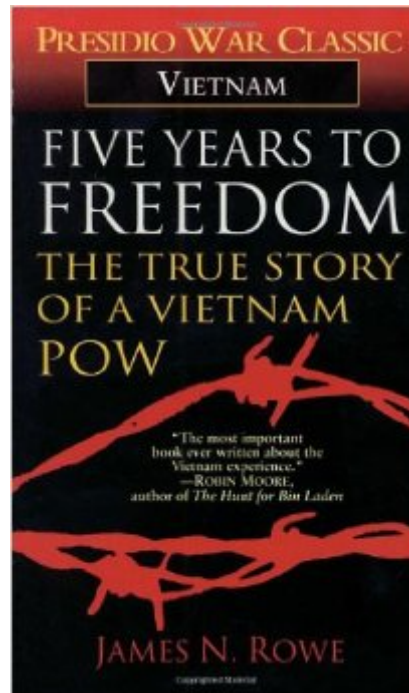


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# Five Years To Freedom: The True Story Of A Vietnam POW



## Synopsis

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.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Special Forces Lieutenant James N. Rowe was sent to Vietnam in 1963 as an advisor with the Military Assistance and Advisory Group (MAAG) to help train the South Vietnamese army. Early on in his tour, Rowe was captured by the Vietcong during a harrowing fire fight and became a prisoner of war for 5 horrible years. Held deep in Southern Vietnam, Lieutenant Rowe would be confined in bamboo cages with no protection from the elements and suffered continuous bouts of dysentery, beri-beri, and fungus infections throughout his confinement. Medical care was practically non-existent and only became available when it suited his captors needs and whims. During the initial years of captivity, Rowe would be confined with other Americans at his camp. He and other POW's would be witness to 3 fellow soldiers starving to death while the Vietcong offered no useful assistance to help save lives. Subjected to years of political indoctrination from camp cadre and propaganda from Hanoi radio broadcasts, Rowe was psychologically tormented and abused. Adding to his further misery was that remaining American captives being held with him were

released after 4 years leaving him completely alone and isolated for the remainder of his incarceration. After several unsuccessful escape attempts, Rowe finally succeeded in evading his captors in late 1968 and was rescued after signalling an American helicopter. *Five Years to Freedom* is a very graphic account of jungle captivity and all the horrors associated with it. This book is also a story of incredible courage, strength, endurance, and bravery. Very well written and inspirational, this book is perhaps one of the finest accounts of POW captivity ever written.

Nick Rowe was already a giant among special operations soldiers when I had him as an instructor in Special Forces in 1982. Every page of his book only serves to demonstrate that which he would never claim - Nick Rowe is an American hero of the model few can match. Read the book to understand what character, courage and a will to live really mean. Years later, in the late 1980s, Nick Rowe autographed my copy of his book. I recall telling him how remarkable I found his story. His response, without batting an eye - "sure hate to have to research it again." There, in a nutshell is Nick Rowe, and the kind of wit that kept him alive. Get a copy of this book and read it. Then remember him every time you see the American Flag. Remember this man, James N. (Nick) Rowe died three weeks before Memorial Day, 1989, at a time this country enjoyed peace, and tell me tears do not come to your eyes.

I remember reading this book when I was in high school. Now, almost a quarter century later, I STILL remember this book. I'm buying another copy, as time has ravaged my original copy. This book really helps put life in perspective. Our concerns pale in comparison. It also gives me the deepest respect for those who were POW's as well as those who have borne the brunt of war. People such as these are the true heroes of our time.

I remember watching an interview with COL Rowe about his time as a POW and was amazed by his story and will to survive when most would have give up. Recently, I read John McCain's book and was inspired by his story as a POW and decided to research other POW memoirs. In doing so, I was happy to discover COL Rowe's book and amazed that it hasn't become more mainstream reading. It is one of the most important books I've ever read - it shows us all that we can conquer any obstacle with the power of will and courage. - COL Rowe is an example to us all for his will, courage and patriotism. - Several years ago I found his grave at Arlington National Cemetary and have visted several times since. The following poem was etched on his gravestone and is something that I immediately memorized and have used in my own life to bolster the necessary

courage and optimism to survive the struggles that life sometimes hands us. I only wish I could thank COL Rowe for his words that helped me in a very dark chapter of my life. - "So look up ahead at times to come, Despair is not for us; We have a world and more to see, While this remains behind" -J.N. Rowe, 1964

James Rowe represents exactly what it means to be an American. He battled with disease, starvation, and the most inhuman abuse that can be imagined, yet he remembered the cause he was fighting for even when it appeared his own nation had turned its back on that cause. James Rowe witnessed first hand the effects of communism on a nation and its people. For him, the enemy was well defined. We were fighting those who attempted to deprive people of human rights and basic freedoms that Americans back home were taking for granted. Before I read his book, I didn't have a grasp on what it meant to be free. I know now that we as Americans must stand up for the freedoms afforded us by our constitution. We can't allow the corruption of government. Some may say that there is nothing worth fighting for but they would certainly change their ideas if they had gone through what James Rowe went through. There are things that are things worth fighting for. James Rowe understood this and never strayed from his beliefs even through years of attempted indoctrination. When reading his detailed accounts of the suffering inflicted on him by his captors, tears came to my eyes many times. It was inspiring at the same time to see the strength of the human spirit carry him through times of trial. And through it all, he remained true to himself and his country. He deserves all of our gratitude. I recommend this book to every American. Let's not choose the cynical or pessimistic view of our government. Let's protect it!

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