

## "Other Than Honorable Conditions" Flier Who Balked Will Be Discharged

SAIGON (AP) — Capt. Michael J. Heck said today he doesn't anticipate his life will be affected adversely by the equivalent of an undesirable discharge that the Air Force is giving him for refusing to bomb North Vietnam.

A telephone call at 4:30 a.m. awakened the 30-year-old B52 pilot at U Taphao Air Base in southern Thailand to bring him the news that the Air Force had decided to discharge him rather than bring court-martial charges.

The call was from Marvin Karpatkin, a lawyer for the

American Civil Liberties Union in New York. Heck said the commander of the 307th Strategic Wing at U Taphao, Col. Donald Davis, confirmed that he had been given a discharge under "other than honorable conditions."

"I'M PLEASED," the Chula Vista, Calif., flier said in an interview. "We're planning an appeal on the type of discharge to have it upgraded. Other than honorable is comparable to an enlisted man's undesirable discharge. Practically speaking, I'll lose certain Veterans Administration benefits.

"From a point of principle, I feel my record justifies a better type discharge. There will be other grounds we'll be using in my appeal such as my conscientious objector status. I don't feel ashamed. In fact, I feel kind of proud of my stand. If the discharge doesn't get changed, I don't anticipate it will affect my life adversely."

Heck, after 175 B52 missions and 100 other combat missions, balked at flying last Dec. 26 during the height of the massive attacks against the Hanoi and Haiphong regions of North Vietnam. He said later that he refused because "the goals do not justify the mass destruction and killing."

"I RECEIVED support from people all over the world," Heck said today. "My parents and I received in excess of 1,000 letters from all over the world. Only six were against me. Very little mail

was from the antiwar groups which you'd expect. Only two letters came from those groups. There were an awful lot of letters supporting me from active and retired military people and dozens of letters from clergymen."

He read aloud one letter to his parents from Donny Osmond, leader of the Osmond Brothers singing group, who wrote:

"We have heard of your son's brave stand against the bombing of Vietnam. We heartily approve of his 'strike.' A petition in favor of your son's action has been going around West Los Angeles, Brentwood, Rancho Park, Beverly Hills, Hollywood, etc. Many television people, singers, actors, etc., are behind you. We all wish your son the

best of luck. We're all behind him."

Heck said many of the letters supporting his stand were from families of prisoners of war.

"It is most touching to see people who suffered directly write," he said. "Many of the people admitted they changed their minds about the war."

The cease-fire in Vietnam "is a step in the right direction," Heck said, but "I'd like to see the whole thing over with. It bothers me that bombers are still going out of U Taphao. They're still moving at a very regular pace. A lot of bombers are taking off."

WHILE THE United States has halted bombing of North and South Vietnam, B52 raids are continuing in Laos.

Heck said he is leaving Sunday for Barksdale Air Force Base, the headquarters of the 596th Bomb Squadron near Shreveport, La., where he will be discharged. He expects this will take about a week.

Then he'll visit friends and family in Chula Vista. In June, he plans to begin graduate work in theater at the University of South Carolina, in Columbia.

"I'll be on a teaching assistantship, teaching fundamental public speaking," he said.

Since he was taken off combat status, he has been performing "administrative du-

ties," writing citations for awards to others. Heck himself has the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Air Medal with 10 Oak Leaf Clusters and two Presidential Unit Citations.

He said he believes the Air Force gave him the kind of discharge it did "because they were afraid they would set a precedent if they gave me an honorable discharge and it might encourage other people to take the position I took.

"I can see their point. But in a way, with the hostilities supposedly over, it seems like a moot point."

In Washington, the Air Force said it accepted Heck's offer to resign "for the good of the service."