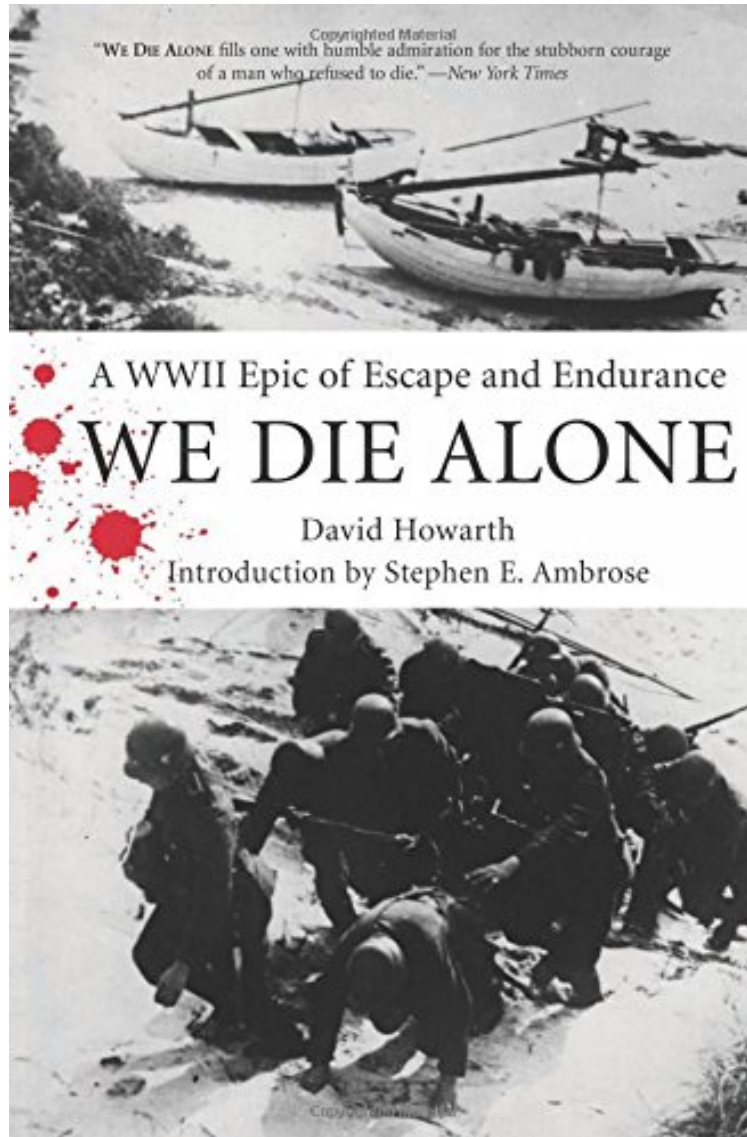


(Download pdf) We Die Alone: A WWII Epic of Escape and Endurance

## We Die Alone: A WWII Epic of Escape and Endurance

David Howarth

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#201673 in Books Howarth, David Armine/ Ambrose, Stephen E. (INT) 2007-06-01Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 9.00 x .63 x 6.00l, .89 #File Name: 1599210630232 pages | File size: 57.Mb

**David Howarth : We Die Alone: A WWII Epic of Escape and Endurance** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised We Die Alone: A WWII Epic of Escape and Endurance:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. One of those true stories that reads like a novelBy a.s.I loved this book.It's about Jan Baalsrud, a Norwegian. He begins WWII as a courier between Stockholm and Oslo, gets caught by the Swedes, imprisoned, and then manages to make his way to England and join a group of other Norwegians being trained to return to their country and fight the Nazis. That's where the book begins, with Jan and the other men on his

