

# Victory at Ft. Jackson

Fifth Estate Collective

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JACKSON, N.C.—The Army announced May 20 its “final disposition of the cases of the three anti-war soldiers who had been in the Fort Jackson stockade for two months.

There will be no courts-martial for Joseph Cole, Eugene Jose Rudder and Andrew Pulley; they were released from the stockade today and the Army says that they will be discharged from the service in short order.

The decision to drop charges was made by base commander Brig. Gen. James Hollingsworth on the recommendation of Col. Harold Miller, presiding officer of the Article 32 hearings held last month.

Miller’s review of the evidence led him to submit a recommendation last week that the men not be court martialled. The convening officer, Col. William DeBrock, overruled this decision but was in turn overruled by Gen. Hollingsworth.

One of the factors inducing Hollingsworth to make this retreat may have been the prospect of a resumption of habeas corpus proceedings. On Monday, May 19, the 4<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court of Appeals sent down a 20-page opinion remanding the question of release of the men to district court for a hearing on its merits “with due dispatch.”

Eight members of GIs United Against the War in Vietnam at Fort Jackson originally faced the threat of court martial for their part in an antiwar meeting on the barracks lawn March 20.

With the release of the three GIs and the simultaneous announcement that the Army is dropping charges against Pvt. Tommie Woodfin and plans to discharge him, all eight are now free. Not a single one was brought to trial.

At a press conference here today, Matilde Zimmermann of the GI Civil Liberties Defense Committee hailed the Fort Jackson developments as a triumph for the legal and public defense of GI rights.

Diane Schuder, one of the attorneys for the Fort Jackson GIs, pointed to the injunctive suit still pending against Gen. Hollingsworth and to the habeas corpus petitions as precedent-setting affirmations of the First Amendment rights of citizens in uniform.

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