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Coast Refugee Pileup Feared

New Wave of Vietnamese Lacks U.S. Ties

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CAMP PENDLETON, Calif.,

May 2—A wave of homeless and unattached Vietnamese refugees—many of them once middle-class professionals who say they now are penniless—began reaching the processing center here today, with no smooth system yet established to match them with sponsors and move them out.

The prospect of a jam up of refugees requiring security clearances and certified sponsorships was raised by some officials.

Donald Day, the Immigration and Naturalization Service official in charge, said the number of refugees at Pendleton could exceed the Marine Base's designated capacity of 18,000. Sleeping facilities—mostly tents—were being completed by Marine and civilian employees working around the clock.

The base commander, Brig. Gen. Paul G. Graham, said it has cost the military \$2 million a day since Tuesday to absorb thousands of refugees. That includes purchase or rental of 18,000 cots, 54,000 blankets, 18,000 wooden bowls and chopstick sets, 300,000 pounds of rice and tents, telephones, electricity lines and the 800 Marines and civilians needed to install them.

"We contemplate they (refugees) will stack up," said Day. "I can visualize that there may have to be some kind of outlet."

The sponsor search is supposed to be done by a group of volunteer organizations with a religious base with experience in resettling displaced persons. But representatives of the organizations—the U.S. Catholic Conference, World Church Services, the American Lutheran Conference and the International Rescue Committee—have been haggling for three days with military and civilian author-

ities about the facilities they need to do the job.

A compromise site finally was selected, and the groups were scheduled to move in at noon today but they found their space was occupied by sleeping refugees.

"I can't resettle a refugee if I can't resettle myself," complained Edmund Cummings, director of migration and refugee services for the Catholic Conference. "The most important part of the whole program is to relocate refugees, and the agencies don't have the facilities to do the job."

Other officials said the snafu was accidental and was to be corrected before day's end.

Cummings said his organization was ready to begin relocating hundreds of refugees once it could establish a headquarters. Bishop David Preus, president of the American Lutheran Conference, said his organization ultimately could absorb as many as 10,000 Vietnamese evacuees.

The problem was accentuated by the changing nature of the refugee influx. Today's 3,000 brought the total here to about 10,000. Those coming in now are not citizens and their Vietnamese dependents, but Vietnamese professionals, students, educators, their families, relatives and often their friends. These are people who managed to escape the closing Vietcong pincer around Saigon.

These individuals, by and large, have no money, few belongings and no ties or attachments. Before they can leave Pendleton, according to immigration official Day, they must pass a security check and obtain a sponsor certified by the volunteer agencies as willing and able to help them resettle.

That could take at least a week to 10 days, said Day. Without the volunteer agencies in full gear, it could take longer.

For the growing army of evacuees living in unheated tents and wearing ill-fitting military field jackets, waiting on awns and in lines to be processed, the experience is frustrating. But few complain.

Most consider themselves lucky to be alive. They represent the wealthy, educated class of South Vietnam who faced harassment or worse if they stayed in Saigon.

Most of the refugees interviewed said they had little or no money, although some had managed to bring out jewelry.

Cases like these confront the resettlement agencies:

• Leon Chapuis, 32, half French, half Vietnamese, was a distributor of pharmaceuticals and chemical supplies from Germany, Italy and the United States. Urbane and multilingual, he said he left a \$30,000-a-year job, a 10-room home and a new Peugeot to flee with his family. He now has no place to settle.

• Nguyen Thanh, 45, is a career Navy captain who commanded amphibious forces protecting the southeast approaches to Saigon. Thanh, a bachelor, fled with his brother, a doctor, his sister-in-law, who is a physician, and five nephews and a niece.

Short, round-faced, cordial but cautious, Thanh has little money, no prospects for a job. He said he is trying to find some American friends he knew in the military. He hopes to get a job using the only skill he knows, "maybe on a merchant ship."

• Vo Duy Linh, 18, was a student at the University of Saigon. His father was a postal employee in his home city near Danang. When Danang fell, Linh was cut off from his family. Still, when some school friends with U.S. embassy connections invited him to try to escape with them, he scrambled aboard a bus for the airport with no documents other than a student I.D. card.

"When we come to the airport we have to pass Vietnamese police," recalled the slender, tense young man. "I close my eyes and pray to God. We get through somehow. God gave me good luck."

• Le Han (not her real name) met her husband in a bar in Saigon five years ago. He was an American civilian employee. They married and had two children. Her husband returned to America, saying he would return in a month. The month became years, and last December, Le Han received a letter from him saying he had met someone new. "I feel I shall never return to Vietnam again . . ."

After he left, one of their children drowned in a brook. When the war closed in, Le Han fled to the United States, using her marriage papers to obtain entry. She is here now, but her husband does not want her.

"I scared," she said, clutching her child. "I don't know U.S. I come here with my baby by myself. My husband he say he don't want me to write to him . . . I scared."