

SFChronicle MAR 30 1973

Rainy Day, But Speeches Spirited

Travis AFB

Fourteen former prisoners of war arrived here in a driving rain yesterday, to be greeted by more than 200 schoolchildren waving American flags and singing "This Land Is Your Land."

It was the first time since Operation Homecoming began that the sun had not shone on former prisoners landing here.

WEATHER

Undaunted by the weather, the senior POW aboard, Colonel Theodore W. Guy, of Tuscon, Ariz., told the crowd:

"I have something to say to all of you, and especially all you kids.

"A man's honor is something that can't be sold.

"... It was the knowledge and belief in our American heritage that made it possible for us to come home with honor.

"It is fitting that our first stop in the continental United States is in California, the home of our beloved President.

"... when (in captivity) someone would say to me, 'the Americans have played their last trump card,' I'd answer: 'The whole deck is wild.'"

CHINESE

Next off the plane was one of the last two military prisoners the Chinese held, Navy Lieutenant Commander Robert J. Flynn, 35. He was shot down on August 21, 1967, by a North Vietnamese MIG fighter near the border of Kiangsi province.

Flynn, originally a Minnesotan, received hugs and kisses from his wife Kathy, his daughter Elizabeth, 9, and son, Robert, 6, who live in Colorado Springs.

He was the only one re-

turning yesterday to be met by his immediate family.

Flynn and Air Force Major Philip E. Smith, 38, were freed by the Chinese at the Hong Kong border last Wednesday. Smith was shot down over Hainan Island on Sept. 20, 1965. His wife divorced him while he was a captive.

The former prisoners were taken to various service hospitals in the Bay Area and around the country for further medical checks.

STATEMENT

Sergeant William G. McMurry Jr., one of the 14, made a brief statement at Letterman General Hospital at The Presidio.

The 27-year-old McMurry, a Special Forces non-com last seen five years ago, bleeding from wounds as he threw a hand grenade at an enemy tank, had been presumed dead until recently.

"... I believe I speak for all returning prisoners of war when I say that the thing that makes the sacrifices worth it to persons in the military is the American people, and I have no regrets," said McMurry, whose home is in Scottsdale, Ariz.

"We're very happy to have served the American people."

Our Correspondent

SF Chronicle MAR 20 1973

Youngsters Greet POWs



By Joseph J. Rosenthal

Schoolchildren greeting returning prisoners of war at Travis AFB sang 'This Land Is Your Land'