

NYTimes

## 3 P.O.W.'S ADMIT TALKING TO FOE

Fliers Here Tell of Torture  
and Their Resistance

By EDWARD HUDSON

Three Navy airmen told yesterday of having given information under torture to the North Vietnamese. But each said he had been able to offer some resistance and none seemed in any way apologetic.

"I would say I did not break," said Capt. James P. Mehl of Hauppauge, L. I., a squadron executive officer who was shot down on May 30, 1967. Although he had back and leg injuries, he said, he was tortured with "ropes, nylon straps, jumbo bars on the ankles and wrist locks." He said he had never lost his will to resist, but then added:

"I didn't resist completely. I gave in on certain propaganda statements."

Lieut. Comdr. Read B. Meclarey of Old Greenwich, Conn., who was shot down four days before Captain Mehl, said he had been tied with nylon straps "to the point of extreme pain" and left that way "until I broke."

Commander Macleary, who said he was "allergic to pain," reported that he had tried in vain to lose consciousness. Although he gave some military and personal information in an initial round of torturing, he said, he found himself "able to resist again" a second time when questioned about military targets.

### Resistance, at First

The third airman, Lieut. George T. Coker of Houston, a bombardier-navigator shot down on Aug. 27, 1966, said he had resisted at first, but after a period of time had yielded some information. Like Captain Mehl, he did not say what that was. But said he did not consider this being "broken" because "we'd come back the next afternoon and fight them some more."

The three were interviewed at the news conference at St. Albans Naval Hospital in Queens. A spokesman at the hospital said the former P.O.W.'s had withheld their comments about prison life until after the last American prisoner of war was freed.

They began the conference by holding up a large multi-colored banner, a gift from a class of second graders, that read: "Today is the first day of the rest of your life." A smiling Captain Mehl called it "typical of the type of things we've been getting."

Then one by one they told of their capture and subsequent treatment.

Commander Meclarey said he had been tortured after his arrival by oxcart in Hanoi following his capture. Asked if he had advised his captors that this was contrary to the Geneva accords on the treatment of war prisoners, the officer said he had been answered: "You're not a prisoner, you're a criminal." He said his treatment from then until 1969, when conditions finally improved, ranged from "brutal to indifferent."