

West Germany Hails Commandos

BONN, West Germany (UPI) — They walked jauntily down the ramp, wearing sport jackets and broad smiles, looking more like athletes returning from a win than commandos from a raid that had freed 86 hostages.

The troopers from Unit 9 of the West German Border Police returned to Cologne from Somalia Tuesday, having stormed a hijacked Lufthansa 737 jet, killed three of four hijackers, rescued 86 hostages and wrote a new chapter in the war against terrorism.

Though four of the 86 remained in Somalia for medical treatment, all had survived 106 hours of hell: they walked off their plane in Frankfurt exhausted but happy, some carrying children, others barely able to carry themselves.

The West German government, fearing a negative world reaction from an enthusiastic display of German military prowess, had the returning soldiers dress like civilians.

West Germany also tried to keep secret as many details of the mission as possible in case they have to do it again. But bits and pieces emerged from jubilant officials and the freed hostages who returned to an enthusiastic welcome from friends and family at Frankfurt.

"Most people were dozing — sleep was never really possible," Georg Freiburg recalled. "Suddenly there were explosions and men came pouring into the plane."

The commandos blew out the plane's doors and, hurling non-lethal "flash" grenades to blind the terrorists, charged in shooting.

"They screamed out 'Hinlegen! Hinlegen!' (Lie Down! Lie Down!) as the shooting began," Freiburg said. "In only a few minutes we were told to leave the plane."

The operation took seven minutes, but represented the culmination of five years of training that began with the Munich Olympics massacre in 1972, when an attack by German police ended in disaster and the deaths of 11 Israeli athletes.

The mood in Cologne and Bonn was tinged with grief. Juergen Schumann, 37, captain of the hijacked plane, was shot in the head in front of the passengers for standing up to the terrorists.

Even before the two planes carrying the hostages and victorious commandos landed, three leaders of the Baader-Meinhof gang reportedly committed suicide. A fourth imprisoned terrorist tried, but failed. All had been among 13



Rescue Commandos

Ulrich Wegener, commander of the special anti-terror unit of the West German border police reviews his civilian-clad men on their arrival from Mogadishu, Somalia at Bonn airport yesterday. The men had staged a pre-dawn raid to free

a Lufthansa 737 hijacked last Thursday. They successfully freed 86 passengers and crew from the plane, killing three hijackers and wounding one.

(AP Laserphoto)

terrorists whose freedom had been demanded in exchange for the lives of the Lufthansa hostages.

They included Andreas Baader, 34, who with Ulrike Meinhof — she was found hanged in her cell last year — founded the Baader-Meinhof gang. Baader's mistress, Gudrun Ensslin, 37, hanged herself on from her cell window and another accomplice, Jan-Carl Raspe, 33, also shot himself, officials said. A fourth convicted terrorist, Irmgard Moeller, 30, slit her throat with a bread knife and was in critical condition.

How the arms were smuggled into the top-security but relatively comfortable jail at Stuttgart is still unanswered.

Authorities acted immediately to head off any suspicion that the suicides were less than voluntary. They asked renowned pathologists from Swit-

zerland, Austria and Belgium to attend the autopsies and invited Amnesty International to send a representative.

The end of the hijacking and the deaths of the three imprisoned terrorists raised fears of revenge by other German terrorists still at large.

There was also fear for the life of Hanns-Martin Schleyer, spokesman for West German industry, who was kidnaped by Baader-Meinhof terrorists Sept 5.

One Swedish survivor was asked for his impression of "Captain Mahmoud."

"What can you make of people like that?" replied Oiva Oijalainen. "He organized a birthday cake for a stewardess who had her birthday and he was nice to the children at times. The next moment he shoots the captain."

American Hostages Freed

Five-year-old Leo Santiago of Santee, Calif., near San Diego, is carried as his mother Christine Maria Santiago, center, follows him down the ramp of their plane at Frankfurt, West Germany airport yesterday. They were among the 86 passengers and crew of a Lufthansa flight hijacked last Thursday who were rescued in a pre-dawn raid at Mogadishu, Somalia. (AP Laserphoto)

