

By Beverly Deepe

SAIGON--For the first time in the Vietnam war, the number of correspondents working for foreign news media here has topped the 400 mark.

The U.S. military accrediting office here announced that as of July 2, 411 correspondents had been accredited <sup>By</sup> ~~to~~ the command to cover the war. The figure is expected to rise more in the near future. This figure includes foreign correspondents as well as Vietnamese correspondents working for foreign press media of all categories. American sergeants worked feverishly to accredit all incoming and resident correspondents by June 30, the deadline for re-accreditation.

"We've whipped out 1111 accreditations since January 1 of this year," one American sergeant explained. "And that's a lot of people." In some cases non-resident correspondents would be accredited more than once.

Vietnamese political developments and the bombing of the Hanoi and Haiphong petroleum storage areas brought an <sup>increase</sup> ~~influx~~ of correspondents into the country. Normal rotations and vacations also kept the Saigon press corps influx.

For Associated Press, George McArthur flew in from Manila when the American Consulate was burned in Hue on June 1, but has since returned home when the political situation de-escalated. Andy Borowiec, AP bureau chief in Geneva, is preparing to leave Vietnam shortly after a three-month fill-in for AP's vacationing Pulitzer Prize winner, Peter Arnett. Bob Tackman has arrived from London for a long tour here; Bob Gassaway, formerly in Texas, has increased the AP strength here. Photographer Horst Paas has returned from two months assignment in Indonesia.

For ABC, Roger Peterson has arrived from Chicago for a one-year tour and David Snell, also from Chicago, for a three-month tour. Elliott Bernstein has arrived from New York for temporary assignment.

Ron Steinman has replaced Jack Fern as bureau chief for HBO. Peter Hereford has taken over the CBS bureau, replacing Bob Allison.

John Fentress has arrived from Washington to head the new Time Magazine bureau, giving Southeast Asia chief Frank McCulloch opportunity to return to Hong Kong and cover other countries. Don Moser now heads the newly-established Life Magazine bureau.

Saigon newsmen hear AP's Milton Marmor is thinking about a vacation trip here...Eric Pace has arrived to replace New York Times' Neal Sheehan, who's returning to New York next month...Jack Steele of Washington has arrived for a three-month assignment for Scripps-Howard, replacing Walt Friedenbergh... Jack Foisie of the Los Angeles Times leaving in two weeks for home leave and then bureau chief-ship in Bangkok. He's to be replaced by Bill Tuohy, formerly of Newsweek, who's soon returning from home leave. Los Angeles Times' John Randolph, formerly of Tokyo, is also a new arrival.

John Hecklin, former director of USIS here in 1963 and author of "Mission in Torment," has arrived for brief assignment. He's associate editor of Fortune, which is doing a major Vietnam piece.

Washington Star's Dick Critchfield on brief vacation in Hong Kong...Black Star's Jim Pickorell has returned in good health after several bouts with malaria and other complications... Peter Chew of National Observer seen visiting U.S. Seabee camps during part of his visit. Richard Dudman has been in-country, representing St. Louis Post Dispatch. Wendell Merrick, formerly free-lancing, now in Hong Kong before assuming assignment here with U.S. News & World Report.



Harold Kaplan has returned to U.S.A. to serve as a deputy assistant Secretary of State--a fine promotion after a hectic tour year as press briefing officer for the U.S. Mission here. He's replaced by Jack Stuart, former press attache at New Delhi, who was introduced to the press at a Kaplan-sponsored reception in mid-June.

Deputy Ambassador William Porter in late June entertained selected members of the press corps at a reception to introduce Robert Komer, President Johnson's special assistant for Vietnam's Rural Development (Pacification) program. Some press correspondents expressed astonishment to see the Presidential assistant at the cocktail reception wearing combat fatigues and boots after rushing back from a day-long inspection trip in the Mekong Delta. One Vietnamese journalist bluntly complained to the President's envoy about the soaring Saigon inflation; an American correspondent complained to the Deputy Ambassador Porter that his direct-attribution press conferences on pacification were much more optimistic in Washington than his backgrounders to the Saigon press corps here.