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Week of Concern For POWs Starts

As the first Americans taken prisoner in Southeast Asia begin their ninth year in captivity this month, the National Week of Concern for American Prisoners of War or Missing in Action officially starts today by Presidential proclamation.

President Nixon has asked all citizens to "observe this week with such appropriate ceremonies and activities as will stir and sustain widespread concern for the missing men and prisoners, nourish the patient courage of their loved ones, and — above all — hasten the day of their safe return to home and freedom."

The United States officially lists 489 Americans captured and 1129 missing in ac-

tion in North and South Vietnam and Laos.

"The enemy continues adamant in his refusal even to identify all the Americans being held," said Nixon. And in flouting the Geneva Prisoner of War Convention, he ignores the prisoners' right to regular correspondence with their families, he added.

Of 428 Army personnel missing or captured, all but three are listed in South Vietnam, said Richard Ham, Northern California civilian aide to the Secretary of the Army. While more than 5000 letters have come from prisoners in North Vietnam, only 19 have been received from prisoners in the south, he said.