

GIs in PRG

Liberation News Service

1969

SAN FRANCISCO (LNS)—In a startling development, recent figures in the *San Francisco Chronicle* show field desertions in Vietnam to be running at the rate of ten a day.

Many of the GIs are joining the military forces of the Provisional Revolutionary Government, their alleged enemy.

Those deserters who would rather switch and fight join up with the PRG, bringing with them detailed knowledge of how to work American equipment and how American units operate. There have been reports of misdirected artillery and helicopter fire in the Mekong Delta because deserters used stolen radios to cut in on Army frequencies.

The PRG derives the greatest benefit from the intelligence reports these GIs receive, according to Solidarity, a San Francisco newsletter run by ex-GIs.

As long as two years ago the US-Saigon command was astounded that the National Liberation Front would know of B-52 strikes more than 24 hours in advance. It confused them because strike time were never divulged to the Saigon Troops. The NLF also found out about attacks flown from Okinawa, Thailand and Guam.

The majority of the deserters choose to stay in the rear areas so that they will not have to fight their countrymen. But two ex-Marine NLF advisors were killed last April in a patrol skirmish near Phu Bai.

Located northeast of Kite Sanh, Phu Bai is the largest US Marine base near the DMZ; it is an extremely important communications base. The Marine Corps was able to identify the two “traitors” but would not release their names.

Some GIs who desert in the field do not want to join the liberation forces and merely roam the countryside trying not to get caught. The PRG often helps such persons find housing and food, expecting nothing in return.

According to a June report in the *Okinawa Morning Star Journal*, there are at least 3,000 AWOL GIs hiding out in Saigon alone. Many recently returned Vietnamese veterans have reported a higher estimate to Solidarity editor Fred Chard—they figure 5,000 to be a more realistic number.

For deserters wishing to leave Vietnam, the PRG offers assistance in reaching countries which do not recognize the tradition of US service deserters, including Sweden, Japan, Cambodia and Thailand. An estimated 300 to 500 deserters have received such assistance from the PRG to date.

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