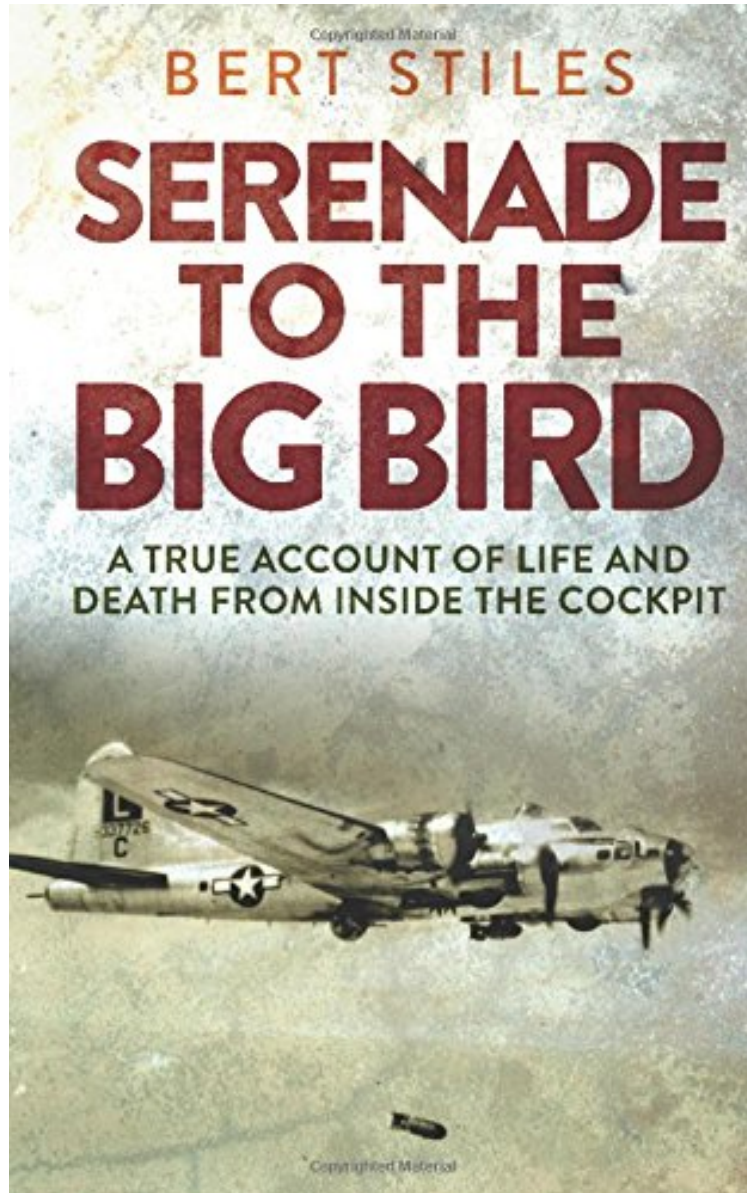


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Serenade to the Big Bird

Bert Stiles

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Bert Stiles : Serenade to the Big Bird before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Serenade to the Big Bird:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A Harmonious SongBy Jeannie Walker (Award-Winning Author)My husband and I are history buffs-that being said- We have seen and heard the name Stiles on many documentaries about WWII and the young men who flew the skies in Bombers and other aircraft. Bert Stiles was just a youngster when he began his tour on B17 bombers- ironically he wasn't killed aboard a bomber- but he was killed in

combat in World War Two- after finishing his tour with the B17's- he became a fighter pilot and that cost him his life. God rest his soul and God bless his family and friends. This book is definitely a serenade to a marvelous big bird and the courageous men who fought for freedom. So what if there are a few errors-here and there- it is a true story that needed to be told and I hope will be read by many. May God bless America and all who fight to keep us free from tyranny. Jeannie Walker (Award-Winning Author) "I Saw the Light" - A True Story of a Near-Death Experience

