

DEC 28 1971

NYTimes

TH

PROTESTERS SEIZE BETSY ROSS HOUSE

25 Are Held in Philadelphia in Demonstration on War

Special to The New York Times

PHILADELPHIA, Dec. 27—Twenty-five antiwar demonstrators occupied the Betsy Ross House here for an hour today in protest against continuation of the war in Vietnam. All were arrested.

The 2½-story brick house, at 239 Arch Street in midtown, is traditionally regarded as the place where Betsy Ross made the first American flag. The structure was built before 1720.

The demonstrators, 23 men and two women, most of them members of the Vietnam Veterans Against the War, entered the building at 11:15 A.M. and closed shutters on windows, tied doors with ropes and jammed toothbrushes in handles to secure the doors from the inside.

Four employes and 15 tourists who were in the souvenir shop were permitted to leave. They joined about 50 other passersby outside and watched as the protesters turned the American flag upside down—a distress sign—on the flagpole in front of the building.

Larry Schmitz, a spokesman for the group, climbed to the roof and read a statement, which said:

"This is a revolt. Protective reaction is being taken because of the revulsion we as veterans of the Vietnam war and our friends feel as a result of the intensified and indiscriminate bombing of the peoples of Indochina."

He said that he and his companions planned to stay in the building until New Year's Day. However, policemen from the civil disobedience unit broke into the building shortly after noon and removed all 25 protesters to the main police headquarters.

William A. Kingsley, director of the shrine, said that he had asked the protesters not to smoke while in the building, and they obeyed.

Protest at Hospital

TRAVIS, Air Force Base, Calif., Dec. 27 (UPI)—Eighteen Army drug patients and four civilian sympathizers abandoned today their barricade of a second-story ward in an Air Force hospital and were driven away in a military bus.

Smiling and flashing the peace sign, the 22 demonstrators walked out of the hospital and boarded the bus. The Air Force did not immediately disclose whether they would face disciplinary action.

The men were associated with Vietnam Veterans Against the War, the same group that stage a sit-in at the Statue of Liberty in New York. The organization said that the purpose of the Travis demonstration was to protest the "unfair" policy of requiring men to undergo drug rehabilitation if they "flunked" a drug-user's test upon discharge.

The demonstrators took over a second-story ward at the hospital late last night and left it at 11:15 A.M. today.

The Air Force had made no move to put down the demonstration.

William Hankin, the spokesman for the organization, said that his group was "trying to fight against the Army's blaming G.I.'s for drug addiction.

"The Army is not stopping guys from using drugs in Vietnam but is trying to clean them out when they get home for the benefit of its public image," he said. Mr. Hankin, who said that he had been a medic in Vietnam, also said that it was the Army's fault that soldiers became heroin addicts, because they were "forced to fight in Vietnam."

Travis is a receiving center for servicemen who have become addicts while stationed in Vietnam.