CHAPTER 2

THE LONG LOOK BACK

PRISONERS IN PROFILE

Learning Objective**:** *To develop an awareness of the commonalities of spiritual development of those in confinement and their capabilities to use this development to survive.*

The captivity experiences of Americans in Vietnam constitute the closest available model from which events and lessons of wartime imprisonment may be drawn. If all 651 accounts of captivity could be told one after the other, 651 distinct and highly personal stories of survival would emerge. Some of these stories have been published in written form, while others have been related to dozens of fascinated audiences. Regardless of the form, each prisoner's story concludes with a consciously developed, clearly stated "lessons of life." A small sampling of these stories, with their associated "lessons," follows.

CDR TIMOTHY SULLIVAN, USN, (RET)

Commander Sullivan was shot down over North Vietnam in 1968 while a LTJG serving as a Radar Intercept Officer (RIO) in a fighter squadron. He was imprisoned for five and a half years, during which time he was moved from prison to prison. He was 24 years old at the time of capture, and 29 years old at the time of his release in 1973.

Upon capture, and in the weeks immediately following, Commander Sullivan felt, primarily, disgust and hatred for his captors. Initially, at least, these strong feelings were enough to keep him going; but eventually, he discovered that hate could not sustain him indefinitely. Over the long haul, he relied upon a combination of factors to help himself survive. While he noticed that one overriding factor, such as religion, or patriotism, or family, carried some of the prisoners through captivity, he found that his own sense of hope alternated among these factors at various times. First, as his feelings of hatred dissipated, his sense of and appreciation for Navy tradition and history increased. He figured that he was not the first American to be captured, and he was probably not going to be the last.

The realization that he was part of a long line of people who had made sacrifices for their country became important to him. Second, he thought a great deal about his parents, and discovered that these thoughts of his family helped sustain him. Third, his religious faith gave him a way of understanding the universe, i.e., why things were the way they were. Because it is one of life's extreme circumstances, captivity requires some way of making sense of situations that defy reasonable attribution and problem solving.

In Commander Sullivan's case, his religious faith contributed a whole pantheon of values, which, in turn, determined his responses during the particularly stressful times.

What exactly were these values, and where did they come from? For Commander Sullivan, they were what he describes as "basic family values": how his family taught him about the world, and the people in it. This basic sense of security helped him deal with the greatest fear he experienced as a POW, the fear of the unknown. The scariest aspect of captivity for him was when his captors changed the "game plan," after he had arrived at some knowledge of his limitations, and how far they could push him.

Immediately after he was shot down, he was placed in the same cell with an Air Force Colonel who was in very bad shape, both physically and mentally. Determined to resist his captors at any cost, this man was in almost a full body cast, which went from one shoulder, around his ribs, and down one leg. Understanding the "game plan" meant realizing that if the captors wanted information badly enough, they would, eventually, be able to obtain it. Resisting at all cost was, for the vast majority of the prisoners, not an option. The ability to face the realistic limitations of resistance, and to experience forgiveness from one's fellow prisoners when one's limits were exceeded, had to draw heavily from an essential and deeply rooted sense of self-esteem and personal worth.

Over time, Commander Sullivan has found that he intellectualizes his captivity experience more, and that he has become more detached from it emotionally. The inevitable distance which time has placed between him

and that period of his life has, however, contributed the insight he needs in order to direct one of the Navy's sites for SERE training. As he observes class after class of students experience the hard lessons of evasion, capture, and interrogation, he has come to a significant conclusion: what individuals need in order to cope with such a situation, they have acquired long before they join the Navy. Those who have never reflected on their life and their values prior to SERE School will discover the need for that reflection very quickly. Commander Sullivan knows this well. He was there for five and a half years.

CAPT JAMES A. MULLIGAN, USN (RET.)

Captain Mulligan had served in the Navy for 24 years when he was shot down over North Vietnam on 20 March 1966. Stationed aboard the USS ENTERPRISE as Executive Officer of VA-36, he was flying his A-4 Skyhawk just south of Vinh, when he was struck by a Surface to Air Missile (SAM), and was forced to eject. He was immediately captured by North Vietnamese regulars, and then transported to Hoa Lo Prison in Hanoi, the infamous Hanoi Hilton. As one of the more senior Navy POWs, he endured torture, abuse, and miserable conditions for nearly seven years, until his release in February 1973.

What prepared him to survive a captivity experience, which included 42 months of solitary confinement? In response to that question, Captain Mulligan cites the process of receiving a liberal education, i.e., undergoing the intellectual preparation necessary to find out who he was. He recalls that the first time he ever heard the Code of Conduct, he thought to himself, "Why do we need this? Why is this necessary? Isn't this basic to who and what we are? Doesn't everybody know this?" The answer, as he discovered during his years in the Navy was, no, not everybody does understand what integrity, commitment, and loyalty mean. For Captain Mulligan, imprisonment in North Vietnam was a supreme test of those values embodied in the Code of Conduct, values of right and wrong. Captivity was an experience in which a prisoner had to live off of whatever was in his head. When it was all over, Captain Mulligan was able to recall some of what he felt on the day of release, as described in his book, *The Hanoi Commitment*:

> This was the only good day I would ever have in North Vietnam, and it would only become good when I boarded that plane and flew out of this damn country. I had spent 2522 days here and I hated every damn one of them. They were firmly etched deep in my mind. I couldn't forget them even if I wanted to. They were as much a part of me as an arm or a leg. In one way I had been a loser for all of those days, yet in another way I had much to be thankful about. For out of the miseries had come strength; out of the suffering, compassion; out of hate, love. If nothing else, I would come home a better man than when I entered there. Life would be more meaningful in every aspect from now on. Freedom, integrity, moral character had new and stronger meanings for me. I knew that I could face the future with faith and hope. I had learned firsthand that in life's darkest hours in Hanoi, God's grace had shone down upon me. In my heart I knew that during my captivity I had lost all the battles, but had won the war because I had done my best. I had paid the price. I had day by day put myself on the line for what I believed in. Alone and in solitary, when no one knew and no one cared, I and the others had fought the good fight. If nothing else, I cared, and they cared. There was no easy way. When the chips were down we did what we had to and we paid the price with physical and mental pain. Now that it was over, we could go home with heads held high. We would walk erect as free men taking our rightful place in a free world. The man who appreciates freedom the most is the free man who has become a slave. We were leaving Hanoi, slaves no more.

Captain Mulligan recalls that the greatest challenge he faced during his imprisonment was the process of living out his convictions and beliefs about who he was in the face of the loss of self-respect. Prior to captivity, he had experienced and understood divine forgiveness; he also knew of human forgiveness; but he did not really know, nor had he fully experienced, personal forgiveness. Survival in the dehumanizing environment of Hoa Lo Prison was critically dependent on his ability to forgive himself, and then come back to fight another day.

Indeed, it was self-forgiveness and inner fortitude that enabled the POWs, as a unit, to win a moral war in 1971, even though victory came at the expense of a hard won battle for group living. Following Christmas of 1970, the North Vietnamese began housing prisoners together in rooms of 45 to 50 each. For many of the prisoners, this move marked the first time they had ever met one another face to face. Nevertheless, they were willing to risk small cells and solitary

confinement once again for the sake of the right to worship. As Captain Mulligan recounts what was later referred to as the "Church Riot," the Vietnamese "became upset" when each room conducted Sunday worship services. Apparently, group worship posed such a threat, perhaps because of the evident spirit of unity that resulted, that all such services were subsequently forbidden.

As the senior POWs met to discuss what action they should take, most favored the politically "smart" course: not making an issue of the worship services, lest the Vietnamese retaliate by moving everyone back into small or solitary cells. Captain Mulligan took the opposite position, that making a moral stand on the freedom of religion took precedence over political strategy. In the overall assessment of what would be lost and what would be gained, he concluded, "We don't have a choice." The agreement of the group was unanimous. Because he and the other prisoners were confronted daily with time slipping away, time which they were missing with their families, especially their children, Captain Mulligan and others developed their own special responses to the question, "If you had just five minutes to spend with your kids, what would you pass on to them?" His answer was:

1. Live a life of order, i.e., as to the priority of things.
2. Live a life of discipline, i.e., absolute self-discipline to do what is right, and not to do what is wrong.
3. Live a life of moderation, i.e., there is plenty to go around — share the wealth!

As for himself, what are the lessons which 42 months in solitary confinement gave him the time to think through and assess?

- With God all things are possible *(Matthew 19:20).*
- Permissiveness is the corruption of Freedom.
- Anarchy is the corruption of Democracy.
- Immorality is the corruption of Morality.

A free democratic moral society has the right as well as the obligation to resist the incursions of those perversions, which would lead to its destruction. A free society requires order, discipline, and moderation. Thus it follows that rights and freedoms demand corresponding duties and obligations from all citizens. Man is an imperfect creature living in an imperfect world but he should always strive to be better than he is. In this struggle he should never, never, never, give up!

Jim Mulligan May 1984

CDR GEORGE COKER, USN (RET.)

Commander Coker was stationed aboard the USS CONSTELLATION with VA-65 when he was shot down over North Vietnam on 27 August 1966. As one of the "early shoot downs," he observed some differences between himself and those prisoners with whom he came into contact after 1970. What did he observe, and what did survival as a prisoner of war constitute for him? Commander Coker recalls that those who functioned best in captivity were strong in three areas of belief: God, country, and family. While the enemy, he found, could repeatedly attack one's country, and might attempt to manipulate one's behavior regarding God and family, there was nothing they could do to change one's faith in these areas, if one truly believed in their efficacy. The enemy had no way of proving or disproving belief.

Consequently, for Commander Coker, it became important to separate what it meant to "do well," from what it meant to "survive," as a prisoner. "Doing well" meant doing what was morally correct. The capability to make morally correct decisions derived, for him, from:

- The Code of Conduct, which provided a quick wrap-up, a reminder, of moral values;
- A sense of duty to one's country;
- His basic upbringing and nurturing set of values;
- One's training as a military member;
- Remembrance of past ceremonial observances, such as parades and changes of command; and
- The Senior Ranking Officer (SRO) concept, i.e., a respect for rank.

"Surviving," on the other hand, merely meant physical survival or existence. It was possible to "hang on" physically, without behaving morally, or doing what was morally correct. In order to continue to fight the war in Hanoi, and to win, it was imperative to "do well."

Commander Coker observed that the "later shootdowns," those captured after 1970, often reflected a "qualified/modified resistance" posture, a difference in attitude that undoubtedly reflected the

gradual shift in cultural values taking place in this country at the time. For POWs, who were living in conditions where the external trappings of culture had been stripped away, and for whom values and attitudes were all that was left, this was a particularly noticeable and disturbing difference. The "modified" posture maintained that not everything is worth suffering for, if conceding a few principles here and there meant receiving more humane treatment at the hands of one's captors. Why knowingly subject oneself to abuse in conditions which were already miserable by any standard? The politically smart course was to accommodate to the enemy at certain points in order to ensure that one would, in the end, make it home.

The case for expediency, however, was challenged by those who valued "doing well" over merely "surviving," a challenge which often stood in direct opposition to one's basic instincts of fear and self-preservation. As justification for his moral conviction to resist the enemy, Commander Coker raised the question, "Why should I deny what I believe in because I'm afraid? My decision is to be what I am. It's up to the other person to decide what to do about that." When measured against a standard of moral character, Commander Coker learned, the case for expediency was found wanting. At least in Hanoi, moral expediency would not have won the war.

CAPT GILES R. NORRINGTON, USN (RET.)

When he was shot down over North Vietnam on the Sunday afternoon of 5 May 1968, Captain Norrington recalls, he could not have foreseen that he would be spending the next four years, ten months, and nine days of his life as a prisoner of war. Even less likely could he have known that, during that period, he would experience not only the toughest of times, but also some good times, when he would grow as a person, and come into touch with himself and his comrades. Upon repatriation in 1973, at which time he was debriefed for 29 and a half hours on his nearly five years as a POW, Captain Norrington found that talking about what happened was an extremely helpful, purging experience. Since that initial debrief, he has continued to refine his perspective on how he and his fellow prisoners coped with seemingly unsurvivable conditions.

The context for captivity, he explains, originates from a series of traumas, beginning with physiological trauma. Most of those shot down arrived at the prison camps wounded, either from injuries incurred as a result of damage done to the airplane, or from injuries sustained during ejection. However, physical wounds were only one part of the picture. One's entire system experienced an all-encompassing shock from the disorienting effects of shootdown, and the humiliation of capture. Thus, in addition to the physical pain of broken legs, arms, ribs or, as in Captain Norrington's case, debilitating burns, the dehumanizing effect of being paraded through villages where North Vietnamese were allowed to vent the full extent of their hatred and anger at the prisoner, resulted in tremendous psychological shock. "Males", observes Captain Norrington, "as conditioned by their families and the demands of society not to fail, and when occasionally they do fail at something, are ill equipped to deal with that failure. Further, although aviators are used to teamwork in flight, squadron or Air Wing operations, they are in large measure, independent creatures ill-prepared for the dependence that POWs learn is the very essence of their emotional survival. Yet, the capacity to acknowledge failure, the faith in oneself to bounce back, and the ability to rely on and support others, were critically important instincts and skills for POWs to develop."

The result of these personal and interpersonal changes was that, as a group, the prisoners became more than brothers, they became very much like "mothers" to one another. Like a mother, they nurtured each other, both physically, as when a fellow prisoner was in poor health or badly injured; and emotionally, as when a fellow prisoner's guilt and remorse over his inability to endure torture at all costs required confession and forgiveness. In order to fill, literally, years of space creatively, and as a way of escaping the misery of the present, one simply had to get to know the other person. Communication, in which one was willing to be vulnerable, was essential, not for the sake of exchanging information, but for emotional contact.

