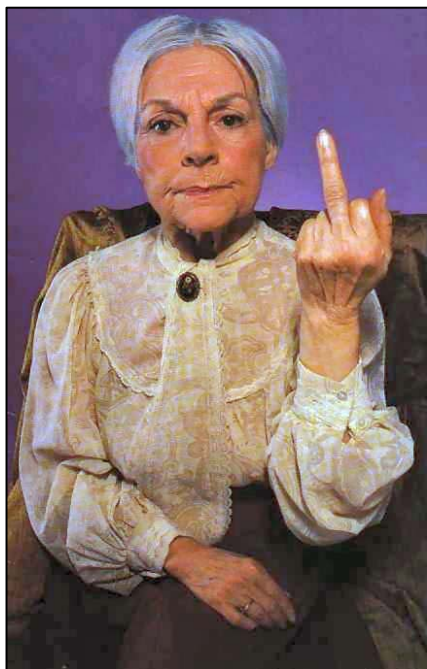


The History of the Middle Finger.

Before the [Battle of Agincourt](#) in October 1415, the French, anticipating victory over the English, proposed to cut off the middle finger of all captured English soldiers. Without the middle finger it would be impossible to draw the renowned English longbow and therefore they would be incapable of fighting in the future. This famous English longbow was made of the native English [Yew tree](#), and the act of drawing the longbow was known as 'plucking the yew' (or 'pluck yew').



Much to the bewilderment of the French, the English won a major upset and began mocking the French by waving their middle fingers at the defeated French, saying, See, we can still pluck yew! Since 'pluck yew' is rather difficult to say, the difficult consonant cluster at the beginning has gradually changed to a [labiodentals fricative](#) F', and thus the words often used in conjunction with the one-finger-salute! It is also because of the pheasant feathers on the arrows used with the longbow that the symbolic gesture is known as 'giving the bird.' It is still an appropriate salute to the French today!

The above has been sent to us by a number of people, however, although it is a great yarn, it's all garbage and [completely untrue](#). We've only included it because it's a helluva story.....and why let the truth interfere...

The Great Escape.

Most will remember seeing the 1963 movie "The Great Escape" which starred the late Steve McQueen, James Garner, Richard Attenborough, James Coburn and others. It was the story of a mass escape from the German prisoner-of-war camp Stalag Luft III during world war 2.

Stalag Luft III was located near the Polish town of Zagan and the movie was a very accurate account of an actual escape attempt.

Stalag Luft III housed mainly British and American airmen whose planes had crashed over German held territory. (The German word "Luft" translates to Air). The Germans generally captured prisoners with the words 'For you the war is over,' however, it was the duty of all captured military personnel to continue to fight the enemy by surviving, communicating information and escaping. Many of the prisoners at the camp were re-captured escapees. The Germans believed that security at the new camp was so tight that it would be impossible for anyone to escape.



The airmen realised early on that for any escape attempt to succeed it had to be well planned and organised. The Prisoners at Zagan therefore established an escape committee. Chief escape officer was Squadron Leader Roger Bushell, a former escapee who had been recaptured several times. He was known as 'Big X'.

The committee decided to build three tunnels and the plan was to effect the escape of at least 200 prisoners. The tunnels were given the code names 'Tom', 'Dick' and 'Harry'. There were two main problems to be considered - how to get rid of the dirt that was dug away and how to prevent the tunnels from collapsing.

Eventually the tunnel was completed and the night of the Great Escape was planned for 24th March 1944, a moonless night. Lots were drawn for the 200 places and maps, papers and disguises were completed.

On the night itself all allotted escapees took up positions in hut 104. It was planned that the escapees would leave the camp in stages. Everyone was very nervous and tense, a situation that was made worse by the discovery that the tunnel was around 10 feet short of the woods. This meant that the tunnel exit was on the path of a perimeter guard. By the time that a decision was made on how to signal when the coast was clear, it was around 10pm. Further delays were caused by some men panicking in the tunnel.

By 4am it was clear that it would be impossible for all 200 men to escape and the decision was made to close the tunnel at 5am. At around 4.45am a shot was heard at the tunnel exit. The tunnel had been discovered.

76 men had escaped through the tunnel. Of the remainder, those that were found waiting their turn in hut 104 were sent to the cooler - the camp name for the solitary confinement cells. Of the 76 men who escaped, only 3 made it back to the UK. 23 were recaptured and sent back to the camp and Hitler personally ordered the execution of the other 50 men. Morale among the prisoners was low when the executions became common knowledge and few were keen to attempt further escape attempts.

Although only 3 men managed to reach safety, the escape caused havoc among the Germans. Thousands of police, Hitler Youth members and soldiers were diverted from wartime duties to search for the escapees.

The commandant of Stalag Luft III, Colonel Friedrich Wilhelm Von Lindeiner, was court-martialled by the Gestapo for not preventing the escape and was reduced in rank to that of "private" at the age of 64. He was then sent to the front lines and survived the war. After the end of the war, he served 2 years in an Allied prison and it was the testimony of Allied prisoners, who were held at Stalag Luft III, that saved him from the death penalty. He was well respected by the prisoners and was invited to and attended their 25th reunion.



You can see a very good web site [HERE](#) which shows the amount of work and expertise that was involved in building the tunnel.

A couple was invited to a swanky family masked fancy dress Halloween party. The wife got a terrible headache and told her husband to go to the party alone. He, being a devoted husband, protested, but she argued and said she was going to take some aspirin and go to bed and there was no need for his good time to be spoiled by not going.

So he took his costume and away he went. The wife, after sleeping soundly for about an hour, woke without pain and as it was still early, decided to go to the party. As her husband didn't know what her costume was, she thought she would have some fun by watching her husband to see how he acted when she was not with him.

So she joined the party and soon spotted her husband in his costume, cavorting around on the dance floor, dancing with every nice 'chick' he could and copping a little feel here and a little kiss there. His wife went up to him and being a rather seductive babe herself, he left his new partner high and dry and devoted his time to her. She let him go as far as he wished, naturally, since he was her husband. After more drinks he finally whispered a little proposition in her ear and she agreed, so off they went to one of the cars and had passionate intercourse in the back seat.

Just before unmasking at midnight, she slipped away and went home and put the costume away and got into bed, wondering what kind of explanation he would make up for his outrageous behaviour. She was sitting up reading when he came in, so she asked what kind of time he had. 'Oh, the same old thing. You know I never have a good time when you're not there.' Then she asked, 'Did you dance much?' He replied, 'I'll tell you, I never even danced one dance. When I got there, I met Pete, Bill Brown and some other guys, so we went into the spare room and played poker all evening.' 'You must have looked really silly wearing that costume playing poker all night!' she said with unashamed sarcasm.

To which the husband replied, 'Actually, I gave my costume to your Dad, apparently he had the time of his life!!