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SILENT PROTEST: A 24-hour fast to protest against the Vietnam war was carried out by these and other persons at an evacuation hospital in Pleiku, South Vietnam. There was no demonstration, and most of the officers and others had their Thanksgiving Day meals.

100 G.I.'S IN PLEIKU FAST FOR HOLIDAY

Soldiers Serving in Hospital
Stage an Antiwar Protest

By RALPH BLUMENTHAL
Special to The New York Times

PLEIKU, South Vietnam, Nov. 27—More than a hundred G.I.'s serving in a field evacuation hospital here boycotted Thanksgiving dinner today in a quiet 24-hour fast designed as a protest against American involvement in the war here.

There were no demonstrations, in accordance with military regulations. Fasting soldiers spent the midday dinner hour as well as breakfast and supertime at their posts or in their barracks. Tables in the mess hall were filled by 234 officers, patients and guests. The commander said that no action would be taken against those who fasted.

Similar fasts on a smaller scale were reported in several scattered units. Except for troops in the field who dined on C-rations, the rest of the 484,000 United States soldiers in South Vietnam ate a traditional dinner of turkey, cornbread dressing, cranberry sauce, sweet potatoes and pumpkin pie.

The fast at this sprawling American base in the red sands of the cool Central Highlands halfway between Saigon and the demilitarized zone was the most notable antiwar activity by G.I.'s in South Vietnam since a handful of soldiers donned black armbands during the moratorium demonstration on Oct. 15.

8 of 141 in Unit Appear

Out of the 141 soldiers of rank below specialist 5 serving with the 71st Medical Detachment of the 44th Medical Group, only eight appeared for dinner at the mess hall, which was decorated with crepe-paper streamers and a large red "Happy Thanksgiving" sign.

Several of the 16 others serving in the kitchen also fasted, as did several non-commissioned officers, at least one officer and several nurses.

The shifting demands of guard duty and medical evacuation missions made it impossible to tell the exact number of those absent out of conviction. But mess personnel reported that 530 midday meals were served last Thursday, while today Thanksgiving dinner — traditionally a well-attended meal—drew only 377 post personnel and guests.

The purpose of the fast was expressed in an open letter to President Nixon written several weeks ago by a loose group of 10 noncareer soldiers.

War Is Called Senseless

The letter, circulated on this and some other bases with a space for signatures, said: "Sir: So long as American soldiers continue and fight in a senseless war that cannot be won, we the undersigned feel that we have very little for which to be thankful."

The letter went on to note the intention of the signers to fast Thanksgiving Day and to request that the uneaten food be donated to the poor here and at home.

About 200 signed the Pleiku letter, which is now being held by the organizing group despite efforts of military intelligence to obtain it.

However, not all those who fasted did so out of opposition to the war. Some soldiers saw the action as an opportunity to vent gripes against the army.

"This is not against the war," said Specialist 4 Terry Pierce, a 23-year-old physical therapy aide from St. Joseph, Mo., who stood with some buddies on a concrete walk outside the mess hall.

"I'm fasting because of the undue harassment, like the foot-and-wall-locker inspections and guard duty. There's no harmony and morale here." His buddies nodded agreement. "Soons you wear sunglasses they call you a dope addict," said one.