

First Suicide

By Returned

Viet POW

United Press

Harrison, N.Y.

An Air Force captain who felt "reborn" only four months ago when he was released after more than seven years as a prisoner of war in North Vietnam apparently committed suicide because he came to feel that "life is not worth living," police said yesterday.

The body of Captain Edward Allen Brudno, who would have been 33 years old today, was found in his in-laws' home here yesterday with a plastic bag over his head tied on by a rope.

Police said Brudno left nine sealed letters, a will dated May 22, and an open note, written in French, that said in part, "Life is not worth living." His mother-in-law, who found his body, told police he had been "despondent."

The Westchester county Medical Examiner's office said after examining the body that it would investigate further before assigning an official cause of death. The office said there was "no overt signs of asphyxiation," but it was not ruling that out as the cause.

Brudno's wife, Deborah, was visiting his family in Quincy, Mass., during the

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EX-POW's SUICIDE

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weekend and returned here last night.

Brudno, who was a prisoner from Oct. 18, 1965, when his F-4C jet was shot down, until February 11 of this year, thus apparently was the first ex-POW to take his own life.

His death came only two days after the Pentagon's top medical officer, Dr. Richard S. Wilbur, warned that the ex-prisoners were "in worse condition than everyone thought."

Less than four months ago Brudno himself told a crowd that greeted him at Westover Air Force Base in Massachusetts, "Words like 'unbelievable,' 'exciting,' and 'unreal' vividly describe the fantastic excitement of being reborn." At that time Brudno had been described by medical officers who examined him as "very fit."

Mrs. Milton Gittenstein, Brudno's mother-in-law, who found his body in a bedroom about 12:30 p.m., said he had been "despondent," police said. Jack Kaner, Harrison police detective, said, "There was no indication but that the death was a suicide."

Brudno was born in Quincy, Mass. He attended Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Cambridge, receiving a B. S. degree in 1963. He entered the Air Force in April 1963 and served in a number of posts before his assignment to Southeast Asia in 1965.

Several neighbors on Crawford road in Harrison



UPI Telephoto

CAPTAIN BRUDNO
Apparently suffocation

indicated that Brudno had kept to himself since moving in with the Gittensteins.

Dr. Wilbur had warned on Friday that all of the returned POW's had suffered from mental stress reactions as a result of their long ordeal. He said the 566 U.S. POWs who came back from Indochina were medically "in worse condition than everyone thought" at first, but that few suffered permanent damage from the prolonged ordeal.

Dr. Wilbur, the Pentagon's chief medical officer by virtue of his position as Assistant Defense Secretary for Health, provided the information at a news conference Friday, called to disclose the results of extensive physical and mental examinations given the former prisoners at hospitals across the nation.