

# GI NEWS



A PUBLICATION OF VIETNAM VETERANS AGAINST THE WAR/WINTER SOLDIER ORGANIZATION (VVAW/WSO)

ISSUE NUMBER 11

NOVEMBER 1974

## Navy Racism Intensifies USS LITTLE ROCK CASE



Little Rock Brothers display banner outside the window of barracks in Naples, Italy, where they had just beaten back a Marine riot squad.

(Naples, Italy - October 2, 1974) After waiting almost a year to go to trial, one Puerto Rican and nine Black sailors from the USS LITTLE ROCK rebellion, along with two others, have been forced into yet another confrontation with the racist Navy brass, and are now facing additional serious court-martial charges. The first pretrial sessions began in Naples on October 2nd on the charges stemming from the November, 1973 incident aboard the LITTLE ROCK and the July 25, 1974 attack by Marines on the Little Rock Brothers.

(The first charges of riot and assault aboard the LITTLE ROCK occurred during the Middle East war last November while cruising in the Mediterranean.

The incident stemmed from four months of racial harassment, culminating with fights when a white sailor attacked a Black sailor with a wrench. Only the Blacks were charged, and they have since been on transient status at a small base in Italy while the Court of Military Appeals in Washington, DC decided a pretrial motion made by their lawyer.)

On July 25th, an all-out battle erupted at the Naval Support Activity (NSA) base in Naples when thirty armed Marines charged into the Navy barracks in a pre-dawn action designed to drag two of the Little Rock Brothers off to pretrial confinement in Rota, Spain.

(continued on next page)

(continued from page 1)

This decision to jail Donald Brookins and Edilberto Felix resulted from the Navy's overreaction to a minor incident several days before.

Fearing resistance and solidarity from the Third World sailors, the brass carefully devised a scheme to separate Brookins and Felix from the others and fly them to the Navy brig in Spain. The plan was foiled when the plane's schedule was changed, but instead of scrapping the plan, the brass had all the Little Rock Brothers awakened at 5:30 in the morning under the guise of a drug inspection. While the others were assembled in the recreation room of the barracks, Brookins and Felix were spirited out to the Master at Arms room and told to pack for jail.

The other Little Rock sailors and several friends got wind of what was happening and demanded that their lawyer in Germany be called or that they all be taken to the brig. In a rage, the Commanding Officer of the base ordered all force necessary be used to accomplish the transfer of the two. The Marine riot squad was ordered in, but the Brothers stood their ground.

When the Black Marines on the riot force realized the situation and what they were being used for, they refused to raise their nightsticks against their brothers (and were later punished for their refusal). The rest, however, began clubbing the sailors, who by then had barricaded Brookins and Felix in a room and locked arms in resistance outside. Though they were outnumbered more than three to one by the Marines - several of whom were brandishing .45s - the Little Rock sailors easily overwhelmed their opponents, took their nightsticks away and forced a retreat. They later hung a sign out the window of the barracks which said: END THE OPPRESSION OF BLACKS AT NSA. The sign was visible to the whole base.

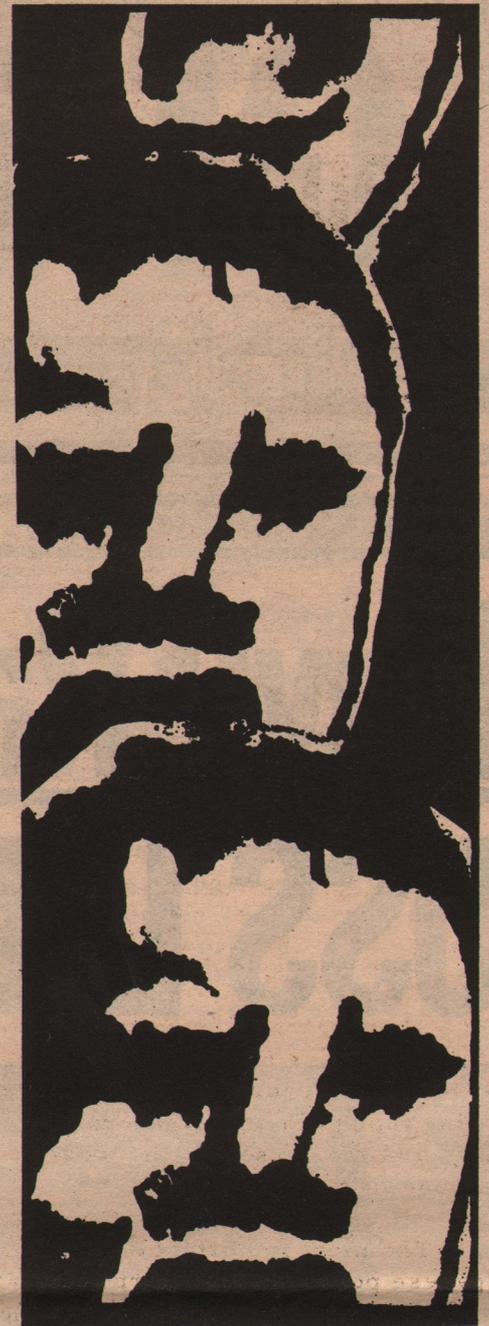
Although negotiations eventually resolved the conflict and the resisters won their demands - (1) to be allowed to talk with their lawyer, and (2) that Brookins and Felix not be sent to the brig - the sailors are now charged with

