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Date: May 24, 1973
A LITERATURE SURVEY OF SELECTED ASPECTS OF THE PSYCHOLOGICAL REACTIONS TO THE STRESSES OF IMPRISONMENT AND REPATRIATION UPON UNITED STATES' VIET NAM PRISONERS OF WAR

by

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this review of literature was to survey selected aspects of the psychological reactions to the stresses of imprisonment and repatriation upon United States' Viet Nam prisoners of war. All prisoners of war studied exhibited, in addition to severe physical abuse, psychological reactions of depression, anxiety, thoughts of suicide, and guilt while in captivity. Some men experienced all of these symptoms, some only one or two, and the magnitude range was from the small adjustment problem to psychotic reaction. Methods of coping with these reactions to stresses were, repression, regression and death, transference of affect and conversion reactions.

The psychological and emotional adjustments upon repatriation followed the same pattern. Some men showed few problems, while others studied six years after imprisonment in World War II still had not completely adjusted. The main problem encountered upon repatriation was the inability of the government to provide adequate screening and care for these men upon return. As late as 1969, severe problems were noted with the repatriated crew members of the U.S.S. Pueblo. These problems exhibited themselves by the men acting out with alcohol and other drugs, squandering of back pay, and in one case, suicide.

Conclusions were that the prisoners studied were all treated by the enemy under the same basic conditions of torture and brutality. The psychological reactions to these stresses were basically the same for each group. Repatriation problems were severe and long lasting for former prisoners of war, and will be severe and long lasting for some of the Viet Nam prisoners of war. Those men with the most severe problems will be men with immature personalities; enlisted men; and those held in the South under the most inhumane conditions by the Viet Cong.

Recommendations are: (1) That a continued study be made of the men released from Viet Nam prisoner of war camps. (2) The Military Code of Conduct be revised to take into consideration lessons learned from the Pueblo Incident and Viet Nam. (3) That intensive training be given to all service men concerning capture by the enemy, with emphasis on how to cope with this situation.
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In all of the wars waged by mankind, soldiers of opposing armies have taken prisoners of war. In earlier times, these prisoners were utilized as slave laborers or were sold into slavery much as cattle or sheep. Only in more civilized times have prisoners of war been returned to their home countries. Initially most emphasis was placed on the physical problems experienced while in prison and no interest given to the returning prisoner of war. Only very recently has much thought been given to the psychological aspects of this repatriation.

The first studies concerning this problem of repatriation of prisoners of war were done shortly after World War II. These studies, for the most part, considered the physical illnesses of the men with reference to the psychological aspects of imprisonment and repatriation receiving only slight mention. It was felt that the physical problems involved were of utmost importance due to their obvious severity and the severe physical conditions under which the men had lived. The psychological repercussions of imprisonment and repatriation were neither noted nor treated unless they were of such a serious nature
that they demanded hospitalization or other intensive care. It was only later that the more minor, latent, psychological disturbances surfaced, indicating that more attention should have been given the mental health of all returned prisoners.

Because these problems surfaced years later, better care was provided to the returned prisoners of war from those conflicts occurring after World War II. However, the surfacing of these latent psychological problems was probably not the only reason for this intensive care. The reasons are many and varied. The overall advancement of the behavioral sciences from World War II to present showed clearly the damage that can be done from psychological and physical torture and isolation for long periods of time. The political indoctrination of many prisoners of war during the Korean War opened the eyes of the American public to the enemy's use of the prisoner of war as a propaganda tool during conflicts and the affect of this use upon the prisoners. In Viet Nam, the guilt of a public involved in an unpopular and unwanted war was transposed from the war in general to the prisoners of war. With the focus of all of this guilt on these prisoners of war, tremendous attention was given to these men. Also,
in Viet Nam, because there was no clear winner of the conflict, the nation had no other place to focus its attention except on the returning prisoners of war. This attention, along with knowledge of previous prisoners of war, will hopefully initiate the best possible care for these repatriated men.

Studies done on prisoners of war of the Korean War and Pueblo incident compare highly with those done after World War II, showing a general trend in each case toward depression, and anxiety during captivity, with loneliness and confusion upon return. By comparing these findings from previous studies with prisoners of war recently released from captivity in Viet Nam, the researcher will be better informed of the psychological problems to be encountered. All of the previous conflicts dealt with in this study were of major United States' involvement and occurred in the Asian part of the world with an Oriental enemy. Because of this, much of what is found about the psychological problems encountered by the prisoners of war of these conflicts can be inferred to be the problems that have been and will be encountered by the Viet Nam prisoner of war. A general picture concerning the
psychological reactions to imprisonment and repatriation of returning Viet Nam prisoners will be available from this study.

This information may point out the need for intensive help to return these prisoners of war to as normal a lifestyle as possible. New directions in long term treatment of these Viet Nam prisoners of war could be indicated. In addition, the findings of this study could possibly apply to the readjustment of public offenders incarcerated for long periods of time in our penal institutions. Although the situations differ from Viet Nam prisoner of war to criminal prisoners, the dynamics of the incarceration are much the same and research findings in one area could lead to knowledge in the other.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The problem in this study is to survey selected aspects of the psychological reactions to the stresses of imprisonment and repatriation upon United States' Viet Nam prisoners of war.

NEED OR PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Since the United States' involvement in the Viet Nam war, much has been written about the repatriation of
the hundreds of prisoners of war captured by the North Vietnamese and the Viet Cong. Most of what has been written concerns the rather superficial needs of the prisoner's family or the needs of the country as a whole. Little has been written about the very real needs of the prisoner himself. This researcher feels that the country is experiencing a type of survivor syndrome. That is, it is difficult for a country that has suffered very little from the Viet Nam war to not feel guilty about a person who has suffered very greatly from this same war. The public feels this guilt over people incarcerated in a war that it, the public, feels is immoral and unnecessary. If the war is immoral and unnecessary, then so is the prisoners' incarceration. In an attempt to rid itself of this feeling of guilt, the public has demanded the immediate return and normalization of the prisoner of war problem. Normalization is defined as returning the men to their families and society as soon as possible.

