favorite genres it was hard to miss. The five were tough young American guys, and I wonder if their caliber exists today. When one of them comes to after his parachute drop, finds his leg badly cut, he takes out his survival sewing kit and stitches it together. Another fashions a sling for his broken shoulder and manfully faces his survival weeks. The 1940's Lhasa is different today, the Potala still reigns over the city of course, the monks wear their purple robes with Teva sandals, and they rankle at the Chinese, now a majority. They diplomatically tell you that parts of the Potala were destroyed by fire, neglecting to say the fires were started by the Chinese. There's a Lexus dealership, a modern airport, but they still serve yak butter tea.

This story is both history and thriller, and tells the little-known story of five American airman who were forced to bail out of their plane, in to a land that could not have been more foreign to these young men. Once I picked it up, I found myself going back every available minute. The adventurous

westerners they met there, the politician intrigue and the naive, gracious Tibetans painted a picture that would be incredible if it were not exactly true. I especially appreciated the explanations of the political implications, because we see the results of those tensions today. All in all, this is one of those rare books I am sure I will read again. Thank you to the authors for such painstaking details that had such a major impact.

A skillful telling of an amazing story! The authors do a superb job of intertwining the political backdrop to the story of what was going on in Tibet during WW2, in a way that the famous *Seven Years in Tibet* never did. In addition, the suspenseful story of how the plane was blown off course is clear and thrilling, as is the narrative of the 5 men's hellish walk back out of Tibet. The picture of Tibet that emerges seems very realistic--neither glossing over the sometimes barbarous conditions that prevailed in traditional Tibet, the poverty, the filth, the distance between the aristocratic class and most other Tibetans, not neglecting the richness and depth of Tibetan culture. My only disappointment with the book was the rather abrupt ending. The story is told in day by day detail until the men cross back into India, and then the afterstory is told in simple bullet points. The greatest strength of the book is that the authors retraced much of the journey through Tibet and so can describe the landscape and terrain in vivid detail. They also use their sources to create a precise history of exactly what happened, and why. If you enjoy adventure stories, you will find much to like here.

This amazing story is about five airmen who were flying from China to India as part of the air bridge established to keep China fighting the Japanese. There were never "routine" flights over the notorious spur of the Himalayas which earned the route the nickname "the Hump," but this run became an adventure when a storm knocked their C-87 Liberator Express so far off course that they wound up over Tibet. Full exhausted, the crew ditched at night with only a few thousand feet to spare (thanks to the height of the mountains) into some of the most inhospitable terrain on Earth. They found themselves in the middle of a closed society and embroiled in political machinations which would put their very lives at risk. This book was very well-written and really draws the reader into the story. The authors explain the background but manage to keep it interesting. The strongest point is the character sketches which make the people real.

This story is full of adventure and tales of resilience of the plane's crew, often keeping me holding my breath. I have had an interest in Tibet, since reading, *"Seven Years In Tibet"*, following news

about the difficulties in Tibet, and having the experience of hearing robed monks speak about the ongoing problems in Tibet while I worked at a university graduate school in Cambridge. This story, "Lost In Tibet" keeps surprising the reader with miracles of survival. I couldn't put it down...had to keep reading.

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