

Vietnam Veterans Against the War-Winter Soldier Organization

# NEWSLETTER

number 27



aug. 26, 74

## General Information

### No September Issue of Winter Soldier

There will be no September issue of Winter Soldier. The reason -- lack of funds. We were faced with the options of either printing the newspaper or keeping the office open, and the latter choice was the one that had to be made. People have been talking for some time about the necessity for the organization to begin to support Winter Soldier. It seems that the time has come when we should cease talking about this and begin to concretely do it. We feel that being unable to publish the newspaper is a serious problem since W. S. is our major national tool of getting our message out to people. Also, not having a newspaper this month will place a burden on many chapters who support themselves through W. S. sales. In order to make up a part of this void, we hope to publish the October issue a week early, so people should be expecting newspaper shipments of the next issue sometime around the middle of September. We deeply regret not having a September issue, but regrets cannot pay for the newspaper. We hope that all chapters will take this problem seriously and begin to understand the necessity of helping to pay for W. S. so that this situation does not arise again in the future.

### Amnesty Statement

Immediately following the August 19 speech by President Ford in which he proposed a variety of conditional amnesty, the NO got a number of calls from the media and others asking for our opinion on the speech and the position put forth in it. Calls from AMEX and from our London Chapter asked the same question. What follows would have been the editorial in this issue of Winter Soldier if we could have printed it; basically, it sets forth the position we took with the media, and our analysis of what Ford's speech was all about.

Gerald Ford, Nixon's replacement has come out for "leniency" for what he calls "draft dodgers" and "deserters." In a speech given before the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Ford said: "I foresee their earned re-entry into a new atmosphere of hope, hard work, and mutual trust. . . . As I reject amnesty, I reject revenge."

In fact, the Ford program provides little new, and nothing concrete. He seems to be talking about case-by-case review for exiles, a system which will give the government the chance to pick and choose among the exiles. Those men or women who have been politically active outside this country can thus be excluded; those who will potentially cause trouble for the government can be kept out. Ford is also apparently advocating alternative service, though the exact nature of this proposal is not clear. It is clear, however, that resisters will be soundly punished for their crimes before Ford's "leniency" takes command.

No where was there mention of the 500,000+ less-than-honorable discharges handed out during the Vietnam era. No mention, either, of the hundreds of thousands of people now living underground in this country as a result of having gone AWOL or refusing to register for the draft. No mention of clearing the records of those resisters who served prison terms. And, most important, no mention of the central issue of the amnesty campaign: that, because of the imperialist nature of the Vietnam War, the resisters were right.

The anti-imperialist amnesty movement is growing; the government had to do something. Ford, riding on the wave of temporary euphoria which followed Nixon's slinking away from the White House, went just as far as he thought was necessary to undercut the peoples' movement for amnesty. Concentrating on the well-publicized exiles, Ford completely separated them from the hundreds of thousands of poor, third-world, and working class vets and resisters to whom amnesty must be granted. With great political shrewdness, Ford chose an audience which would trumpet the most reactionary position on amnesty and thus make the Ford position seem that much more progressive.

Ford has now made public the government tactics which we of VVAW/WSO predicted a year ago. He will try to divide the amnesty movement by co-opting those segments of the movement who refuse to recognize that the real problem is imperialism. For those of us who have been building the anti-imperialist amnesty movement, our task and slogans remain the same:

SINGLE TYPE DISCHARGE FOR ALL VETS  
UNIVERSAL, UNCONDITIONAL AMNESTY FOR ALL RESISTERS

Chapters should make maximum use of the new interest in amnesty--let the media know that we have a clear position and are willing to put it forward at every opportunity. The fact that Ford had to go as far as he did should be seen as a real achievement for us and the amnesty movement; constant day-to-day outreach to the people of this country will force the government into further steps toward universal, unconditional amnesty.

