

Truce Team Grounds Its Helicopters

United Press

Saigon

The truce team today suspended all helicopter flights of cease-fire control missions as a result of shooting attacks yesterday on two helicopters.

One chopper apparently was destroyed but there were no injuries.

"The International Commission for Control and Supervision has suspended all ICCS helicopter flights until further notice . . ." an ICCS spokesman said.

About 30 Air America helicopters have been flying for the ICCS under contract. They have American pilots.

RISK

Canada meanwhile threatened to pull out of the peace commission rather than risk lives for a task "not worth the effort."

In Ottawa, Canadian External Affairs Minister Mitchell Sharp told parliament that unless the situation in Vietnam "improves very substantially" Canada will withdraw from the four-nation peace-keeping force at the end of June.

A Canadian general said yesterday reports from witnesses indicate the helicop-

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HELICOPTERS

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ter which crashed Saturday over Communist-held territory was blown out of the sky by a heat-seeking missile and was not involved in an "accident" as claimed by the Viet Cong.

DUTY

The nine victims of the crash Saturday included two American crewmen as well as four members of the ICCS, two Viet Cong and a Filipino. The ICCS victims were the first commission members killed on duty since the cease-fire became effective January 28.

The Viet Cong said Sunday the crash of the ICCS helicopter was the result of an accident that occurred after the aircraft deviated from its assigned air corridor. The helicopter accompanying it was reported to have landed at the crash site outside Lao Bao, a village near the Laotian border in the northern section of South Vietnam.

Major General Duncan McAlpine, chief of the Canadian military delegation to the ICCS, said preliminary reports showed one of the ICCS helicopter was hit by a missile and the other was

shot up by Communist ground units.

HIT

McAlpine said the second helicopter also was hit and damaged so badly it was forced to land and could not be flown out.

The Canadian said it has not yet been determined whether the helicopters were flying within the air corridor set up by the Communists or had gone off course, as the Viet Cong said.

The two helicopters fired upon in South Vietnam yesterday belonged to the Joint Military Commission (JMC) and carried both South Vietnamese and Viet Cong passengers from the two-party JMC. There were conflicting reports about the damage caused by the firing.

Lieutenant Colonel Le Trung Hien, the South Vietnamese command spokesman, said one of the two helicopters was hit by six bullets and then both landed near Vi Thanh, 98 miles southwest of Saigon. Other military sources, however, said the helicopter that took the fire was destroyed.

Hien and the military sources said there were no casualties.