Mutiny at the Outposts of Empire

GI Resistance in the Vietnam Era

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Thirty years ago, the most powerful military colossus ever assembled, its triumphant legions spread throughout the world, committed an expeditionary force of its best troops to the Asian mainland. "The American Army of 1965," wrote an admiring historian, "was headstrong with confidence, sharply honed to a lethal fighting edge ... [and] eager to test its newly acquired wings of airmobility." [1] In other words, it felt invincible. Battalions dispatched to Indochina were told that the local communist guerrilla-bandits were politically isolated and would quickly succumb to their superior might, but instead they found themselves locked in desperate battle with a determined adversary enjoying massive popular support. This expeditionary force gradually became a gigantic field army of over half a million men, and the lightning war turned into a meat-grinder.

As America's involvement in Vietnam deepened, political and social turbulence at home reached proportions unimaginable in 1965, and the magnificent army started falling apart. Low morale and outright rebellion eroded its combat effectiveness, and the malaise began spreading beyond Southeast Asia to brigades garrisoning more vital imperial frontiers, especially Central Europe.

A startling development took place among the children of the men who dutifully fought the Second World War in theaters around the globe. Their conscripted sons came to see not Asian communists but the United States military machine as the real enemy.

Hundreds of thousands voted against the war with their feet by deserting before their hitches were up. Marines and soldiers murdered their officers. Sailors sabotaged powerful warships, and bomber pilots refused to fly missions.

Mutinies broke out on isolated jungle trails all over Vietnam, forcing troop leaders to "work it out" with the men. Stockades and brigs were rocked by uprisings. GI antiwar organizations and newspapers spontaneously proliferated at U.S. military bases worldwide as soldiers finished with their one-year tour in Vietnam spread the contagion.

The evidence indicates that troop rebellions–contrary to most conventional histories of the war–were not merely background blare to the central drama of decisions by politicians and generals. They were instead a critical factor that hindered the expeditionary army's fighting ability, and the snowballing process of decay hastened American withdrawal from the battlefield.

After the U.S. invasion of South Vietnam, draft resistance was the first activity directed against the war effort. Many of those successfully conscripted, though, also became a problem for the armed forces as they learned about the military and the war through experience. Desertion skyrocketed during peak years of the ground fighting, steadily rising from a rate of 15 incidents per thousand in the 1966 Army to a staggering 74 per thousand by 1971. [2]

This outdid even the Second World War maximum of 63 per thousand during the grueling land combat of 1944. (Army generals found this figure so upsetting that, as an example to others, they actually carried out the firing squad execution in France of one unlucky GI from Detroit who had gone over the hill.) It should be noted that unlike

World War II, most Vietnam-era desertions took place away from the combat zone, indicating disgust rather than fear as a primary motivating factor.

Abbie Hoffman once quipped at a demonstration outside the gates of Fort Meade, Maryland, "Behind every GI haircut lies a Samson." [3] By 1967, the peace movement recognized the immense value of antiwar feeling in the ranks, and intensified organizing efforts.

So-called GI coffeehouses were set up by activists outside military posts in the U.S., providing a space where soldiers and civilians could congregate free of the repressive atmosphere that prevailed on-base. These establishments came under legal attack from both military and local city officials. Coffeehouse organizers responded with a "Summer of Support" project in 1968, successfully raising funds to keep the soldier meeting places open.

That year, one could realize the increasing magnitude of military dissent through the nascent GI "underground" press which eventually grew to include hundreds of papers. The most famous of these, *FTA* (short for "Free The Army," but usually translated as a more coarse comment on soldiering), was first published in 1968 at Fort Knox, Kentucky. *The Bond*, from New York City, became the voice of the influential American Servicemen's Union and during the big years of the ground war, this paper was distributed to tens of thousands of GIs worldwide.

Stories revealing on-base incidents that army control kept from the civilian press began to appear in these soldier newspapers. A 1967 *Bond* article, for example, described rioting that erupted at Fort Hood, Texas, when the 198th Infantry Brigade vented its unhappiness at receiving Vietnam orders. [4]

Another story, published during the 1968 Tet Offensive, reported, "In a highly significant event not noted by the national press, GIs at Fort Jackson, S.C., tried to hold a meeting on the post against the war, but the MPs broke it up...Their bitterness is certainly shared by soldiers at other bases." [5]

The civilian antiwar movement's enthusiasm for military resistance had by 1969 reached a point where some teenage members of the Young Socialist Alliance were allowing themselves to be drafted without resistance when they came of age, then immediately agitating from within upon induction. [6]

