

# Pressure Grows for

By Leroy Arons

Washington Post Staff Writer

CAMP PENDLETON, Calif.

—The Vietnamese refugee settlement here will close down by mid-October, heightening pressures to find sponsors for more than 19,000 refugees here or coming to the installation.

Nicholas G. W. Thorne, State Department representative in charge of the Pendleton operation, registered his concern with the decelerating of refugee placement, but denied rumors of tension between government officials and voluntary agencies responsible for placing refugees.

The rate of refugee departures has slipped steadily in recent weeks, from roughly 2,000 a week in July to around 1,500 a week in August. There are currently 16,000 refugees at Pendleton, with about 3,000 more expected from Hong Kong, the last of the overseas centers.

At that, assuming it does not decline further, there would be about 4,000 unplaced refugees by mid-October, when Pendleton is scheduled to close down the operation because of chilly weather. Thorne said those remaining would probably be transferred to Ft. Chaffee, Ark., largest of the refugee encampments, with 21,000.

Last month, the federal government's Inter-Agency Task Force for Indochina Refugees announced that the Chaffee installation would be the only

one of the refugee camps—including Pendleton, Indiantown Gap, Pa., and Eglin Air Force Base, Fla.—to continue operations during the winter. Chaffee is the only refugee installation with heated barracks.

"Sponsors clearly are not coming forward fast enough to clear this camp (Pendleton) out by the time we have to close," Thorne said. But he added that the eight voluntary agencies charged with finding sponsors and placing refugees, are "doing very well."

Other sources, however, reported tensions here between representatives of the inter-agency task force and the voluntary agencies, particularly the U.C. Catholic Conference, which is handling 60 per cent of the refugee cases.

"I feel the State Department role is to expedite movement of refugees in an effective manner," said one source, "but we haven't put any pressure on the voluntary agencies. We give them complete freedom. And they are slow and inefficient. The USCC has more than 100 people on their list who are here for more than 90 days. They allow refugees to turn down sponsors again and again. What is their logic in holding people in camp?"

Vincent Battaglia, the chief USCC representative here, responded: "The State Department is interested in statistics. We're interested in proper settlements. There's no reason we have to rush out a difficult

case just so we can say there's no case here for more than 30 or 45 days."

Battaglia said his agency had placed 10,000 refugees out of Pendleton since the beginning of May. "I have never seen a program move so fast," he added.

"It used to take a year to two years, as in the case of the displaced persons after World War II."

Battaglia said most of the 107 people on USCC rolls since May have turned down sponsors. "We've put the screws on them," he said. "Some are satisfied staying here; they start to get used to the camp. We're trying to push them out."

Thorne said about 2,000 refugees have chosen to stay in camp, most of whom are waiting to reunite with other family members. About 10 per cent of the 2,000, he said, are simply fearful of going out into the world.

Some refugees do not want to go to cold climates. Others, with large families, are reluctant to split up. Le Quang Anh, a former bandleader in Saigon, is one of these. He left Vietnam on a fishing boat with 76 relatives. He still has 15 with him, including his wife, several children and his 5-year-old mother.

Said Anh, who has been here since June, "I am prepared to split up, if necessary. But I would hope we all could go to the same city. Maybe I will go out first myself, get a job, and then send for the others."

Anh said he had already turned down one sponsor who was unwilling to take the entire group. He is registered with USCC, which he says is "too slow." But, he added,

# Viet Refugees

"people who get out say that although they are slow, most of those who go through USCC are satisfied."

There have been reports of refugees not getting along with sponsors, or sponsors not being able to sustain their support. Voluntary agencies are expected to follow up and relocate such cases, called "breakdowns" by officials.

Many of the refugees seem to wind up on welfare rolls in some form or another. In California, the largest refugee state with 15,000, nearly half of those settled as of mid-July were receiving some form of public assistance.

All in all, Thorne maintained, the resettlement effort is "a damn good program." He noted that, nationwide, 72,000

*Special correspondent Robert Joffe assisted in this report.*

## **2 Indicted in Death Of Vietnam Orphan**

CONYERS, Ga., Aug. 9 (AP) —A grand jury has indicted a Conyers couple on charges of

murder and cruelty to a child in the death of 9-month-old Nguyen Thi, a Vietnamese orphan who had been staying with them.

The Rockdale County sheriff's department said Catherine Elaine Maltbie, 22, and Richard William Maltbie, 25, were released Friday after posting bonds of \$10,000 each in the girl's death July 11.

The baby died at Eggleston Hospital for children in Atlanta after being unconscious 12 days. An autopsy revealed massive head injuries, a broken collar bone and other injuries.

A county investigator quoted Mrs. Maltbie as saying she left little Nguyen in a high chair while she took a shower and that when she returned she found the baby on the floor.

The child had been staying at the Maltbie home since April when she was brought to the United States from a South Vietnamese orphanage. The couple's attorney said they had supported Nguyen Thi for six months while she was in the orphanage.