

No Scotch For POWs

Clark Air Base Philippines

If a returning American prisoner of war asks for a scotch on the rocks or any other alcoholic drink at Clark Air Base hospital, he won't get it.

He will have to settle for fruit juice, beef broth or soft drinks.

The ban on alcohol is part of the rigid medical supervision to be imposed on the POWs during the first few days of their release. But according to a dietician at the Clark hospital, the authorities are prepared to make at least one concession to the normal diet.

TASTES

A POW who, during his captivity, has developed a taste for the pungent Vietnamese fish sauce nuoc mam — a standard part of the Vietnamese diet — will be served it if his doctor allows, according to Captain Cynthia Chung, from Honolulu.

"We are prepared to meet as much as possible a returnee's food tastes, and this includes rice and nuoc mam," the dietician said.

Reporters were invited to taste the basic menus that will be made available to the POWs when they get to Clark for a minimum three-day medical checkup.

They had the pick of eight diets, ranging from "liberal liquid" to the regular diet served to staff members of the hospital. Other than in the restricted liquid diets — which featured grape juice, clear broth and 7-Up — the dishes featured boiled had-dock, baked potatoes, strained mushroom soup and lemon pudding.

The "sodium restricted" diet featured a lettuce salad, while the "protein restricted" diet lacked the carton of homogenized milk provided with all the other diets.

REPORTERS

Accustomed to richer food, the reporters were not overly impressed.

A spokesman said the restriction on alcohol for the POWs was made because "alcohol may influence body chemistry in such a way as to confuse the biochemical measurements of the blood. Therefore, the consumption of alcohol is not normally allowed any hospitalized patient."

During the plane trips from Hanoi and Saigon to Clark, the POWs will not be allowed to smoke cigarettes "because the condition of the other returnees on board will not be known and smoking may cause discomfort," the spokesman said.

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