



No Ordinary Joes: The Extraordinary True Story of Four Submariners in War and Love and Life

Larry Colton

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On April 23, 1943, the seventy-man crew of the USS *Grenadier* scrambled to save their submarine—and themselves—after a Japanese aerial torpedo sent it crashing to the ocean floor. Miraculously, the men were able to bring the sub back to the surface, only to be captured by the Japanese.

No Ordinary Joes tells the harrowing story of four of the *Grenadier*'s crew: Bob Palmer of Medford, Oregon; Chuck Vervalin of Dundee, New York; Tim McCoy of Dallas, Texas; and Gordy Cox of Yakima, Washington. All were enlistees from families that struggled through the Great Depression. The lure of service and duty to country were not their primary motivations—they were more compelled by the promise of a job that provided “three hots and a cot” and a steady paycheck. On the day they were captured, all four were still teenagers.

Together, the men faced unimaginable brutality at the hands of their captors in a prisoner of war camp. With no training in how to respond in the face of relentless interrogations and with less than a cup of rice per day for sustenance, each man created his own strategy for survival. When the liberation finally came, all four anticipated a triumphant homecoming to waiting families, loved ones, and wives, but instead were forced to find a new kind of strength as they struggled to resume their lives in a world that had given them up for dead, and with the aftershocks of an experience that haunted and colored the rest of their days.

Author Larry Colton brings the lives of these four “ordinary” heroes into brilliant focus. Theirs is a story of tragedy and courage, romance and war, loss and endurance, failure and redemption. With a scope both panoramic and disarmingly intimate, *No Ordinary Joes* is a powerful look at the atrocities of war, the reality of its aftermath, and the restorative power of love.

From the Hardcover edition.



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