POW's Model T Still Purring, Awaits Arrival

SAIGON (AP)—When America's highest-ranking diplomat in captivity returns home after five years, he'll find his yellow and black Model T Ford parked in the driveway.

Close friends said they sometimes doubted that Philip W. Manhard would survive the grueling years as a captive of the Communists. But they said Manhard's family always believed he'd be coming home and kept the classic vintage car "in perfect running order" waiting for his arrival.

"That car was Phil Manhard's pride and joy, but his family hasn't let it just sit around," friends said. "Peg Manhard uses it and the cat has had kittens in it twice. Phil should be home just in time for spring kittens."

He is to be released Friday by the Viet Cong.

Manhard, 52, went to the former imperial capital of Hue in September 1967 as a senior U.S. adviser to South Vietnamese officials. He was in his two-story white French colonial home when the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong overran the city at the start of the 1968 Tet offensive.

Manhard was next seen at a pagoda north of Hue being loaded onto a truck. His friends breathed easier because his medical history included recurring treatment for foot infections. However, a few days later another report arrived that Manhard and the other prisoners had been taken off the truck and were seen marching north.

Like most of the 20 or so Americans captured at Hue, his fate was unknown for at least a year. Then State Department officials obtained information that led them to believe he was still alive.

Manhard's wife Margaret was always preparing for his return, friends said. She redid his study, kept the Model T running and talked about him freely.

"She'd talk about Vietnam and POWs," a friend recalled. "There wasn't any subject you had to pussyfoot around with Peg and her children. You never had to avoid mentioning his name."

Manhard joined the foreign service in February 1948 and was assigned to the Peking language school and then to T'ienching, where he closed out the American consulate after the Communist takeover. A colleague recalled that he was briefly held under house arrest during the takeover.

In 1951, Manhard was assigned to Korea and two years later he was embroiled in a [illegible] crisis.

"He was the American [illegible] cal officer in Koje-Do [illegible] 1953 the North Korean [illegible] rioted," the colleague [illegible] "Phil was the language [illegible] He went into the camp [illegible] tarily to negotiate with [illegible] on their demands."

From Korea, Manhard [illegible] the Japanese language [illegible] Tokyo. In 1962, he was [illegible] deputy political adviser [illegible] commander in chief of U.S. [illegible] es in the Pacific. Before [illegible] to Vietnam, he served as [illegible] director for regional affairs [illegible] the State Department's Far [illegible] Bureau.

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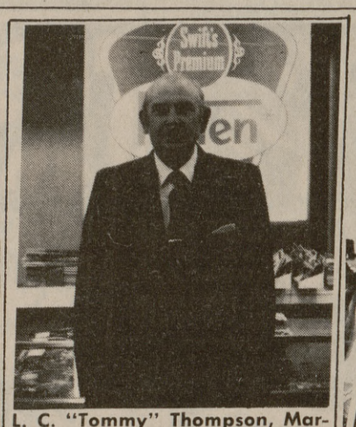

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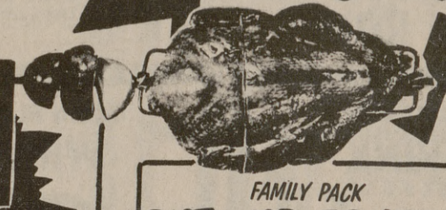

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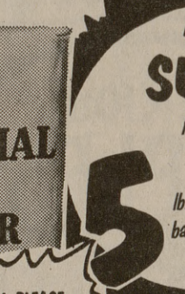

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