

August Edition: In Memory of John McCain, Bud Day, and All POWs



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By Carrie and Stacie Stoelting

According to the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs, there have been **142,246 prisoners of war** since WWI. These brave Americans suffered tortures beyond description.

On August 25, 2018, we lost one of these American heroes: John S. McCain. As we continue in our mission to honor veterans, educate Americans on their heroism, and share God's love with all, we often hear about the heart-wrenching sacrifices of our heroes. When we visited with John McCain, his kindness and heroism touched our hearts. Here are several reasons why:

For five and a half years, John McCain suffered extreme torture at Hanoi Hilton in Vietnam. That equals approximately 2,008 days. And people complain about being in line, waiting in

traffic, or slow Internet. He waited for relief from hair-raising torture for **48,180 hours. Think about that.**



Col. Bud Day

His wartime injuries inflicted such damage that he lost the ability to lift his arms higher than his chest. What a daily reminder of the nightmare he endured for our country. For you. For us.

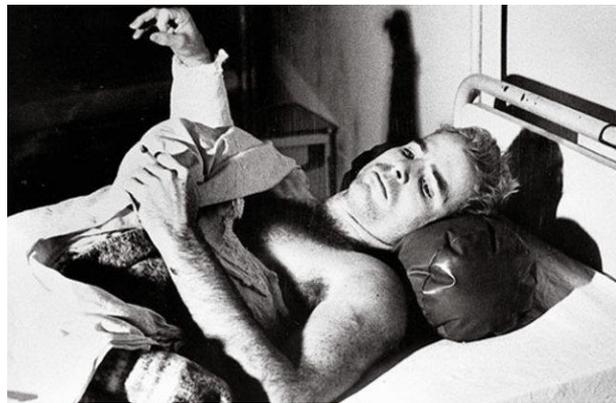
If you've flown through Sioux City, Iowa, you've likely craned your neck to look up at an inspiring statue of John McCain's buddy and Hanoi Hilton cellmate, Col. Bud Day.

In 1967, Bud Day was shot down exactly two months earlier than when the North Vietnamese shot down John McCain. The lives of John McCain and Bud Day came together in a torture cell in Vietnam. POW's like Bud Day and John McCain were held sometimes five to a cell, a space that was barely big enough for two.

The late Bud Day recalled in a 2008 interview, "So they told me that we were going to get a roommate and it was going to be 'the prince.' The Vietnamese called him 'the prince.' So, I asked my nurse, 'What's his name?' She said, 'John McCain.'"

The North Vietnamese considered John McCain to be a "propaganda prize" because his father and grandfather were renowned American admirals.

They lifted John McCain in on a stretcher. He body was mangled from multiple severe wounds. Bud Day continued, "I took one look at him and my brain instantly said they must have dropped this guy off on me to claim that we let him die. He was just emaciated; very, very skinny. He was in an awful body cast that was just filthy. I mean you could smell him for 25 feet."



John McCain as a POW in Vietnam.

Col. Day vividly remembered John McCain's injuries, "He had this very gimp knee where he busted his knee. His arm had been broken in a couple places, he had been bayoneted in the leg, his arm was out of the shoulder."

The enemy mercilessly tortured Bud Day as well. He described his own injuries and torture: "They had roped me under the arms and tied the rope behind my back and ran another rope to that...Put me up on a chair and threw that rope up over a rafter and jerked the chair out from under me and your own weight just tears your body apart."

The enemy re-broke Bud Day's arm so he would never fly again. Bud Day's nerve damage was so extensive, and his crushed hands were useless. But, although suffering himself, John McCain stepped up and acted as his "physical therapist."

Bud Day described how John McCain helped him, "John said we'll gather up some bamboo. And he was on a bandage on his leg at that time. He got some little strips of bamboo and smuggled them into the room. John put his foot in my armpit and pulled on my wrist, so we could get the bone forced back down. John would pull my fingers out straight, but they would instantly re-curl. And finally, one morning I had just a slightest bit of (movement) in this finger and we both cried. Tears started rolling down my eyes; tears started rolling down John's eyes."

Since the Vietnamese deemed John McCain a "celebrity prisoner," he was offered early release. But John McCain selflessly refused because he wouldn't leave until all the men could go. By refusing early release, he was tortured even more.

Bud Day explained, "By any humane standard, John would have been a perfectly good candidate to release early because there were a number of people who were just enormously injured like him. But that was not in his playbook, and it also wasn't in his playbook to die."

In fact, he quickly became a leader among the other POWs at Hanoi Hilton. Col. Day and the POWs knew the importance of faith in God at such a desperate time. Fellow prisoners later said their faith was a matter of life and death. Bud Day was the senior officer there, and he helped organize church services for his fellow POWs. "We agreed that we were going to have a church service and told the Vietnamese, and they said, 'No.'" But the courageous POWs went ahead anyway and held a church service and sang patriotic and Christian songs.

