

# Anti-War GIs Face Trial, Court Martial

Louie Collins

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Can the Army brass deny a GI his constitutional rights to hold and express ideas differing from those held by the administration in Washington—including ideas in direct opposition to the Vietnam war?

These are the key issues of civil liberties in the now celebrated case of Howard Petrick, the twenty one year old Fort Hood based Pfc., recently threatened with court martial solely for expressing his anti-war and socialist — oriented beliefs to his fellow soldiers.

Pfc. Petrick, who prior to his induction had been active in the Minneapolis socialist movements, now faces the tentative charges of “subversion,” making “disloyal statements,” and creating “disaffection” within the armed forces, each of which carries a maximum sentence of three years hard labor.

There is no question of infraction of military rules on the part of Pfc. Petrick, nor has there ever been a single disciplinary action taken against him. Since his induction, Petrick has maintained an excellent service record, and is regarded by his immediate superiors and fellow GIs as a good soldier.

However, April 1, Pfc. Petrick returned from a ten day leave to find that his locker had been searched and literature removed. He also discovered that his GI buddies had been questioned about him, and that they too had had their lockers searched for any literature he might have supplied them with.

The case of Pfc. Howard Petrick follows on the heels of the arrest of Gary Rader, the much publicized reserve Green Beret—now awaiting court — martial after demonstrating his opposition to the draft by openly burning his draft card at the April 15<sup>th</sup> Mobilization in New York.

Similarly related is the now “successful” court-martial of Pvt. John Morgan, the young Marine who denounced the Vietnam War and who is now serving out a six month term In the Camp Pendleton Military Prison.

Earlier, Morgan had served several months after turning himself in AWOL. Upon release, he was ordered to Pendleton for shipment to Vietnam.

After being -refused release from Vietnam duty, Pvt. Morgan once again chose the AWOL route, whereupon the ensuing court-martial and conviction took place.

Since his first arrest, Pvt. Morgan has petitioned his home state senator—Fulbright, Dem., Arkansas—for discharge from the Marines, although thus far, his efforts have apparently been ignored.

## Related

- *Fifth Estate's* Vietnam Resource Page.
- Review Denied for Fort Hood Three, FE #40, October 15–31, 1967



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