

# 40 More POWs Take Off for U.S.

## 2 Planes Due Today At Travis

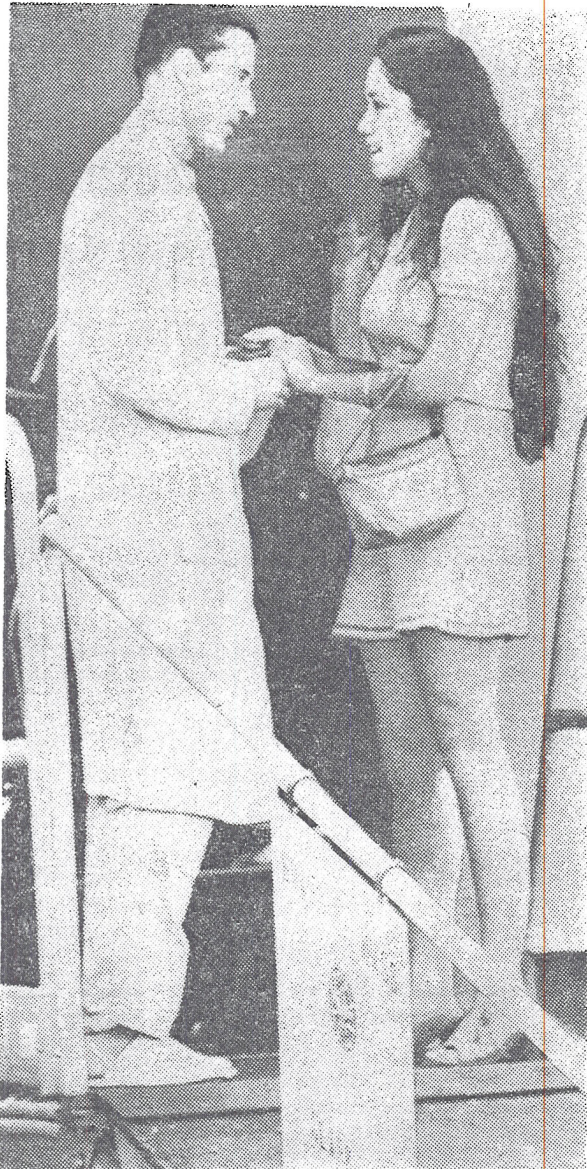
### Clark Air Base Philippines

Forty released American war prisoners left the Philippines for home on two flights today.

Both groups of 20 men headed for Travis Air Force Base, Calif., on specially fitted C-141 Starlifter jet transports that took off for the 15-hour flight two hours apart. The first plane is scheduled to land at 10:40 a.m., the second at 12:40 p.m.

Of the 142 POWs who arrived here Monday from Vietnam, the departures left 80 still preparing for the long-awaited trip home. One other POW released by the Communists Sunday night, civilian Richard G. Waldhaus, remained near Saigon, where he asked to stay.

Just as the doors were about to close on the first plane today, a 16-year-old girl student from Wagner High School on the base dashed up the ramp. She presented one of the departing men, Major Robert D. Jeffrey of Los Angeles, with a letter and a POW bracelet with his name on it, which she had been wearing for



UPI Telephoto

Elizabeth Powers said good-by to the man whose POW bracelet she had worn—Major Robert Jeffrey

more than a year. Framed in the doorway, they talked and he kissed her goodbye.

"Ten years ago he taught me to swim here at Clark," said the student, brown-haired Elizabeth Powers, 16, daughter of a civilian base employee from Griffin, Ga.

As the second plane was loading, one of the ex-POWs, Navy Lieutenant Commander Rodney A. Knutson of Billings, Mont., stepped off the bus, saluted, dropped his arm and ran over to a group of excited young women about ten yards away.

He threw his arms around three of them, hugged and kissed them and said, "Hi, everybody. Thank you."

In a departure statement, Air Force Colonel Ronald E. Byrene Jr. of New York — senior man on the second plane — said:

"I can tell you this: that there was one thing we were able to keep and that was our faith, our strong faith in God, in our wives, in our families, in our President and our national leaders. But especially, and most important, in you, the American people. Our faith was justified. Your reception has been wonderful, way beyond our expectations. Thank you."

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