"The Vietnamese broke in and seized the people who were standing against the wall doing the service. They marched them out of the room at gunpoint. So, I stood up and started singing 'The Star-Spangled Banner,' 'God Bless America,' 'My Country 'Tis of Thee' and every song we could think of."

Then the Vietnamese stormed back in and definitively stopped the service. Guards moved McCain and Day and about 20 others to a camp where the conditions were even worse.

John McCain recalled in an interview later, "We wanted to actually just have a chance to do what we felt was a fundamental human right ... and we got spiritual comfort from being able to worship together. We thought, look, if we're going to be together, then we're going to stand up. ... They'd done so many bad things that we weren't nearly as afraid of them as maybe we would have been if a lot of us hadn't gone through what we'd gone through."

About six months later, Bud Day and John McCain were back at Hanoi Hilton.

Bud Day recalls, "I asked John if he would be one of my preachers and he said, 'Sure.' He had a great handle on the Episcopalian liturgy and he could just repeat it verbatim."

The Navy awarded John McCain 17 medals and commendations as a Naval Airman and Prisoner of War. Col. Bud Day was the most decorated serviceman since Douglas MacArthur and served in *three wars*: World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War. In total, Bud Day received over 70 medals including the Medal of Honor, the Airforce Cross, Distinguished Service Medal, Silver Star, Legion of Merit, the Silver Flying Cross, Bronze Star Medals, and Purple Hearts, Combat Engagement Medals.

Fast-forward to recent times: As young Americans and recording artists, we sang the *Star-Spangled Banner* for both heroes. And their presence made it more emotional than it always has been for us as patriots to sing our National Anthem.



L-R: Stacie, John McCain, Carrie, and Sarah Palin in 2008. Todd Palin and future governor of Iowa Kim Reynolds are also pictured.

There is so much to their story which comprises an important part of American history. It is a powerful example of the grit our servicemen and women have endured. While their story became famous, the majority of other POW stories remain largely untold. **We believe that their story not only is a way to honor and remember both men but also the multitudes of others who suffered torture for the cause of freedom:**

Both men now live with their Lord. They have passed on, but their important stories live on. It is up to us to share with the next generation what men like Bud Day and John McCain endured for freedom. We owe so much to them and all of the men and women who were willing to give it all so that we might be free.

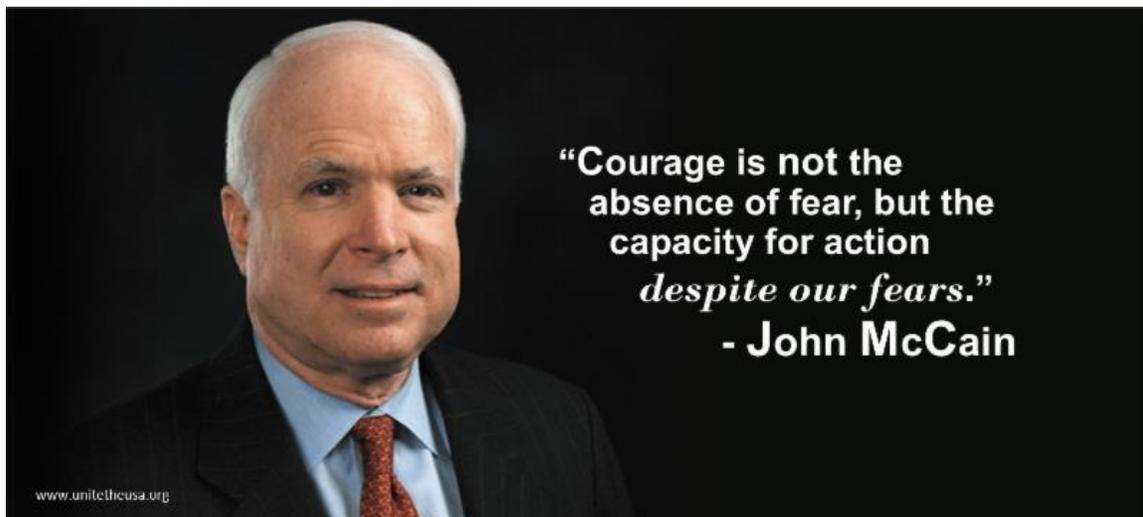
John McCain bravely served our country well. With God's help, may we do the same in every way possible. Now his seat in the Senate looms empty. But, more than that, we must remember the empty seat at his family's table and pray for his family in the days to come. God bless the memory of John McCain. And God bless the USA -McCain's beloved USA.

