

# Reds Down 2 U.S. Helicopters

SFC.  
7-6-71

## Saigon

Two United States helicopters were shot down near the A Shau valley Sunday, the first American aircraft losses in Vietnam in a week, the U.S. command in Saigon announced yesterday.

Two crewmen were wounded when the helicopters, an AH1 Cobra gunship and an OH-6 Cayuse light observation craft, went down just southeast of the valley, a Communist stronghold 375 miles northwest of Saigon.

B-52 bombers attacked in force for a sixth straight day near the demilitarized zone yesterday while ground fighting across South Vietnam re-

mained at a near standstill.

There was no sign of a widely predicted summer offensive in the northern provinces by North Vietnamese forces.

On the contrary, latest reconnaissance reports from the north indicated that Hanoi's troops may have pulled back to regroup and resupply in the wake of heavy fighting late last month around allied fire bases guarding the DMZ.

Another possible explanation of the lull was the surge in peace moves in several capitals following the new peace proposal from the Viet Cong in Paris last Thursday.

In Saigon, the U.S. Command reported that Ameri-

can troop strength in South Vietnam dropped by another 2200 men last week, cutting the over-all total to just under 240,000 men still here.

The command's weekly summary showed that only 500 U.S. Marines were left in Vietnam, from a peak of more than 80,000. Of the other branches of service, the Army leads with 191,000 still here followed by the Air Force with 36,900, the Navy with 10,900 and the Coast Guard with 100.

President Nixon has announced that over-all U.S. strength will be cut to 184,000 by December 1. Peak strength was 543,400, reached in April of 1969. *A.P. & U.P.*