This guilt, felt by the public, should be used to insure that all of the prisoners of war receive the medical and psychiatric help necessary, not just superficial help with no followup care. In every recent conflict, even as
recent as the 1968 Pueblo Incident, severe psychological reactions were not noted and later erupted in overreaction during the stressful days following repatriation. This study will attempt to identify some of the similarities and differences in problems of readjustment experienced by World War II, Korean War, Pueblo Incident and Viet Nam repatriations.

GENERAL QUESTIONS TO BE ANSWERED

The general questions to be answered are:

1. The psychological and physical condition of prisoners of war while in prisoner of war camps.

2. The psychological and emotional adjustments in returning to the United States.

GENERAL PROCEDURE

The investigator will conduct a review of the literature to determine psychological problems encountered by the Viet Nam prisoners of war, and their methods of coping with these problems. The psychological problems noted in earlier prisoners of war will be determined by a further review of the literature and if appropriate, applied to the Viet Nam prisoners of war as a prognosis of their future.
It is felt that because of the similarity of the previous prisoners of war to the Viet Nam prisoners of war in the areas of treatment, race and political convictions of the captors, that near direct inferences can be drawn from past prisoners of war and applied to the present Viet Nam prisoner of war.

Because this is a review of literature, no instrument will be utilized or constructed to aid the investigator. The information gained from this review of literature will help in determining what problems can be expected and will show what treatment may be considered necessary to help these men re-enter society with as few problems as possible.

LIMITATIONS AND/OR DELIMITATIONS

1. This study is limited to World War II (Pacific Theatre), the Korean War, Pueblo incident and the Viet Nam War.

2. Because of the recent repatriation of the Viet Nam prisoners of war, and the time requirements of this paper, no data will be considered after April 15, 1973.
Because of the recent repatriation, information on Viet Nam prisoners of war will be obtained from all sources, to include currently popular periodicals.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

The term normalization, as used in this paper, refers to the immediate return of the prisoner of war to his role in society as it was prior to his capture.

Depression is used in this paper as exogenous depression rather than endogenous depression. That is, depression that originates due to outside stresses, rather than depression that originates from within a person.

Prisoner of war means any member of the American Military or civilian captured and held by the opposition in either World War II, the Korean War, the Pueblo Incident or the Viet Nam War.

SUMMARY

Little study was made of prisoners of war prior to World War II. Since that time, studies have shown that repatriated prisoners of war fared poorly both physically and psychologically both during captivity and after
repatriation. As late as the 1968 Pueblo Incident, severe reactions to the stresses were not noted upon repatriation and resulted in severe delayed psychological problems. This study will attempt to determine the psychological stresses involved by those prisoners of war of World War II, the Korean War and the Pueblo Incident. An attempt will be made to identify those stresses to be experienced by the Viet Nam prisoners of war during their imprisonment. It is felt that by knowing what each of these groups of prisoners of war experienced in imprisonment, and what the earlier prisoners of war experienced upon repatriation, one can deduct what the Viet Nam prisoners of war will encounter upon their repatriation.

The findings of this study will give new directions for research as well as aid in determining the psychiatric help needed by each prisoner of war.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

INTRODUCTION

The repatriation of American men held prisoner or listed as missing in action due to the Viet Nam war is an emotionally charged issue. Some evidence is present to cause tremendous concern over the repatriation of these men. If Viet Nam prisoners fared as previous prisoners of war, the problems encountered by the men during imprisonment and during repatriation are tremendous and must be taken into account.

The literature reviewed in this chapter will concern the psychological reactions to the stresses involved in the imprisonment and repatriation of these prisoners. This literature will be divided for topically into the following major areas: (1) World War II (Pacific Theatre); (2) Korean Conflict; (3) Pueblo Incident; and (4) Viet Nam War. At the end of this chapter is a section summarizing the contents of the areas listed above.

WORLD WAR II (PACIFIC THEATRE)

The war in the Pacific was different from any war the United States had fought previously in that it was
primarily a tropical war fought against an Oriental enemy. These two factors, a tropical war and an Oriental enemy, added to the already stressful situation of being a prisoner of war. Cultural differences, a different diet, physical disease, lack of adequate food, clothing, water, shelter, and medicine contributed in large part to the 60 percent death rate of the approximately 30,000 soldiers captured by the Japanese during World War II. In addition to the factors listed above, emotional shock about being captured, and reactive depression to the treatment encountered played a great part in the individual's inability to cope with disease and physical symptoms and consequently, contributed to the death rate (Nardini, 1952).

Himself a prisoner of the Japanese, Nardini found a never ending circle of disease, leading to psychological illness and psychological illness leading in turn to disease. The loss of the will to live was cited as a significant factor in both severe psychological reactions as well as death. The inability to display anger or hostility towards their captors resulted in the men turning this emotion inward or toward other groups of prisoners or members of their own group. Self pity was found to be,
"... highly dangerous to life" (Nardini, 1952). Survival factors included generally good intelligence and a strong constitution. Emotional insensitivity, a sense of humor, courage, luck, opportunism and a few years military experience were listed as supporting factors that maintained this will to live (Nardini, 1952:242).

Factors leading to poor adjustment were dependence, sensitivity, and immaturity. Men of low intelligence did poorly due to the inability to properly plan and poor self care (Nardini, 1952).

Unlike persons imprisoned for civilian crimes, POWs did not know when their release would be, if ever. The future offered only visions of more disease, hunger, beatings, boredom and continued subservience.

Inmates of concentration camps showed basically the same problems as the prisoners of war described above. There was a greater use of denial and isolation of affect defense mechanisms. The feeling that, "This isn't really happening to me" was widespread and the case of a young prisoner "... who would not see the corpses she was stepping over. ..." shows the severity of the denial (Chodoff, 1970). Isolation of affect was epitomized by the girl who stated, "I had no feelings whatsoever. ..."
while being stripped naked and having all of her hair shaved off in front of the soldiers on guard (Chodoff, 1970).

