



Born in Modesto, California, **Gerald “Jerry” Coffee** joined the Navy in 1957 after graduating from UCLA with a Bachelor of Arts degree.

In 1962, during the Cuban Missile Crisis as an F-8 Crusader pilot, Jerry was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for flying low level reconnaissance missions over Cuba, taking the photos ultimately used by the United States U.N. ambassador to prove the existence of Soviet missiles there. He was featured in the 2007 History Channel series *The Man, The Moment, and the Machine* recounting his photo recon exploits during that dangerous time in U.S. history. His daring mission is also documented in Michael Dobb’s book (p. 119), *One Minute to Midnight Kennedy, Khrushchev, and Castro on the Brink of Nuclear War...* (2008 Alfred A. Knopf Publishing).

In February of 1966, while flying combat missions over North Vietnam, his RA5-C reconnaissance jet was downed by enemy fire. He parachuted safely but was captured immediately. For the next seven years he was held as a POW in the Communist prisons of North Vietnam. After his repatriation in February, 1973, Jerry returned to operational duties. He retired from active duty in the Navy after 28 years of service.

His military decorations include the Silver Star, two awards of the Legion of Merit, the Distinguished Flying Cross, two Bronze Stars, the Air Medal, two Purple Hearts, and the Vietnam Service Medal with 13 stars.

For the past 20 years, Captain Gerald Coffee, has been considered one of the nation’s top speakers, addressing thousands each year across a broad spectrum of corporate America and to international groups as well.

In his message of going beyond survival, Jerry draws not only from insights derived ...

Gerald Coffee

Speech Topics

- Virtual Keynotes
- Teambuilding
- Resilience
- Overcoming Adversity
- Military
- Leadership



Testimonials

"Captain Coffee's was the last speaker of the program. He received a standing ovation and I believe even got a few folks choked up. It was extremely inspirational."

- Salomon Smith Barney.

"The fact that you were willing to participate in a variety of activities throughout our conference enabled out attendees to interface with you individually... remembered long after the memories of the event fade away."

- Cal-Air, Inc..