

Thousands in Back Pay Await P.O.W.'s

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WASHINGTON, Feb. 6—Many of the prisoners of war, upon their release, will find several thousand dollars awaiting them in pay, savings and bonuses that accumulated while they were in captivity.

In a limited number of cases, according to the Defense Department, some prisoners will have a "freedom fund" measured in tens of thousands of dollars in military savings accounts.

Most of the savings come from deductions made in the prisoners' pay while in captivity. In addition, under a 1970 law passed by Congress, each prisoner will be entitled to \$5 a day for every day he was held in captivity.

Throughout the Vietnam war, the Defense Department has followed a policy of continuing to pay the salary and allowances of men captured or missing in action. What was done with the pay depended upon the choice made by each individual before he entered combat.

In some cases, most or all of the pay was sent to the fam-

ilies of the prisoners. In other cases, particularly involving unmarried men with no dependents, the pay, at the direction of the individual, was put by the Defense Department in a special savings account.

Partly to encourage savings deductions by servicemen in Vietnam, the Defense Department established an overseas savings system paying 10 per cent annual interest. About a year ago, the Air Force directed that at least 10 per cent of the pay of Air Force prisoners had to go into the overseas savings accounts.

According to Defense Department records, 79 Air Force officers and men who are either captured or missing in action have accumulated from \$50,000 to \$100,000 in such savings accounts. In addition, 247 have between \$25,000 and \$50,000 credited to their accounts.

The returning prisoners will find out how much money is coming to them when they reach the processing center at Clark Air Base in the Philippines. At that time, they will be given an advance payment to meet their immediate expenses.

Just how much each individual will receive will depend

upon how long he has been in captivity and the decision he made on distribution of his pay while imprisoned. Even if all the pay was allotted to families, however, most of the prisoners will receive at least a few thousand dollars in "captivity bonuses" ordered by Congress.

The 1970 law provided that every United States citizen, military or civilian, would receive \$5 a day for every day held in captivity—\$3 a day for forced labor and \$2 a day for substandard food. The "captivity bonuses" will be paid by the Foreign Claims Settlement Commission.

Since three-quarters of the prisoners have been held for four years or longer, that means that most of the men will receive at least \$7,000 in individual bonuses.

In addition, the men will be paid for the 30-day annual leave they lost while in captivity. Each man will be entitled to 2½ days' pay for each month spent in captivity, so that one year in captivity will add up to one month's pay.

Under a 1972 law, the men will not have to pay any Federal income tax on military pay received while they were in captivity.