

LAST P.O.W.'S LAND AT PHILIPPINE BASE

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67 Arrive From Hanoi in 2 Planeloads, Completing Releases a Day Late NYTimes

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CLARK AIR BASE, the Philippines, March 29—The last 67 American prisoners held by the North Vietnamese arrived tonight after being released in Hanoi. All but one were shot down late in December and most were B-52 crewmen.

They were the last Americans listed by the Communists as prisoners of war. However, the Vietcong announced that one additional American was still being held in South Vietnam.

He was identified by the Pentagon today as Capt. Robert T. White of Virginia, and he was expected to be freed sometime this weekend. The Vietcong originally gave his name as Wheme, but Defense Department records showed no such person and Captain White was eventually traced through his service number.

Completed a Day Late

The prisoner releases ended one day later than the 60-day schedule in the Paris cease-fire agreement. Officials here said that the delay was caused by United States insistence that nine Americans and one Canadian listed as held by the Pathet Lao also be released. They arrived here today.

Altogether, the Communists have freed 595 prisoners. These included 587 Americans and 8 others—2 West Germans, 2 Canadians, 2 Thais and 2 Filipinos. Of the Americans, 24 were civilians and 563 were military men, the majority bomber pilots.

Some 1,330 Americans are listed by the Pentagon as missing in action and unaccounted for. It also lists as killed in action 1,100 men whose bodies have not been recovered.

Officials Silent on Treatment

Military officials here in charge of the releases under Operation Homecoming continued to maintain silence on the treatment of American prisoners by the North Vietnamese. Asked to summarize that treatment, Brig. Gen. Russell G. Ogan, director of matters concerning prisoners of war and the missing in action for the Office of the Secretary of Defense, said: "I haven't looked into this in any great detail. These questions were not asked here at Clark."

Two United States Air Force C-141 jets ferried the released prisoners from Hanoi to this base today. They arrived after dark in a drizzling rain. Several hundred American residents responded to appeals made over the base radio station and turned out with flags, banners and cheers.

'Day of Joy and Pride'

As usual, the senior officer aboard each plane made a brief arrival statement. One of them, Lieut. Col. James W. O'Neil of the Air Force, who is 42 years old and from Las Vegas, Nev., said:

"For us, this is a day of joy and pride. What could be more joyous than to be delivered from your enemies and delivered to your friends. And the pride that we have in our nation and our Government could not be greater. And this day justifies our faith. P.O.W.'s never have a nice day, but we get one great day. Each of us thanks all of you for this unforgettable day."

It was the first time that any of the returning prisoners had publicly referred to the North Vietnamese as "enemies."

Two Planeloads of Men

The first plane brought back 40 men and the second carried the rest. The senior man aboard the second plane, Lieut. Col. Louis H. Bernasconi, 41, from NAPA, Calif., made this statement:

"On behalf of all of us, we thank you for this glorious moment. To those of you back home and, of course, to those of you here, you have answered our prayers. Thank you so much."

The last man released in Hanoi today and the last man to disembark here was Lieut. Comdr. Alfred H. Agnew, 32, of the Navy. Commander Agnew, who was originally from Chicago and now gives his residence as Albany, Ga., was listed by Hanoi as the last man shot down over the North before the halt in the bombing in December. He was flying an RA-5 reconnaissance jet from the carrier Enterprise, when he was downed on Dec. 28.

His Skipper In Audience

Led to the microphone by Adm. Noel A. M. Gayler, American commander in the Pacific, Colonel Agnew, hands on hips, greeted his squadron commander in the audience with a "hello, skipper," and then said:

"As the last prisoner of war on the list released by Hanoi, I would like to speak for all of the prisoners of war and simply say we're mighty happy to be home."

Colonel Agnew was then led by Admiral Gayler on a walk among the audience, some of whom were singing "America the Beautiful."

Two information officers aboard the planes said that the men were joyous and spirited

on the flight. Cigars were distributed.

Lieut. Col. Richard Abel of the Air Force, who was aboard the final plane, ended his presentation with a well-known military phrase that a prisoner told him was written on the wall of the camp in Hanoi:

"Freedom has a taste for those who have fought and almost died for it that the protected will never know."

Col. James Dennett, the United States negotiator for the turnover ceremonies in Hanoi, said that the release today was no different from previous ones except for the large number of people on hand at Gia Lam airfield.

As usual, he signed papers with his North Vietnamese equivalent, Lieut. Col. Nguyen Phuong. No mention was made by either side that the day's releases were the last. Asked about his parting words to Colonel Phuong, Colonel Dennett said: "Good-by."