

P.O.W. 'CONFESSION' IS TIED TO TORTURE

Flier Held by Chinese Says
They Dictated Statement

CHAMPAIGN, Ill., April 6 (AP)—Attempting to extract a "confession" and military information, the Chinese tortured an American flier who strayed over their territory after a combat mission against North Vietnam, the returned prisoner says.

Air Force Maj. Philip E. Smith, held in prisons in Canton and Peking for 7½ years, said yesterday that he had been physically abused and mentally harassed during his incarceration.

But he said that after the visits to China by President Nixon and Henry A. Kissinger, conditions improved.

"I was treated very kindly," he said. "I was treated with respect."

Major Smith, whose F-104 jet was shot down by ground fire off Hainan Island on Sept. 20, 1965, when it reportedly strayed off course in bad weather, said he learned of President Nixon's and Mr. Kissinger's visits through Chinese propaganda broadcasts and publications.

The major told a news conference at the University of Illinois that three times during his imprisonment he was placed in "torture cuffs," his arms chained behind his back and one of his arms twisted in a painful position. He said that after a week of constant torture he wrote the confession demanded of him on Sept. 19, 1970.

Major Smith, 38 years old, of Roodhouse, Ill., said his arms swelled so that the flesh hid the tight bands of the manacles. The pain in his shoulder was so great, he said, "it felt like it would be fun to have a knife jabbed in it."

He said he was also tortured in January and September, 1969. He wrote his "confession" during the third such session, he said.

"The confession consisted of what they told me to write," he said. Among other things, he wrote that he had intentionally violated Chinese air space, that he deserved to be imprisoned because he was a criminal and that he had "written a large quantity of statements"

belittling Chinese Communism while he was a captive. Only the last statement was true, Major Smith said.

He said he had given some military information because he believed it was in the inter-

est of the United States. He said he had told his captors the type of aircraft he was flying, where he had taken off from, what his mission was and how he had come to be in Chinese air space.