

# The Colonel's Accusing Finger

COLONEL T. W. GUY of the Air Force, a returned Vietnam prisoner of war, has searched his soul and found a compulsion to file charges of collaborating with the enemy against eight of his fellow prisoners, all enlisted men.

In doing so, he has possibly opened the way for a series of courts martial such as discomfited and divided the nation at the close of the Korean war two decades ago, and accomplished little beyond a re-disclosure that men break under the rigors of confinement and torture.

Colonel Guy himself has conceded that some of his fellow-officers, too, had signed statements and made broadcasts favorable to North Vietnam, but did so "under extreme duress." Thus we have Lieutenant Commander John S. McCain III, son of Admiral McCain, recounting his own experiences as a prisoner of war and testifying that other officers were tortured till they agreed to say they weren't tortured.

IF THE EIGHT MEN accused by the colonel are brought to trial — and that is something to be determined by the Secretaries of the Army and Navy — it is quite likely that many more charges of violating the military code will follow. That was anticipated by the Pentagon in its announcement that no POWs would be held to answer for statements they made in prison, and that is an eventuality that many military men of rank are hoping will not come to pass.

But their fears in that respect have promptly been validated by one of the accused men, Staff Sergeant James A. Daly Jr. He has pointed a finger directly at his accuser, and suggested that the colonel may have filed his charges to "cover up" his own derelictions. Nobody in the prison camp received packages from home unless he "did something" for the North Vietnamese, he said, and nobody in the camp received packages from home except Colonel Guy.

Thus do crinations bring recriminations in a situation such as this — a situation involving human nature under unbearable strains. With the painful example of the Korean trials in mind, military men and the nation at large might well regret Colonel Guy's soul-searching.