

U.S. Pullout of G.I.'s In Thailand Complete

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BANGKOK, Thailand, July 20 —The United States completed its military withdrawal from Thailand today, ending a 26-year military presence here.

The "designated" last American combat soldier in mainland Southeast Asia, George Leroy Davis, a 40-year-old Air Force master sergeant from Cincinnati, boarded a Cathay Pacific flight to Hong Kong at 10:30 A.M. with his wife and two children.

At the same time, the Military Assistance Command Thailand, established by an agreement on Oct. 17, 1950, ceased to exist.

According to American military estimates, the United States left behind nearly \$400 million fixed emplacements, ranging from the U Taphao Air Base and Sattahip Naval Station of the Gulf of Siam to radio and communications equipment that will be operated by the Thai military.

Tomorrow, Gen. Harry C. Aderholt, who headed both the Military Assistance Command and the advisory forces, will also leave. But the general, who retires next month, plans to return this fall. He has reportedly accepted a vice presidency with a Thai charter airline, Air Siam.

250 Americans Stay

About 250 American military advisers, operating under the continuing military-aid agreement, remained in Thailand today, the deadline set three months ago by the Thai Government for the American withdrawal.

American officials said that the number of Americans who administer military assistance would remain somewhat below the Thai-imposed ceiling of 270. At Thailand's request the last combat troops left last fall.

Negotiations are continuing on a number of technical points involving the turnover. They are expected to lead to the Thais permitting the United States to use the Takli Air Force Base, which the Americans built as a refueling stop for flights between the Philippines and the Ditgo Garcia base in the Indian Ocean.

Foreign Minister Phichai Rat-

takul said recently that this base would be used only for "emergencies." In fact, the United States reportedly has already sounded out Singapore on allowing stopovers there instead, and Singapore is said to be amendable.

The negotiations with Thailand also involve the sale of 15,000 tons of ammunition now stored at Korat in northeastern Thailand. While no price has been agreed upon, the figure is likely to be about \$45 million. Of course Thailand would prefer that the United States donate the ammunition.

The United States is also reported training Thais to operate the seismic station at Chiangmai used to monitor Chinese and Soviet underground nuclear tests. The information would be passed to American authorities.

Some radio monitoring activities by Thailand are still reported continuing at the secret electronic espionage station at Ramasun. However, all classified equipment and the 4,000 Americans who operated the sophisticated National Security Agency decoding and monitoring operations there during the Indochina war are said to have been withdrawn. The facility was officially closed June 20.

The Ramasun station was a principal cause of the Thai decision March 20 to break off talks with the United States over a residual presence and to order all troops withdrawn within four months.

At that time the United States had sought to retain 3,000 soldiers in the country, largely to operate Ramasun. But Thailand was faced with many pressures. The new Communist governments of Indochina on her borders were demanding an end to the American operations here. It was Thai soil that served as the springboard for the American bombing of Indochina at the height of the war.

Within Thailand, the vocal left wing was also pressing for an end to the American presence. It was the realization that Thailand would receive little in return for the continued American operations here —

particularly from the secret data at Ramasun—that forced the then Prime Minister, Kukrit Pramoj, to make the decision for the pullout.

Thus far, the withdrawal has defused the left-wing and student demonstrations that had been a Thai fixture.

There has been a growing fear among moderates and right-wingers, including some of the military, that Thailand may not be able to counter threats from her Communist neighbors without the American military umbrella.

A Persistent Theme

This has been a persistent theme throughout the region since the end of the Vietnam war more than a year ago, a fear that has begun to affect broad spectrums of society and the government.

Last night, Prime Minister Seni Pramoj, Foreign Minister Phichai, and the Supreme Commander, Adm. Sa-Nga Chaloyu, went on nationwide television to calm these fears.

Both the Supreme Commander and the Foreign Minister asserted that the American troops had been in Thailand not to protect Thai territory but to press the war in Vietnam.

"The Vietnam war is over now and, so, it is not necessary for them to remain here," Mr. Phichai said.

And there was none of the civil disorder today that had been predicted for weeks as the deadline for the withdrawal approached.

About 1,000 university students held a quiet rally near downtown Bangkok but there were none of the pro-American and anti-American clashes that had marked much of the earlier period of negotiations between Thailand and the United States.

The scene today at Bangkok's Non Muang Airport was a



Associated Press

Master Sergeant George L. Davis of the Air Force checks baggage at Bangkok Airport

familiar one to those who have followed the decline of the American presence in Asia and the accelerating withdrawal from Thailand.

At the height of the American presence in 1969, 48,000 American troops manned 93 installations. Today 30 servicemen and their families boarded flights to Hong Kong and Europe on the way home. Many wore the colorful Thai silk shirts and were draped with garlands of

farewell flowers from their Thai friends.

"I would have liked to stay a little bit longer," Sergeant Davis said. "These people could use our help and expertise. But there are a lot of things I'll miss here. The food sellers who ride by your house calling out their wares. It's the first thing you hear in the morning." He paused, glanced at his wife and added. "Maybe I'll save my baht and come back some day, as a tourist."