

Army Brings On the Girls

QUI NHON (Vietnam) — (UPI) — The U.S. Army has opened its gates to Vietnamese prostitutes at several bases in South Vietnam and Army spokesmen said such a thing is apparently all right by current regulations.

Officers said there are considerable security risks and a strong possibility of narcotics smuggling, but many said they support the practice anyway to keep peace within increasingly disgruntled ranks of the Americans still left in Vietnam.

So far the allowing of prostitutes on bases has been limited to bases along South Vietnam's central coast. The

gates of military posts in Binh Dinh Province 250 miles northeast of Saigon were opened to such "guests" several weeks ago.

The new practice came less than four months after the Army itself erected a steel wall at the Cam Ranh Bay base, 140 miles south of Qui Nhon, to keep out prostitutes and drug sellers.

The girls cluster nightly at the gates of Quincy Compound, headquarters of the Qui Nhon Army support command, and at gates of other bases nearby.

As many as 50 or 60 girls stand across the street from

the gate on a typical evening and solicit GIs who pass.

The soldiers are allowed to sign the women into the bases as a "local national guest" on an official Army roster. The girls can then go with the GIs to movies, clubs or to their rooms in the barracks.

"Hi, GI! I Your Numbah One Girl!" the girls call to the troops as they leave the base.

The risk of security violations arises from the fact that the girls need produce no more than a Vietnamese government identity card — something Viet Cong agents can get — in order to be ad-

mitted to a base.

Although they are barred from operations centers they can move around freely enough on bases to be able to observe defenses and the condition and position of war equipment.

"As nearly as I can determine, the installation commander of each installation is the person who established the policy (on local national guests) for that installation," an Army spokesman said. "I know of no Vietnam-wide directive . . ."

The GIs have been forbidden for more than a year to go into local towns except on official business.

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can obtain without difficulty.

They also acknowledge that, despite precautions, some of the girls are smuggling drugs onto the bases. But they maintain that the risks are worthwhile in the interests of keeping the peace within an increasingly disgruntled and demoralized army here.

The girls, wearing the same mod clothes they wore when they worked in the mostly boarded-up bar district of downtown Qui Nhon, cluster nightly at the gates of major bases in this area.

.. PARADE

Soliciting business from soldiers who wander out to the gates after dinner with cries of "Hey GI! I your Numbah One girl!" and other expressions, they parade up and down along the dimly lit, dusty, barbed-wire perimeters trying to attract attention as best they can.

Often as many as 50 to 60 girls can be seen at one time clustered at the gates of Quincy compound, headquarters of the Qui Nhon Support Command, which controls the flow of all U.S. supplies to the critical Central Highlands.

Other smaller bases in the area, such as Phu Tai and Lane Army Airfield, ten miles northwest of here, also attract flocks of Vietnamese prostitutes.

SEARCH

The GIs, who have been forbidden for more than a year to go into local towns except on official business, come to the gates after dinner and pick girls from the crowd. Then they sign the girls onto the bases in official rosters maintained by the gate guards. They are thus considered "local national guests."

At one base, a special shack has been built near the gate, and girls are taken into it and searched for drugs before being permitted onto the compound. Any girl caught carrying narcotics is forced to surrender her identity card to the guards and is supposed to be permanently barred from the base.

The security risk arises from the fact that, once the girls are on base, they are permitted to move about freely with their escorts.

They can frequently be seen with American soldiers going to recreation centers, non-commissioned and commissioned officers' clubs, movies, barracks areas or wandering about in darkened business areas. Most barracks here have private or semi-private rooms, and the girls often stay overnight.

Although they are barred from command posts and other restricted areas, it is no secret that they do sometimes visit guard bunkers and perimeter towers.

SPY

Officers acknowledge that a trained spy could easily make mental — or written — notes about the location and condition of defense positions numbers and positions of fighting machines, the general state of readiness for ground attack, and the mission of a base and how well it was being carried out.

The policy of letting the girls onto the bases officially started several weeks ago, officers said. Previously many prostitutes had been able to sneak through the barbed wire defenses with the aid of GIs inside.

U.S. Army headquarters spokesmen confirmed yesterday that a new visitors policy directive had been issued recently, and said it was applicable to bases all over Vietnam.