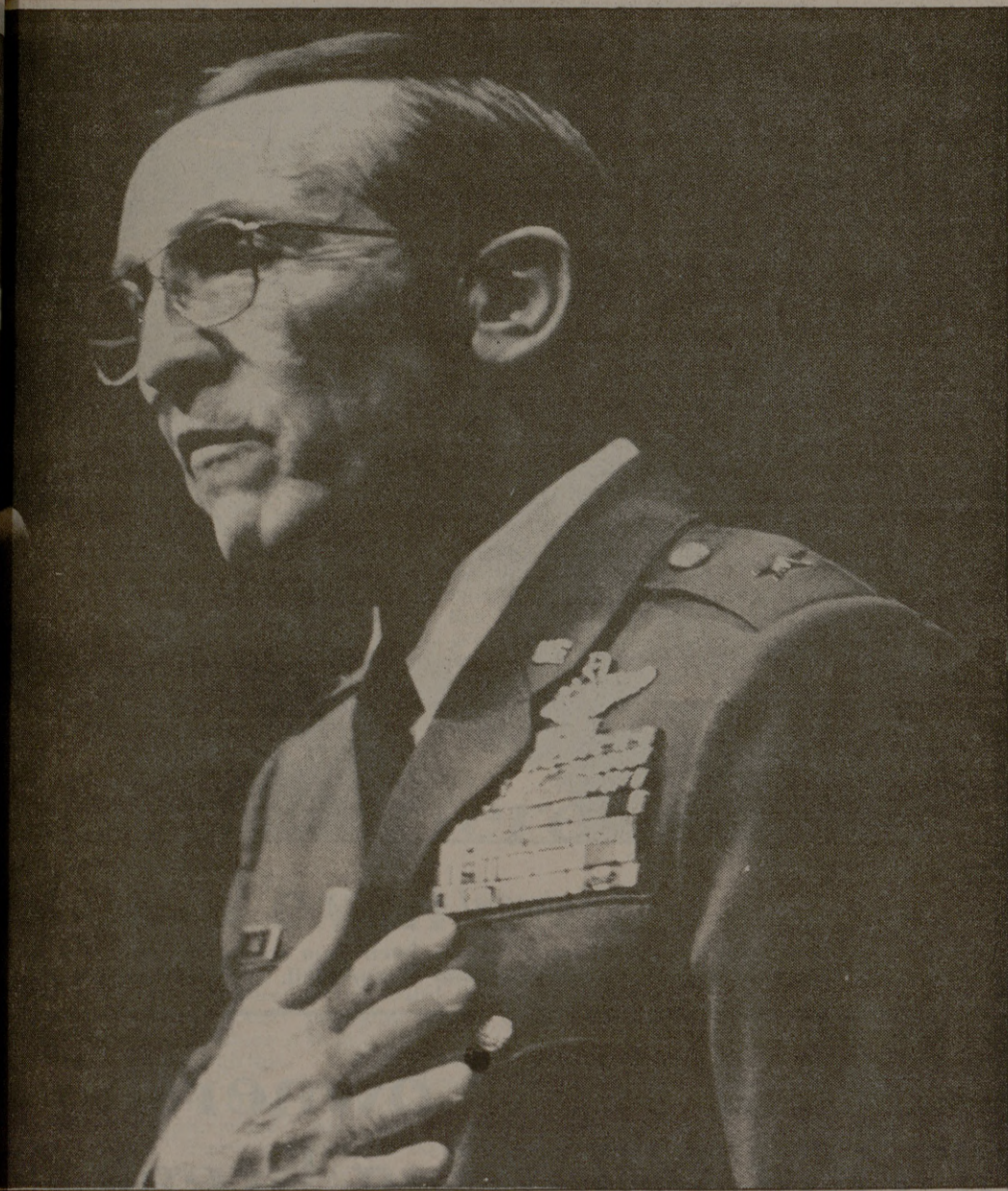


Local



Staff photo by Dave Einsel

Brig. Gen. Robinson Risner speaks to members of the Corps of Cadets Thursday night.

Former POW puts trust in God, country

By DANIEL PUCKETT
Battalion Staff
A former prisoner of war Thursday night told the Corps of Cadets about his experiences in captivity in Vietnam and stressed the need for a strong national defense.

Retired Brig. Gen. Robinson Risner spoke in Rudder Auditorium to the Corps, all of which were required to attend. Risner was an Air Force pilot for 33 years and recipient of two Air Force Cross medals, the second highest military award in the United States.

He was shot down twice over North Vietnam. The second time he was captured by the North Vietnamese and spent more than seven years in prison — three of those years in solitary confinement.

Despite torture and other ill-treatment, he and the other POWs developed an intense faith in Christ and America, he said. This faith sustained the prisoners, and they became deeply devoted to both ideas.

"I found God and country becoming almost synonymous," he said. He said he wished every American were a Christian, especially since he felt the prisoners' faith enabled them to resist their captors.

They developed several means of communication, and some of the codes were so elaborate that Defense Department computers were unable to crack them after the POWs returned, he said.

The prisoners' determination and ingenuity in overcoming adversity convinced Risner that

Americans have something worth fighting and dying for. He said the deaths of 2.5 million Americans in wars have preserved a way of life that is superior to any other.

However, he said, this country is now number two in military strength and must match the Soviets in defense expenditures or face extinction. But, he added, the military budget is now rising, and Americans can feel confident about the future.



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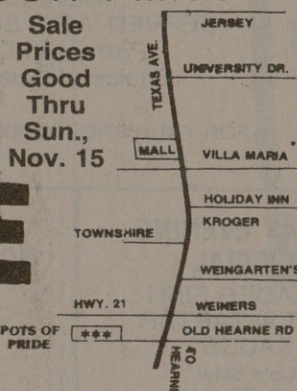
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