

30,000 REFUGEES LEFT IN VIETNAM

Ship Took on 9,000—Others Abandoned on Beaches

AGANA, Guam, May 7 (AP)—An evacuation captain whose ship reached here after more than a week at sea says thousands of South Vietnamese "howling and crying, 'come back!'" were left behind on the beaches.

Capt. Arthur Boucher said that "at Phu Cuoc there were 30,000 to 50,000" would-be refugees left behind who pleaded to board his ship, the freighter American Challenger.

"There were people afloat in boats. They were scrambling to get on the ship," said Captain Boucher, who arrived yesterday with his ship, one of the last to leave South Vietnamese waters.

The American Challenger took on 9,000 refugees, about double her capacity. Later, nearly half were shifted to other vessels, Captain Boucher said.

Arriving here shortly after the Challenger was the freighter Pioneer Commander with about 5,400 Vietnamese refugees.

The Challenger left Vung Tau, 40 miles southeast of Saigon, shortly before the fall of Saigon. The Commander departed with its load of refugees April 23, a week before Saigon surrendered.

Many refugees were Roman Catholics, led by several Vietnamese priests who apparently brought along their entire congregations. One refugee carried a life-size statue of the Virgin Mary.

Both ships carried fishermen and their families, some of



Associated Press

Young Vietnamese refugees at Camp Pendleton, Calif. wearing oversize Government-issue coats as they strolled the base yesterday. The temperatures—in the 60's and 50's—are much lower than in Vietnam.

them carrying their belongings in fishing nets, who came barefooted in black pajama-like clothes.

The Pioneer also carried an elite group of passengers, headed by Tran Van Lam, a

former president of the South Vietnamese Senate who signed the 1972 Paris agreement. Others included a former Foreign Minister, high police officials and the former director of Tan Son Nhut airport.