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On Highway 1, Brutality and a

By Holger Jensen

ON HIGHWAY 1 (South Vietnam) — (AP) — North Vietnamese troops are mixing brutality with friendliness in their treatment of South Vietnamese prisoners.

Some South Vietnamese soldiers missing on the Dong Ha front lines earlier in the offensive were found later with their hands tied and bullet holes in the backs of their heads.

But other South Vietnamese marines who were captured south of Quang Tri

had a different story following daring escapes.

They said their captors were young, friendly and kind. Their wounds were treated, they were fed and given water.

'Game of Tag'

Maj. Don Price, 33, of Flagstaff Ariz., a U.S. adviser, described how some of the marines were captured in a fierce firefight about 10 miles southwest of Quang Tri:

"They got into a goddamn game of tag with the North

Vietnamese. When the North Vietnamese saw that some of my men had run out of ammunition they stopped shooting and began chasing them, yelling 'catch them, catch them.'

"They were laughing. It was like a big game to them.

"Two of my men who were caught said they saw North Vietnamese females — I guess they were nurses — when they had their wounds treated. They were given water to drink and sent out on a work detail to

cut wood for North Vietnamese bunkers.

Evades Capture

"When they got behind a tree they lit out and made their way back to friendly lines."

Price also told of a South Vietnamese marine lieutenant who twice evaded capture in one day.

The lieutenant was wounded in the hand and lying on the ground when he saw some North Vietnamese soldiers approaching. He rubbed blood from a nearby body on his face and faked

'Game of Tag'

death as the enemy soldiers stopped to strip him of his watch and compass.

"He got another compass from a body and started to

make his way back to friendly lines," said Price, "when he ran slap-bang into an NVA (North Vietnamese) ambush. He physically

broke away from them and ran as they emptied their weapons at him.

Eye For an Eye

"He jumped into a river and they threw grenades after him. He was wounded by several pieces of shrapnel but managed to swim away.

"He hid out for the night, then walked to Highway 1 and flagged down a passing

South Vietnamese truck."

Price said the marines he is advising do not tolerate any brutality to North Vietnamese prisoners because "it just doesn't pay."

"Pretty soon they know which units treat prisoners well and which ones don't," he said. "Then it becomes an eye for an eye sort of thing."



Wounded ARVN soldiers rush for place on copter bringing in fresh troops, some even clinging to skids

—UPI Photo