resisting arrest, assaulting the Marines and taking a hostage. (The so-called hostage was a close friend of many of the Brothers who wandered into the 'liberated' section of the barracks during the July 25th incident.) There is little chance that the so-called hostage, who has since been discharged, will testify against the brothers, but he has confirmed to the defense that he was threatened with prosecution himself by Naval Investigative Service (NIS) if he didn't.

The pretrial sessions which began on October 2nd followed a six-month delay during which the Court of Military Appeals (COMA) in Washington, DC, had adjourned the trials to decide whether Captain Cullins, CO of the LITTLE ROCK, had illegally convened the courts since he was the accuser, being a participant in last November's events. The defense won that decision and all of the original charges were thrown out. When the Little Rock charges, plus the one arising out of the July 25th incidents, were sent to a new Convening Authority, he dropped eight of the ten riot charges and a few other minor ones, but sent all the rest to new courts. The ten original Little Rock defendants and two other Black sailors stationed at NSA (who supported them during the July 25th incident) are now all on trial.

As new incidents of racism towards the men arise nearly every day, new charges against them are constantly being added. Their attorney, Bill Schaap of the Lawyers Military Defense Committee, is hopeful of making pre-trial settlements. The importance of making settlements of the cases is that it is clear that the defendants could never get a fair trial or jury anywhere in the Navy, especially in the Mediterranean area where there is not a single black officer.

The racism directed against the Little Rock Brothers is an example of the racism throughout the Navy and the whole US military. The struggle against racism must not, however, be looked at as a struggle of only Third World people. The struggle against racism is as much the concern of white people as it is Third World people because in the final analysis we will only



be able to end racial oppression, military oppression and all other forms of oppression when both white and Third World people are united. As long as the brass is able to effectively use racism to divide enlisted people and as long as they are able to perpetuate chauvinistic and racist attitudes among white GIs, they will be successful in preventing GIs from getting together to fight back against the brass and the whole system of imperialism. Racism is one of the cornerstones of imperialism and will only be thoroughly eliminated when the whole system of imperialism is defeated.

END ALL RACIAL OPPRESSION!

## Clip this form out, today!

SEND TO: VVAW/WSO, 827 West Newport Ave., Chicago, Illinois 60657 (312) 935-2129

- I would like to JOIN VVAW/WSO.
- I am an active-duty GI.
- I am currently in prison.
- I am enclosing \$\_\_\_\_\_ to support your work.
- I would like more information.

name \_\_\_\_\_

address \_\_\_\_\_

zip \_\_\_\_\_

# GI NEWS & WINTER SOLDIER

SUBSCRIBE

- |   |                 |         |              |
|---|-----------------|---------|--------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> GI NEWS  | 12 Issues each: | \$3.00  | GIs          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> WINTER SOLDIER (the monthly, national paper of VVAW/WSO) |                 | \$6.00  | Civilians    |
|   |                 | \$9.00  | Foreign      |
|   |                 | \$15.00 | Institutions |

make checks payable to: VVAW/WSO

name \_\_\_\_\_

address \_\_\_\_\_

zip \_\_\_\_\_

# End homeporting, nuclear arms, U.S. military bases!

## Japanese Demonstrate



October 6, 1974 - Yokosuka - Banner supporting MIDWAY sailor Mike Hammond.

(Yokosuka, Japan - October 6, 1974) Over thirty thousand Japanese people demonstrated in Yokosuka, Japan, on October 6, 1974, demanding an end to the homeporting of US ships in Japan, the stationing of US troops in Japan and the possession of nuclear weapons in Japan.