Over There

It was in Southeast Asia, though, where military units really began to unravel. Fragging, the deliberate murder of unpopular officers and noncommissioned officers using fragmentation hand grenades (to avoid ballistic detection) became a popular form of resistance among infantry platoons. By 1967, soldiers in the Mekong Delta were offering bounties raised by the men for combat executions of dangerously gung-ho officers. [7]

One droll GI wrote back to the underground newspaper at Camp Pendleton, the sprawling California home of the 1st Marine Division: "After months of assiduous care and maintenance of my M16, it failed to function at a critical moment, endangering my life and the lives of other men in this company. Last night, at 0300 hours I had a clear, unobstructed shot at the captain. To my chagrin, the weapon misfired. It may be weeks before I get another crack at the bastard and in the meantime I am subject to the ridicule of my associates and can kiss goodbye the $2000 in the company pool." [8]

The murder of overzealous commanders during battle was hardly unknown in earlier American wars, but in Indochina, the practice–and even more, the hesitancy that this constantly implied threat induced in the entire officer corps–mushroomed out of control as the war stalemated. Such ruthless correctives to excessive officer ambition were restricted to life-and-death combat situations in previous conflicts, but by 1970, the phenomenon leapt from the front lines to rear areas and even to bases in Germany. [9] Vietnam was beginning to have a corrosive effect on the U.S. Army far beyond the Asian battlefields.

Fighting The White Man's War

Mirroring turbulent civil society, militant activism among young African-American men was in the forefront of the GI movement. An early example occurred in July 1967 (at the same time as the Detroit riot/rebellion), when two Camp Pendleton marines called a meeting on the base to question whether "black men should fight white men's

wars." To air these concerns, they and twelve other marines requested a Captain's Mast with their commanding officer, which is naval parlance for the military judicial right given troops to redress grievances. Instead, the original two were arrested and charged with insubordination and promoting disloyalty. In November, both were found guilty and sentenced to several years in the brig. [10]

On August 23, 1968, over 100 black soldiers from troubled Fort Hood met to discuss orders for duty in Chicago, where Army units would be used during the Democratic national convention to suppress civilian demonstrations. After allowing an all-night discussion, Army MPs arrested 43 "ringleaders" as the meeting broke up. [11]

The April 1970 invasion of Cambodia provided further impetus to military resistance, paralleling the outrage it generated in the civilian peace movement. Expanded fighting in Asia assured the success of previously scheduled "Armed Farces Day" demonstrations held on May 16, the national Armed Forces Day holiday, which included over a dozen large rallies and marches at military posts across the country.

The reaction of Army brass at Fort Ord, California (just two weeks after Ohio reserve soldiers shot down unarmed students at Kent State), shows how frightened some were by the protests. When civilians demonstrated outside the gates of the base, post commanders had security forces erect razor wire, set up M-60 machine guns on nearby rooftops, and maintain riot control troops on alert. The reliability of this contingency unit was so suspect, however, that they were not issued ammunition and were kept aboard trucks, lest they fraternize with demonstrators. [12]

Other manifestations of civilian unrest were matched in the military, including prison rebellion and polarization among blacks and whites. In the summer of 1968, the two largest of many stockade uprisings in Vietnam occurred, both led by black GIs. During the weekend of August 16, marine inmates took over part of the brig outside Da Nang, the Marines' main in-country staging base. The prisoners held out for 20 hours against armed guards, resulting in several injuries.

Two weeks later, at the huge and overcrowded Army facility at Long Binh, the bloodiest revolt in a U.S. military prison in recent times took place. For hours, hundreds of inmates fought a running battle with MPs, and much of the stockade was destroyed by fire. Five guards and 58 prisoners were injured, 23 seriously. One GI inmate died. [13]

Another unfortunate symptom of the general breakdown underway was the fracture of unit solidarity along color lines. Confrontations between blacks and whites were pandemic in Vietnam, and in some instances became a war within a war. Perhaps the worst unrest took place at the Camp Baxter Marine post near the demilitarized zone separating North and South Vietnam.

In early 1971, a major racial clash took place that left at least one black GI dead. MPs investigating afterwards discovered that many of the marines were carrying illegal arms, and several caches of ammunition, grenades, and machine guns had been assembled by both sides, ostensibly in preparation for more trouble. [14]

By the turn of the decade, the volume of soldiers balking at orders in war zones had required an Army designation for the rot: "combat refusal." U.S. military operations were crippled by both actual incidents and the generalized atmosphere of battle evasion that restricted military options for unit commanders. For every defiant refusal, dozens more would "search and avoid," or fake their night patrols by stopping 100 meters beyond the perimeter wire to wait out the darkness, radioing in that they were passing the appropriate checkpoints at the appropriate times.

