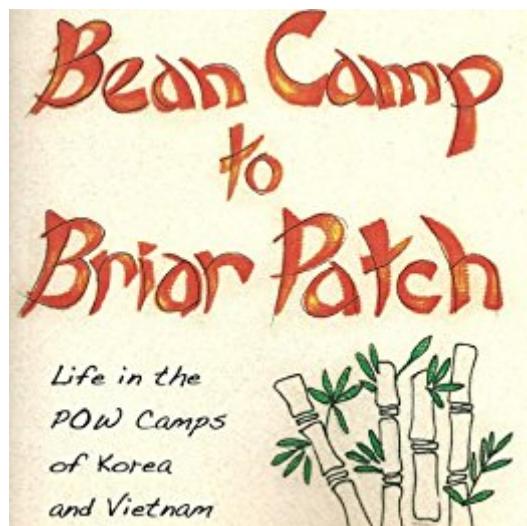


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Bean Camp To Briar Patch-Life In The POW Camps Of Korea And Vietnam



Synopsis

Bean Camp to Briar Patch details the life of American POWs during the Korean and Vietnam wars. Conditions in the camps are explained along with how the POWs coped with those conditions. Maps are included and for some camps names of the men (and women) held there are listed. Detailed histories of each of the main camps from both wars are given. Almost half of the POWs died from cold and starvation the first winter in Korea. The dead were stripped of clothing so the living could stay warm. Men were so weak they died while digging in the frozen ground to bury their buddies. In Vietnam the POWs endured extreme isolation. Some went years without seeing another American face to face. They were tortured to the point death was near, then were revived to be tortured again. They had to compete with the rats for their food. Americans know nothing about our POWs in Korea. Some recognize the name of the Hanoi Hilton from Vietnam, but know almost nothing about what happened to the men held there. This book will change that. The book was named Grand Prize winner in the 2013 Great Midwest Book Festival, a Silver Medal winner for Reference in the 2013 Stars and Flags Book Festival, a Finalist for Military History in the 2013 USA Best Book Awards, a Finalist for Military Non-Fiction in the 2014 National Indie Excellence Awards, Winner for History in the 2014 Pacific Book Awards, and Winner for Non-Fiction in the 2014 Best Indie Book Awards.

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Customer Reviews

The author answers questions I've had since 1950 when I began high school, with names, dates and details of daily life of our POWs in Korea. Those young men were entering a much different system of education than I, forced to sign peace petitions and make recordings against the USA and to "learn the truth" from Communist material. A system I knew nothing about. POWs were worked, lectured, beaten, tortured, and literally starved to death by North Koreans and Chinese instructors, under unbearable conditions. I had no idea then. Now some 60 years later Bean Camp to Briar Patch helps me to finally understand. I was too young for Korea; back surgery in 1960 may have kept me from Vietnam, perhaps being a statistic at Briar Patch. In this book the details of life in the POW camps changed my perceptions of Vietnam. At the time antiwar apologists at home made our POWs seem like the enemy. Now I can see how brave and strong they had to be to just make it through each day and resist their captors. That our POWs were in both North and South Vietnam is just one of the many revelations to be discovered in Bean Camp to Briar Patch. Take the time to learn the many others.

Life in concentration camps is an inherently difficult subject to write about, because the hardships of it are so severe as to be almost incomprehensible to those who haven't been through them personally -- no written or spoken words can suffice to convey the terrible suffering, and no matter how an author tries to do this, a normal reaction from an unprepared reader would be, "It ain't real, man". That said, John N. Powers has done a very good job in describing the awful conditions in Korean and Vietnamese POW camps: his book "Bean Camp to Briar Patch" is a well-researched and highly factual account which goes into extensive detail about the prisoners' experience -- the hunger, the disease, the torture, etc. -- while at the same time completely avoiding dramatic hyperbole that might cause reactions of disbelief among the audience. In fact, after reading this book, one can get a good idea of what the POWs had to endure while being held in those camps, and also understand why so few of them actively resisted -- not for lack of willpower or moral strength, as is the common misconception, but because they were severely weakened by malnutrition and disease, and in many cases subjected to unendurable torture (especially in the North Vietnamese camps). In conclusion, this book is a must-read for anyone doing serious research into the POW experience during the Korean and Vietnam wars, and especially for those who want to gain not just factual knowledge but a deeper understanding of what our people had

gone through while being held prisoner during these two conflicts. If there's a way to honor them and their sacrifice, this book is it!

John Powers has done an excellent job in collating and documenting a fascinating but little known portion of our military history. In his book Bean Camp to Briar Patch, he has provided the reader a perfect sized analysis of the prisoner of war camps run by North Korea and later by the North Vietnamese and the Viet Cong during the respective wars against their brothers to the south. While Powers' focus is on those camps where Americans were held, he did make note if any of our allies were also held prisoner at the same camps. Unlike other books, this book doesn't look at the exploits and experiences of one or two people. Rather, it's a study of the camps themselves, and what life was like in them. This is definitely a must read for scholars of military history.

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