As he recounts the lessons learned during those years, Captain Norrington cites a greater appreciation for those around him, and an enhanced awareness that all resources — one's own, one's country's, and one's comrades' — belong to God. Through this awareness, he discovered gifts and tools he never knew he had, tools which enabled even the wounds of captivity to heal.

COL JERRY MARVEL, USMC (RET.)
"LAST FLIGHT" 27 MAY 95

Colonel Marvel was stationed with VMAW-533 out of Chu Lai when he was shot down on the night of 24 February 1968. An A-6 pilot with 12 years in the

Marine Corps, he was on his second tour in Vietnam. In the process of ejecting from the airplane, he broke three vertebrae. For the first 18 months of captivity, he was in solitary confinement. The only emotion he seemed able to experience at first was anger, and he spent a great deal of time wondering, "Why me?" One day, he received an answer to his question: he heard the sound of an A-6 being shot down, and he realized that he was alive. Now that the initial shock and anger associated with capture had begun to dissipate, what was going to enable him to survive?

It was a strong sense of pride in himself which became the principal survival factor for Colonel Marvel. As he recalls, he was determined not to do anything to disgrace himself, his family, or the legacy of morality and integrity which he hoped to pass on. However, he knew that he could not have cultivated this sense of pride apart from his relationships with other prisoners. Long lasting and unique in their quality and closeness, these relationships provided him during captivity with the emotional grounding he needed to continue the fight.

One of the greatest challenges he faced was adhering to the Code of Conduct. As a function of his training, he was aware of the kind of treatment he might expect from the enemy, and he was familiar with survival techniques; but he was not particularly conversant with the Code of Conduct. As did the other prisoners, he rapidly discovered that he could not make it on the "Big Four" alone: name, rank, service number, and date of birth. His captors had a way of prolonging torture to the point that the prisoner would almost, but not quite, pass out. They were professional extortionists, and their job was to extract information for intelligence and propaganda purposes, one way or another.

Eventually, Colonel Marvel recalls, most of the prisoners became adept at knowing what kind of lie the enemy was most likely to believe, and at what point during the interrogation session they were most likely to believe it. It was a mistake to give up information too soon, because the enemy was suspicious of an easy mark; but at some point, each one needed to acknowledge that he had reached his limit. This way of manipulating the enemy was about the only recourse available. Nevertheless, Colonel Marvel found it difficult for his sense of pride to concede even the lies, for he still felt as though he had disgraced himself and his country. Being a prisoner of war appeared to constitute the quintessential "no-win" situation.

During his first few months of captivity, the predominant impression he had was, "No one has any idea I'm here," and this further aggravated his sense of loneliness and defeat. Once he became a part of the communications network, however, he realized how much his mind was capable of exaggerating and distorting reality, and concurrently, how crucial it was for him, especially in solitary confinement, to discipline his mind. As a result, he rigorously scheduled his time in such a way that he devoted one hour each to such functions as, some type of physical exercise, a topic of study, a subject for reflection, or a project for planning. As many of the prisoners who had wives and children back home had to do, Colonel Marvel learned to discipline himself to restrict his thoughts about his family, lest he enter a downward spiral of despair from which there was no way out. Each prisoner was emotionally vulnerable in a different area of life. Whatever area this was — and for most, it was family — it had to be disciplined.

"At the time," recalls Colonel Marvel, "we thought we were getting passed by, that we were living in a vacuum," but this was not so: "We gained more from that experience than we could ever know." What were the lessons that captivity in enemy territory could teach a community of military men? Colonel Marvel answers, "We had to work with each other, we had to get things done, and we had to cooperate." These, he adds, have been timeless lessons, not by any means restricted to survival under adverse, hostile conditions, but applicable to any job or family situation. Most importantly, they were lessons which relied heavily upon, and reinforced, personal pride and honor.

CAPT KENNETH COSKEY, USN (RET.)

Captain Coskey was Commanding Officer of VA-85, stationed aboard the USS AMERICA, when he was shot down over North Vietnam on 6 September 1968. Looking back at his four and a half years of captivity, he recalls that, at the beginning, time seemed like an eternity. How did he get through this initial period, and what changes in perspective did he experience during the years that followed?

Contributing to his initial shock at the point of capture were three factors: physical pain and deprivation; interrogation; and the fact that three weeks elapsed from the time he was shot down, to his arrival in Hanoi. Probably as a result of this rather lengthy period preceding actual imprisonment, a period which most of the other prisoners endured as well, almost two months went by before Captain

Coskey reached a state of acceptance of his circumstances. He even remembers how reaching that state of acceptance felt, and when it happened. On one particular morning, he woke up, looked outside, and noticed that the sun was shining, and that it was a beautiful day. At that moment, he recalls, "I knew I was going to make this thing." Communication with other prisoners helped him immeasurably in reaching this point of acceptance. He also found himself turning to prayer as a way of releasing what he could not control, from the most major concern, e.g., the welfare of his family, to the seemingly mundane, e.g., taking care of a cold.

As months turned into years, the hope that "we were going to be out of here in six months" became a significant sustaining factor. During fourteen months of solitary confinement, when, from day to day, the future extent of prolonged isolation was uncertain, Captain Coskey found that his thoughts were preoccupied mostly with family. As a way of disciplining his mind, which, in solitary confinement, became a necessity, he was able to dredge up all the names of his grammar school class, and alphabetize them. Eventually, he was able to recall 50 names from those eight years of his life. These periods of discipline were interspersed, inevitably, with daydreams about escape and freedom.

One period of time during his captivity particularly stands out in Captain Coskey's memory, not only because he reached a new level of acceptance and understanding of his circumstances after he came through it, but also because he has never fully understood why it happened. For almost three months, he completely withdrew, not to the point that he was suicidal, but that he simply did not want to communicate with anyone. He did nothing to take care of himself, and did not even bathe when given the opportunity. One day, the guard came in to give him a hair cut, and, discovering that Captain Coskey was covered with dirt, gave him some soap, and told him to "go take a bath." Captain Coskey recalls bathing, and bathing, and bathing, as though trying to cleanse himself of "whatever it was." On both a physical and a spiritual level, that bath marked the termination of a period of withdrawal, which he never revisited.

Perhaps the most significant lesson, which Captain Coskey derived from his years as a prisoner of war, was the value of communication. On an informal level, communication with other prisoners contributed a perspective to captivity, which ensured both survival and growth. However, communication also served an invaluable function along the formal lines of the chain of command. Juniors' obedience of seniors, and mutual accountability both up and down the chain of command, enhanced everyone's ability to keep faith with one another.

When they heard a fellow American reading a propaganda statement on the camp radio, or when they were shown signed statements in which their fellow prisoners acknowledged committing criminal acts against the North Vietnamese, the adage, "Don't be surprised at what you see and hear," took on new meaning. Captain Coskey realized that, as individuals, they were not just in personal survival situations: they were together, and they were still in the military. Most important, keeping faith with one's fellow prisoners ensured camp unity, the one feature of the American way of life, which the North Vietnamese could not destroy.

VADM EDWARD H. MARTIN, USN (RET.)

On 9 July 1967, Admiral Martin was making a run on an ammunition site near Hanoi in his A-4 Skyhawk. The previous day, 8 July, he had successfully bombed the same area, but his squadron, VA-34, of which he was Executive Officer, was directed to go back, "just to make sure." The day he went back, Sunday, 9 July, was the day he was shot down.

At the start, Admiral Martin experienced much the same shock, which other prisoners experienced, as a result of beatings by both captors and villagers, the "nasty treatment" of initial interrogation, and the physical trauma associated with ejection. He particularly recalls being "dreadfully thirsty." Upon arrival at Hoa Lo Prison, he endured 30 to 50 days of rope torture, during which his back and both shoulders were broken; leg irons; wrist irons; and boils and mosquitoes. Following this ordeal, he recalls that Major Chuck Tyler, USAF, was "brought in to clean me up."

Despite the ordeal, however, Admiral Martin was "determined" that he was "going to beat these people." To do this, he developed a personal code, which consisted of maintaining:

- Absolute trust and faith in God and in His infinite wisdom

- Absolute trust and faith in the President of the United States and all those in power

- Absolute trust and faith in your family at home

- Absolute trust and faith in his fellow prisoners
- Absolute trust and faith in his personal ability to withstand an ordeal and make the best of it

He recalls that each prisoner, in whatever way he could, had to develop some strength, "something to lean against." For most, including himself, the Code of Conduct was an essential component for developing a strong personal code: without it, it was much too easy to rationalize a weak resistance posture. The Code, in other words, provided a standard by which to develop a response in the face of manipulation by the enemy.

As a graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy, Admiral Martin had learned all about humility during his Plebe year, a lesson that helped him understand his captors' attempts to humiliate him. It was more manipulation, not humiliation, which posed the challenge to resistance. Each prisoner had to learn to "play the game, and walk a tightrope." Eventually, if the enemy wanted information badly enough, they would find a way for the prisoner to give it, and to give it willingly. Violating the Code, which happened daily, was always done willingly — no one was "brainwashed" — which is what made it so difficult to forgive oneself.

On the other hand, if information was handed over too readily, the enemy would only come back for more. Consequently, there was no way to "win" the propaganda game: the reality of being a prisoner guaranteed a "no win" scenario. One could, however, in countless small ways, outsmart the enemy, especially by knowing how and when to feed them lies; and could emerge with one's personal code of honor intact. In such a situation, the key to developing a personal code was discipline: moral (personal) discipline, service (Navy, Marine Corps) discipline, and the discipline of foundational (social) values. These disciplines enabled at least one man to survive, grow, and emerge the victor through one of life's most extreme circumstances.

CAPT GERALD COFFEE, USN (RET.)

One of the first sensations that Captain Coffee recalls experiencing immediately following his shoot down, was the feeling of floating in a sun-drenched ocean, the sounds of a loudspeaker in the distance announcing speedboat rides. For just a few moments, he was back in the San Joaquin Valley, swimming next to his wife, Bea. Suddenly, she dove beneath the surface, and seemed to be pulling him down with her. His attempts to free himself were futile, because, for some reason, his right arm would not move. What kind of fantasy was this? Where was Bea? What had become of the speedboats, and the amusement park, and the rides?

The shock and resulting disorientation associated with shootdown and ejection had temporarily erased the grim reality for then — Lieutenant Jerry Coffee that he was far from the USS KITTY HAWK, far from his RA-5C Vigilante aircraft, and far from all hope of rescue. It was February 1966. It was not Bea with whom he was playing in the waters of California, but the shroud lines from his parachute which threatened to pull him forever into the waters of the Gulf of Tonkin. Having just checked aboard the squadron the previous month, he now found himself surrendering to an excited boatload of Vietnamese who, moments before, had nearly killed him by firing a barrage of bullets into the water. Years later, remembering how it felt to be thrust so abruptly into a strange and hostile world, Captain Coffee reflects on "the enemy's other face":

The absolute tests are those we face alone, without the support of others who believe as we do. There the beliefs we hold most dear are challenged — some to be strengthened, some to be tempered, others to be abandoned — but all to be examined. From deep within we claim the values that we know to be our own. Those are the ones by which we are willing to live or die.

For the next seven years of captivity in Hanoi, Captain Coffee was to discover what his real values were; how dependent he was on the community of his fellow prisoners for perspective and forgiveness; and the importance of not merely <u>surviving</u> such circumstances, but of emerging through them <u>triumphant</u>.

As every other prisoner of war before him had experienced, the predicament and conditions of captivity were utterly foreign, stifling, and overwhelming. As he realized that he had never in his life felt such physical deprivation — <u>hunger</u>, <u>filth</u>, and <u>pain</u> — he also realized that even his qualifications as a "jet jock" counted for nothing in Hanoi. "Suddenly," he recalls, "I was quiet: the stripping away of my perceived identity had commenced." Fortunately, and to Captain Coffee's credit, what lay beneath the surface features of his "perceived identity" was a will and a determination to continue thinking, dreaming, and behaving as an American, despite attempts to coerce him to the contrary. Several fellow prisoners provided encouragement and inspiration to "hang on," but Captain Coffee writes with special admiration for the

leadership example set by Colonel Robinson Risner, USAF, senior ranking officer at the Hanoi Hilton. Apparently, the North Vietnamese were positively gleeful when Colonel Risner was shot down, because they had seen his picture on the cover of *Time* magazine, and were well acquainted with his illustrious career as an aviator, both in Korea and in Vietnam. Captain Coffee points out that "Robbie" lost battles, but never lost the war: "They ultimately forced him to write statements and say things he wouldn't have otherwise, but they never got him in their pocket, never forced him to surrender his will to theirs, to conform — without torture — to their program of extortion and exploitation."

Through an elaborate communications network, in which prisoners tapped messages in code to one another on the walls (the so-called "tap code"), Captain Coffee began to understand that the Communists were not nearly as interested in gathering intelligence, as they were preoccupied with exploiting prisoners for propaganda purposes. Colonel Risner himself once pointed out with some amazement that their captors seemed oblivious to the "gold mine of military information they are sitting on here," due, in part, to their lack of technological sophistication; but due, in larger part, to their urgency for control over their own people, and for influence over the nations around them. To broadcast tapes, in which downed American military air crewmen read statements condemning the United States' involvement in Vietnam, extolling the virtue and tenacity of the Vietnamese people, and acknowledging their own criminal acts of war, was a tremendous victory for the Communist cause. The process — whether the statement was read under duress, for example, or whether the tape itself was the edited product of statements taken out of context was not nearly as important as the end result.

