



AP Wirephoto

COLONEL KEIRN  
'Oh, no, not again'

## POW Twice --He Rates His Captors

Tampa, Fla.

Air Force Colonel Richard P. Keirn, who twice in his 48 years has been a prisoner of war, said POWs in Germany "were treated like men, but in North Vietnam we were treated as criminals."

Keirn said yesterday his first reaction when his F-4 Phantom jet was shot down July 24, 1965, was "Oh, no. Not again."

In 1944 he was the co-pilot aboard a B-17 shot down near Leipzig, Germany, and spent the next ten months in a Nazi prisoner of war camp where he said conditions were "very humane."

"It was definitely good for the conditions of the country at the time," Keirn said of his experience in Germany. "We were treated like men."

But in North Vietnam, he said, "we were treated like criminals. We saw each other only occasionally." Keirn said the men were moved from camp to camp frequently, and as prisoners passed each other "we'd pass any information we could as quickly as possible."

The 30-year Air Force veteran said the men were allowed regular exercise only after 1969, and this change may have been due to the death of North Vietnamese leader Ho Chi Minh or allied progress in the war.

In the last months before release, the captors began feeding the men better to get them "in better physical shape," he said.

But in the 7½ lonely years of imprisonment he said meals consisted of rice, soup, bread — if a bakery was near the camp — and a small piece of meat once in a while.

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