

APR 7 1975

Ashamed Viet
General
Won't Eat
SFChronicle

Saigon

The South Vietnamese general charged with the defense of Da Nang — but who was absent when the city fell — has gone on a hunger strike for the shame he suffered because his area collapsed in panic, family friends said yesterday.

The friends said Lieutenant General Ngo Quang Truong was accepting intravenous feedings, however, and was in good condition at the main Saigon military hospital — and under heavy guard.

Truong told his relatives he was ordered out of Da Nang by officers in Saigon and was prevented from returning when the city panicked March 28 by "a high-ranking U.S. official" whom he did not identify.

The general said he understood the "advice" from the American meant that if he returned to Da Nang, he could expect no more U.S. aid, the relatives said.

Truong was taken out of Da Nang by military police when the first signs of panic and communist rockets began hitting South Vietnam's second largest city, 370 miles north of Saigon, late March 28. He was flown by helicopter to a vessel offshore.

Within 36 hours, government forces had lost all control of the city, completing the Communist lightning occupation in five days of the entire I corps area. Truong's region of responsibility.

The loss followed vows by Truong to stay and fight to the death both at Hue and Da Nang. He was not present when either city fell to the communists.

When residents panicked and Da Nang began to fall, Truong and U.S. consul-General Albert Francis were already aboard the ship off the coast.

Truong sailed south aboard his command ship, and refused a direct order from President Nguyen Van Thieu to report to him.

United Press