



UPI Telephoto

North Vietnamese and Viet Cong officers (right) took photos of the big American troop withdrawal

## Jubilant GIs on Way Home

# U.S. Starts Final Viet Pullout

### Saigon

Under the gaze of camera-snapping Viet Cong and North Vietnamese observers, a group of jubilant American GIs flew home yesterday to begin the final withdrawal of U.S. troops of Vietnam.

A dozen North Vietnamese and Provisional Revolutionary Government delegates to the Joint Military Commission were at the flight line. They jockeyed with photographers for pictures of the first Americans

to fly home in the massive three-day airlift.

"I wonder if any of them want to come with us. We've got a few extra seats on the plane," said Navy Lieutenant James Holbach of Glen Burnie, Md., as he waited to board a homebound U.S. Air Force C-141 transport.

There didn't appear to be any takers, although a PRG and a North Vietnamese delegate boarded the aircraft to make a final head count.

"Look at our new allies," whispered Major Ed Sillis of

Atlanta, Ga., as he watched the stern-faced Vietnamese Communists watching him. "I feel great. I've been waiting for this moment for a long time."

Eleven transports, military and commercial, carried 936 American troops from Saigon's Tan Son Nhut air base. Another 1800 troops are scheduled to leave today and the final 2500 tomorrow.

The final withdrawal of American troops was timed to the release of the final group of POWs. The first

American plane of home-bound GIs left Saigon about an hour after 32 American prisoners were released by the Viet Cong at Hanoi's Gia Lam airport.

Associated Press