mission approaching the Norwegian coast. Their plan is to hide their sabotage gear, train local groups to resist the Nazis, and then attack a German airfield that's wrecking havoc on convoys between England and the Soviet Union. But their plans fall apart pretty quickly, and Jan soon finds himself alone in the snow with nothing but his clothing, his pistol, and one boot. What follows is how he survives and eventually makes it back to Sweden, with a lot of help along the way. I was initially interested in this book because of its title. I like titles with the words like "death" or "die" or "dead" in them. But the title isn't entirely accurate: Jan doesn't die (comes close several times). And the people who do die don't die alone--there's usually at least a gestapo agent around. But enough about the title. Jan is brave and resourceful and he can ski like something else. But then events leave him gradually more and more at the mercy of others, and the tough commando becomes vulnerable. Howarth did a wonderful job of finding an amazing story, researching it thoroughly, and then writing it in a way that uses good principles of storytelling so that this true story reads like a novel. *We Die Alone* is one of those books I recommend for just about everyone. Readers that enjoy *Unbroken* or *The Long Walk* may be especially interested in adding this to their to-read list.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Still not sure I believe it...By Andy in Washington There are so many other reviews that I won't even bother discussing the main events in this book. Suffice it to say that it is among the most incredible tales of survival that you will ever read, fiction or non-fiction. Jack London would have been afraid to submit such an outlandish tale to his publishers. That said, a few thoughts:

1. I found the actions of the local Norwegian "Resistance Movement" almost more interesting than the actual tale. To be caught helping Baalsrud was an act the occupying Nazis would have punished severely, both the actual person that did it, his family and maybe even the whole village. And yet the local villagers were, for the most part, not intimidated. The bigger concern seemed to be that if too many people found out about the rescue effort, their attempts to help would be noticed by the Nazi occupiers and raise suspicions.
2. Even more amazing, people in the next village were recruited based just on a request from a respected member of the first village. All this, without the use of a telephone, which was probably tapped by the Germans. Imagine your reaction if someone you don't know showed up at your door and said that so-and-so from the next town over wants you to climb a mountain in a blizzard and rescue someone...nevermind that the Germans will kill you and your family if you get caught...just do it.
3. Baalsrud spends several weeks in a snow cave on the Norwegian "Outback", sometimes completely buried, with very limited supplies of food, fresh water, blankets or medical supplies. I am not sure I believe this is even possible, but yet the author seems to have done a credible job of researching the story. There are multiple sources for research material, and a credible looking timeline. Either Baalsrud is capable of hibernating, or memories have been corrupted in the ten years between the events and the story being told. I would believe either scenario.
4. As many have pointed out, the editing and proofreading on this book were horrible. These sorts of errors ruin my reading experience, and most times I would abandon reading a book with this level of problems. In this instance, the story was captivating enough that I powered through the mistakes. The story was better than the proofreading was bad.
5. The Kindle edition did not have a map-something sorely needed. Even Google-maps seemed unable to rise to the task for some of the locations mentioned in the story. An old Atlas that I hadn't used in years, showing topography and little hamlets of Norway, greatly enhanced the story. So find a good map, ignore the grammar and writing style, and start reading. You might have to suspend disbelief at some of the details, but no doubt the major points of the story are true. If nothing else, the tale of Jan Baalsrud and the Norwegian villagers will reaffirm your faith in the human will and spirit. Finally, since the characters in the story seemed to run on brandy, pour yourself a glass and toast these men and women...preferably on a cold, windy winter evening.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Great Book on WW2 Escape in Norway By P. Pollock This is a really excellent book about a group of Norwegian commandos who were infiltrated into Nazi-occupied Norway in WW2. The book is great reading as a true adventure story, and it would also be of some interest to soldiers and special forces who must work in hostile, cold environments. It can certainly be said that the hero of this story, Jan Baalsrud, achieved one of the great escapes of the second world war. But it might be more true to say that he really won an epic battle of survival against the forces of nature. Before going further ... let me thank previous reviewers who added their thoughts here on .com. If you really want to understand the story, you need to buy one of the older hard-cover versions of this book. These were printed back in the 1950's. These old versions have important maps on the inside covers, and the maps help considerably in understanding the background of what happened. Fortunately, the older hard copies can be found fairly readily by searching the used copies of the book. It's a shame that the recent paperback versions did not reproduce the maps. The subject of this story, Mr. Baalsrud, tried to infiltrate Norway with a small team of well-trained commandos. Unfortunately, the whole plan backfired when an incredible foul-up occurred with a local contact who was supposed to help the team (I won't spoil the surprise - read the story). After that, Mr. Baalsrud became very dependent upon his personal energy and resourcefulness, combined with the sympathy of Norwegian partisans, as he struggled to avoid capture in enemy-occupied territory. Ultimately, through mistakes of judgment about weather, he was plunged into a terrible struggle against the elements. It is actually hard to believe that he survived what happened to him - I can't imagine how anyone could be entombed in a frozen wasteland and get through the experience. So this really is an epic story of Man vs. Nature. Overall, I was very impressed by the spirit of the Norwegian partisans in WW2. Frankly, I had little knowledge of what took place in Norway under the Nazi's, and this book explains a lot about the exemplary

