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# Arkansas Caught Off Guard

## Even the High School Marching Band Has Its Headaches

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FORT SMITH, Ark., May 1—There were two problems weighing on Stanley Cate's mind today as this Ozark Mountain city prepared for an influx of 20,000 or more Vietnamese refugees.

One of the headaches: there is no oriental marching music to be found in the Ozarks.

"I searched—and it's hopeless," said Cate, a 42-year-old band master, as he watched his Southside High School marching band rehearse for the arrival Friday of the first planeload of refugees.

The second problem is the band's nickname—"The Rebels." "That's not going to be too appropriate either," sighed the band leader.

Cate was not the only one with problems today in this city of 65,393 in the western Ozarks on the Arkansas-Oklahoma border. The Pentagon announced earlier this week that it was activating the dormant Ft. Chaffee, just eight miles southeast of here, as one of three refugee camps for Vietnamese.

The announcement and the prospects that Chaffee will be both the biggest and the camp to remain in operation the longest caught nearly everyone off guard here.

Donald McDonald, an official of the Agency for International Development who flew in today to take over the camp's civilian operation, told reporters that Chaffee may end up as a repository for the refugees who will be most difficult to relocate.

The camp, a World War II and Korean War training area, can hold 20,000 or more persons, Army officials said.

The other two refugee centers, in

California and Florida, are more likely to receive refugees with "sponsors" who have promised them jobs or housing, McDonald said.

"We're going to get those who will have to have people go out for them and find jobs and find sponsors," he said. Some of the refugees could remain at Chaffee for six months or longer, he added.

Despite a rapid buildup of Army support personnel in the last few days, the unexpected announcement that Chaffee would be reactivated to hold the refugees has clearly created substantial disruption in the military routine.

Army spokesmen shifted figures three times today on the number of refugees expected to be arriving Friday. They settled on about 500 expected on seven planes directly from Guam and Wake Island, with 2,000 more to arrive each day, swelling the total to 20,000 or more.

Ft. Chaffee, which is used mainly to train National Guard troops, had only 25 full-time military employees on the base at the beginning of this week. It had nearly 1,500 today with more flights and convoys of troops and supplies arriving hourly.

Although the federal government says the refugees will be distributed around the country, there is some apprehension in Fort Smith that the Vietnamese might stay and undercut the local labor market.

The Arkansas unemployment rate is about 9.6 per cent, and Fort Smith's unemployment rate is only slightly lower, 9 per cent.

Wednesday night four protesters picketed the gate to the sprawling 71-

944-acre military camp. And two signs referring to the refugees as "gooks" appeared on roadsides near the camp.

A protest petition is circulating in at least one food store near the military base.

"A lot of us were in Vietnam and we know who these people are," said J. D. Smith, a former Army sergeant, as he stood outside the camp. "They're the ones in the black market or worse who bought their way out, and we don't need them."

Others, however, were busy arranging collections of toys and English textbooks for the refugees.

"It's all happened so fast that people really haven't had a chance to talk it out and decide how they feel," said barber Joseph Peoples.

The imminent arrival of 20,000 or more Vietnamese is a source of confusion for many here.

"What is their average clothing size?" a woman asked McDonald this afternoon. "Are these people smaller than we are?"

One of those here who got a close look at the war that created the refugees was 30-year-old Chad Colley, who had both his legs and his left arm blown away by a land mine.

Now the manager of a trailer park less than a mile from Ft. Chaffee, Colley works with an artificial arm.

Colley said he does not bear the Vietnamese any anger and would show up at the airport Friday to welcome them if he could.

"Here we are a Christian nation and we went over there supposedly to prove it," he said. "This is our chance. These people are going to be a reminder of our failure, and we've got to be able to rise above it."