

Jet Carrying 47 Hijacked to Cuba by Deserter, 19

is Puts Knife Against Neck
of Stewardess

By BOB M. GASSAWAY

is MIAMI (AP) — A Navy deserter who said he didn't want to kill in Vietnam hijacked a National Airlines jet to Cuba Friday, forcing along 46 other persons, including a grieving widow taking her husband's body home.

he National Stewardess Kim Tatum said four minutes after the plane departed Key West for Miami the hijacker "grabbed me around the neck and put a knife to my neck with the other hand" and demanded the flight be diverted to Cuba.

to The man jammed himself and Miss Tatum into a rear corner of the passenger compartment and had the hostesses relay his orders to the pilot in the cockpit.

he Stewardess Sue Morrill said the hijacker told her he was a 19-year-old American who had deserted from the Navy at San Diego, Calif.

ing Miss Morrill said he told her: "I don't want to kill. I don't want to go to Vietnam."

RELUCTANT TO WALK

en- The 22-year-old stewardess said the hijacker was "fidgety" and appeared reluctant to walk down the landing steps once they arrived at Havana's Jose Marti Airport.

no He hesitated when he saw the uniformed Cuban soldiers waiting for him at the bottom of the stairs, she said. "He didn't want to leave. He almost had tears in his eyes. It was the type of deal where he didn't know what he wanted to do."

Miss Morrill said the air pi-

rate had shaggy, but not long hair, and was dressed in tight slacks and sport shirt.

All but one of the passengers were ordered off the plane and bussed to Varadero where they were to be picked up later by a chartered plane sent from Miami.

Allowed to accompany the crew was Mrs. Leif E. Deskins who was taking her husband's body back to their home in Beltrifry, Ky. Deskins died while vacationing in the tropical city of Key West, just 90 miles from Cuba.

EIGHTH DIVERSION

The hijacking was the eighth light diverted to Cuba since the first of the year.

The plane was National Airlines flight 424, a Boeing 727 jet flying from Key West, Fla., to Miami. Officials said there were indications the hijacker may have taken over before the jet lifted off.

George Faraldo, manager of the Key West airport, said he watched the takeoff from the ramp and "I noticed he delayed a little bit on the end of the runway."

Faraldo said as the pilot lifted off, "it seemed to be a little slower than usual, and his left wing kind of dipped a little bit. I got by the fire-fighting equipment because I was a little concerned about it."

TURNED RIGHT

Faraldo said as the plane climbed to "about 400 or 500 feet, it looked like he was going to turn left, the normal turn for Miami. Gut there was a Navy jet in front of him. He hesitated. Then he turned right."

Faraldo said he ran upstairs where he learned the pilot had radioed: "Here we go again."

The pilot added, according to the Federal Aviation Administration, "there was a kid with a knife in the cockpit" and the jet was going to Havana.

The plane landed in Cuba at 4:19 at Jose Marti Airport, just outside Havana.