#### Lawton-Gardner Trial Up-Date

The third trial of Gary Lawton and Zurebu Gardner has been postponed again and is now scheduled to begin on September 24th. The delay was requested by the prosecutor and was granted. The reason stated by the prosecution is that the former District Attorney and chief prosecutor in the last trial, Harley Porst, has lung cancer and recently underwent surgery. Because of Porst's illness, Deputy District Attorney, Ron Smith, has been appointed to the case as chief prosecutor and it was Smith who filed the motion for delay on the basis that he needed time to prepare for the trial. Under examination by the defense, Smith admitted that he had actually been assigned to the case on June 20th, but that he had not notified the defense or the court of this assignment (although he had numerous opportunities to do so). It was also discovered that Porst returned from a leave-of-absence on August 5th.

This continuing series of postponements is just one more method of harassing Gary and Zurebu and forcing them to wait out the trial procedure before being given the chance to prove their innocence.

The Riverside Political Prisoners Defense Committee has asked that we do actions around this beginning trial date to show that there is national support for these brothers. Also, they have suggested that chapters initiate petitioning campaigns demanding that the charges be dropped, and the continuation of the telegram/letter-writing campaign. People should write to the following people immediately, demanding that this frame-up be stopped: Presiding Judge Richard Marsh, Riverside Superior Court, P.O. Box 1748, Indio, CA 92201; Byron Morton, District Attorney, 3535 10th St., Riverside, CA 92501; and Norton Younglove, Riverside County Board of Supervisors, 4050 Main St., Riverside CA 92501. We must mobilize our forces and resources immediately and put an end to this racist outrage. We must show the "powers that be" in Riverside that Gary and Zurebu are not alone, are not being tried in isolation, and that we realize that only through mass action and support will these brothers be freed.

## 'New Veterans Administrator

Richard Lowell Roudebush

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Aug. 19—Applauding, whistling and cheering, members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars were on their feet today before President Ford could finish his sentence naming their former

Man  
in the  
News

commander in chief as the new Administrator of Veterans Affairs.

Richard L. Roudebush, an Indiana Republican, was obviously a popular choice with the veterans, having sponsored many bills in their behalf while serving five terms in the House of Representatives. He also served as chairman of the Indiana Veterans Commission for six years.

"He's very popular with veterans, a friendly man," said one delegate to the national V.F.W. convention.

If his nomination is confirmed by the Senate, Mr. Roudebush will be plunged into the midst of problems of veterans benefits and red tape that have plagued the Veterans Administration in recent years.

But he will not be plunging into unknown waters having served for three years in the No. 3 spot at the V.A. and seven months as deputy administrator.

Richard Lowell Roudebush was born on a farm

near Noblesville, Ind., on Jan. 18, 1918. He attended the public schools of Hamilton County, Indiana, and received a bachelor of science degree in business administration from Butler University in 1941.

### 5 Battle Stars

Mr. Roudebush enlisted in the Army just before the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941. He served in the North African and Italian campaigns, and, as a demolition specialist, was awarded five battle stars before being discharged in 1944.

He quickly joined the V.F.W. and, after holding various offices in the organization, was elected state commander of Indiana in 1953 and national commander in chief in 1957.

Mr. Roudebush was a member of Congress for 10 years, from 1961 to 1971, but was forced to run in three different Congressional districts because of redistricting.

"He's not a quitter," said an associate and friend who is a member of the Indiana Republican State Committee. "He has been shoved around in Indiana because of the redistricting and then, after he was seriously injured in a



United Press International

*A champion of the flag*

plane crash during the 1968 campaign, he refused to drop out of the race."

As a member of Congress known for his devotion to the American flag, Mr. Roudebush proposed legislation making Flag Day, June 14, a national holiday. He also sponsored a bill prohibit-

ing the Astronauts from planting any flag other than the American flag on the moon.

"He has a patent on patriotism," quipped an Indiana politician during Mr. Roudebush's unsuccessful campaign for the Senate in 1970.

The politics in Mr. Roudebush's home state are known to be among the roughest in the country, and his senatorial campaign was a particularly bitter one.

