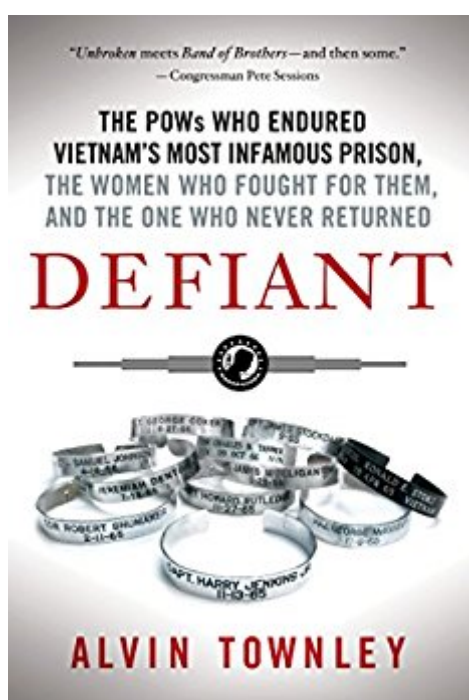


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# Defiant: The POWs Who Endured Vietnam's Most Infamous Prison, The Women Who Fought For Them, And The One Who Never Returned



## Synopsis

During the Vietnam War, hundreds of American prisoners-of-war faced years of brutal conditions and horrific torture at the hands of North Vietnamese guards and interrogators who ruthlessly plied them for military intelligence and propaganda. Determined to maintain their Code of Conduct, the POWs developed a powerful underground resistance. To quash it, their captors singled out its eleven leaders, Vietnam's own "dirty dozen," and banished them to an isolated jail that would become known as Alcatraz. None would leave its solitary cells and interrogation rooms unscathed; one would never return. As these eleven men suffered in Hanoi, their wives at home launched an extraordinary campaign that would ultimately spark the nationwide POW/MIA movement. The members of these military families banded together and showed the courage to not only endure years of doubt about the fate of their husbands and fathers, but to bravely fight for their safe return. When the survivors of Alcatraz finally came home, one would go on to receive the Medal of Honor, another would become a U.S. Senator, and a third still serves in the U.S. Congress. A powerful story of survival and triumph, Alvin Townley's *Defiant* will inspire anyone wondering how courage, faith, and brotherhood can endure even in the darkest of situations.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I just finished this book this morning, and even as I sit to write a review I am at a loss for words. I did not grow up knowing details of, or understanding much of the Vietnam War. I was not yet alive when this all took place. I know it was a painful time in our country's history that so many have extremely passionate opinions about, and to that I do not assume to hold such an opinion. I always wanted to understand more. Alvin Townley's "Defiant" allowed me to see through a peephole into the human spirit of men like I can only hope we still have fighting for our country today. The story of the eleven men who were imprisoned in Alcatraz in Northern Vietnam were men of character, courage, faith, integrity and valiance. The torture that was brought to life on the pages of Townley's book forced me to lay the book aside more than once, yet I could not put it down. I am proud to be a part of a country whose history includes these men, along with their wives and families back home who fought tirelessly for their lives and release. I felt heartache and sickness as I read of the days and weeks of endless torture. I cried tears of joy and pride that welled up in the end as the men returned to lives that had been put on hold for them, luckier than I know many were. Though not often, I did laugh - being a born and bred Texan it made me chuckle to read that Sam Johnson ate Tex Mex for five days straight upon his return to the Lone Star State. I read a lot, though not a lot of historical non-fiction. However, I would recommend this book to everyone who would like to have a glimpse of this time in our history, or into the lives of these men who served us so well. Alvin, great job on telling their stories to the rest of us!

I am always impressed when an author who did not live through the events he is reporting does such a masterful job of recreating an era he did not know. This author, Alvin Townley, has done just that with his riveting, unflinching account of the torturous ordeal of the US POW's held in North Vietnam during the Vietnam War. Like many Americans of my generation who were in high school and college during that war, I paid much more attention to protesting the war than to the plight of the POWs being held there. Of course, as I learned in this book, the secrecy of the Department of Defense and the ineptness of LBJ's Department of State did little to publicize what was going on, keeping us in the dark about the prison gulag where our men were imprisoned. I want to thank Alvin Townley for writing this book, and for writing it so well. I could not put it down. Please Mr. Townley, take on some other important and untold stories from our history and keep writing. You did a superb

job with this one.

I can't tell you how much I cried. Excellent book , written well and really let a reader what was in these guys souls. I do now remember as a kid sitting at the tv watching these POW's get off the plane with their families waiting. It's taken me over 40 years to discover what I was really watching as a 13 year old. I wish all these people who decide to send troops some where would read a few books like that and not send our guys out to fight other people's wars, and die for other countries. It's just not right. God bless all soldiers.

This is one of the most moving and historical accounts of what our POWs had to endure at the infamous Hanoi Hilton. Despite the brutal torture, meager diet, filthy and inhumane conditions, the captives fought their captors each and every day. They established simple yet effective methods of communicating with each other as they tried to keep the population of the prison informed and acting as a unit. This is a MUST READ! Also highly recommend the book Five Years To Freedom.

A true testament to courage, brotherhood and respect for the Code Of Conduct! After reading of the brutal torture and barbaric conditions these men suffered at the hands of the enemy, it's a miracle that any of them survived to return home. Not only survived but resisted and defied the enemy and adhered to the Military Code Of Conduct to the best of their ability! As a veteran I am in awe of these true heroes! All gave some. Some gave all.

This is must read for readers who are interested in the Day to Day Lives of the POW's who where imprisoned in Hanoi during the Vietnam War. The author , Alvin Townley , obviously researched the personal stories of a number of P.O.W.'s but in particular a primary group who remained committed to honoring the Military Code of Honor . These men were beaten and tortured both physically and mentally by the North Vietnamese on a 24/7 basis. For the reader, it is secondary if one believed or did not believe in the Vietnam War as the book is about courage and a believe in country without consideration to life and well being. They survived through the secret creation of communications and insistence that each individual follow the Military Code even when faced with daily torture for long periods of time. Many experienced torture that resulted in permanent damage to their bodies which could not be reconstructed upon their release. Although a large portion of the book is about the POW's it also provides a detailed description of how their wives and family members created a challenge to our President and Secretary of State to assure the release of their family members

became a major part of the negotiations at the Paris Peace Talks, that eventually ended the war, Their efforts embarrassed both the U.S. State Department and the Vietnamese negotiators and in turn forced them to make the welfare and release of their men a priority with the negotiation process..

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