

**THE SEVENTH ANNUAL HUGH J. CLAUSEN
LECTURE ON LEADERSHIP¹**

COLONEL GEORGE E. "BUD" DAY²

Thank you. Good morning. General and Mrs. Clausen, Colonel Lederer, distinguished guests, fellow lawyers. It's a pleasure to be here and I

1. This is an edited transcript of a lecture delivered by Colonel George E. "Bud" Day to members of the staff and faculty, their distinguished guests, and officers attending the 49th Judge Advocate Officer Graduate Course at The Judge Advocate General's School, U.S. Army, Charlottesville, Virginia, on 26 March 2001. The Clausen Lecture is named in honor of Major General Hugh J. Clausen, who served as The Judge Advocate General, United States Army, from 1981 to 1985 and served over thirty years in the United States Army before retiring in 1985. His distinguished military career included assignments as the Executive Officer of The Judge Advocate General; Staff Judge Advocate, III Corps and Fort Hood; Commander, United States Army Legal Services Agency and Chief Judge, United States Army Court of Military Review; The Assistant Judge Advocate General; and finally, The Judge Advocate General. On his retirement from active duty, General Clausen served for a number of years as the Vice President for Administration and Secretary to the Board of Visitors at Clemson University.

2. United States Air Force (Retired). Colonel Day's military career spanned more than thirty years, during which he excelled in combat in three wars. He joined the Marine Corps in 1942 and served thirty months in the South Pacific as a noncommissioned officer. He received an appointment as a second lieutenant in the National Guard in 1950, and he entered jet pilot training when called to active duty in the Air Force in 1951. He served two tours in the Far East as a fighter-bomber pilot during the Korean War. In 1955 he survived the first "no chute" bailout from a burning jet fighter in England. In April 1967, Colonel Day was assigned to the 31st Tactical Fighter Wing at Tuy Hoa Air Base, Republic of Vietnam. He later moved to Phu Cat Air Base where he organized and became the first commander of the "Misty Super FAC's," an F-100 squadron. Shot down over North Vietnam on 26 August 1967, Colonel Day spent sixty-seven months as a prisoner of war (POW). He was the only POW to escape from prison in North Vietnam and then be recaptured by the Viet Cong in the South. When shot down in 1967, Colonel Day was one of the nation's most experienced jet fighter pilots, with 4500 hours of single-engine jet time and more than 5000 hours of flying time.

Colonel Day holds nearly seventy military decorations and awards, of which more than fifty are for combat, including the Medal of Honor, Distinguished Service Medal, Silver Star, Legion of Merit, Distinguished Flying Cross, Air Medal with nine Oak Leaf Clusters, Bronze Star for Valor with two Oak Leaf Clusters, Bronze Star, and Purple Heart with three Clusters. Colonel Day was also presented Vietnam's highest medal by President Thieu, two Vietnamese Gallantry Crosses, and Vietnamese Wings. He wears twelve Campaign Battle Stars.

Colonel Day is a trial attorney at his law firm in Fort Walton Beach, Florida. In his practice, Colonel Day frequently represents the interests of service members.

want to start out by telling you, I appreciate, as all Americans do, your service. I know, and our country knows, you all have other choices. And I'd just like to see a hand out there. How many lifers are in this group? Way to go! It's been a chilling experience here. I went out to walk this morning, and it was freezing. I hadn't felt temperatures like this since Korea. And leaving Fort Walton Beach was maybe not the greatest idea in the world, because it was about fifty-five degrees when I left down there and getting better.

I wanted to talk in kind of general terms about some of my experiences, and before I get into that, I wanted to talk about the importance of role models. Most of you are older than many of the groups that I have talked to, but I think one of the most significant things that we can do as citizens, is to sort out what kind of a person we're going to be and what kind of a track we're going to follow. And many times, we get to where we get to because of our imitation, hopefully, of a good role model. Certainly, these gentlemen down here in the front are that kind of a model for you. And in my case, I had a lot of problems sorting out who my role model was going to be as a young guy.

