

Last Known American Captive in Indochina Freed

CLARK AIR BASE, the Philippines, Sept 18 (AP)—Emmet James Kay was freed today by his Laotian captors after 16 months as a prisoner and told greeters he knew of no other Americans in custody.

Thus the civilian pilot from Hawaii was the last known American prisoner of war in Indochina.

Mr. Kay, 47 years old, was the first prisoner released in a long-delayed exchange in Laos between the side led by Prince Souvanna Phouma and the pro-Communist Pathet Lao. The two sides, now joined in a coalition Government, are to exchange 350 Laotian, Vietnamese and Thai prisoners starting tomorrow.

Mr. Kay landed shortly after sunset at the end of a two-hour flight from Thailand in a C-9 hosUital jet. It was his third flight for the day, which started with his release at Samneua in the Communists' mountain stronghold of northern Laos. The British Army pilot who picked up Mr. Kay at Samneua and Pathet Lao captors had embraced warmly in an emotional farewell.

The pilot, Maj' Peter Shield, said that Mr. Kay had pledged that he would "work toward peace in Indochina" and quoted him as having said that he now opposed American intervention in Indochina and fully supported the Indochinese people "in their struggle for peace."

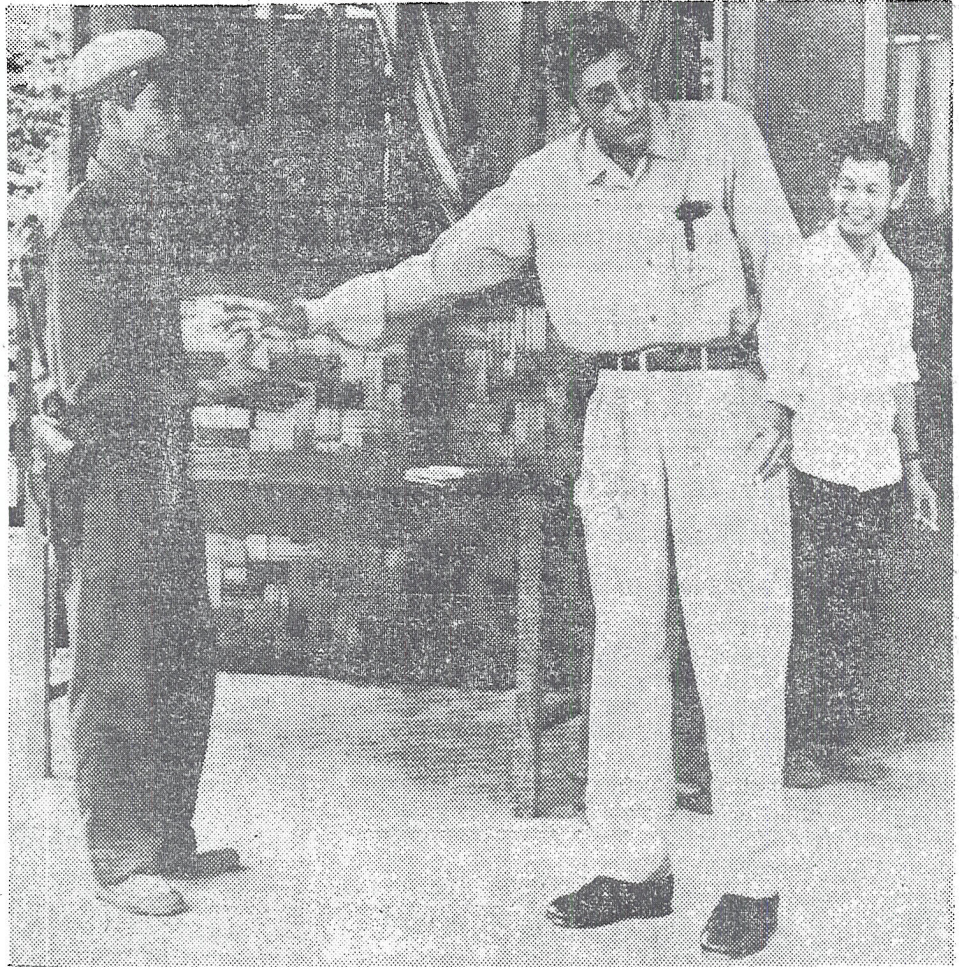
He Looks Fine:

After greeting her husband in Vientiane, Florence Kay said: "He looks fine." Mr. Kay said he had lost 20 pounds in captivity but was "treated very, very well" after his small plane made a forced landing in northern Laos on May 7, 1973. He was flying for a civilian charter line working for the United States Government.

Although first held in a cave, which he described in a letter to his wife as being occupied by bats and rats, he more recently occupied a guest bungalow and received medical care, he reported.

Maurice Gralnik, political-military officer of the United States Embassy in Vientiane, who escorted Mr. and Mrs. Kay, said an Air Force flight surgeon had checked Mr. Kay on the trip to the Philippines and pronounced him fit.

Mr. Kay told the small group of military personnel and civilian dependents who greeted his plane at Clark that he was happy to be back. As soon as he is cleared by the Clark base hospital, he and his wife are expected to fly to Hawaii to join their two children, Emmet Jr., 20, and a daughter, Puanani, 15.



Associated Press

Emmet Kay saying good-bye to his captors in Sam Neua, Laos, yesterday before release