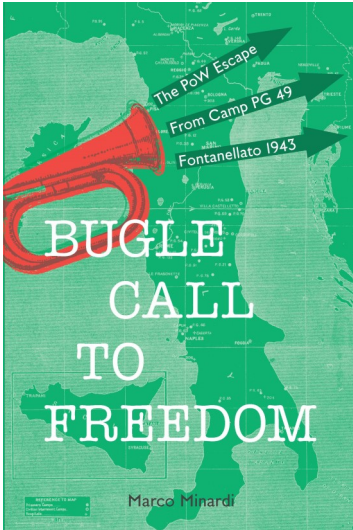




# MONTE SAN MARTINO TRUST

## Title Information Sheet



## Bugle Call to Freedom

The PoW Escape from Camp PG 49 Fontanellato 1943

Marco Minardi

Translated from Italian by John Simkins

Foreword by Paolo Pezzino; preface by Francesco Trivelloni

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**The first book that tells the story of the dramatic escape of 600 Allied PoWs from an Italian prison camp from the perspective of both the prisoners and the local population that helped them.**

It was midday on 9 September 1943, the day following the announcement of Italy's surrender to the Allies. At PG 49, a prison camp at Fontanellato, in the Po valley, a bugle sounded three short blasts, the signal for the most successful escape by Allied prisoners in Italy during the Second World War.

In camps elsewhere in the country there was confusion. Many prisoners of war, obeying orders from London, stayed put, only to be swept up by the occupying German army and sent to Germany, long before Allied forces could reach them.

At PG 49, however, the Senior British Officer and the Italian commandant came to an agreement. The wire was cut and 600 PoWs marched into the countryside, in the nick of time before the Germans arrived.

The prisoners faced an uncertain future. Should they go north to neutral Switzerland or walk hundreds of miles south to Allied lines? Either way, they would rely on the bravery of peasant farmers, the *contadini*, to hide them from the Germans and Italian Fascists. One of the inmates, travel writer Eric Newby, wrote about the assistance he was given in his bestselling *Love and War in the Apennines*.

Drawing on both PoW memoirs and civilian eyewitness accounts, Italian historian Marco Minardi tells the compelling story of the escape and its aftermath. In this edition, published by the Monte San Martino Trust and translated from Italian by John Simkins, the son of a PG 49 prisoner, the huge and, in some cases, tragic repercussions for the local community become abundantly clear.

*Dr. Minardi is Director of the Historical Institute, Parma. He specialises in the history of fascism and Italy's liberation struggle.*

The Monte San Martino Trust is a charity founded by former Allied PoWs in Italy to repay the kindness of the *contadini*. It arranges scholarships for young Italians to study English in the UK.