

Processing of Refugees Speeded Up

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Special to The New York Times

FORT INDIANTOWN GAP, Pa., May 30—As the third contingent of Indochinese refugees began arriving here today, the civilian machinery to prepare them for eventual status as resident aliens was gathering speed.

By last night, ^{26 MAY} all the 519 South Vietnamese who were brought here Wednesday directly from Guam had completed their preliminary processing. The 576 others who arrived yesterday were moving through the processing pipeline today at a pace of 100 persons every two hours. Half of the time was consumed in the laborious completion of alien registration forms.

The rest of the processing—immunization and blood tests, the assignment of Social Security numbers and biographical interviews to determine what, if any, skills or English a refugee had—was quick.

After that, everything passed into the hands of Volag, the magical acronym that the Indiantown Gap refugees have quickly learned, and then there was an abrupt halt.

Volag stands for Volunteer Agencies, the church and international refugee organizations

that will complete the final complex procedure of "mating" refugee families with American sponsors who have agreed to assume the responsibility of finding them housing, food, clothing and a job.

Many of the military and Federal officials at Indiantown Gap have had some experience in handling Indochinese refugees at the three other reception camps in the United States, and the operation here has profited from that.

Yesterday, seven Vietnamese refugees who are fluent in English were flown here from Camp Pendleton, Calif., to hasten the movement through the processing phases.

Luu Ngoe Thanh, a former embassy employe in Da Nang, volunteered to come to Indiantown Gap while his wife and four children, two brothers, three sisters and nephew remained at Fort Chaffee, Ark.

Mr. Thanh was moving among the desks of immigration officers in the damp old headquarters building, stopping for a few moments to clear up some puzzling aspect of a complex interview.

Agencies Better Staffed

"Much quicker here," said Mr. Thanh, who had gone through the sketchy processing at Subic Bay in the Philippines and cleared the first round at Camp Pendleton.

The Federal agencies handling the processing here are better staffed. Where there were only five immigration officers present in the early phases of staging on Guam, more than 100 officers and clerks are working here.

Many of the first 500 refugees at Indiantown Gap had completed a preliminary security form on Guam. Some of these forms have already passed through a computer in Washington, and 50 of the first group have received security clearances.

More than half of the adults and children who arrived Wednesday have completed immunization.

But before any of the refugees can leave they will have to have a security clearance indicating that they are not criminals, drug addicts or enemy agents.

Then they will have to satisfy

an immigration officer that they have a bona fide sponsor and a job or enough money (at least \$4,000 for each member of the family) to sustain them until they find work.

In the meantime, all they can do is sit here among the World War II barracks, play soccer or attend English classes, which are scheduled to begin Sunday.

Today, the cumbersome machinery through which sponsors are identified and Indochinese families are found who fit the requests of the sponsors was beginning to function.

Holding up an inch-thick portfolio, Andrea Perry, the Health, Education and Welfare Department official who is coordinating the work of the Volag groups here, said:

"There are more than 10,000 sponsors listed in here, and my telephone has been ringing all morning with calls from people offering sponsorship. So there is some tangible hope that some of these people here can be brought together with the right sponsors for them. But it will not be quick, nor will it be easy to do that."

As the pace of refugee movement from Guam and Subic Bay increased, four more planes carrying 750 refugees arrived today. Among them were 450 Cambodians, the first large contingent to reach the United States.

They have been assigned to a barracks area separated from the Vietnamese area. The two ethnic groups speak different languages and in Indochina had little affection for each other.

The arrival of the Cambodians has added another problem—translation. All of the signs in the barracks and mess halls were in Vietnamese, and the Army was busy today changing those in the Cambodian area.

Some signs that they changed must be changed again. One sign, read: "Please do not throw paper diapers or sanitary napkins in the toilets."

Instead, the sign read: "Please do not throw your babies in the toilets."

The Indiantown Gap camp got its first new American citizen early today. Jennifer Lynn was born early this morning to Mrs. Tran Dung Kim.