Concentration camp inmates also tended to view any hopes of deliverance in the form of a miraculous event, possibly because their situation was even more hopeless than that of the prisoners of war and any hope would have had to be rather unrealistic.

Prisoners studied immediately after World War II by Wolf and Ripley (1947:180) were categorized as, "... comparatively seclusive and taciturn." Also in this report, prisoners were reported to have said they hated their superior officers and spoke badly of them while in captivity. This was looked upon as a transference of emotions, for to vent this anger on their captors was to invite death. Major conversion problems noted were blindness and loss of hearing. These had survival value in that if a person could not see or hear his environment, he did not have to react to it.

According to Wolf and Ripley (1947:192) those that fared best were of two basic types: (1) those with the personality traits of a psychopathic personality and (2) extremely mature individuals. It was said that the
psychopathic person was emotionally insensitive, while the mature person could basically cope with the problems.

Wolf and Ripley (1947:192) further state that the experience of being a POW has a relatively "... long lasting effect on the personality adjustments of even the best integrated of these individuals." Among those contacted a year after repatriation, some were functioning in productive activities, but few considered themselves completely well or adjusted.

A question that arose after World War II was why some men fared well psychologically and physically, while others did not. Morgan, Wright, and van Ravensway (1946:995) attempted to answer this question by interviewing 4,618 former prisoners of war. They report that many factors played a part. However, when questioned specifically concerning what factors were most important, many former prisoners credited the will to live as having the greatest importance. This is an intangible phrase, but those who survived best were characterized as being able to adjust easily to difficult situations, able to eat anything, basically nonaggressive, able to secure food by any means, and of high morale and courage.
In general, in the case of prisoners of war subjected to extreme and inhuman conditions, and of concentration camp survivors, there is often residual organic as well as psychological damage and a lowering of tolerance to stress of any kind. In the observation and treatment of large numbers of former prisoners of war, the following clinical pattern was found:

With relatively few exceptions the presenting complaints are usually as follows: fatigability, lack of ability to withstand frustration, frequent resort to alcohol and sedative drugs, low resistance to physical illness, neurotic-type pains in feet and hands and frequently edema of the ankles and feet, irritability and other manifestations in varying degree of emotional instability, and a need for preferential duty assignments. ... On physical examination remarkably little is found in the way of structural pathology (Chambers, 1952).

Wolf (1960) reported that American POWs who survived the extreme stresses of imprisonment in the Pacific area during World War II showed an excessively high mortality rate during the six years following their liberation. Deaths from tuberculosis, gastrointestinal disease, cancer and heart disease were many times the number expected from civilian life. Also, three times the expected number died as a result of accidents, and twice the expected number died from suicide.
It should be pointed out that these figures are dealing with a very select group, for as stated above, over half of those captured died in captivity. Chance probably played a role in their survival, but Nardini (1962b) has suggested the following qualities as positive factors in survival, both physical and psychological: a philosophical, fatalistic, yet nondefeatist attitude; intense application of life energies to the present; an ability to retain hope in the face of the greatest hardships; the ability to manage hostility and fight depression; personality maturity and ego strength; a strong sense of self-identity and self-respect and the intangible but all inclusive determination to live.

In general, the eventual outcome for the survivors of POW camps seems to have depended on the individual's psychological/biological stress tolerance, the length and severity of the traumatic experience, and his ability to devise defenses to protect his integrity.

Residual psychological damage was shown by some survivors' inability to adjust well to normalized home life. In some instances after they returned home, they had trouble with indiscriminate outburst of hostility. Nardini (1962) feels that underlying the apathy so prevalent
in the POW situation there were often intense pent up feelings of hostility which proved to be a problem to the individual once he was no longer in the stressful situation.

The residual damage experienced by concentration camp survivors was much more extreme. In a preliminary followup study of one hundred Norwegian survivors of German concentration camps, Eitinger (1961:1962) found that ninety-six percent continued to experience symptoms resulting from their interment. These symptoms included fatigue, nervousness, irritability, restlessness, impairment of memory, sleep disturbances, anxiety, feelings of inadequacy, loss of initiative, headaches, depression and abuse of alcohol. Later followup studies report the same symptoms (Eitinger, 1964:1968). Eitinger made it clear in all references that he felt these symptoms were a combination of psychological and biological stresses.

Hafner (1968) summarized what he called the World War II concentration camp syndrome of systematic terror and cruelty experienced in these camps. This syndrome included anxiety, nightmares, insomnia, headaches, irritability, depression, and social withdrawal.
In addition to the stresses during World War II, the Korean Conflict added two new ones: extremely cold, harsh weather conditions and political indoctrination. Mayer (1956:58) listed a mortality rate of approximately thirty-five percent. Segal (1954:360) listed those that were repatriated as bland apathetic, and emotionally retarded. Each man showed a disinterest in his environment. Their talk had large memory gaps, and in general there was no content to their conversations. Segal summarized this condition, in part, as a "zombie reaction" which seemed to last about three days and was replaced by a mild euphoria. However, they still appeared "suspended in time" (Segal, 1954). There was no urgent desire to return home. The men acted confused, did not want to talk to anybody who had not experienced their imprisonment, and banded together in small groups to remain isolated from nonrepatriates.

Schein (1956) classified the prisoners of war in Korea into "get alongers," "resisters," and "cooperators." There were psychological problems for each type of person. Those who cooperated were ostracized by their countrymen and those that resisted were physically and psychologically beaten. Lifton (1954) labeled those men who cooperated
as progressives and those who did not as reactionaries. These two groups were separated and treatment was better for the progressives. This caused much hatred in the reactionaries which surfaced after repatriation. Long hidden resentment was noted by Lifton (1954:732) concerning the reactionaries and progressives. This resentment, coupled with a power reversal in which the reactionaries were stronger resulted in several emotional outbreaks. These emotional outbreaks were characterized by name calling and accusations by the reactionaries against the progressives. Physical harm was threatened and fights broke out between the two groups and consequently they were isolated from one another. Threats of pressing for punishment through the military judicial system were leveled against the progressives.

