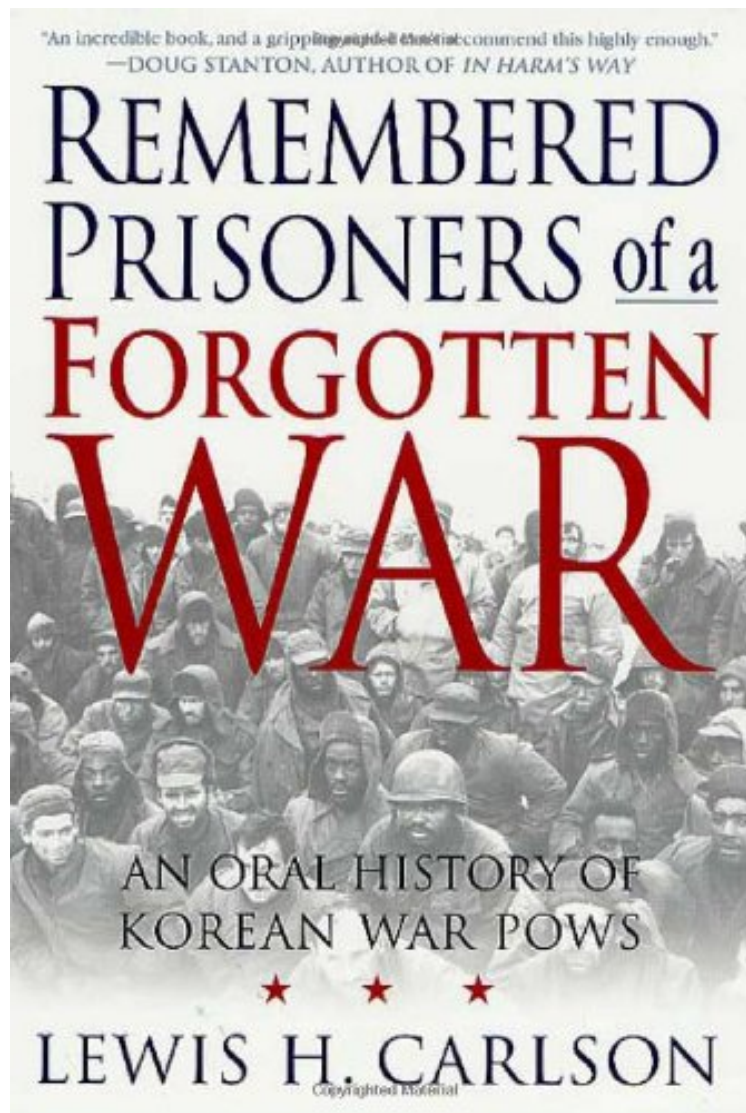


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Remembered Prisoners of a Forgotten War: An Oral History of Korean War POWs

Lewis H. Carlson

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Lewis H. Carlson : Remembered Prisoners of a Forgotten War: An Oral History of Korean War POWs before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Remembered Prisoners of a Forgotten War: An Oral History of Korean War POWs:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A gut wrenching story and long overdue.By ApuleiusIn the epilogue of Eric Hammel's "Chosin: Heroic Ordeal of the Korean War," we are left with the beginning journey of a Marine's

three year captivity as a POW (the Marines had blown the bridge without knowing they left some of their men behind). Wanting to learn the details of such captivity from veterans who actually experienced it, I began reading Mr. Carlson's book. I was not disappointed. But soon I was shocked to learn how terribly so many of the military POWs were treated upon their release. It is within this context that I truly came to feel a sense of bitterness myself. Mr. Carlson's research is well documented, both from the individual veteran's experience (indeed, the men speak for themselves) as well as from a sociological perspective. It was difficult getting through some of the book's passages, but then such were the atrocities and savagery they experienced. And so in this sense too the book is honest. Harsh but honest. The book ends with a brief bio on each of the key witnesses and survivors, and I thought this was an excellent way to show how these brave men (and their often caring wives or children) chose to deal with life despite all the horrific challenges that the Korean War, POW camps and the (too often than not) disrespectful treatment at worst, forgetful at best, this nation gave to its fighting men.

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. The Enlightening Truth By Jerri Garofalo This is a must read, especially now that we are in the middle of another unpopular war. If you want to know the way things really were for the POWs of the Korean War, read this book and the words of the POW soldiers who were there. Lewis Carlson's interviews and research are exemplary, spellbinding, sometimes graphic, and always reminding us, what price our freedom is purchased at. His depiction of war is real, not this stuff we often see in movies. We read about real men who have their own lives and feelings. Yet, soldiers who went off to war for different reasons. Some didn't want to go, but they did. They had all been trained to duty, honor, obey, and country, and in their own words their "honor," shines through. When you start to feel a little sorry for yourself, this is the book to pick up and you will soon forget all your troubles. Imagine, never knowing when your captors might decide to make an example of you and put a bullet in your head, or if you might get thrown in the freezing cell for 30 days. Ask yourself, could you survive on a cup of partially cooked millet a day? Learn how men depend on each other and yet have to survive as one. All this just scratches the surfaces of what Carlson is able to share. Are you aware that there are some who still believe that our POWs were willing collaborators with the enemy and turned Communist and make a bad name for those who gave up so much. The truth is plainly and truthfully laid out in these pages by the men who endured being beaten, terrorized, starved, froze nearly to death, riddled with disease or war wounds yet never given medical care, because there was none. Many died, yet many also came home and in the pages of this book you can read their honest story. How many of us have heard their stories in the 50 years since that war? After all their suffering of the most horrible atrocities imaginable, witnessing the deaths of their brothers, and then for these men to finally get to come home at the end of the war, did America welcome them home? did we hug them and help to put them back on their feet? No! First each was sorely interrogated as a war criminal. Then most if not all had great difficulty getting a job and were socially scared. For years they were still secretly under surveillance and some were further interrogated over and over again. All this, despite their innocence. Why, you may ask? That is a good question. You owe it to yourself, to learn the real truth and to be enlightened. I think this is one of the best historical books I have read in years. Let us not forget this war any longer nor the men who fought in it. Jerri Garofalo

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. It all comes back after sixty years of trying to forget By Daniel H. Oldewage I thought the author did a fine job of portraying the lives of the Korean P.O.W.s. I feel very qualified to make that statement since I spent over 2 1/2 years as one of them. It brought back many memories. Sadly, the American press and much of the public had misconceptions of how we prisoners acted. Some of the bravest and most honorable people I have known in my 88 years were prisoners..

