

War

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kept asking."

"I thought I would never see my wife again," said a sobbing Chief Warrant Officer David Williams, 30, of Orlando, Fla.

The POWs, some still wearing striped pajamas issued by their captors, were flown by C-130 transport to Kuwait for medical checkups. Young, Miller and Sgt. James Riley, 31, of Pennsauken, N.J., all appeared healthy.

"All the words in the world can't explain how I feel."

Edgar Hernandez
U.S. special forces soldier

Johnson limped from bullet wounds in both her ankles, Spc. Joseph Hudson, 23, of Alamogordo, N.M., had gunshot wounds to the buttocks and side, and Spc. Edgar Hernandez, 21, of Mission, Texas, was wounded in the right arm, but all walked on and off the plane and seemed in good spirits, if unshaven and bedraggled and not a little shocked.

"All the words in the world can't explain how I feel," Hernandez said during the one-hour flight to Kuwait.

Col. Larry Brown, operations chief for the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force, said the POWs were rescued after some of their guards approached Marines near the town of Samara north of Baghdad. The guards told the Marines their officers had deserted, and they wanted to hand over the Americans. Other Marines said townspeople tipped them to the house where the Americans were held.

Five of the POWs were members of the Army's 507th Battalion's "Lost Patrol," a lightly guarded supply convoy that got lost and wandered into an ambush in the south central Iraqi city of Nasiriyah on March 23, the first Sunday of the war. Five soldiers were killed and six were captured, including Pfc. Jessica Lynch, who was rescued last week.

Two of the POWs were aboard an Apache attack helicopter when it went down over southeastern

Baghdad on that same day.

Back in Washington, President George W. Bush on Sunday accused Syria of having weapons of mass destruction and of harboring fleeing Iraqi leaders, raising questions about whether that country might be the next target for the U.S. military.

"We believe there are chemical weapons in Syria," Bush said. "Each situation will require a different response."

He also said he expects Syria to stop harboring cronies of Saddam Hussein believed to have fled there as their government in Iraq collapsed.

"The Syrian government needs to cooperate with the United States and our coalition partners and not harbor any Baathists, any military officials, any people who need to be held to account for their tenure" in Iraq, Bush told reporters Sunday.

Bush sidestepped a question about whether the United States might threaten war against Syria if it did not cooperate with U.S. demands. "They just need to cooperate," he said in response.

Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld also brushed aside questions about war against Syria.

"The Syrian government needs to cooperate with the United States and our coalition partners and not harbor any Baathists, any military officials, any people who need to be held to account for their tenure."

George W. Bush
president

"That's above my pay grade," he said on NBC's "Meet the Press" program. "Those are the kinds of things that countries and presidents decide."

Syrian officials denied that Iraqi officials had escaped to their country.

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