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We consider the restriction of the unramified principal series representation of  $GL(3, k)$ , for  $k$  a  $p$ -adic field of residual characteristic greater than 3, to the maximal compact subgroup  $GL(3, R)$ , where  $R$  denotes the integer ring. We give a decomposition of this representation into individually induced representations of smaller subgroups, as a first approximation to a decomposition into irreducibles. A similar decomposition appears in the case of ramified principal series. It is conjectured that these decompositions give insight into the orbit method for  $p$ -adic groups, much in the same way that happens in the case of  $SL(2, k)$  (Received February 21, 2006)