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UPI Telephoto

CMDR. CHARLES SOUTHWICK, WIFE KAREN  
She helped him slip his wedding ring on

## Travis Homecoming-- 20 More POWs Land

By Dick Hallgren  
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### Travis Air Force Base, Solano county

A hulking C-141 Starlifter jet touched down at 2:15 p.m. here yesterday, bringing 20 more American prisoners of war home from years in North Vietnam.

More than 300 relatives, friends and well-wishers cheered as the huge jet taxied up to the reception with roaring engines and lowered its ramp.

First down was Navy Cap-

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tain Ernest M. Moore Jr., the senior officer on board, who snapped to attention on the tarmac and gave greeting officers a brisk, jaunty salute.

"There can be but one day like this in the life of a

man," Moore said with emotion.

"We can not thank you enough for being with us all the way. There was never any doubt."

### CHILDREN

Moore, shot down over North Vietnam on March 11, 1967, said he and other returning men had visited the pediatrics ward at Clark Air Base in the Philippines before leaving on their 15-hour, 8000 mile flight home.

The children there, he said, "were of all colors and nationalities . . . and it didn't make any difference . . . and so I saw these children . . . and it warmed my heart.

"They were sick and they needed help — and my country was giving it to them.

"And I knew that my country would always do this . . ."

The 43-year-old Moore was

greeted by his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Moore Sr. of Walnut Creek, and by his brother Terry and his wife.

Moore's wife and his three children were awaiting him at Balboa Naval Hospital in San Diego, where he and 12 others were being transported immediately by plane.

"Tonight," Captain Moore said, "I'm going to take my lovely wife in my arms—something I have dreamed about for years—and I will know an openness and communion with her that I have never known in the past . . ."

Yesterday's was one of four Operation Homecoming flights that brought the total returning prisoners of war to 243. The other three jets flew directly to bases in Maryland, Illinois and Texas.

As each man came down the ramp at Travis yesterday and saluted the colors, the crowd cheered and applauded and held high signs saying "God Bless You!" "Welcome Home!" and "Happiness Is Knowing Men Like You . . ."

The crowd began singing "Happy Birthday to You" when Navy Commander Collin H. Haines of Miramar bounded down the ramp.

Haines grinned, walked up to the well-wishers and thanked them for the reception before joining other men in the POW lounge.

Thirteenth off the plane in the ten-minute ceremony was Navy Commander Charles E. Southwick of Sausalito, whose plane was hit over North Vietnam on May 14, 1967.

The gray-haired, jaunty pilot had just touched ground when his wife Karen, dressed in a green pantsuit, ran across the tarmac and embraced him.

The couple disappeared into the nearby reception center, with Mrs. Southwick leaving shortly after and getting into a parked car. Then Southwick emerged—smiling and smoking a big cigar—to join her for the ride to Oak Knoll Naval Hospital in Oakland.

Also taken to Oak Knoll yesterday was Navy Reserve Lieutenant Gary L. Thornton of Porterville, who was shot down on Feb. 20, 1967.

Five men were taken to David Grant Air Force hospital at Travis.

Children of some returning POWs clutched little American flags during the homecoming and the son of one — Air Force Lieutenant Donald G. Waltman of Kellogg, Idaho — wore the uniform of an Air Force cadet.

The only less-than-joyous note yesterday was the disappointment of 175 grade school children from the Travis Unified School District, who arrived with posters and letters to welcome the men back. State law, however, insists that all school buses be at the schools by 2 p.m. and the children were forced to leave 15 minutes before the big plane touched down.

A teacher said the men returning yesterday would get the letters and posters somehow, and that plans were being made to have the children return at 11 a.m. today, when another 20 POWs are scheduled to return.