Lifton suggests that one of the major reasons for the difficulty experienced by prisoners of war in Korea was that most of the men were captured early in the conflict, shortly after arriving in Korea and without having made any strong supportive ties with units or friends. They were captured while still in a transient status and with several moves from prisoner of war camp to camp in different groups,
they remained in this status until repatriation. In effect they had no *esprit de corps*, nothing permanent with which they could identify. Also, after capture, most were isolated, away from fellow prisoners and unable to communicate except with their captors. It was under these conditions that, coupled with extreme physical violence, the Communist Chinese were able to psychologically indoctrinate so many of our soldiers. Not mentioned, but surely a factor is the fact that a very large percentage of these men indoctrinated were enlisted men—citizen soldiers. No one expected this treatment and consequently there was no training to prepare the seamen for it.

Returnees from the Korean Conflict were returned to the United States by boat. It was felt that this slow return home was necessary to aid these men in their adjustment to freedom. Once aboard ship, during psychiatric sessions, the men were more direct in expressing their pent up hatred and anger. Many were reluctant to discuss their imprisonment and problems. They felt that unless a person was there with them, communication was impossible. Lifton (1954:734) gives as an example of their isolation, a poem, written by three of the men in one of the camps:
I know you are curious about my life in this strange land. As a prisoner of war in Korea, but how could you understand?

You ask about the treatment, was it good or was it bad? I answer, it's all over now and I am very glad.

You ask if I was captured, if I was wounded too, Yes, I was badly wounded, but what does that mean to you?

I realize your idle interest, curiosity and wonder too, But even if I tried, I couldn't explain all this to you.

I hope this answers your questions, please forget you ever knew That I was ever a prisoner, for I want to forget it too.

They expressed great fear of their return to home and family and wanted "... to be left alone, maybe take a fishing trip for a few days" (Lifton, 1954).

At San Francisco, they showed the same reactions expressed by those men returned after World War II. There was no emotional release, rather, they were quiet, reserved and bland. The delayed homecoming by ship was considered of definite value. It offered the men a period of time to work through their problems and anxieties and gave them time to plan their future. It also served to protect
them from too soon an exposure to outsiders (Lifton, 1954).

Braatz, (1971:455) in his study of veterans from these three conflicts recommends going one step farther than the slow return home by ship. He recommends less emphasis on inpatient hospital care for psychological disorders not considered major problems. Instead of this inpatient care, he recommends community centered crisis intervention clinics for all returned prisoners of war.

It is interesting to note that, as a result of the political indoctrination conducted by the Chinese, one third of those returning prisoners of war, considered themselves progressives (Mayer, 1956). Due to this high percentage, the President of the United States initiated the Armed Forces Code of Conduct. This Code of Conduct establishes the expected behavior of men made prisoners of war, and stresses the "... well and faithful discharge of one's duty" (Dean, 1970). It acts as a guide in that it delineates exactly, the conduct expected of a patriotic American prisoner of war. It provides guidelines to aid every American soldier who might become a prisoner of war on how to become an "Agent 007, James Bond." Unfortunately
it fails to take into account that James Bond is a fictional character and prisoners of war are flesh and blood humans.

PUEBLO INCIDENT

On January 23, 1968, the intelligence ship USS Pueblo was attacked off the shores of North Korea. One crew member was killed and two were wounded. The ship was boarded, captured and sailed to North Korea. The crew was imprisoned at Pyongyoung, North Korea for approximately the next eleven months (Spaulding and Ford, 1972).

Although the officers were held separately, the enlisted men were housed in several small groups. This was a change in the basic conditions encountered during the Korean Conflict, and aided the Pueblo crew considerably. For the most part, however, the rest of the conditions were basically the same. Beatings, threatened death, and severe interrogations were experienced by all of the men. All of the men made "confessions" as to the criminal nature of their mission. These confessions were in direct violation of the Code of Conduct and consequently resulted in feelings of guilt, and fear of military judicial punishment. When the men later returned home they appeared subdued and voiced only a desire to be left alone. They
reported that "... this is the happiest day of my life" (Spaulding and Ford, 1972). However, this comment was made with little or no emotional release. They displayed a zombie reaction in much the same manner as those men studied by Segal in the Korean War (Spaulding and Ford, 1972).

It was learned from the men that they had experienced significant anxiety, depression and despair, often accompanied by thoughts of suicide. An attempt was made by Spaulding and Ford (1972) to determine the major causes of the depression. For eleven men this was separation from family. Four said it was due to their confessions and subsequent breaking of the Code of Conduct. Seven men anticipated the loss of their Navy careers and one man "... worked through transient depression secondary to traumatic castration by shrapnel" (Spaulding and Ford, 1972).

When asked how they coped with their imprisonment, crew members frequently stated they kept "... faith in their commanding officer, religion, and country" (Spaulding and Ford, 1972). There was a definite group support noted. Although the officers were separated, group leaders emerged and the men felt free to talk in their rooms and did so, working out aggressions and talking out anxieties. The crew felt little desire to escape overall. To do so would
mean desertion of friends and facing an even more hostile environment in the countryside.

Spaulding and Ford (1972) characterized those who did better as "... bright and schizoid." These men could "... isolate the affect and entertain themselves with fantasy." The factors contributing to poor adjustment were "... youth, immaturity, and personality characteristics of obsessive-compulsiveness, passive-dependence, or emotional instability."

In contrast to their bland, unresponsive, emotion-free responses immediately upon release, the men were increasingly hostile at a 12 week reevaluation. Much acting out with drugs, alcohol and squandering of back pay was seen. During this reevaluation it was also noted that "... one man had developed paranoid ideation and another had incapacitating symptoms of an obsessive-compulsive neurosis. At least one man developed symptomatic alcoholism... another is reported to have committed suicide" (Spaulding and Ford, 1972).