Through persistent communication, prisoners encouraged and supported one another, and realized that taking care of each other was a primary need in captivity. Captain Coffee recalls that some men did withdraw, despite determined efforts by their fellow prisoners to break through the wall of isolation. Eventually, they stopped eating, and "disappeared." Some, feigning insanity or amnesia in order to avoid exploitation, might be caught in a lie or a discrepancy by the Vietnamese, and would then be punished and beaten into the actual state which they had sought to feign. These tragic cases reinforced the fact that communication was survival, and, beyond survival, growth.

Captain Coffee remembers one day seeing a simple formula scratched into the prison wall: God Strength. Communion with others met one set of needs essential to survival and growth; but in those moments when one was totally and utterly alone, where was strength to be found? Captain Coffee describes in some detail one Christmas which he spent in Hanoi. The guards had made a big show of "the Christmas Room," where they had set up a Christmas tree, and little baskets of fruit and candy for each prisoner. After he had returned to his cell that evening, he made an origami rosette, a swan, and a star from the foil wrappers left over from the candy. As he watched the little ornaments twinkle softly in that chilly cell, he "was immediately struck by the satisfying simplicity" of his Christmas celebration. His reflection on that Christmas of 1967 follows — a fine Christmas meditation, and an eloquent summary of spiritual strength:

> I thought more about the birth of the Christ Child and the simplicity of the Nativity. There was nothing to distract me from the pure awesomeness of the story of Christ's birth — no materialism, commercialism, no food, presents, or glitz. Just me and that little baby.
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> Finally I thought intensely of Bea and the children and of their own Christmas Eve activities, close unto themselves certainly, but perhaps now with friends and family celebrating the occasion in all the usual ways. I prayed for them and for their joy and peace and well-being. And I knew there were many prayers and toasts for me. I felt them all.
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> I was beginning to realize and appreciate my own spirituality because I had been stripped of everything else. Everything by which I had measured my identity was denied: my rank, my title, uniform, clothes, money, car, the trappings of my religion. It was just me left — my flesh, bones, intellect, and soul.
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> And where was I now finding answers and sustenance? From within. It had been there all the time. And as I had gone deeper within myself and with God, I began to realize and see more clearly all my connections to everyone and everything else. To go within and to know myself was the key to understanding everything outside, my relationship with God, with the man in the next cell, with the geckos on the wall, with my family on the other side of the world, and with all elements of nature.

> But for the moment I had God, myself, and my rosette and my swan and my star. I realized that although I was hurting and lonely and scared, this might be the most significant Christmas Eve of my life. The circumstances of this night were helping me to crystallize my understanding of my journey within to find God there, and thereby to see Him everywhere.

CDR EVERETT ALVAREZ, JR., USN (RET.)

Commander Alvarez was a prisoner of the North Vietnamese for eight-and-one-half years, the longest period of captivity endured by any American in Vietnam. On 5 August 1964, after a successful attack against the naval docks in Hon Gai Harbor, then — LTJG Alvarez's plane was hit by flak, and he was forced to eject from his A-4 Skyhawk at low altitude. Picked up by local fishermen, Commander Alvarez initially attempted to confuse his captors by speaking Spanish, but a search through his identification papers quickly revealed that he was an American. After some initial interrogation at Hon Gai, he arrived in Hanoi on 11 August, and began his lengthy captivity at Hoa Lo Prison.

At home in California, his wife of seven months, Tangee, his parents, and his sisters, eventually learned that he had been taken prisoner. The story of Commander Alvarez's captivity is also their story, as not only their grief over his situation, but also their uncertainty and questions about the United States' involvement in Vietnam, surfaced and grew over time. It was not until he began writing *Chained Eagle* in 1986 that he and his family really reviewed with one another the full extent of their feelings, doubts, and opinions from those years.

At the very start of his captivity, because he was alone in Hanoi for several months, Commander Alvarez was overwhelmed with the sense that he was "already a corpse in the eyes of the world." He was convinced that no one knew he was alive, or in prison, and that, therefore, the Vietnamese would never be held accountable for his fate. The huge rats with which he shared living quarters seemed to be the only other occupants, until a year later, when he met a group of Navy and Air Force prisoners.

From that point on, even during the most stressful and painful of times, he and his fellow prisoners developed a solid unity, even a sense of humor. Commander Alvarez, more than anyone else, observed innumerable cases of "new-guy-itis," the difficult adjustment to prison life which all new prisoners, in one way or another, experienced. Imitating the quirks of their guards and assigning them names, accordingly (Rabbit, Elf, Dum-Dum, etc.); laughing at new guys' expectations that the Hanoi Hilton had a laundry service, reading the note scratched into the wall of the shower room which said, "Smile! You're on candid camera!" — all of these incidents worked together to forge a bond of loyalty and forgiveness which sustained them through the changing seasons.

Perhaps most painful of all during the period of captivity itself was the news that Tangee had divorced him and remarried. For years, Commander Alvarez had written her letters, wondering why he never received a reply or any word about her, but assuming that it was simply the Vietnamese' failure to give him his mail. On Christmas Day, 1971, he learned through a letter from his mother that his wife had "decided not to wait," and that no one had seen her. About a year later, he learned that she had remarried and was expecting a child. The sudden feeling of desolation from the loss of dreams which he had nurtured for seven-and-a-half years was nearly overwhelming. Commander Alvarez describes himself at the time as "drifting pathetically," his "light at the end of the tunnel" gone. Even his closest friends were, initially, unable to help him view this incident as nothing more than a minor setback within the grand scheme of life. Nevertheless, he eventually recovered a tremendous sense of hope, even within that grim prison setting in Hanoi.

> I had lost my freedom and now my wife, but my faith in a just and merciful God remained steadfast. While I paced outside I prayed silently, seeking guidance. 'What shall I do now?' Prayer and the strong loyalty of my friends pulled me through the grim months of dejection and self-examination. Gradually, the pain eased somewhat and though my whole world had disintegrated, I was beginning to face up to the reality.

Commander Alvarez considered becoming a monk, and began to look forward to the prospect of living in a monastery and writing about his experiences. But it was the arrival of spring which completed his awakening, and which provided him not just with the ability to accept reality, but to fall in love with life again.

When I heard [the] murmuring [of Spring] I seemed to shake off a trance and suddenly became aware of other people. It all happened so quickly that it

felt like I was being carried along on a swift current. I stood revitalized ... I was going to live! My prayers for guidance had been answered because I was now looking forward instead of backward. Maybe I would be a monk and maybe I wouldn't. It didn't matter ... I didn't know what I wanted to do and yet I was going to do everything. There seemed to be neither limits nor boundaries. I might still be in a prisoner of war camp but I was now back up to speed.

His inner transformation from despair to hope is testimony to the power of the spiritual life, despite the physical backdrop and circumstances. As his mother was eventually to write in a letter to him later that spring, "It was good you had a dream to live when you did need one. Your world hasn't vanished."

Stamina, endurance, and a persistent belief in his country's values enabled Commander Alvarez to withstand years of attempts by the Communists to extort and exploit him. In his case, because he had been in captivity the longest, he was particularly vulnerable to promises of early release. Additionally, because up until 1971 he had been so concerned about his wife, Tangee, he was vulnerable to the anticipation of being reunited with her. But over time, he had changed, having developed an inner reserve of strength from which he drew a renewed will for, and a deeper understanding of the meaning of life.

He observes about himself that by the time he had reached his last year of captivity, he had become, after eight years in chains, a more patient person, "so that like many people of the East, I cared little for the movement of the hands on a clock." Time had become, for him, simply a change of seasons. Had it been necessary, he could have gone through many more years.

Following repatriation, Commander Alvarez remarried, and started a family after a long and arduous, painful and grim, episode in his life. While, happily, his circumstances had improved, the best part was the legacy which he had brought with him from Vietnam. On the day of his wedding, a U.S. flag was flown over the Capitol building in Washington, DC in his honor. At dusk, it was lowered and folded, and sent as a gift to a man who had served his country with honor, dignity, and valor.

CDR PORTER A. HALYBURTON, USN (RET.)

On 17 October 1965, Commander Halyburton became the fortieth American shot down over North Vietnam. Even though he was a Lieutenant junior grade, he had already flown 75 combat missions since reporting from the Training Command. While his treatment at the hands of the Vietnamese varied somewhat from season to season during the seven-and-a-half years of captivity, conditions improved towards the end of 1969. Prior to 1969, the darkest days stressed him and the rest of the small society of prisoners to a point where few of the rest of us have ever been, or probably ever will be. In that environment, characterized by change, fear, and uncertainty, Commander Halyburton emphasizes that what "works" for survival is also what "works" for growth and meaning in all kinds of life situations.

It is very difficult to predict how an individual will respond in the stressful environment of captivity. That response depends on the nature of the captivity, and the nature of the person—and these remain surprises until the existential moment has arrived. In Vietnam, every prisoner, sooner or later, came to a point where he realized that the enemy could make him do something he did not want to do. The pain of this reality stemmed from the realization that living up to the letter of the Code of Conduct was, under brutal and extreme circumstances, not possible for the vast majority of prisoners. That is, most prisoners eventually gave up information beyond name, rank, and serial number.

It was at this point that what Commander Halyburton refers to as, "the second line of defense," came into play: one resisted to the very best of one's ability, and then either provided the enemy with a lie, or gave up as useless a piece of information as possible. These concessions were never made without a fight. If the enemy wanted something, he was going to have to work for it. By taking this approach, the prisoner preserved and sharpened two essential ingredients for survival: his wits, and his will to resist. In turn, he built a reserve of strength for coming back to fight the second line of defense another day.

Along with many of his fellow prisoners, Commander Halyburton acknowledges that the role of faith cannot be divorced from survival in a captivity situation. The objects of faith may vary — God, country, family, one's fellow prisoners, oneself — and may combine differently for different people. Regardless of what "faiths" a prisoner chose to rely on in captivity, his ability to maintain his faith, and to keep adverse circumstances in perspective, depended upon how active he remained physically, mentally, and spiritually. Living these three areas in some kind of balance through force of discipline multiplied and

enhanced the benefits to be derived from "keeping faith."

In fact, "keeping faith" was often the only constant, through circumstances characterized by horror, fear, and unpredictability. Additionally, the depth of one's faith was tested as mental and emotional needs changed, over the entire course of captivity, and evolved like the passing seasons. Commander Halyburton recalls three distinct stages of preoccupation in his own life during those years. In the first stage, he spent a great deal of time in retrospection, in which he reviewed, in exhaustive detail, every word he ever spoke, and every deed he ever did, for which he was either proud or remorseful.

He filled in the conclusions of unfinished incidents or unresolved relationships, and revised those, which had not ended as he had hoped. After he had thus examined the past, he passed into the "future dreaming" stage, in which he projected and outlined everything he hoped, some day, to study, accomplish, or improve about himself. Daydreaming, he discovered, was a breath of fresh air from the earlier dwelling on the past, but he found that he could not stay there forever, either.

Eventually, he passed into a third stage, in which he learned to find meaning: life in the present. It was at this third and final stage that he finally felt at peace, in much the same way that Victor Frankl wrote about finding peace through being able to choose his own attitude, and transcend the environment of the concentration camp, in his book, *Man's Search For Meaning*. Commander Halyburton discovered, once he had "gotten over" his need to review the past and project the future, that he had developed profound resources to grow in the present during his years of captivity.

It cannot go without saying that keeping faith and preserving one's will took place in a community of prisoners, without whose collective internal network and sense of unity, individual resources would most certainly have dried up after a short period of time. The communal aspect of living, whether as prisoners in captivity in North Vietnam, or as families at home, became essential both to survival, and to ongoing mental, physical, and spiritual health. The unity of the prison camp also served to ensure that the good name of the United States would be preserved: because the propaganda war was being fought in Hanoi, the entire group had to follow the orders and judgment of camp leadership in the face of attempts to confuse, intimidate, or manipulate individual prisoners into believing and endorsing Communist propaganda about the United States' political and military role in Vietnam. "Lone rangers" bent on becoming self-made heroes either died in captivity, or punished the entire group as a result of their independent actions and decisions. On the other hand, lives lived in connection with others were the only ones which survived and flourished, possibly because these were the only truly examined lives.

Commander Halyburton's own "Life Statement" expresses the lessons learned in captivity about faith, will, and connectedness, thus:

I wish, at the instant of my death, to be able to look back upon a full and fruitful Christian life, lived as an honest man who has constantly striven to improve himself and the world in which he lives, and to die forgiven by God, with a clear conscience, the love and respect of my family and friends, and the peace of the Lord in my soul.

COL FRED V. CHERRY, USAF (RET.)

Colonel Cherry was one of the few black aviators who flew in Vietnam, and the first black to be captured. On 25 October 1965, while flying his fiftieth mission of the war, he led a squadron of F-105s against a series of missile installations in the North. Colonel Cherry recalls seeing rifle fire on the ground when he was about three minutes from the target, but was not particularly concerned until he heard a thump. Thinking that something electrical had probably been hit, he immediately headed towards the target, and released his weapons. Just as he was exiting the area, dense electrical smoke began to fill up the cockpit, and the plane exploded. By this time, the smoke was so dense that he could not see outside, and he had no idea whether he was upright or upside down. He ejected, and prayed, and hit the ground. In the process, he smashed his left shoulder, and broke his left wrist and ankle; and, as happened to many of his fellow prisoners, he landed right into the arms of a dozen militia. There was no opportunity for evasion. After some initial interrogation at Hoa Lo Prison in Hanoi, he was transferred in November 1965 to the prison known as The Zoo in southwest Hanoi.

