



Defiant: The POWs Who Endured Vietnam's Most Infamous Prison, The Women Who Fought for Them, and The One Who Never Returned

By Alvin Townley

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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.

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Editorial Review

Review

"You told it exactly like it was. In this unexpected way, your book made it all worthwhile." ?GEORGE MCKNIGHT, *POW, 1965-1973*

"*Defiant* is a riveting tribute to the unyielding men who endured years of brutal captivity as POWs in Vietnam and the families they left behind. The men of the 'Alcatraz Eleven' are true American heroes and their extraordinary stories will serve as an inspiration for generations to come." ?SENATOR JOHN MCCAIN, *POW, 1967-1973*

"These heroic men and women remind us how courage, devotion, and faith can triumph even in the darkest of times. In *Defiant*, Alvin Townley masterfully tells the inspirational and unforgettable story of our Vietnam POWs and the Alcatraz Eleven." ?PRESIDENT JIMMY CARTER

"Alvin Townley's story of the courage, valor and honor of eleven indomitable POWs and their wives is a new American classic that will be read as long as the breezes kiss Old Glory. As I read it I wept." ?STEPHEN COONTS

"A moving, must read of extraordinary courage and mutual support in facing unimaginable hardship and torture." ?ANN MILLS-GRIFFITHS, *Chair, National League of POW/MIA Families*

"This stirring tale by Alvin Townley of resilience and leadership under unimaginable conditions is a must read." ?JIM LOVELL, *Commander of Apollo 13*

"*Defiant* is *Unbroken* meets *Band of Brothers* - and then some...The devotion and undefeatable will of these courageous American heroes shines on every page and reminds us exactly what our great nation is made of." ?CONGRESSMAN PETE SESSIONS

"This moving and authentic epic of unrelenting heroism shines like the sun as an example of American men and women at their very best." ?*Medal of Honor recipient* GEORGE "BUD" DAY, *POW, 1968-1973*

"Riveting. Powerful. Authentic. I had tears in my eyes reading *Defiant*. If I can still cry, I know others will too." ?MIKE MCGRATH, *POW, 1967-1973*

"*Defiant* will make you proud to be an American, and Alvin Townley's writing makes you feel as if you are there yourself. It would be a wonderful textbook for a course on how to be a POW, but it is also a book for anyone on how to face and overcome adversity!" ?WESLEY D. SCHIERMAN, *POW, 1965-1973*

"Alvin Townley has captured the individual accounts of these eleven men and woven them into a captivating story of resilience, courage and love of country." ?ROBERT H. SHUMAKER, *POW, 1965-1973*

"A unique American epic which must never be forgotten. Thanks to Alvin Townley's ability to convert its heartbreaking reality into vivid prose, its men and women are alive as human beings as well as symbols of their commitment to each other -- and their country." ?THOMAS FLEMING, *author of The Officers' Wives*

"*Defiant* is a must read for those who seek to understand and honor the very best of America and its heroes.

Alvin Townley's exhaustive research shows us how our prisoners of war in Vietnam served with inspired bravery and unrelenting courage. We can now know in detail how the most abused of them all survived years of brutality and solitary confinement.” ?MELVIN R. LAIRD, *Secretary of Defense (1968-1972)*

“In *Defiant*, Alvin Townley reveals a moving, inspiring, untold story of courage and sacrifice that stands as a vivid testimony to what the human spirit can overcome. This is an important and too often overlooked aspect of the Vietnam War's history...For those interested in Vietnam's Band of Brothers, it is a must read.” ?JAY WINIK, *bestselling author of April 1865 and The Great Upheaval*

“*Defiant* is an astounding story that will capture your heart and mind proving once and for all that determination trumps circumstance.” ?ANDY ANDREWS, *New York Times bestselling author of How Do You Kill 11 Million People?, The Noticer, and The Traveler's Gift*

“I carried this book from room to room and kept trying to put it down, but I couldn't stop reading. Alvin Townley shows the heart of what it means to be American in this tale of some of our greatest heroes. *Defiant* is superb.” ?GREGORY A. FREEMAN, *author of The Gathering Wind: Hurricane Sandy, the Sailing Ship Bounty, and a Courageous Rescue at Sea*

