

After interrogation in a Dulag, Alex moved to Stalag Luft I; Luft VI on 7 November 1943 where dad joined him in January 1944 before they both moved to Stalag Luft 3 known for "The Great Escape" killing of 50 Allied prisoners. The prison also housed flying ace Douglas Bader, legendary RAF camp leader "Dixie" Deans and Eric Williams who wrote *The Wooden Horse* based on his camp experiences.

Uncle Alex escaped twice. The first time he was caught after three nights by the Gestapo in Prague and on the second attempt by the police in Sagan after which he spent 56 days in the "cooler," a windowless cell.

In August 1945, Alex received the **George Medal** from King George VI on the recommendation of the German Navy for his heroic swim, saving the life of his navigator in the "most difficult and dangerous circumstances." He is pictured below at Buckingham Palace after receiving his award accompanied by brother Bob (right) and his wife, Jean.



### **The Long March to Glasgow**

Starved, and ill-prepared for the freezing temperatures, the McGarvey boys set off on The Long March in snow in early 1945. Dad was emaciated and my cousin Sandy told me uncle Alex carried dad part of the way, otherwise he would have been left on the road to die.

The boys were flown back to Britain and dad ended up in RAF Cosford hospital – today it is one of the RAF Museum's two sites, which I visit several times a year.

Back home in Glasgow, Bob continued his studies, graduated as a lawyer in 1949 and resumed his sporting prowess as a British and Scottish Water Polo International, and a reserve in the 1948 London Olympics.

Sadly his health was ruined by the war and led to an early death in 1960, aged 38. Uncle Alex's career with The City of Glasgow Police culminated in him becoming Chief Superintendent (Traffic) of Strathclyde Police. In 1974 he was awarded the Queen's Police Medal. He died in 1994, aged 76.

This summer (2018), I'm off to Bomber County to explore Lincolnshire - the former RAF Binbrook base, tour the Just Jane Linc in East Kirkby and see the new International Bomber Command Centre. But, when in the RAF Museum Hendon, I always look at the Lancaster and Long March memorial with pride.