Because several men had feelings of guilt at having not lived up to the Code of Conduct, an assessment of the relevance of the Code of Conduct as it related to
the Pueblo crew was made. It found their actions to be a movement from historical military credos "... toward more humanistic values" (Dean, 1970). Dean cited the approval of the crew's actions by the majority of the country as proof of this movement and gave as reasons for public approval, two undeclared, unsupported wars with purposes that have not been clearly defined. Dean further stated that he felt this area would be of major concern with returning Viet Nam prisoners of war.

VIET NAM WAR

No modern American has ever suffered the experience of being confined to an enemy prisoner of war camp for six or seven years. The sense of desolation and never ending boredom can only be imagined. The readjustment problems for such a person must be great. Only recently has the story begun to emerge.

In January, 1973, the North Vietnamese turned over to the United States a list of 585 American military and civilian prisoners held in Indochina. United States officials said the communists had failed to account for more than 1,300 Americans missing in action in the area (National Observer, 10Feb73).
As release of the prisoners became imminent, efforts were initiated to insure that the best possible care was given to the returned prisoners of war, the Department of Defense established a special task force in the Spring of 1971. This task force, headed by Dr. Roger Shields, was staffed by psychiatric, and medical specialists. Their plan of action, titled Operation Homecoming, put special emphasis on the long range rehabilitation of the prisoners and heavy emphasis on the problems that the long absences have created for the families of the prisoners, as well as the prisoners themselves. As reported by Wainwright (1972:34), all of the possibilities cannot be accurately forecast. The range of medical problems alone is enormous. However, the plan has been updated and amended each time a prisoner returned home, whether an escapee or one returned by the communists. Those returned from Hanoi at the time this article was written reported their comrades held in North Vietnamese camps were in relatively good condition.

Their reports were positive, and of course the hope was always there that the men had been relatively well treated and in turn would have minimal difficulty in reestablishing their normal lives once repatriated. Hints
to the contrary were received in letters by relatives. One husband wrote his wife in a letter asking that his brother-in-law build him a rocking chair, later he asked for a wheel chair, and still later in a third letter asked that it be a vault (Wainright, 1972).

Operation Homecoming anticipated problems both physical and emotional. It was found that this was an area of great sensitivity. Some wives were furious at hints that their husbands would return in anything but a super manly condition. Their attitude can be summarized by one wife as reported by Wainright (1972:34) who said, "My husband is no goddamn baby. He was a man when he went away and that's how he's coming home."

It seemed that both expectations, the vault condition and the "... and that's how he's coming home" one were erroneous. As the first POWs returned to the United States they appeared somewhere between these two extremes, perhaps a little closer to the latter. The Communists--at least in the North--apparently had treated the American prisoners far more humanely than the Chinese in the Korean War or the North Koreans during the captivity of the Pueblo crew. There was no knowledge of any political indoctrination attempts. Both the physical
and emotional condition of the prisoners appeared good. It was apparent that the prisoners of war held in the south fared much less well. Their living conditions were much poorer and they were moved about from location to location more often. Also, it was immediately reported they were often beaten.

Douglas Ramsey, a State Department officer, spent seven years in Viet Cong captivity. He subsisted on a diet of rice with monkey, dog, or bear meat. He contracted beriberi from a severe lack of protein and survived severe cases of cerebral malaria. He claims he was kept alive by a neurotic need to exercise. He jogged in his bamboo cage an equivalent of seven miles per day. The cages were too small to pace in, but large enough to stand erect. Kept in isolation and away from other prisoners, he did not have one sustained conversation during the last five years of his captivity. To combat boredom, he spent his time multiplying numbers in his head, working up to where he could multiply four digits by four digits. He also attempted to devise a formula to measure the slowing of time believed to occur as a rocket approaches

But the number held in the south was small compared to the total number of prisoners released, and overall the prisoners appeared to be quite healthy both physically and mentally. They still faced the problems of getting to know their families again and becoming accustomed to freedom again, but at least their treatment appeared to have been humane.

Also, the first flight upon which these generalizations were based held those men who had been in captivity the longest. Ninety-eight percent of the forty men had been held over six years and two of them had been held over eight years. They clutched at the hands of their escort officers until onboard the plane and then cheered wildly at takeoff, kissed the stewardesses, read the magazines, and smoked all the cigarettes on board (Newsweek, February 26, 1973).

Behavior such as this was typical of all those released from the North Vietnamese. However, those held by the Viet Cong in the south fared less well during captivity and were less exuberant at release. Army
Captain David Baker was carried off the aircraft on a stretcher at Ton Son Nhut Airport, Saigon. "He was a bit shakey. He got so excited that he passed out" (Newsweek, February 26, 1973). Later at Clark Air Force Base, Phillipines, Major Raymond Schrump stepped off the plane a bit pale and haggard. He and the others were obviously tired and worn down. Many marched away in a state of bewilderment and daze. In contrast to those released from North Viet Nam, few of these men saluted the flag or officers. Some were noted to bow from the waist, an oriental custom of respect (Newsweek, February 26, 1973).

As these first released prisoners were returned to the United States, rumors started about horrible treatment, of beatings, torture, severe interrogation, of eating insects and rats. Because many of the prisoners were still in Communist hands, those prisoners released were ordered by the Defense Department to remain silent concerning their treatment. The public knew little of the treatment of the prisoners of war but doctors at the Center for Prisoners of War Studies at San Diego, California had collected a great deal of information from prisoners of war of earlier wars and released Viet Nam prisoners of war.
Their findings prohibited them from being led astray by the excited behavior of the released men. Their research indicated that however healthy a prisoner of war seemed, he would have difficulty in homecoming. They report that a lot depends on how a prisoner views himself, whether hero, coward, or oddity, or part of each (Life, November 10, 1972).

The United States public treated the returnees as heros, but for many reasons, the men quite possibly might not view themselves in this way. Such things as failure to live up to the Code of Conduct by many if not all of the men could cause them to view themselves as traitors or at least less than heros.