The declining combat ability of the Army was obvious to its troop leaders during the 1970 expansion of ground fighting into Cambodia. While maneuvering across the Cambodian border, many infantry companies avoided battle or were hesitant in moving out to new locations. The 4th Infantry Division, the "Fighting Fourth" of World War II fame, was renamed the "Funky Fourth" by cynical Army officers after it repeatedly lapsed into combat paralysis in Cambodia upon encountering any resistance. [15]

The Brink of Collapse

Historically, armies have gone to the verge of collapse and beyond numerous times. During the First World War alone, the tsarist army of Russia fell apart in 1917, and the French and Italian armies nearly followed suit. In 1918,

the German and Austrian armies dissolved, and even the British had serious problems for a time. (Mutinies among United Kingdom troops actually increased after the shooting stopped. Thousands of survivors of the trenches died in squalid army "demobilization centres" in England, a situation which generated riots and rebellions.) [16]

Events in Vietnam–made up of pervasive minor incidents and a substantial number of larger, more formal events of mass insubordination–never constituted a complete physical disintegration of America's military table of organization. In many ways, the situation instead mirrored the more limited Nivelle mutinies by weary French troops in 1917 after the failure of a bloody and ill-advised Western Front offensive. For a period of time in the Reims salient northeast of Paris, tens of thousands of soldiers would defend themselves if attacked, but no longer advance to a pointless death. The tactic was somewhat successful: French generals carried out several firing squad executions, yet left this portion of the line in a basically defensive posture for over a year until the final campaign of the war, no doubt sparing some of the mutineers' lives.

Faced with meaningless sacrifice in stalemated wars, tired veterans in both the trenches of France and the jungles of Southeast Asia refused to conduct aggressive patrolling beyond forward positions, though they would still guard their own ramparts. The problem in South Vietnam was so widespread that punishment became impossible, causing the Army to downplay the incidents as much as circumstances allowed.

Contemporary media did not completely ignore the crisis. Among the miles of column-inches devoted to the actions of politicians and can-do military managers, hints of trouble percolating within the ranks slipped through. By the summer of 1969, a reporter who first came to Vietnam before the American buildup noted that, "rumors of troops quitting in combat were everywhere, but nothing could be verified–newsmen never happened to be in the right place at the right time." [17] That August, a *New York Times* story described disillusioned soldiers "who lack an ideological commitment to the war." [18]

In September, the press finally got their verifiable incident when a company of the morale-plagued Americal Division that had suffered heavy casualties during four days of continuous assaults against North Vietnamese bunkers refused to attack on the fifth day. Though high-ranking officers shrugged off the affair, it attracted so much attention that even the official Army paper, *Stars and Stripes*, covered the story.

During one of the October-November 1969 antiwar "Moratoriums" observed nationwide in the U.S., fifteen GIs on patrol near Chu Lai wore black armbands in solidarity with the demonstrators back home. "Before the day was out," *The New York Times* grimly noted, "four of the protesting soldiers had been wounded by Vietcong booby traps." [19]

In April 1970, one veteran company of grunts refused outright a direct order from their inexperienced commanding officer to advance down a dangerous open road, all in front of a CBS television crew.

The following month, a *Newsweek* article on the Cambodian invasion mentioned the growing effect of combat refusals, and concluded that "the current crop of U.S. troops–many of them draftees who make no bones about their opposition to the war–bears little resemblance to the aggressive, gung-ho units that saw action two or three years ago." [20]

Media evidence of growing discontent also emerged back in the States that summer. A crippled marine sergeant told a Senate committee that his injuries had been caused by his own men throwing a hand grenade underneath his bunk after he clamped down on their marijuana use, and CBS broadcast a clip of troopers from the First Air Cavalry smoking pot through the barrel of a shotgun.

