

# Freed Pilots Begin Tests and Are Visited by Families

By SEYMOUR M. HERSH

The three American pilots freed by North Vietnam began intensive medical checkups and debriefings yesterday while the mother of one of the men complained that the military's reaction to his return "really didn't seem like a hero's welcome."

But Mrs. Minnie Lee Gartley, who had engaged in an emotional shouting match over the military's plans to immediately hospitalize her son, told newsmen that she had become reconciled to her son's stay in St. Albans Naval Hospital in Queens.

"What's transpired has transpired," she said. "There's no need for further discussion."

Her son, Lieut. (j.g.) Mark L. Gartley of the Navy, and the other pilots, Maj. Edward K. Elias of the Air Force and Lieut. (j.g.) Norris A. Charles of the Navy, arrived here Thursday night after a four-day trip from Hanoi. Shortly before the aircraft landed, the men agreed to put on their military uniforms and leave the plane with military escorts—steps they had previously refused to do in Moscow and Copenhagen.

## Visits Son in Hospital

The dispute broke out when Defense Department officials told Mrs. Gartley, who had traveled with the members of the Committee of Liaison, an antiwar group, to Hanoi, that her son's request for a few days of leave with his family had been denied.

Mrs. Gartley, accompanied by her husband, Gerald, of Greenville, Me., refused to join her son Thursday night at the hospital but visited him at length yesterday.

Both Major Elias, who was flown to a hospital at Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama, and Lieutenant Charles, who went to Balboa Naval Hospital in

San Diego, slept late yesterday morning, military officials said. Both were visited by their families.

They face a lengthy period of evaluation by military doctors and psychiatrists involved in the Operation Egress Recap program.

The operation was set up early this year after a team of military experts in prisoner psychology determined that what they called a "slow decompression" would be the most positive way of dealing with the prisoners. The object is to delay family reunions and emotional encounters to insure the isolation the military doctors say is needed for psycho-

knowledge that the three released pilots are now undergoing Operation Egress Recap procedures, but refused to say yesterday how long each man would be hospitalized.

Mrs. Gartley, who appeared at a news conference at St. Albans Hospital, described her son as being rested and happy and added that he would be going on leave "reasonably soon."

Navy spokesmen refused to tell newsmen in which wing the pilot was staying, but said that the hospital's primary concern "is to provide him as much time with his family as he wants."

The spokesman, Cmdr. Henry C. Bowman, apparently attempted to minimize the controversy and said in response to a question that the lieutenant had gone to the hospital because he "expressed a desire to stay here."

The spokesman's assertion was contradicted a few moments later by Lieutenant Gartley's father, who said that his son "didn't request that he be brought anywhere except the United States."

Lieutenant Gartley had said during an interview Thursday while flying here from Copenhagen that he expected to be hospitalized in Jacksonville, Fla., near the school in which his mother teaches.

## Mother Explains

Mrs. Gartley, apparently concerned by newsmen's questions about possible brainwashing of the returned pilots, attempted to explain why the men had refused military offers of transportation in Moscow and Copenhagen.

She said that officials in North Vietnam had told the men after their release that there would be "no conditions" for their freedom. But she said representatives of the Committee of Liaison, who escorted the prisoners and two family members from Hanoi, had been told by the North Vietnamese Government to return the prisoners by civilian means and personally hand them over to their families.

"The committee was told that if those procedures were jeopardized, it would seriously endanger the future release of other fliers," Mrs. Gartley said.

She added that the pilots recognized that following the North Vietnamese requirements "would be in the best interests for the possibility of future releases." Since the men did not accept military travel overseas, Mrs. Gartley said, "I don't think they did jeopardize the agreement."

Liaison, continued her sharp criticism of the military in an interview.

She said the moving of the pilots to military hospitals "makes it clear that the Government will go to every extent to prevent the truth about the prisoners of war from coming forward," "And it's also clear who cares," she added.

Mrs. Weiss explained that Major Elias obviously disagreed with the political views of the North Vietnamese and the Committee of Liaison. "That's not important now," she said. "We brought him home, irrespective of his feelings."

Future releases, she said, have "absolutely" been endangered by what she termed the military's interference.