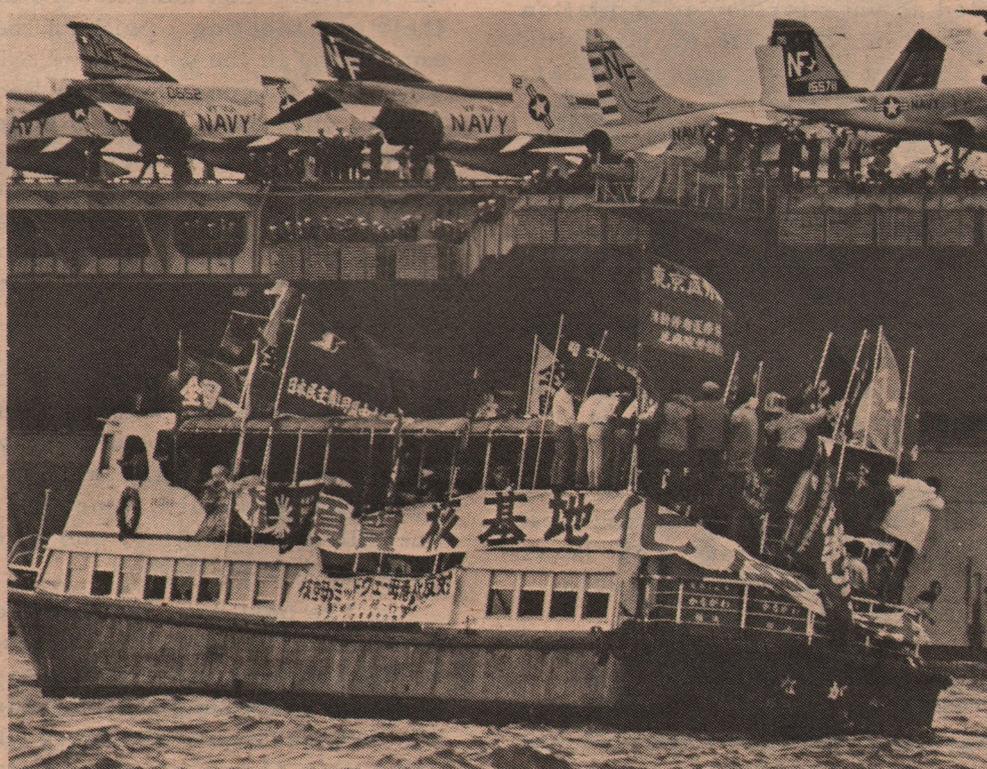
The most important ship that the Japanese people are concerned with is the USS MIDWAY, an aircraft carrier that arrived in Japan in October of 1973. The Japanese people are also very concerned about recent revelations that nuclear weapons are being carried aboard the MIDWAY (and secreted at US military installations in Japan) in violation of the Japanese-US treaty which prohibits the carrying or storage of nuclear weapons in Japan. During the August trials of the sailors who walked off the MIDWAY in June, Mike Hammond, one of the sailors charged, stated that one of the reasons that he left the ship was because of the nuclear weapons being carried. And on October 27, sources in Japan revealed that a secret "transit agreement" permitting the US to bring nuclear arms temporarily into Japan was concluded without a Japanese text so that it could be denied to the people of Japan. The Japanese people are terrified of nuclear weapons, and rightly so, since 300,000 of their people were killed as a result of the atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan, during World War II. This recently revealed secret agreement was made in 1960 by Japan's foreign minister and the US ambassador and allows for US aircraft and ships to bring in nuclear weapons during routine landings and port calls.

The people of Japan have been struggling against US military interference in their country ever since the end of World War II. Since the signing of the Mutual Security Treaty of 1951, the US has made Japan a "junior partner"

of US imperialism in the western Pacific and has set up US bases all Japan. The Japanese people were opposed to these bases, and they showed their opposition by demonstrating on many occasions. This frightened the US, and so it decided it would be helpful for Japan to begin a limited military buildup so they could protect the US bases.

By 1960, the US and Japanese governments were all the more committed to maintaining US bases. They were also more committed to building up Japanese military forces, but not just for defending US bases; this joint agreement signaled a new role for Japan as the first line of defense for US and Japanese business interests in Asia. This new role became even more publicly formalized with the announcement of the Nixon Doctrine in 1969, which in essence meant that local and regional powers such as Japan would do most of the fighting while the US stood ready in

October 5, 1973 - Yokosuka - Japanese workers sail out to protest arrival of USS MIDWAY.



the background to intervene - particularly with nuclear weapons if necessary.

But this buildup was very unpopular with the majority of the Japanese people, and they took to the streets many times in the 60's in protest to the militarization of their country, and in particular to the use of their country as a staging area for US military operations in Indochina.

By the time the USS MIDWAY arrived in Yokosuka on October 5, 1973, it was being opposed by daily demonstrations of up to 30,000 people. And again this October, on the anniversary of the arrival of the MIDWAY, the Japanese people took to the streets to protest US military presence in Japan.

