

Against Invasion

16 Soldiers Balk At Cambodia War

Phum Tasuous, Cambodia

Sixteen soldiers in the American 25th Division initially refused to leave their rear area base in South Vietnam and accompany their unit on a thrust into Cambodia.

All 16 finally agreed to go to a forward command base in Vietnam on the understanding they would not go across the frontier.

Two of them who renewed their protest yesterday before their unit jumped off were interviewed on the outskirts of the Phum Tasuous, a village four miles inside Cambodia.

They are members of A Company, Third Battalion, 22nd Infantry, 25th Infantry Division.

Private First Class Harry Veon, 20, of Darlington, Pa., said, "We have no business here. We have enough troubles in Vietnam."

Originally, he said, "Sixteen of us refused to go. We just sat down. Then they promised us we wouldn't have to go to Cambodia. They said we could work on the fire base in Vietnam."

Specialist 4 Willie Clark, 21, of Monroe, La., said when he learned about coming to Cambodia, "I did a lot of thinking."

"It wasn't easy," he added. "But I realized this morning I just did not want to come here. I told my platoon leader that I wouldn't come."

"He said he would charge us with mutiny and everything else in the book."

Specialist 4 Brian Flaherty, 25, of Jersey City, N.J., said: "I'm all for going into Cambodia. I've been here (Vietnam) eight months. I've seen North Vietnamese shoot rockets from Cambodia and

in one case one rocket hit a hootch and wiped out 15 guys.

"They were my friends. I've seen a lot more . . . We've just been like a dog in a cage just poking at them. Now it's like a dog being let out of a cage. Nixon has let us out."

Specialist 4 James Moran, 22, of Charleston, Mo., said "We're going in here five years too late. We've already wasted 40,000 lives. We should have done it a long time ago."

Lieutenant Dick Dent, 22, of Berwick, Pa., a platoon leader in D Company of the battalion, said many of his men "feel we're doing more than necessary," and added: "I sometimes think the higher-ups forget what it's like to be in the field and don't take the grunts' feelings into consideration." *Associated Press*