

# INSIDE CAMP DAVID

THE PRIVATE WORLD of the PRESIDENTIAL RETREAT



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*Michael Giorgione*

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**Inside Camp David: The Private World of the Presidential Retreat** Michael Giorgione  
**The first-ever insider account, timed to the 75th anniversary of Camp David**

Never before have the gates of Camp David been opened to the public. Intensely private and completely secluded, the president's personal campground is situated deep in the woods, up miles of unmarked roads that are practically invisible to the untrained eye. Now, for the first time, we are allowed to travel along the mountain route and directly into the fascinating and intimate complex of rustic residential cabins, wildlife trails, and athletic courses that make up the presidential family room.

For seventy-five years, Camp David has served as the president's private retreat. A home away from the hustle and bustle of Washington, this historic site is the ideal place for the First Family to relax, unwind, and, perhaps most important, escape from the incessant gaze of the media and the public. It has hosted decades of family gatherings for thirteen presidents, from Franklin D. Roosevelt to Barack Obama, including holiday celebrations, reunions, and even a wedding. But more than just a weekend getaway, Camp David has also been the site of private meetings and high-level summits with foreign leaders to foster diplomacy.

Former Camp David commander Rear Admiral Michael Giorgione, CEC, USN (Ret.), takes us deep into this enigmatic and revered sanctuary. Combining fascinating first-person anecdotes of the presidents and their families with storied history and interviews with commanders both past and present, he reveals the intimate connection felt by the First Families with this historic retreat.

## Inside Camp David: The Private World of the Presidential Retreat Details

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# **From Reader Review Inside Camp David: The Private World of the Presidential Retreat for online ebook**

## **Kelly Frager says**

Living a short 45 minutes from Camp David, I've always been intrigued by the secrecy and privacy of it. Michael Giorgione gives a fascinating inside account of the Camp, its' significance, and what it is like to have the honor of serving as CO of this presidential retreat. I particularly enjoyed his perspective of what it was like for his family to be part of Camp David for their two years of service. A truly interesting read and highly recommended!

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## **Susen says**

I found this book interesting. The author spoke eloquently about his job, his surroundings and the people and families he served.

The part that struck me as odd was at the conclusion of the book, the author made it a point to say he did not show favoritism toward the people/families attending Camp David but he plainly did, as indicated through his descriptions and anecdotes.

This is not a criticism but simply an observation.

I still enjoyed this book.

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## **Mary Jane says**

Interesting peek into the world of our Presidents when they're not under constant scrutiny.

Views taken from this:

Both Bush families appreciated the folks who worked there - and were constant in the shown gratitude.

Presidents enjoy the same "banal" recreation that us common folks do - bowling, movies, fishing, horseshoes...

Very important meetings took place at this retreat.

Being the President brings its own unique type of loneliness - no matter how many people surround them.

Most presidents worshiped on Sundays.

Fun read.

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## **Mary Lou says**

I really loved this book, for many reasons: the history; the voyeurism; the author's extraordinary ability to write about some of the world's most high-profile political figures without giving an inkling as to his own political leanings (astounding!); and more. Rear Admiral Giorgione takes his readers into a world that few get to experience, and a physical space that makes me crazy with envy.

Lots of surprises here (there's a *gift shop* at Camp David?), and I learned quite a bit. Giorgione did the impossible - he was actually able to humanize certain figures and, as an affectionate observer, helps his reader to get just a tiny idea of the magnitude of being the POTUS, and all the stress that involves. I was brought to tears several times, especially when Giorgione wrote about those moments in which the presidents themselves were humbled by the weight of their office.

Giorgione was told not to let his hat size change over the course of his time at Camp David, and it seems apparent that it didn't. He obviously remembers his command there fondly, and was not jaded by the experience. Giorgione still recognizes what a privilege it was to serve in this special place, and have the opportunity to give his wife and children these extraordinary memories, as well.

Full disclosure -- I have lived much of my life in the shadows of the Catoctin Mountains, and intimately know the town of Thurmont, the Cozy, etc., so my enthusiasm for the topic may be more than that of the average reader. I removed one star with this in mind, as well as for Giorgione's writing -- while the stories were fascinating and the prose was very easy to read, the text was somewhat scattered, and there was a bit of redundancy. And, of course, there are so many stories that didn't make the cut -- [Inside Camp David](#) just whet my appetite and made me want more.

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### **Margaret Sankey says**

Written by Giorgione, who was Camp David's CO (and how the Navy runs a mountaintop Presidential retreat is part of the story), this is a behind the scenes view of how the property operates day to day--deicing the pool deck, dealing with Presidential pets, how CO's children meet the school bus, updates to the plumbing (LBJ wanted very high pressure shower heads, and he wanted them NOW), gracious gestures and weather hazards. Giorgione had access to decades of military families who lived at Camp David, and folds their memories into a respectful view of a private world Presidents and their families rely on to relax and preserve their privacy while in the most visible job in the world.

