

# 3 U.S. Pilots Freed<sup>59</sup> By Hanoi Back In U.S.

By DARRELL GARWOOD

WASHINGTON (UPI)—The three American pilots freed by North Vietnam flew home Saturday for a reunion with their families. Hanoi's peace talks statement that accompanied their release left Johnson administration officials unimpressed.

The pilots, Air Force Maj. Norris M. Overly and Capt. Jon D. Black and Navy Lt. (j.g.) David P. Matheny, were expected to arrive at Andrews Air Force Base, Md., outside Washington about midnight EST.

The Pentagon said Overly and Black would leave almost immediately for Air Force hospitals closest to their homes, where they will undergo briefings and physical examinations.

Overly, whose wife, Nola, resides at Wurtsmith Air Force Base, Oscoda, Mich., will fly to Wright-Patterson Air Force Base at Dayton, Ohio. Black, whose wife Carol lives in Laredo, Tex., will go to Lackland Air Force Base at San Antonio.

Matheny will enter Bethesda Naval Hospital in suburban

Maryland. His parents, Mr. and Mrs. C. S. Matheny of Bakersfield, Calif., will fly to Washington Sunday for a reunion with their son.

## Alaskan Stop

The fliers left Clark Field in the Philippines Friday night aboard an Air Force C141 jet transport plane, which stopped for refueling at Eielson Air Force Base near Fairbanks, Alaska, on the way to Washington.

Overly said at Manila, after the three had been given haircuts, medical checkups and a lunch of steak and eggs, that they felt fine and were "really happy" to be going home.

The fliers, who had been captured during bombing raids last fall, were released Friday by North Vietnam in a previously announced goodwill gesture marking Tet, the Lunar New Year.

Two American pacifists who arranged details of their release and escorted them by air from Hanoi to Vientiane, Laos, reported that North Vietnamese Prime Minister Pham Van Dong had spoken to them about peace talks before their departure.

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## North Vietnam Frees 3 Captured Pilots

WASHINGTON—The three captured U.S. pilots Hanoi released last week—AF Maj. Norris M. Overly, AF Capt. Jon D. Black and Navy Lt. (j.g.) David Matheny—were the first pilots North Vietnam has released of the estimated 500 it has captured. At presstime, the officers were undergoing medical check-ups here.

Before the men were freed, Air Force announced that 448 of its men are missing in SEA. Six AFmen were among 400 U.S. personnel killed in Vietnam during the week ending February 10. The week before, a record 416 U.S. troops died in the war's heaviest period of fighting.

Major Overly, who is on the lieutenant colonel selected list, was reunited with his wife and two children at Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio, and Black flew home to his family at Kelly AFB, Tex., before coming here.

Overly reported there was a possibility of more prisoners following him home, but did not elaborate.

While in Laos, Overly—speaking for the group—made a brief statement. "I was treated well," he said, "as I observed other captured American pilots being treated. I would like to express my gratitude to the Vietnamese people."