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# Ex-POW Is Irked by Protesters

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BILOXI—A Louisiana man held captive for seven years said today at Keesler Air Force Base he was "a little bit mad" when he found out while still in captivity that American war protesters had visited in enemy territory.

Asked if he considered their actions treason, 40-year-old Lt. Col. Thomas J. Curtis of Alexandria said, "I wouldn't put a title on it . . . but I feel like they had a right to dissent . . . that was one of the reasons I was sitting in jail."

Curtis added, however, "I feel like they should have confined their feelings to the home port, the U.S."

CURTIS WAS interviewed today along with four other Air Force officers held in North Vietnam for as long as seven years. — Maj. Murphy Neal Jones of Baton Rouge, Lt. Col. Bruce G. Seeber of West Monroe, Maj. Thomas Collins of Jackson, Miss., and Col. George R. Hall of Hattiesburg.

All arrived in mid-February at Keesler where they were reunited with their families and have undergone medical examinations and debriefing. All expect to go home today or tomorrow.

The returnees expressed appreciation to the American public and to the press for their interest in the POWs but indicated they'd like to have all questions asked today so they can be left alone to get back into the swing of American life.

Jones, a former Tulane Green Wave linebacker, said he wants to see the New Orleans Saints and some of his former Tulane coaches and that he'd like to walk the streets of Baton Rouge and have his friends think "I've just been gone a few days."

For the most part the returnees declined to answer questions about the conditions of their captivity, but they did enlarge on what they did to pass the time.

HALL, A golf buff, said he would "play 18 holes of golf a day in my head."

Curtis said he discovered his imagination wasn't large enough for such feats, and added humorously, "Then I found out about people like Col. Hall who were playing 18 holes of golf a day and I started worrying about them."

Curtis, a Houston native, said he kept track of time by keeping up with

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which days were Sundays and then "going from there."

About length of captivity, Curtis said, "sometimes I had to make a conscious effort to remember how long it had been . . . I saw people as they had been five years ago."

COLLINS, JONES and Seeber told newsmen they spent lots of time building dream houses in their minds.

Told some returnees said they had built \$250,000 residences in their minds, Collins laughed and said, "I just couldn't seem to get one under that."

Asked if the military had given them adequate preparation for captivity, Hall expressed what his fellow POWs said they felt. Terming the survival training they underwent adequate, Hall said he had believed "it can't happen to me" and speculated that "my own personal preparation was probably inadequate."

All five men, Air Force career officers, said they feel they deserve nothing special for being POWs. "We did our job; we knew that this might happen," said Hall.

HOW DO POWs feel about the idea

of amnesty for draft dodgers? Curtis said, "I feel like we have rules and law and if we don't abide by them we can be expected to suffer the consequences. They didn't fulfill their obligations to their country."

Welcome-home festivities for the POWs are being planned throughout the nation, despite Defense Department wishes to keep the activities "low key."

ASKED WHAT he wants as far as a homecoming goes, Curtis said he doesn't like the limelight but after seeing the expression on the faces of Americans on the way home, "I wouldn't deny them anything."

Jones was asked if his training as an athlete helped him and he said, "I played all my high school and college games over in my head and my teams did much better in the replays."

Jones echoed the feeling of the others that war protests prolonged the conflict. "I think the North Vietnamese fed on this type of action."

He said he turned over in his head every day a quote from Alabama football coach Paul "Bear" Bryant, "I am badly wounded but not yet slain. I shall lie here and bleed awhile and then I shall rise again."