

# POW 'Snapped Cork' After Days of Torture

Washington Post Service.  
Andrews Air Force Base, Md. — When the beating started, Air Force Col. Thomas H. Kirk — who had sat on a stool unshaven and unwashed for 10 days — could resist his North-Vietnamese captors no longer, he said after his return home.

"I snapped my cork," said Kirk, 44. "I rolled up into a fetal position and cried like a baby. When they asked me if I'd make the tape (for broadcast), I said 'Yes, yes, yes.'"

Kirk was one of six Air Force POWs who held a news conference here Wednesday. The men, all released in Hanoi on March 14, described how they were tortured until many made antiwar statements.

**Days on Stool**  
"The North Vietnamese can (force compliance) in a relatively short time," said Kirk, who told reporters how he was made to sit on a stool for days at a time.

"That may not sound very hard, but when you have to sit there for seven days and seven nights with no shaving and no washing, I guarantee it's pretty much of a strain," he said. During a second session, Kirk said, he had to sit for 10 days.

Kirk, a prisoner since October 1967, said a guard would shake him every five minutes so he couldn't sleep. When one "jabbed me in the face with a bamboo stick, I lost my cool and pushed him."

For that, Kirk said, the commander allowed the guard to beat him. During the beating, Kirk said, he broke down and agreed to make the tape.

Kirk said actress Jane Fonda "was duped" by Communist propaganda. He said he would let Americans decide "whether the 480 of us were lying (about the torture) or whether she is misinformed." He suggested that she and other antiwar "radicals" be given "a one-way ticket to Hanoi and let them join the happy society of the North Vietnamese."

## Journalists Released By Viet Cong

Saigon (UPI) — Two American journalists, one a woman, captured Monday by the Viet Cong about 320 miles north of Saigon and released Wednesday, reported they were well treated by their Communist captors.

Daniel Southerland, correspondent for the Christian Science Monitor, and Frances Fitzgerald, author of the book "Fire in the Lake," were the first journalists to be captured in South Vietnam since the Jan. 28 peace agreement.

## N. Viets Saved Admiral's Son

Jacksonville, Fla. (AP) — Navy Lt. Cmdr. John S. McCain III said Wednesday his life was saved by the North Vietnamese because his father was a prominent admiral.

McCain was badly injured in

**Slide Kills 12**  
Reuters News Agency.  
Lima — A landslide crashed onto the sleeping Peruvian village of Huatan, killing 12 people, injuring 10 and sweeping away a dozen houses, police said Wednesday.

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# Last Known U.S. POW Has Returned Home

McGuire AFB, N.J. (UPI)—Capt. Robert T. White, the last known American prisoner of war, set foot in the continental United States for the first time in more than three years Wednesday and thanked a rainsoaked crowd for welcoming him.

Some 150 persons cheered as the 32-year-old Army officer walked off an Air Force plane and saluted three officers.

He told the crowd, "Every place I've been, they've said thank you to me. I should say thank you to you. I'm proud of you and thank you for coming out to see me in the rain."

White of Newport News, Va., appeared to have trouble walking and was aided to an Army



—AP Wirephoto.  
White

sedan. He was driven to Valley Forge General Hospital in Phoenixville, Pa.

White was flown here from Clark Air Base in the Philippines on a C141, which landed in Hawaii for refueling.

He was greeted there by 600 persons, shouting "Aloha, welcome home."

White, who made 180 pair of chopsticks during his 3½ years of captivity, looked weak and pale.

He had been listed missing in action until last week when the Viet Cong announced he was being held in the Mekong Delta.

He told doctors after his release Sunday that twice during his 3½ years in captivity

he became so ill he thought he would die.

White's reconnaissance plane was shot down over the Mekong Delta Nov. 15, 1969. He spent 41 months of his captivity in a bamboo cage.

He told officials he "was treated pretty well" by his captors.

White, was the last of 597 POWs released during the 67 days of "Operation Homecoming."



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