

A Day of Joy for Wives of Prisoners

Washington

For the wives of American prisoners in Indochina, yesterday was the day they were "just overjoyed."

For the wives of those missing in action, the news of a possible end to the Vietnam war meant the moment of truth was approaching.

Carole Hanson, whose husband, Stephen, a Marine major, has been missing in Laos five years, talked about the day's news with their son, Todd, before he went to school in El Toro, Calif.

"What do you say to a 6-year-old? Maybe your daddy's coming home?" she said. "We've talked about all the possibilities including the fact that he might not come home. But for a 6-year-old it is easier to think in terms of when rather than if."

"I just hope I can hold up for the next couple of months," Mrs. Hanson said.

'OVERJOYED'

Phyllis Galanti of Richmond, Va., issued a statement from the National League of Families of American Prisoners and Missing in Southeast Asia, of which she is chairman. It began simply: "We are just overjoyed."

"Above all we are deeply gratified that under tentative plans North Vietnam has agreed to assume responsibility for the accounting and release of all captured and missing Americans throughout Indochina," she said. "These provisions are the answer to our most earnest prayers."

There have been fears that only the approximately 400 prisoners officially acknowledged by North Vietnam would be freed, and the 106 known captives in South Vietnam and six in Laos would fall into limbo along with the more than 1200 Americans whose whereabouts and fate remain unknown.

Mrs. Galanti and her husband, Paul, are childless. He is a Navy lieutenant captured in North Vietnam six years and nine months ago. In that time she has received 20 letters from her husband, the last on June 1.

ANXIETY

For Joan Vinson of Alexandria, Va., the anxiety continues. Her husband, Bobby, an Air Force lieutenant colonel, has been missing in North Vietnam for four years and six months.

"I'm very encouraged and guardedly optimistic," she said, adding in slowly spo-

ken and carefully measured words: "I am very aware of the chances of my husband's situation."

No one yet knows the fate of the missing but few in the Pentagon believe that many of these men remain alive today.

"You think about it and you pray," Mrs. Hanson said of the long years alone. "Here it is — and now what do I do with it? It's a very scary thing for those of us with missing men. Who knows what the outcome will be? You want it to be over. You think, 'How will I handle it?'"

'FANTASTIC'

Mrs. James Kula, 20, of Orange county, Calif., whose husband was shot down July 29, said news of the possible cease-fire was "fantastic."

Judy Ayres, 32, also of Orange county whose husband, Air Force Major Gerald Ayres, was shot down June 18 and is missing, said, "I've always been hopeful my husband is alive. But when the cease-fire comes I'll be faced with knowing whether it's true or not."

"I don't watch TV news at night until my three children are asleep," she said. "I don't want to give them false hopes."

Betty Lancaster, Hunting-



AP Wirephoto

**BONNIE SINGLETON AND SON RICK, 6, IN DALLAS
Captain Jerry Singleton was captured in 1965**

ton Beach, Calif., the mother of Lieutenant Commander Charles Lee, who was shot down July 9, 1967, said, "My son is 31 now . . . if he's alive. I'm not awfully hopeful because it's been so long, but there's a possibility."

Mrs. Porter Halyburton, of Tucker, Ga., whose hus-

band, a Navy lieutenant, was shot down more than six years ago, said, "I don't think I have ever been this optimistic."

Millie Parrott, of Atlanta, wife of Air Force Captain Thomas Vance Parrott, said she was acting silly "but this is the first time I've been happy in a long time."