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"When I was twelve years old I went away to summer camp in the High Sierra. My mother was fond of saying I never came back."

Peter Stekel

Author, *Beneath Haunted Waters: The Tragic Tale of Two B-24s Lost in the Sierra Nevada Mountains During World War II*

Peter Stekel is an award-winning writer specializing in World War II aviation history of the Sierra Nevada. Stekel grew up in Southern California and has been hiking, backpacking, and mountaineering in the Sierra since he was twelve years old.

Peter Stekel's first strip to the Sierra Nevada was while at summer camp with his boy scout troop in Sequoia National Park. Under the weight of a heavy backpack and arduous long distances, Stekel believed he might actually die from exhaustion. Upon reaching their destination - amidst the beauty of an alpine lake, granite cliffs, and fields of wildflowers - Stekel changed his opinion, and believed he *had* died - and gone to heaven. It was on this first trip to the High Sierra that Peter Stekel initially heard the story of the Hester Lake B-24 bomber lost in 1943. It had been only five years since the Liberator's discovery in Hester Lake and it was still possible to meet people in the backcountry who had known or encountered Clinton Hester during the search for his son's missing aircraft.

Peter Stekel is also the author of *Final Flight, The Mystery of a WWII Plane Crash and the Frozen Airmen in the High Sierra* (Wilderness Press), *Best Wildflower Hikes Western Washington* (FalconGuides), *Best Hikes Near Seattle* (FalconGuides), two works of fiction and over 700 magazine and newspaper feature and news stories. Stekel has appeared as an authority on the Sierra Nevada in various national and international media outlets including National Geographic, BBC4, and other print, radio, and television media. He holds a B.A. in Botany from the University of California at Davis, and a teaching credential from Humboldt State University. He makes his home in Seattle with his wife, their tropical fish, and a menagerie of stuffed animals.

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