The Zoo is where Colonel Cherry met then — LTJG Porter Halyburton, who would be his cellmate for almost 9 months of captivity. Commander Halyburton would also become his nurse, confidante, and lifelong friend. Colonel Cherry believes that because "Hally," as he calls him, was a white

southerner, the North Vietnamese intentionally put the two of them together, assuming that a white man and a black man from the American South would have "a long-term game to run." While they were initially very wary around each other, they quickly developed a mutual trust which Colonel Cherry credits with saving his life. The injuries which he had sustained as a result of high-speed ejection had only partially healed. His wrist and ankle did not require medical attention, but he badly needed an operation on his shoulder. This eventually took place in February 1966, resulting in a torso cast which extended down to his hipline, but which, unfortunately, was not accompanied by penicillin or an equivalent antibiotic. In a month's time, Colonel Cherry was dying of a massive infection. Feverish and delirious, he even recalls, at one point, leaving his body and going into town. (Years later, when he actually saw Hanoi in daylight, he recognized several streams, bridges, and buildings).

Over the next three months, as Colonel Cherry suffered from sadistic, negative medical treatment (major operations performed without anesthetic, antibiotics withheld, gasoline poured over his wounds), Hally conscientiously washed him and tended him, providing his own food and clothing so that his cellmate could live. The day the guards moved Hally to another cell, Colonel Cherry recalls, "was the most depressing evening of my life. I never hated to lose anybody so much in my entire life. We had become very good friends. He was responsible for my life."

Colonel Cherry did survive his injuries, and went on to endure months of beatings, torture, and solitary confinement (700 days). Because he was the senior black officer in captivity, the North Vietnamese did everything they could to make him write statements denouncing the "American imperialists," statements which, in turn, they hoped to pass on to young black GIs. Through all of this, Colonel Cherry was strongly motivated to resist by the thought that he was representing 24 million black Americans. He was determined to do nothing to shame his country or his people.

Raised in Suffolk, Virginia, at a time when segregation was the norm, and inequality between whites and blacks was not questioned, Colonel Cherry credits his parents with building into him toughness, a strong will, and a sense of fairness in doing things for other people. He also credits his sister for believing in him, and pushing him to do well in school. These qualities enabled him to pursue his dream of becoming a fighter pilot, in 1951. A fierce determination not to submit to his captors' attempts at coercion, and an almost philosophical view of his own longing for freedom, allowed him to forgive the depressions and failures of others, doggedly communicating through the walls with those of his fellow prisoners who had begun to withdraw, until they, too, answered back.

Years after their repatriation, Colonel Cherry and Commander Halyburton continue to keep in touch with one another, and to tell others about "how we looked to each other the first time we met." They describe the bonds of brotherhood which they forged in that hostile, alien setting in Hanoi, North Vietnam. Colonel Cherry insists,

> No matter how rough the tortures were, no matter how sick I became, I never once said to myself, I want to take my own life or quit. I would just pray to the Supreme Being each morning for the best mind to get through the interrogations, and then give thanks each night for makin' it through the day.

He makes it sound simple, but there was nothing easy about the spirit of survival, which Colonel Cherry evidenced as a prisoner of war. That spirit grew out of his upbringing, his faith in God, and the love of a fellow prisoner who would not let him die.

VADM JAMES B. STOCKDALE, USN (RET.)

As the most senior naval officer imprisoned in North Vietnam, Admiral Stockdale became well known during his years of captivity for extraordinary courage in leadership. Following repatriation, he was awarded the Medal of Honor for offering resistance to the North Vietnamese, on behalf of his fellow prisoners, by "deliberately inflicting a near-mortal wound to his person in order to convince his captors of his willingness to give up his life rather than capitulate." Admiral Stockdale is also a persuasive and insightful thinker and writer on the lessons of captivity. From the day of his shootdown (9 September 1965) until the day of his release (12 February 1973), he experienced both the pain of externally imposed suffering, and the power of his own inner resistance.

What "secret weapon" became his security during those years? It was "those selected portions of philosophic thought that emphasized human dignity and self-respect," epitomized and expounded upon in Epictetus' *Enchiridion*, which helped him organize and understand an experience as shocking as shootdown and capture by the enemy, and face it

head-on. A few years prior to his capture, Admiral Stockdale had taken the opportunity to study moral philosophy at Stanford University under Professor Philip Rhinelander. It was Professor Rhinelander who not only taught him and tutored him privately, but also gave him, at the end of his course of study, a copy of Epictetus' *Enchiridion*. A moral guide written by a military man of the ancient world, the *Enchiridion* discussed matters over which the author acknowledged that he had no control — a seemingly odd choice of a parting gift for a naval aviator in a technological age. Nevertheless, while he recognized little in Epictetus that applied to him in 1963, here is how Admiral Stockdale, in a 1974 letter to Professor Joseph Brennan of the Naval War College, described what went through his mind on 9 September 1965:

> As I sped over the treetops it became immediately apparent that I had lost my flight controls—by reflex action I pulled the curtain and ejected—and was almost immediately suspended in air 200 feet above a village street, in total silence except for rifle shots and the whir of bullets past my ear. So help me in those fleeting seconds before I landed among the waiting crowd I had two vivid thoughts. (1) Five years to wait (I had studied enough modem Far East history and talked to enough Forward Air Controllers in the South to fully appreciate the dilemma of Vietnam — I turned out to be an optimist by 2 1/2 years). (2) I am leaving that technological world and entering the world of Epictetus.

Just as Epictetus had observed in his world centuries before, Admiral Stockdale soon discovered that in an environment that can best be described as a "buzz saw," human will was the only salvation.

Human will, of course, was the primary target of the North Vietnamese. If they could succeed in weakening the resolve of men who were accustomed to making their own decisions, by removing not only their independence, but also their sense of hope, they would have caused them to become self-defeating. Admiral Stockdale, in the book he later co-wrote with his wife, Sybil, summarized his state of mind during the winter of 1966 as preoccupied with one central fear: that he was doomed to a "life of continuous shame without friends or self-respect." After six months of captivity, he had all but locked himself in to futility and failure: "When I took stock of the power the Vietnamese had over me, my weakness and crippledness, my sinking mental state, it seemed clear that they had me on a downhill run that would force me to the bottom."

Nevertheless, in testimony to his ability to be truthful with himself, and to live with himself, Admiral Stockdale survived by thinking, imagining, dreaming, and, in general, by learning to make sense of loneliness. In a tone reminiscent of Epictetus and the Stoic philosophy which contributed so prominently to the formation of his own world view, Admiral Stockdale summarizes the perspective which helped him understand the confusing, ever-changing events of captivity: "In such circumstances, when one has no voice in what happens to him and randomness and chanciness determine his fate, one lives in a worse hell than if continually pestered by a mean but predictable antagonist. Chance and continual uncertainty are the ultimate destabilizers." Simply knowing that he was experiencing what others who had gone before him — even as far back as ancient times — had come to know as the evil depths of human behavior, helped him remain connected with himself and his fellow prisoners; and gave him the resolve to fight hard for his own, his family's, and his country's honor.

How does one acquire that perspective and resolve? As did many other prisoners of war, Admiral Stockdale drew liberally from the lessons in life learned early in childhood; from his higher education and training; and from a persistent desire to make the best of a terrible situation. With these assets he maintained his wits, and his knowledge of himself and his captors. When he finally came home, he had the assurance that he had lived through seven-and-a-half years of extreme moral stress without ever having made a compromise to conscience.

CHAPLAINS AS RETAINED PERSONNEL

Learning Objective: *Recognize the selfless response of chaplains in captivity during WW II and recall one contemporary chaplain's suggestions after going through survival training.*

CHAPLAINS CAPTURED IN THE PHILIPPINES

War came to the Philippines on the morning of 8 December 1941. A strong force of enemy planes hit Army airfields in the vicinity of Manila shortly before noon, knocking out of action one-half of the Army bombers and two-thirds of the fighter planes. On 10 December, the Japanese, with complete air superiority,

struck at Cavite. The bombs from 50 enemy planes left the Navy yard a mass of flames. About 200,000 tons of American shipping were in the harbor at the time, including the submarine tenders *Holland* and *Canopus.* Most of the American ships managed to escape.

Four Navy chaplains were taken prisoners by the Japanese in the 5 months campaign waged to conquer the Philippine Islands. They were Earl Brewster of the *Holland,* D. L. Quinn of the Sixteenth Naval District, F. J. McManus of the *Canopus,* and H. R. Trump of the Fourth Marine Regiment. Brewster and Quinn were taken when Manila fell, in the closing days of 1941 and opening days of 1942. McManus and Trump were on Corregidor during the last bitter days of its defense and were made prisoners when it surrendered on 6 May 1942.

Chaplain Earl Brewster of the *Holland* was recovering from an operation performed in the Canacao Naval Hospital, Cavite, when his ship left the Manila Bay area. He reported for duty on 15 December and was ordered by the Staff of Commander Submarines to a unit assembling at the Philippine Girls College at Caloocan that consisted largely of medical personnel and former patients of the hospital. He reported there on the 20th. The victorious Japanese forces, sweeping through the city of Manila during the closing days of December, took Brewster prisoner and confined him with others at Santa Scholastica's College, Manila, on 2 January 1942.

Chaplain D. L. Quinn was also interned at Santa Scholastica's College, (see fig 2-1). A diary kept by R. W. Kentner, pharmacist mate first-class during the whole of his captivity, records the fact that Chaplains Brewster and Quinn were among those transferred to the Elementary School at Pasay, Rizal, on 9 May 1942, and that the two were sent to Bilibid Prison on 28 May.

On 2 June, the two chaplains were sent to Cabanatuan. Regarding his experiences as a prisoner of the Japanese, Brewster has written:

> The transporting of prisoners between Manila and Cabanatuan was effected by means of half sized metal boxcars, which had to hold from 80 to 100 men, together with their gear. The 6- to 8-hour trip was not exactly a luxury ride in that heat. Of course, a hike was required on each end of these trips, and they were never under ideal conditions, to put it mildly. We usually found far from ideal conditions when we arrived at our destination.
>
> Arriving at Cabanatuan on 1 June 1942, we started on our rice diet, which was really quite an experience. Lack of water, sanitation, medical supplies and equipment, a combination of malaria, dysentery, beri-beri, and diphtheria, were responsible for the loss of 2,000 out of 8,000 men in 4 months, nine-tenths of whom could have been saved with decent food.
>
> We buried (after the Japs agreed to permit chaplains to officiate) from 10 to 40 a day during this period. The experience of seeing Zero Ward, where men wallowed and died in their own filth, to be moved to another barracks labeled the "morgue," where I have seen 40 naked skeletons on the bare deck, to be carried out to the so-called cemetery by fellow prisoners, some of whom would themselves be carried out soon, to be thrown into watery common graves to be visited by roaming wild dogs, is a sight some of us will not soon forget. And may God help us if we fail to keep faith with those who can no longer enjoy the life they have helped to make possible for us.
>
> Partly because there was no other place, and partly because the Japs banned religious services for a while at Cabanatuan, I held services in my own barracks (at the request of fellow naval officers) during most of the time that I was there. In spite of the fact that some of these services had to be held in secret, and in spite of a lack of facilities (I did have my New Testament) we had some rich experiences, and I personally enjoyed a relationship with my shipmates that I could never expect to have duplicated. I was also privileged to hold services for enlisted men in their barracks.

A few days after their arrival at Cabanatuan, Chaplain Quinn was transferred to camp No. 3, where he remained until that camp was closed on 28 October 1942, when he was returned to camp No. 1. In the meantime, Brewster had been sent with other prisoners to Mindanao, and the two chaplains did not meet again until October 1944. Of his trip to and experiences in Mindanao, Brewster testified:

> In October of 1942 I was selected to be one of 1,000 officers and men to go to a camp in Mindanao, to which place we were sent via Manila in our boxcars, and then to Davao by ship. This was a rugged experience, taking a dozen days for a trip which could have been made in two. Many of us were not in good shape by then. I myself was in such bad shape from beri-beri that I was forced to turn in to

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Figure 2-1.—Chaplain David L. Quinn.

our so-called hospital soon after arriving there. This was an experience, the like of which I would not wish for my worst enemy. Suffice it to say, that I suffered the tortures of the damned, and my weight went to 120 pounds from a normal 200. But, by the grace of God, it was my good fortune to gradually recover to the extent that since I have been privileged to return home to normal living, I seem to be fully restored to my former good health.

Over the period of 20 months we remained here at this former penal colony, things did not turn out as well as we had hoped. Perhaps a very successful escape by 10 Americans was partly responsible for this. Food rations were always inadequate, even when the things we needed were available. Services were banned part of the time, but we managed to hold them most of the time (the hard way) and had some rich experiences. We found there were some things they couldn't take from us—although we had practically none of the things we were used to.

On 4 April 1943, Major Jack Hawkins, USMC, escaped from Mindanao, and, on 7 February 1944, wrote about the heroic services rendered by Chaplain Brewster while in prison. Hawkins stated:

After the final surrender of the Philippines, I was interned at prison camp number 1 at Cabanatuan, Nueva Ecija, P. I. I met Chaplain Brewster for the first time in this camp and was immediately struck by his splendid example of courage and fortitude under the stress of the terrible circumstances in which we found ourselves. In this camp all Naval and Marine Corps personnel, seeking to keep together as much as possible, had managed to be quartered in the same portion of the camp. It was difficult to maintain faith and hope in these horrible circumstances, but it was made easier for all of us by the moral and spiritual leadership of Chaplain Brewster, (see fig 2-2). He was our friend and counselor and a constant source of good cheer and hope. He ministered to the sick, organized a daily Bible class for us which benefited all of us greatly, and every Sunday he delivered a sermon to us which was absolutely inspiring. His efforts were endless even though his physical strength ebbed constantly as a result of the starvation we were enduring.

