



## Five Years to Freedom: The True Story of a Vietnam POW

*James N. Rowe*

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## **Five Years to Freedom: The True Story of a Vietnam POW** James N. Rowe

When Green Beret Lieutenant James N. Rowe was captured in 1963 in Vietnam, his life became more than a matter of staying alive.

In a Vietcong POW camp, Rowe endured beri-beri, dysentery, and tropical fungus diseases. He suffered grueling psychological and physical torment. He experienced the loneliness and frustration of watching his friends die. And he struggled every day to maintain faith in himself as a soldier and in his country as it appeared to be turning against him.

His survival is testimony to the disciplined human spirit.

His story is gripping.

*From the Paperback edition.*

## **Five Years to Freedom: The True Story of a Vietnam POW Details**

Date : Published March 9th 2011 by Presidio Press (first published June 1st 1971)

ISBN :

Author : James N. Rowe

Format : Kindle Edition 478 pages

Genre : History, War, Military Fiction, Nonfiction, Biography, Military, Military History

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## From Reader Review Five Years to Freedom: The True Story of a Vietnam POW for online ebook

### Christine Rothrock says

This was a book that made me realize how much a human can go through physically, mentally, and emotionally. Captured by the Vietnamese in 1963, this soldier was a POW for 5yrs. Even though they never physically beat him, they would take away cloths, food, or his mosquito net as punishment. He spent 5yrs having dysentery and a fungus that covered him from neck to foot and made his fingernails and toenails fall off. He was severely malnourished, living on a diet of rice and salt with very little fish. He often would get beri beri. I could not deal with that myself and probably would have died of infection. Really, really good book!

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### Robert F. says

#### Astonishing

I rarely give books five star ratings. Many of my reads have gotten 4 stars because they were well written and about subjects that I am interested in.

This book goes beyond being interesting. It is superbly written, much of it in first person. The author takes us back to 1962, he a young Army Officer, Special Forces. It is Vietnam. But this is not an action packed military thriller, nor an analysis of how, why or should we have been there, though those issues are covered in some respects.

The author was captured deep in South Vietnam's Delta region and kept as a POW for five years. He skillfully takes you along with him on what can only be described as a horrible journey into the innermost region of his being. You will feel the sting of the mosquitoes bite, the itch and burn of skin fungus, the despair of being among people who look upon you as disposable but have to tolerate your presence for their own special agenda.

This is neither an easy nor short read, yet I read it almost straight thru in a couple of days. Even though you know he lived because you are reading his book, you keep expecting him to report his own demise, and he almost does.

Compelling, astounding and probably written to help dispel demons of survival and struggle in impossible circumstances that would drive lesser beings to suicide or madness.

Don't pass this one up!

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### Zach says

A riveting account of a man who went through hell and survived. This book chronicles the events leading up to and his eventual capture by the Viet Cong. It gives an account of his interactions with his captors, fellow prisoners, and how he was able to survive even when there was no reason to keep on hoping.

What made this book so captivating was that the author did not hold back in his account, and told the tale even when it was obviously painful to remember and recite the most horrible moments. Seeing friends die, experiencing torture from his captors, and living with debilitating illness from time to time are just a few of these things.

I was left with a sense of admiration and awe after finishing this book. Nick Rowe embodied the word hero.

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### **J.willy says**

I will start off by highly recommending this book. I bought the book off the shelf in a truck stop. I was hoping it wasn't about John McCain. I had never heard of James N. Rowe. After getting through the first chapter, and learning about the firefight and capture I was completely hooked. I ended up reading the book in 2 days.

After getting about halfway through, I thought that I would write Col. Rowe a letter telling my thoughts. I discovered that this book was in reprint from 1970's, and Col. Rowe had been assassinated. That broke my heart.

Read this book. If you want to know what communists say in indoctrinations, this book will explain it to you.

