

Pentagon Promises Leaves to Prisoners

Examiner News Service

Three repatriated American pilots who are undergoing medical examinations and military debriefings appear to be well and will be given leaves after they receive a "clean bill of health," a Pentagon official says.

How long that will be depends on their doctors and "on the wishes" of the men, Dr. Roger E. Shields, special assistant for prisoner of war affairs, said yesterday. Later, they will be returned to active duty if they desire, Shields said.

The returning prisoners are the first to be treated under the Defense Department's new Operation Egress Recap, a plan for the care and gradual rehabilitation of POWs returning from North Vietnam.

"I feel great," Navy Lt. (j.g.) Norris Charles told newsmen at Miramar Naval Air Station in San Diego, where he was taken after arriving in New York Thursday night with the other two officers freed by North Vietnam.

A military doctor reported that Charles, 27, had lost 16 pounds during his 8½ months as a prisoner in North Vietnam but that he was in good condition and should be out of the hospital in a few days.

A second POW, Navy Lt. Mark Gartley, 28, who was captured four years ago, was in St. Albans Naval Hospital in New York City where chest X-rays taken yesterday were described as negative.

Gartley's mother, Minnie Lee, who had vigorously protested her son's immediate hospitalization, said yesterday, "He will leave the hospital soon . . . he's very well. We've been with him last night and this morn-

Elias, who was flown to Maxwell Air Force Base in Montgomery, Ala., expected

— Turn to Page 4, Col. 5

—From Page 1

to spend the weekend with his son and wife Georgia, whose gratitude for the return of her husband continued to be tinged with expressions of concern for other POW families. Elias, 34, was captured five months ago.

Charges

The homecoming of the POWs released by Hanoi Sept. 17 was practically eclipsed by peace activists' charges that the Defense Department had recaptured the three airmen. Shields said the men went to military hospitals voluntarily.

Even Gerald Gartley and his wife Minnie Lee, who were unhappy with the way the Pentagon handled the arrival of their son, Mark, denied that he was being held incommunicado against his wishes at the St. Albans Naval Hospital.

But Gartley's father told a news conference, "They had VIP treatment all over the world and I don't see why they could not have had it here."

"It put quite a damper on a happy homecoming," his wife said. "And it really didn't seem to be a hero's welcome."

Furlough Refused

Lt. Gartley had asked authorities for a three-day furlough to be alone with his family, but he was refused. He was assigned to St. Alban's Naval Hospital for a physical checkup.

The promptness with which the military took the three men away sparked a bitter controversy, in which David Dellinger, the peace activist, said Gartley had been "coerced" into going to the hospital.

Mrs. Gartley said he seemed in good health and that he planned to "contact

as he is released.

The Gartleys also were effusive in their praise for Dellinger, Mrs. Cora Weiss and other Americans who accompanied the POWs from North Vietnam.

Dellinger meanwhile said he believed the central point of the prisoner's release had been lost: That the North Vietnamese made a peace overture.

"This (release) was clearly explained to us as a peace initiative," Dellinger said in an interview yesterday. "The U.S. government should have responded with some peace initiative on its part."

Dellinger suggested that Nixon might welcome home the three released fliers and announce a halt in the bombing of North Vietnam.

But he said the North Vietnamese made it clear to him and the other Americans who traveled to Hanoi to pick up the POWs that President Nixon would have to make a choice between the early release of the POWs and supporting South Vietnamese President Nguyen Van Thieu.

"We were told by the North Vietnamese in Paris and Premier Pham Van Dong that the release was a signal of North Vietnam's desire to release all the prisoners," he said.

Nixon's Choice

He continued: "Pham Van Dong told us Nixon must choose between support of the puppet Thieu and support of the POWs."

Dellinger said he thought the North Vietnamese would be reluctant to release more prisoners before the end of the war because of the Pentagon's handling of the three



DR. ROGER SHIELDS
"No direct order"



MRS. EDWARD ELIAS

Her prayers answered who arrived here Thursday.

Dellinger categorized the military action as "totalitarian." He said: "The American military, by its use of the medical pretext, is following the practice of totalitarian regimes, which often attack people medically when for reasons of public opinion they are not attack them frontally."