

Thai HQ for U.S. Warplanes

Washington

Headquarters for all United States air operations in Southeast Asia will be shifted to a remote base in Thailand after the withdrawal of American troops from South Vietnam, the Pentagon announced yesterday.

Defense Department spokesman Jerry W. Friedheim said Nakorn Phanom, a Thai base near the Laotian border, will serve as the new headquarters for General John Vogt, who will command the new U.S. Support Activities Group (USSAG).

Vogt, now head of the Seventh Air Force and responsible for all U.S. air operations in Indochina, will move onto the Thai base once the U.S. command in Saigon is disbanded and all troops are withdrawn by March 27 under terms of the Paris peace agreement.

Nakorn Phanom, will also serve as headquarters for the Joint Casualty Resolution Center (JCRC) which will be responsible for searching for the missing in action.

Friedheim said USSAG will "control such supporting air activities as may be required" in Southeast Asia and also "provide operation control and maximum support for the mission for the JCRC."

Despite the Vietnam cease-fire, the U.S. is conducting air attacks against Communist forces in Laos and Cambodia. Friedheim said these attacks would be controlled from the new headquarters unless an Indochina-wide cease-fire goes into effect.

Officials said about 1000

men will be assigned to the new headquarters.

Associated Press