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### **Dan Rabbia says**

Five Years to Freedom is the most intense, emotionally-exhausting book I have ever read. I can't imagine going through what Rowe went through... reading about it was hard enough. The fact that he was able to remember everything so vividly and then put it into words is incredible. From the time he entered Vietnam with his Special Forces Group, to his capture and details about each year as POW, Rowe really makes you feel like you were there. The amount of physical and psychological abuse that he went through is probably enough to break a human in just a few months. Seeing other POWs suffer and die, having a case of dysentery for nearly all 5 years, having his mosquito net taken away at night from time to time, and only being given rice for each meal made the experience a living nightmare that never seemed to end. This book is a step up in intensity from Laura Hillenbrand's Unbroken, and is eye-opening in showing what the conditions in Vietnam were like for POWs. Although exhausting and difficult to read at some parts, it is a phenomenal book that anybody interested in the military and/or history should read!

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### **Terri says**

A not to be forgotten account by James 'Nick' Rowe. A US Green Beret captured in Vietnam and held for 5 years under the toughest of conditions.

The reader will find that most of this book is designated to his ordeal with a small amount at the beginning on his training and his readying himself for the mission and subsequent capture, then at the end his escape and return to the US. The majority of the book is a very detailed retelling of his time with the Viet Cong as a prisoner of war.

Sometimes it can be draining reading such high detail for so long, but it is an important book that anyone

interested in POW history, War history or most especially a humans ability to survive under elevated levels of deprivation and starvation, should read.

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### **Joy says**

Forget the history books - this is the way that we should learn history, from those who lived it. Anyone who reads this book will never forget it.

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### **Jeanie says**

AWESOME book! I highly recommend this to anyone who has an interest in Vietnam or war stories or just stories of amazing survival. It is very readable and gives a lot of background into the Vietnam culture and the politics of the war. The man kept a diary throughout his captivity and it showed an interesting side to the indoctrination/policies of the Vietnam people.

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### **Melissa T says**

This one rivaled Unbroken for me. Though this prisoner-of-war was not "physically" tortured (technically), the mental anguish they put him through was horrifying. And that was added to the deplorable physical conditions they kept him in. I was amazed at how he managed to keep his sanity and sense of reasoning throughout those five years.

I must say, though, that if you're offended by language, this is not the book for you! The author does not censor the language he or other soldiers used, and they swore as much as you'd expect from a bunch of prisoners of war.

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### **Bob Mayer says**

A classic story of true courage, especially poignant as tomorrow is Memorial Day. I remember when they brought Nick Rowe back on active duty to start up the SERE-- survival, evasion, resistance and escape course at Camp Mackall-- which would be renamed in his honor. If you want to understand true bravery, read this book.

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### **Dawn Michelle says**

It is tough to review this book and do it justice; how do you write a review about a book that describes in horrifying detail what one man went through at the hands of oppressors? How do you write about those horrors without sounding trite [as you sit in your warm house, enjoying the very things he went without for 5 years]? You don't.

Nick Rowe was a hero. He survived a horrific ordeal and never lost his faith in God and faith in his country;

even while being barraged with lies being told to him almost daily. He did his very best to keep the men he was held captive with alive [and sometimes failed], and then kept himself alive when he was the only one left. He was daring and brave and amazing. Reading this book was one of the hardest things I have ever done, but I am so glad that I had the opportunity to do so. To read about this man and his courage and determination in the face of evil was awe-inspiring.

I highly recommend this book; yes, it is a tough read and there will be moments where you will want to give up [trust me, I did quite a bit. It took a lot to keep going at some moments], and there will definitely be tears, but it will be worth it. You will come out of it totally inspired.

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### **Mike says**

An incredible story... there are many like this out there, but it was Rowe's account that got the Army to start training people in Survival, Evasion, Resistance and Escape. This is virtually a textbook in SERE training..

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### **Tommy Stubblefield says**

Another great read. LTC Rowe is an American hero. RIP

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### **Chrissy says**

I don't know what to say about this book other than Read It! The experiences this man went through as a POW for five years, and the fact that he was able to keep surviving is a testament to his character and human resolve in the face of adversity. If you think you're going through hardships and life is so tough on you, this book will put things into perspective. I can imagine it was difficult for the author to put all these things on paper and relive the experiences while writing, but it is to the benefit of the American people (and others as well) that he has.

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### **Tasha says**

[ I was saddened to learn that he was killed in the late 80s while on a military assignment. So sad to have endured so much to have been killed by the 'enemy'. However, it sounds

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