

RETURN TO FREEDOM

"First dramatic pictures by Pathe News cameramen in Korea and Britain record the repatriation of prisoners from the Communists."

An R.A.F. Hastings aircraft lands at Abingdon, bringing home seven civilians released at last from captivity in North Korea. Here to greet them are many of their friends, including a party of Salvation Army workers. Captain Vyvyan Holt, the British Minister in Seoul, is first to leave the aircraft.

Then comes Commissioner Herbert Lord of the Salvation Army, followed by Mr. George Blaks of the Seoul Legation staff, who is greeted by his wife.

Dr. Cooper, Anglican Bishop in Korea, is followed out of the aircraft by Father Thomas Quinlan a missionary from Eire. All the men have been in Communist internment camps for nearly three years, and friends who knew them before that time say how greatly they have aged.

Wearing an ill-fitting suit given to him by the North Koreans, Captain Holt (here with George Blaks) tells his memories of imprisonment to reporters who welcome him home again:

"Thank you, it's very nice to be back, and I'm very happy to have been brought home by the R.A.F. which always gets you out of a jam. Well, we had both pleasant and unpleasant memories of our treatment. When the country itself was in difficulties of course it was not possible for them to treat us with the same consideration as later."

Now Father Quinlan describes the internees' journey from their prison camp in Korea to Moscow, from whence they have just come:

"We had a wonderful trip through Manchuria, across the trans-Siberian railway. But heaven began when we got to Moscow, where His Excellency the British Ambassador met us and the Ambassadorial staff. And they gave us a very wonderful time."

Commissioner Lord, like all the party, is reluctant to divulge many details of life in their camp:

"We lived in a Korean house and our food, I think, was probably greater in quantity and better in quality than the great majority of the ordinary Korean people were getting."

Int: "But there wasn't a great deal of it, I imagine by that?"

"There was sufficient - it wasn't our type of food - but we were taken by the Koreans, but we couldn't expect better than the Koreans were having."

Britain welcomes the internees home, but waits to hear the full story. Meanwhile in Panmunjom, North Korean ambulances hurry United Nations sick and wounded prisoners of war towards no-man's land, where six hundred of them will be exchanged for nearly ten times as many Reds. The ambulances turn into the compound and eagerly the prisoners clamber out. Once more they are with their own people - and they are free.

Among the prisoners are four Turks, and the first to arrive receives a warm welcome from a Turkish officer.

A solitary Greek, with a magnificent beard grown during captivity, is another to arrive in the first batch. Now come the stretcher cases, the men who have given much in the struggle for peace. Many are still seriously ill, and their wounds have yet to heal. Helicopters stand by to fly them to hospitals further south to receive immediate attention.

For the rest, the road over Freedom Gate Bridge leads them towards Munsan. American ambulances bring them to Freedom Village, a new town specially built to receive them. General Mark Clark, the United Nations Commander, adds his own personal welcome.

In the convoy are twelve British soldiers, some of whom were captured in the battle that won for the Gloucestershire Regiment the proud title, "The Glorious Gloucesters."

All the released men are dressed in dark blue Chinese style uniforms and Russian type caps, part of the Communists' last minute "goodwill" efforts. Although it is believed that conditions (particularly to begin with) were bad, few of the released men are willing to make much comment, probably to protect their friends still in Communist hands, and so as not to cause any ill-feeling during the forthcoming peace negotiations.

Arthur Hunt (on the left) and Trooper Edward O'Donnell are among the first Britishers released. O'Donnell's home is in St. Helen's, Lancashire. Weston-super-Mare is Hunt's home town. A Lance Corporal in the Gloucesters, he was captured during the Imjin battle. Soon he will be back in Britain: but now, in Panmunjom, talks begin to bring peace to Korea which would bring them all home again.

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KOREAN PRISONERS

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The historic exchange of sick and wounded prisoners of war begins in Korea. United Nations buses wait beside Navy LST's in Pusan harbor as disabled ~~thir~~ Communist PWs, ferried from their island prisoner camps, set foot again on Korean soil. Some hobble on crutches to the buses which will take them to the Pannungom exchange site. ~~They~~ Sullenly and silently, defiance masking their faces, they plod obediently along on the road back to a life behind the Iron Curtain.

Coming back to freedom, thirty Americans and seventy other ailing U. N. prisoners are processed at Freedom Village. Physical checkups, delousing and hot soup wait for the GIs, first exchanged in the two years and ten months since the ~~start~~ war started. After a night between clean white sheets the men are on their way ~~home~~ to Tokyo on the long journey home.

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KOREAN PRISONERS -- 2

Sergeant John Porter to his wife, Margaret, in Bordentown, New Jersey, who said she didn't know whether to laugh or cry when she heard he was safe at last.

Pfc. Robert Stell to his mother in Baltimore, Maryland. Serenely now she reads and rereads the telegram from the War Department that ~~brrought~~ gave her back her son.

Pfc. Raymond Medina to his family in New York City. To his father, a fifty-seven year-old restaurant worker, his mother, who prayed for his deliverance, and to his brother, Frank, who heard the joyous news on the radio:

(LIVE SOUND)