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**Freed Pilot--
Reds Were
'Humane'**

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The first of the three newly freed American pilots to hold an American press conference yesterday called his treatment in a North Vietnamese prison "humane," affirmed that he had not been mistreated and pictured prison conditions as steadily improving.

The pilot, Lieutenant Mark L. Gartley of the Navy, also told how he and fellow captives were forced to take cover on the floor of their compound when American planes bombed nearby.

Gartley — he learned he

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had been promoted one rank from Lieutenant Junior Grade when he put on his uniform in the Scandinavian Airline System jet that flew him and the POW party into Kennedy Airport Thursday night from Copenhagen, also sought to portray as a "misunderstanding" the clash he and his mother had with military officials at the airport over his immediate hospital confinement.

INCIDENT

Insisting on what she said was an agreement to permit the family to have at least two days alone together, Mrs. Gartley broke into tears when her son was ordered away.

But yesterday at his press conference at St. Albans Naval Hospital, where he has been confined, undergoing tests, Gartley said that "military officials afforded myself and my family the seclusion which I so desired." The "initial misunderstanding," he said, has since been "cleared up."

Meanwhile, it was learned that another of the three freed prisoners, Navy Lieutenant Junior Grade Norris A. Charles, and his family had a similar confrontation with military officials at Kennedy Airport.

According to the officer's brother, Dr. Herbert Charles, who was there, family members insisted on having at least a few hours alone with the 27-year-old flyer. The officers appeared to agree, Charles recalled, but then whisked the pilot and his family to a plane waiting to fly him to San Diego.

PROTEST

The family "flipped out — we screamed and hollered," Charles said, until the military authorities conceded and drove them all to the airport's International Inn, where they celebrated their reunion with champagne in a private room for about an hour and a half before the military made Charles continue on to San Diego.

In his news conference, Gartley said:

"My treatment during capture has been humane. I



UPI Telephoto
**LT. GARTLEY
He talked to press**

have not been mistreated. Prisons anywhere in the world are no bed of roses. This was no exception. But when you take into account the standard of living in the country in which we were confined and examine the conditions you'd have to say we were treated very well."

While there were instances of good and bad treatment of American prisoners, Gartley said in reply to another question, "generally speaking (good) treatment has been on the increase. We have been provided with more food, more educational material and more access to sports activities."

"On the average," he said, "treatment is improving. It's much better now than it was when I arrived in 1968."

In their prison compound Gartley said the pilots could hear American planes overhead, bomb explosions and anti-aircraft guns. There were no special underground shelters for them, he said, adding that during the raids "we were confined to our buildings which were protection enough."

However, he declined to be drawn into discussing his feelings on the war and the bombing because he said it takes "quite a bit of re-examination."

He appeared ill at ease under some of the probing and,

after about 15 minutes — with many questions still to be asked, including one he cut off on whether he was satisfied with his treatment by the American government — he stood up abruptly, announced he had to catch the military plane to Jacksonville and left.

Charles, meanwhile, remained confined in the naval hospital in San Diego. Relatives said he was expected to be released late yesterday.

The third released flier, Major Edward K. Elias, of the Air Force, the only one of the trio who has announced his intention to remain in the military, has been undergoing out-patient testing at Maxwell Air Force Base in Montgomery, Ala., and spending remaining hours in strolls with his family.