

Gov't Attacks GI Group

anon.

1971

MADISON, Wisc.—A Federal Grand Jury here has indicted three army enlisted men on charges that they dynamited installations at Camp McCoy, Wisconsin last July 26th, the anniversary of Fidel Castro's attack on the Moncada Barracks.

All three GIs are members of the American Servicemen's Union.

Damage to the camp's central telephone exchange, a Western Electric transformer and the base's waterworks was estimated at \$100,000 by United States Attorney John Olsen. Destruction at the two old WWII buildings housing the telephone exchange was almost total, putting the phone service out of operation for almost a month.

Immediately after the explosions, Pfc. Dannie Kreps, Pfc. Thomas Chase, and Pfc. Steven Geden, a Vietnam veteran, were held for questioning. They were interrogated by army Criminal Investigation Division agents, Military Intelligence and the FBI, who threatened them with charges of sedition, conspiracy, and treason.

Dannie Kreps, a communications instructor, had started his classes for National Guard trainees by saying, "I don't know a hell of a lot about communications but I do know about the American Servicemen's Union." He would then go into a talk about the ASU.

The men were held under barracks arrest until Aug. 19th when a Union lawyer from Madison, David Heitzman, filed a writ of Habeas Corpus in Federal Court, forcing the army to release the three. They were then transferred to Ft. Carson, Colorado.

Several weeks later, a grand jury was convened in Madison to investigate the bombings. At Ft. Carson the soldiers continued to struggle and Chase soon was facing a special court-martial for distributing the Bond, the ASU national newspaper. Geden was thrown into the stockade pending a general court-martial for participating in a demonstration at Ft. Carson's main gate while in uniform.

They were never brought to trial on these charges, however, for at 11 a.m. on Feb. 11th, the three GIs were taken into custody by the FBI and removed to the Federal building in Denver. The Madison grand jury had brought down its indictments.

Kreps and Chase were charged with stealing explosives from the Overgard Quarry near LaCrosse, Wisc. on July 22nd and, along with Geden, carrying out the bombings at Camp McCoy. William Powers, named as a co-conspirator, was not arrested. He is expected to be a government witness. Geden, Chase and Kreps face prison terms of up to 35 years each and individual fines of up to \$30,000.

Terry Klug, National Organizer of the American Servicemen's Union, has said that, "This is a direct attack on the ASU. The Federal Government has felt our strength and now, with the invasion of Laos, and with escalated warfare against the Black Panther Party and all oppressed Third World Peoples, the government, along with the military, is attempting to intimidate the Union by framing three of its key organizers.

"That the announcement of the indictments came directly from Attorney General Mitchell makes it clear that this will be a major government attack on the GI movement. The Union will take whatever measures are necessary to keep this attack from succeeding."

Geden and Kreps are being held on \$15,000 bail each and Chase on \$25,000. Contributions for their defense can be sent to The Camp McCoy Three Defense Committee, 156 Fifth Avenue, Room 538, New York City 10010.

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