

# Dix Brass Plot Vengeance

Bob Heilbroner

1969

NEW YORK (LNS)—The Army is planning a heavy vengeance for the June 5 rebellion of over 150 GIs imprisoned in the Ft. Dix stockade. [See “Army Stockades Blow,” FE #84, July 24-August 6, 1969.]

Apparently, 38 prisoners have already been hit with some kind of charge, or to declare the nature of the charges.

The charges which we do know about are exceedingly severe. Nine GIs are known to be charged with riot and inciting to riot (the latter is a 10 year rap). Five of these are also charged with conspiracy to riot (another 10 years).

In addition, one of the above, Terry Klug, an organizer from the American’s Servicemen’s Union, is charged with will-full damage of government property (1 gov. footlocker: \$13.36–6 months) and aggravated arson (1 barracks: \$12,16920 years). A Black GI organizer, Tom Tuck, has been charged with riot and willful damage of government property.

At least 19 of the rebel prisoners have been kept in “segregation” (solitary confinement) for the last three weeks. They have been refused any contact with friends, family, lawyers, or other stockade inmates.

Tom Tuck was held in segregation without food for 72 hours after the rebellion, then manacled and paraded around before the other prisoners as an “example.”

GIs call the Dix Stockade the “pound,” fit only for a dog. Eight hundred men are crammed into prison, built to hold 250. Most of them are there for being AWOL.

For months the stockade GIs have been protesting interference with their mail to friends and lawyers, racist treatment of black and Puerto Rican prisoners, brutalization and intimidation of prisoners by guards, starvation rations, poor sanitary conditions, and having to wait months for trial.

The June 5 rebellion is not the first incident in the Dix stockade, though in the past the brass has been more successful in instituting a news black-out.

The rebellion seems to have been touched off when stockade inmates were forced to stand in formation for five hours without break through the hottest part of the day, then forced to wait in line three hours for dinner just to find that there were only enough water bowls for half the men (prisoners are served their water in bowls at the Pound.)

A prisoner, Private Chabot, requested a water bowl and his request was followed by others. Chabot was arrested and put into “segregation.”

As word of Chabot’s punishment reached cell block 67, the GIs began to tear the place up. Mattresses were set aflame, furniture thrown out the windows and windows smashed. The rebellion spread to cell block 66, then over to cell block 84. Over 150 men took part.

The brass sent in a force of 250 MPs and other troops equipped with riot guns, bayonets, and tear gas to smash the riot. ASU organizer Bill Brakefield (veteran of a City College sanctuary) was beaten unconscious. Another GI was thrown down the stockade stairs by the MPs.

A Puerto Rican GI was kicked in the head by an MP captain after being knocked to the ground. One MP who is a ASU member reports that MP captain Williams said, “I hope they riot some more so we can really gas the whole place and teach them a lesson.”

Klug, Brakefield, and 18 other prisoners were put into segregation cells. The next day, Tom Tuck was put into a segregation cell for “suspected Black Panther activities.”

The information that 38 prisoners have already been charged, and that more may follow, comes from a letter sent to the ASU by Col. James C. Schultze, Acting Provost Marshall General at Dix.

Schultze turned down an ASU request to contact the prisoners (“segregating the identified participants of the disturbance from the main body of the population is necessary in order that a thorough and accurate investigation may be accomplished”) and the ASU’s request for an inspection of the prisoners’ health by the Medical Committee for Human Rights (“There is no legal authority for inspection of stockades by private civilian investigators”).

Schultze goes on to explain that while it is true that 9 prisoners were taken to the base hospital, “there was no physical contact between MPs and the prisoners.” The injuries, he explains, were “sustained during the mass evacuation from the barracks.”

In spite of the Army’s efforts to suppress all information regarding the rebellion, more and more information keeps seeping out of Dix—through discharged GIs, MP members of the ASU (Military Police duty is by assignment, not voluntary), and smuggled tapes and letters.

One of the prisoners writes of a GI who has two years to go on a previous rap. The brass offered to release him immediately if he would be a witness against his fellow prisoners. He told them he had been asleep throughout the rebellion and hadn’t seen a thing.

At the time of the rebellion, Terry Klug was serving out a three year sentence for desertion. He had deserted on July 26, 1967 to Paris, where he was doing organizing work among other U.S. Army deserters.

Klug returned to the U.S. on January 17, 1969, saying “I have urged other GIs to resist the pigs that are destroying us, our country, and the rest of the world...I feel that I must return to resist and fight for what I believe in, and where my struggle will be most effective. And, above all, I want it to be known that I am returning to my country as an anti-war activist, and as an ASU organizer.”

In a letter smuggled out of the Dix stockade June 25, Klug says: “You know how the military works. They’d love to put some of us away for life because they know we can never possibly return to this society as docile, decent citizens.”

“I think the biggest factor in this case—which will decide whether we win or not—is outside support, in order to expose, disarm, and embarrass the military.

“As I’ve said, we want out. But we want out knowing that we have played our part in helping to destroy this obscene beast.

“We will under no circumstances back down, make any agreements, or accept any bargains or deals. We want this to be a head-on collision.”

FORT DIX, N.J., July 29—The following letter was sent from three members of the American Servicemen’s Union who are being held in the Fort Dix Stockade on charges of rioting, which hold up to forty years in prison per man, to their brothers in the stockade at Fort Riley, who participated in a work stoppage on July 21: (No charges have been announced at Fort Riley.)

Brothers of Riley:

We the accused of the Ft. Dix riot of June 5, now known as the Ft. Dix 38, wish to express our solidarity to the accused of the Ft. Riley protest.

We realize that we are all struggling for freedom, peace and an end to the fascist imperialism which is dominating our lives both in the military and under the current U.S. government.

We salute you as our brothers and send our peace.

Peace be with you,

William Brakefield

Om Shanti,

Jeffrey D. Russell

Hasta la victoria siempre

Terry G. Klug

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