None of these "liberal media," who certain segments of the population today credit with gutting public support for the war, could manage to put together the mutiny puzzle pieces. It was instead Robert Heinl, a conservative analyst writing in 1971 for a journal of military professionals, who sounded the alarm. To alert his colleagues to the danger, he tied the seemingly unrelated outbursts into a larger fabric of disintegration. No examination of this subject is complete without quoting the former marine combat officer's opening sentences of this extremely influential article that still explode like an artillery shell:

"The morale, discipline, and battle-worthiness of the U.S. Armed Forces are, with a few salient exceptions, lower and worse than at any time in this century and possibly in the history of the United States. By every conceivable indicator, our army that now remains in Vietnam is in a state approaching collapse, with individual units avoiding or having refused combat, murdering their officers and noncommissioned officers, drug-ridden and dispirited

where not near-mutinous. Elsewhere than Vietnam, the situation is nearly as serious." [21] (See *Fifth Estate #335*, Winter 1990–1991 for a eprint of this article.)

Such frank disclosures by frightened military men soon affected governmental policy discourse. It was no exaggeration to assert as fact the degradation of the Army's fighting ability; by the spring of 1972, even *Foreign Affairs*, an influential journal of the ruling elites, could report: "In the United States, the military establishment, and especially its ground forces, are experiencing a profound crisis in legitimacy due to the impact of Vietnam, internal race tension, corruption, extensive drug abuse, *disintegration of command and operational effectiveness*, and widespread anti-military sentiment." (My emphasis.) [22]

In 1970, the Cambodian debacle and changing political climate allowed a formerly hawkish *Newsweek* columnist to warn that "it might be a good idea to accelerate the rate of withdrawal from Vietnam very sharply...[because] discipline and morale are deteriorating very seriously...Is it any wonder that those who know the score are beginning to think about pulling this non-fighting army out of Vietnam in a hurry?...It is time to take those bitter draftees in our crumbling Army out of Vietnam–and the sooner the better." [23]

These incidents represent only the tip of the iceberg. How many rebellions by tired veterans in remote jungle gorges were "worked out" by the compromises of realistic officers we can never know.

The military cancer of Vietnam came home with the returning vets. Disciplinary problems such as desertion and drug abuse increased substantially in Stateside garrisons with the influx of former occupiers of South Vietnam. Among ground forces back in the U.S., continued resistance to the Indochina war took its most ominous and intriguing turn during antiwar events held in Washington D.C, in April and May of 1971.

Thousands of protesters there were disillusioned Vietnam veterans, and when an ex-soldier encampment on the Mall was threatened with forcible removal, 82nd Airborne Division troopers dispatched to the capital on riot duty (with many combat returnees in their ranks) told demonstrators they would refuse any orders to interfere with their brother vets. Their commanders wisely did not press the issue.

Sympathetic GIs in other outfits relayed troop-movement information to protest organizers, allowing them to find out in advance which units were being prepared for civil duty, and to leaflet the affected bases with information on the aims of the demonstrations. Fortunately for the nervous brass, D.C. cops aided by nearby county and state police forces were able to contain the unrest, thus not forcing a showdown over the troops' questionable obedience. [24]

In Southeast Asia, the war continued despite protests. To cover major U.S. ground force reductions of 1970–71, the air war had to be ratcheted up substantially. This intensified resistance in the Navy and Air Force, where it had previously simmered at a lower flame while American land fighting predominated. Antiwar organizing efforts in the U.S. Seventh Fleet increased in direct response to the stepped up bombing.

The Movement for a Democratic Military surfaced in Southern California in early 1970 and drew its greatest strength from the immense San Diego naval base, home port to the aircraft carriers of the Pacific fleet. Rebellion took many forms, but the most effective in curtailing the Navy's war-making ability was sabotage. Four hundred eighty-eight "investigations on damage or attempted damage" were noted in fiscal 1971, and the widespread tactic of literally throwing a wrench into the gears of the war machine became the technology-intensive (and thus vulnerable) Navy's nightmare. [25]

The situation reached crisis in 1972. The North Vietnamese Army, emboldened by the rapid withdrawal of American troops, attempted a large scale conventional invasion of the South in April. The "Easter Offensive" was halted only by massive U.S. bombing of NVA troop formations, and air attacks on the major North Vietnamese cities of Hanoi and Haiphong.

Naval air forces were stretched to their breaking point. For the rest of the year, as many as four carriers were stationed in the Tonkin Gulf, with an equal number committed to the area to provide rotation capability. Normal U.S. fleet routine was completely disrupted; nearly all the Pacific fleet, and many ships usually assigned to the Atlantic, sailed west into the fray.

For crew members, the escalation brought severe hardships. Carrier operations demanded an incredible 100-hour workweek, and deployments lasted as long as 45 days, straining crews to the very limits of human endurance. Forced to remain at sea beyond their rotation schedule, and thrust suddenly into the center of an unpopular war, sailor-rebels responded.