Mr. Roudebush was narrowly defeated in 1970 by his Democratic opponent, Senator Vance Hartke. Many Indiana politicians feel that it was Mr. Roudebush's zealous law-and-order campaigning and flag-waving that finally defeated him.

Mr. Roudebush is a portly man who "loves to eat," according to one of his friends. But his friends, among them President Ford, know him as "Roudy."

"Roudy is an outgoing and friendly man," an Indiana friend said. "I guess you could say he is common in the best sense of the word. He's like an old shoe, a very comfortable friend."

Mr. Roudebush is married to the former Marjorie Elliot of Indianapolis. They have two children, Karen and Roy.

The article (the official biography from the New York Times) gives the background on the new VA Chief. Clearly, he is a stone reactionary; there will be no change (except maybe for the worse) in the VA's work around Vietnam-era veterans.

In a speech on August 23 in front of the American Legion, meeting in Miami Beach, Roudebush said (as quoted in the Chicago Tribune, 24 Aug 74) "many times our difficulties in administering benefits--particularly education benefits--have resulted from inaction on the part of Congress."

Roudebush said he hopes for a moratorium on criticism that drove his predecessor from office while he overhauls the agency and its relationship with Congress.... Vietnam veterans, Roudebush said, are getting their share of the VA budget. "From a numbers standpoint," he said, Viet Nam veterans represent about 20 per cent of the nation's 29 million veterans, and they're getting about 30 per cent of the total budget."

Roudebush said he opposes the demand made by the Vietnam Veterans Against the War that VA medical care be offered to veterans with less-than-honorable discharges.

Such a policy, he said, would have to be enacted by Congress and the President. But he said that, if Congress considered the issue, he would oppose changing the law, which now extends medical and other VA benefits only to veterans with honorable discharges."

There are a number of points we believe should be made about Roudebush and the position put forth in this speech. First, there should obviously be no "moratorium." Second, 30% of lousy benefits are still lousy. Third, it makes no sense to equate the care--or money--needed for 20-30 year old vets as opposed to older veterans who, when in need of medical care, are usually talking about maintenance care. And, of course, things like the GI education benefits have long run out for vets from earlier wars. Fourth, we feel it is significant that Roudebush had to respond to our demand for equal treatment by the VA; also, he doesn't have his legal facts straight--regional offices of the VA do have the power to give treatment to vets with administrative discharges other than honorable.

We hope that chapters and regions will intensify the struggle against the VA and can use the information here to help in that project.

#### DECENT BENEFITS FOR ALL VETS



"Speaking of amnesty, I'd also like a chance to earn my way back into society. . . ."

## Attica Memorial Week

On September 9, 1971, 1,280 prisoners in Attica prison took over the prison. For four days they controlled their own lives, gave medical attention where needed, protected the lives of the 38 hostages. On the morning of September 13, Rockefeller storm troopers charged into D-Yard, killing 38 people including 10 hostages. Five leaders of the Rebellion, seen alive after the attack, were later found dead.

In the last three years, nothing has changed at Attica--the administrators have shown their idea of change by constructing new guard towers and arming the guards with M-16s. Meanwhile, an all-white Grand Jury (of the 23 members of the Grand Jury, 12 either knew or were related to people who work at Attica) indicted a total of 61 brothers on 42 indictments; the Brothers face a total of over 67,000 years in prison.

The first of the trials begin on September 4 in Buffalo; four Brothers, charged with murder for the terrorism of the Rockefeller troops, begin trial in an atmosphere of tension--guards everywhere, elaborate security precautions, all designed to show the jury that the se men are dangerous criminals. Meanwhile, the real criminals get nominated to be vice-president of the US.

A Rally in support of the Attica Brothers, and in commemoration of those who died three years ago, is being held in Buffalo, New York, on the 14th of September. All chapters which can attend are urged to do so--the Buffalo chapter has offered to handle the logistics arrangements for all who can attend. Other demonstrations and rallies are being held elsewhere in the country. Support for the Attica Brothers is being coordinated through the Attica Brothers Legal Defense, 147 Franklin St, Buffalo, NY 14202; there are also local offices. Attica Brothers are available to speak: money from these speaking tours has gone a long ways toward financing the defense, in the face of \$4 million of state funds already spent in preparation for the case, and an additional request of \$5 million for prosecution expenses, increased security, and new courtrooms. And, around the country, people are confronting Rockefeller with his crimes against Attica.

