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56 LEAP INTO SUEZ CANAL

Deserting Legion Veterans Ask Egypt for Asylum

CAIRO, Feb. 21 (AP)—Fifty-six soldiers of the French Foreign Legion jumped into the narrow Suez Canal from the troopship Pasteur today. It was the biggest mass desertion yet on the waterway.

Egyptian coast guardsmen rounded up the legionnaires, who asked for political asylum in Egypt. Authorities said most of the deserters were French and German. They were returning from Indochina duty.

The French Consulate said many of the deserters were facing trial for petty crimes and declared a formal demand would be made for their return to French jurisdiction. In the past Egypt has accorded many deserters political asylum.

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