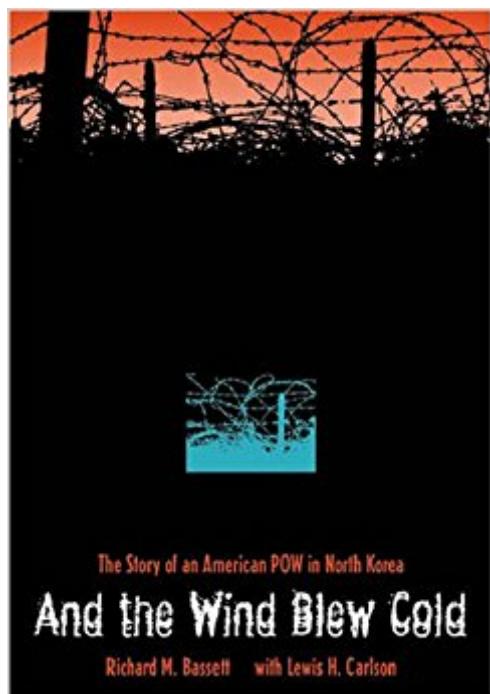


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And The Wind Blew Cold: The Story Of An American POW In North Korea



Synopsis

A first-person account of the day-to-day struggles of an American held captive in North Korea. October 6, 1951. Richard Bassett remembers the day vividly. That was the day his platoon ran into an ambush near Kumwha. During the firefight many were wounded, four were killed, and Bassett, along with three others, was captured. During a month-long march to the POW camp the Americans frequently came under friendly fire. Surviving the march paled in comparison to what the captured soldiers had to endure at Camp-5-Pyokdong. Frostbite, dysentery, jaundice, and mental breakdowns dwindled their numbers. Starvation and squalid conditions took their toll on Bassett during his 21-month incarceration. Yet he pledged to himself that if anyone were to walk out of this camp alive, it would be him. When Richard Bassett returned from Korea on convalescent leave in 1953, he set down his experiences in training, combat, and captivity. Then he put the memoir away and tried to forget. More than twenty years later, hospitalized for acute Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, he once again faced his personal demons. Expanding the memoir to include his postwar struggles with the U.S. government and his own wounded psyche, the resulting comprehensive account is published here for the first time. Bassett captures in plain language and vivid detail those days of his captivity. He describes the shock of capture and ensuing long march to Pyokdong, North Korea, Camp 5 on the Yellow River, where many prisoners died of untreated wounds, disease, hunger, paralyzing cold, and brutal mistreatment in the bitter winter of 1950-51. He recounts Chinese attempts to mentally break down prisoners in order to exploit them for propaganda. Bassett takes the reader through typical days in a prisoner's life, discussing food, clothing, shelter, and work; the struggle against unremitting boredom; religious, social, and recreational diversions; and even those moments of terror when all seemed lost. Bassett's story is important to general audiences and scholars alike because it has not counterpart in the literature of the Korean War. And the Wind Blew Cold refutes Cold War-era propaganda that often unfairly characterized POWs as brainwashed victims or even traitors who lacked the grit that Americans expected of their brave sons. Bassett concludes his memoir with a candid discussion of the war's aftermath, his battle with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, harassment by a government eager to impugn the loyalty of repatriated POWs, and his long struggle with the Veterans Administration to receive compensation for enduring physical and mental scars. This book will fascinate anyone interested in the Korean War era, in captivity tales, and in the resilience of the human spirit.

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Customer Reviews

Richard M. Bassett received a B.S. and M.S. from Florida State University. Before retiring in 1989 he was a high school social studies teacher.

It is refreshing to read a first person account of his experiences as a POW which is characterised by "telling it as it was". It is also noteworthy that there was an absence of bitterness towards his captors. His Christian faith was also significant in the book and it came through as something that sustained him throughout his captivity. His story also tends to strengthen the perception that veterans from the Korean war (as with the Vietnam War) were not treated as well as they should have been by the US Government. There was an initial warm welcome of the returning POWs but a less than satisfactory acknowledgement by the Government of the effects of their internment.

I bought this book to learn how the POWs were treated and what they did to them. I never knew my biological Dad who I do have most of his medals who did fight in Korea. He had lost some of them and I know he wanted me to have them. I have heard so many stories what the abuse the soldiers were subjected to. I can relate with them as I have been told in the book by just releasing them and sending them home. It is so sad we did not know what Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome is or how it affects people. I now understand why he never came around and was a wonderer-hobo. Oh how I really enjoyed the book for it was a good learning lesson. I liked the way the author goes into detail painting the picture and puts you in the middle of it without going overboard. It is well written and enjoyed reading.....Lets not forget " The Forgotten War"

This was a good book based on a true story of a man who finds himself fighting in one of the most horrific wars of our time. He is captured by the Chinese and becomes a POW for over 2 years. This writing gives a good description of what a POW to the North Korean and Chinese was like for our men. He includes information on his last great battle during that War; his capture, the death march, the 1/2 way camp in Suan called The Mining Camp, and his long imprisonment as a POW. As this author points out, most of our troops were good men doing the best they could to survive and abide the oaths they had taken as members of our military. Read this and look for others books like it based on this topic. Remember that each soldiers story is unique in his own. But again, who should know this story better than those who were the fighting soldiers and captured POWs?

After hearing about , and seeing the Author, Richard Bassett , on PBS , I realized,that I knew him long ago as , a fine teenager from a wonderful family..It was the first book I put on my Kindle Christmas present ! Never have I read anything that gives a more complete understanding of the day by day horrid ordeal of our brave P.O.W.s ! The description of the lives lived by them is so remarkably remembered, one feels as though they were there with them.. This should be read by all, to deepen the regard we already feel towards our military ,the debt we owe to them , and especially to those who gave so very much.!God bless them all, and God bless the U.S.A..

This is a must read if you want to understand the POW experience in the Korean War. Bassett gives a very detailed account of the conditions at Camp 5, a major camp holding thousands of prisoners. He describes the day to day life-food, housing, clothing, medical care, and more. He also explains a part of the Korean POW experience most people know nothing about. The Chinese put extreme pressure on the prisoners to re-think their entire outlook on life. The POWs were to learn "the glories of communism" whether they wanted to or not. Bassett explains these efforts to re-educate the POWs and how the POWs fought back. He also discusses how the efforts by the POWs to resist the Chinese attempts to change their thinking led to senseless investigations of many returned POWs by the FBI. While giving a detailed and thorough explanation of his experiences Bassett points out he was captured long after the majority of POW deaths occurred. He explains how conditions at Camp 5 in the year prior to his capture led to the death of half of the prisoners held there. And the Wind Blew Cold will help you understand the horrific experience of our POWs in Korea. By trying to understand what they endured we honor those who sacrificed so much.

There is so much those of us who have never experienced the deprivation of our freedom can learn

from former POW's such as Mr. Bassett. When I studied Americanism vs Communism at St. Augustine high School in 1969, I had no idea what this quiet kind teacher had suffered for our country.

Excellent to read if you want to know about the daily lives of the POWs in Camp #5 in the Korean War.

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