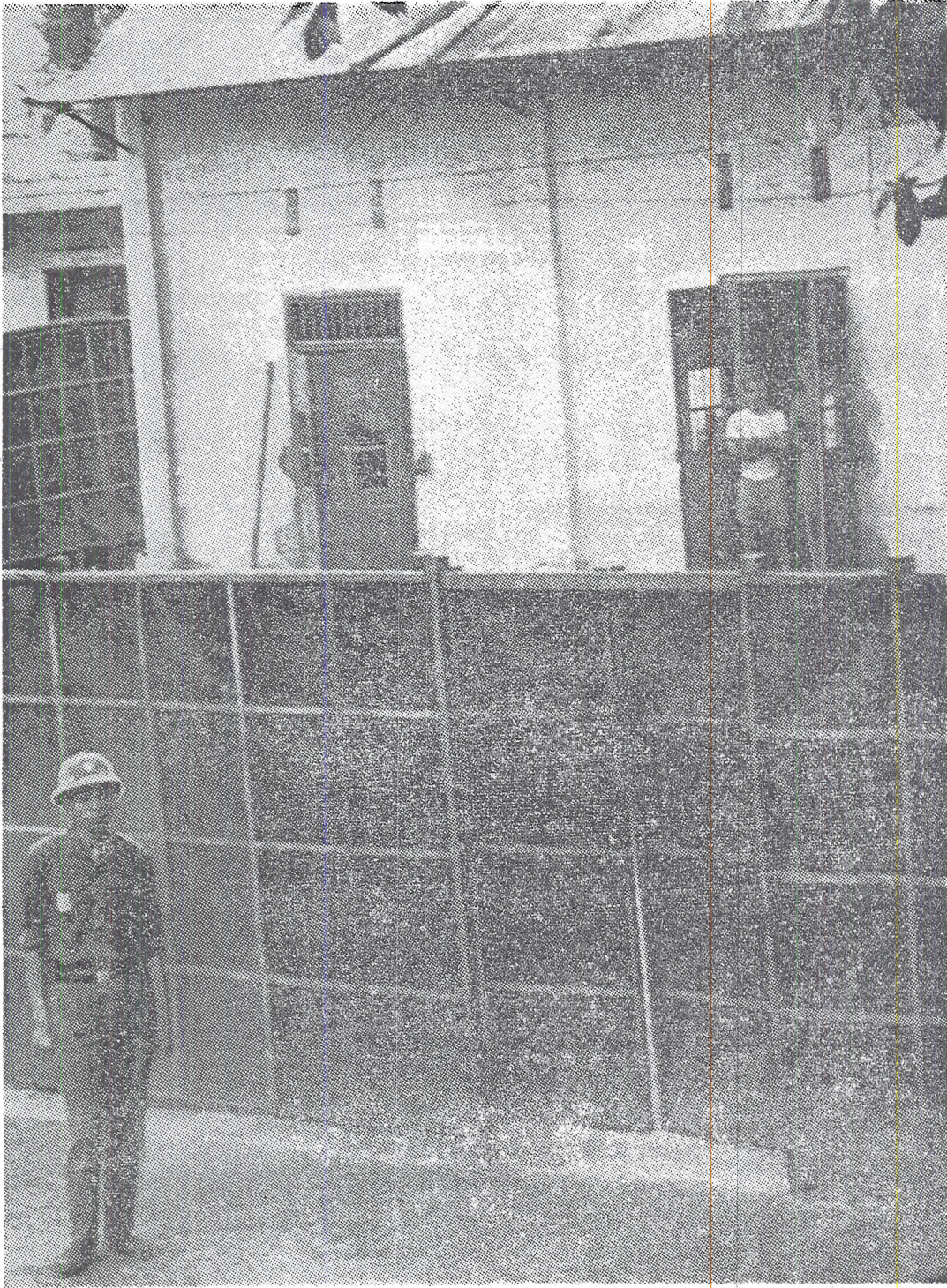


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The Last Minutes Inside a POW Camp



UPI Telephoto

American prisoners stood outside their rooms in the prison camp while a guard stood nearby