After ten months as a Viet Cong prisoner, Ken Wallingford met his parents at Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio, Texas. "Welcome home son," his mother beamed. "I'm so proud of you." Wallingford replied, "[Why] I haven't done anything" (Newsweek, February 26, 1973).

In addition to feelings of ambivalence and uncertainty about themselves, doctors and psychiatrists warn that former prisoners of war from other wars, as well as Viet Nam, have a history of substandard health, caused by maltreatment. "$\ldots$ they are prone to automobile
accidents and tend to suffer bouts of depression" (Newsweek, February 26, 1973).

Until the last American held prisoner by the Communists was released, the United States public could only speculate as to the treatment of the prisoners. Upon his release, it soon became apparent that the prisoners had indeed suffered tremendous physical and emotional stresses over much of their confinement. With the knowledge of this treatment, it became apparent that the returned prisoners adjustment problems would probably be more difficult and more severe than many had hoped.

The National Observer (Malloy, 1973) quotes Navy Captain Jeremiah A. Denton who was beaten seven days and six mights continuously in what he calls the Battle of Hanoi as saying, "They beat me regularly and brutally while I was in large traveling irons with my hands tightlyuffed behind me." "... When I moved it hurt more. I was like an animal." This was probably the worst period of imprisonment in Hanoi in 1965 and 1966 when the North Vietnamese were attempting to secure "confessions" from the prisoners concerning their alleged war crimes.

Tales of beatings with automobile fan belts, torture by burning cigarettes, semi-starvation, lack of
adequate medical or dental attention and long periods of isolation were voiced by many of the prisoners. Some of the most brutal treatment went to the senior officers. "We forced them to be brutal to us," said Navy Captain Denton. He related in the end that, "I was pretty much a vegetable" (Newsweek, April 9, 1973).

Army Major Floyd H. Kushner, the lone doctor captured, was held by the Viet Cong in the south for over five years. He reported that some men cracked under the hardships and strain. "In extreme cases," Kushner said, "men would lie on their beds in fetal positions, sucking their thumbs, calling for mama." Men would give up, lay down on their beds and soon die. Said Kushner, "One of the men . . . sat on his bed with a blanket over his head for two years" (Newsweek, April 16, 1973).

"The Vietnamese tortured and knew each one of us better than we knew ourselves," said Brigadier General John P. Flynn. "They brought me to the point where if they asked me to shoot my own mother, I would have" (Newsweek, April 16, 1973). Navy Captain James A. Mulligan, Jr., estimated that ninety-five percent of the prisoners were tortured and eighty percent gave in to the North Vietnamese demands.
In Pentagon sponsored press conferences, former prisoners of war told of torture that "... broke their bodies, bent their minds, and left them only their troubled souls ..." When asked by reporters about their captor's supposed lenient behavior it was explained that the North Vietnamese idea of lenient behavior was not killing the prisoner. Solitary confinement—Colonel Norman Gaddis counted 1000 days—and other forms of psychological torture were almost as bad as the physical torture. The men were told that their wives were being unfaithful back home (Newsweek, April 9, 1973).

Almost from his first day in the service, the American soldier, if captured is trained to give the enemy only his name, rank, and serial number. In an effort to hold out as long as possible, as successful as possible, a secret military structure was established in some of the prisons. Called the Allied Prisoner of War Wing, it provided a high degree of organization and developed a command structure with local commanders and staff officers. Communication was maintained by tapping and whistling in Morse code and whispering under doors. An elaborate grapevine was established between prisons when prisoners were moved from camp to camp for various reasons (Newsweek, February 26, 1973).
As the beatings and torture reached a peak about 1969, cells were enlarged and prisoners were grouped together more. These groups seemed to aid the prisoners psychologically, physically, and emotionally in many ways. They allowed the men to relate to their own people and allowed the venting of emotions, prompted athletics, callisthenics and bull sessions. Also, it increased the development and efficiency of the Allied Prisoner of War Wing. Chaplains and camp historians were appointed, resulting in an abridged Bible from memory and a written history of the camps. In the south it was different, "One of the captives had not held a conversation with anyone for 5 years" (Newsweek, February 26, 1973; Time, March 5, 1973).

In an attempt to establish some sort of internal controls and structure among the hundreds of prisoners of war, the Allied Prisoner of War Wing established its own code of conduct. It consisted basically of the rule that a man would resist the enemy until the loss of mentality, then give in (Malloy, 1973). This new code was one the men could live with. It gave the control of the situation back to the man. He decided when he had to give in, rather than adhering to the idea that one must never give in.
The group interactions showed men who had given in to their captors' demands, that there were others who had done the same. Their feelings of weakness and aloneness were done away with in this manner. "They were not to succumb to threats," reported Navy Captain Denton, one of the camp commanders. "Our honor was preserved" (Newsweek, April 9, 1973).

Even with this dispensation from the Allied Prisoner of War Wing, the moral ambiguities were torture in themselves. A senior U.S. officer in the fourth group to be released brought word of eight enlisted men who had formed an ad hoc Peace Committee. They allegedly volunteered statements against the war and because of the anger and hostility generated in the other prisoners by this action several threats of charges pressed under the military judicial system were leveled at these men.

Despite the poor treatment, physical and psychological torture, and poor living conditions given the prisoners during their interment, and the anger and hatred expressed for the enemy and in some cases their own countrymen, most of the prisoners were considered in good condition. They were a select group of men to begin with, mostly Air Force and Navy career officers, mature, well
educated, and highly dedicated. Their number had been further reduced by the survivor-of-the-fittest rigors of life in the camps. Also, as a result of the Korean experience, pilots were given intensive training in survival and what to expect if captured.

Still some of the men will find when they return home, little understanding; estranged wives; children who don't know or possibly don't like him; changed economy, styles and job; troublesome feelings of guilt, depression, futility, hostility and withdrawal (Life, November 10, 1972).

