

AMONG 18 POW'S RELEASED BY REDS

Sergeant Robert T. Hesselink, of Big Rapids, was one of the 18 men freed from North Korean prison camps during the weekend. Sgt. Hesselink is the son of Mrs. Alta Slater of Rogers Heights.

By UNITED PRESS

Eighteen more Michigan men were freed from N. Korean prison camps during the weekend, boosting to 81 the number of state GI's released in "Operation Big Switch."

Eight of the weekend returnees arrived at Freedom Village Saturday night and the other 10 Sunday night. Freed Sunday night were: Jack W. Andrews, Northville; Lee James Irons, Lum; Pfc. Joseph Loutner, Minden City; Pfc. Richard J. Montgomery, Owosso; Pfc. Ignacio Perez, Melvindale; Pvt. Benjamin M. Romero, Jackson; Sgt. Norman A. Robinson, Adrian; Pfc. Richard C. Smith, Coral; Pvt. Roman L. Szumiak, Detroit, and Cpl. John C. Williams, Detroit.

Released Saturday night were Sgt. Homer Medler, Jr., Benton Harbor; Sgt. Dale H. Williams, Justin; Cpl. Floyd E. McKinley, Bay City; Cpl. Marcos Gonzales, Pontiac; Cpl. Stanley T. Kura, Gaylord; Cpl. Maurice D. Racey, Fremont; Sgt. Robert T. Hesselink, Big Rapids, and Cpl. Charles L. Spencer, Dowagiac.

Before the exchange began, 104 Michigan men officially were listed as Red prisoners. However, early repatriates listed an additional 56 Michigan men they said they saw in North Korean camps.

The Sunday night exchange brought to 120 the number of Michigan men accounted for on lists at Panmunjom — 81 released, 33 reported dead and six reported "escaped." As before, the Defense Department in Washington said it has received no verification of the Communist reports of deaths and escapes.

Meanwhile, 10 of the Michigan men freed earlier were among the 328 repatriated American prisoners who arrived at San Francisco Sunday aboard the USNS Nelson M. Walker. They were Pfc. Robert W. Fletcher, Ypsilanti; Cpl. Leo Fredrickson, Monroe; Cpl. Wilbert R. Gibson, Detroit; Sfc. Edward Hewlett, Detroit; Pfc. Turner Johnson Jr., Detroit; Pvt. Kenneth L. Madison, Detroit; Cpl. Wayne L. Martin, Lansing; Pfc. Wilmer Norman, Remus; Cpl. L. C. Polk, Flint, and Cpl. Ronald D. Underly, Kalamazoo.

Most of the arrivals planned to return to their families in Michigan as soon as possible.

Martin and Gibson said they arranged for passage east on morning Trans World Airline flights. Norman, Underly and Johnson also said they were arranging their own transportation but did not give details.

Johnson's wife flew from Detroit to be at the pier when the transport arrived. He said life on the ship was far from that in the camp.

Second Mecosta County Soldier Communist List of War Prisoners

Mecosta county today had another one of its "missing in action" soldiers accounted for on a Communist listing—but the news entirely new to 22-year-old Pvt. Wilmer Norman's father.

George E. Norman, the father, had received a letter about a month ago from the Remus Soldier "in his own handwriting" friends reported. Pvt. Norman had been listed as "missing in action" since May, this year.

However, it was with relief and joy that the father received official word that the 7th Division soldier is being held by the Reds in the Chiang-Song prison camp.

Friends of the Norman family, who were isolated by snow-choked roads in their rural home north of Remus, said the father had been "overjoyed" when he was notified officially of his son's status yesterday.

The letter he received earlier was "undoubtedly in Wilmer's own handwriting," and was the first word received since he was listed missing in action during May.

It was not known during what action young Norman was taken.

He was the second Mecosta county soldier to "turn up found" on a Communist prisoner of war list after they had been reported missing. The first was Cpl. Robert T. Hesselink, son of Mrs. Alta Slater, Route 3, Big Rapids. Hesselink, of the 25th Division, also was held in a camp at Chiang-Song.

Washington — (UP)—The Defense Department hoped to complete today its heartache list of 3,198 U. S. servicemen reported by the Communists as prisoners of war in Korea.

Pentagon officials cautioned anew that they do not consider trustworthy the list supplied by the Reds.

President Truman yesterday urged the loved ones of missing American servicemen to "treat this list with skepticism" because the United States has no way of determining how "true or false" it is.

Personnel on the list of all services except the Army had been completely processed by the Pentagon crew of 10 officers and 23 civilian employes working around the clock supplying home address and next of kin.

Monday, August 10, 1953

REMUS MAN IS RELEASED FROM RED PRISON

Pvt. Wilmer Norman, 26, a Remus man held captive by the Communists for two and one-half years, was released Saturday night in the fourth day of the prisoner exchange at Panmunjom, Korea.

Pvt. Norman, the son of George E. Norman of Remus, was captured by the Reds April 25, 1951, less than three months after his induction, Feb. 1, 1951.

The release of Pvt. Norman brought to three the number of West Michigan servicemen captured by the Reds and released. But 17 other West state families are still waiting, scouring the magic prisoner lists as they appear daily.

Pvt. Norman graduated from Remus High school in 1946 and followed farming, the vocation of his father. He has seven sisters and six brothers.

Remus POW Arrives In San Francisco

Pfc. William Norman, 26, of Route 1, Remus, was among the 328 repatriated prisoners of war who arrived Sunday in San Francisco from aboard the naval transport General Nelson M. Walker.

Norman, the son of a livestock farmer near Remus and graduate of Remus High School spent 836 days as a captive.

He told of the long, 52-day march north after being captured which he said was bad as anything he had ever experienced. Most of the time, according to Norman, prisoners in his group were forced to eat soy beans ground up in a powder which were eaten raw and washed down with water.

Eight hours a day were spent in study of Communist indoctrination, Norman said, while balance of the time was spent on a food-gathering detail.