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Figure 2-2.—Chaplain Earl Ray Brewster.

> Finally, a group of prisoners numbering 1,000 were sent to camp number 2 at the former Davao Penal Colony in Mindanao. Chaplain Brewster and I were in this group. We all suffered terribly from exposure and the unbelievably crowded and filthy conditions on the Japanese ship during the 11-day trip to Davao. Upon our arrival there, we were forced to march about 20 miles, which, in our weakened condition, was almost beyond the limits of our endurance. It was not long after our arrival in this new camp that Chaplain Brewster developed beri-beri, the disease which caused untold suffering among the prisoners. The chaplain's condition was very serious. He suffered endless, stabbing pain in his feet and legs and he was not able to get up from his bed in our crude hospital. He was very thin. Sleep for him was almost impossible since there were no sedatives and the pain never stopped, not even for a minute. He once told me "Jack, I never knew such suffering was possible on this earth. But I will never give up."

Major Hawkins and others managed to smuggle fruit past the guards which they brought to the suffering chaplain. It was good medicine. Brewster began to rally. "We marveled," wrote Hawkins "when we found him on his feet, even though it caused him torturing pain, holding religious services for the other suffering patients in the hospital." And, Hawkins added: "When I escaped with the other members of our party of 10, we left Chaplain Brewster still improving, still walking, still defying pain, still bringing hope and courage to the hearts of men."

Of his religious activities Brewster wrote:

> The response to religious activities was good, everything considered. I was even requested by a group of fellow bed patients, while I was not able to walk, to preach to them from my bed, which I did (sitting on my cot) for several Sundays. As I mentioned above, some services had to be held secretly, although they let us arrange for some special services at Christmas and Easter. Mother's Day services were as well attended, as were the services on Easter. There was considerable interest in Communion Services. I had no elements or equipment. The men were asked to bring their canteen cups, and I poured the wine, which was melted grape jelly from my Red Cross box. The bread was made from rice flour. We really had some good times together and I have not enjoyed preaching anywhere more than in those strange surroundings.
>
> Personal contacts, of course, were a large part of the chaplain's opportunity. He was with his parishioners in every kind of experience—eating, sleeping, hiking, bathing, and working. I was on a rope-making detail for a while, and on several details in the fields. For a time in Mindanao I was the only active Protestant chaplain among 2,000 fellow prisoners, and was able to spend most of my time working as a chaplain. During this period it was my privilege to read aloud each day to as many as 50 men whose eyesight had become more impaired than my own. This was also rather practical since books were scarce. I found reading aloud a couple of hours each day to be very good training.

When the Japanese feared an invasion of Mindanao, the prisoners were transferred back to Luzon and sent to Cabanatuan via Bilibid Prison in Manila. On the first stage of their return trip, from the camp to Davao, the prisoners "were jammed into open trucks"; their shoes were removed; all were blindfolded; and a Japanese guard was seated on the cab armed with a stick (in addition to his gun) which he used to beat any caught trying to peek under the blindfold or who began talking. Brewster wrote:

> It would be quite difficult to describe adequately our trips in Jap ships where we were jammed below decks, even into dirty coal bunkers infested with rats. There was not even enough room for all of us to sit down at one time. We had to try to sleep in relays, and any adequate rest was impossible. Food (rice twice a day) and water (one Canteen a day) were terribly scarce. There was no bathing. On our trip back to Luzon most of us did not remove our clothing for the 3 weeks en route. Our friends in Bilibid Prison, upon our arrival there (on our way back to Cabanatuan) said that we were the worst looking large group they had seen, and they had seen some bad ones. It was nice to come back through Bilibid again and see many of my old friends of the Canacao hospital staff (Bilibid remained largely a hospital unit) and others.

The sea trip from Mindanao to Luzon took almost three weeks, with 1,200 men packed in two small dirty holds.

Brewster was sent back to Cabanatuan, but was again returned to Bilibid on request of the Japanese commander (a doctor). A special truck was sent from Cabanatuan to transport Brewster to Manila. "I am told," commented Brewster, "that I am the only one-man detail the Japs ever sent out from Cabanatuan—a dubious distinction, but it resulted in my being retained in Manila." The special duty assignment at Bilibid prevented Brewster from being included in the company of prisoners sent to Japan in the closing days of 1944. This exception probably saved his life.

Throughout his prison experience, a period of more than three years, Brewster carried on his religious activities as far as his strength permitted and other circumstances allowed. He reported that one of his hardest tasks was that of conducting burial services for 40 men who died in one day at Cabanatuan. As a form of punishment for some minor offense, the Japanese often banned the holding of Divine Services. At one time, the Japanese ruled that, while reading from the Bible and singing were permitted, preaching was forbidden. Commenting on this, Brewster said: "I would just look at my Bible and say, 'If I were preaching I would say this' and give my sermon."

Brewster's account continues:

> My work as a Protestant chaplain in Bilibid was as enjoyable as could be expected under the circumstances, and it was a real privilege to work with fellow prisoners, even though they were down physically and consequently low as far as morale was concerned. The food ration (rice, corn, and a few so-called vegetables) for the last 3 months got as low as 800 calories a day, which speaks for itself. The average weight of the 800 prisoners released there was 113 pounds.I missed the October draft to Japan (there were 5 survivors out of 1,700 prisoners) because the Japs retained me as the lowest ranking reserve chaplain. I was sent out to Fort McKinley with 400 cripples about the middle of November, not to return to Bilibid until 5 January 1945, which was 3 weeks after the last group (300 survivors out of 1,600) had left for Japan. Many of my best friends were in these last two drafts, and it was heart rending to see them half starved and sick, waiting as doomed men, which most of them proved to be.
>
> I spent Christmas and Thanksgiving of '44 at Fort McKinley, where they almost starved us for 7 weeks. We had nothing with which to celebrate, but some of the men still had inner resources, which caused them to be able to hold up their chins and hope for a better day. We had nothing but rice and watery soup (no meat) twice a day— the same as other days. Most of what little meat we did get from time to time was so spoiled that you could smell it from across a street. But, in spite of everything we were able, by the grace of God, to hold services, reading groups, and even have some special observance of Christmas and Thanksgiving. For the Christian Christmas, Easter and Thanksgiving are always meaningful.
>
> Coming back into Manila on 5 January 1945 I found that I was the only Protestant chaplain there—all the others (several Army and three Navy) had been included in the December draft. They had retained a Catholic Army chaplain, apparently anticipating my return to fill the quota which the Japs had allowed during the whole time at Bilibid. Now, there were 800 men in Manila, which was nearly two-thirds of the military prisoners left in the Philippines, since there were about 500 cripples left at Cabanatuan, whose peak population had been at least 20 times that number. These 500 were liberated, as is well known, by the Rangers a week or so before the 1st Cavalry and the 37th Infantry came into Manila.

In the closing days of his incarceration in Bilibid, Brewster was conducting funerals every day. These services were often interrupted by air-raid alarms when American planes flew overhead. "We did not object," wrote Brewster, "for it meant that the day of our possible release was drawing nearer." The great day of deliverance came on 4 February 1945. Brewster was awarded the Bronze Star Medal for "meritorious conduct" while detained by the Japanese ….

The terrible bombing Cavite received on 10 December 1941 was the signal for a general exodus of all possible American shipping from the Manila Bay area. The *Canopus,* however, with her chaplain, F. J. McManus, (see fig 2-2), remained behind to tend her brood of submarines still operating in Philippine waters. On Christmas Eve, the Japanese again bombed Cavite and the *Canopus* narrowly escaped being hit. Since the Americans were moving all strategic supplies and available forces as rapidly as possible out of Manila to Bataan and Corregidor, the tender was

POWf2003

Figure 2-3.—Chaplain Francis J. McManus.

ordered to Marivales Bay on the southern tip of Bataan. There she continued to serve her submarines. A camouflage was hastily improvised but this did not prevent her from being attacked on the 29th when bombs fell all around the helpless ship. She took one direct hit that left many casualties.

In the citation for the Silver Star Medal, awarded posthumously to Chaplain McManus, the following reference is made to the chaplain's heroic service when the *Canopus* was hit.

"When an armor-piercing bomb exploded in the vicinity of the after *magazine* crushing or exploding 70 rounds of ammunition, killing 6 men and wounding 6 others, and starting fires in adjacent compartments, Chaplain McManus, with complete disregard for his own safety, entered the smoke and steam filled engine room, assisted in removing the wounded and administered the last rites to the dying. His courageous action, beyond the call of duty and in the face of grave danger, is in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service."The last American submarines were ordered out of the Bay on 31 December, but it was then too late for the mother ship to slip by the Japanese blockade. When the *Canopus*

was bombed again a week later, she was left with such a list that the Japanese evidently thought she was a derelict. The officers of the *Canopus* did not disillusion the enemy and made no attempt to right the vessel. Activity, however, continued aboard especially at night when the ship's machine shop rendered valuable aid in a multitude of ways to the defenders of Bataan.

During the weeks and months of the siege before being transferred to Corregidor, Chaplain McManus made frequent trips from the *Canopus* to the island fortress in order to minister to Catholic personnel there and especially to members of the Fourth Marine Regiment. "This was far beyond the normal call of duty," wrote an Army chaplain, "and in addition to his other work."

As the fortunes of the defenders became increasingly desperate, it was finally decided to move the naval forces from Mariveles Bay to Corregidor. This was done in the night of April 6—7. Under cover of darkness, the *Canopus* was moved to deeper water and scuttled. Bataan fell on 9 April. Corregidor held out for about four more agonizing weeks and then on 6 May it, too, surrendered.

The fourth naval chaplain to be included in the surrender of American forces to the Japanese in the Philippines was H. R. Trump, who left Shanghai with the Fourth Marines on 27—28 November 1941. They reached Manila the week before the outbreak of war. The Marines played a valiant role in the defense of Bataan and Corregidor. Chaplain Oliver, who had opportunity to see Chaplain Trump at work, wrote of his tireless services in behalf of his men:

> Upon arriving at Corregidor late in the evening of 27 December 1941, Chaplain Trump learned that final radio messages could be sent to the United States from military personnel and although very tired from the hazardous trip from Olongapo, when his regiment was forced to evacuate to Corregidor, he sat up all night collecting messages and money from the men for transmission home and censored over 800 of these radiograms. It was the final message many people received from their men who were later killed in action or died as prisoners of war.

Chaplain Trump's regiment was widely scattered over Corregidor, but he was most faithful in visiting them and conducting services for his men under enemy shelling and bombing.

Following the surrender of Corregidor, both McManus and Trump elected to go with their men. On 2 July 1942, Kentner, the faithful diarist of Bilibid Prison, noted in his journal:

> The following named United States Navy chaplains arrived from Corregidor this date: LCDR H. R. Trump, CHC, U. S. Navy; LT F. J. McManus, CHC, U. S. Navy. Trump and McManus remained at Bilibid for only one night and were then sent to Camp No. 1, at Cabanatuan, where they found Chaplain Brewster. Navy chaplains joined with Army chaplains at this same camp in providing Divine Services, religious instruction, and in other expressions of their spiritual ministry. The prisoners were able to construct a chapel with materials they found or salvaged, large enough to seat about 30. The roof was thatched.

All faiths used this chapel. Because the seating capacity of the chapel was so small, most of the congregation attending Divine Services had to remain outside, but they could still hear the voice of the speaker.

Among the prisoners was a Jewish cantor. Protestant chaplains took turns in assisting him conduct services for those of the Jewish faith.

Chaplain A. C. Oliver, USA, also a prisoner a Camp No. I at Cabanatuan, in his testimony of 1 November 1945, commented as follows upon the faithful ministry rendered by Chaplain McManus:

> In Military Prison Camp No. I, Cabanatuan, Chaplain McManus constantly visited the sick, gave generously of very limited personal funds for the purchase of food for the sick . . . and frequently worked on details so that a sick man would not have to go out. Many times he volunteered to take the place of a sick Chaplain so that he would not have to work on the prison farm, airport project, or in cleaning the Japanese Guard Company area. He had the profound respect of men of all faiths and was a potent factor in bolstering their morale.

> According to Oliver, both Army and Navy chaplains often held Divine Services contrary to the orders of the Japanese. Such was done at the risk of the life of the officiating chaplain. Oliver made special mention of Chaplains McManus and Trump carrying on under these dangers and difficulties. Oliver's commendation of Trump included the following:

> In Philippine Military Prison Camp No. 1, Cabanatuan, Chaplain Trump constantly

visited the sick, acted as welfare officer for Group I for a period of 5 months, worked on Japanese details in order to be near his men, and in the course of this was beaten severely several times when he interfered in the interest of the men as a Japanese guard was beating them. In addition, Chaplain Trump carried on an excellent religious program and his services constantly attracted a large group of men. He had the respect of the men of all faiths and was a potent factor in keeping up their morale.

Chaplain John E. Borneman, another Army chaplain who was held prisoner in Camp No. 1 and who also observed the Navy chaplains at work, told how the Protestant chaplains conducted Bible and discussion classes at night, all unknown to the Japanese and contrary to their orders. Chaplain Trump led a series of meetings on the subject: "The Man Everybody Should Know." Protestant Army chaplains joined in this project by presenting other subjects. The attendance averaged about 80. The chaplains felt that such classes were most important, not only for the opportunity they presented for religious instruction, but also for the contribution they gave in maintaining morale.