There is some evidence that readjustment problems, both physical and psychological may last for years. Green Beret Major Nick Rowe escaped from Viet Cong hands in 1968 after over five years in captivity. He is still troubled by diarrhea, circulatory problems and recurring visions of his jungle cage. (Newsweek, April 16, 1973).

SUMMARY

Treatment of American prisoners of war in all of the conflicts of recent American history has been brutal and inhumane by American standards. Severe physical torture, coupled with intense interrogation, substandard
living conditions, clothing and medical care were contributing factors in death and psychological disorders.

In the Korean War, political indoctrination was noted for the first time and the American prisoner of war was ill equipped to handle it. In an effort to prepare the American fighting man to cope with this type of systematic indoctrination, the Military Code of Conduct was devised. It was the failure to live up to this Code that caused many psychological problems of guilt and depression in the crew members of the Pueblo.

The Viet Nam prisoner of war suffered the same physical and psychological torture as previous prisoners of war of this country, only for far longer periods of time. Initially the returned prisoners of war were felt to be in excellent shape. Only later was it learned of the torture and maltreatment. No one knows for certain how these prisoners of war will readjust. Some say that because of their high ability as pilot, career officers they will have little problem adjusting. Still, history tells us that most of the previous prisoners of war had some difficulty in their adjustment.
CHAPTER III

RESULTS OF REVIEW

INTRODUCTION

The problem of this study was to survey selected aspects of the psychological reactions to the stresses of imprisonment and repatriation of United States' Viet Nam prisoners of war.

A review of the literature was conducted with emphasis on World War II (Pacific Theatre), Korean War, Pueblo Incident, and Viet Nam prisoners of war. Because the stresses of imprisonment were the same for each of these groups of prisoners of war—inefficient medical and dental care, insufficient water, food, clothing and shelter, psychological and physical torture, cultural differences, different diet and separation from home and family—the psychological reactions to these stress of imprisonment can be predicted to be primarily the same for each group. By reviewing the literature written about the psychological stresses encountered by prisoners of war of World War II, Korea and the Pueblo Incident and comparing this to the information written about the Viet Nam prisoners of war, a high degree of similarity has been
found. The reactions to repatriation by these former prisoners of war cannot be compared with the Viet Nam prisoner of war due to the Viet Nam prisoners' recent release. However, it can be logically inferred that due to the similar stresses experienced and the similarity of the psychological reactions to these stresses, that the problems encountered in repatriation will be much the same for the Viet Nam prisoner of war as they were for former prisoners of war.

PSYCHOLOGICAL REACTIONS TO STRESSES OF IMPRISONMENT

World War II

Prisoners of war captured by the Japanese during World War II were brutally beaten, forced to work under inhumane conditions and given inadequate medical care, clothing, food, and shelter. The shock of being captured by what was considered an inferior enemy race, coupled with the physical abuse proved too much for many of the prisoners. Many died from disease or physical abuse. Many gave up their daily struggle to survive and died. In all, sixty percent of the 30,000 soldiers captured by the Japanese in World War II died while in captivity.
The will to live was cited by many of the captives as the factor that most aided their survival. Without this will to live, men would give up hope, waste away, refuse to eat and slowly die.

The major psychological reactions noted were severe depression and anxiety over being captured. These were worked through by means of transference of affect and conversion reactions. Transference was accomplished by transferring hostility toward captors to other prisoners of war. Conversion problems were loss of sight and hearing.

Those prisoners that fared best in captivity were described by one study as either extremely mature individuals or persons with psychopathic personality traits. Another listed a philosophical, nondefeatist attitude; personal maturity and a strong ego. Probably a will to live was the single, strongest factor most responsible for survival. This will to live was a factor noted in all of the literature dealing with the factors involved in survival.

Korea

Korea introduced two new stress factors, harsh climate and political indoctrination. It was found that
the North Koreans together with their Communist Chinese allies brutally tortured the prisoners of war in order to get confessions of war crimes and also practiced systematic psychological indoctrination. They were so effective in their attempts that an estimated one third of the returned prisoners of war considered themselves as progressives—the name given those men who cooperated with the enemy.

Depression, anxiety, and a sense of hopelessness were the major stress reactions noted by the released prisoners of war upon their examination after repatriation. Many of the men voiced extreme hatred of their captors.

The men who were not housed in separate cells were monitored by enemy guards. Because of this, little group interaction was possible for, as leaders emerged, they were separated from the other men and sent to other groups.

The men who fared better were of two types. One was the progressive who agreed to the enemy's demands. Living conditions and care were better for these men, and beatings were less. These men had difficulty later upon repatriation however, when guilt surfaced over their collaboration with the enemy. The second type that fared well was the more intelligent, mature individual who had a strong self-identity.
These prisoners of war also were treated inhumanely, beaten, tortured and threatened with death. Confessions were sought by the North Koreans and it was reported that all of the men gave these confessions. Depression, thoughts of suicide, and severe anxiety were the major reactions to the stresses of imprisonment. Severe guilt was noted by many over the confessions given under torture. Many felt like traitors at their failure to live up to the Military Code of Conduct.

Factors that aided in their survival were a faith in their superior officers, religion and country. The men were housed in small groups which aided by allowing catharsis of emotions and showed the men that doubts experienced by individuals were universal among the prisoners. Also, the North Koreans probably did not want any of the men to die because of the adverse propaganda it would entail.

The men who reacted better to the stresses were characterized as men who could withdraw into themselves and occupy their minds with remote matters. Those who did poorly were young and immature and unstable personality characteristics.
Viet Nam War

Many of the men captured were killed by hostile villagers or militia. Those fortunate enough to be taken captive were to be physically and psychologically tortured, given inadequate food, medicine, water and shelter. Forced to live in this manner, all of the prisoners, both those held by the Viet Cong in the South and the North Vietnamese in the North, suffered bouts of depression and anxiety. They were beaten until they described their conditions as like vegetables or animals.

Long stretches of isolation were revealed by many of the prisoners in individual cases. However, during 1969, most of those prisoners held by the North Vietnamese were housed in groups in enlarged cells. Also, about this time the beatings and torture eased.

