

# The Winter of Seals and Jews: A Struggle for Survival in the Arctic

In the winter of 1940-41, a group of Jewish refugees and Allied soldiers found themselves stranded on an ice floe in the Arctic. They faced starvation, freezing temperatures, and relentless attacks from German bombers.



## A WINTER OF SEALS AND JEWS by Lynn Schiffhorst

★★★★☆ 4.5 out of 5

Language : English  
File size : 728 KB  
Text-to-Speech : Enabled  
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled  
Word Wise : Enabled  
Lending : Enabled  
Screen Reader : Supported  
Print length : 192 pages



The refugees were part of a group of over 1000 Jews who had been evacuated from Norway after the German invasion in April 1940. They were being transported to Canada on the SS Baychimo, but the ship was caught in pack ice and forced to turn back. On December 25, 1940, the Baychimo was finally crushed by the ice and the refugees were forced to abandon ship.

The refugees and soldiers spent the next two months drifting on an ice floe, with little food or shelter. They were constantly harassed by German

bombers, who attacked them with machine guns and bombs. Many of the refugees and soldiers died from starvation, exposure, or injuries.

In February 1941, the ice floe finally drifted close to land, and the refugees and soldiers were able to make their way to safety. They had endured two months of unimaginable hardship, but they had survived.

The story of the Winter of Seals and Jews is an incredible tale of human resilience and survival. It is a reminder of the horrors of war and the strength of the human spirit.

## **The Refugees**

The refugees who were stranded on the ice floe were from all walks of life. They included men, women, and children. Some were doctors, lawyers, and teachers. Others were farmers, laborers, and housewives.

All of the refugees had one thing in common: they were Jewish. They had been forced to flee their homes in Norway because of the Nazi persecution of Jews.

The refugees were all terrified and confused when they were forced to abandon the Baychimo. They had no idea what the future held for them.

## **The Soldiers**

The soldiers who were stranded on the ice floe were from the Norwegian Army. They had been fighting against the German invaders when they were forced to retreat to the coast.

The soldiers were all brave and experienced men. They were determined to fight for their country, no matter what the odds.

The soldiers were also very concerned about the refugees. They knew that the refugees were vulnerable and would need their protection.

## **The Ice Floe**

The ice floe that the refugees and soldiers were stranded on was about the size of a football field. It was covered in snow and ice, and it was constantly drifting and shifting.

The ice floe was a dangerous place to be. It was constantly moving, and it could break up at any time. The refugees and soldiers were also exposed to the freezing cold and the relentless attacks of German bombers.

## **The Survival**

The refugees and soldiers survived on the ice floe for two months. They endured starvation, freezing temperatures, and relentless attacks from German bombers.

The refugees and soldiers survived by working together. They hunted seals for food, and they built shelters to protect themselves from the cold. They also took turns standing guard, so that they could be warned of any approaching German bombers.

The refugees and soldiers also survived because they had hope. They believed that they would eventually be rescued, and they never gave up on their dream of freedom.

## The Rescue

In February 1941, the ice floe finally drifted close to land. The refugees and soldiers were able to make their way to safety.

The refugees and soldiers were greeted as heroes when they finally reached land. They had endured two months of unimaginable hardship, but they had survived.

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