I had a great affection, as a young boy, for Charlie Lindbergh, because I can remember, very early in my years, Charlie had just flown the Atlantic. And he was a hero of a dimension we have not seen, probably since that time. The country was absolutely gaga over Lindbergh, a fact that drove him absolutely into seclusion. They worshiped him so much until he got to the point he couldn't stand all that company, which was a pity, because he was an incredible man. As I got a little older, one of my heroes was Franklin Roosevelt, who back during the Depression, came up with some socialistic schemes that kept the country afloat, and got us prepared for World War II. And following him, of course, was Harry Truman. A man who, in his time, was highly maligned. I remember how they desecrated Harry as a shoe clerk and clothing salesman from Kansas City and as a spokesman for the Pendergass gang. Truly, Harry was one of the better men of our times. Winston Churchill is another man for whom I had a fervent admiration. Back during the Battle of Britain and when times were very, very tough, Winnie was famous for saying, "Never, never, never give up." And that was so important in those days, because had anyone fallen during the course of the war, it would have been absolutely different.

As time went by, I learned to admire another great American named Jimmy Doolittle. Perhaps the strangest-named man in all of history, Jimmy was a little guy, smaller than me, probably about five foot, four

inches, an absolutely fantastic aviator. Learned by a Ph.D. in Aeronautics, a brilliant man and a great hero. It was Jimmy that turned the tide in World War II with the launch off the carriers of the B-25s that bombed Tokyo, which turned the morale of the country totally around. He was a marvelous man, and very modest. One of the things that I always admired about him was that he was absolutely candid. He never told any mistruths and he was very careful about how he said things; he was always truthful. And that, as a matter of fact, cost him a fourth star. Jimmy never got to be a four-star until either just before he died or right after he died—I don't recall which—when someone finally said, "It's time to promote this wonderful guy to four-stars."

All of those people have kind of a message, a thread in their life, that's useful for us to adopt. And with that kind of a background, I went to Vietnam in 1967, a very senior aviator. At that time I had about 4500 hours of jet time—fighter time—which was more than any commander in World War II. Talk with any of those famous air leaders and so forth; none of them had that kind of a background. I was, hands down, far more experienced as a major than any of those people had been, going off to war. And that was because of the wonderful training and turnaround in our combat proficiency that had occurred after Korea. And the beautiful part of that was, that when I got to Vietnam, I was ready to go. All I had to do was crank the engine up and check the bomb load and go. And interestingly enough, I dropped a few bombs for the Big Red One while I was in Vietnam. And in fact, I had a poster of a soldier. They gave you a huge poster with a soldier-grunt personified on it. Somehow or another, it was lost in my travels, so I still don't have my "Big Red One," but I remember him well.

When I got there, it was kind of an astonishing experience. The war was going absolutely nowhere. It was as if we transported all our forces over there and said, "go get 'em," but you never got to go get them. And if you would imagine Vietnam as being a peninsula like Florida and put some mountains on the west side, your area of activity was really quite narrow as maybe fifteen or twenty miles wide as you got up in the central part of North Vietnam, and then it widened out as you got up near Hanoi. But down in those southern areas going over into Laos, you had this really narrow operating area. And amazingly, we were fighting their war. They were indigenous, so they were out there milling around in the villages and in the jungle at night. And instead of fighting the war as we had fought World War II in the name of "terminate, do it quick," as you saw in the Gulf

War, there never was the political commitment to get busy and win the war. And as a result, unfortunately, we lost it.

