

2 POW Wives

By Ken Wong

Two Bay Area wives of prisoners of war in North Vietnam, while rejoicing with the families of the three returned POWs, yesterday pressed for information concerning the condition of the more than 1600 still in captivity.

Mrs. William Butler, San Rafael, and Mrs. Richard Stratton Palo Alto questioned Hanoi's gesture of goodwill in releasing the three POWs at a news conference yesterday.

Their husbands have been prisoners in North Vietnam for five years. Navy Commander Richard Stratton was shot down in January 1967. Air Force Captain William Butler was down the same year in November.

Others Ignored

"No consideration has been given our sick wounded and long term prisoners," noted the two women members of the National League of Families of American Prisoners and Missing in Southeast Asia.

Hanoi has released 12 men since 1968. "But nine of these had been held less than a year, most of them only a few months. No one captured prior to 1967 has ever been released," they added.

The women felt that Hanoi's freeing of the latest three POWs is a "token re-

lease" for propaganda purposes.

"The men were paraded in Hanoi, Peking and Moscow after their release on Sept. 17 and didn't return until yesterday," they said.

Disagreement

The two disagreed with the Committee of Liaison which escorted the men home over the Pentagon's rushing the released POWs to military hospitals.

"We must find out about the conditions of the prison camps. The men might forget vital information later on," Mrs. Butler said.

The committee a group of anti-war activists "is not responsible for the release of these men," Mrs. Stratton said. "They are only a tool of the North Vietnamese. Hanoi uses them to bypass official channels."

During the past two years only 10 POWs in North Vietnam have been interviewed and they were always the same men, the two women noted.

Same Display

"If all the prisoners are being treated so well why are the same few always out on display? What about the other POWs?" they asked.

The women were disappointed with former Attorney General Ramsey Clark's comment that "Hanoi's treatment of POWs is humane."

"How can he make gener-

Challenge Hanoi



TWO BAY AREA WIVES OF WAR PRISONERS MEET THE PRESS

Mrs. Richard Stratton (left) and Mrs. Richard Butler seek information about their husbands

—Examiner Photo

alizations about all the men when he has seen only a relative few?" the two challenged.

Mrs. Butler who lives in San Rafael with her two

children, a boy, 5, and a girl, 4, said she last heard from her husband in August. The note, a six-line card mailed in June didn't say much. It was censored.

Mrs. Stratton, who has a young son, lives in Palo Alto.

The two women said they would continue to ask about POW's condition and those

missing.

"We hope the constant publicity highlighting the problem might bring about a public awareness" they concluded.