

# Priest Saved

anon.

1970

WASHINGTON—Seaman Roger Priest, who said he felt it was his “duty to speak out on the Vietnam war,” received nearly the minimum court-martial sentence after being convicted of promoting disloyalty with his anti-war newspaper, “OM.”

Priest was convicted April 27 and received a bad-conduct discharge, a cut in rank and a reprimand. He could have received a total of 39 years in prison for the charges facing him.

“I do not feel what I have done is bad conduct,” Priest said after the verdict.

Although the chief judge had cautioned courtroom spectators against any outbursts, there were gasps and cries when the decision was announced. Priest’s parents wept as they congratulated him.

The Priest decision represents a significant victory for the rights of GIs to act politically while in the service. Priest’s court-martial had virtually been ordered by the drunken head of the House Armed Services Committee, Mendel Rivers. After months of investigation, the Navy finally moved against the seaman in an attempt to stifle the growing dissent in the Navy. It is clear their efforts have failed.

Copies of OM may be obtained from the Roger Priest Defense Committee, Rm. 200, 1029 Vermont, Washington DC 20005 at \$.50 a copy.

A new navy anti-war publication, “Potemkin,” is being written by the men of the U.S.S. Forrestal and printed by the American Servicemen’s Union (ASU) and may be obtained from the ASU, 156 Fifth Ave., Rm. 538, NYC.

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