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In July, at the main Atlantic base in Norfolk, Virginia, a crew member aboard the *Forrestal* torched the carrier's officer berthing areas, causing seven million dollars worth of damage and delaying the ship's deployment to the Pacific for over two months. [26]

Later that month, a militant deckhand inserted two bolts and a paint scraper into the carrier *Ranger's* number-four-engine reduction gears, necessitating a three month layover for one million dollars in repairs. This was the culmination of a wave of sabotage by *Ranger* sailors in direct response to the Easter Offensive escalation of the air war. In May and June alone, over two dozen incidents of willful destruction took place, including cut fire hoses, bomb threats, a plugged fire main, fuel in the freshwater supply, a flooded compartment, and assorted damage to generators and oil pumps. [27]

Carrier sabotage compelled the *Kitty Hawk*, in the Tonkin Gulf, to remain on station for months. Shipboard racial tensions already on edge then exploded in a series of violent incidents, necessitating its rotation out of the war zone. Thus, the disablement of one floating airbase after another severely hampered the Navy's ability to conduct bombing operations during the second half of 1972. Sailor dissent was only suppressed by withdrawal of the carrier task forces from Vietnamese waters by the end of the year, and mass discharges of over 6,000 "troublemakers" in 1972 and 1973. [28]

Airmen Join the Rebellion

With its relaxed discipline and low ratio of actual involvement by members in direct fighting, the Air Force had managed to avoid much of the discontent affecting other services before 1971. Early that year, only ten GI papers circulated among U.S. air bases; by the spring of 1972, there were more than thirty. A Congressional panel, the House Internal Security Committee, recognized a clear pattern: "The trend towards organizing among Air Force personnel, in line with U.S. continued air activities in Indochina, is quite obvious." [29]

Intensified bombing in 1972 brought protests to Air Force installations around the world. The swell of resistance receded as bombing operations declined in the fall, but surged sharply again as a disgusted response to the Christmas B-52 attacks on central Hanoi. That December, two combat pilots from the U Tapao base in Thailand refused to fly bombing missions over Vietnam, beginning the last chapter of GI resistance to America's Indochinese slaughter.

Morale in the Pacific air command deteriorated dramatically throughout 1972, but during the relentless bombing of inner Cambodia in 1973, it plunged to critical levels. Four B-52 pilots stationed in Guam joined with a congresswoman's legal suit challenging the constitutionality of the Cambodian bombing; three were relieved from duty and the forth refused to fly missions after this action against his comrades. [30]

In a more subtle form of rebellion, ground crews left certain operational maintenance undone, which caused increasing numbers of sorties to be aborted shortly after takeoff. Demoralized bomber crews were only too happy to use such excuses, and rates of equipment "failures" increased. [31]

Though the Pentagon claimed its 40% reduction in B-52 missions over Cambodia in May 1973 was due to budget cuts, a *Washington Post* correspondent reported that "despite official assertions, there are indications that the Air Force is facing a deepening morale crisis among pilots and especially among crews of the B-52s...High ranking Defense Department sources say the morale situation at Guam has been poor for some time now...These sources say the morale problem at U Tapao in Thailand is also growing worse daily." [32] Despite the highly professional and officer-heavy structure of the air service, resistance to the Cambodian raids certainly affected U.S. military options.

Today, "mainstream" analysis of these pivotal events in America's Vietnam adventure, other than mention of fragging, that word the war added to our vocabulary, is nearly nonexistent. Why have so many historians ignored the significance of the GI movement? Perhaps because the implications of such a multi-class social movement in an army whose loyalty had been beyond question in the century since the Civil War are scarcely conceivable to scholars steeped in the assumptions of current ideology.

GI activism also contradicts dominant historical notions that interpret the antiwar movement among youth almost entirely as a middle-class student affair, eschewed by the sons of America's working class.

Marcus Raskin mentions this point in his introduction to David Cortright's definitive 1975 study, *Soldiers In Revolt*: "From time to time, incidents were noted in the media, but for the most part these incidents were seen by civilian society as sporadic...[however] the struggle against the war in Indochina moved from the campus and was continued within the military itself by the children of all classes–the poor, working, and middle classes. This is an important political fact...unrecorded among journalists, academics, and politicians. To be aware of this fact is to be relieved of the comfortable belief that the armed forces are a quiet, apolitical group." [33]

Awareness of this socially broad movement of war resistance in the military inherently challenges a popular mythology that only lack of political will (the "one-hand-tied-behind-our-back" theory) kept the boys from taking Hanoi and turning Uncle Ho out. In actuality, the risk of further civil disorder in America and complete collapse of the field army in Asia precluded large offensive operations, as the invasion of Cambodia indicated.

