

POW

Biloxi, Miss.

exempt from retribution."

Brigadier General John P. Flynn, the highest ranking U.S. officer to be held prisoner of war in North Vietnam, said yesterday that torturers probably could have forced him to shoot his own mother.

Flynn, an Air Force colonel when his F-105 jet was brought down over North Vietnam Oct. 27, 1967, said he did not want to get into details about his own treatment. He spoke at a news conference at Keesler Air Force Base.

Fynn, 50, who was promoted to brigadier general yesterday, told newsmen he thought any propaganda statements wrung from prisoners "under torture, or reasonable duress should be

HURT

"The thing that hurt me the most personally was that after they had tortured me and got me to answering questions I came to the realization that I was not as

'Would Have Shot

strong as I thought I was," he said.

"Up to this point I had a great deal of confidence in the toughness of John Peter Flynn. Suddenly I was in the hands of the 'V' and the 'V' were making me do what they wanted.

"I realized I was not as tough as I thought. I realized they could bring me to a point where, if they asked me to shoot my mother, I probably would have done it. The impact of that realization was the toughest thing that I had to handle."

To the recurring questions of whether prisoners collaborated with the enemy, Flynn said the Department of Defense has stated it will not press charges and "I agree with that policy."

"They would not have gotten any statements had there not been torture," Flynn said.

Flynn said the North Vietnamese were masters at making it seem that a prisoner was cooperating with them and that "in many cases men who appeared to be cooperating were not actually."

In addition, he said, "many people make mistakes, many people are victimized, many people are tricked. And the mistakes were made in an atmosphere of tension, pressure."

"It is neither Christian nor military to nag a repentant sinner to death," he said.

CODE

He said the Code of Conduct for prisoners — which everyone in the armed forces learns — was "beautiful in principle, an anchor to hold onto in order to keep themselves straight.

"We senior officers are going to form a study group to examine the doctrine of the code," he said.

"We are going to attempt to update the doctrine, but I don't think we would undertake a revision of the code."

He said the study will examine such areas as "whether it is reasonable, for example, for a man to take heavy torture in order not to bow — that sort of thing."

The military code forbids a prisoner of war to give any information other than

his name, rank, and serial number.

QUESTIONS

Flynn's comment came after repeated questions about whether any charges were contemplated against American POWs who made statements which North Vietnam used as propaganda.

As the senior officer in the Hanoi prison, Flynn organized what came to be known as the fourth Allied Prisoners of War Wing.

"I would like to report that the fourth Allied POW Wing is closed," he said,

"but unfortunately that is not the case."

"We have learned that two members of the wing, both Thais, are still there. We are terribly distressed by this."

Flynn said one of the men was a Thai sergeant whose last words to the last man out were, "Please tell Col. Flynn to get me out of here."

Flynn declined to say how his organization of POWs was formed or how it operated because he thought the techniques used should be kept secret if possible.

Associated Press

Mother'