

117A

W	FILE	Ref	SUBJ.
JAN 74	DATE	SUB-CAT.	

~~Ref~~

41

Filmstrip 33

like this refugee camp in Quang Ngai. Each tent holds about 100 people, or one hamlet.

SLIDE

SOURCE: AFSC, International Service Division, David Perry. CAPTION: Quang Ngai Refugee Camps, February 1973

TEXT

The refugee camp shown lies not far from Quang Ngai City, where the AFSC medical center is located. Staff from the center visited it often. They reported to NARMIC that the people are crowded into large tents, each of which holds the entire population of one hamlet, averaging about 100 people.



Quang Ngai has long been the target of intense pacification efforts (see p. 57 top). This U.S. Army photo shows:

"A search and destroy mission...in the vil-lages and hamlets around the Duc Pho area, Quang Ngai province, 320 miles northeast of Saigon. Two Viet Cong sus-pects walk into the village with their hands in the air after being captured by mem-bers of Co. B."

4-9 September 1967

Frances Fitzgerald, author of Fire in the Lake, visited this camp and others in Quang Ngai province. She reported:

CAMBRIDGE, Mass.—Not far from Quang Ngai City the Muc Tien refugee camp lies on a sandspit on a river. Some 20,000 people live in the congeries of tents and tin-roofed shacks, each tent sheltering ten or more families, and each family with only the space for a bed and a bundle of belongings.

In April the heat is intense, and the breezes that bring some relief sweep up sand and lodge it in cooking pots, clothing and childrens' runny noses. Still, even the heat of the dry season is preferable to the floods of the monsoon. Since last November the Americans at regional headquarters have been planning to improve camp conditions, but owing to the usual bureaucratic delays and the usual corruption, the camp has remained much as it was a year ago. The tents are crowded all day long. Bands of children run and shriek in the alleyways while the women and old people simply sit and stare out through the barbed wire. For there is nothing to do. Jobs are scarce, and there is no land to cultivate. People simply sit and wait for the occasional hand-out of rice, salt and cooking oil.

Left to themselves, they would leave the camp and walk the ten or fifteen kilometers to the site of their old villages. But the Saigon authorities will not let them since they come from an area not fully controlled by the Thieu Government. The police and village officials regard the people with some suspicion, believing them to be "dangerous elements" or "VC sympathizers." They may be right, for the camp, as it happens, contains the people of Son My village and the survivors of the My Lai massacre.

...

According to official figures there are currently some 650,000 people in the South Vietnamese refugee camps. The professed aim of the Nixon Administration—is in line with its work ethic—is to rid itself of these welfare cases and resettle all the refugees before the end of the year. But American officials say that the task cannot be completed since the Thieu regime (supported by the United States) will not, if it can help it, permit those refugees who come from P.R.G. (Provisional Revolutionary Government) or contested areas to return to their home

villages. The U.S. and the Saigon regime have other plans for these people who make up a significant proportion of the camp population, but none of them seems likely to succeed. For those people who come from areas conceded to the P.R.G. (such as the northern third of Quang Tri Province), Saigon proposes to create new villages on undeveloped land that it can militarily control.

In the past, however, the Government has proved incapable of planning or implementing such projects to the satisfaction of even those few thousand people willing to abandon all hope of returning home. The resettlement of hundreds of thousands of probably reluctant people would offer problems of a new order of magnitude. As for those refugees who, like the people of My Lai, come from contested areas, the Saigon Government plan is to assert military control over their villages, building new outposts or reinforcing old ones and obliging the people to build concentrated settlements—much like the old Strategic Hamlets—under the guns of the outposts.

(Frances Fitzgerald, "How it is Now With the People of My Lai," New York Times, 5/4/73, p. 37)

A brief review of Quang Ngai province is given in Note 40. The conditions of refugees in camps in Quang Ngai are typical of camps all over South Vietnam. See Notes 42 and 114-15.

42

Filmstrip 34

The U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Refugees reports that after the Peace Agreement the number of people driven each day from their homes doubled. Since the war began, over half the people of South Vietnam have been made refugees.