The bottom line was that the soldiers and the marines, and the sailors and the Air Force won their part of the war, but the political part of the war was lost. And, of course, today they are occupied by this Communist apparatus. Well, on August 26, 1967, I had moved up to another job. I had been asked to set up a fast-FAC [Forward Air Controller] operation into North Vietnam. And what that meant was we were supposed to go up and look for lucrative targets and then have some fighter bombers meet us from the fleet or from the bases in Thailand or South Vietnam to go hammer these targets. And basically, what I had available were any of the airplanes off the ships or the F-105's, F-4's, and occasionally some F-100's from South Vietnam and Thailand. I was really skeptical about this business of FAC-ing with a jet because I'd been in the fighter business over in Europe and back in the mid-fifties through about the mid-sixties, and we had literally hundreds of fighters available that had a nuke bomb hung on them. And these were pretty good-sized nukes. Up to about ten mega-ton nukes, which would have dwarfed what happened at Hiroshima or Nagasaki. And in those days, because of the limitation of radar, we low-leveled all the time. So I had literally hundreds of hours down on the deck at fifty feet or sometimes less. A lot of dodging telephone poles and power lines and that sort of stuff. And so the idea was that they'd send me up there and we'd crank up a FAC operation and go up and locate lucrative targets and, theoretically, I'd have all these forces to come up and hammer the targets.

On the morning of August 26, the briefer came in. Then we got geared up and went out to the airplane. I had a wonderful group of young kids, mostly Air Force Academy graduates and captains, low time guys but very gung ho and ready to go to war. And on this morning, I had a young fellow in the front seat, who was getting his first front seat ride. It was going to be a really exciting day. As we were sitting in the airplane getting it bombed up and armed up, an airplane landed which was a stranger, a Saigon airplane. I knew something was up because those planes didn't visit you but very, very rarely. Someone came out to the airplane and brought me a photo of a SAM [surface-to-air missile] site. And this site was the furthest south in North Vietnam that a site had ever been. It was probably roughly forty miles north of the demilitarized zone. I had, just the week before, killed a bunch of SAMs and some other weaponry about another fifty or sixty miles north of there. And my first thought, when I saw this photo, was that it was a flat trap. We'd had several of those built up at various times and they usually victimized one or two pilots before we

sorted out that that's what they were. So we cracked on out, and we flew a very unusual mission. The mission was long and very arduous, and we got shot at a tremendous amount. We flew out of South Vietnam up into North Vietnam and dropped down to about 3500 to 4000 feet, and ran the airplane at about 520 or 540, however fast it would go, and we would be working the roads or whatever.

On this day, we did this: we got down on the deck and started into North Vietnam heading for this target on our Northwest course. Then we just ran into a hail of fire coming up out of the green of the jungle. So there was no question it was a pretty good target and luckily we got through this mess and buzzed on off. Not that you all are interested in this, but you never circle a target like that because, it's well known, you always circle once. We went on up and beat up some targets and then went out over Thailand to tank, picked up a load of fuel, and came back into North Vietnam. There were some incredible strange formations of land there that are upside down icicles that look like something right out of a movie. And these great big things that look like an upside down radish are sticking up. We popped up over this ridge and dropped back down and we were about four miles from the target and the guns just opened up again. This time, we were in a different position; the sun had moved and I could see the side of the radar van and I could see the end of one of the missiles. So we bored in, junking the airplane pretty hard, bending it around trying to keep the gunner from tracking us, and just as we got over the target, we took a tremendous hit in the aft of the "hun" [the F-100]. So I said to this young gent, "I've got the airplane," and struck the burner in and got the nose up and we were doing about 540 or so, and headed out toward the water. Just as I got the airplane coming to about 4500 feet, the controls reversed and the airplane bunted over into what would be an outside loop. Now the F-100 was not famous for turning some tight corners. You could not do an inside loop inside 4500 feet so I knew damn well I wasn't going to make that outside loop. I thought momentarily about trying to roll the airplane over and see if that was going to solve our problem but the way we were descending, if that failed, I wasn't going to have time to eject. So, I punched the canopy and pulled the handle and reversed the American dream from riches to rags in the pull of one handle.

