

The POWs and Pacifists Unwind

By Peter Arnett

HANOI — (AP) — The long early morning drives down darkened roads, the meetings with war victims, the questions and interviews, are over.

"It's unwinding time for all of us," said Prof. Richard Falk, one of the escort party of American pacifists in Hanoi waiting to take home three released U.S. pilots.

On Friday and Saturday the pilots and other visiting Americans wandered around a Hanoi that seemed to have suddenly forgotten war to celebrate the traditional autumn children's festival.

"This is the time of the year when I most miss my boy friend fighting in the South," said a pretty interpreter clutching the hand of bachelor Navy Lt. Mark Gartley under a bright moon at the city's Reunification Park.

Romantic Spirit

But so the handsome flier would not get the wrong idea, she also held the arm of his mother, Minnie Lee Gartley.

As the moon glittered on the lake, Navy Lt. Norris Charles sipped the sweet black coffee traditionally served



RELEASED PRISONER OF WAR AND WIFE SIGHTSEEING IN HANOI

Navy pilot Lt. Norris A. Charles waits as Olga takes pictures

— AP Photo

at this holiday time. His wife, Olga, seemed to catch the romantic spirit of the evening and cuddled his arm.

"This is bizarre," said Air Force Maj. Edward Elias who for four months had been held as a prisoner of

war in Hanoi prison. Hanoi residents are by now well aware of the pilots.

Posters erected on the city streets depict brave woman soldiers capturing pilots. But there is no sign of resentment or anger.

A Vietnamese official said:

"Don't you understand? We have forgiven them."

A field trip to the port of Haiphong, reported devastated in B-52 strikes in April, had been planned Friday but the North Vietnamese canceled it after Mrs. Gartley

said she was tired.

"I came here all this way to get Mark home in good health and by golly I'll do it," she said after officials had agreed to cancel the

A little later, Cora Weiss, co-chairman of the Committee for Liaison that had been handling prisoner release, announced to the party: "No more trips, no more interviews. Relax, we're going home soon."

Field Trips

Mrs. Weiss and her party of David Dellinger, William Sloane Coffin, and Falk have been making extensive field trips themselves.

On Friday Mrs. Charles and Mrs. Gartley haunted a downtown Hanoi shopping center that shows no obvious signs of suffering from the air and naval blockade. Imported produce seemed in good supply. Powdered milk and cognac were available.

The women settled on buying tiny Vietnamese umbrellas, mother of pearl ornaments and some combs and cigarette boxes made from the aluminum of downed U.S. planes.

Early yesterday morning the whole party visited St. Dominic's church in Hanoi to hear Mass said by the

Rev. Harry Bury, a Roman Catholic priest from Minneapolis. He left Hanoi later yesterday after a week's visit.

1st American Mass

Bury was the first American to say Mass in Hanoi and he told the congregation of about 200 Vietnamese. "We as Americans could take an example from you who have forgiven these three pilots and released them to their loved ones."

Then for the pilots it was back to the Hoa Binh — Freedom — Hotel to a three-egg breakfast, unlimited beer and the prospect of a four-course French lunch and dinner.

The pilots read a lot and talk with anyone who will bring them up to date on the American and world situation. Gartley was in a prisoner-of-war camp for four years.

The pilots say they are enjoying relaxing, but uppermost on their minds is the journey home. That seems likely in the next few days.

North Vietnamese officials have been checking health cards and preparing departure formalities but Mrs. Weiss has said only that the matter of departure is in the hands of the North Vietnamese Foreign Ministry and the route out is not yet decided.

Mrs. Weiss on Friday called President Nixon her intention to take the men back to the United States in a civilian plane and said that it is the desire of the Hanoi government.

Mrs. Weiss insists that unless the release goes as planned, future releases will be jeopardized.