

(Major Floyd Thompson, NYTimes,  
SFChronicle 17 Mar;  
SFChronicle 20 Mar)

## Civilian Held 5 Years

# A POW vs. Nixon, War

By Maitland Zane

An unabashedly anti-war civilian who spent five years in a POW camp near Hanoi denounced President Nixon and the "evil" Vietnam war yesterday.

Navy officers looked on glumly as Gary L. Daves told a battery of newsmen and TV crews at Oakland Naval Hospital:

"Mr. President of the United States, your integrity was not shown to me by your handling of the Vietnam tragedy. I do not thank you for it. For what you did to Vietnam in 1972, history will pin you to the wall, and I say it here."

### CONTRAST

In sharp contrast to the "God bless you, President Nixon" statements made by other returning POWs, Daves charged:

"Our past policies on Vietnam have been based upon premises of arrogance, with the tragedy that this arrogance has been combined with a power that made it evil.

"I do not exclude previous Administrations or most of us, the American public, from responsibility here. Our executives, in the name of the American people, have assumed the right of life or death over countless people in Indochina—even now the bombs fall in Cambodia. Our assumption of that right is derived only from our power. I say that is evil.

"The best of the peace movement finally recog-

nized and opposed this evil. And it's my profound belief that during my time of detention the peace movement represented me, represented America and its ideals far better than our Government."

### BACKGROUND

Daves, 30, a chemist from Mescalero, N.M. had spent two years in the Peace Corps in Ethiopia when he went to Vietnam in late 1967 with the International Volunteer Service.

He had spent 4½ months in a mobile team, giving laboratory demonstrations to elementary school teachers when he was captured in Hue in February, 1968, during the Tet offensive.

Daves said he opposed the war when he went to Vietnam and that his anti-war sentiments deepened as a prisoner.

### CELLMATE

For five years he was a cellmate of Captain (now Major) Floyd Thompson, the Green Beret who spent the longest time in captivity, nearly nine years.

He and Thompson never stopped arguing the morality of the war, with Thompson a "loyal supporter" of the President and Daves just as violently opposed to it.

"A very good man," Daves said. "We tolerated each other."

Daves, who is about 6 feet 4, said he and Thompson were treated "humanely."

He said he had "no reason to disbelieve" that other Americans were tortured

but he said the Saigon regime also tortured prisoners.

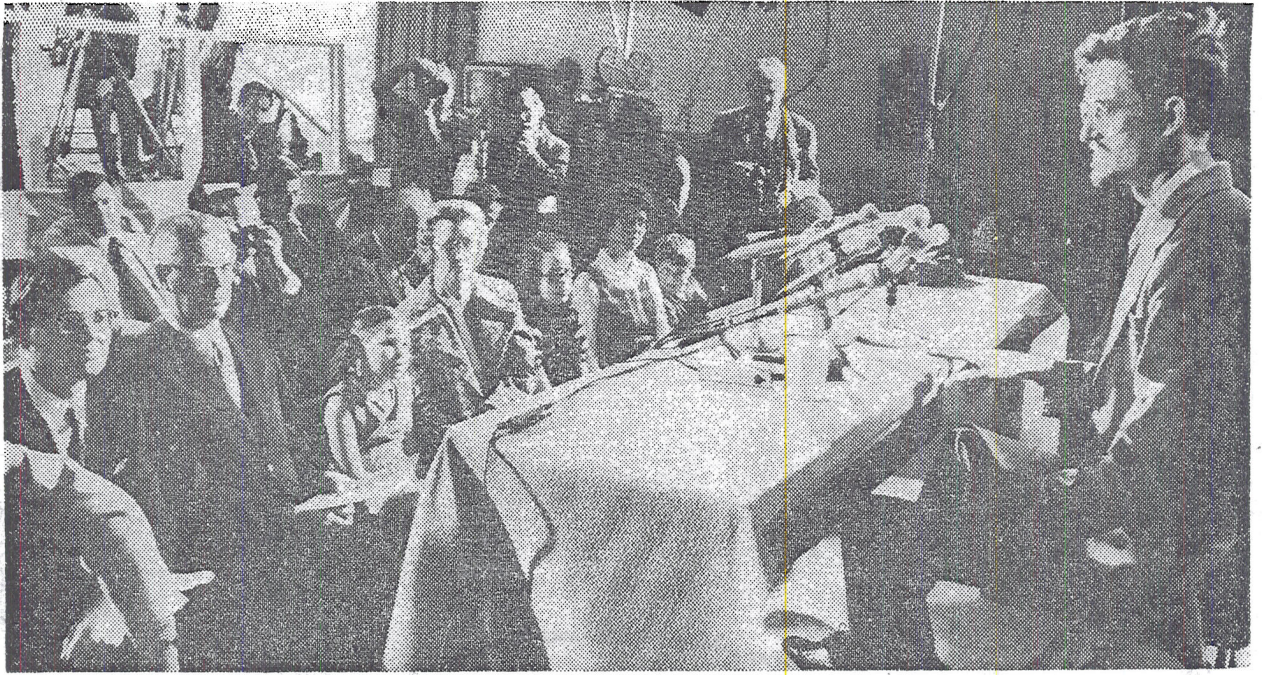
The tall, bearded, rail-thin Daves was wearing mod glasses and a double-knit brown suit yesterday when he told his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Glenn Daves, that "I have the right to get in my first two cents worth in over five years."

Daves' father, who is the superintendent of schools in his small New Mexico town, said "I agree with some of the things my son said."

Other family members in

the audience included a sister-in-law, Mrs. Doyle Daves, and her children Laura, 10, Anne, 7, and Glenn, 6.





Gary Daves (right) at the Naval Hospital press conference, with his family in the front row