



Performance of American POWs in the Vietnam War : Adequate Training or Creative Leadership?

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When looking at the extraordinary circumstances our American prisoners of war faced in North Vietnam, were these men trained in such a way that they knew exactly what to do? Can a training environment adequately duplicate the horrendous conditions these men faced? This research project intends to show that no amount of training could have fully prepared these airmen for the grueling captivity they faced as POWs in North Vietnam, but rather it was their heroism, innovation, imagination, and professional character that cause us to hold them in such high esteem. First, the research focuses on the protections afforded POWs by the Geneva Convention of 1949 and the training servicemen received immediately prior to and during the Vietnam War regarding the Fighting Mans Code of Conduct and other vital areas of POW camp survival. The research focuses on the roles of religion communication ingenuity and imagination and organization and leadership in understanding exactly what the POWs experienced and if their training prepared them in these areas. Lastly, the research looks at the immediate aftermath of the Vietnam War and what recommendations were made at the time to increase the effectiveness of service preparation.

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