In the meantime, Chaplain Quinn was also carrying on such religious services under similar difficult conditions in camp No. 3. Chaplain Borneman reported that when Chaplain Quinn returned to camp No. 1, he joined in the Bible class that met at night and led a series of studies in the life of Paul. Among the survivors of the prison camp and of the terrible voyage on three different prison ships to Japan in January 1945 was Chief Yeoman Theodore R Brownell whose testimony regarding his experience throws further light on the work the Navy chaplains:

> I'm certain if facilities had been placed at our disposal, the chaplains would have carried on much the same as they would have under peace conditions, but they were as much deprived by the Japanese as any other one of us and were having a difficult time keeping themselves alive. I do believe, however, that Chaplain McManus was probably the most outstanding chaplain with us. Chaplain Cummings [U. S. Army] and Chaplain H. R. Trump were "in there pitching too," but McManus had a quality rarely found in an individual. He was convincing in every undertaking and I personally have found him to be a man who believed in what he preached (pardon the expression). As Camp Sergeant Major for the Cabanatuan Prison Camp No. 1, I was in a position to meet and know not only the chaplains, but every other officer and man who had occasion to come near the office or, well, I now realize that I must have personally known thousands. The programs for religious services were prepared in my office. I took care of passes through to our "makeshift" hospital for chaplains and all.

Late in 1944, the Japanese, realizing that they might lose the Philippines, decided to transfer to Japan the allied prisoners still held in the Islands. On 13 October. many prisoners were moved from Cabanatuan to Bilibid Prison preparatory for shipment to Japan, including Chaplains Trump, Quinn, and McManus. Brownell has given the following vivid account of the harrowing experiences through which the unfortunate prisoners passed:

> On the 13th of December 1944, the Japanese marched 1,639 officers and men from Bilibid Prison to Pier 7, Manila, Philippine Islands. A roundabout way was selected to help humiliate we prisoners in the eyes of the Filipinos and Japanese military in Manila. The day was a scorching-hot one and the march was not an easy one for men in the poor physical condition that then prevailed in our ranks. We were loaded like cattle into the forward and after hold of the ship the Oryoko Maru. It was just a matter of hours before many deaths resulted from heat exhaustion and suffocation.

Statements by survivors tell of men, emaciated from three years' malnutrition and ill treatment, collapsing and dying under the horrible conditions which existed below decks. One of the survivors, Ensign Jimmy Mullins, testified: "Many deaths occurred among the naval personnel on board this ship in the night of 14 December 1944 due to suffocation." The ship was spotted by American planes after it left Manila Bay, and, since the vessel displayed no markings to identify her as a prison ship, was bombed. There were no casualties among the prisoners that day. The vessel put in at Olongapo, Subic Bay, where American planes bombed her again on the 15th, inflicting many casualties among the prisoners. Brownell's account continues:

> . . . off Olongapo, Philippine Islands, the ship was strafed by the American flyers and

eventually bombed. Many officers and men were killed instantly or suffered major wounds when a bomb exploded at the base of the mainmast. Part of the mast fell into the hold and, together with hatch covers, numerous men were buried in the debris.

A couple of miserable days were spent on a tennis court in plain sight of attacking planes and then we were loaded into trucks and transported to a theater in San Fernando, Pampanga, on the Island of Luzon again. A couple of miserable days and nights spent in cramped positions but, for a change, a little more rice in our stomachs, we were loaded into oriental-type (small) boxcars like cattle. Men again met death on a crawling trip to San Fernando, LaUnion, from heat exhaustion and lack of water. I recall that my buddy, William Earl Surber, USA (now deceased), and I took turns sucking air through a little bolt hole in the rear of the car we were packed into.

It is known that the three Navy chaplains were among those who reached the shore at Olongapo and that they shared the terrible experiences of their comrades on the tennis court and the train ride to San Fernando. Brownell's revealing and almost unbelievable description of conditions follows:

This miserable train ride ended at San Fernando, LaUnion still on the Island of Luzon. This was on Christmas Eve The following day we were marched into a schoolyard where we were furnished with a more plentiful portion of rice and limited supply of water. That night we were herded into ranks and marched to another point several kilometers away and placed on the sands of a beach. We waited there all that following day and night in the hot sun while horses were being unloaded from some Japanese ships. The next day, men and officers dying from the usual causes (dysentery mostly) were loaded into the forward and after holds of these cattle carriers for the second leg of a trip (beyond the belief of people in our so-called civilized age) and after scraping up the manure into piles in order to make sufficient room, we formed ourselves into groups of about 30 men per group; this being done in order to have some sort of order maintained in drawing anticipated rice and soup.

The second transport was boarded the 28 or 29 of December and the Japanese again started for Japan. No words can adequately describe the horrible sufferings endured on this second hell-ship. Men died from slow starvation, lack of water, brutal beatings, exposure, and disease. Many of the men suffered from diarrhea and dysentery.

On 9 January 1945, shortly before its arrival at Takao, Formosa, American planes spotted the vessel and bombed it. Ensign Mullins inserted a notation in his testimony that "Lieutenant David Long Quinn, 63952, USN, had previously died on '7 January' 1945 en route to Formosa.

Brownell's account of the voyage from Formosa to Japan, on the third vessel with an account of the passing of Chaplain Trump, follows:

On the 14th of January, 1945, the Americans bombed us off Takao, Formosa. Some five hundred or so were instantly killed in the forward hold (mostly all officers) and some three hundred and twenty-some odd injured or killed in the after hold. From that ship we were transferred to another pile of junk and thus started a freezing trip to Southern Japan. to Moji to be exact.

Chaplain H. R. Trump, USN, laid on the deck at my feet and was cheery and had high morale, but he was (had been) a big man and seemed to require more water and rice than a small man like myself. Each day, he was wasting away and finally, on the 27th of January, 1945, about 3 or 4 o'clock in the morning, he "went to sleep.' Dying from starvation and exposure has more mental than physical agony. His last few days alive were his "hell" for the want of water. An average of about two tablespoonfuls a day were, I would consider, about maximum received. A Chaplain Murphy died the day before that. His demise was caused mostly from malnutrition-diarrhea. He shook constantly from the cold as he wouldn't stay snuggled up close to someone else as we were all doing.

We landed in Moji on the 31st of January 1945, with less than 400 of the original 1,639!

According to the statement of another survivor, LTJG A. W. Long, "LT. Francis Joseph McManus died during the last week of January'." Only Earl Brewster of the four Navy chaplains taken prisoners in the

Philippines survived. He escaped because he was left behind at Bilibid Prison.

Chaplains of all services performed many acts of valor in combat during World War II.

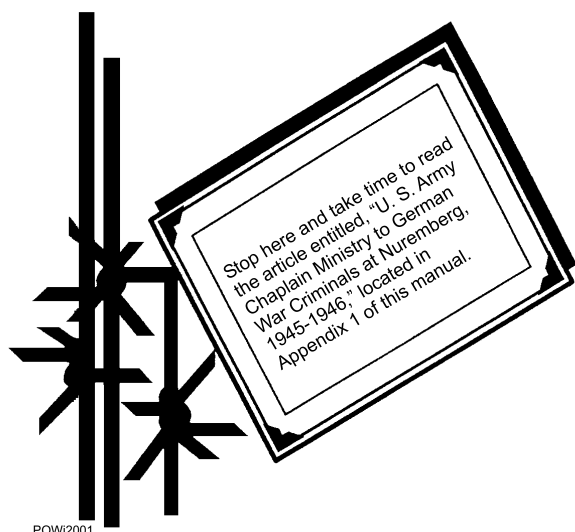
The following article is reprinted in its entirety as published in the Air Force Magazine, Jan 98, entitled, "Heroic Noncombatants." It was written by John L Frisbee.

> By definition chaplains are noncombatants, yet in the Pacific Theater alone, more than 20 chaplains were killed in action while ministering to the spiritual and physical needs of the troops. One of the most notable examples of sustained heroism among chaplains was that of Robert Preston Taylor.
>
> During the campaign to hold the Bataan Peninsula in the Philippines, Taylor spent many days in the battle area, searching out and caring for the physically wounded and disheartened, sometimes behind enemy lines. By his example, he brought hope and religious faith to those who had lost both and created a new faith among some who had none. These were hallmarks of his ministry throughout the war. He was awarded the Silver Star for gallantry in action.
>
> During the death march that followed the surrender of Bataan, Taylor suffered many beatings and calculated torture for his attempts to alleviate the suffering of other POWs. At Cabanatuan, the largest of the POW compounds, the inspirational Taylor soon became the best known and respected of the officers. He volunteered for duty in the worst of all areas, the hospital, where the average life of a patient was 19 days. Many men could have been saved if the Japanese had provided a minimum of medication, of which they had ample supplies.
>
> Taylor devised a plan for getting medical supplies from Philippine guerrillas and smuggling them into camp—an offense punishable by death. The plan was carried out largely by a corporal who was assigned work at railroad yards near the camp. The supplies could be obtained by Clara Phillips, an American woman who had contacts with the guerrillas. As medication began to filter into the camp, the death rate among patients declined drastically.
>
> Eventually the smuggling operation was exposed. Phillips was sentenced to life imprisonment and several participants were executed. Taylor was threatened with immediate death by the brutal camp commandant, Captain Suzuki, then confined in a "heat box"—a four-by-five-foot cage placed in the blazing sun—where he was expected to die. With barely enough food and water to keep him alive in the pest-infested cage, Taylor survived the box for nine weeks. His example encouraged others in the boxes to not give up. Near death, Taylor was moved to the hospital to die. Against all odds, he survived.
>
> A new and more humane commandant replaced Suzuki. Conditions began to improve, in part due to Taylor's influence over the new man. In October 1944, the Japanese ordered all American officers at Cabanatuan to be shipped to Japan. The Americans now were within 200 miles of Manila. Defeat stared Japan in the face. Some 1,600 officers were moved to Manila, where they were held nearly two months while the enemy assembled a convoy to take them and others to Japan.
>
> Early in December, the hottest and driest month in the Philippines, the men were marched to the docks. The 1,619 from Cabanatuan were assigned to Oryoku Maru, which once had been a luxury liner. The men were forced into the ship's three sweltering, unventilated holds. About two square feet of space was available for each man. There were no sanitary facilities. The first night, 30 men died in just one of the holds.
>
> After an attack on the convoy by US bombers whose crews did not know there were Americans aboard, only Oryoku Maru survived and it was anchored in Subic Bay. The next morning it was bombed and left sinking. Taylor was severely wounded but continued to help others out of the doomed vessel. As those who could swim neared the shore, Japanese troops opened fire on them, killing many.
>
> Jammed into a succession of equally crowded, unsanitary hulks, and with the barest minimum of food and water, the officers from Cabanatuan finally reached Japan on Jan. 30 in freezing weather for which they were not

clothed. Only 400 of the original 1,619 survived the horrible experience in the "hell ships," as they became known. Throughout the long months at Cabanatuan and the terrible voyage to Japan, Taylor never ceased to encourage hope among the POWs and to enlighten their spiritual lives.

When Taylor regained some strength as his wounds healed, he was assigned to work in the coal mines at Fukuoka. Soon formations of B-29s began to fill the skies of Japan. For that country, the war clearly was lost. The POWs were moved to Manchuria until the war ended. Only two chaplains who were aboard the hell ships survived.

After the war, Taylor remained in the Air Force. He was assigned to wing and command chaplain posts at several US bases and ultimately was named Air Force Chief of Chaplains with the rank of Major General. On his retirement in 1966, he returned to his native Texas to continue a life of service. Throughout his years that were marked by the horrors of war and by great personal suffering, he never lost the faith that sustained him and that he engendered in those whose lives he touched. He and the many chaplains who have devoted their lives to the service of others are a part of the Air Force tradition of valor.



The next article is entitled, "Escape and Evasion: The Chaplain's Role." It appears in an Army Training document. It is written by Chaplain Daniel Minjares, who is endorsed by the Church of the Nazarene. He is describing his experience in survival training:

> The Blackhawk helicopter swooped in low and swift over the treetops, settling in a downward rush of heavy wind and receding engine noises to the landing strip at North Fort Hood. Eight pilots and I looked anxiously out of the windows. We could see the MP guards that were at the far end of the strip. As the aircraft touched down in the grassy field, the crew chief opened the door and we quickly seized the opportunity before us, jumping out and sprinting toward a nearby tree line. This was our chance to put into practice the escape and evasion techniques we had learned.

Unfortunately, the MPs reacted too quickly to our escape attempt. One of the pilots and I soon found ourselves face down in the grass with MPs handcuffing and searching us. We were POWs! I am the chaplain for the 15th Military Intelligence Battalion (Aerial Exploitation). I recently participated with 24 pilots from my unit in phased training related to Escape and Evasion and Conduct as a Prisoner of War.

During the Escape and Evasion training, I trained with CSM John Gregorcyk, a Vietnam and Desert Storm veteran with 10 years' experience in Special Forces. At the beginning of our exercise, the Observer/Controller gave us two destinations via grid coordinates and told us to avoid capture by the Opposing Forces (OPFOR). Midway through our training, instructors from the Air Force Survival School taught classes on survival, escape and evasion techniques, and how to undergo interrogation. We also received an MRE, which was to be our only food for the two-day exercise. We were prisoners of war in the Corps Interrogation Facility (CIF), operated by Company A, 163d Military Intelligence Battalion (Tactical Exploitation). In the CIF we learned what it is like to actually be a prisoner of war. We were searched again, and then we waited to be questioned. Each pilot was given information that the interrogators were to attempt to uncover during their questioning. When I identified myself as a chaplain, and indicated that I was to be a detained person, the military police allowed me to keep the New Testament and inspirational cards that I carried to continue ministry to my fellow POWs. After several hours in the CIF, the

exercise was concluded, but not before I learned critical lessons that I outline here.

