

Families Welcome Green Berets Home

Fort Bragg, N.C.

About 100 Green Beret soldiers involved in an attempt to rescue American prisoners from North Vietnam returned home to Fort Bragg yesterday and the Army disclosed they had been gone since August.

While they were training for the commando raid at Son Tay, about 23 miles from Hanoi, an Army spokesman said, their wives thought they were on a routine field training mission.

The soldiers were not allowed yesterday to make any public comment about their experience.

Lieutenant Colonel Thorne

Marlow, an Army public information officer, said, "This was a raid and we're going to do it again, maybe. So we're not going to say anything."

ARRIVAL

The soldiers arrived at Pope Air Force Base, near Fort Bragg, in three camouflage-colored C-123 Provider airplanes. After a brief ceremony presided over by Brigadier General Henry M. Emerson, deputy commander of the Special Forces center at Fort Bragg, they boarded buses with their families and left.

pppppp The raiders trained for weeks before the mission,

he said, refusing to reveal the training site. Other reports have located it at Eglin Air Force Base in Florida.

LETTERS

Marlow said they exchanged letters with their families, but the Army arranged for the origin of the letters from the soldiers to be kept secret.*

As they filed from the planes and rushed to their families, the men wore their berets and green combat fatigues. Some carried automatic rifles.

Marlow would not say how many touched ground in North Vietnam, how many were aboard the helicopters

which landed the raiders inside the prison complex.

DUTIES

Asked whether the raiding group will now disband, Marlow said, "There never was a group, just a task force, and it certainly will disband." He said the men will return to their normal duties at the Special Forces center, officially called the John F. Kennedy Center for Military Assistance.

The raiders found the prisoner of war camp had just been vacated.

The Defense Department said they returned with no serious casualties.

Associated Press

*Katherine Petrie [wife of First Lieut. George W. Petrie, who took part in the raid] and the two children received letters from George that bore the return address, "Field Three, Eglin Air Force Base."

(NYTimes, 27 Nov 70, Robert M. Smith.)