The reason for homeporting of the MIDWAY in Japan goes back to the beginning of this century when the US began to expand its business operations in Asia and the western Pacific. Today that drive for profits in the Pacific is stronger than ever. Hundreds of US multinational corporations are trying to gain control of raw materials sources in such places as the Micronesian Islands, Indonesia, Vietnam and Cambodia. They are also trying desperately to hand on to what they already have in such places as South Korea, The Philippines and Taiwan. Homeporting was implemented to help US corporations do just that.

Using giant carriers like the MIDWAY, homeporting is a powerful tool. But 30,000 people marching in the street and sailors walking off the ship are also powerful political tools - tools which we must continue to use to force the US military and its nuclear weapons out of Japan.

### SOLIDARITY WITH THE JAPANESE PEOPLE

CONTACT: VVAW/WSO, PO Box 26, Yokosuka-shi, Kanagawa-ken, Japan.

## Camp Hague, Okinawa

# Marines Go On 'Strike'

(Camp Hague, Okinawa, Japan)

On Sunday, September 10, the entire Motor Transport section of HQ Battery, Second Battalion, 12th Marines, Camp Hague, Okinawa - over 40 people - refused to work until their living and working conditions were changed. Instead of going to work that day, they called a meeting, presented their grievances to the Motor Transport Officer, and refused to work until they saw the Commanding General.

The strike was an incredible success. In the week following the one-day work stoppage, sweeping improvements were instituted in the mess halls, barracks and working conditions around 2/12, Camp Hague, considered by almost everyone on the island to be the most rundown base on Okinawa.

2/12 came back from three months training at Mt. Fuji, Japan, on August 3rd. From that date until September 10, they received only three days of liberty. Plus, almost everyone in Motor T had been working every night until 10:00 - sometimes until 2:00 AM.

Why were they working so hard? Was it for an emergency mount out or because a typhoon had wiped out the motor pool? No, it was only because a general known as the IG was coming to pay a visit, and Motor T's equipment had been neglected by personnel in the past to such an extent that the brass feared they would fail the inspection if they didn't work their people half to death.

But it was more than just overly long working hours that forced the men to take action. Hague was supposedly evaluated as unfit for human habitation by an Army inspection team in the mid-50's. But that hasn't stopped the Marine Corps from billeting people there ever since. When it rained, the floors in the Motor T barracks got covered with puddles. The toilets and urinals were usually clogged and overflowing. Toilet paper was as scarce as caviar for Sunday breakfast. The hot water didn't work unless the snuffies fixed it themselves several times a day. Most of the people didn't have mattress covers or pillows, hardly anyone had pillow cases; plus, the barracks were so cramped that many people couldn't open their wall lockers without moving their racks out of the way first. And "luxuries" such as writing desks or cubes were unheard of.

Then there was the mess hall. There was no milk over 50% of the time. Shortages of silverware were so acute that often people had to wait half an hour in line for all utensils. Bugs ran rampant all over the place, and often



the floor was so greasy it was dangerous to walk on.

And of course, there was the petty harassment. People were ordered to get haircuts when their hair was well within Marine Corps regs, just because they didn't wear high 'n tights like the lifers. And the same tired civilian attire regs that most Marines on Okinawa get hassled with; no sandals without socks, no earrings, no beltloop pants without a belt, no frayed trousers, no open-neck shirts, no body shirts... you name it, you couldn't wear it.

On September 10, when they were ordered to work for the third Sunday in a row, they stood as a group and refused. Forty Marines, acting like human beings, not robots -- and the brass, never having had to deal with something like that before, could not handle it!

After their refusal to work, the Motor Transport Officer very respectfully asked them to come together (something they had managed to do by themselves) for a meeting to "get everything out in the open." They all went, expecting it would not amount to much, which it didn't. But, after the lieutenant left, the men hung around and had their own meeting... without the lieutenant getting in the way. With a little advice from a counselor from People's House, they drew up a two-page typewritten list of grievances, to be filed the next day against the company commander under Article 138, UCMJ (the article gives you a way to complain about your CO, and give the complaint some punch).

That night, they were questioned by CIT (the Marine's crack Counter Intelligence Team), about holding "an unauthorized gathering on base." It seemed a bit absurd, since the lieutenant called the meeting, and no one knows of him being questioned.

The next day, they all requested mast to the Commanding General and informed the command that they all had individual 138 complaints against the CO. The request mast chits were filled out, and within 24 hours, results started happening. The CG (freaked out by the work stoppage) was on Hague by 9:00

AM, and he toured the barracks. His comment? "My dog lives better than this."

