

14 CAPTIVES FREED BY VIETNAM REDS

Group Flown to Bangkok
Includes 9 Americans
Held Since Spring

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BANGKOK, Thailand, Oct. 30 —Nine Americans captured in South Vietnam in the spring arrived in Bangkok today, ending more than seven months in Communist detention camps. Two Canadians, two Filipinos and an Australian were also freed.

After the 14 debarked from a Laotian plane chartered by the United Nations that brought them from Hanoi, they told of forced marches through the jungles of South Vietnam and imprisonment in the North Vietnamese camp at Son Tay.

They said that it was their understanding that they were the last foreign prisoners held anywhere in Vietnam and reported that they had had no glimpse of any other Americans, including any previously listed as missing in action.

Among those freed was a 6-year-old girl, Luann Miller, the daughter of a missionary couple.

Six Caught Malaria

All appeared healthy, although six caught malaria during their detention they said that once they arrived in North Vietnam they were well treated and adequately fed. But before that, from their capture in March or April until their arrival at Son Tay in August, Hay said life in the jungle was frequently a nightmare.

James Lewis of Granada Hills, Calif., a consular officer at Nha Trang, said that he was captured at Phan Rang when Communist troops overran the town after a three-day battle on April 16.

"I was with two South Vietnamese generals," Mr. Lewis recalled. "All the forces were overrun. Our position was overrun. We managed to get into the jungle. They the three of us were captured."

Within a week they were in the Son Tay camp—a camp made famous by a raid during

the war by United States Marines seeking to free prisoners of war. The prisoners had been moved hours before.

Mr. Lewis said that he and the two generals were alone in the camp until the others joined them in August. He said there had been no effort to "interrogate me or brainwash me, although they certainly did explain their point of view repeatedly, but after all, they did win."

Cornell Student Held

One of the Americans, Jay Scarborough of Harrisburg, Pa., a graduate student at Cornell University studying the Cham dialect in the Central Highlands on a Ford Foundation fellowship, said that at one point during their captivity he and an Australian broadcaster, Peter Whitlock, marched through the jungles for nearly 70 miles with South Vietnamese Army prisoners.

Carolyn Miller of the Wycliffe Bible Society, who held her daughter in her lap, said: "Until we arrived at San Tay it was difficult, particularly when we were in the jungles. Conditions could best be described as primitive."

Paul A. Struharik of Norton, Ohio, a senior official of the Agency for International Development in Ban Me Thout, said that he was captured on March 12 when the Communists overran the town.

"They came over the back fence of my compound," he said and smiled. "I was waving a white flag."

Neither North nor South Vietnam gave an official reason for the prisoner release, which was carried out by the United Nations high commission for refugees.

Others in Saigon

At least 25 nonofficial Americans and hundreds of other foreigners are still at liberty in Saigon awaiting permission to leave the country.

Scores of friends and relatives met the chartered DC-3 in Bangkok at Don Muang Airport and there were tearful scenes of family reunions.

"This is a very happy moment for all of us," said Mrs. Miller. "We are very happy to be home."

A list issued here identified the others as Mrs. Miller's husband, John, of Allentown, Pa.; Betty Michell of Minneapolis; Richard Philips of Portland, Ore., a missionary, and his wife, Joan, and Enrique Tolentino and Arellano Bugarin of the Philippines.