

**7769 Remain**

# Still More GIs Leave Vietnam

**Saigon**

American troop strength in Vietnam diminished some more yesterday.

Brigadier General John A. Wickham Jr., deputy chief of the U.S. delegation to the four - party Joint Military Commission, told the other senior representatives on the peacekeeping group that American strength in Vietnam has fallen to 7769 from a level of 23,516 troops in the country at the time the cease - fire went into effect on January 28.

The U.S. said it has withdrawn 15,747 troops in the first six weeks, or more than 66 per cent of its forces here when the truce went into effect, in compliance with the peace agreement.

A spokesman for the U.S. delegation said that other allies, mainly South Korea, have withdrawn 27,490 troops of the 35,516 they had in Vietnam at the start of the cease-fire. This leaves 8026 allied troops to be withdrawn by the March 28 deadline.

The U.S. spokesman added that the allied withdrawal rate is 77 per cent, while the over-all withdrawal of allied plus American troops is 73.7 per cent.

Under terms of the peace agreement, U.S. prisoners are to be released at the same rate that American and other foreign allied troops are withdrawn from Vietnam.

The Communist side has released 299 American prisoners, a little more than 50 per cent of the number it held at the time of the cease-fire.

To approach a 75 per cent completion mark that would match the troop withdrawal rate, the other side would have to free half the 286 American prisoners it still holds.

Vietnamese prisoner exchanges, running more than a week behind schedule, are continuing. The Saigon government released another 997 POWs in northernmost Quang Tri Province yesterday.

*Associated Press*