The Korean War POW remains the most maligned victim of all American wars. For nearly half a century, the media, general public, and even scholars have described hundreds of these prisoners as "brainwashed" victims who uncharacteristically caved in to their Communist captors or, even worse, as turncoats who betrayed their fellow soldiers. In either case, these boys apparently lacked the "right stuff" required of our brave sons. Here, at long last, is a chance to hear the true story of these courageous men in their own words-- a story that, until now, has gone largely untold. Dr. Carlson debunks many of the popular myths of Korean War POWs in this devastating oral history that's as compelling and moving as it is informative. From the Tiger Death March to the paranoia here at home, Korean POWs suffered injustices on a scale few can comprehend. More than 40 percent of the 7,140 Americans taken prisoner died in captivity, and as haunting tales of the survivors unfold, it becomes clear that the goal of these men was simply to survive under the most terrible conditions. Each survivor's story is a unique and personal experience, from missionary teacher Larry Zeller's imprisonment in the death cells of P'yongyang and his first encounter with the infamous killer known as The Tiger, to Rubin Townsend's daring escape from a death march by jumping off a bridge in a blinding snowstorm. From capture to forced marches, isolation, permanent camps, and torture, *Remembered Prisoners of a Forgotten War* is one of the most fascinating and disturbing books on the Korean War in years-- and a brutally honest account of the Korean POW experience, in the survivors' own words.

From Publishers Weekly Carlson's *We Were Each Other's Prisoners* was an oral history of WWII POWs; he returns to that form here, offering a well-researched account of the experience of American POWs and a few Western civilians

captured by Communist forces during the Korean War. The many first-hand accounts here meld into a chronological narrative via Carlson's annotations and analysis that place reports of atrocities (such as death marches and mass executions) into a historical context. Typical aspects of prisoner-of-war life such as diet, mail as punishment or reward, "guard-baiting" and reprisal are offset by accounts of starvation, indoctrination, brutal executions and collaboration. The testimony's directness is potent: "When they got through shooting, they came around and stepped on everybody and pounded on them with their rifle butts." Postwar effects of incarceration on the former prisoners and their families are detailed; the wives emerge as heroes, pushing their husbands to treatment, enduring their nightmares and working to resocialize them. Carlson wrote the book, he notes, to counter popular misconceptions about Korean War POWs he feels were perpetuated by *The Manchurian Candidate* book and film (wherein a POW is brainwashed and sent to kill the U.S. president) and other Cold War cultural fallout. While the book is probably too weighted toward testimony to find general readers, buffs and survivors will take it to heart. (Apr. 2)Forecast: The significant percentage of African-American soldiers on the book's cover could broaden its appeal for browsers, but its description of the difficulties faced by soldiers specifically identified as black is limited. An academic marketing campaign targets what will probably be the book's largest audience. Copyright 2002 Cahners Business Information, Inc. From Library Journal

Of the 7,140 Americans who were taken prisoner during the Korean War, about 40 percent died in captivity. Oddly, Korean War prisoners were not treated as heroes; instead, the popular press seemed to regard them at the time, and for some years afterward, as brainwashed turncoats or weaklings. Carlson (*We Were Each Other's Prisoners: An Oral History of World War II*) here argues that an America affected by the Red Menace and McCarthyism chose to blame the victims. He attempts to correct the misperception by demonstrating that the main causes of POW mortality were starvation, lack of medical treatment, and execution by their captors, using the voices of surviving prisoners as evidence. The narratives of the prisoners themselves are remarkable for their forthrightness and matter-of-fact tone. In many cases, the men's survival, under conditions of extreme privation, torture, and psychological pressure, is nothing short of amazing. This book will fit well into subject collections and should be buttressed with mainstream narrative histories. Edwin B. Burgess, U.S. Army Combined Arms Research Lib., Fort Leavenworth, KS Copyright 2002 Cahners Business Information, Inc. "Remembered Prisoners of a Forgotten War is an incredible book, and a gripping read. I can't recommend this highly enough because it tells us all that we've forgotten and often never knew about our fathers, grandfathers, uncles, and brothers who served in a war that was as chilling and challenging and life-changing as any war anywhere. These men deserve to be heard-- and we need to hear them as we navigate in these times of our own. Lewis Carlson has done a great deed in letting these men speak-- for the first time-- for themselves."--Doug Stanton, New York Times bestselling author of *In Harm's Way* "Lewis Carlson gives voice to the vital human story from a pivotal American war, through men who first suffered cruelties at the enemy's hands and then abuse from their own society. *Remembered Prisoners of a Forgotten War* is a harrowing story, powerfully told, a triumph for truth in the historical fog called Korea."--Charles J. Hanley, Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist and co-author of *The Bridge at No Gun Ri* "The most vivid and thorough account of the Korean War POW ever published. An astounding journey through America's worst and most important POW experience."--Lieutenant Colonel Elliott Gruner, U.S. Army, Associate Professor of English, USMA, and author of *Prisoners of Culture: Representing the Vietnam POW*