

..... PARTING SHOT



John Nance/AP

Don't Forget the Chocolates

On February 12, 1973, two weeks after North Vietnam agreed to release all U.S. Prisoners of War as part of the January 27 Paris Peace Accords, the first group of 116 POWs flew from Hanoi's Gia Lam Airport to Clark Air Base in the Philippines on the first leg of their trip home on three USAF troop and cargo carrier aircraft dubbed "Hanoi Taxis."

There would be 14 additional Operation Homecoming flights carrying POWs out of Hanoi that month and in March, during which the Vietnamese released a total of 591 U.S. servicemembers held in North Viet-

nam. Other American POWs, including some civilians held in South Vietnam and Cambodia, also were released following the signing of the Accords.

The former POWs received medical care at the Clark Hospital before heading to the U.S.A. On February 14, 1973, while recuperating and decompressing, at least one unidentified POW who had flown out of Hanoi on February 12 took time to peruse the selection of heart-shaped boxes of Valentine's Day candy at the Clark Airbase PX under the watchful eye of his escort officer. ♦