

Brass v. GIs United

Fifth Estate Collective

1969

COLUMBIA, S.C. — The Army brass at Ft. Jackson is still trying to screw GIs for exercising their Constitutional rights. (See last issue, p.15 [“Free Speech for GIs: Analysis of a victory” by Michael Smith, FE #82, June 26-July 9, 1969] for background story.)

Pvt. Tommy Woodfin, one of the founders of GIs United Against the War in Vietnam, has just come through a second court martial. He was acquitted on two counts, but plead guilty to a third count of being Absent Without Official Leave. Woodfin went AWOL on Memorial Day to visit his sick girlfriend in a New York hospital. He was sentenced to one month at hard labor and busted in rank.

The light penalty was the result of the defense counsel’s presentation of the fact that at the time he went AWOL Woodfin had not had a weekend pass since February. In addition, Woodfin testified that when he had explained to his commanding officer that his girlfriend was in the hospital and he wanted to see her, he was told, “You’ll get a pass when you’re soldier enough.”

He was acquitted of the charge that he had used “provocative language” to a sergeant and also assaulted him in a chow line dispute.

Pvt. Joseph Miles, another founder of GIs United, who was transferred to Ft. Bragg, has not been shipped to Alaska as reported in our last issue.

Miles’ attorneys filed for an injunction barring his transfer, but it was denied by Federal Judge Algernon Butler at a hearing in Clinton, S.C. Miles is presently scheduled to be shipped North on July 14.

He and the Ft. Bragg chapter of GIs United are protesting his reassignment. They are circulating a petition on the base which charges that the Alaska transfer is an attack on the right of all GIs to speak out on the war and demands that the orders be revoked immediately.

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