SLIDE

SOURCE: U.S. Army Photo CC 45835. CAPTION: SAIGON, REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM. Vietnamese civilians evacuate their homes as members of Co A, 30th Ranger Bn, move in on the Viet Cong terrorists during the Lunar New Year holidays. Photo by SP5 James Newlin, 221st Sig Co (Pic) 31 January 1968

TEXT

"By official count, some 213,400 new refugees were generated during the first 3 weeks of the cease-fire. This is a daily average of more than 10,000 -- twice the daily average during the 1972 North Vietnamese offensive." (Senator Edward Kennedy presenting a report of the Subcommittee on Refugees, Congressional Record, 2/28/73, p. S 3608)

Wells Klein, a member of the Kennedy Study Mission to South Vietnam in March 1973, reported to the Subcommittee on Refugees the following statistics:

Refugees: Surely the most enduring legacy of the Vietnam war will be its cumulative impact on the lives and the social structure of the people of South Vietnam. Over half of South Vietnam's estimated population of 18 million people have been forced to move as refugees, often many times over, since the war escalated in late 1964 and early 1965. As table I indicates, the cumulative total of refugees since 1964-65 now stands at 10,369,700.

TABLE I: STATISTICAL SUMMARY OF REFUGEE AND WAR VICTIM MOVEMENT IN SOUTH VIETNAM, 1965-73

1. Newly registered refugees, by official GVN/USAID count:		
1965	772,000	
1966	906,000	
1967	483,000	
1968	491,000	
1969	560,000	
1970	129,000	
Registered in 1970, but generated earlier	281,000	
1971	136,000	
1972	1,320,000	
1973 (as of July 1st)	713,700	
Total	5,809,700	
2. Cambodian repatriates, ethnic Vietnamese expelled from Cambodia in 1970		210,000
3. Estimated casualty and damage claimants, including some 1 million temporarily displaced during Tet and May 1969 offensives		1,680,000
4. Displaced persons in PRG controlled areas and other nonregistered refugees from the 1972 offensive		700,000
5. Estimated nonregistered refugees, including some 1 million in Saigon ineligible to register as refugees since 1964		2,000,000
Cumulative total since 1965		10,369,700

How many of these refugees are still in refugee status is a matter of definition as well as numerical count. At the time of our visit in March of this year there were 659,600 refugees officially acknowledged to be in temporary refugee sites with another several hundred thousand estimated in "out of camp" situations. As table III documents, nearly half a million refugees are still in officially identified camp locations.

As always, the most accurate index of conditions in the countryside, of the level of conflict and violence, is the number of refugees fleeing the countryside and the number of civilian war casualties filling hospital wards. By this measure, the daily average of new refugees during the study mission's visit—some 6,000 a day—resembles the level of violence during last year's offensive...

TABLE III: VIETNAM REFUGEES IN IDENTIFIED LOCATIONS—STATUS ON JUNE 14, 1973

Mr. I:		Mr. III:	
Thua Thien (including Hue).....	47,400	Phuoc Long.....	5,200
Quang Nam.....	11,000	Long Khanh.....	4,400
Quang Tin.....	18,500	Bien Hoa.....	400
Quang Ngai.....	44,100	Binh Duong.....	35,800
Danang.....	239,200	Binh Long.....	200
Total.....	360,200	Total.....	46,000
Mr. II:		Mr. IV:	
Binh Dinh.....	80,400	Chau Doc.....	8,400
Darlac.....	3,100	Total.....	521,000
Kontum.....	12,000		
Pleiku.....	6,600		
Khanh Hoa (including Nha Trang).....	0		
Phu Yen.....	4,300		
Total.....	106,400		

Note.—This chart shows provinces where refugees have been accounted for in identified locations, which is not necessarily where they were generated.

(Hearings on War Victims in South Vietnam,
pp. 8-9; emphasis added)

In February 1973, former Marine sergeant John Naveau went to Vietnam as an employee of Lear Siegler Inc. (See Note 26.) He visited a refugee camp near Saigon and described it in an interview with Winter Soldier upon his return in August 1973:

I wouldn't call those camps "refugee" camps. I would call them camps for committing genocide. I visited a camp near Bear Cat, just outside Saigon. There were 28,000 people crammed into this barbed wire trap, which had no shade or trees or any kind of vegetation. This means being directly exposed to the sun in 100 degree weather. There was no running water there for these people. The Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) would truck in water in rusty 50 gallon drums which would be half empty. Plus, the people only get 5 piastres a day for food, not enough to even buy rice for two meals. It was incredible, considering that American tax money paid for these camps. I'm not that young and I can remember the concentration camps of Nazi Germany.

