

Navy Doctors Say Ex-POW Is Well

San Diego

Released prisoner of war Lieutenant (J.G.) Norris Charles returned to San Diego early yesterday and entered Balboa naval hospital where doctors reported him in generally excellent condition.

Captain E. D. Kaufman, hospital chief of medicine, said that after examining Charles physicians "deduced he had received humane treatment."

Charles, 27, was a prisoner of the North Vietnamese for nine months before being freed with two other flyers 12 days ago.

Charles' wife, Olga, was in Hanoi when he was released. He was accompanied from New York by her, their 3-year-old daughter, Kirsten, and his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Charles of Tampa, Fla., on a military C-9 medical evacuation craft.

Mrs. Charles accepted a Navy offer of secret private accommodations instead of returning to the couple's

home in Clairmont, Calif. Her stated reason was to avoid newsmen and to rest while her husband undergoes debriefing and medical evaluation.

"From conversations with him," Kaufman said, "and from his general condition, I would deduce that he received humane treatment. There are no signs of violence or brutality. No psychological rehabilitation will be needed."

Charles' weight dropped from 158 to 142 during captivity, Kaufman said. The loss was attributed to disappearance of excess body fat, not dietary deprivation.

Kaufman told newsmen that Charles would be released quickly and would then be available to talk.

At the Charles' home, neighbors stretched a large banner across the front of the garage, saying, "Welcome home, Mr. Charles," and bearing signatures of residents. A smaller legend said, "We all love you."

L.A. Times Service