Within a few days, Motor T was moved into other barracks (which had been used illegally to store mess gear) that were in decent shape. Everyone was issued new pillows, pillow cases, and mattress covers, the mess hall was improved over night, base maintenance fixed all the toilets, and urinals and hot water systems. Except for a few people per night, everyone has been knocking off work at 4:30 sharp. And nobody works Sundays.

The Hague civilian attire regs are somewhat different, too. Open front shirts, sandals without socks, etc. are authorized.

A lot of people in the military complain about the lousy conditions and bad treatment. But Motor T section, HQ Battery, 2/12, took that crucial step and did something about it. And because everyone - of all races and all ranks (below E-6) - stuck together, their action was successful. And it is only through this type of unified action - unity between both white and non-white GIs - that conditions will change in the military.

The military is obviously not concerned with the working and living conditions of lower-ranking GIs; conditions such as those at Camp Hague exist at hundreds of US bases and ships all over the world. If the military was set up to serve the majority of the people in the US then it would see to it that GIs didn't have to put up with lousy conditions and long hours; but it isn't. The only purpose of the military is to protect US business interests all over the world. It is this system of monopolies - imperialism - that must be destroyed before we can improve all living and working conditions for good. Otherwise, the conditions at Camp Hague will soon deteriorate back to the same lousy condition they were in in September. Only through continued action throughout the military will GIs be able to improve all working and living conditions once and for all.



Chicago

# GI Conference

More than 65 people from 25 different groups attended the conference of GIs and GI organizers held during the weekend of October 11 - 14. The conference was called by VVAW/WSO for the purpose of trying to arrive at a minimum form of programmatic unity to apply toward organizing within the US military.

During the conference, much time was devoted to discussing past experience, political views on different topics effecting GI organizing and possible activities for the future. While it was recognized that there were important political differences among many of the groups attending the conference, we did arrive at agreement on several important points. (It should be noted that resolutions passed by the conference were only a "sense of the body" and are not binding on any groups attending.) A resolution was passed that calls for local demonstrations and actions at or near US military bases all over the world on Armed Forces Day, May 17, 1975. Many of the groups, including VVAW/WSO, will be planning actions for Armed Forces Day where feasible and desirable.

A lot of discussion was devoted to the role of GIs and the fact that they are often used to break strikes or to act as riot police. The conference saw the need to strengthen ties between labor struggles going on in civilian society and the struggles of GIs, and also to do more work around the possible use of GIs in riot situations. We also saw the need to do more education around the possible use of GIs in situations similar

to martial law, like the current situation in Boston for which the 82nd Airborne has been put on alert.

The oppression of Third World people in the military received a considerable amount of discussion both because of the seriousness of the oppression and because racism is continually used by the brass to divide white and non-white GIs, preventing them from uniting. There was considerable debate however, over whether separate organizations should be encouraged for Third World GIs since many participants felt that the basis of unity in the struggle against imperialism in this country is that both white and non-white people are part of a multi-national working class. Everyone agreed that Third World people have the right to form their own organizations, and that in many cases this may be the only way they can build organized resistance to the racism and oppression of the military. But others felt that multi-national, multi-racial groups represented a higher form of unity, and in general, this form of organization should be the type that is encouraged the most.

An equally important topic at the conference was the oppression of women in the military, especially in light of the increased numbers of women who are entering the military. While many women are joining the military today for primarily economic reasons, they are still being denied entry into many jobs that are still considered "men's" jobs. However, even though women are getting into many different fields in the military, it is more because the mil-

itary is in serious need of people in these fields than because they like women. These new job positions should not be looked at as the new 'liberated' military, because in fact the same old male chauvinist attitudes remain and are continually promoted among men. Women are getting tired of being looked at as someone who is supposed to look 'attractive' for THE MEN. Serious discussion was devoted to finding ways of breaking down attitudes of chauvinism among men. It was also recognized that Third World women face an even worse situation in the white, male-dominated military.

Although there was disagreement on many issues, many of the groups there, including VVAW/WSO, will continue to work to develop programs and campaigns to end the racism, sexism, intimidation and harassment that GIs face every day, as well as trying to improve the lousy living and working conditions. We also recognized the importance of building solidarity among GIs with the struggles of people in other countries, such as South Korea, The Philippines, South Vietnam, Cambodia, and the countries of Africa, the Middle East and Latin America, especially Puerto Rico, where the US military may someday be called on to stop Puerto Ricans from taking control of their own economy. Imperialism is a system that oppresses people everywhere - in the military, the factory, and all workplaces as well as in other countries where US businesses are getting rich from the sweat and blood of the people. It is only through unified, militant action that imperialism will be defeated.

