

S P C H R O N

Nixon's Call To the Pilot --'A Hero'

Washington

TWA Captain Dale C. Hupe, shot in the stomach in Thursday's \$100 million hijacking attempt, had a phone call from President Nixon yesterday, but was unable to take it.

"Tell him for me," Mr. Nixon told the nurse who answered, "that he is a national hero."

Hupe was sleeping under sedation in the intensive care ward at Fairfax, Va., hospital, but his wife said it was wonderful that the President had called.

CALL

Mr. Nixon placed the call himself and asked for Hupe. When nurse Mary Jane Matovich told him the pilot could not be disturbed the President identified himself and said:

"I served with Captain Hupe on Guadalcanal during World War II and I would like for you to express my personal best wishes to him, and that I wish him a speedy recovery."

"He went through the entire war without a scratch," the President said. "It's too bad he had to be injured this way."

MEETING

The White House said the President recalled having met Hupe in the Pacific when Hupe was a Marine captain and the President was a Navy lieutenant assigned to a Marine air group.

Hupe's wife, who flew in from Kansas with their 19-year-old son Dennis to be with him, said he and his copilot were convinced during Thursday's eight-hour ordeal that they were dealing with "a highly disturbed man."

Mrs. Hupe told reporters that her husband, who is recuperating from a bullet wound in the intestines, was "very calm and very composed" when she talked to him just before he went into surgery.

"He didn't talk much about what actually happened," she said, "but he did say that they had a highly disturbed man aboard."

"I told him we always thought he was a brave man and now he proved it to the whole world," she said.

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