Regression was noted by some of the men. This psychological reaction often resulted in death. Men would stay on their cots, not eat and die.

It is not known how many Viet Nam prisoners of war died while in captivity. Although, some rather concrete evidence of the death of certain individuals is present, most managed to cope well. Most of the prisoners of war
were Navy and Air Force pilots--officers with more education and maturity as a whole than prisoners of war from previous conflicts. Also, a special emphasis was placed on survival tactics since the Korean War experience.

Group cohesiveness was established and maintained through a prisoner of war organization set up among the prisoners. It was called The Allied Prisoner of War Wing. It added stability and structure to the prisoners' situation and provided a means of covertly fighting back. It was extremely important in establishing a prisoner code of conduct in that it allowed the men to give-in to the enemy under torture, thereby attempting to dispel feelings of guilt felt by the men at their failure to live up to the Military Code of Conduct.

Studies have not been completed to determine what type of person coped better. But it could be inferred from previous studies of previous prisoners of war that the same type of person who did well in the previous wars, did well in North Viet Nam.
World War II

Prisoners studied shortly after World War II were found to be quiet and reserved, with little affect displayed. Long lasting problems were found in nearly all of the prisoners. Of those contacted a year after repatriation, none felt they had completely adjusted. There was found residual organic and psychological damage, as well as lowered resistance to stress. Although little was found immediately upon repatriation, fatigability lack of ability to withstand frustration, neurotic type pains and frequent resort to alcohol and sedative drugs was noted later upon follow-up examinations.

Other studies showed an extremely high mortality rate for these men for the first six years following their return. Deaths from diseases or injuries incurred while in prison were many times the number expected from non-prisoners of war. Three times the normal number died from accidents and twice the expected number committed suicide.
Korean War

Upon repatriation, the Korean prisoners of war were noted as apathetic, bland and uninterested in their environment. There seemed to be no content to their conversation. There was no urgent need to be returned home as expected. The men acted confused and banded together for mutual support and understanding.

These men were returned to the United States on board ships. This type of transportation was provided in order for them to be given time to work out problems they might have, and better enable them to cope with their new found freedom. It was during this trip home by ship, that several emotional outbreaks surfaced between those who had strongly resisted the North Koreans and Communist Chinese demands and those who had cooperated with their demands.

Many problems were experienced by these returned prisoners of war. In addition to those experienced by World War II prisoners, these Korean prisoners had to deal with feelings of guilt at having cooperated with the enemy.
Pueblo Incident

As these prisoners of war returned home, they too were subdued and voiced a desire to be left alone. There was little emotion in their conversations. There was much guilt upon repatriation at having not lived up to the Military Code of Conduct.

This bland, quiet attitude was not noted at a twelve week followup examination. In contrast, the men were extremely hostile, while some were using drugs and alcohol. In one person, the stresses had created a severe neurosis, and in another a problem of paranoid ideation. There was reported a case of alcoholism and one suicide.

Viet Nam War

Because of the very recent repatriation of Viet Nam prisoners of war, no follow-up studies have been done to date. However, it is interesting to note that the men showed every possible reaction from extreme exuberance to subdued blandness upon their return to the United States. In general, those returned from the Viet Cong in the South seemed much more subdued and apathetic than those from the North.
There is some evidence that there will be readjustment problems, at least by those held in the South. Army Major Nick Rowe still experiences physical and psychological problems from his imprisonment of five years by the Viet Cong. Major Rowe escaped over five years ago.

SUMMARY

It can be said in summary that the psychological reactions to the stresses of capture and imprisonment were quite similar for all of the prisoners of war studied. This was due to the similarity of treatment imposed upon the prisoners. Because of this similarity of treatment and psychological reactions, one could predict that the Viet Nam prisoners of war will encounter the same problems with repatriation experienced by former prisoners of war. One argument against this prediction, advanced by some, is that these men who returned from Viet Nam prison camps are results of the survival of the fittest. However, one must realize that only forty percent of those held captive in World War II survived to return home and their repatriation problems were severe. Therefore, this argument would appear weak, and the prisoners of war from Viet Nam can be expected to have numerous problems just as former
prisoners. There is some evidence to support this
prediction in the problem still encountered by former
prisoner of war Major Nick Rowe.
CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CONCLUSIONS

From the review of literature completed by this study, it was found that the Viet Nam War was not significantly different from the previous wars and conflicts studied in the area of prisoner of war treatment. In each case, the prisoners of war were brutally tortured and beaten. They were forced to live under inhumane conditions for long periods of time with little or no medical treatment, food, water or shelter. These stresses were primarily the same for each prisoner of war group and the men coped with these stresses in the same manner with basically the same psychological and physical reactions in each case.

It has also been found that these psychological and physical reactions persisted for years after repatriation in many of the prisoners of war from World War II, Korean and the Pueblo Incident.

Because the conditions of imprisonment were basically identical for all of the prisoners of war and their psychological reactions basically the same, it can be said that some of the Viet Nam prisoners of war will
have serious problems for years to come after repatriation. Those with the most severe problems will probably be those with more immature personalities; enlisted men; and those held in the South by the Viet Cong.

RECOMMENDATIONS

From the information gained from the review of literature, and the conclusions reached by this study, it is recommended that a continued study be made of the psychological problems exhibited by each of the prisoners released from camps in Viet Nam.

It is recommended that the Military Code of Conduct be revised to take into account the lessons learned from Viet Nam and the Pueblo Incident about the treatment of prisoners of war by the enemy. Specifically, recommend that it be revised to allow some amount of giving— in the face of extreme torture. As it is written today, it is worthless as a code to be followed by captured soldiers.

It is further recommended that intensive training be given to all military services in the area of prisoner of war treatment. This training should be as realistic as possible and be oriented to teaching the captured prisoner of war how to cope with his situation if captured.
LITERATURE CITED
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Newsweek, April 9, 1973