Eventually, there was even concern about the reliability of American troops in riot control operations at home. When the dependability of soldiers to follow orders can even be questioned, the situation is already intolerable for ruling elites. Without loyal armed retainers to back them, the leaders of any state simply shout orders at the wind. "Policy makers" and the military brass realized that the game in Southeast Asia was clearly no longer worth the candle in what was not a life-or-death struggle for the motherland, so the world's mightiest armed force cut its losses and accepted defeat.

However, a mythology of noble unvanquished warriors, even in the ranks of beaten armies, can take root. Defeated soldiers are not useful instruments of state power, and in a government's worst-case scenario, disillusioned veterans can even turn upon the state they served. Avoiding or shedding the stigma of defeat is crucial to restoring a fighting attitude to demoralized troops.

It Happened Before

A historical example in this century of such successful recovery of a beaten army occurred in Europe after the November 1918 cease fire that ended World War I. Ordered by their admirals to sail into hopeless destruction as a face-saving glorious end, German sailors of the Baltic Fleet instead mutinied and declared that naval power would henceforth reside in enlisted-man councils. Demobilized soldiers returning from the trenches joined them and uprisings flared throughout Germany for over a year, the most famous being the 1919 Berlin Spartakus insurrection.

The revolutionary wave of 1918–20 was channeled into a Western-style parliamentary government by leftist politicians and viciously suppressed by their temporary allies, the Freikorps militia. This right-wing death squad organization of future Nazis and professional soldiers scourged the nation with counterrevolutionary terror.

During the Weimar Republic years that followed, Hitler's increasingly popular "national socialism" enshrined militarist trappings, and a legend grew that Prussian arms had never been conquered in the field during the Great War. Revised historical interpretation absolved the generals and viewed the armistice as a "stab-in-the-back" delivered by treacherous politicians.

This shibboleth is familiar to anyone living in post-Vietnam America, right down to "in-the-back" imagery that reflects not only phrasing but mood. Such rhetoric proved an effective aid in rehabilitating the disgraced German military machine to blitzkrieg Poland and France only two decades after its soldiers and sailors suppressed not the people but their officers, and ignited a revolution.

It is pertinent to consider this history when assessing the resurgence of militaristic values in 1980s America, and to contrast the Desert Storm troopers of 1991 with the insolent and cynical mutineers pulled out of Vietnam twenty years earlier.

Note: The author spent four years in the Marine Corps, from 1979 to 1983

Text box: Major mutinies among ground forces in Vietnam included

September 1969: 60 men of the Americal Division refuse to charge bunkers after days of grueling combat near Queson.

November 1969: 21 GIs, all hardened veterans nearing the end of their tours, refuse to advance into enemy-held ground at Cu Chi near the Cambodian border.

April 1970: News correspondent John Laurence and the nation's television viewing audience watch as a squad leader on patrol in War Zone C flatly refuses his captain's reckless command to advance down a hazardous road, and successfully negotiates for an alternate route.

May 1970: During the Cambodian invasion, 16 soldiers from Firebase Washington will not advance with their units across the frontier, and a small group of 4th Division GIs refuse to board helicopters bound for Cambodia.

December 1970: A company commander in the 101st Airborne Division refuses his colonel's directive to move at night after talking the order over with his men and deciding it is too dangerous.

March 1971: During the invasion of Laos by South Vietnamese troops, two supporting platoons of American soldiers under enemy fire refuse orders to advance and recover a damaged armored vehicle.

October 1971: A refusal of 6 GIs to patrol outside Firebase Pace near the Laotian border sparks wider mutiny in a company of the 1st Air Cavalry Division. 65 men sign a petition to be sent to U.S. Sen. Ted Kennedy, requesting protection from what they consider needless danger.

April 1972: In the final reported in-country mutiny, about 100 GIs of the 196th Infantry Brigade refuse an order to mount trucks for an advance into enemy territory near Phu Bai.

ENDNOTES

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27 *The New York Times*, June 13, 1973, p. 5.

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32 Michael Getter, *The Washington Post*, May 31, 1973, p. 1 and 9.

33 Cortright, from the introduction, p. xii.

Note: The Labadie Collection, located in the Graduate Library at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, is an excellent local archive of the Vietnam-era GI press.

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