



Alcatraz Screw: My Years as a Guard in America's Most Notorious Prison

George H. Gregory

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Alcatraz Screw is a firsthand account from a prison guard's perspective of some of the most storied years at the infamous U.S. Penitentiary at Alcatraz. George Gregory began his career as a guard for the Federal Bureau of Prisons in 1940. Following his training, he was sent to the federal prison at Sandstone, Minnesota. A few years later he enlisted in the Marine Corps. Badly wounded at Iwo Jima, he returned to Sandstone after a long rehabilitation. When the Bureau of Prisons closed Sandstone in 1947, Gregory was transferred to Alcatraz, which had been a federal penitentiary since 1934.

For the next fifteen years, Gregory worked on "The Rock." He takes the reader along on a correctional officer's tour of duty, showing what it was like to pull a lonely, tedious night of sentry duty in the Road Tower, or witness illicit transactions in the clothing room, or forcibly quell a riot in the cell blocks. Gregory provides an insider's account of the tenures of all four of Alcatraz's wardens and their sometimes contradictory approaches to administering the institution. He knew and regularly interacted with such legendary inmates as Robert Stroud (the Birdman of Alcatraz) and George "Machine Gun" Kelly.

Without glamorizing or demonizing either the staff or the convicts, *Alcatraz Screw* provides a candid portrayal of corruption, drug abuse, and sexual practices, as well as efforts at reform and unrecorded acts of kindness. Various incidents in the memoir convey the fear, hatred, frustration, boredom, and unavoidable tension of being incarcerated. With the inclusion of maps and diagrams of Alcatraz Island, as well as photographs of inmates, officers, and the prison itself, this book offers insight into life at the notorious Alcatraz from an unprecedented perspective.

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