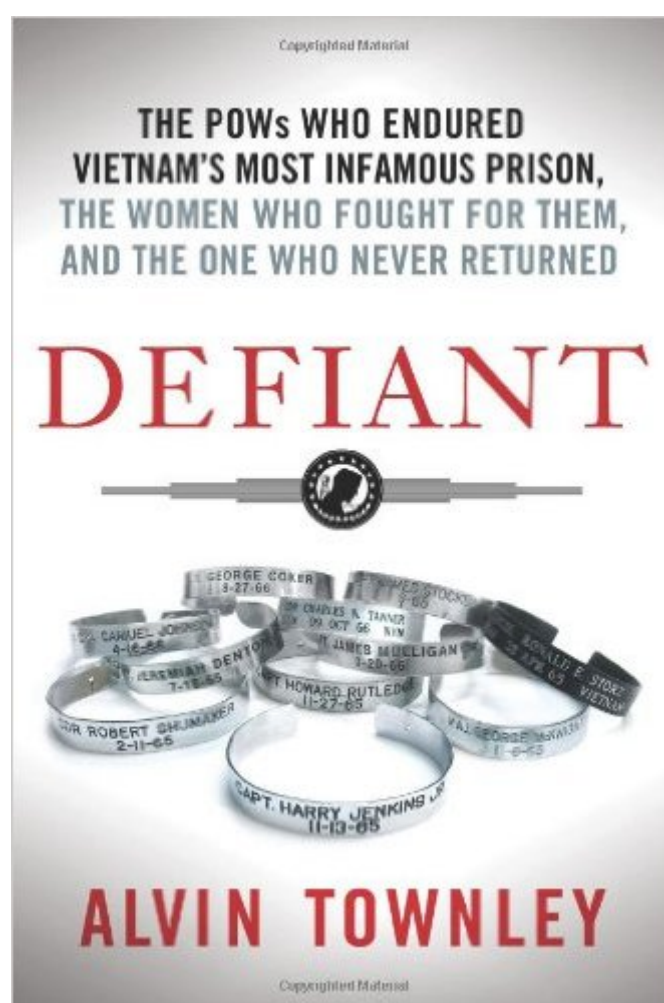


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# Defiant: The POWs Who Endured Vietnam's Most Infamous Prison, The Women Who Fought For Them, And The One Who Never Returned



## Synopsis

Winner of the Georgia Author of the Year Award in History 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 not only to 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 veteran 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

*Defiant* is not a book that you will read quickly and or get through in a normal amount of time.

Usually it doesn't take me long to devour a book and then post a review, but this book took me

forever. Why, you ask? Because I found myself at a loss for the emotional strength to continue reading at times. The pain and agony that these men went through who were prisoners of the North Vietnamese is just too hard to bear at times. Having lost many friends in Viet Nam I was not sure how I would react to this book. But here goes. Prisoners of war should be treated according to the Geneva Convention. BUT, since this wasn't a war the North Vietnamese decided these prisoners were war criminals, not prisoners of war. Thus they treated them as badly as they could. Torture, solitary confinement, poor food, no health care and then more torture. This was the daily regime of these prisoners. It took its toll. But to read of the men's strong desire to serve their country and make their families, fellow soldiers and their country proud is amazing. They wanted to give up hope. They at times wanted to die. BUT, they never wavered on the desire to stand fast and make America proud. But this book was hard to read because it brought back way too many difficult memories. Then to add to those memories to read how these men were treated just made me angry. Further, to read of the lack of any respect or human dignity being shown by their captors made me wonder what type of human beings communists could be. This book **MUST BE READ** but anyone who wonders about what went on at the Hanoi Hilton and how our men survived. It **MUST BE READ** by anyone who questions the drive and loyalty of a person serving the military.

Growing up in Va. Beach during the 70s, I distinctly remember wearing my mother's POW bracelet to school in 1st grade, even though I had no clue what it really meant. I also vaguely remember Jeremiah Denton's celebrated return (he was stationed in Va. Beach) in 1973. But, aside from reading Denton's "When Hell Was in Session" years ago and the occasional media quip simply reminding us that John McCain was a POW, I really never received a proper understanding of the suffering experienced by American POWs in Vietnam until I read Alvin Townley's **DEFIANT**. Townley's collective account of eleven men who stood united and strong after almost a decade of unimaginable physical and mental torture proved to be an emotional read from beginning to end. Townley's book details the experience of the "Alcatraz Eleven": eleven men who distinguished themselves as being so defiant to their captors that they were transported to a special prison within the POW system specifically designed to break their will by any means necessary. Paralleling the story of the long-term misery of these men is the account of a different misery experienced by their families back home, desperately trying to learn more about the status of their husbands/fathers but encountering frustrating bureaucratic incompetence and red tape. **DEFIANT** is presented chronologically, starting with the first of the "eleven" captured with the remaining men individually brought into the story as they are in-turn captured. Even before the core group of eleven are in the

same camp, a hierarchy is established according to military rank and the prisoners are expected to abide by the US military Code of Conduct which details how the men are to behave (resist) in captivity.

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