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POWS listed as AWOL

Criminal charges against a POW released from captivity in South Vietnam have been dropped, according to a public affairs officer for the Defense Department's "Operation Homecoming."

At the time of his capture, Army Specialist Keith Albert of Thibodaux, Louisiana was under investigation for assault and the charges remained against him throughout his captivity. Albert is reportedly now at the Brooks Army Hospital at Fort Sam Houston, Texas.

Charges are still pending, however, against three other POWs, all of whom are enlisted men.

Marine Pfc. Frederick Elbert of Queens, New York, who is still imprisoned in South Vietnam, was listed as a deserter at the time of his cap-

ture in 1968. Army Specialist Richard Springman was listed as AWOL at the time of his capture. Described by relatives as having strong anti-war sentiments, Springman was reportedly wearing a peace symbol around his neck when he got off the plane at Travis Air Force Base after his release from a prison camp in South Vietnam. The third POW, Army Private Ferdinand Rodriguez of Brooklyn, New York — also listed as AWOL at the time of his capture — was taken directly to Valley Forge Army Hospital, Pennsylvania, following his return to the United States.

A Pentagon spokesman told *Earth News* that the cases against the three POWs are presently under investigation.

(*Earth News*)