## Major Undergoes Tests

Special to The New York Times

MONTGOMERY, Ala., Sept. 29—Maj. Edward Elias, 34, one of the three American prisoners released by North Vietnam, spent his first day back on an American military base undergoing "routine" medical examinations and "intelligence debriefings."

Major Elias is assigned to a private room in the military hospital at nearby Maxwell Air Force Base. Maxwell was chosen because it is the nearest such Air Force facility to his home, Valdosta, Ga.

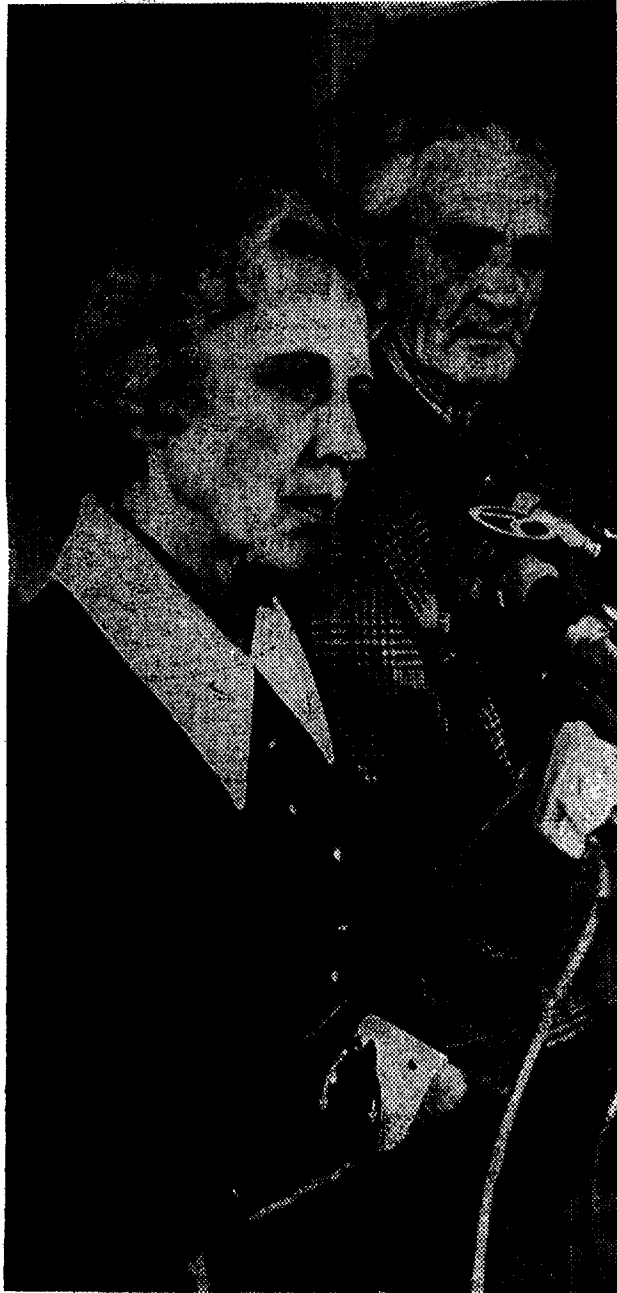
Maxwell authorities said they expected him to leave the hospital tonight and stay with his wife at the married officers quarters at the base.

## Newsmen Protest Curbs

SAN DIEGO, Sept. 29—Lieutenant (j.g.) Norris A. Charles, back home from nearly nine months of imprisonment in North Vietnam, today occupied a suite normally reserved for captains and admirals at Balboa Naval Hospital here.

His rival in the early morning at Miramar Naval Air Station from New York aboard an Air Force DC-9 Medivac aircraft was without fanfare.

Newsmen at the airfield, kept 40 feet away from the uniformed 27-year-old pilot, protested without avail that he was not even allowed to tell them that he was happy to be home, although he seemed willing and even eager to talk with the reporters. Several times when the lieutenant started to move toward the beckoning newsmen he was pulled back by Navy public relations officers.



The New York Times/Tyrone Dukes

**Mr. and Mrs. Gerald Gartley, the parents of Navy Lieut. (j.g.) Mark L. Gartley, during their news conference yesterday at St. Albans Naval Hospital in Queens.**