

## 6 Americans, Israelis Seized

# Hostages Exercise in Desert

By David Zenian

United Press International

DAWSON'S FIELD, Jordan, Sept. 8 — Bleary-eyed hostages allowed to walk outside a hijacked TWA airliner briefly today said that Palestinian guerrillas boarded the plane last night and seized six Americans and Israelis, including a U.S. soldier.

The passengers were among an estimated 180 hostages aboard the TWA 707 and a Swissair DC-8 hijacked to this desert airfield Sunday by guerrillas. Another 116 passengers were taken to Amman.

A middle-aged Israeli

woman, Mrs. Harari Raful, said, "The commandos took my husband and his brother and four other men. They gave no reasons. Where have they taken them?" She wept as she told of the incident.

Guerrilla leaders denied any men had been taken from the plane, but TWA copilot James Major said the six were Israelis and Americans. He gave their names as Gerald Berkowitz, James Wood, John Hollingsworth, Abraham Harari Raful and Joseph Harari. He said he did not know the name of the sixth.

He said that Berkowitz was a New York City rabbi but that he did not know the nationalities of the others, their addresses or which one was the soldier.

The hostages who were allowed outside the TWA plane appeared to number about 60, including about 30 women and children. They enjoyed their first venture outside since the aircraft touched down at this landing strip, which the hijackers, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, named "Revolution Airport."

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# Hostages Allowed Outside Jets

## HOSTAGES, From A1

I drove 78 miles from Amman, the last 22 across trackless desert, to find the hostages clambering with difficulty from their parked plane.

### First Outsider

I was the first outsider they had spoken to since they arrived Sunday night and they were anxious to hear what steps were being taken by their governments to secure their release.

"Has the American government done anything?" they asked over and over. They were cheered when I told them the Swiss government had indicated it would release jailed commandos there.

Most of the men had stubble on their chins and the women looked red-eyed and weary. Some passengers sat under the wings of the plane to escape the sun beating down on the desert. Temperatures were in the 80s.

They said hostages aboard the Swiss air plane parked only 50 yards away had an outing earlier in the day.

The Captain of the TWA plane, Carroll D. Woods of Prairie Village, Kan., said, "Things are not too bad. Our main problem is the women and children."

### Spotless Uniform

Woods had a beard; his uniform was spotless and he had on a tie and buttoned-up collar despite the heat.

Copilot Major said, "there are infants here who cannot stand this much longer."

But the hostages agreed the guerrillas were trying hard to make them comfortable.

"There is enough food and water," said Woods, and he pointed to two guerrilla water trucks that had just driven up to the airstrip. He said the hostages had boiled eggs, cheese, bread, grapes, bananas and hot tea for breakfast today.

A Palestinian doctor, who gave his name as Ahmed, was on hand to care for the hostages. He had a Volkswagen bus converted for use as a mobile clinic.

He said his biggest case had been the American soldier.

"When the plane arrived I had to treat him for shock," he said. "He thought we were going to kill him. I calmed him down by joking with him, then I gave him a morphine shot and he slept all Sunday night and was much better afterwards."

The guerrillas allowed me only 10 minutes with the passengers and refused to let me look inside the plane. One woman, with a small child, said, "It gets unbearably hot in the plane during the day. I don't know what the temperature is, but it's very, very hot. The nights are not bad. They are bearable."

She said the commandos — about two dozen strolled round the parked planes with Kalachnikov submachine guns over their shoulders — were considerate.

"They keep apologizing for what they have done and they say it is all for their noble cause."

Woods said, "The main problem has been sanitation. I have asked the commandos to ask Royal Jordanian Airlines to lend us drainage equipment so we can clean the lavatory tanks. They said they would pass on the request, but I have had no reply yet."

### Yellow Desert

The desert stretches out white and yellow for miles in this area of salt flats. Mirages shimmer like pools of water. There is not a single building of any sort at the airstrip, which is a former British Royal Air Force landing ground.

The desert is hideously dusty to drive across, but the landing strip itself is as hard as concrete.

Wood said, "The plane is in good condition and we could take off at any time with or without our passengers. We have enough fuel to get to Beirut or Damascus.

"The runway here is 30,000 feet long—three times what is needed for this plane to take off. The ground is hard and there would be no problems."

A few miles away across the desert, six Jordan army tanks stand guard. There were also a few trucks and jeeps and the soldiers to man them. Close to the plane itself the guerrillas

have dug half a dozen slit trenches, but none of them was occupied while I was there.

The guerrillas, most in olive green or camouflage-type uniforms, roamed around the planes, smoking and chatting, and some joked with children from the TWA plane who ran around the aircraft.

The Palestinian flag of red, black, green and white was draped from the doors of both airliners.

The hostages — including two rabbis in dark clerical garb and long beards and one rabbinical student-discussed rumors that the guerrillas might be planning to let the Swissair plane fly off today.

They told me the guerrillas had given them no concrete evidence of this, but there was a belief that the Swissair passengers were getting more leniency.

Neither the guerrillas nor the pilot of the TWA plane seemed to be sure exactly how many persons had been released and how many were being detained. The hostages thought there were about 60 in the Swissair plane and about 60 or 70 in the TWA aircraft, but reports from the airlines indicated there were more.

When I asked about reports in Amman by some of the free hostages that Jewish women and children were being detained in the TWA plane, Major said: "I understood only non-Americans were being released, but it is true no Jewish person of any nationality left the plane."

He added, "Yesterday all women and children were asked to get down in preparation for their release, but later most were asked to return."