

General George E. "Bud" Day



George Day joined the U.S. Marine Corp in 1942 and served in the Pacific during WW II. He then served in the Army Reserve, the Iowa National Guard and the U.S. Air Force beginning in 1951. He was flying F-84 fighter jets in Korea. Col Day was also an attorney in Iowa. Remaining in the Air Force, he served as an Air Force Advisor to the 107th Tactical Fighter Squadron in Niagara Falls, NY, flying F-100 fighters before being assigned to Tuy Hoa Air Base, Vietnam. He then commanded Detachment 1 at Phu Cat Air Base flying F-100F two seat aircraft. This was a specialized, all volunteer unit flying in high threat areas, code named Misty.

On 26 August 1967, Colonel Day was forced to eject from his F-100F aircraft over North Vietnam when it was hit by ground fire. His right arm was broken in three places, and his left knee was badly sprained. He was immediately captured by hostile forces and taken to a prison camp where he was interrogated and severely tortured. After causing the guards to relax their vigilance, Colonel Day escaped into the jungle and began the trek toward South Vietnam. Despite injuries inflicted by fragments of a bomb, he continued southward surviving only on a few berries and uncooked frogs. He successfully evaded enemy patrols and reached the Ben Hai River, where he encountered U.S. artillery barrages. With the aid of a bamboo log float, Colonel Day swam across the river and entered the demilitarized zone. Due to delirium, he lost his sense of direction and wandered aimlessly for several days. After several unsuccessful attempts to signal U.S. aircraft, he was ambushed and recaptured by the Viet Cong, sustaining gunshot wounds to his left hand and thigh. He was returned to the prison from which he had escaped and later was moved to Hanoi. Col. Day served 5 years and 3 months in captivity.

Colonel Day, after serving in three wars, became the most highly decorated aviator in American history. His decorations include the Congressional Medal of Honor presented to him on March 26, 1968 by President Gerald R. Ford. Colonel Day died on July 27, 2013 and is buried in the National Cemetery in Pensacola, Florida. He was posthumously promoted to the rank of Brigadier General on March 27, 2018.

Additional information about Colonel George "Bud" Day can be found at:

"Return With Honor", Jan 1, 1991, George E. Day, author

"American Patriot: The Life and Wars of Colonel Bud Day", Jun 2, 2008, Robert Coram

Google Search: "Col. George Day"