LAND NAVIGATION IS CRUCIAL

During the Escape and Evasion phase of the training, our ability to navigate was seriously tested. Since we were attempting to avoid capture, the terrain features and vegetation dictated our route to conceal our movement as much as possible. We could not rely only on azimuth readings, pace counts or following roads to avoid the OPFOR. A key factor affecting the ability to navigate is that virtually all movement during evasion would be done at night. The important use of terrain features as "handrails" for navigation cannot be underestimated. By carefully observing terrain (river beds, ridge lines) during daylight hours, you will be able to improve your navigation during hours of darkness.

STAY CALM, BE PATIENT

It is important to stay claim while attempting to evade captors. It is easy to panic. You must stop and think about what your are going to do before acting. Soldiers need to learn the importance of patiently waiting for the right moment to act. Carefully thinking through a course of action will pay great dividends.Air Force Captain Scott O'Grady successfully evaded Serbian troops for six days in war-torn Bosnia. His commander noted that O'Grady's ability to "maintain his cool" played a key role in this achievement. O'Grady moved slowly and carefully while avoiding hostile troops, never venturing more than two miles from the spot where he initially landed.

FATIGUE AND HUNGER MAKE EVERYTHING MORE DIFFICULT

Fatigue and hunger will confuse your thinking. After 10 miles of walking though dense undergrowth and "wait-a-minute" vines, the sergeant major and I were very tired and anxious to get to the end point (destination). Due to our fatigue, we made a serious mistake in reading our map. We had not gone as far as we thought we had, and crossed a creek nearly one kilometer from where we thought we were. As a result, thinking we were in the safe zone around the next point, when in reality we were not, we were captured. Such mistakes in war time can obviously spell disaster. Fatigue and hunger also play a significant role during interrogation. The Escape and Evasion phase covered more than 12 miles of difficult terrain. The sergeant major and I didn't reach the end point until 0300 hours on the second day. I covered myself with my poncho and lay on the wet, hard ground to sleep. When I awoke after a couple of hours of restless sleep, I joined the other pilots for our flight to the Corps Interrogation Facility. I was not in the best of shape when I arrived. Fatigue and hunger reduces one's ability to withstand the pressures of interrogation. Interrogators are trained manipulators, and they are skilled in easing information from unsuspecting soldiers. What may start as iron clad resolve may disappear quickly after several days of hiding from the enemy. An Interrogation Technician for the 163d Military Intelligence Battalion, Warrant Officer Stacy Strand, states the best strategy to take during interrogation is simply not to give any information beyond name, rank and service number. Any other information may be exploited and used as a lever against you or other prisoners. WO 1 Strand adds these tips: Don't give the interrogator anything to key on, such as being thirsty, hungry or how long it has been since you heard from your spouse or family. Give careful short answers to questions; try to show no emotion through facial expressions or body language.

HAVE CONFIDENCE IN YOUR ABILITIES

Confidence in your abilities to use all aspects of land navigation is critical in avoiding capture. Knowing you can read a map accurately, identify terrain features, and navigate will give a tremendous boost to your confidence when you need it most. Facing a real life evasion scenario is not the time to try and figure these things out. Continual practice and review will help keep skills fresh and confidence high.

PREPARATION FOR MINISTRY

While preparing for the escape and evasion exercise, I thought about what I would need, at a minimum, to continue my ministry in a POW environment. All I would have was what I could carry on my load bearing equipment and survival vest.

What do I need to continue to function as a chaplain? What did I want to have to perform my mission despite the circumstances? What do I need to have on me at all times in the event I am captured? These are important questions to consider and the answers will vary for all chaplains. For this exercise, I

took a small New Testament, and some inspirational cards to give to the pilots.

Additionally, chaplains need to prepare themselves spiritually and mentally for combat. This is an obvious point that bears repeating. With adequate preparation, my own fears and concerns will be under control, which then frees me to assist others POWs. Without this preparation, I can unwittingly limit my own ministry. It is difficult to give to others what I don't have myself.

Ministry as a POW

Once I have decided what I want or think I need for ministry, how do I go about my work as a POW? Individual ministry may be the main focus during captivity. Opportunities for group worship will probably be limited or nonexistent. Captors likely will not allow groups of prisoners to gather for any reason.

Maintaining Hope

During last year's Escape and Evasion exercise, I prepared a class on POW survival. I found some interesting statistics that underscore the importance of maintaining hope. I believed, before then, that POWs were not likely to survive the ordeal of captivity. But the following information shows a very different reality.

	WWII	KOREA	VIETNAM	TOTAL
Captured/ Interned	130,201	7,140	766	138,107
Died	14,072	2,701	114	16,887
Returned	116,129	4,418	651	121,198

—Statistics from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorders: A Handbook for Clinicians, Tom Williams, Published by Disabled American Veterans, 1987. These statistics indicate that 87.7% of POWs returned to their homes.

Chaplains, therefore, need to assist POWs in fighting the normal feelings of helplessness, despair, and depression. We cannot allow them to give up hope. Viktor Frankl's book, *Man's Search for Meaning*, is an excellent resource for chaplains to study this important issue.

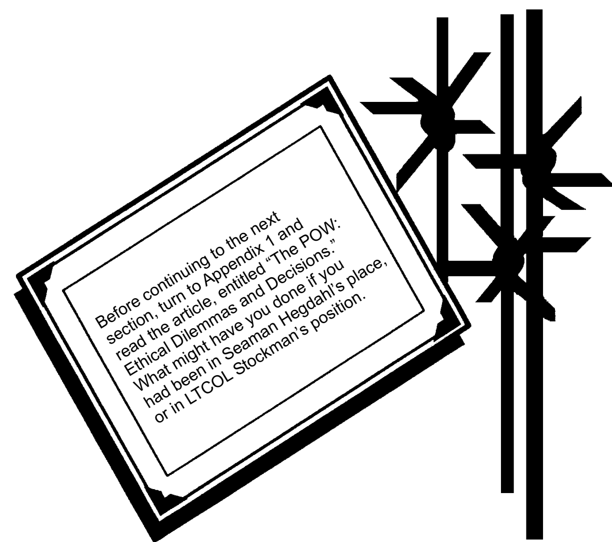
OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

These are some additional questions to consider. Do I work with the captors? Do I cooperate with them to gain concessions for the prisoners? Do I give some information in an attempt to have more freedom to do ministry?

Article 3 of the Code of Conduct states "If I am captured, I will continue to resist by all means available. I will make every effort to escape and aid other to escape...." How does this apply to me, as a chaplain? Do I attempt to escape or stay with prisoners still detained? There are no schoolbook solutions to these questions. Each chaplain will have to come to his or her own position on these issues.

CONCLUSION

The Escape and Evasion exercise at Fort Hood taught me the importance of thinking about potential captivity during field training. I admit that during my four years as an armor battalion chaplain, the thought of becoming a POW never crossed my mind. I ministered with soldiers during rotations at the CMTC and NTC, and I deployed to Desert Storm and Desert Shield without giving captivity even a passing thought. Air Force Captain Scott O'Grady fortunately survived his harrowing trial by fire and the rigors of escape and evasion. Training and preparation were critical to his success, although he readily admits that prior to the incident, the thought of such a near tragedy was "unthinkable." We need to remember that unthinkable events occur in war, and preparation is the key to our survival.



COMMON QUALITIES THAT AIDED SURVIVAL

Learning Objective: *To recall some insights into commonly accepted spiritual growth exercises and how enforced isolation and hardship can enhance these into a reality for survival.*

All of these experiences identify a commonality that a lot of people take for granted. Basically it became the need for a value system and the need for others to share in that same system. Each of these stories stresses the soul searching that each individual struggled with about who they were and, ultimately, why they were there, while imprisoned. Once they accepted their traumatic experience and responded to the values they had been taught, they were able to endure the worst of treatment. The noblest part of this endeavor was each individual's growth became dramatic when they were able to help a comrade.

Family background, any religious training and the bonding of the military community itself, worked in a positive way to strengthen each of these individuals in their struggle with the unknown. Once stripped of their status and relatively comfortable support systems, each of these individuals had the opportunity to identify what was of true value. They learned how to be compassionate because of the suffering and learned how to love from the hatred they witnessed. Faith and hope became the watchwords of survival. The process of Dr. Elizabeth Kubler-Ross, although primarily suggested for those in the trauma of death, aptly applies here. The denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance stages are reflected in all their stories in various intensities. Once the final stage of acceptance was reached then each of these POW's was able to cope and become supportive and effective in their own survival of those of their shipmates.

It is common to most spiritual traditions that some type of "retreat" where one isolates him or herself from the world to reflect on their very existence is recommended. Per force POW's are given this opportunity. Generally it is also suggested that this type of experience be within a community setting. Again, the bonding of intra communication between the POW's was the very lifeline that made their suffering endurable. The ingenuity and talents of each member became vital. Cooperation transcended personal differences and became endemic. The development of the "tap" code showed the resourcefulness of the POW's when all else failed or seemed insurmountable. Obviously, this was a no win scenario and yet their determination made it survivable.

The soul searching required that the important values of their cultural, social and military discipline be chosen carefully for this challenge. No matter what the deprivation, their spiritual powers could not be taken away. For those who had to endure isolation, they used this time constructively. Ultimately each individual became aware that taking care of each other was their primary need. How each POW survived depended upon each one's maintenance of their own spiritual, mental and physical well-being and that of their comrades. Truly the expression of living one day at a time became their reality.

In her book, "The Gulf between Us: Love and Terror in Desert Storm," Cynthia B. Acree writes about her struggle on the home front awaiting her Marine Aviator Husband's return from being held as a POW during the Gulf War. **See Appendix I, "Further Reading."**

FAMILIES: FIGHTING THEIR OWN WAR

Learning Objective: *To raise the level of awareness that the needs of family members of prisoners are significant and require resourceful help from caregivers on the homefront.*

If those held prisoners in Vietnam viewed themselves as continuing the war in captivity, their families were faced with fighting a war of their own. Daily, over a period of years, the wives and children of American prisoners of war lived with the extremes of uncertainty, loneliness, and hope. Just as the Communist propaganda machine brutally dictated rules of life for those imprisoned in a total institution thousands of miles from home, so, too, political circumstances seemed to dictate the hopes and fears of family members.

Nearly every prisoner of war, at the time of shootdown, assumed in blissful ignorance that his imprisonment would probably last about 6 months, and then it would all be over. Families, on the waiting end of this unknown, struggled to maintain normalcy," while at the same time lobbying for information and influence. The war fought on the home front consisted

of learning and deepening basic life values of faithfulness, constancy in adversity, and honor. The stories of the families, like the stories of the prisoners, have to do with the search for meaning in the midst of extreme circumstances.

Included among the waiting families were those whose wait would not end in 1973. Hundreds of these families of servicemen missing in action (MIAs) continue to live with unresolved grief. During the Vietnam years, of course, many women were not certain whether they were wives or widows, due to the fact that a list of confirmed prisoners was not made available until the time of release. For example, a wife might have been informed initially that her husband had been killed in action (KIA), only to receive news as many as 2 years later that he was, in fact, in the prison system.

Further, the nearly 600 prisoners of war repatriated in 1973 represented only a portion of the total number of families affected directly by captivity, as the families of MIAs will confirm. It is actually the experience of families, not only that of the prisoners themselves, which warrants the degree of attention paid to wartime captivity. While captivity would appear to be a unique, infrequent occurrence, statistics indicate that there were over 4,000 American servicemen captured during World War I; over 142,000 captured in World War II; and 766 captured and interned in Vietnam.

When the number of anxious family members left behind waiting multiplies these numbers; the real impact of captivity on society becomes more significant. Research into the effects of captivity on both prisoners and families has never been undertaken more intentionally than it was during the Vietnam years. Operation Homecoming, originally organized in 1972 under the more cumbersome name "Egress Recap," was a full-scale effort at the Department of Defense level to ensure that the repatriated prisoners received a hero's welcome with plenty of re-entry assistance, both psychologically and materially. The Naval Aerospace Medical Institute (NAMI) in Pensacola, Florida (since renamed NOMI, Naval Operational Medicine Institute) began conducting medical follow-up exams of each prisoner in January 1974. These medical exams still take place, annually.

Additionally, the Family Studies Branch of the Center for Prisoner of War Studies (CPWS) was established in 1971 to focus specifically on how families were coping with the highly ambiguous and stressful situation of captivity; and what issues repatriation would introduce to the changing family dynamic. Consequently, there are from the Vietnam era a number of documented studies on such family concerns as the effect of father-absence on children, role identification in a changed family structure, and post-reunion adjustment. The value and implications of these findings for other types of military separations (e.g., routine deployments and special operations) are obvious.

One of the more illuminating accounts of how one family experienced the ordeal of captivity is provided in the book, *In Love And War*, by Jim and Sybil Stockdale. Particularly moving, and unique among POW autobiographies because the Stockdales each wrote alternate chapters, *In Love And War* truly reveals a war fought on two fronts. The sections on captivity written by Admiral Stockdale have been alluded to in the previous section of this package. The chapters contributed by Mrs. Stockdale, in turn, provide insights which the empirical research of CPWS confirms, and an emotional dimension which the data lack. The following are some significant conclusions and recommendations to be drawn from both the book, and the research.

