



Monica Schwinn, a nurse from West Germany who was held captive in North Vietnam, during interview here.

## Nurse Tells of a 4-Year Ordeal As Captive of North Vietnamese

A German nurse who survived four years of North Vietnamese captivity recalled here yesterday how she passed the time in a wooden hut with dreams of building schools and hospitals.

Monica Schwinn, 31 years old, of Lebach, West Germany, was a member of the Maltese Aid Service who went to Vietnam to give medical help to people on both sides. During her imprisonment she watched three comrades starve to death.

Miss Schwinn, according to West German and American officials, is the only woman to emerge from North Vietnamese imprisonment. She was interviewed here on her way home after recuperating in Pennsylvania.

"The most difficult thing was having nothing to do as I lay on a wooden bench in a hut, alone for three years, and being told I had committed crimes against the Vietnamese people," she said.

### The Painful Awakening

She said she dreamed of building houses—first small ones, then large ones, then schools, then hospitals.

"I dreamt of utilizing space in the best ways," she continued, "and I was very happy in these dreams. But when I woke up, it was painful."

Miss Schwinn also said the North Vietnamese resented the fact she was a woman and

struck her while on a forced march to the North.

"During the march, a North Vietnamese officer beat me twice until I was unconscious—because I was a woman," she said.

"An even worse time was when we were in a hospital hut on the Ho Chi Minh trail. I had collapsed from the walking and the officer threw a bamboo broom at me and told me to sweep the hut. I think I made him lose face in front of the two other Vietnamese taking us North because I said no.

"I was angry about his action and I told him he shouldn't play the big shot, in German. So he came up to me and put a revolver to my head, but I did not show fear, so he just beat me all over my body—wherever he could reach."

Miss Schwinn's ordeal began when she and four colleagues were taken prisoner on April 27, 1969, while on their way to a village near the Maltese hospital.

### 3 Die of Starvation

She said the five were kept in a Vietcong prison camp, mostly made up of small huts, where three of her comrades, two of them women, died of starvation within three months.

After a year in the South, she said, she and the other survivor, Bernhard Diehl, 26, of Worms, West Germany, were marched for 62 days up the Ho

North Vietnam.

"I was happy, of course, when I was released on March 5," she continued, "but I was a little worried about whether I could continue where I left off. I am confident now I can return to my old life."

Miss Schwinn said she intended to work at a nursery in Germany.