

Ex-POW's Good Duty

He's Home --Sign Is Down

South San Gabriel

As a band played and neighbors cheered in the rain yesterday, as American flyer held by North Vietnam for 6½ years chopped down a sign at his home that read:

"Hanoi Release John Nasymth."

"It felt good, but it was a little tiring. This axe is heavier than it looks," said Captain John H. Nasmyth Jr. after the homemade sign crashed to the ground.

His family painted the ten-foot square sign and erected it on a corner about 100 yards from their home in this Los Angeles suburb on Oct. 11, 1969. They looked on as the uniformed Air Force captain whacked away for five minutes in a steady drizzle that turned into a downpour as he finished.

The marching band from a nearby high school turned out in full uniform and played "When Johnny Comes Marching Home." About 200 people of all ages turned out to watch, including pre-school-age youngsters carrying American flags.

Nasmyth, a 32-year-old bachelor whose Phantom F4C aircraft was shot down on Sept. 4, 1966, didn't know about the sign until he

reached the Philippines last month.

At a party for family and friends afterward, Nasmyth's mother, Virginia, said the long-awaited ceremony went exactly as she imagined it would. "I was glad to see the rotten thing go," she said.

Nasmyth's parents, two sisters and brother were active in efforts to gain the re-

lease of POWs. They made several trips to Paris, sometimes carrying hundreds of letters of support.

One sister went to Moscow, the other went with her mother around the world trying to gain support. His brother once fasted for four days in a mock cell.

After changing into civilian clothes, Nasmyth seemed to mix easily with

the friends and relatives, kissing the young women and having his picture taken with the small children. He puffed a cigar, sipped beer and then demonstrated he hadn't forgotten how to open a bottle of champagne.

"I'm not having any trouble readjusting," he said, "just in getting the energy to keep up the pace."

Associated Press



UPI Telephoto

Captain John Nasmyth Jr. chopped down the sign