

Two Helicopters Forced Down In Vietnam

Visitors See Only Three U.S. Graves

Saigon

Two helicopters from the Joint Military Commission were forced down by anti-aircraft fire yesterday and the Viet Cong detained their occupants at gunpoint for three hours before releasing them, the South Vietnamese command said.

Aboard the aircraft were eight Viet Cong officers, two South Vietnamese liaison officers and eight government air crewmen. The two aircraft and the 18 persons abroad them returned to Bien Hoa airbase near Saigon after the incident.

Captain Phuong Nam, press officer for the Viet Cong's Provisional Revolutionary Government, said the PRG was investigating the incident and hoped to have a report today. He said those aboard the helicopters "returned in complete safety to Saigon."

The release of civilian prisoners by South Vietnam resumed yesterday at Quang Tri city. The Saigon command said 23 of the 250 scheduled for release declined to return to the Viet Cong, preferring to remain on the government side. The Viet Cong received the other 227.

The command said fighting continued yesterday throughout South Vietnam as it has every day since the cease-fire took effect January 28.

United Press

Saigon

Delegates from the Joint Military Team flew to Hanoi yesterday to check graves of American servicemen who died in North Vietnam during the war, but officials allowed them to see only three graves and declined to discuss recovery of any bodies.

The 20-man delegation, including five Americans, was scheduled to inspect the graves of 23 American servicemen who died either in plane crashes or prison camps there.

A U.S. embassy spokesman in Saigon said the North Vietnamese explained that only three graves were available for inspection because the bodies of the 20 others had been transferred from the Van Dien municipal cemetery to another burial site 35 miles outside the city.

When Colonel B. H. Russell, chief of the U.S. delegation to the JMT, asked to visit the site of the relocated graves, he was told it would be impossible because of the travel time needed.

The spokesman said the North Vietnamese had supplied a list of the names of the three men said to be still buried in the Van Diein cemetery and the other 20 whose bodies had been moved. As far as was known, the spokesman said, all the names were of men previously listed as dead rather than missing.

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