

War Protesters Criticized

Alvarez Meets Press

By Duffy Jennings

Lieutenant Commander Everett Alvarez Jr., held prisoner in North Vietnam longer than any other American serviceman, said yesterday he believes anti-war protests in this country prolonged his captivity.

"I feel, as I'm sure most of the other men there did, that anti-war activities did prolong our stay," he said.

The 35-year-old Navy pilot, who spent 8½ years in confinement, met with newsmen at the Oakland Naval Hospital for the first time since his release February 12.

Clad in a crisp new uniform with two rows of ribbons and his gold flying wings above the pocket, Alvarez appeared shy and often nervous before the barrage of lights, microphones and cameras.

FAITH

He declined, as have other former POWs, to discuss any details of his "internment," citing his unwillingness to jeopardize those not yet released.

At the outset of the press conference, Alvarez reiterated his faith in America.

"Even though there have been many changes in our society," he said, "the American people are still the same — they're honest and decent.

"This just confirms my convictions that it was all worth it."

Asked about his reaction to anti-war activities by his younger sister, Delia, Alvarez said:

FONDA

"I'm convinced her activities were based on emotion. We were there a long time. She wanted us home. She wanted me home. But I haven't had a chance yet to talk to her about it.

"As a military man" — which, he said, he intends to remain — "I support the policies of this country."

Alvarez said he was aware of visits to Hanoi by anti-war activists Jane Fonda and former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark, but that he had not seen them — nor did he want to.



LIEUTENANT COMMANDER ALVAREZ
'I support the policies of this country'

"We heard they were in town," he said. "We didn't care for it at all."

EX-WIFE

Alvarez said he and other prisoners received news about the war and America mostly from "new shoot-downs," indicating the POWs were permitted to fraternize, but an attempt by one reporter to confirm that was met with a polite "no comment."

The Salinas-born pilot also expressed his distaste for draft evades.

"I don't think very much of them," he said. "When called upon to serve, they should do it."

Alvarez parried inquiries about his former wife, Tangee, who obtained a Mexi-

can divorce from him two years ago and has since remarried and borne a daughter.

"I think all that needs to be said about that has already been said," he replied. "I will have nothing further to comment."

Doctors at the Naval hos-

pital have said Alvarez is in excellent condition — a fact the pilot himself said "surprised" him. He declined, however, to discuss his treatment by his captors.

Alvarez, reared in Salinas and graduated from the University of Santa Clara, said the Mexican-American movement in this country "is all new" to him and that he "had much to learn about it."

He said he was pleased with changing styles in clothing, including mini-skirts. "They're very nice."

NIGHT OUT

Alvarez confirmed spending a recent evening in San Francisco with former Minnesota Vikings quarterback and boyhood friend, Joe Kapp.

"I don't really know where I was," he said, quickly adding that he meant it only in a geographical sense.

"The skyline has changed," he said. "So many of the places I used to go (in San Francisco) are no longer there.

"I was rather surprised that night, being out and enjoying myself like that. It was almost as if it was only yesterday, and nothing had happened."