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# Report GIs Balked at Patrol Order

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A United States infantry company in which six men reportedly balked at going out on a night ambush patrol was removed today from Artillery Support Base Pace on the Cambodian border.

Major General Jack J. Wagstaff, commander of U.S. forces in South Vietnam's Third Military Region, said he replaced the company because of "the possible harm it could do to company morale and in line with normal rotation policy."

The base is a mile south of the border and six miles south of the Cambodian town of Krek, where there has been heavy fighting.

The troops of a company of the First Battalion, 12th Infantry, First Air Cavalry Division, have been under Communist shelling attacks for two weeks at Pace. Nearly 30 GIs have been wounded.

Field reports said that on Saturday afternoon seven men from Bravo company went on patrol and six of them walked into a minefield apparently laid as an ambush by other U.S. troops or

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South Vietnamese.

The reports said the mines, set to explode automatically when tripped, did not go off, and the patrol returned unharmed. Other units at Pace denied leaving the ambush in place.

Military spokesmen said that at dusk Saturday a 12-man patrol was ordered to set up an ambush outside Pace, 75 miles northwest of Saigon on Highway 22. A spokesman for the U.S. Third Regional Assistance Command, which controls the base, said:

"Some of the members expressed a desire not to go. Their company commander repeated the order, and the men prepared to move out when they learned that an ARVN (Army of the Republic of Vietnam) element had already manned the position. At this point the order was withdrawn and no further action was taken."

The initial field reports from Pace, where a U.S. artillery battery is protected by an ARVN company that was bolstered by 90 American infantrymen two weeks ago, said that after the men refused to go on patrol the U.S. commander issued direct individual orders to six.

All six refused, the reports said, and the commander gave up and called off the action because of "bad weather." But Vietnamese units went out the same night, they said.

Yesterday Lt. Col. Robert J. McCaffee, the operations officer for Artillery Support Base Pace, said the men had not actually refused an order to move out on the night ambush.

He said the men had complained about going out, but before it came to the test of whether they would refuse an order or not, the patrol was cancelled.

"The captain never did give any order," said McCaffee. "It never reached the point where the men were ready to move out. They were bitching during the planning session and the platoon leader got indications that some of them might refuse."

"The next day, the same people moved out with a reinforced squad on a daylight patrol," McCaffee said. "So they overcame it."

The U.S. command said yesterday an investigative team has been sent to the base.

More than 60 GIs at Pace were reported to have sent a petition to Senator Edward M. Kennedy (Dem-Mass.), saying they would not patrol any more and demanding immediate withdrawal.

In Washington, Kennedy called for an immediate investigation of the incident.

"Any refusal by American soldiers to engage in combat is a cause of extremely serious concern," Kennedy said in a statement. "The events described in the press reports demand an immediate investigation and full explanation by the Nixon administration . . ."

"I am also concerned over the fact that the episode apparently took place along the Cambodian border."