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## Drabic Was Never Tortured

UNION MILLS, Md. (AP) — Sgt. Peter E. Drabic says he was never tortured during his four and a half years as a prisoner of war in Vietnam.

The fact that he was a private first class rather than an officer might have had something to do with it, he said.

"Maybe they thought I didn't have anything to tell them," he said in an interview with the Baltimore Evening Sun Sunday.

The war for Drabic was short.

He was captured 12 days after he landed in South Vietnam and just a few hours after he heard shots in combat for the first time. Drabic said he was captured after an ambush on a mountain top landing zone in Pleiku Province Sept. 24, 1968.

He was marched from sunrise to sunset for two weeks to his first prison camp which he

thought was in Cambodia. His weight dropped from 170 pounds to 113 pounds due to dysentery.

His legs were placed in stocks every night in the two jungle camps where he was held for the first 14 months of captivity.

He learned to eat boiled water lilies, gibbon monkeys and "these little brown things about they size of bicycle ball bearings."

"I think they cared about us," he said of his captors. "Like if an officer had 15 prisoners and only showed up with 13 of them, he'd have to explain what happened to those two guys."

"It's the same way in our Army."

"Anyway, I think they wanted to keep us alive for trading material," he said.

Treatment and living condi-

tions improved once the contingent made it to a prison near Son Tay, although prisoners were still kept isolated.

Despite living in a black cell with little ventilation, he came to see his captors as human beings.

"A lot of them weren't military men, they were just civilians who got drafted like me," he said.

Drabic said he heard of the antiwar movement while in prison and wondering how it would affect him when he got home.

"I always told myself I could go to another country," he said. Then he arrived at Clark Air Force Base in the Philippines after being freed.

"Then I saw the flag and all those men in uniform and I knew everything was all right," he said.