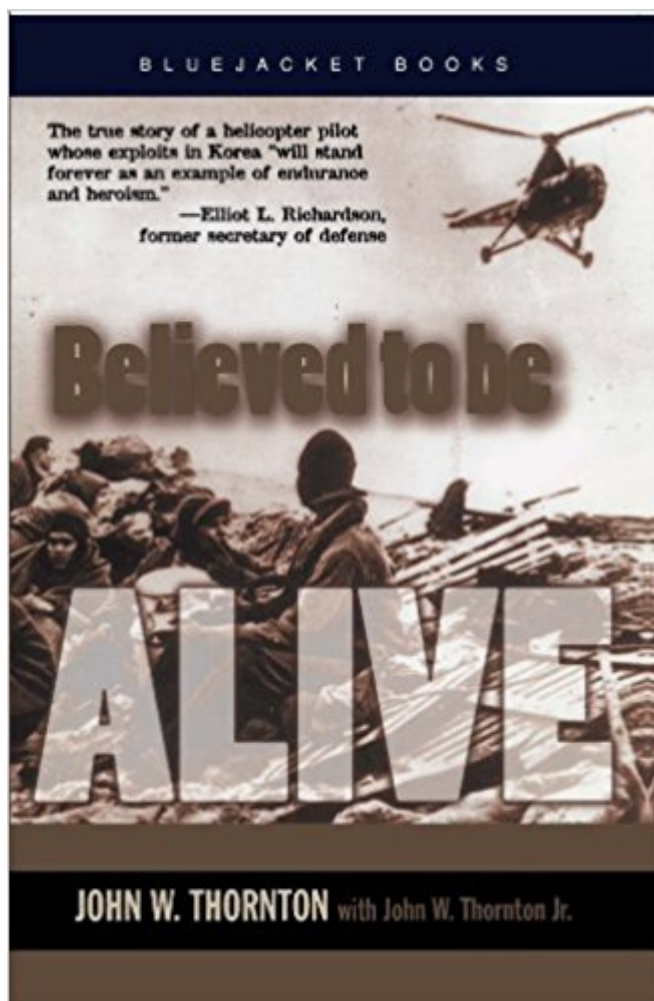


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# Believed To Be Alive (Bluejacket Books)



## Synopsis

On March 31, 1951, a young Navy helicopter pilot, Lt.(jg) John W. Thornton volunteered for a dangerous mission to rescue a key intelligence unit trapped on a high ridge behind enemy lines in Korea. Although he wrecked his craft while attempting to land on a small clearing atop the ridge, he immediately directed other helicopters to the scene to evacuate the marooned personnel. Thornton's resourcefulness was credited with saving the lives of three men who possessed vital intelligence, and his courage and selfless devotion to duty he gallantly refused to be rescued himself despite rapidly advancing hostile forces--won him the Navy Cross. This firsthand account of his exploits that day and during the following three years he spent in captivity tell a tale of courage, cruelty, and compassion. His descriptions of combat are blood chilling, and his account of brainwashing is revealing and not without humor. With a foreword by Edwin P. Hoyt and first published in 1981, the book has earned high praise and brought Thornton's experiences to the attention of many Americans. Now back in print after 23 years, it promises to attract new generations wanting to know more about the Korean war and its often overlooked heroes.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

John W. Thornton, a retired captain in the U.S. Navy who died in January 2004, was the first Navy helicopter pilot to be shot down and taken prisoner in the history of aviation. In addition to the Navy Cross, he earned nearly thirty other medals and citations.

I became familiar with Thornton's POW experience when I heard a taped interview of his two and half years in North Korea. He is quite a story teller, very colorful.. When I learned that he had written this book, I had to read it. It is true to all the stories he told of his captivity in the taped interview. His treatment by the North Koreans was a test of any man's temperament. Thornton vividly describes how he and other prisoners dealt with their treatment while in captivity. He displayed a high degree of tenacity, faith and above all humor in dealing with his captors. make one wonder how I would have behaved. His experience contributed much to the survival training doctrine adopted by the armed forces and subsequently no doubt helped other POW's like John McCain when he was held in Vietnam. The book's co-author is his son John Thornton, Jr. but nowhere is their any mention of his contribution to this work. I enjoyed reading it probably because I heard the tapes. The book has limited appeal to a broad audience.

I met the author years ago and had never read his book. Since the book is out of print, I ordered a used one. Thanks.

Amazing read!

I could identify with the principal person in the story. I would recommend to anyone that served in Korea or was around during that time.

I can't believe no one has written a review for this book. It's outstanding. It's a first person account of being a POW in the Korean War. This is a phenomenal BOOK! He's a helicopter pilot that gets shoot down. He's a great American and stop reading my dumb review and order this book so you can read something great!

My late father, Marvin E. King, was a P.O.W. in Camp 2 with Jim Thornton and could not say enough good things about this man, his incredible character, his sense of humor and his inspirational courage. My dad and I read this book together about 10 years or so ago (I think it was published with a different cover at that time). I would ask him, "Is this part really true?" and my dad would say, "Yep, every word." There are some funny stories but some horrifically tragic ones that are hidden partially in the subtlety of the language. Read this book, you won't regret it.

From the cover: "This is a first-hand account of a navy (helicopter) pilot's heroic exploits in combat

and captivity amid terror, torture and violent death. The place: Korea. The time: 1950-1953."Thornton was shot down following a rescue mission behind enemy lines, and not freed until three years later. His personal sacrifice allowed three men with vital intelligence to be evacuated.272 pages.

Great book. My Dad went to flight school with him and flew with him. They reunited in their 70's .  
Great man

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