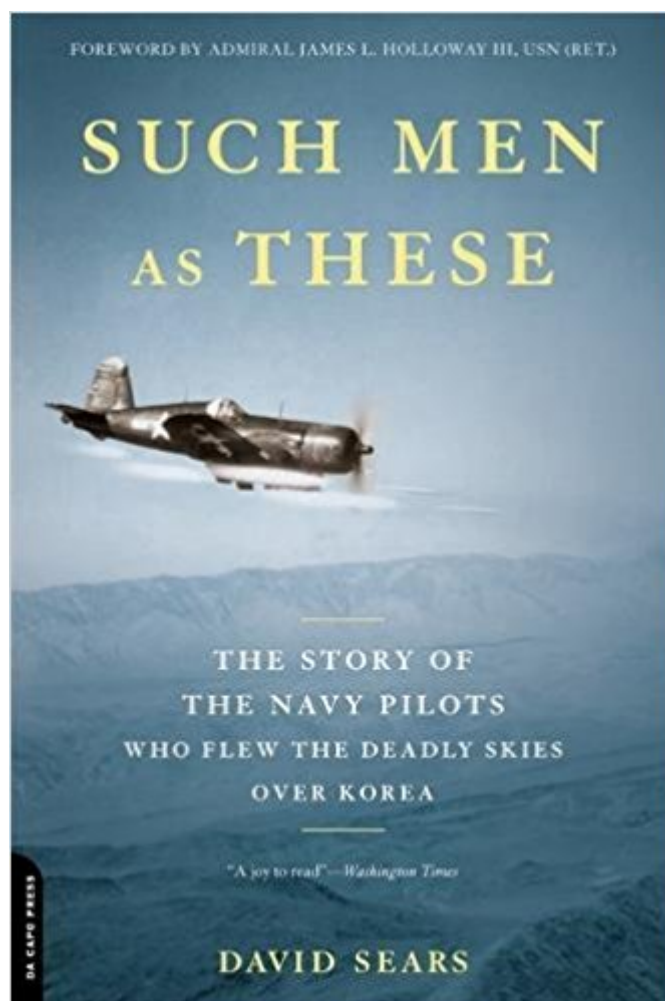


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# Such Men As These: The Story Of The Navy Pilots Who Flew The Deadly Skies Over Korea



## 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, bestselling novel became 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 stories. The result, *Such Men As These*, brims with action-packed accounts of combat, from the icy, windswept decks of aircraft carriers to the treacherous skies over Korea, while providing unforgettable portraits of the pilots whose skill and sacrifice made epic history.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Few aspects of the ostensibly forgotten Korean War are more so than the role naval aviation played in it. About all most who have heard of it comes from James Michener's *The Bridges at Toko-Ri* (1953). Sears covers the writing of that novel, also the rest of the navy's air war over and around Korea, which included the first use of carrier-based jets (for which of the era weren't ideal), the last hurrah of the F4U Corsair, and the Golden Age of the AD Skyraider. Naval aviation deployment stretched from almost the first days of the war to battles with Russian MiGs off Vladivostok toward its end. Close support was invaluable, but interdiction involved fighting lots of low-tech, well-defended transportation links with high-tech, vulnerable aircraft, which proved to be a foretaste of Vietnam. Eminently readable, this volume breaks new ground on the Korean War and naval aviation. --Roland Green --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Smithsonian Air & Space magazine, July 2011; A valuable study of the culture and conduct of the naval air war over North Korea; A fitting addition not only to the literature of the Korean War, but also to the literature emerging in this, the centennial year of U.S. naval aviation. —Collected Miscellany, 7/8/11; A great tribute to the U.S. Navy pilots who flew in the 'Forgotten War.' —Michigan War Studies Review, 5/16/14; The author has done a service to both students and veterans of the Korean War; Sears's account poignantly proves that the pilots faced missions as perilous as those of any infantryman. The narrative places readers in the cockpit, feeling the sensations and stress of aerial combat; Present-day military personnel will find in Such Men As These much that is instructive regarding wartime leadership and the resilience and courage of men fighting a war to which the American public paid little attention. —

