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**Hanoi Officials 'Thwarted'**

# POWs Kept 'Iron

Andrews AFB, Md.

Americans jailed in the Hanoi Hilton tapped secret messages, tossed notes between cells, yelled out commands and maintained iron discipline which thwarted their North Vietnamese captors, one of the senior commanders said yesterday.

"Our communication link was at times tenuous," Air Force Colonel Norman C. Gaddis of Dandridge, Tenn., conceded, "But we did manage by tapping on the table, through the walls, by tossing notes and at times just yelling out vital information to the camp, so that we directed the activities of the wing.

"And it was, we believe, a very effective military organization," Gaddis said at a news conference. "And because we were organized, we were able to thwart the

efforts of the North Vietnamese as they attempted to exploit us for propaganda purposes.

"We had problems of discipline. They were not major problems. I think the same type of problems you would encounter in normal military organizations."

## STRAYS

Gaddis, 49, said the moral force of several hundred tightly knit professional officers quickly pulled strays back in line.

The prisoners of war in the old French prison in the heart of North Vietnam's capital city organized themselves into the "Fourth Combined POW Wing," Gaddis said.

"We established the organization in accordance with our military doctrine,"

he said. "The senior officers were responsible for the development and the execution of policies. . . We developed an organization dedicated to resisting the Vietnamese.

"The senior officers were always isolated. We were kept away from the rest of the POWs because the Vietnamese, I think, feared the influence which we would have over them."

## COMMANDER

The POWs were commanded by Air Force Colonel John P. Flynn of Shalimar, Fla., who was the senior prisoner. Gaddis and Air Force Colonel David Wynn of Minneapolis, Minn., were on his staff.

Gaddis said that, despite isolation, the senior officers were able to form camp policy and transmit it by sur-

reptitious signals through a precise chain of command.

"The senior officer in each of the communal rooms was considered to be the squadron commander," Gaddis said. "And he had an executive officer. And in turn they had flight leaders or duty sections.

## RELEASE

"The squadron commander had the same function that he would have had were he a free man. He had the responsibility for discipline. He also dealt with such things as awards and decorations for those who had done outstanding work, and in addition he would have the opportunity to submit effectiveness reports on everyone during the period of time in which he supervised them."

Gaddis said, "One of the most important areas that we dealt with had to do with our release, and we developed this policy in February and March of 1971."

The men anticipated being released in groups over a period of time. Gaddis said, and agreed not to discuss treatment or conditions in the prison until all were out. He said they also agreed not to discuss prisoner misconduct except before proper boards of inquiry.

"And I would like to ask those who are present to please not judge an individual on the basis of what they may have heard or seen," he said. "I believe it is only fair to this individual to allow him to come back and tell his own story."

Associated Press

# Discipline'