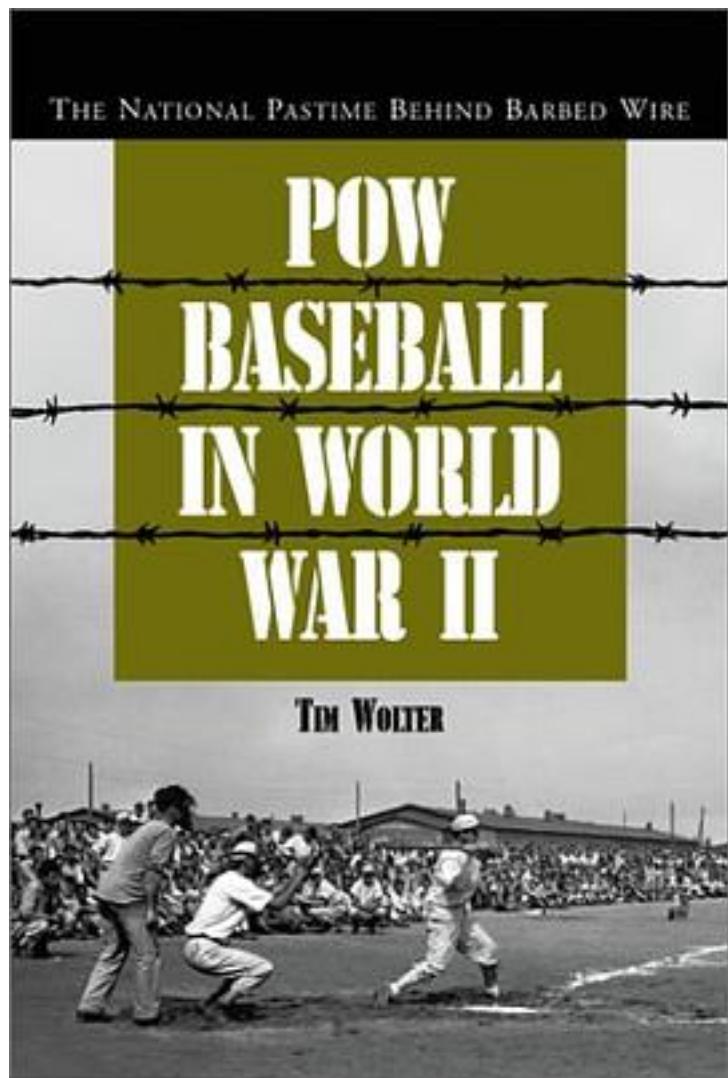


# POW Baseball in World War II



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Nearly 130,000 American soldiers and 19,000 American civilians were captured by the enemy during the Second World War. The conditions under which they were held varied enormously but baseball, in various forms, was a common activity among these prisoners of war. Not just Americans, but Canadians, British, Australians and New Zealanders took the field, as well as the Japanese and even a few Germans. In the best of the German Stalags (permanent German camps where these prisoners were held, shortened from Stamm Lagers) there were often several leagues active at a time, with dozens of teams playing games continuously during the warm weather months. In the harsher Stalags, and in some Japanese camps, there was only makeshift ball playing. In places like Camp O'Donnell, the worst of the camps, there was no energy left for anything but the struggle to survive. This work is the story of POW baseball, complete with guard versus prisoner ball games, radio parts hidden in baseballs, and future major leaguers. The book is divided into the various prison camps and describes the types of prisoners held there and the degree to which baseball was played.

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