1. <u>As much as shootdown and capture are a shock for the prisoner, these events carry their own unique shock for families receiving the news</u>. The first notification, which Mrs. Stockdale received, of her husband's capture was that he was "missing." It was seven months before she received, in April 1967, a letter from him dated December 1966. Prior to this, the details of his whereabouts and well being were simply nonexistent, other than the fact that his parachute had been sighted. Mrs. Stockdale describes her first reaction to the news, thus: "No tears gushed forth. No screams of anguish. Just a puzzling sensation of shock that this was happening to me. Then I began to shake all over."

Later that same day she recalls trying to detect whether her intuition was telling her that her husband was alive or dead, but realized that she "had absolutely no intuitive feelings about it one way or another." Another wife interviewed for this writing noted that she found it difficult to make major decisions in the immediate aftermath of receiving news of her husband's capture, and that, in fact, it was good that she did not make any major decisions for about the first three months." Thinking, planning, and exercising sound judgment were not only difficult because of the lack of information; these were functions which required considerable energy — energy which was

being diverted into maintaining emotional stability. Interestingly, service members at risk of capture are taught in survival training about a similar phenomenon, known as "capture shock": that initial period in which one's whole system is saying, "I can't believe this is happening to me." Depending on the circumstances of capture, and the personality of the individual, this period may last for as little as two days, or for as long as a few weeks.

Escape plans made while one is in shock typically fail, because complete attention cannot be given as it should to crucial details. In the case of families, the period of shock may last longer than it would for the prisoner, depending, among other factors, on how soon information can be obtained which is unambiguous. Of the two parties, the family is in the more ambiguous situation; and ambiguity prolongs, even delays, grief.

2. Prior connections and contacts are essential. In much the same way that a foreign visitor will revert to his or her language of birth in times of stress or crisis, families left to cope with events such as war time captivity, which pose the possibility of significant loss, require a supportive network of family or friends with whom they are absolutely comfortable, and can trust. Mrs. Stockdale describes being unable to sleep the first night after she had received the news of her husband's capture. She immediately called on her closest friend to stay with her. Further, in much the same way that the prisoners struggled to maintain communication with one another in captivity because of the emotional support it provided, the ability of the wives to initiate and nurture new contacts played a very important role in their survival, growth, and, as a group, their effectiveness in influencing world opinion regarding North Vietnam's treatment of prisoners of war.

3. Depending upon the overall health of the marriage, and of the family's life together prior to captivity, families' experiences of survival and growth differ widely. Just as some families come through a routine deployment stronger and more committed than they were before, while others become alienated and fragmented, not all the families of prisoners of war responded identically. Some marriages ended in divorce, either during the captivity itself, or following repatriation; others flourished at a new level of maturity. Some children immediately evidenced problems adjusting to and coping with their father's absence; for other children, the effects were delayed, more subtle. Some families had positive experiences with the Navy system, in regard to financial policy, communication, and support; others did not. However, all the families were deeply affected by captivity, and in certain similar ways. In this light, two important generalizations may be made, based on CPWS research, for future insight and use:

a. Following the initial shock of notification, most wives remained in a "limbo" state for one to two years. Whether this period was characterized as "marking time in place" or "vegetating," its prolongation was detrimental to day-to-day functioning. Wives eventually had to "close out" the husbands' roles within the families, whether partially or totally, and make major decisions as though their husbands were no longer a part of the family unit. On the whole, the better able wives were at making this adjustment, the better their children were at coping with the long years of separation.

b. When POW families were interviewed one year following repatriation, the key to successful re-negotiation of roles appeared to depend on the extent to which husband and wife were able to agree on and resolve role relationships. Whether the family structure was traditional, egalitarian, or role reversed, was not as important as whether or not an unresolved discrepancy of values had arisen between husband and wife. Almost 30 percent of the reunited families were divorced after one year, a percentage which matched the divorce rate in the civilian sector in 1974. Nevertheless, the percentage in the comparison group was only 11 to 12 percent, or about one-third as high as the POW families. The indelible scars left on prisoners by their captivity experience meant that, in some cases, they had trouble making decisions. In marked comparison with their wives, who had had to become, if not completely comfortable, at least accustomed to making all the family decisions, most of the prisoners had just come from an environment in which it was normal to spend several hours of the day deciding, for example, when or whether to smoke the rationed cigarette. There were no other decisions to make. Thus, extreme shifts in roles and responsibilities occurred to a degree not normally experienced during a deployment, and over a far greater length of time (years, as opposed to months). Renegotiation and redefinition of role relationships was essential, and difficult, and not always successful.

4. Immediate and responsive assistance at the institutional level goes a long way toward defusing the anxiety, frustration, and despair associated with war-time, or terrorist captivity. Families' "captivity" can result in an emotional isolation which active support, without becoming intrusive or impositional, can alleviate. Sharing information through any

available network of communication reinforces the message to families that they have not been forgotten, and those politically influential powers are still aware of the prisoners' plight. Mrs. Stockdale, who founded the National League of Families of American Prisoners and Missing in Southeast Asia during her husband's captivity, repeatedly discovered the value of simply bringing wives together to talk about how they were doing and what they were feeling.

In 1969, when she first began extending her efforts beyond the San Diego area via a letter to 60 POW wives whom she knew throughout the country, countless replies poured in by phone call and letter from those who had no concept that there were others in their same situation. One woman in Anniston, Alabama, indicated that her husband had been missing for 3 years, and that Mrs. Stockdale was the first person she had ever heard from who was "in the same boat."

As the League became an increasingly organized and influential entity, more and more officials in the Department of Defense and the Department of State began listening to their pleas that international attention be focused on the North Vietnamese' lack of adherence to the terms of the Geneva Convention. Of course, the emotional support to be gained within the individual League chapters was still a factor of great significance to the families; but knowing that their solidarity carried an influence that extended far beyond their boundaries, freed many from futility.

5. Coincident with support offered to prisoners' families, opportunities should be provided for children, specifically, to participate in group counseling. Some of the former POWs interviewed for this report, when asked what they considered, in retrospect, might have served their families well during the captivity period, mentioned the need for counseling for their children. Perhaps because the family unit headed solely by the mother necessarily became insular and private, even involvement in outside activities where there are "significant other" adults could not address the need for emotional support, intentionally offered, and guided within a group of one's peers. Further, mothers' own needs probably diminished the full degree of emotional energy that they may have been able to muster for their children under different circumstances.

6. Exposure to the media is not an activity for which all families are enthusiastic. Even for those who are fairly comfortable giving magazine interviews or appearing on television, media activities can be stressful. While some may find it personally helpful, even healing, to bring their message to the news media, those who do not find it so should be encouraged to discover other activities which are healing. In this, as in other areas, not all families are alike.

Perhaps the greatest lesson learned from the extensive research and study of families during the Vietnam captivity, is that family programs which are well-planned, responsive, and able to be implemented quickly in a crisis, will play an essential role in families' healthy adjustment and readjustment for years to come. Prisoners and their families learned through their respective ordeals that they are able to take on far more stress than they had ever dreamed possible. Reinforcing strength and confidence in these abilities enables victory in the face of the toughest odds.

ISSUES IN COMMON

Learning Objective: *To distinguish between the historical realities and conditions of captivity in the various wars and to identify the common emotional and spiritual effects that Prisoners of War share.*

Even a superficial reading of accounts of captivity during World War II and Vietnam quickly reveals the vast differences in conditions and treatment. If common issues were to be identified on the basis of circumstances alone, one might be hard pressed to find similarities.

For example, those interned in Japanese prison camps in the Philippines suffered terribly from both the immediate and long-term effects of diseases associated with malnutrition and exposure. Various gastrointestinal diseases, tuberculosis, beri-beri, avitaminosis, and pneumonia, as well as diseases endemic to the Far East (e.g., malaria and dengue-type fevers), decimated the numbers of American prisoners by the thousands. The Bataan Death March (April 1942) caused the deaths of thousands more through starvation. The atrocities associated with physical survival alone were compounded by the brutal and capricious treatment of the Japanese. Starving, malnourished prisoners were routinely assigned to heavy work details, and beaten severely for little or no reason at all.

Upon repatriation, unlike prisoners returning from Vietnam, the 9,732 who survived discovered to their disillusionment that their stories of what took place were not believed. Many doctors dismissed their harrowing accounts as gross exaggerations. The

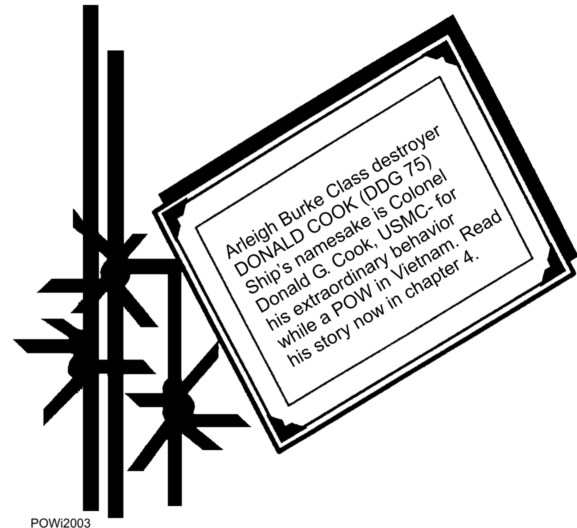
former prisoners were mistakenly perceived as seeking glory and adulation, rather than needing to share the pain of what they had experienced. Additionally, medical treatment from the Veterans Administration hospitals was denied, due to the perception that their maladies were not "service connected." Numerous first-hand accounts of painful post-repatriation experiences are documented, alongside accounts of the atrocities of the prison camps.

The thousands of Americans imprisoned during the Korean conflict met, for the first time, such tactics of the enemy as extortion, propaganda, and "re-education." While much has been made of "brainwashing" from this era, the changed convictions of those who either divulged valuable intelligence information, or who became openly sympathetic to the enemy cause, may be attributed to an actual change of will, not to any hypnotic transformation of the mind. Many government officials and citizens were alarmed at the prospect that any American fighting man could be persuasively tempted by the enemy to "sell out" the American way of life. Of the 4,000 who were repatriated, Major Mayer estimated that approximately one-third became "progressives": "By the Communists' own definition, this meant that a man was either a Communist sympathizer or a collaborator — or both — during his stay in a prison camp."

In reality, what Major Mayer and others observed sounds very similar to current debate on the state of American education. A significant number of American soldiers either did not understand their nation's history, or did not feel a strong personal investment in the American way of life, or both. Consequently, they were vulnerable, under the horrifying pressures and conditions of prison life, to attempts at "re-education" by the enemy.

The 591 Americans imprisoned in North Vietnam, and the somewhat smaller number (117) imprisoned in South Vietnam, was an exceptional group, for a variety of reasons. Not only were the vast majority well-educated, highly committed military professionals; but also their smaller number, at least compared with previous wars, led to tighter management and control by the Vietnamese, and ultimately, to a kind of propaganda war on the world stage.

While the propaganda war backfired when world opinion turned against the North Vietnamese, this result occurred only after the prisoners had been exposed over a period of years to severe pressure to become propagandists against their own country. The prisoners profiled in the first section (above), and many of the articles reproduced in these chapters, attest to the unique community formed by this particular group of prisoners, due in part to the political circumstances of the Vietnam War.



The above discussion is provided merely to point out that the actual captivity circumstance, both in physical and psychological terms, can vary, and has varied widely from war to war. However, there is value in identifying issues in common, not only in order to prepare more effectively for future captivity, but also to highlight some universally shared aspects of the prisoner experience.

From CDR Holt's research paper *Prisoners of War: Prescriptive Conduct and Compliance in Captive Situations:*

All prisoners, albeit to varying degrees, share degradation and dehumanization by the enemy. Whether in the form of torture, political exploitation, or extreme physical deprivation and injury, it is the feelings that result from such treatment which are common: loneliness, profound sense of loss and abandonment, and despair.

Because prisoners of war are, in nearly every case, military members, their shared military training and values become bedrock assets in a captivity environment. Part of the reason why American prisoners in North Vietnam were able to form an effective community, was because they were almost all aviators.

Whether Navy or Air Force, the flying "club" constituted a powerful bond. Another aspect of military training is a common code of ethics. American prisoners in Vietnam, in the wake of the experience in North Korea with Communist propaganda, had specified rules of behavior known as the Code of Conduct. Again and again, prisoners from the Vietnam era cite the Code as a powerful guide and motivator during those torturous years.

The extreme deprivation of the captivity circumstance will inevitably bring individuals together around the following four shared human needs:

1. Communication (emotional contact)
2. Humor
3. Meaning (beyond survival)
4. A clear conscience
5. Captors, regardless of their country and culture, tend to use the same tactics to manipulate prisoners, and to increase dependence:
6. Humiliation
7. Guilt
8. Threat
9. Reward and punishment
10. Frank attempts directed toward attitudinal change by appeal to reason.

In the light of these common issues, American service members are typically trained to develop their will to resist. As prisoner after prisoner in a variety of wartime captivity settings will affirm, the prisoner of war status invariably drives a person inward, into the earliest memories and lessons of childhood and basic schooling. The resistance tools, they say, lie within, in the world of the soul and the will. Therefore, training, to be effective, must acquaint the individual with his or her inner world, where invisible, often underdeveloped values await the chance to emerge.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. In the scenario of imprisonment, whether as a POW or a hostage, reflect on what would become important to you when you are deprived of all semblance of human dignity?

2. In our everyday lives, we are allowed the opportunity to consciously care about other people. In the confinement expressed in this chapter, what nature of commitment do you feel would be needed to "love" your captors?

3. The selflessness expressed in the lives of the POW's both in Vietnam and especially the chaplains in WW II is heroic. Discuss how our daily experiences can even today, allow us to attain this goal?