This was a really great book that covered an interesting bit of history, which is why it should be 3.5 and maybe pushing 3.9 on the star rating system. There are a few downers, first is the huge cast of people the author introduces, which you lose track of who is who after the author spent some chapters development on their background. While a couple of folks mentioned in the opening, some famous aviators and astronauts get passing mentions later in the book. Then the biggest fault is the lack of maps. The mention of towns, airfields and operating areas were prolific in the book; but without good maps you could be anywhere when the stories of pilot rescue or survival were mentioned. No frame of reference as to how dangerous an aircraft that has seconds to stay aloft is when the description of a town could place you over Trenton on the way to Philadelphia or deep over the mountains and the nearest civilization is a week hike south. So the lack of maps really frustrated me in reading this book. Finally, what kept it from being a four star was the typos. From names being misspelled in one paragraph and spelt right the next down to some designation of aircraft or units that were done right and wrong multiple times on the same page. That said this is a good book that tries to humanize the air war over Korea from the men who flew off the USN carriers. Most of them were reservists who either just missed being in WW2 or had served and when the post WW2 drawdown occurred wanted to keep flying but couldn't on active duty. If you are a history buff and have read anything of Naval Aviation after WW2 then some of these stories you have heard. From the Jesse L. Brown story and his wingman Tom Hudner who crash lands in the same mountains to save the first black aviator, to the use of torpedoes against a dam that the Chinese controlled, to the attempts to bomb the rail and roads and starve the Communist armies. Intermixed in these stories is the arrival of Michener an author of note who was working as a newspaper

correspondent and spent almost a year on the Navy carriers getting stories. Some of which would form the bones of the novel Michener would later write. Also, mixed in this was the history of the Korean War. It's a good book if only to make more readable and accessible some of the stories that history buffs and drier history tomes have told of the U.S. Navy and its Naval Aviators over the skies of Korea. This book really humanized those folks stuck with both jets and props as the planes they would fly in those skies.

I found "Men Such as These" to be very well-written. However, as a member of fighter squadron VF-72, an F9F Panther jet squadron in CVG-7 aboard the BON HOMME RICHARD CV-31, Task Force 77, I was disappointed that there was no mention at all of our 7 month tour off Korea operating out of Yokosuka, Japan. Our ship and the CVG-7 squadrons played a significant role in naval operations during the war. BON HOMME RICHARD departed San Diego on 10 May for the Far East. She joined TF-77 off Korea on 29 May and launched her first air strikes 31 May. BON HOMME RICHARD continued operations with TF 77 until 20 November 1951. The carrier reached San Diego in mid-December 1951 and on 20 May 1952 was off again to the Far East. She joined TF 77 once more on 23 June 1952 and took part in the heavy strikes against the North Korean power complex (24-25 June) and the amphibious feint at Kojo (12-16 October). She continued operations against North Korean targets until 18 December 1952 and then steamed to San Francisco where she arrived 8 January 1953. Her classification was changed from CV 31 to CVA 31, 1 October 1952. Despite this omission, I would recommend this book to anyone interested in the history of naval aviation in Korea.

This is an excellent and well researched short history of the carrier war in Korea, targeted mainly, as is most Korean War history, at the first brutal, terribly desperate year of the war. It tells the stories of a group of very brave men pulled from their peacetime lives to fly mostly obsolete WWII aircraft pulled from mothballs off WWII aircraft carriers into one of the harshest environments they had ever experienced. My dad was there on the Carrier USS Leyte in the fall and winter of 1950 (I was in the first grade and didn't understand it at all) and I've always been interested in the war stories he would never tell. He took the loss of each of those pilots personally. You'll find buried here the real story of the "Bridges at Toko-Ri", a Michener tale that, as with most of Michener's work, wasn't far from the tragic truth. It's a great book and I give it 5 stars. It has a prominent place in my military history collection.

This record of historical events during the Korean War was researched painstakingly. It was interestingly written like a serialized novel, with two different but related stories being partially told sequentially. As a participant of 103 combat missions from the carriers USS Valley Forge CV-45 and USS Essex CV-9 from 3 July 1950 to 4 March 1952, Mr. Sears' descriptions of the winter weather hazards, and our pilot losses, brought back stark, unpleasant memories to me. Highly recommended for those seeking accurate history of both Naval air and Marine and Army combat operations.

A half century later this book makes a number of important points about the Korean War. First, of course, is the main theme of the book to provide some insight into the skill and courage of naval aviators in just getting on and off air craft carriers. But the bonus points, as I see it, are descriptions of enemy anti-aircraft attacks, the difficulty in hitting railroad and tunnel targets, the experiences of POW's, the helicopter rescue missions and the two year drag-out of the so called Peace Talks. The only two criticisms I have is what was probably the editor's break off in the middle of a description of one of the many unfolding dramas; and the unnecessary references to numbers and letters of certain aircraft. Finally, it was interesting to read about James Michener whom the author obviously greatly admired...

This book is a real story about the real pilots during the Korean and world II, My father is in the book, hard to find, only get through , and What it was like in real life. In one part of the book Hollywood did not give the truth, about to pilots that were killed by Korean were not, my father Saved them, and his crew. The Hollywood movie had then killed to make the people mad. When I heard about it and finding out my dad saved their life

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