

ASU forms at Selfridge

Fifth Estate Collective

1970

Things may never be the same again at Selfridge Air Force Base of Mt. Clemens.

Several of the Marines, Airmen and one Navy man stationed at the base are forming a chapter of the American Serviceman's Union (ASU) and this has meant trouble for the brass at every base where the Union exists.

The ASU is committed to support of the enlisted man, the removal of all officer privileges and the stopping of the Armed Forces from being used in a politically reactionary way.

The Fifth Estate talked to several of the men active in organizing the Selfridge chapter.

Bruce Reaves is a Marine Lance Corporal who spent 13 months in Vietnam. He became angered at the military when his commanding officer, anxious for promotion, began harassing him and his unit. He was finally court martialed for piercing his ear. The officer is so hated that one of the men said, "If he was in 'Nam, he would be dead."

Reaves said the purpose of the chapter will be to "overcome the brainwashing that makes guys function like robots and machines."

"We want to get the guys together who refuse to operate like this and organize and educate them before they get too gung-ho," he said.

Weekly meetings will be held on the base to develop a program and to be able to function as a unified group so no individual can be victimized by the brass.

The group will continue to publish "Broken Arrow" their anti-war publication. It's available from Box 9571 North End Station, Detroit.

They said that the charges against two black airmen that had been harassed for speaking at a recent anti-war rally had apparently been dropped because of the storm of protest against the brass' actions.

Bob, an Airman 1st Class at Selfridge, summed up the group's feelings. "What's happening at our base is the same thing that's happening across the nation in the GI movement," he said. "The repression of GIs, especially Viet vets, who attempt to speak out on the war or the injustice and racism of the military has brought us together. We will stand united to deal with the brass one way or another."

The ASU demands are:

1. An end to saluting and sir-ing of officers.
2. Election of officers by vote of the men.
3. Racial equality.
4. Rank & filers control of court-martial boards.
5. Federal minimum wages.
6. Right of free political associations.

7. Right of collective bargaining.
8. The right to disobey illegal orders—like orders to go and fight in an illegal war in Vietnam.

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See *Fifth Estate's* Vietnam Resource Page.

For an updated list of demands, see text box in “War Crimes in Vietnam,” FE #98, February 4–18, 1970.



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