But it was quite difficult. I was strapped up as tight as I could be, but I'd never been in a three or four negative-G bunt like that, and it raised me way up off the seat. So I was up in this awkward position, my head up against the canopy, all these water bottles and all this trash we had up around my head. And cameras. When I pulled the handle, instead of get-

ting my arm in tight, I obviously was out of position. When I stroked the ejection seat, my arm hit the right canopy rail and broke my arm in three places. It was not my day. Also, the oxygen mask did not separate right and popped up and hit my visor and blinded me in the left eye. When I hit the ground, I hit it pretty hard, and I dislocated my left knee. So I wound up on the ground in the worst condition possible for any kind of escape or evasion.

That problem was solved real quick about escape or evasion, because I had just got my radio out and recognized that my arm was broken. I had a couple radios, and I got one of them out and called the Airborne controller and said, "I'm on the deck." I'd seen my kid get a good chute; he landed probably about a mile south of me and I saw a chute with my other guy. And boom! I've got this young Vietnamese poking a really old rifle in my face. So I was obviously captured. This kid could not have been more than thirteen, maybe twelve, and they stripped me instantly out of my boots and out of my clothes—some procedure they had been taught—and started trying to march me back up over this little hill. And just as I popped up over this ridge, I heard the whop-whop-whop of a Jolly Green chopper coming after me. We had a beeper in our chute for an identification thing, and this Jolly was heading in right on top of the trees, right straight where I had landed, and they were just shooting the bejesus out of him! I had no idea how those things ever get through that hail of fire. That always escapes me, but amazingly they do. So he drove right in, stopped and tilted the chopper up a little bit to the left and then to the right and didn't see me and did a hard left turn and moved out. Now I have to say, of some of the courageous deeds I've seen, that had to be one of the bravest things I have ever seen. That dude only runs at about eighty or one-hundred knots, I don't know, but its way, way, way too slow. So all the time, he's taking the fire from these places that shot me down.

Next I got dragged into camp and got tied up. I'd made up my mind that if I ever got captured, I had a plan that I would try to escape if I could. At first, they were really quite careful with me. They would take my good hand here and wrap a piece of telephone wire around it and wire my arm to this little tunnel that I was in. I convinced them that I absolutely couldn't move. I went through a lot of drill with them, and they put me through a mock execution. They told me I had to answer some questions or they were going to shoot me. So you have to make some kind of decision about what you're going to do about that. I knew there were other POWs up there, so I was quite certain I wasn't going to get shot. [My captor] said "either speak or I'm going to shoot you," and I just refused. Obviously, he

didn't shoot me. But we went through some of these kinds of things, and eventually I was able to set up the escape.

They started tying me up with this little garden rope, and I was able to untie that. I was unaware that your hand and all of that still works, even though your arms are broken. You just don't have much strength because you don't have bony structure. But I could untie. So I did that and escaped. I was out for somewhere around two weeks. I don't really know how long. I made my way back into South Vietnam, and I was recaptured by some North Vietnamese who had set an ambush on this Marine camp that I was trying to locate. My navigation was good. I'd made it to within a mile of this Marine base, but I began running out of brainpower. I wasn't aware of what happens to you when you don't eat. There was plenty to drink, and I wasn't really concerned about what I drank because I figured, if I made it back to friendly hands, certainly they'd be able to treat me for whatever problems I might have with water. But I had no idea what it was like to function without food. What happens is you lose your mental capacity. By about the tenth or eleventh day, somewhere in that vicinity, I was hallucinating. I was having some wacky illusions and started talking to my wife and my Sunday school teacher and some other things. And then I walked into an ambush.