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### **Mandy says**

I would have enjoyed this portrait of Camp David by one of its former commanding officers much more if it hadn't been quite so sycophantic. Respect for the President is one thing, fawning admiration quite another and it got on my nerves. However, that quibble apart, the book achieves admirably what it sets out to do -- gives an insider's view of the Presidential retreat and of the Presidents who have stayed there. What seems clear is that it is indeed a valuable retreat for each incumbent, and each President leaves his mark on it. It's an eminently readable, gossipy (although always reverential) account of life in this iconic residence and a fascinating behind the scenes exploration.

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### **Ann says**

This was a good read. I've always been fascinated by the private lives of presidents and their families. I know the Bush's loved Camp David and I was glad to read about their stays. It seems the Trump administration has been in the news for using it for a diplomatic meeting place. It was fascinating to learn how the property is protected and maintained and how it has been upgraded and changed over the years. It seems authentic and

well written by military personnel that have been stationed there over the years. I'd definitely recommend this title to non-fiction readers.

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### **Gregg says**

It was a complete surprise to me when I learned I have crossed paths with someone in this book. I'll never be able to go so this book is the closest I'll get.

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### **Nan says**

What an excellent book! I have always been fascinated by Camp David, but never knew much about it. I knew about where it is located. Now I realize how many times I have driven by it. This is a well-written account of the Navy Officers who have served as Camp Commanders and the Presidents they served from the establishment of Camp David to present day. The author writes about the families, the prominent events, the daily routine of running this base, the actual facility, etc. it is not political nor partisan. Thanks to my husband for finding it and recommending it to me. I am happy to pass along that recommendation.

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### **James Crabtree says**

Not knowing much about Camp David, this book was a real eye-opener for me. Giorgione talks about the history of the place as well as the role the presidential retreat has played for each administration. Giorgione was in charge of the facility during part of the Clinton and George W. Bush years but he supplements his first-hand knowledge of the place with memories gleaned from other people who ran Camp David during the the Obama, George H.W. Bush, Reagan, Ford, Nixon, Kennedy, Eisenhower and FDR. In addition to being a place for the President "to get away from it all" Camp David has also served as a place for bringing key leaders together to discuss their differences. It includes photos.

Received this book as part of a Goodreads Giveaway.

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### **CL says**

**ARC received from:** Netgalley

**Rating:** ????

**One-Sentence Summary:** An insight into what goes on in the exclusive Presidential Retreat

**Review:** If you have ever been interested to find out what Presidents are really like as people once you take away all the grandstanding and politics then this is the book for you.

At Camp David, Presidents are more relaxed than at the White House and get a chance to show their true personalities. This book is written and researched by a former CO of Camp David who worked there at the time of Clinton and Bush's presidencies but he also includes a lot of stories from the archives/other COs to showcase vignettes from all the Presidents that stayed at Camp David.

I thoroughly enjoyed reading this and seeing what some of the most famous people in the world are really like out of the media spotlight.

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### **Holly says**

Fascinating glimpse into the rarefied air at Camp David. Actually, a very down-to-earth view of what it's like to live and work at Camp David and also hosting the most important people in the world. It really makes the presidential escape come to life. Anecdotes about the different presidential experiences are heartwarming and create a very humanistic portrayal of them. To response to one reviewer, yes, there is some fawning which I could have done without, but overall it was a fun view and a enjoyable light read.

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### **Mark Bacon says**

I'm surprised so many people give this book five stars here and on Amazon. Yes there are some interesting insights about Camp David, some tidbits about the presidents who rested there and details of the camp's construction and facilities. But all this information could be digested into a lengthy magazine article without omitting any crucial details. Much of the book reads like the "Life in the United States" vignettes from Reader's Digest. Interesting but without depth. A few times of crises at the camp parallel our last 75-years of history. Light reading.

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### **Amy says**

An interesting history about Camp David, told from the points of view of the camp (this IS a military installation) CO's from over the years.

This book is written by the man who was Camp Commander from June 1999 to August 2001, so he really does have the inside scoop!

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### **Susan Davenport says**

In the spirit of full disclosure, I know the author, but until I read Inside Camp David I had no idea of his history at the Presidential Retreat. I was glued to this book start to finish and loved getting to know the Presidents and their families through the eyes of the Commander(s). Also, I have to admit that the accounts of the final goodbyes by the Presidents and the Commanders and their families made me a bit teary.

I'm a big fan!