I discovered that an average of 20 people a day die at this camp from starvation and thirst. These are the people Thieu is supposedly saving from the "communist" blood-bath. I was really shocked to find an 8 year old girl who had starved to death in one of the huts. She had been lying there for hours because no one knew what to do. It's almost become normal at these camps to find dead people lying around. And I think, "Jesus Christ, the American people are paying for this but they think they're not involved."

On top of these problems, the people at the camps face two other dangers. If they try to return to their farms, they are afraid of being blown to bits from all the left-over ordnance that we dropped there. I saw a couple of Vietnamese who had been snuffed by unexploded mines or bombs when they tried to plow their rice fields. Plus, the kids here don't know what mines look like and start playing around with them only to go up in smoke.

For other descriptions of conditions in refugee and resettlement camps, see Notes 41 and 114-115.

Not all of the people displaced by bombing and shelling have moved to refugee camps. The total number of 521,000 refugees as of June 14, 1973 reported by the Senate Subcommittee on Refugees reflects only those in "identified locations" where refugees have registered and are receiving government assistance. As Wells Klein, of the Kennedy Study Mission to South Vietnam, explained, "many other thousands of refugees remain in completely dependent status though their entitlement to benefits has expired and they are no longer reflected in refugee statistics. To put the case bluntly, refugee statistics bear little relationship to who has been displaced by the war or to what portion of the population is economically independent and viable...."

"In many parts of the country, ... the population has been totally displaced and strung out along the roads for physical security from both sides. This dislocation of population far exceeds anything reflected in any refugee statistics." (Hearings on War Victims in South Vietnam, p. 19-20)

Part of the discrepancy between actual numbers of refugees and GVN statistics comes from "resettlement" operations involving little more than changing the name of refugee camps or forced movement to new camps. (See Notes 114 - 115.)

Many other refugees never entered camps, but fled to the cities. Dr. James R. Dumpson, Dean of the School of Social Service at Fordham University and a member of the Kennedy Study Mission to South Vietnam, described their plight as follows:

However governments may define "war victims" or "war casualties," in my judgment those terms must include the great majority of civilians and the children of that nation. As one moves about Vietnam, from the DMZ to the depth of the Delta, one cannot escape the continuing plight of these war victims. In every city, in every provincial town and village, one sees, today, small groups of children moving about in groups, struggling to be free, to laugh and to play—to be carefree as children have a right to be, but struggling also to survive. The clothing they wear is threadbare; in many instances the children are naked. Some go unwashed; many are without shoes. Many if not all are deprived the basic essentials for healthy growth and development by any standards. As one observer described it, despite the gradual process of animalization, in their process to maintain a semblance of dignity, they are beautiful human beings. These are the children in Saigon and Danang and the urban centers of Vietnam. They have come to the urban centers with their mothers, many of whom have had to turn to prostitution and forced the children into the streets to fend for their own...

... Family life, as defined by Vietnamese standards is nonexistent for these children and their parents. Children, most of the children in Vietnam, have been amongst the most tragic victims of the Vietnam war...

... There are reports and one easily observes gangs of wandering youth in Saigon and other cities juvenile delinquency is and will continue to plague the cities and towns of Vietnam, and destroy the valuable human potential of so many of the delinquents as long as basic human needs are neglected, as long as opportunities are denied for meaningful participation in the social and material productivity of the country. The mushrooming of bars, "bar girls," and prostitutes, the strips of bars and cafes that developed outside military areas in all parts of the country—all of this cannot help but have left scars on

the fabric of Vietnamese family life.

One of the most dramatic developments in Vietnam and one that harbors almost unlimited potential for serious social disruption is the unattended, unplanned increase in urbanism. One need only recall that the Saigon/Cholon area in 1954 had less than 500,000 people. It now has an estimated population of more than two million. To a lesser degree but exhibiting the same growth clusters are the areas surrounding Hue, Danaug, Qui Nhon, Vung Tau, and others. Vietnam is experiencing the same inevitable development facing all nations of the world—the increasing flow of rural people into metropolitan areas seeking economic opportunities and higher standards of living. I do not share the view of some that this trend will be reversed now that the war is officially ended and that most new urban dwellers will return to the land. This influx has created a host of problems in housing, water supply, sewage and garbage disposal, traffic congestion, and fire hazards. Increases in family disorganization in health problems, in delinquency and in crime, are some of the indices of personal tragedy, of social systems failure, of rapid urbanization. They are the phenomena that gnaw at and seriously weaken if not destroy the social fabric of any nation.

(Hearings on War Victims in South Vietnam, pp. 16-18)