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142 U. S. Families Await Freed Men

Examiner News Services

WASHINGTON—U.S. officials notified the families of 142 American military and civilian war prisoners yesterday that they will be freed late to-

day — U.S. time — in North and South Vietnam.

The list includes Lt. Cmdr. Everett Alvarez Jr. of Santa Clara, Calif., who has been held by the North Vietnamese for 8½ years. He was the first U.S. pilot shot down and captured over North Vietnam on Aug. 5, 1964, during the Gulf of Tonkin incident.

Military officers and State Department officials began phoning the relatives of this first batch of American POWs to be freed about mid-day, shortly after receiving the names from Saigon, where Communist authorities handed them over.

Secretary of State William Rogers personally telephoned the news to the parents of Foreign Service officer Douglas K. Ramsey, 38, of Boulder City, Nev., who was captured in South Vietnam on Jan. 5, 1966.

Notification went smoothly this time, compared to the slow start two weeks ago when the North Vietnamese diplomats in Paris first listed all the American prisoners they held. At that time, casualty officers went in person to notify each next-of-kin.

The 134 U.S. servicemen and eight civilians who will

be freed tomorrow, Vietnam time, represent the first installment.

Under the U.S.-North Vietnamese cease-fire agreement, all 562 U.S. military war prisoners in North Vietnam, South Vietnam and Laos and 31 civilian prisoners are due to be released by late March.

Meanwhile, the United States will complete the withdrawal of the last American troops from Vietnam. At last official count, there were 18,600 Americans still in South Vietnam.

Officials said they know of some American prisoners who have been wounded but were not on the first list to

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be released. They did not give names.

And while Alvarez is on the list, the name of Army Maj. Floyd Thompson was not. Thompson has been held longest. He was captured in South Vietnam in March, 1964, nearly nine years ago.

The list of the first post-war contingent of American repatriates, delivered in two parts by North Vietnam and the Viet Cong, was given to Maj. Gen. Gilbert Woodward, chief U.S. representative on the Joint Military Commission, in Saigon yesterday morning.

The list was transmitted immediately to Washington, where it was received at the Defense Department at 11:30 a.m.

The State Department said information from the Viet Cong indicated that none of the civilians suffered any serious health problems. Half of the eight civilians apparently were captured during the Communist Tet offensive of 1968.

The eight being set free appear to have been kept in one camp, the officials added.

They are to be released near Tay Ninh, a town northwest of Saigon close to the Cambodian border, the State Department said.