“*Defiant* is all about voices – those that went unused for days by solitary prisoners of war, and those of silently suffering women back home who eventually felt no choice but to speak out. Alvin Townley soberly evokes the terror, sadness, frustration, pain and inspiration they all felt, and along the way, gives us a Vietnam War most of us have never heard about, involving legions of American women and imprisoned men fighting together, thousands of miles apart.” ?ALAN HUFFMAN, *author of Here I Am: The Story of Tim Hetherington, War Photographer*

“The story of human courage, individual and family perseverance, survival based on a warrior's code of honor. Alvin Townley weaves the recollections of these remarkable men into a compelling narrative against the backdrop of war, freedom, forgiveness and reconciliation. An inspirational account of POWs who served with honor while in captivity and returned home with a commitment to serve their country.” ?Larry Berman, *author of Zumwalt: The Life and Times of Admiral Elmo Russell "Bud" Zumwalt, Jr.*

“If you have ever wondered how real courage and ultimate perseverance should be defined, all you need to do is read these pages. If you have ever pondered whether Americans still have the grit and the ‘guts’ to show the world what it takes to defend freedom, reading about the ‘Alcatraz Eleven’ will bolster your confidence. What these men endured nearly defies description, but Alvin Townley has managed to pull it off brilliantly. The writing is hard-hitting and powerful, dynamic and breath-taking. So, too, is his retelling of the stoic courage of the loved ones stuck at home with uncertainty and doubt: uncertainty about their own abilities to bear up, then doubt in the fortitude and truthfulness of their own government. What the families did from afar, and how they ultimately put backbone into their own leaders and pushed accountability onto the captors of the POWs, is a story heretofore largely untold. It is a narrative as striking in its own right as the tales of the ‘Alcatraz Eleven’ themselves.” ?PHIL KEITH, *award-winning author of Blackhorse Riders and Fire Base Illingworth*

“Alvin Townley's *Defiant* is a compelling recounting of the horror, hope, hell, and humanity that was daily life for the American prisoners of war who struggled through existence at Hanoi's most brutal prison camp. Expertly researched and compellingly written, Townley's account of the reality of life both in Hanoi's prisons and for the families of the prisoners at home is inspiring reading and should be part of any Vietnam War library.” ?ANDREW WIEST, *author of The Boys of '67*

“Alvin Townley has done a magnificent job of weaving together the powerful and complex story of eleven men who survived the unbelievable cruelty of their North Vietnamese captors. *Defiant* honors the bravery

and sacrifice of our prisoners of war and their families as no other reporting has done to date. These men, many of whom I knew, deserve no less.” ?*RICHARD G. CAPEN, Assistant to the Secretary of Defense (1968-1971)*

“Alvin Townley's work speaks volumes of America and our service men and women, and their spouses....their honor, steadfastness, perseverance, spirit, and love of country...and clearly illuminates the differences in our militaries and governments. Reading 'today' of their time in captivity, brings the same emotions Americans shed upon their release and return in 1973.” ?*GENERAL J.H. BINFORD PEAY III, U.S. Army (Retired); Superintendent, Virginia Military Institute; former Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Central Command*

“With *Defiant*, Alvin Townley has done readers a huge favor. By describing the POWs' scenes of torture and deprivation in such detail--to the point we can almost feel our own bones crack under pressure--he reminds us that we should never take our civil liberties for granted. This book is a testament to the human spirit and how, in the worst of conditions with the best of men, it can be bent but never broken.” ?*DAVID ABRAMS, author of Fobbit*

“In a fast-flowing narrative replete with reconstructed dialogue, Townley writes reverently of these POWs” ?*Publishers Weekly*

“Inspirational. ” ?*Kirkus Reviews*

“*Defiant* is a significant document of human survival and endurance under unspeakable circumstances, and, in a time when the White House levels charges of torture against fellow Americans, provides a reality check.” ?*World Affairs*

“A gripping account of the 'Alcatraz Eleven,' a group of American prisoners of war in North Vietnam who formed a tough core of heroic resisters despite brutal and relentless efforts to break them and convert them into fodder for the Communist propaganda machine. ... Townley's telling of these important stories is fresh and vivid, thanks to his interviews with surviving prisoners and their family members. *Defiant* is an excellent book for younger readers with little knowledge of this searing chapter in American history, when a brash United States stumbled its way deeper and deeper into the Indochina morass. ... Townley also adds an important, and often overlooked, dimension to the prisoners' stories -- that of their wives' campaign at home to thrust the plight of the P.O.W.'s into the national spotlight.” ?*The New York Times Book Review*

