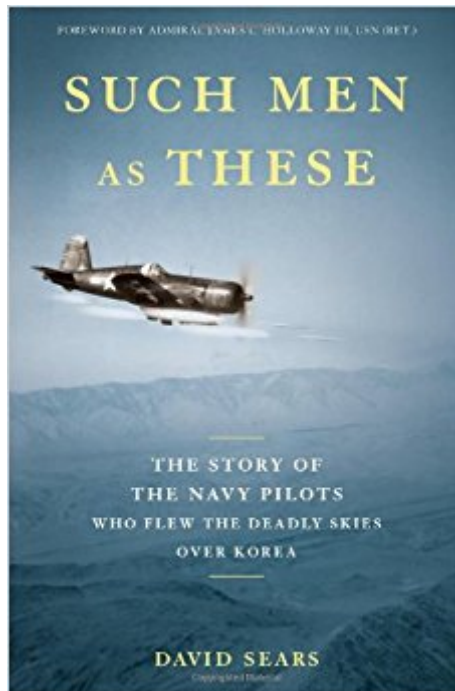


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Such Men As These: The Story Of The Navy Pilots Who Flew The Deadly Skies Over Korea



Synopsis

In 1951, James Michener went to Korea to report on a little known aspect of America's stalemated war: navy aviators. His research inspired novel about these pilots became an overnight bestseller and, perhaps, the most widely read book ever written about aerial combat. Using Michener's notes, author David Sears tracked down the actual pilots to tell their riveting, true-life stories. From the icy, windswept decks of aircraft carriers, they penetrated treacherous mountain terrain to strike heavily defended dams, bridges, and tunnels, where well entrenched Communist anti-aircraft gunners waited to shoot them down. Many of these men became air combat legends, and one, Neil Armstrong, the first astronaut to walk on the moon. Such Men As These brims with action-packed accounts of combat and unforgettable portraits of the pilots whose skill and sacrifice made epic history.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The background for this well written book comes of course from The Korean War, a 'police action' never declared a war by Congress but most people refer to it as a 'war' all the same. Built into this background is the work that James A. Michener did while spending time aboard both aircraft carriers and planes collecting datum during the war prior to his writing the book The Bridges at Toko-ri. Later from his writings came two Hollywood movies, Men of the Fighting Lady and The Bridges at Toko-ri. The movies and the book were well received (even to this day) both by the United States Navy and the reading and viewing public. Late in his career Michener stated that he felt the best book he had ever written was The Bridges at Toko-ri. I purchased a copy of this new book by Mr. Sears primarily

for two reasons: I hold an honorable discharge from the United States Navy during the Vietnam era and I have been a lifelong fan of James Albert Michener. I have to agree with author Michener for I too feel The Bridges at Toko-ri represent his best work. Short, concise, but with a realism that jumps both off the page and movie screen. Similar things can also be said for Mr. Sears' new book, with title SUCH MEN AS THESE, having its genesis with Michener's book, The Bridges at Toko-ri. Of all the contents of Michener's book, the words "Where did we get such men?" spoken by Admiral Tarrant have always been ingrained in my memory. SUCH MEN AS THESE is written by an ex-Navy officer, not an aviator, but we will not hold that against him! SUCH MEN AS THESE is a very fine book on many levels due to its offering several aspects of history, in addition to describing these mostly citizen pilots, abruptly, some would say unfairly, called back to active duty to become heroic combat pilots.

This being the 60th anniversary of the outbreak of war in Korea, David Sears' marvelous account of the combat missions flown by USN aviators in the 'Forgotten War' is especially welcome. Comparatively few books have been written on NavAir over Korea. Sears' wide-ranging, incisive and well-written account will take pride of place in the books on that long-ago 'police action.' SUCH MEN AS THESE is far more than a 'yank-and-bank' account of missions flown by the Navy's carrier-based aviators from 1950 to 1953. Sears begins his story in the 1940s, detailing the Navy's tremendous growth followed by huge postwar cuts in personnel and ships, bruising inter-service fights between the Navy and USAF and the development of the Cold War. Neil Armstrong, Jesse Brown, Joe Akagi and other eager naval cadets undergoing training in the mid-1940s saw their hopes of combat (against the Japanese) derailed by war's end yet persevered and eventually found the combat they were seeking over the Korean peninsula. Sears also interweaves the postwar development of jet aircraft and their often-troubled deployment to American carriers in his narrative. Lastly, he traces James Michener's Korean War-reporting efforts and how he came to write the classic war novel THE BRIDGES OF TOKO-RI. Sears is a gifted writer. SUCH MEN AS THESE flows effortlessly, interweaving the various plot threads into a seamless whole. Sears' book is a very thorough account of NavAir circa 1940-1953, Sears lingering briefly to discuss some sidebar topic, battlefield development or personality before returning to the main narrative thread. He does a fine job of describing carrier ops off the Korean peninsula.

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