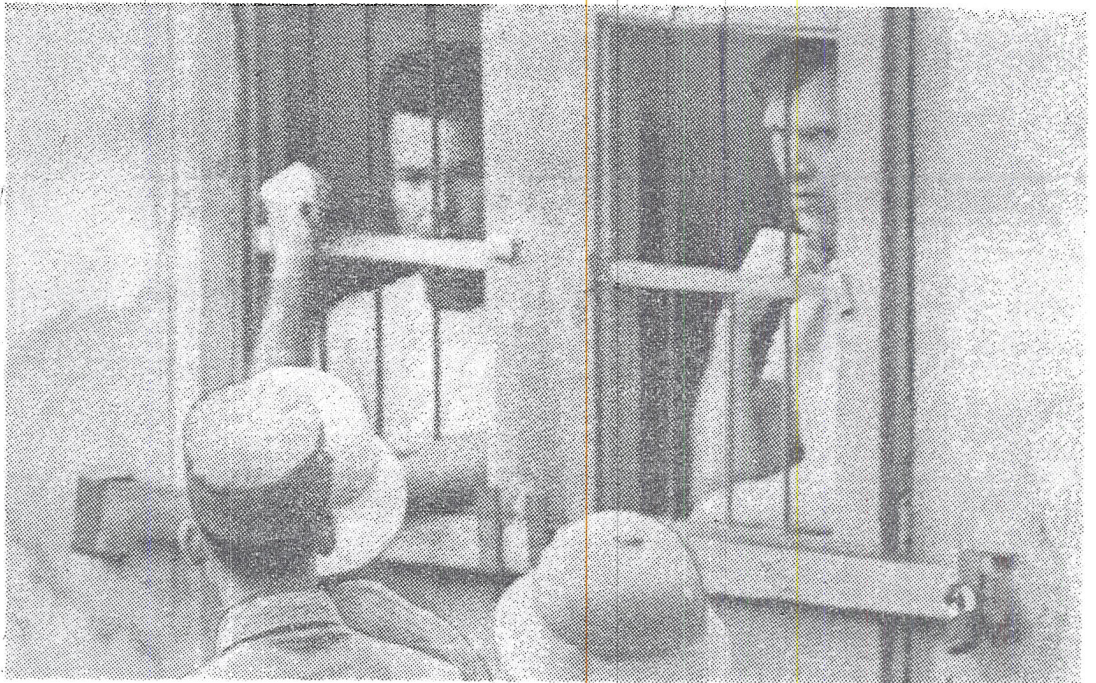
Hanoi

The American prisoner freed yesterday had been detained in a one-story, tin-roofed barracks surrounded by watchtowers, a man-high metal fence and some barbed wire.

The drab barracks, in a residential quarter of the city, was obviously not the notorious Hanoi Hilton but a transit camp.

When members of the international control commissions visited the camp yesterday morning, the Americans were detained in 11 rooms on the ground floor.

Each room had a locked wooded door and a barred lookout window. The prisoners, some bare-chested, others in gray prison garb with numbers stamped on



AP Wirephoto

Two U.S. prisoners of war peered through the bars as North Vietnamese guards strolled by

the back, were gripping the iron bars.

Nine to 11 POWs were locked in one room. They crowded at the door to watch the control commission arriving to inspect the camp, one of the prelimi-

naries for the release.

Some POWs hid their faces. Others stuck their hands through the bars to give V-for-victory signs when spotting Western reporters. Others made obscene gestures when filmed

by foreign newsmen.

When the Joint Military Commission and International Control Commission delegates invited a group of POWs for interviews, four were brought in. An unidentified American POW officer told the commission they would not reply to questions but wanted the ranking POW, Air Force Colonel John P. Flynn, 50, to answer for the whole group.

A spokesman for the four prisoners also said they wanted to walk out of the conference room if Western and local newsmen continued taking pictures of the POWs.

The North Vietnamese camp commander granted the POWs the right to refuse to answer and the prisoners were walked back to their cells.

After the commissions' visit, the prisoners got new clothes, showered and shaved. They then boarded buses inside the detention camp compound and drove off through the streets packed with children squealing "Look the prisoners are leaving. Hoa binh — peace."



AP Wirephoto

Four U.S. servicemen were brought out to be interviewed but they refused to talk

Associated Press