

First Person Account of the Story of Mike Christian

**By Col. Bud Day
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POW 1967-1973**

In a letter to MG Patrick H. Brady, Col. Day recounted his personal recollections of Mike Christian, POW. The letter was entered in testimony on the flag protection constitutional amendment before the US Senate Judiciary Committee.

Dear Pat:

No one loves liberty more than those who lose it . . . and lose it for a long time. I was shot down on August 26, 1967 . . . captured, escaped, and was recaptured some two weeks later. I spent 38 months of my 67 months in solitary . . . where I had the time to sort out what is important, and what is not. I started my daily regimen by first saying the pledge of allegiance to the flag, then reciting the Lord's prayer, and then praying for my family.

The reason for doing it in that order was that I knew above all other things that my country would never desert me . . . and it was of utmost importance that I not desert my flag! She was my link to civilization.

When we were moved into joint living with about 40 other people, I was the commander. I ordered my troops to face to the East every afternoon to say the pledge of allegiance. This motivated one of my junior officers (Mike Christian) to craft a homemade flag from scraps. He sewed it inside of his shirt, and at pledge time, he would turn the shirt wrongside out, hang it on a line . . . and we would say the pledge and render a hand salute. It was the best time of every day.

At one of the shakedown inspections, the commies found the flag. They brutally dragged Mike out and we could hear them beating him for hours. He came back that night with broken ribs, and his face battered. They broke his ribs . . . but not his spirit. A few days passed and Mike approached me. He said: "Major, they got the flag . . . but they didn't get the needle I made it with. If you agree . . . I'm making another flag!"

My answer was, "Do it!"

It was several weeks before we had another homemade flag, but he finished it.

There was never a day from that day forward that the Stars and Stripes did not fly in my room, with 40 American pilots proudly saluting! What we guaranteed to 40 American prisoners should be the minimum guarantee for the entire United States.

God bless U, and God bless your efforts.

Col. Bud Day MOH-AFC
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