

Marine Officer

Ex-POW Denies Misconduct

Lieutenant Colonel Edison W. Miller, who was the highest ranking Marine prisoner in Vietnam, denied yesterday that he did anything "illegal, disloyal, dishonest or harmful to the best interests of my fellow Americans."

Miller, 41, was a prisoner in North Vietnam for five years. Charges were filed against him Tuesday, which could, under the maximum penalty, result in his execution.

Rear Admiral James B. Stockdale, deputy commander of all POWs held in North Vietnam, accused Miller and Navy Captain Walter E. Wilber, both veteran fighter pilots, of aiding the enemy and committing mutiny.

Yesterday, in a statement issued here by his attorney,

Melvin Belli, Miller denied the charges and described the injuries and harsh treatment he suffered in North Vietnam.

Neither Belli nor Miller were available yesterday to answer questions on news stories from 1970 and 1972 which reported he had called U.S. efforts in Vietnam "futile" and "unjust."

Belli was out of town. Robert Ingram, an attorney in Belli's office who is working on the case, said, "We have to get more information from Mr. Miller."

"We have to get the specifics of the charges against him. All we know right at the moment is what Mr. Miller has told us."

Ingram said it would be several days before he or Miller would be ready to add to Miller's statement of yesterday.

INTERVIEW

He had no comment, for example, on an August, 1972, story about Miller being among a group of prisoners who were interviewed by former attorney general Ramsey Clark and other visitors to North Vietnam.

Miller was quoted as telling Clark: "I was injured a little bit when I was shot down, but I fully recovered and I am a little lighter, maybe ten or 15 pounds, but I feel in excellent health. We have got all the exercise time we want."

Earlier, in August 1970, Miller was one of three U.S. pilots who reportedly told a Swedish lawyer they were treated well in North Vietnam and had come to the realization the U.S. was engaged in an "unjust" war in Indochina.

STATEMENT

In May 1972, Miller allegedly was one of eight captive U.S. pilots who signed a statement that the bombing of North Vietnam was "futile." A North Vietnamese representative distributed the statement at the Paris peace talks.



LT. COL. MILLER
Fighter pilot

In a statement distributed yesterday, Miller said, "I am not ashamed of any actions I took as a prisoner and I have not done anything illegal, disloyal, dishonest or harmful to the best interests of my fellow Americans."

"I feel I have kept faith with my country and her fighting men. While a captive, I repeatedly exposed myself to punishment by the North Vietnamese, including threats to my life, through my vigorous actions opposing any unjust or inhumane actions on their part."