people who lived in that country. The patriotic Norwegians made a mighty effort to save their own man, and by a miracle they managed to succeed. But only at great cost. So the background material about Norway was all very interesting and made for a great story. Overall, this is one of the finest escape stories from the WW2 era. But mostly - it is the true tale of an epic struggle between a man and the hostile forces of nature in the "white north" of Scandinavia.

A World War II chronicles of Jan Baalsrud's escape from Nazi-occupied arctic Norway.

.com If this story of espionage and survival were a novel, readers might dismiss the Shackleton-like exploits of its hero as too fantastic to be taken seriously. But respected historian David Howarth confirmed the details of Jan Baalsrud's riveting tale. It begins in the spring of 1943, with Norway occupied by the Nazis and the Allies desperate to open the northern sea lanes to Russia. Baalsrud and three compatriots plan to smuggle themselves into their homeland by boat, spend the summer recruiting and training resistance fighters, and launch a surprise attack on a German air base. But he's betrayed shortly after landfall, and a quick fight leaves Baalsrud alone and trapped on a freezing island above the Arctic Circle. He's poorly clothed (one foot is entirely bare), has a head start of only a few hundred yards on his Nazi pursuers, and leaves a trail of blood as he crosses the snow. How he avoids capture and ultimately escapes--revealing that much spoils nothing in this white-knuckle narrative--is astonishing stuff. Baalsrud's feats make the travails in Jon Krakauer's Mt. Everest classic *Into Thin Air* look like child's play. In an introduction, Stephen Ambrose calls *We Die Alone* a rare reading experience: "a book that I absolutely cannot put down until I've finished it and one that I can never forget." This amazing book will disappoint no one. --John J. Miller *From Library Journal* This 1955 volume is one of the most remarkable survival stories ever written. Jan Baalsrud was the only survivor of a Norwegian commando team ambushed by the Nazis during World War II. Wounded and with the Germans in pursuit, Baalsrud escaped and miraculously fought his way through the Norwegian tundra to a distant village, where he was saved by locals who helped spirit him to Sweden. Baalsrud suffered frostbite and snowblindness, came through an avalanche, and lived to tell the tale. This edition has a new introduction by *Citizen Soldiers'* author Stephen Ambrose. Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc. "Jan Baalsrud encountered some of the most harrowing adventures yet recorded about the survivors of the Second World War . . . A mere outline of Jan's adventures cannot possibly suggest the emotional impact that Mr. Howarth creates by his sharp selection of revealing details and his terse skill in telling a plain, unvarnished tale. *We Die Alone* fills one with humber admiration for the stubborn courage of a man who refused to die under circumstances that would have killed ninety-nine men out of a hundred and with almost equal admiration for the many men and women who never hesitated to help him as best they could, knowing full well that death was the mildest punishment they could expect for their heroic 'crime.'" --*The New York Times*