“Townley shines a light on [the POWs'] courage and what their families back home went through.” ?*The New York Post*

“Townley recounts, in detail, how Stockdale, Denton, and the other POWs endured years of almost unimaginable physical and mental torture, and the ways the men coped with the physical pain and emotional torment.” ?*VVA Veteran*

“*Defiant* is a page-turner. ... *Defiant* focuses on the prisoners -- 'war criminals' to the Vietnamese -- who were upgraded from bad (Hanoi Hilton) to worse (Alcatraz). 'No one group endured any more than the 11 brothers,' Townley writes, and he proves his point. 'We should not forget,' and you won't.” ?*Marine Corps Times*

“*Defiant* is an extremely accurate depiction of the miserable existence prisoners of the North Viet Nam (NVN) endured during the US war in Viet Nam. I know his description is accurate because I was held prisoner in NVN prison camps in and around Hanoi for almost six years, from May 1967 to March 1973. ... Alvin Townley has done a remarkable job in portraying many aspects of the POW's situation and capturing

his resolve to return with honor. He has given a well-researched look into the hearts and minds of these men and their wives. Defiant will educate the serious military history student and the curious citizen. I believe it will also be an inspiration to many.” ?*Captain Robert J. Naughton, U.S. Navy (Retired), Naval Historical Foundation*

About the Author

ALVIN TOWNLEY is the acclaimed author of *Legacy of Honor: The Values and Influence of America's Eagle Scouts*, *Spirit of Adventure: Eagle Scouts and the Making of America's Future*, and *Fly Navy: Discovering the Extraordinary People and Enduring Spirit of Naval Aviation*. He lives in his hometown of Atlanta, Georgia.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

William Fugate:

The feeling that you get from Defiant: The POWs Who Endured Vietnam's Most Infamous Prison, The Women Who Fought for Them, and The One Who Never Returned is a more deep you excavating the information that hide inside the words the more you get thinking about reading it. It does not mean that this book is hard to be aware of but Defiant: The POWs Who Endured Vietnam's Most Infamous Prison, The Women Who Fought for Them, and The One Who Never Returned giving you excitement feeling of reading. The writer conveys their point in specific way that can be understood simply by anyone who read this because the author of this reserve is well-known enough. This book also makes your personal vocabulary increase well. Therefore it is easy to understand then can go along, both in printed or e-book style are available. We propose you for having this particular Defiant: The POWs Who Endured Vietnam's Most Infamous Prison, The Women Who Fought for Them, and The One Who Never Returned instantly.

Ariane Gray:

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Nancy Byrom:

This Defiant: The POWs Who Endured Vietnam's Most Infamous Prison, The Women Who Fought for Them, and The One Who Never Returned is great guide for you because the content which is full of information for you who also always deal with world and still have to make decision every minute. This kind of book reveal it info accurately using great plan word or we can point out no rambling sentences inside. So

if you are read the item hurriedly you can have whole info in it. Doesn't mean it only will give you straight forward sentences but hard core information with wonderful delivering sentences. Having Defiant: The POWs Who Endured Vietnam's Most Infamous Prison, The Women Who Fought for Them, and The One Who Never Returned in your hand like keeping the world in your arm, data in it is not ridiculous 1. We can say that no reserve that offer you world inside ten or fifteen second right but this book already do that. So , this can be good reading book. Heya Mr. and Mrs. busy do you still doubt in which?

Rosemarie Nicoll:

The book untitled Defiant: The POWs Who Endured Vietnam's Most Infamous Prison, The Women Who Fought for Them, and The One Who Never Returned contain a lot of information on the idea. The writer explains your girlfriend idea with easy approach. The language is very straightforward all the people, so do certainly not worry, you can easy to read this. The book was authored by famous author. The author will bring you in the new period of time of literary works. You can actually read this book because you can read more your smart phone, or model, so you can read the book throughout anywhere and anytime. In a situation you wish to purchase the e-book, you can wide open their official web-site along with order it. Have a nice go through.

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