



MAJOR CARPENTER
Pressure on Hanoi

Ex POW's Campaign For Prisoners

A jet fighter pilot — a former prisoner at the "Hanoi Hilton" — said here yesterday that increasing public pressure on the North Vietnamese will aid the cause of American prisoners there.

And the pressure, said Air Force Major Joe V. Carpenter, should be worldwide.

The major, a former Navato resident, was shot down in an F-4 Phantom on his 96th mission over North Vietnam, but was released by the North Vietnamese in August, 1968, with Majors James F. Low of Sausalito and Fred M. Thompson of Taylors, South Carolina.

The North Vietnamese "were trying to improve their image," Carpenter said, noting that because he had been in the "Hanoi Hilton" — the military's slang term for the POW compound — only five and a half months he "hadn't lost much weight."

"I still looked pretty good," he quipped.

At the "Hanoi Hilton," he said, "isolation is the rule — it's very hard to maintain yourself."

Now a jet instructor pilot at Williams Air Force Base in Arizona, Carpenter spends much of his free time flying throughout the West "trying to create interest in the POW problem . . . so people who are interested can become involved."

What ultimately happens to American prisoners, he believes, "depends on the public pressure brought to bear on the North Vietnamese."

For a starter, he suggested, Americans interested in gaining better treatment and early release for U.S. prisoners should write to Xuan Thuy, North Vietnamese delegate to the Paris Peace Talks, Paris, France.