UNITE TO FIGHT ALL OPPRESSION!



Woman handling mooring line aboard USS SANCTUARY.

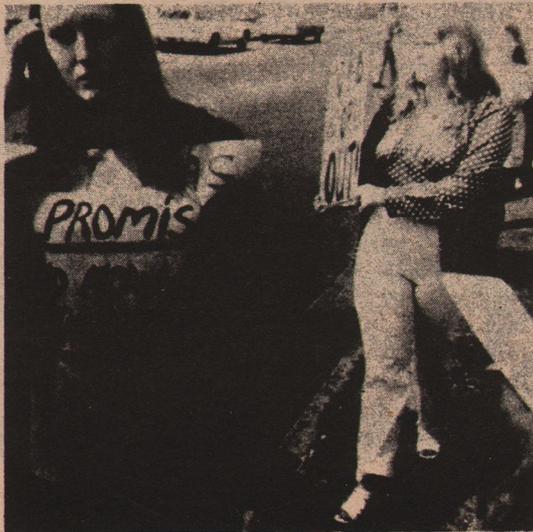
# Navy families fight cutback

## Variable Re-enlistment Bonus

People who signed up in the Navy under the 2x6 program are getting the shaft from Congress. Under this program, a person would enlist for four years and at the same time obligate themselves to extend for an additional two years at the end of their four-year hitch. The program was designed to attract people into certain job categories by offering them advanced schooling. In return for this training, the Navy was to give a good-sized re-enlistment bonus when the person began their two-year extension. This bonus amounted to anywhere from \$4,000 to \$6,000.

However, on June 1st of this year Congress passed a bill entitled the Armed Forces Enlisted Personnel Bonus Revision Act of 1974 which eliminated the Variable Re-enlistment Bonuses (VRB) for thousands of GIs. Most of the GIs involved are those who enlisted in the Navy's 2x6 program prior to June 1st. The new bonus system lowers the bonus to between \$800 and \$1,000.

A group of women whose husbands are stationed aboard the USS LONG BEACH and the USS BAINBRIDGE have



Sailors' wives protesting VRB cut at Long Beach Naval Base.

filed a class action law suit against the Navy because this new bill has lowered considerably the bonus that their husbands and many other sailors were promised when they signed up. They have formed a group known as VRB-OUT (Variable Re-enlistment Bonus or Out). There is also another VRB-OUT

chapter that has been formed among Navy personnel at Newport News, Virginia. They have filed a similar suit which demands that people who signed up under this VRB provision be allowed to leave the military after their four years if the Navy does not pay the original bonus.

In late August, the women in Long Beach staged a small but very effective demonstration across from Gate 1 at the Long Beach Naval Base in California.

As the general crisis of imperialism grows, the people who run this country will continue to push the crisis onto the backs of working people and GIs and their families through inflation and cutbacks in services. They will also not hesitate to pull such tricks as breaking a re-enlistment contract and lowering the bonus as with the VRB. The solution to these attacks is to do what the people in Long Beach and Newport News have done: organize and fight back!

(Thanks to GI FIGHT BACK, published by the GI Rights Center in Long Beach, and GRAPES OF WRATH, published by the Defense Committee in Tidewater, Virginia.)

CONTACT: VRB-OUT, c/o Steve Swanson, 13223 Aqueduct Dr., Apt 9, Newport News, VA 23602.

## Hawaii

# Soldiers & Strikers

Since February 1, 1974, a small unit of aircraft mechanics has been on strike in Hawaii. One of the main reasons why this strike has not been settled is because of the use of military men (Army and Air Force) as scabs.

**History** - In July, 1972, the Hawaiian Air Tour Service (HATS) mechanics voted to be represented by the International Association of Mechanics Union (IAM). Since January, 1973, they have been trying to negotiate a first contract with millionaire owner Hans Mueller. Long months went by with no progress. Finally, when Mueller fired one of the workers for refusing to test fly a plane when he was sick with the flu, the workers decided they had had enough and voted 100% to strike.

**Strike Issues** - The mechanics want union security to protect their organized status and strength. They want substantial wage increases. Their current pay ranges from \$2.15 to \$3.70 an hour.

less than half of what mechanics at Hawaiian or Aloha Airlines make. They have not received a pay increase since July, 1972!

Overtime has been almost compulsory for HATS workers, but they receive only straight-time pay. The union wants to stop forced overtime and win premium pay.

**Military Strikebreakers** - These workers have even more hassles because Army and Air Force members have taken parttime jobs at HATS. By taking these jobs, these military people are acting as strikebreakers.

