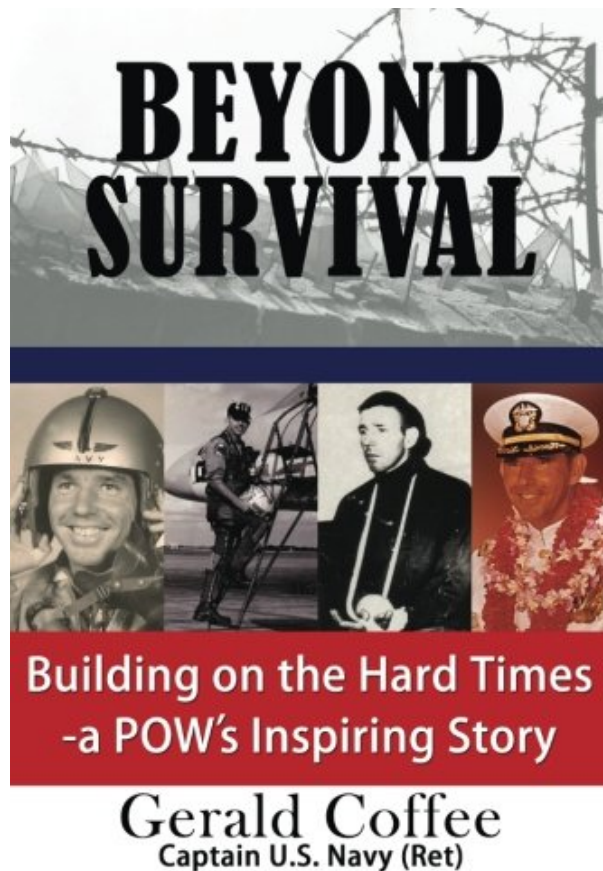


**BEYOND SURVIVAL: BUILDING ON THE
HARD TIMES - A POW'S INSPIRING STORY
BY GERALD COFFEE**



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BEYOND SURVIVAL



Building on the Hard Times
-a POW's Inspiring Story

Gerald Coffee
Captain U.S. Navy (Ret)

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Review

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When life loses its meaning, when suddenly the world is turned upside down, when there's nothing left that resembles life as we've known it, where do we find the strength and sustenance to go on? For naval aviator Jerry Coffee and others who were held as prisoners of war in North Vietnam, there was only one choice: to go within.

Beyond Survival is a journey into the invincible human spirit that unites heart and mind in a compelling and unforgettable experience. Drawing from his seven years as a POW, Captain Coffee provides timeless lessons that apply to the physical, emotional, and ethical challenges of everyday life. Proving that leadership and creativity are possible in difficult and uncertain circumstances, Captain Coffee offers a message we can draw on in any trying situation. His story demonstrates that conviction must come from within, and in telling that story he touches the place inside of us where growth begins.

Beyond Survival is a positive statement about love and commitment in the midst of war and division. It contrasts the cold reality of war, degradation, and torture with the warmth of human connections, inner serenity, and kinship with all of life. It poignantly illustrates that to be stripped of everything that is familiar and by which we identify ourselves leaves us with only what unites us - our human identity. It conveys truths about relationships at every level - with ourselves, with others, with our country, and with our God.

Without inflaming the wounds inflicted by America's involvement in Vietnam, Beyond Survival explores an issue at the heart of every free society: the willingness of ordinary individuals to maintain a passion for freedom so compelling that adversity strengthens rather than weakens personal resolve in the worst of circumstances. Through Gerald Coffee's story you will discover the universal principles of survival and triumph that empower anyone to overcome adversity.

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Most helpful customer reviews

7 of 7 people found the following review helpful.

This book didn't only Change my life, it Saved my life!!

By Casey A. Landeros

As a three time combat veteran struggling with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, I believe that "Beyond Survival" is a MUST READ!! In my darkest hours, Captain Coffee's book has consoled me, validated my feelings, moved me to action, and made me 'count my blessings.' Captain Coffee takes you inside of the Vietnamese Prisons where he was held captive and tortured. Despite all odds, he managed to overcome the pain, loneliness, hunger, fear, and humiliation of being a POW for SEVEN YEARS! Captain Coffee describes every bit of his experience in painstaking detail and grips the reader with his honesty and sincerity. This book will touch your heart and humble you.

