

Pro-Amnesty Sergeant in Ft. Ord Stockade

Fort Ord, Monterey County

A staff sergeant has been put in the stockade here for refusing orders to go see a psychiatrist after he persisted in urging amnesty for draft resisters.

Sergeant Conrad A. Rondeau has been in the military lockup since March 13.

Major J.D. Coleman, information officer at Fort Ord, said yesterday that the infantryman, wounded while serving in Vietnam, was jailed "because he indicated clearly he would continue" to disobey orders.

The sergeant's attorney, Fred Novinger, said: "The original intention of these people was to shut him up. When they couldn't do it, they tried the psychiatric approach. When that failed, they put him in confinement."

Sergeant Rondeau, who lives with his wife and 10-year-old child in nearby Seaside, believes that draft evaders should get amnesty after serving six years in the National Guard.

He propounded this idea on a local TV station with - he said - the permission of his superiors.

According to Major Coleman, the sergeant was told that he could not express his opinions on the subject either while he was on the Army post or when he was in uniform because he would be violating the Hatch act, which restricts political activities by government employees.

When Sergeant Rondeau continued to do so, he was twice ordered to see a psychiatrist, the Army charges, and refused.

Our Correspondent