I had evaded thirty-three patrols, basically, because I was keeping my eyes open and I was looking for them, and they were not looking for me. I went walking up [toward the Marine base] late in the morning. I had missed a helicopter that had landed, and I wrongfully assumed that I was at the base. I thought I was right at the base, because I'd heard gun fire coming out of there. 155s [Howitzers] were firing, and I thought I was just within a matter of yards from this Marine Corps base. In fact, it was just over the next little ridge. And so I woke up late in the morning, which was strange because I had been waking up before light or right at light. I was kind of groggy, and I was having some trouble getting my head going, and I decided that I was going to have to follow the trail. I stepped out into this area where I thought the base was, and I made a left turn, and some Vietnamese popped up out of little holes and yelled at me. I couldn't sort out whether they were our Vietnamese or the other Vietnamese. Finally it dawned on me that these Vietnamese had an AK-47 that wasn't the standard weapon that [our Vietnamese] were issued, which had a little handle on the top and was camouflaged. So, when I figured out who they were, I said to myself, "Well, I didn't come this far to surrender to these little guys." I took off running, and they shot me down, and I got into the woods

and evaded them for a while and eventually they came in and found me. And that was when my story of real abuse commenced.

I got moved from there. They picked me up, moved me in a litter, and it took them about thirty-four hours to get me back to the camp that I'd escaped from some two weeks or so before. These guys, six of them who were carrying a chogi pole and had me in a litter, had me back in that camp in about thirty-four hours. A steady trot, pretty impressive. I got a lot of abuse when I got back there, as you can imagine. The worst was from the cook, for some reason. Someone must have passed the word that I was griping about the chow, because she came in with a little stick and really pounded me. They had me wired to the ceiling again, and the only thing I could do was eventually get kind of rolled up in a ball and get my legs up there and I kicked her right in the chin and then kicked her out of the hole. After that, they instantly moved me to a holding camp right up along the eastern coast.

[When I got there, they] insisted that I was going to have to tell them some things and they were giving me some instructions about what I was going to have to do. And all of these were things that you simply couldn't do and live with yourself. So I refused to do them, and went through some very bad beating-type abuse. And that culminated in getting hung. They took me into this pagoda, got my arms behind my back, wrapped a rope behind me, got me up on a chair and wrapped a rope around the beams that were in the ceiling, and jerked the chair out from under me. It's a horrible torture. Your chest feels like it's coming apart, your arms try to separate from your shoulders and it's just incredibly painful. That didn't go all that well; I had a terrible time fighting off the pain and tried to think. The senior guy said something to the guard, who came over and took my wrist and began twisting my wrist until he actually broke it. I could hear the bone splintering and that was, needless to say, ungodly painful. Somewhere from within me came this voice that said, "Well, I'm not gonna say zip until you put me down." So I finally told him, "Okay, I will answer some questions, but only if you put me down." Well, they put me down.

So the first question they asked me was, "What political party is your family?" And I wondered if I was just in a really bad movie in which I'm the star. One thing I knew was that the Vietnamese were such that, at that time, the Democratic Party was very anti-Vietnam War, so I responded that I was a Democrat. And I don't know if God's ever forgiven me for that. That outrageous, dreadful lie. At any rate, the aftermath of that was that both of my hands and arms were wiped out. My left hand was rolled up

into a ball like this, and my right hand fingers were curled up, and the only motion I had was just the tiniest bit of motion between thumb and forefinger. I could not get my arms up; I had zero mobility.

When I got to Hanoi, which was by truck, I was back in the same thing. I realized then the value of having very short and very brief stories. The [Hanoi] Hilton was a dreadful place, almost indescribable in its brutality, its lack of civilization. The Vietnamese were, as Oriental torturers are, skillful and persistent, and the main goal was to turn your head around.³ They were determined that, if they put enough brutality to you, you were going to roll up and join them and help them. I can't speak for all prisoners because obviously these things are one-on-one. As you came into camp, if you've seen any photos, you came into this place down the left side, this place called New Guy Village, which was the initial torture room. They had a dossier of some sort on you, although it might be quite primitive. They immediately started asking you questions about basically the same things that you had been responding to before.

