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Hanoi Returns 3 Pilots' Remains

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Associated Press

BANGKOK, Thailand (AP) — The remains of three American pilots killed in the Vietnam War — each enclosed in a small casket wrapped in a U.S. flag — were flown from Hanoi to Bangkok Sunday. There were indications that the remains of other Americans might soon be released by North Vietnam. "The tone in Hanoi has changed," said a United Nations official who accompanied the caskets from Hanoi. He said a U.S. Congressional delegation that flew to Hanoi to receive the remains told him it expected Vietnam to release the remains of other U.S. servicemen.

A U.S. military spokesman identified the three servicemen as Lt. Col. Crosley James Fitton Jr., of Hartford, Conn., who was reported missing Feb. 29, 1968; Capt. Ronald Dwight Perry of Gallatin, Tenn., who was declared missing Dec. 21, 1972, and Navy Cmdr. Jesse Taylor Jr. of Los Angeles,

listed as killed in action Nov. 17, 1965. Fitton and Perry were both in the Air Force.

After a brief ceremony at Bangkok's international airport, the caskets were placed aboard another aircraft for a short flight to a U.S. military laboratory in Thailand, where the remains were to be examined. A U.S. military spokesman said the remains would be flown to the United States at a still undetermined date.

The four-man delegation of the House Select Committee on Missing Persons in Southeast Asia received the three caskets in Hanoi, then stayed behind to negotiate with North Vietnamese authorities, the spokesman for the U.N. High Commission for Refugees said. The delegation is led by Rep. G.V. Montgomery, D-Miss., who negotiated with North and South Vietnamese officials in Paris Dec. 6 for the transfer of the remains.

The U.N. refugee spokesman said the three caskets were brought to Hanoi's airport on a truck and

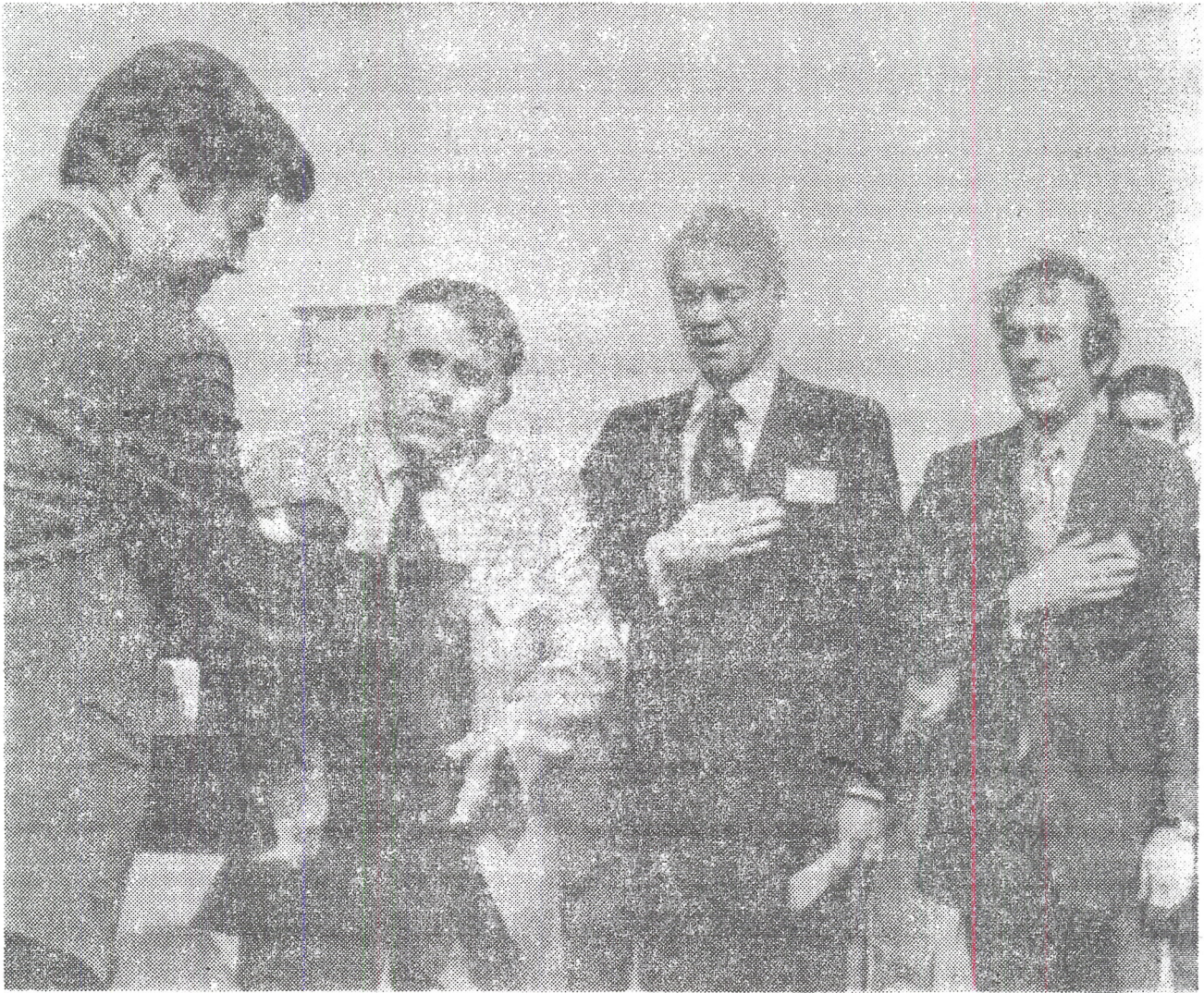
handed to the congressmen by North Vietnamese officials. "The ceremony was brief and low keyed," he said.

A Laotian Caravelle jet, chartered by the UNHCR, flew directly from Hanoi to Bangkok. The jet landed mistakenly at the civilian side of Bangkok's Don Muang airport but then taxied to the U.S. military terminal at the airport, where an honor guard, representing all four of the U.S. armed forces services, stood by.

Four soldiers took the flag-

wrapped caskets and carried them one at a time to a waiting U.S. Air Force C130. Four officers from the U.S. Army, Navy, Air Force and Marines, together with the deputy chief of the American Embassy, Edward Masters, received the caskets.

The military men were assigned to the Joint Casualty Resolution Center, the unit charged with the search for American servicemen missing in Southeast Asia. The remains will be processed at Camp Samae San, 80 miles southeast of Bangkok.



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Reps. Paul McCloskey, Benjamin Gilman, G.V. Montgomery and Richard Ottinger escort casket in Hanoi with remains of one of three U.S. pilots who died in the air war over North Vietnam.