

Refugees Reported Yearning for Home

Camp Pendleton

Some refugees in the capacity crowd at this giant Marine Corps base are desperately homesick and worried about an uncertain future to the point of suicide, a Vietnamese doctor reported yesterday.

Dr. Hoang Van Duc, 50, is practicing medicine in Camp 4, a tent city of 1800 refugees, many of whom yearn for their homeland.

"If a plane were to leave for Saigon today half this camp would be empty," he said.

The waiting period — as long as two weeks — before the refugees can be cleared to settle down in other areas is stressful, he said.

"There is much despair here," Duc reported. "They are anxious about everything. They are anxious about their status, anxious about jobs. They are anxious about losing their identities."

Resentment among some

refugees about their former Saigon leaders combined with worry over fragmented families and the uncertain future may lead some to suicide, he said.

"We must devise some form of psychotherapy," he explained. "They must accept reality."

Security checks and checks by the Health, Education and Welfare Department on refugees have slowed the process of releasing them.

One HEW official said some "undesirables" have turned up such as prostitutes, and black marketeers. Some politicians charged with or suspected of corruption also have been identified in the processing, he said.

By yesterday morning, 25,890 refugees had arrived here and 7244 had been processed and sent on to their eventual destinations.

Still in camp are 18,646 people.

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