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. *Gonzo Journalism Meets World War II* By Mike Sorohan Had Bert Stiles survived the war, I believe his legacy would have been as one of the great writers of his generation, on a par with Mailer, only more cynical. This is not a rah-rah Greatest Generation account; it reads more like if Jack Kerouac had covered the war. His accounts of battle are descriptive and vivid; his cynicism about war is refreshingly frank; and his running commentary about his would-be girlfriend, "August," reads like a Mickey Spillane novel. One could argue--okay, I could argue--that this book is an early form of Gonzo journalism. A terrific read, leaving me wanting more.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. *Goes Hot and Cold* By Common Sense The book goes hot and cold. I ordered it because I had some friends whose fathers flew bombers in WWII. When the narrator (a co-pilot) is not rhapsodizing about how similar the fields, towns and people of France, England Germany are, the book really drags. But once the pilot tells him to stop day dreaming the descriptions of the challenges of actually flying such a big plane in formation and avoiding enemy fighters is very good. There were a couple of scenarios where I found myself holding my breath without thinking about it. I flew light attack aircraft in the Navy for 9 years so I am familiar with formation flying but after reading this I am still trying to figure out how they flew formation with the pilot on the yolk and the co-pilot managing the power.

"... the whole low squadron was gone ... blown up ... burned up ... shot to hell ... one guy got out of that." At the age of twenty-two, Bert Stiles joined the American Air Force. Two years later he began his life as a co-pilot of a B-17 Flying Fortress, flying high over Germany and bombing cities far below. In his moving memoir of that time Stiles takes you right to the heart of life as a young bomber pilot in World War Two; the terror of being under fire from flak and German planes, the disillusionment in their mission, the thoughts of girls back home and those they'd met on their travels, the dreams of the future and the overwhelming tiredness that hung over every member of the crew. "A book of terrific impact. Perhaps the best to come out of World War II." The Philadelphia Inquirer "The serenade is a simple and moving story of the war in the air. The big bird was a Flying Fort. She had a crew of ten men and all but one of them were 20 to 24 years old. ... They went out on missions together into Germany from England. They ran into flak and had the daylight scared out of them, and burned out their guns shooting down 109's and Focke-Wulfs. They dropped bombs on Berlin and other cities, and hated war, and did not like to think what their bombs had done." The New York Times Bert Stiles was a student at Colorado College in 1942 when he joined the American Army Air Force. He received his commission in November, 1943, and went overseas to Great Britain in March, 1944. He was awarded the Air Medal and the Distinguished Flying Cross and was a veteran of thirty-five bomber missions. Instead of returning to America when leave was due to him, he requested to be transferred to fighters. On November 26, 1944, he was shot down in a P-51 on an escort mission to Hanover. He died at the age of 23.

From the Publisher Bert Stiles was a prolific and highly talented writer. While still in college he had several stories published in the Saturday Evening Post, Colliers and other magazines. He was way ahead of his time. He wrote about The United Nations while it was still in the planning stage. He wrote about racial inequities and the environment long before such topics were popular. His college classmate Roland Dickson and Robert Cooper have collected many of his manuscripts and published them in separate publications. When we consider that Bert Stiles died at the young age of twenty three, the magnitude and scope of his writing is truly outstanding.

About the Author Bert Stiles was a highly talented writer who flew as a pilot with the United States Army Air Corps. He first flew a tour of duty as a co-pilot in heavy bombers with the 91st Bomb Group. After completing his tour of duty he volunteered for another tour of duty in fighter aircraft. He was assigned to a P-51 Squadron. However, he took one month off during the late summer of 1944 and wrote *Serenade to the Big Bird*. Tragically, three months later he was killed in action on an escort raid to Hanover. His mother recovered the manuscript from his personal effects and acquired a publisher. *Serenade to the Big Bird* was first published in 1947. Now in its fifth printing, it has become a classic tale of the air war in Europe. Bert Stiles tells the story as it was, while it was happening. The author is buried in the Ardennes Cemetery near Liege Belgium. One hundred four fallen airmen from the 91st Bomb Group are buried beside Bert Stiles in this military cemetery. Though their lips are stilled, Bert's words live on, and he has become the unofficial spokesman for every one of his fallen comrades.