Before I depart that subject, let me just say one thing about torture and our Code of Conduct. Our Code of Conduct says that you've got to resist them to the best of your ability. And that does not mean that you're expected to be a Kamikaze; that means just what it says. Determined torture can make some noises come out of you that you had no idea existed within you. One of the favorite tortures up there was to get your hand behind your back, and they would then plant their foot in the middle of your back and raise your arms up. This has a tendency to either break your arms or pop your arms out of the socket. It's just excruciatingly painful. When I say it will make some noises come out of you that you didn't know you had, that's 100% true. So, I went through basically a replay of what had happened down there where they'd hung me. But this time, of course, I'm really defenseless, and I forgot to tell you I'd been shot in the leg and in the hand, and I'd been wounded in the right leg. So basically, I had no defenses whatsoever except what brainpower I had. I got through that session without anything disgraceful happening and got filtered out into the system. I went out into a little small cell area where they run you into some stocks right out of the Fourteenth Century. Metal stocks go across your

3. For a gripping account of an American's experience in Japanese POW camps during World War II, see Colonel John K. Wallace II, *Japanese Prison Camps: Diary of a Survivor*, 113 MIL. L. REV. 219 (1986).

legs and I spent three days in there. And that's an interesting experience also.

So when I got through with [the stocks], I got filtered out and paired up with a guy who was an Air Force major who was my nurse. They gave me this guy because they didn't want to expend any manpower in getting me fed, getting me washed up, or anything like that. He turned out to be a very nice, very kind guy. In December, 1967, we got moved to a camp that was called the Plantation and that was an easy treatment camp. It was kind of the equivalent of a rehabilitation camp I guess you would say, an easy camp. They had a plan to release some Americans from this camp. I got paired up with Senator John McCain there. John was a lieutenant commander; he got shot down October 16th, and I'd heard this stuff on the radio. They had a speaker in your cell, and you got a lot of great propaganda from the Voice of Vietnam. John was truly a pathetic sight. My first impression was that they'd brought John in and dumped him on us so that he would die with Americans. Then they would be able to say that the Americans killed him, that we'd taken care of him and let him die. But John had an incredible heart, great spirit, and he began to recuperate. Just for example, his right leg had been broken, he'd been bayoneted in the left leg, and his left shoulder, the arm was out of the socket, dislocated. His right arm was broken in a couple places, and he was in a cast that started about here and came clear up over his shoulder. His right arm stuck out of this cast kind of like a snowman, you know with the stick sticking out. You didn't have to be a doctor to know that this was a botched job. And if you watch John walk around today, you notice that he's still very gimpy from that experience. He was wonderful. We lived together from December through the next May, and I got moved from there to a very hard camp. I eventually got through that, and then got a trip back to the Hilton.

I wound up being the camp commander of several of the major camps in Hanoi, largely because they took a lot of the commanders and lieutenant colonels and isolated them. They had three full colonels who had been shot down, but they were also isolated, so none of those guys had any leadership chances because the Vietnamese just locked them up and kept them sequestered. Finally, in December, 1972, Richard Nixon sent the bombers up north, and on the night of December 19th, the sky just rained bombs and began to blow away everything that was of any value. That went on until early January. The Vietnamese rolled up and agreed to release the prisoners, and that was the idea behind the bombing. So that was the way we got

out, and that was precisely the way we should have been fighting the war from day one.

Vietnam, like Iraq, was about a twelve- to fifteen-day war, in terms of destroying all their infrastructure and ability to really operate. If there was any lesson to be learned [from Vietnam], it was, “Never do it that way again.” So I wrote a book, and it got published in 1991, and the primary message was, “Don’t ever do it that way again.” And I will give Dick Cheney, our new Vice President, credit. He was Secretary of Defense during the Gulf War, and Cheney gave [Generals] Schwarzkopf and Powell clear reign to go fight the war the way it needed to be fought. Our air crews and Army and all of our naval vessels, Marine Corps, everybody took off and did exactly what they could do, and do well, and in ten days the war was over, because we basically did it right. That was my message [in my book].