This Month's Bible Verse



"Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends." John 15:13

Featured Quote and Meme to Share

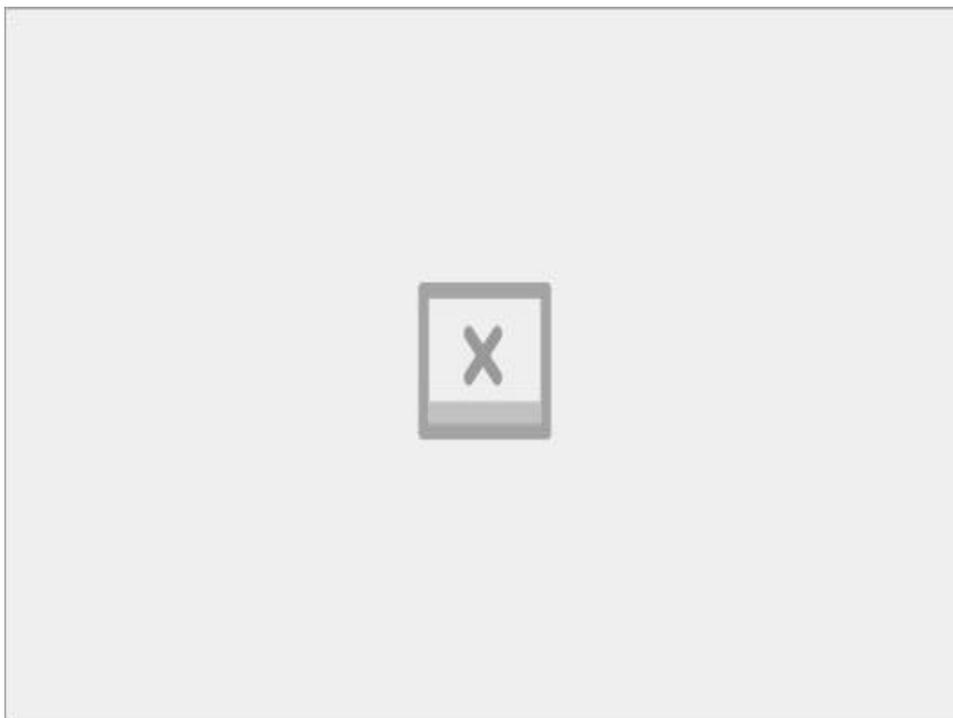


"Courage is not the
absence of fear, but the capacity for action

despite our fears."

-John McCain

This Month's Historical Video



John McCain and POWs return home from Vietnam in 1973

This month's historical video features footage of when Vietnam POWs were being released. One of the men being released is John McCain. This 1973 video shows POWs stepping off a bus at Gia Lim Airport in Hanoi as they prepare to go through a release ceremony to be returned to the United States.

John McCain's Story



Vietnam War: 50 Years Later With Senator McCain

October 18, 2017: Senator John McCain talked about the 50th anniversary of his being shot down over North Vietnam as a Navy flier and the war's impact on his life and the country. [Click here](#) to see the full interview.

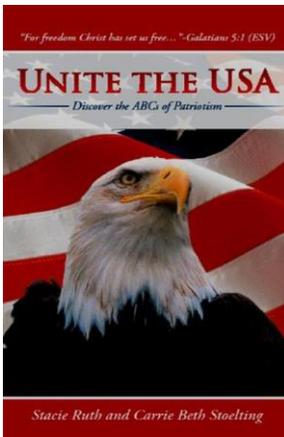
Learn From Our Heroes



Bud Day talks about when he and John McCain were POWs in Vietnam

Show this to your kids. It is a powerful example of what our heroes have done for us. Teach them that freedom is not free.

Order Now



Unite the USA: Discover the ABCs of Patriotism is a new book by **Stacie Ruth and Carrie Beth Stoelting**. It's a book that empowers patriots to make a big difference in the land we love. With 100+ ways to make a positive difference in America, *Unite the USA* is a must-have tool for patriots. *Unite the USA* will inspire and educate Americans to defend faith and freedom. (Important Note: All proceeds go to fund the mission of UnitetheUSA.org.) Order it here today!

In God We Still Trust
an inspiring album dedicated to God and veterans
by Stacie and Carrie Stoelting



Per request from veterans who love patriotic and inspiring music sung by Stacie and Carrie, [In God We Still Trust](#) was recorded. From the National Anthem to "God Bless America" you will be inspired and uplifted about our God-given freedoms. All proceeds go to Unite the USA. Help promote faith and freedom in America. Your support is important and appreciated. [Buy or download a copy today.](#) God bless you as you celebrate the red, white, and blue!

In God We Still Trust Video

Our country needs to turn to Jesus. Listen to "In God We Still Trust" for inspiration to keep "fighting the good fight". For hope and encouragement, listen to Stacie Ruth and Carrie Beth sing "In God We Still Trust".



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Booking Info



Celebrate the true spirit of America with Carrie Beth and Stacie Ruth. Book Stacie and Carrie for concert or conference! E-mail info@unitetheusa.org for more information.

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