

Word From POW Is Relief to Mother

1/3/72

The fact that Lt. (j. g.) Joseph E. Kernan made some kind of statement from North Vietnam was more important to his mother than what he said.

Kernan, a naval reconnaissance navigator who was shot down last May 7 over North Vietnam, was one of 30 American prisoners of war who issued a statement yesterday asking Congress to exercise its powers to end the Vietnam war.

"Whenever the statement was made he was alive and well, and that's what counts with us," said his mother, Marion Kernan, of 12807 Parkland Dr., Rockville.

She last heard from Joe, 26, the eldest of her nine children, in a letter received before Thanksgiving. But she hopes for another in the batch of 600 reported to be returning from North Vietnam with Telford Taylor and Joan Baez.

The content of the statement did not surprise Mrs. Kernan. "Bless their hearts," she said. "No matter why they said it, they're only echoing what the American people are finally beginning to say and what so many members of Congress are saying too, thank God."

Her son was one of 10 American POWs who met with former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark last August. In September, he instructed his mother to contribute \$25 on his behalf to the Presidential campaign of Sen. George McGovern.

"I can't imagine any of the prisoners wanting the war to

go on," said Mrs. Kernan, "especially with this bombing, which is the most dreadful thing we've ever done."

Another signer of the statement, Navy Cdr. Walter E. Wilber, formerly of Virginia Beach, Va., also "desperately wants the war to be over," according to his wife, Jeanne. Reached at the family's current home in Columbia Crossroads, Pa., Mrs. Wilber said she would have preferred a letter from her husband to the public statement. "I like more personal contact, I'm afraid," she said. "I'm not overjoyed when he says things like this."

Also among those listed by the Vietnam News Agency broadcast as signers of the statement were Capt. Marion A. Marshall of Hyattsville, and Lt. Brian Ward of Maryland, no home town given. Attempts to reach Marshall's family at 2825 75th Pl. in Landover, Md., failed, however, and the Department of Defense Southeast Asia office reported no information available on Ward.

Storm Kills 13 in It

Reuter

MESSINA, Sicily, J

The death toll from the storm which have lashed southern Italy rose to 13 today as people drove through waters swollen by the storm. The death toll rose to 13 today as people drove through waters swollen by the storm.