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AMERICAN NOTES

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Bracelets That Bind

To try to keep up the spirits of the P.O.W.s, Americans are donning bracelets—some 4,000,000 at last count. Each is a metal band engraved with the name and rank of a serviceman and the date he was taken prisoner or listed as missing in action. The wearer agrees to keep the bracelet on until all 1,783 imprisoned and missing Americans are accounted for and their camps have been inspected by the Red Cross.

The bracelets are distributed by VIVA (Voices in Vital America), a non-profit organization based in Los Angeles. Working out of six regional offices, a staff of 60 full-time employees handles the bands as well as bundles of other materials sent out free: buttons, brochures, matchbooks, bumper stickers ("P.O.W.s Never Have a Nice Day"). Of the \$3.5 million VIVA has received, it has plowed back all but \$35,000 into more materials.

Bracelet wearers come in all shades of opinion on the war. They include Eleanor McGovern, Bob Hope and George Wallace, General William Westmoreland and Princess Grace of Monaco. Many members of Congress and Governors wear the bracelets. President Nixon does not, but his brother Edward has ordered three.