The striking HATS workers had this to say about military people taking their jobs:

"The military is supposed to protect our lives and jobs. Instead they help themselves to our jobs and steal our livelihood. We know these military men may need the extra money; the military pays so little."



**GI's Are Not Strikebreakers** - The use of military personnel as scabs during a strike is not unusual. That is one of the reasons that the wealthy people fought so hard to create a federal standing army in the early days of our country. Eventually soldiers were used both as scabs and to attack striking workers. But strikebreaking is not in the interests of the rank and file GIs, nor is it in the interest of their families. In fact, some soldiers may even be called on to scab on a strike that their own mother or father is a part of.

It is the right of all workers to strike to protect their income, safety and their job. You can help protect that right by refusing to take part in any strikebreaking activity.

GI'S ARE NOT STRIKEBREAKERS!

BUILD GI/WORKER SOLIDARITY!

# fighting the regs

DOD 1325.6

## Dissident and Protest Activities

Contrary to what you may have been told about reading "radical" newspapers like GI NEWS or WINTER SOLDIER, and contrary to what you may have been told about hanging out at a nearby bookstore or GI counseling center, and contrary to what you may have been told about demonstrating with the "radicals" out on the strip, these and many other forms of protest are perfectly legal according to Department of Defense Directive 1325.6. Since this Directive is one of the few military laws which guarantees any rights to GIs, it is not likely that anyone has taken the time to explain it to you. But DOD Directive 1325.6 was signed into law by the Secretary of Defense in September of 1969, and it is to your benefit to know about its contents.

According to DOD 1325.6, a member of the armed forces has the right to belong to a GI organization, work at an off-base anti-imperialist or GI movement bookstore, coffeehouse or center, work on an "underground/GI newspaper" possess written materials, display political stickers on your private vehicle, and demonstrate. Now, let's take a take a closer look at each one of these rights.

It is perfectly legal for a service person to belong to an organization such as VVAW/WSO. The only hassle that might arise would be if on-base meetings of the group were held, and in this case the brass would have to prove that "the activity on the installation is presenting a clear danger to the loyalty, discipline or morale of the troops."

The military does not have the right to stop any member of the armed forces from working at or going to an off-base movement center or to organizational meetings unless the center or meeting place has been legally placed off limits, "if activities there include counseling GIs to desert, involve or do things that would have an adverse effect on the GI's health, morale or welfare."

As far as newspapers go, like WINTER SOLDIER or GI NEWS, and any other printed material you may have in your possession, there is no way the brass can legally take a personal copy of a paper or book away from you. DOD 1325.6, paragraph IIIa (2), states that



"mere possession of unauthorized material may not be prohibited." The only way they can take papers away is if you have more than one copy of any single issue, and they can prove you are intending to distribute them. Also, as long as you are off base, out of uniform, off duty and not using government materials the brass cannot stop you from working on the staff of a GI newspaper.

Any member of the armed forces has the right to demonstrate in the United States. If done on base, you may run into some hassles because of the supposed "disruptive nature" of the activity. But off base you have the right to demonstrate against the war, military oppression, imperialism and just about any other issue. The only times demonstrations are illegal is "when on duty, in uniform, in a foreign country, when violence is likely to break out, or when the activity constitutes a breach of law and order." Most demonstrations that are held off base do not violate any of these conditions.

So now that you know that it is legal to do most of the things that you've been threatened out of doing, what can

you do to stop the harassment? Well, if someone takes a copy of WINTER SOLDIER or GI NEWS or any other printed material away from you, file an Article 121 (larceny and wrongful appropriation) against the person. If you are told that you will get busted or restricted if you go to a demonstration, and this was told to you while the person was acting in some official capacity, the person was telling you a lie and charges can be filed under Article 107 (false official statements). Or you can file an Article 138 complain for undue harassment.

It is important that you know what few rights that you have and are able to exercise them. Most NCOs and officers don't know crap about military regulations, and if you just take the time to learn a little about the UCMJ, you can avoid a lot of petty harassment. Know your rights, and use them against the brass.

UNITY STRUGGLE VICTORY

(Thanks to GRAPES OF WRATH for the bulk of this article.)

PUBLISHED BY: Vietnam Veterans Against the War/Winter Soldier Organization (VVAW/WSO) at the National Office, 827 West Newport Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60657 (312) 935-2129



Department of Defense Directive 1325.6 forbids anyone in the military from taking single copies of this paper or any other piece of literature from you. If anyone takes it from you, demand a receipt and then file charges against them.

