

Freed hostage to meet his daughter

By **TERRENCE PETTY**
Associated Press Writer

WIESBADEN, Germany — Undergoing a battery of tests at a U.S. military hospital, downing coffee and cherry pie, freed hostage Jesse Turner is savoring freedom after nearly five years as a hostage in Lebanon.

Turner was to be reunited today with his wife, Badr, who arrived on an overnight flight at nearby Frankfurt airport with their 4-year-old daughter Joanne, whom Turner has never seen.

Joanne nodded energetically and smiled broadly when asked if she was excited about seeing her daddy.

"She can't tell anything. She is shy," said Turner's Lebanese-born wife shortly before heading to the hospital.

Also with Mrs. Turner were the freed captive's mother, Estelle Ronneburg, and her husband, Eugene.

Mrs. Turner recalled the brief telephone conversation she had with her husband after he arrived in Syria and was handed over to U.S. officials on Tuesday.

"He is very happy, anxious to see her," said Mrs. Turner. "I will be seeing how he looks at his daughter for the first time."

The 44-year-old Turner arrived in Wiesbaden later Tuesday, flown to Germany on a special U.S. Air Force flight.

With his release, eight Western hostages remain in Lebanon, four of them Americans.

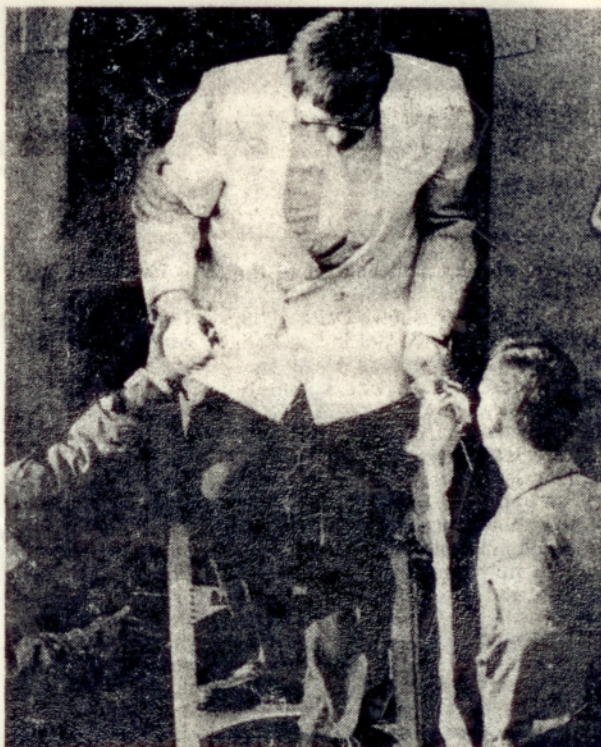
The American mathematics teacher, who had taught at Beirut University College, underwent preliminary medical checks at Wiesbaden Tuesday night.

Upon his request for a "light meal," Turner had a dinner consisting of a turkey and ham club sandwich, tossed salad, cherry pie and "lots of black coffee," said the U.S. military spokesman.

"The report from the medical team on the plane was that he appeared to be in good physical condition. But that's just very much an initial impression, not based on any tests," said U.S. Army Col. Don Maple, a military spokesman.

Turner tripped and almost fell in Damascus, earlier Tuesday, and also stumbled slightly on arrival at the Rhein-Main base.

Turner is undergoing a battery of physical and psychiatric exams, which could make his stay at the Wiesbaden hospital extend to three or four days.



← DAVID

American educator Jesse Turner is helped out of the aircraft at the Rhein-Main Air Base by officials in Frankfurt upon his arrival Tuesday. (AP)

He was also being questioned by a special State Department debriefing team.

Turner is known to have been held with American Alann Steen. The two men were kidnapped with two other Beirut University College teachers Jan. 24, 1987.

Turner's release was the fruit of intense U.N. efforts that have since August seen three other Western hostages go free.

As part of the process, 66 Arab detainees held by Israel and its allies have been freed and Israel has gained information on the fate of two Israeli soldiers missing in Lebanon and the body of a third.

The longest-held Western hostage is American Terry Anderson, chief Middle East correspondent for The Associated Press, who was kidnapped March 16, 1985.

Sanford Son

Brings 'Em Home

SANFORD - 'He feels honored to be on the team that picks up hostages when they are released and brought to Germany,' said Theresa Bernier, of her son, First Lieutenant David M. Bernier, 27, of Marc Drive, Sanford.

Bernier was shown recently in an Associated Press photo helping American educator Jesse Turner out of an airplane at the Rhein-Main Air Base in Frankfurt, Germany.

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Bernier

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Turner arrived in Germany on Oct. 22, after being held hostage for nearly five years in Lebanon. He was taken to the United States Military hospital in Weisbaden, Germany.

Bernier has been director of the Medi-Vac operations out of Frankfurt, Germany since July 24. He entered the Air Force in 1982 and was stationed in Del Rio, Texas for two years prior to his assignment to Frankfurt, where he will remain for the next two years.

The Persian Gulf War was taking place while Bernier was stationed in Del Rio, 'but it didn't affect his work,'

Mrs. Bernier said. Bernier, whose field of training is hospital administration, was in charge of scheduling appointments for doctors at the Del Rio military hospital.

Prior to living in Del Rio, Bernier was stationed in Wichita, Texas, where he taught medical administration.

'He doesn't know where he will be sent next,' Mrs. Bernier said, 'But he is very happy where he is.'

Because he is director of Medi-Vac operations, she explained, he is in charge of scheduling the medical team's assignments to pick up people in different countries and bring them to the United States Military hospital in Wiesbaden.