

Ex-POW AF Colonel Seeks Prosecution of Collaborators

By Fred Hoffman

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An Air Force colonel who commanded U.S. war prisoners in North Vietnam has bitterly denounced some POWs as cowards "who openly collaborated with the enemy" and even caused physical harm to some of their comrades.

"I intend to do everything in my power to weed these people out of the system," Col. Theodore W. Guy said yesterday in a telephone interview from Tucson, Ariz. He said there are fewer than 20 collaborators among the 566 returned POWs. He declined to identify them.

Guy said he was "turned in" by other American prisoners and beaten and tortured because of his efforts to establish communications among the POWs and to organize camp life and discipline.

He also said some POWs accepted gratuities from their North Vietnamese captors in the form of extra rations and greater freedom within the walls, and "turned their backs on us."

The former camp commander's accusations were the sharpest attack yet made public, bringing into the open resentments that top Pentagon officials had hoped to smooth over.

The 44-year-old colonel, who spent five years in North Vietnamese hands, said he is in a mood to press charges but wants to be sure first that investigators come up with enough evidence to make the charges stick.

Guy confirmed that he and other senior POWs are moving to enter black marks in the service records of men they regard as collaborators. A bad efficiency report can wreck a military career.

Guy said he was senior ranking officer at a Hanoi prison compound called "The Planatation" for 4½ years.

At first, he said, he commanded 50 pilots. Later he

was senior officer over 108 men who had been captured by the Communists in South Vietnam and Laos. They ranged from private to colonel, he said.

Guy said he knows of POWs who made propaganda tapes without being tortured.

The men who accepted favored treatment from the North Vietnamese "lived pretty good" compared with the rest of the POWs, he said. They walked around looking tanned and fit while "the rest of us sat in little, tiny cells," he added.

A Pentagon spokesman told The Washington Post yesterday that the armed forces' position on collaborators has not changed since April 12, when Dr. Roger Shields, in charge of the POW recovery operation, said the military did not plan to initiate formal charges but would not rule out the possibility that some prisoners might charge others with violations of codes of conduct. The spokesman said investigations at the service level are still under way.

However, a government official who has been in close touch with all of the senior officers in the North Vietnamese prison camps said yesterday that Col. Guy's hard-line position favoring prosecution was not shared by the rest of the camp commanders.

Colonel Guy, the official aid, is regarded in military circles as an "independent, spirited" officer whose outspokenness on POW behavior is not representative of the repatriated senior officers.

Most, if not all, of the other prison camp commanders have indicated they favor an approach in which black marks would be quietly inserted in the service records of known collaborators, thus ruining their military careers, the official said.

Colonel Guy's suggestion of prosecution is regarded by some top government officials as a "breaking of the ranks" that could lead to controversial courts-martial and legal wranglers over the morality of U.S. involvement in the Vietnam war.

In addition, sources said, the charges of serious collaboration resulting in the torture of other prisoners have not yet been borne out by the investigations being conducted by each service branch.