We had been misled for a very long time. I would occasionally lecture up at Maxwell [Air Force Base] when I got called back from Korea. All of the pointy heads were telling us how easy it was to control these little regional conflicts, these limited wars. Limited wars do not work; it’s a screw up to even think that a limited war is going to work. Never has worked. I have no knowledge of where limited war has been 100% successful. It wins some battles, but you don’t win the war. And if you’re going to put your troops at risk and go to war, you need to go to war 100%.

I think some of the things I brought out of [Vietnam] that were so valuable to me were how ingenious Americans are, how well they can function under some horrible conditions. Roughly 45% of our people had some kind of a major orthopedic injury. And a combination of injuries, like John McCain had, was not at all an isolated case. As I said, 45% of the people had a broken arm, back, legs, skull fracture, or some combination of these injuries.

Nevertheless, the communication net was cranked up, and the first thing that you found when you got into a compound of any kind where a bunch of Americans were was that there was some comm going. As soon as the guys were sweeping, shoveling, scraping, whatever it was, you would then hear sounds going [in the background], and you knew that it

meant something. If you didn't know the tap code at that time, you didn't know what was going on, so you just knew that something was going on.

In my case, the first one of those that I heard and was able to identify was this tap here. [Taps out C-C] I later learned the C-C tap was the church call. So on Sunday, when the guards would clear, the C-C would tap church call and we would pray for everyone who was getting brutalized over in the cells or getting tortured. And we prayed for our families and prayed for ourselves. In fact, I did that so seriously, there were times I'm sure that no one else got a word in because I had the line blocked. The second one I learned was this call [taps out H-H], which was an H-H that was tapped on Friday night, for Happy Hour! My God, when I got that one sorted out I said: "This guy is really around the bend. There ain't been nobody happy up in this place."

But there were a few light moments. The most memorable for me is the wonderful dedication of these many people who would get in that line of communication. We were isolated. My time up there I spent thirty-eight months in solitary. That was not a high number; there were quite a few people who spent fifty-two to fifty-four months. And when we all got moved together after the Son Tay Raid, you would see some strange people. All this isolation had gotten you into some time-killing patterns where you had to get through that day, so you develop these routines. And when they got us back into a single large cell, which held about forty people, it was just wild to watch all of these patterns work themselves out. A psychiatrist would have been in hog heaven. Because there were, without question, many of us who had turned the corner. And this move back into this room with forty-five people got you reoriented into the world.

Of course that night when all of those bombs started to hit the ground was really a marvelous thing, because we'd been waiting for that, in my case, for sixty-seven months. I was a short timer in a sense; Everett Alvarez, our first POW shoot down, got shot down August 5, 1964. So at the time I got released with five years and seven months, Everett got released the month before, obviously with seven some odd years. And the fact that he endured and came out with his head up the way he did was a manifest testimony to his convictions and his courage and his allegiance to his country.

One thing I remember most fervently: when I got into a big room, I was the building commander. I had a policy that every day as soon as the guards would clear the room, we would all stand up and face west and

pledge allegiance to the United States. That was a defiant moment for us. We had a flag; a guy had made a flag and had it sewn inside his shirt and we would all stand together and pledge allegiance to the United States.

And out of this 500 and some shoot downs that we had, we only had two really bad apples. One was a colonel; the other was a Navy captain. Unfortunately, they were opportunists who refused to stay in the loop, refused to hang in with us, and they opted to cross over to the other side. And they did so, of course, at the loss of their reputation and future. So I thought it was a wonderful monument to America to see all these people come out of there in 1973 with their head up and full of conviction that they'd done the best that they could do under these very difficult circumstances. Jerry Denton, a Navy commander from down in Mobile, became the spokesman for the first group that came out on February 14th. And I can't precisely recall his words, but it was much like this: he saluted the flag and said, "It's been a pleasure to serve under difficult conditions. God bless America." And that said it all.