# Independence for Puerto Rico!

The nation of Puerto Rico has been a colony of the United States for more than 75 years, and the people of Puerto Rico have been fighting back against this domination for just as long. One of the high points in their struggle recently was a solidarity rally held in Madison Square Garden in New York City on October 27th. Twenty thousand people attended the rally to show their support for independence, many of whom were from New York City's large Puerto Rican population. Representatives were also there from virtually every progressive organization in the United States, many of whom spoke. The rally organizing committee also received telegrams of support from every progressive country in the world.

Puerto Rico is located several hundred miles off the southeast coast of the US in the Caribbean. It is a classic colony of the United States: a country under the full political and economic control of the US government. Eighty-five percent of all industry on the island is directly controlled by US corporations. Although Puerto Ricans have their own "government" and a constitution, all political decisions are subject to approval from Washington. It is this reality that molds and dictates the lives of Puerto Ricans.

In response to this colonial exploitation, the people of Puerto Rico have begun, as they have many times in the past, to build a massive movement for independence... a movement to free their country. In 1897, they won a large degree of autonomy from Spain in their war for independence. However, in 1898, the island was invaded by armed forces of the United States, which placed the territory under military occupation, dissolved the Parliament and established United States rule by force of arms. Since that time, the US government has done everything in its power to crush the aspirations of the Puerto Rican people for independence.

Today, the US has exclusive jurisdiction over all questions of citizenship, foreign affairs, defense, immigration, emigration, foreign trade, currency, postal service, radio and television; air and maritime transport. Decisions of the Supreme Court of Puerto Rico can be overturned by federal courts of the US, and all laws adopted by the US Congress automatically apply to Puerto Rico.

The US also has absolute control over the economy of Puerto Rico. Investments total over \$1 billion, and now the big oil companies, like EXXON, are planning to build a gigantic superport to handle their oil, something the people there strongly oppose. What makes things even more attractive for US corporations is that all of their profits are exempt from all corporate and personal



Rally in Madison Square Garden, New York - Oct. 27, 1974

income taxes for up to 17 years!

The US also maintains an extensive network of military bases in Puerto Rico, some of which have nuclear weapons on them. At least 13% of the best land is taken up by US bases.

#### What does this domination mean for the Puerto Rican people?

It means that their country will remain stagnant forever. The enormous profits made by US corporations do not get plowed back into the Puerto Rican economy; they get plowed into the bank accounts of corporations like Union Carbide, EXXON, American Metal Climax, Gulf Oil and Sheraton Hotels. For Puerto Rican workers, it has meant wages that are 50% lower than in the US, unemployment that is 30%, and prices 25% higher than in New York City.

The constant drive to squeeze more out of the Puerto Rican worker has meant the implementing of such extensive schemes as Operation Bootstrap the infamous plan to industrialize Puerto Rico. What this scheme has done instead is to create massive unemployment as the agriculture industry was destroyed and the developing industries did not provide enough jobs. The standard of living of the present industrial worker, rather than improving, is constantly deteriorating.

Historically, this had led to militant labor struggles, and today is no exception. In the last year-and-a-half, strikes have been called by such unions as the Electrical Workers Union, the Firemen's Union and the Sanitation workers in San Juan. The government responded by calling out the National Guard. Early this year the government responded to a Teachers Union strike by occupying the schools with police and arresting the teachers. For US corporations and the Puerto Rican "government", this rising militancy calls for only one response: more repression.

This repression has come in the form of everything from political arrests to using the Taft-Hartley law against militant workers. It has also taken the form of bombings of offices like the pro-independence newspaper CLARIDAD and the physical assault of Puerto Rican leaders. And the government is now making plans to revamp the penal code to legalize many new forms of repression.

The domination of Puerto Rico has also meant mass migrations to the US. With the economic situation so bad and the continuing repression, hundreds of thousands of Puerto Ricans have been forced to migrate to the US. Today, at least two million Puerto Ricans reside in the US, more than 40% of the Puerto Rican nation. New York City alone has 1.2 million Puerto Ricans. But this migration has meant little improvement - for many it has only made matters worse. Unemployment in some cities is as high as 50% for Puerto Ricans; for Puerto Rican Vietnam veterans in New York City, the unemployment rate is 60%.

These conditions, however, have not deterred the Puerto Rican people. With the same spirit that continues to guide the heroic struggle of the Vietnamese people, their struggle for independence is growing every day, gaining momentum in workers unions and popular organizations, as well as here in the US. The call for independence for Puerto Rico is a call that deserves the support of all Americans - including GIs, who may someday be called on to put down the struggle of the Puerto Rican people. It is a call that represents not only international solidarity, but a movement to end the cultural genocide and economic pillage of the Puerto Rican nation by US imperialism.

VICTORY TO THE  
PUERTO RICAN PEOPLE!