Gerald Coffee is a Fighter, and has remained a true patriot, and my real-life Hero. He continues to INSPIRE others as a keynote speaker.

Grateful living and humility have helped me through some of my toughest times. I've never been much of a 'reader,' but while I was going through Virtual Reality Gradual Exposure Therapy, my doctor recommended BEYOND SURVIVAL. When I picked it up, I could not put it down.

Thank you, Captain Coffee, for having the bravery to serve our country, and to share your experience with us afterward.

Beyond Survival didn't only Change my life, it Saved my life.

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful.

Goes above and beyond in chronicling the power of the human spirit!

By Jada A. Washington

We like to think of military members as superheroes. In combat, they are subjected to horrors that the average civilian would be ill-equipped to handle. Some service members succumb in battle, offering the ultimate sacrifice for their country. Others suffer from injuries that may be debilitating in nature, yet seem to awaken in them a warrior spirit ready to meet their new challenges. Many return home unscathed. These are the superheroes of war combat.

Then, there are the POWs. These aren't superheroes. These are infidels, criminals, evildoers, scum, and

every other bad guy name their captors can think of. POWs come face-to-face with the villains, and are subjected to a cruelty that most of us wouldn't wish on our worst enemies. They can be held captive for years, leaving loved ones back home hopeful and fearful at the same time. Not all survive. But, some manage to stay alive long enough for release. Then, they emerge as free women and men. Again, they are our superheroes. However, they'll be quick to tell you there's nothing heroic in being a POW. And there's no one better to explain this than Captain Gerald Coffee (USN, Retired).

Captain Coffee brilliantly portrays his time at a Vietnamese prison camp in his autobiography, *Beyond Survival*. His commitment to detail makes a gripping narrative that shows the reality of a POW camp. Like many service members, the Captain was duped into believing that the international laws of armed conflict would protect him in enemy hands. Hollywood didn't do Captain Coffee any favors either. The author says, "My concept of such a camp was based partly upon the Hollywood versions that I had seen in movies such as *Stalag 17*, *The Great Escape*, or the TV serial *Hogan's Heroes*." What he experienced was a world where food, clothing, shelter, and medical treatment were all used as tools of reward or punishment. And, not even one second of life was promised. Through it all, Captain Coffee exhibited a level of perseverance and longevity mostly seen in those fellows and gals wearing tights and capes—superheroes. Even with his self-defeats, readers will see small victories in his ability to stay alive. By the end of the book, it will be obvious why this former Navy officer continues to be an inspiration.

If this person could endure the physical and mental anguish of his ordeal victoriously, there's hope that there's a little superhero in all us as we face overwhelming challenges in life. As a Veteran, I'm honored to have read this story.

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful.

An amazing story that brought tears to my eyes more than once

By Beverly Clark

My brother served in the Korean War and I learned first-hand what our soldiers endured and the pain and heartbreak that those at home went through.

When the Vietnam War began I recall thinking how once again our brothers, husbands and fathers would be subjected to things we couldn't imagine in our wildest dreams.

When I came across author Captain Gerald Coffee's book, I wanted to read it. As many people of my generation know, Captain Coffee was shot down during a combat mission over North Vietnam. He was held a prisoner for 7 years in what soon became known as the Hanoi Hilton – a sordid, inhumane holding pen for prisoners of war.

Captain Coffee graciously takes us into Vietnam and into his seven years of containment. This book truly is a book that shows us all the strength of the human spirit and goodness outweighing evil.

You'll read about his almost escape in the beginning and the condition of his surrounding as well as the mindset of his captors. Eventually placed in a cell that was all of 3 feet by 7 feet, Captain Coffee describes in detail his ordeal. Thinking it will be a short stint of maybe a few months, his ordeal lasts over 7 years.

If you're like me, over and over again, you'll be amazed at how much the human spirit can endure.

If you're like me you'll probably be shaking your head more than once when you read what our US soldiers endured.

Captain Coffee walks us through the ordeals and his upbeat spirit shines throughout the story. The book also contains a great assortment of photos including some taken during his imprisonment.

There are many, many moments that brought tears to my eyes and I can't imagine actually experiencing them firsthand as Captain Coffee did.

This is a great read and a must gift for anyone with a love of history. I think this book is also a must read for younger generations who may not have even been born when the Vietnam War took place.

See all 80 customer reviews...

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