

SFChronicle

JAN 31 1973

# Some POWs May Still Want to Sleep on Floor

By Charles Howe

The government has made a number of studies on the problems of dealing with psychiatric casualties among returning American prisoners of war, and one of these studies will soon be published.

The study was done by Dr. Julius Segal, a psychologist, and it is scheduled to be published in the February issue of the magazine, *Military Medicine*. \*

Segal stressed yesterday that the conclusions in the four-month study are his alone, adding he had no idea how many of his recommendations may be acted upon.

Segal is chief of the Program and Evaluations Branch of the National Institute of Mental Health in Bethesda, Md.

Expanding upon an investigation that began at the end of the Korean War when he interviewed repatriated American servicemen, some of his conclusions show that:

- Some of the men coming back from Vietnam may go through a period of dejection and apathy. Later, they will show anger and hostility

that was of necessity masked while in captivity.

"A clear requirement exists for an initial period to allow feelings their free expression in an environment marked by understanding and acceptance and freedom from undue constraints and stress," Segal recommends.

- While men imprisoned for short periods of time will want a speedy return home, others held in captivity for years may not. Indeed, this feeling is shared by some of their wives.

"Preliminary data based on interviews with wives of POWs suggest strongly that most feel a similar need for a period in which to prepare for the stark realities of the POW's return.

"Some cite their strong convictions that their husbands will want to prepare themselves physically and psychologically, while others note their own and their children's requirement for a period of time in which their lives can be psychologically restructured to prepare for the event."

- Many of the returning men may be more comfortable among themselves as they adjust and perhaps something in the nature of a

military "halfway house" may be appropriate for these men.

"The sense of isolation and abandonment felt by many POWs will be exacerbated when the men are confronted with an avalanche of family change ...

"In structuring post-rehabilitation procedures, strong consideration appears to be merited for providing a relatively protected setting in which the now former POWs can interact for a time as a group."

In a telephone conversation yesterday with *The Chronicle*, Segal stressed that his recommendations were not to be construed as a blanket panacea.

"We are dealing with a small enough number of men so as to make individual treatment appropriate. In any case, you can't generalize about a whole group of men; there are all sorts of variables."

In his study completed last year, Segal stated:

"The culture shock for the returnee is likely to be enormous, and a logical requirement exists, therefore (for) ... not only factual news but an orientation to the sweeping social changes that have evolved during his absence."

Years of living in an alien environment will have deeply changed some of the men. These changes may even include a tendency to eat at first only with a spoon, prison-fashion. In other cases some may be more comfortable squatting rather than sitting. A few initially may prefer sleeping on the floor.

"It is a fair assumption that some brief period will be necessary to allow the POW to begin relearning basic social skills, to adapt to a society in which he has become unaccustomed — even where rudimentary activities as eating and sleeping are concerned."

See SFChronicle 17 Feb 73, "Most POWs in 'Real Good' Shape." Col. John W. Ord, commander of Clark Air Base Hospital, says that applies also to their mental condition.

\* THIS FILE, FEB