

Pre-Truce POWs Freed

Saigon

One long chapter of the Vietnam war ended yesterday with the release of the last prisoners officially listed as having been captured before the ceasefire of January, 1973.

Culminating four weeks of exchanges, the South Vietnamese government announced that it had flown 121 prisoners to Loc Ninh, a Viet Cong administrative capital, 75 miles north of Saigon.

This brought to 31,961 the total number of prisoners released by the government since the signing of the Paris agreement. Of these, 26,880 were soldiers and 5081 were civilians. According to government figures, 248 soldiers and 211 civilians chose to stay on the Saigon side.

The Viet Cong have released 5942 prisoners, of whom 606 were civilians and 5336 were soldiers.

This exhausted the official lists, but many more men and women remain in prison, for according to officials on both sides, as many people have been captured since the cease-fire as have been released.

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