

'Homecoming' Fervor At Clark Air Base

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CLARK AIR BASE — (Philippines) — After a long prologue the curtain has gone up on Operation Homecoming.

The first released POWs will emerge from the ambulance planes early tomorrow afternoon and be greeted here by waving flags, welcoming banners, and more than a thousand well-wishers.

Adm. Noel Gayler, commander in chief in the Pacific, is expected to be here to greet the first returnees.

Fast Departure

An 18-man military team will fly to Hanoi's Gia Lam Airport tomorrow (today in the United States) to prepare a fast departure for the first 115 American war prisoners leaving North Vietnam.

Almost at the same time, the Viet Cong will be freeing 27 persons — military and civilian — held in South Vietnam. They will be released at Quan Loi, 65 miles north of Saigon.

Helicopters will whisk them to Saigon's Tan Son Nhut Airport, where they will transfer to a C9A Nightingale medical evacuation plane for the flight to Clark.

If all goes well, the first POWs will head toward Clark aboard a Giant C141 Starlifter ambulance plane three hours after the loading and medical men arrive in Hanoi.

Because of the shorter flight, the released POWs in South Vietnam may be the first to arrive at Clark, a 129,705-acre U.S. Air Force base about 50 miles north of Manila.

Air Force spokesmen say three C141s probably will be used to ferry the 115 prisoners from Hanoi to Clark.

Medical Plans

An 18-man reception support team that will fly into Hanoi will be led by Col. James R. Dennett, 47, Spruce Pine, N.C. But the key man will be a doctor, flight surgeon Richard S.

Malone, 53, of San Antonio.

Dr. Malone's six-man medical group will examine the 115 POWs and relay information to Clark.

Malone's group is from the 10th Airvac Squadron, Travis AFB, and includes S-Sgt. Sylvester Lumpkin, 29, Vallejo, and Airman 1-C James E. Moss, 20, Richmond.

These men will remain in Hanoi until the last POW is released and put aboard the ambulance planes.

Also in the reception support team are two public af-

fairs officers, one of whom, Col. A. J. Lynn, will ride back to Clark with the first returnees.

Estimated round trip with two hours on the ground in Hanoi is eight hours. The ambulance planes are expected to leave Clark before dawn tomorrow.

The reception support team members were notified of their assignments yesterday said Lynn. Their plane is a C130 from the 345th Tactical Airlift Squadron. Two interpreters are part of the team.