

U.S. Officially Ends Vietnam Military Role

Associated Press

Saigon

The U.S. Command officially ends more than a decade of military intervention in Vietnam today, folding its colors and sending its last 2500 men to other bases.

The U.S. failed in eleventh-hour secret negotiations with Hanoi to keep alive the four-party Joint Military

Commission and prolong the American military presence. the North Vietnamese reported.

U.S. sources said Washington had promised Canada to press for an extension of the commission in return for a guarantee that Canada would remain as a member of the International Commis-

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sion of Control and Supervision.

Only hours before the negotiations collapsed, Canada announced a decision to stay on the supervisory commission for an additional 60 days and urged "greater cooperation" among the four member nations: Indonesia, Hungary, Poland and Canada.

The last American troops were leaving Vietnam virtually around the clock. Planes took off from Saigon's Tan Son Nhut air base from midnight on. The last flight was due out by dusk today, officially ending the role of the U.S. Command that once had half a million American soldiers under its orders.

Some troops were simply transferred to U.S. bases in Thailand, where the U.S. will continue to maintain a strong air arm to discourage any mass offensive in South Vietnam by the North Vietnamese.

The Pentagon lists 48,000

American troops in Thailand and 20,000 on Guam. The U.S. has 600 bombers and fighter-bombers at bases in Thailand and Guam. Another 30,000 American servicemen are aboard Seventh Fleet ships off Vietnam.

At its peak in April, 1969, American troop strength in Vietnam grew to 543,000 men. In June, 1969, President Nixon began phased withdrawals.

By the time Americans stopped participating in the fighting, nearly 46,000 had died on Vietnam battlefields.

The "Pentagon East" military headquarters on Tan Son Nhut air base will be taken over by the Defense Attache Office under the U.S. Embassy. It will have a staff of 50 military attaches and 1200 civilians. The only other U.S. troops remaining in Vietnam will be 159 Marine guards at the U.S. Embassy.

The 825-man North Vietnamese and U.S. delegation to the four-party Joint Military Commission are to pull out tomorrow and Saturday.