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'It's Like He's Never Been Away'

Orlando, Fla.

The period of adjustment prisoner of war wives were warned about took ten seconds, says Ann Browning, just long enough for her to fly into the arms of her returning husband.

"They can throw away their books about readjustment," she said Thursday. "There isn't any. It's like he's never been away."

Air Force Captain Ralph (Tom) Browning, 32, returned home March 3 after nearly seven years in a prison camp in North Vietnam.

SAMENESS

"Things just seemed to pick up right where they left off when he went to war," Mrs. Browning said.

"He slipped right back into fixing me breakfast on Sunday mornings — just like he always did," she said, adding: "I think I'm going to push it and see if I can get Saturdays, too."

Wives of returning prisoners are cautioned that extended imprisonments, conditions of treatment and the long separations may have taken a toll in physical health and mental attitudes and that these scars may take time to heal.

PEACE

"There were no nightmares," said Mrs. Browning. "He's been sleeping like a baby."

Despite the long years apart, "we communicate with each other just like we always did," she said. "I have to pinch myself once in awhile."

Browning had never seen his son, Scott, who was five months old when the flyer was shot down in July 1966.

Meeting his little boy for the first time, "he said it was just like Scott knew him," Mrs. Browning recalled.

"It's like we're newlyweds — the three of us," she said.

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