



Captive Warriors: A Vietnam POW's Story (Texas A & M University Military History Series 23)

By Sam Johnson, Jan Winebrenner

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"If hell is here on earth, it is located on an oddly shaped city block in downtown Hanoi, Vietnam," writes Sam Johnson, who lived in that hell for seven years.

Col. Samuel R. Johnson, U.S. Air Force, was shot down in April, 1966, while flying his twenty-fifth mission over North Vietnam. Shortly after his capture and imprisonment in the infamous Hanoi Hilton, Colonel Johnson was labeled a diehard by his enemies. His creative and innovative resistance of prison authority earned him banishment to the high-security prison unit where, unknown to U.S. military intelligence, Ho Chi Minh kept the eleven prisoners believed to be a serious threat to his war efforts. For two years Johnson and the other ten endured leg irons, malnutrition, and appallingly primitive conditions while imprisoned in tiny cubicles built in the earthen-walled facility dug out of the center courtyard of North Vietnam's Ministry of Defense in downtown Hanoi.

Captive Warriors is the story of Alcatraz, where courage and humor thrived amid the madness. It is the story of Colonel Johnson's seven-year battle for his life, limbs, and sanity. It is the story of the hundreds of captured warriors--American POWs--whose lives lay in the hands of angry and vengeful North Vietnamese captors. The book also chronicles America's trek into political confusion and chaos throughout the course of the Vietnam War.

More than a story, *Captive Warriors* is a tribute to all the American prisoners of war who, without benefit of the conventional weapons of war, waged daily battles against an insidious enemy disdainful of the requirements of the Geneva Conventions and who, in the end, became the final pawn in the peace settlement that ended the longest war in American history.



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Editorial Review

From Library Journal

Among prisoner of war memoirs, which all remind us of the brutality of war and the staggering toll it takes on the individual, Vietnam POW accounts are especially powerful reminders of what the ordinary soldier is sometimes forced to endure. Johnson, presently a Congressman from Texas, was an Air Force pilot shot down over North Vietnam in 1966. He spent the next seven years of his life in brutally inhumane conditions that tested his strength and will to survive in ways he never believed possible. His personal struggle, assisted by the love and compassion of his fellow POWs, forms the heart and soul of the book. *Captive Warriors* is as fine a work as James and Sybil Stockdale's *In Love and War* (LJ 8/84) and *Chained Eagle* (LJ 11/1/89) by Everett Alvarez Jr. and Anthony S. Pitch. Recommended for Vietnam collections.

- John R. Valley, Siena Coll. Lib., Loudonville, N.Y.

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Review

"In Sam Johnson, patriotism, smarts, guts and humor are combined. The best actor to play his roll in a movie would be Jimmy Stewart at age 40. His book about Alcatraz will provide major insights on the Vietnam experience." --Sen. Jeremiah A. Denton, Rear Admiral USN (Ret.)

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From the Inside Flap

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experience". -- Jeremiah A. Denton, Rear Admiral USN (Ret.)

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