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Captain Says Resistance by P.O.W.'s Forced

Captors to Be Brutal

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WASHINGTON, March 30—

One of the senior American officers in the North Vietnamese prison camps into today that the prisoners "forced" their captors "to be brutal to us" by resisting their demands to the last possible point of human endurance.

Navy Capt. Jeremiah A. Denton, who has been nominated for promotion to admiral, said the policy of resistance was designed to provoke a public outcry against the North Vietnamese and put pressure on them into improving camp conditions.

Those conditions improved dramatically in October, 1969, and many observers give the credit to protests mounted by the Government and the families of the prisoners.

Captain Denton's comments came as more former P.O.W.'s elaborated on charges of torture and brutality made by other prisoners yesterday. For example, Lieut. Comdr. Paul E. Galanti of Richmond said he had been drugged and suffered

hallucinations for months afterward.

Maj. Russell Temperly of Goffstown, N. H., added an insight into how the men survived such treatment.

"We became completely dead inside," he said. "The day of the actual release, if the airplanes had just turned around and taken off, I probably just would have dropped my head."

Meanwhile, there were these additional developments concerning prisoners of war:

Thirty-two former inmates, including Lieut. Comdr. Philip Kientzler, the last man shot down over North Vietnam, left Clark Air Base in the Philippines for home. The remaining 116 in the final group will leave over the weekend.

A Pentagon official said the "reports that some of our men were dying" helped lead to the unsuccessful raid on the Son Tay prison camp near Hanoi in November, 1970.

In Saigon, American officials said they were convinced that some Americans were still being held captive by Communist troops in South Vietnam. They pointed to the case of

Capt. Robert White, whose name suddenly appeared two days ago as a Vietcong prisoner.

The first description of prison conditions in Laos came from Ernest C. Brace, a civilian pilot, now in the Philippines. Mr. Brace, one of only nine prisoners to emerge from Laos, said he had been buried up to his neck for a week after he tried to escape from the Pathet Lao. More than 300 Americans are still listed as missing in Laos.

Complex Interplay

As the stories of mistreatment continue to be told, Captain Denton's comments about prisoner attitudes added a new dimension to the complex relationship between captor and captive that existed in the prisons of Indochina.

In an interview with The Associated Press, Captain Denton noted that when he took command of a North Vietnam prison compound known as the Zo in October, 1965 — the senior officer in each camp automatically assumed command—he got tough with his own men.

"When I learned that some men were writing biographies and military information [unclassified] due to mere intimidation from threats, I put the policy out that they were not to succumb to threats but must stand up and say no," he said.

"I tried to put out involved orders saying that you should die before giving the enemy classified information," he added.

"Figuratively speaking," Captain Denton went on, "we now began to lie on the railroad tracks hoping that the sheer bulk of our bodies would slow down the train. We forced them to be brutal to us, and this policy was successful in that the consequent exposure to their brutality ultimately caused United States public and official pressure to bear so heavily on our captors that treatment was eventually improved and meanwhile our honor was preserved."

Another result of this policy was considerable guilt among the men who did break down and either gave military information or signed statements. According to some prisoners,

the remorse was sometimes so great they wished for death, and even contemplated suicide.

Captain Denton's comments hinted that the torture of American prisoners resulted partly from their own attitudes. Other information indicated that conditions varied widely in different places, at different times, and among different prisoners.

The worst treatment was reserved for senior officers like Captain Denton who encouraged the policy of resistance. In one case he was shackled in a darkened room for a week and at the end, he said, "I was like an animal. Not even a healthy animal, like a crippled roach. I was pretty much of a vegetable."

Younger men apparently did not suffer quite so badly, and after 1969, life improved for everyone.

We had periods when it was not at all unhappy," said Lieut. Col. Leo Thorsness of Sioux Falls, S. D. In later years, he noted, the men were able to play cards, study a wide variety of subjects, and otherwise amuse themselves.