

GIs Resist the War

News Items

Fifth Estate Collective

1969

GIs Resist the WarFort Dix

FT. DIX, N.J.—The trials of the Ft. Dix 38 accused of a variety of charges stemming from a stockade rebellion last June are continuing.

On Nov. 20 Pvt. Thomas Catlow was convicted at his court-martial of aggravated arson and riot despite the Fire Chief's testimony that fire damage was of such a minor nature he did not even bother to examine it closely.

Pvt. Terry Klug's trial began Dec. 1, and is continuing at this writing. Klug is an organizer for the American Servicemen's Union (ASU) and has been singled out for attack by the Army's Criminal Investigation Division (CID). Klug testified during Catlow's court martial that CID men had told him, "We're really going to get you now, Klug."

Catlow's sentence was incredibly light—a dishonorable discharge, loss of pay, but no time.

This way the Army looks generous. Besides, he already spent the last six months in solitary confinement waiting for trial. Now the Army can really nail the next two "ringleaders"—Klug and Pvt. William Bekersfield—for the rebellion in which 150 GIs tore apart their cell blocks.

The Army needs these convictions to make the men from the stockade appear as nothing more than criminal rioters. For them to do otherwise would mean they would have to admit to the charges of filth, corruption, brutality and overcrowding that were the reason for the June rebellion. The ASU says the Dix stockade is no different than those anywhere else in the world.

The mood of the soldiers at Dix perhaps can be best judged by the scene outside the courtroom where Catlow was just convicted and about 20 angry and disgusted GIs had gathered.

"They just try to turn you into a goddam machine."

"When the Army decided to fuck you, they don't let anything stop them."

Suddenly the evening bugle sounds across the bleak fort. It sounds like something out of Rin Tin Tin.

The soldiers make for the inside of the courtroom—you don't have to salute during the bugle call if you're indoors—but the Court is closed.

"Now what do we do?"

They look at each other, embarrassed, and at the 15 MPs watching them.

"I'm not saluting the damned flag now," says one.

A five-foot-five MP captain turns and snaps at the men, "Soldiers do you hear that music?!"

Painfully, they adopt sloppy mock salutes. A few of them, with civilians blocking the MP's view, don't salute at all.

"I feel like my hand has just committed a crime," says one of them.

Official Pentagon figures for the number of US troops in Vietnam, Aug. 31 to Oct. 2:

Aug. 31 509,800

Sept. 4 509,600

Sept. 11 508,000

Sept. 18 510,200

Sept. 25 511,500

Oct. 2 509,600

Net Withdrawal in 6 weeks 200

At this rate the US would withdraw 1732 men every 12 months and be out of Vietnam in 294 years.

(Reprinted from I.F. Stone's Weekly)

Brass Worried

WASHINGTON, D.C.—The Brass are getting more and more uptight about the use of grass and drugs in 'Nam and on domestic bases. Three-fourths of a recent issue of *Commanders Digest* was devoted to the "dangers" of marijuana. Dope busts are on the rise in the service, but no one seriously thinks this will stop the men from turning on.

Peace Fast

PLEIKKU, RVN — Over 100 GIs from the 71st Medical Detachment fasted for peace in Vietnam by giving up their Thanksgiving dinners. Fasts were also reported in several scattered units on a smaller scale.

GIs Demand Rights

FT. BRAGG, N.C.—GIs at this base have brought a suit in Federal Court arguing that their 1st Amendment rights cannot be restricted by the military. GIs United Against the War in Vietnam want to distribute their publication "Bragg Briefs" without harassment from the brass. Commanding General Tolson says the contents of the GI paper "presented a clear danger to the loyalty, discipline and morale of my command." Write on, brothers.

Local Action

DETROIT—Although the Motor City is not much of a serviceman's town (Mendal Rivers and Strom Thurmond keep all the bases in the South) there has been some important anti-war GI work here. "Broken Arrow", the GI paper at Selfridge Air Force Base is still publishing from Box 9571, North End Sta., Detroit 48202 and a new paper, *Veteran's Peace Offensive*, is put out bi-monthly by GIs and Vets Against the War at 5705 Woodward, Detroit, 48202 for \$1.50 for a six month subscription.

GIs from Ft. Knox were here on Dec. 5 and ran down about their organizing attempts and the shit they have been getting from trying to start a GI coffeehouse in Maldraugh, Ky. The meeting was held at the Unitarian Church on Cass and Forest which is fast becoming a community meeting place. The 50 persons there also got to see Newsreel's new flic "Army" which was excellent. If you want to use it call 833-7885.

Free Richard Chase

FT. HOOD, Tex.—GIs at this base are organizing support for Pvt. Richard Chase who is being court-martialed for refusing to take riot training. The brother knows that the only purpose of this training is to prepare for the suppression of blacks, workers and students when they try to fight for their rights. Ft. Hood had 43 black GIs refuse to go to Chicago during the 1968 Democratic Convention for riot duty because they knew they might be forced to fight their own people.

Editors' Note: The *Fifth Estate* will be expanding its coverage of the GI movement and invites all servicemen who read our paper to send us their personal experiences, service publications or opinions. Also, we are offering our GI readers a free bumpersticker which reads "Bring All the Troops Home Now." Maybe you can put one on your tank or the side of your ship.

Sidebar

"I think now that we must, as has been said again and again from this stage, talk about the next steps. It is obvious that these monthly demonstrations that have brought millions of people into the street must continue. But I think now that it has to be said that they must continue with a new militancy.

"A militancy that brings the mutiny that was started by Company A in Vietnam into every factory and every schoolhouse and every Army base in this land. I think the next concerted campaign has got to begin to support American GIs who are organizing against this war.

"Because when GIs and freaks, short hairs and long hairs, unite against imperialism, Richard Nixon better turn himself into an astronaut if he wants to find a safe place to travel..."

—Rennie Davis Nov. 15, Washington, D.C.

Related

See *Fifth Estate's* Vietnam Resource Page.



Fifth Estate Collective
GIs Resist the War
News Items
1969

<https://www.fifthestate.org/archive/94-december-11-24-1969/gis-resist-the-war>
Fifth Estate #94, December 11-24, 1969

fifthestate.anarchistlibraries.net