



# The Survivor: Scruffy's War

*Blake Heathcote*

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## **The Survivor: Scruffy's War** Blake Heathcote

It takes brains, grit, and maybe a dash of humour to be a survivor. Nobody knew that better than John Gordon "Scruffy" Weir, the subject of bestselling author Blake Heathcote's newest book.

In *The Survivor: Scruffy's War*, Heathcote tells how Toronto-born Weir, the son of investment dealer Gordon Weir, went on to become a World War II fighter pilot, POW, participant in the Great Escape - and spy. Drawing on skills he had learned from an Ojibway hunter and in special operations training, Weir endures a fiery plane crash and four grim years in POW camps, capped by a 350 mile trek in 1945's infamous Winter March to Lübeck. In crisp prose, journal entries, and dozens of interview excerpts, Heathcote reveals how Weir was trained almost from birth for conditions neither he nor his teachers could ever have anticipated.

Scruffy Weir spoke to no one about his experiences in war. No one, that is, except Blake Heathcote. And once he began to speak, Scruffy held nothing back. Over two years, and hundreds of hours of interviews, he talked to Heathcote about everything from his childhood to his flight training, the prison camps, the Great Escape, and the shadowy world of intelligence. And it wasn't all just talk. Scruffy's journals, personal notes, and thousands of photographs - many of them reproduced in this book - tell an unforgettable story of war and courage. What makes a survivor? Most of us can only guess. In this remarkable book, Blake Heathcote paints a moving and affectionate portrait of Scruffy Weir, an extraordinary man: a true survivor.

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