

City's 2nd Vietnamese Family Arrives

By Darrell West

Richmond's second Vietnamese refugee family arrived here Wednesday under the sponsorship of the First English Lutheran Church.

The family, which includes a husband, wife and five children ranging in age from one month to seven years, was met at the Dayton airport by Russell Morgan, pastor of the church. They will live in the parsonage at 2701 East Main St. next to the church.

In addition, the Wayne Vincent family of the congregation is sponsoring a 22-year-old refugee, Hai Tran, a baker, and 24-year-old An Tran, a jeweler. An apartment has been furnished for them in Richmond.

Foremost among the needs of the family according to Morgan is employment for the 30-year-old husband, Thua Dinh Pham. He served 13 years in the South Vietnam Army, graduating from the Army Military Academy and rising to the rank of major in the psychological warfare unit

before being forced to leave South Vietnam April 29 by the advancing Viet Cong.

As part of his job he wrote columns and stories for Vietnamese newspapers in addition to supervising the men under his command. He earlier attended Saigon University for three years, studying business and math.

But Thua says that because of the differences between his country and the United States, he doesn't have any conception of what kind of job to look for. Eventually, he'd like to be employed in a business position so as to make use of his management experience.

Counting On Help

Morgan said he is counting on the people in his congregation to provide job opportunities for the refugees. The baker and the jeweler have already been employed. "If Thua can't find anything, we'll make something for him in the way of a job," Morgan promised.

The family escaped by fishing boat from their

home in the Soc Trang Province near the Mekong Delta region. Thua said the army fought for a day and a night after the Viet Cong attacked, giving families in the town time to escape.

As the boat was heading towards the South Vietnam Navy, which would take them to the U.S. Fleet, the Viet Cong started shelling their boat, using 81-millimeter mortar shells. Despite several close hits, the boat made it away from shore safely.

After stopovers in refugee camps in the Phillipines and Guam, Thua and his family entered the Indiantown Gap Army camp in Pennsylvania.

There they lived in army barracks, using one billet, the size of two rooms in an average house, for their family of seven. The government provided food and clothing, supplies the family needed since they left Vietnam with only the clothes on their backs.

Because Thua's wife, Nguon, was six and one-half months pregnant when she left her country, their permanent relocation outside the camp was delayed until after the baby was born.

Child Born

They were able to use a civilian medical center near the Army camp when their baby was born Aug. 8. The boy, named Jeam, is the only American citizen in the family.

At the camp they had the choice of four agencies with which to arrange a permanent relocation. Thua chose the Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, he said, because he was impressed with the way the organization operated.

Each Vietnamese family had to undergo an interview in which information on the size of the family, job experience and education was provided to

agency.

It was then the job of the agency to locate a sponsorship anywhere in the United States. Four locations were offered the Thua family, from which it chose the Richmond church.

As its half of the agreement, the church voted to supply the family with shelter, food and employment.

The two oldest children, seven-year-old Ngan Thuy and five-year-old Thuy, will start in the first grade and kindergarten, respectively, at Charles Elementary School Monday. Both speak some English, but only what they learned during four months at the Indiantown Gap camp. Neither of the two younger children, three-year-old Ngan Thy and two-year-old Thuyen, speak any English.

Since Thua and his family arrived in Richmond, the city's first Vietnamese family, sponsored by Earlham College, has visited them. By coincidence, one of the women in Richmond's first Vietnam family lived in the same camp barracks as Thua's family.

Thua said he has two brothers, two sisters and a