At the Buffalo NSCM, VVAW/WSO voted, as a national organization, to support the national demonstration planned for September 14th in Buffalo. This action is being called in memory of the Attica massacre.

ATTICA MEANS ALL OF US

## Leavenworth Brothers Trial Begins!

The trial of four of the Leavenworth Brothers began on July 29th in Wichita, Kansas. Currently on trial are four black brothers -- Odell Bennett, Jessie Evans, Alf Hill and Alfred Jasper -- who have been charged with assault and riot. They were also charged with murder, conspiracy to riot, and mutiny, but these charges were dropped due to lack of evidence. Jesse Lopez and Armondo Miramon, two Chicano brothers, will face trial on charges of kidnapping when the current trials are completed. The defense had asked for postponement of the trial because they were not yet fully prepared, but Judge Theis denied this motion (and many others), thus the trial began on July 29th in the midst of more than 30 Federal Marshalls, extreme "security" precautions, and continual harassment of the Brothers and their supporters. Early in the court proceedings, Odell Bennett removed himself from the courtroom saying, "I do not wish to dignify these railroad proceedings with my presence." Another brother, Alfred Jasper, began this trial with no attorney (his attorney recently had surgery and could not be present to represent him). The judge

refused to grant a delay in the trial because Jasper was not represented, so Jasper also left the court saying, "I do not have the attorney of my choice, therefore, I do not wish to participate in this frame-up."

Jury selection lasted for three days as 15 jurors were selected from a panel of 92 people (only 3 of the prospective jurors were Black and no other national minorities were represented). Two prospective Black jurors disqualified themselves, saying that a lifetime of racial oppression and experiences involving Blacks unjustifiably accused would prevent them from being partial. The third Black juror stated he could be impartial, but at the first opportunity, the government used one of their challenges and the young Black man was dismissed. Thus, an all white jury of 8 men and 4 women, with an average age of 45, was empaneled.

The government has completed the presentation of their case--a case filled with conflicting testimony. Witnesses against the brothers included government informers and prison officials. There were many contradictions in the testimony of these witnesses, as guards stated that they saw one of the brothers do something and shortly thereafter, another guard would say that it was another brother who had done it. They couldn't seem to get their stories straight. Defense witnesses are mostly prisoners and there has been much testimony concerning the deplorable conditions in Leavenworth prior to the July 31st rebellion. Testimony of these witnesses proved that the Brothers were nowhere near the place of the rebellion when the uprising broke out. Also, it became clear that defense witnesses were testifying under extreme duress. Lester Pickens (a Leavenworth prisoner) stated that he was in fear for his life because a prison official warned him to stay out of trouble, or "the same thing that happened to the four niggers going to trial will happen to you." Other defense witnesses remarked that they had received similar threats from guards.

The trial is expected to last another two weeks, and then there will be a short break and the trial of Lopez and Miramon will begin. For more information on what is happening in the extremely grim Wichita courtroom, contact: Leavenworth Brothers Offense/Defense Committee, 106 E. Lincoln, Wichita, KS, (316) 267-6535.

The Leavenworth Brothers sent a message of greeting and solidarity to the 13th National Steering Committee Meeting in Buffalo. The message was read to the body and is reprinted below for all those who missed it. If people wish to return the feelings of support and solidarity, the brothers can be written directly. Letters should be sent to the LBODC (address above) and they will be given to the Brothers. We encourage chapters to write the Brothers (and this should be done soon) and express their solidarity. Following is the message from the Brothers to VVAW/WSO:

"We the Leavenworth Brothers, prisoners of the war between capitalism and labor, victims of this cannabilistic order of exploitation and oppression, political prisoners, take this opportunity to extend to you our strength and solidarity.

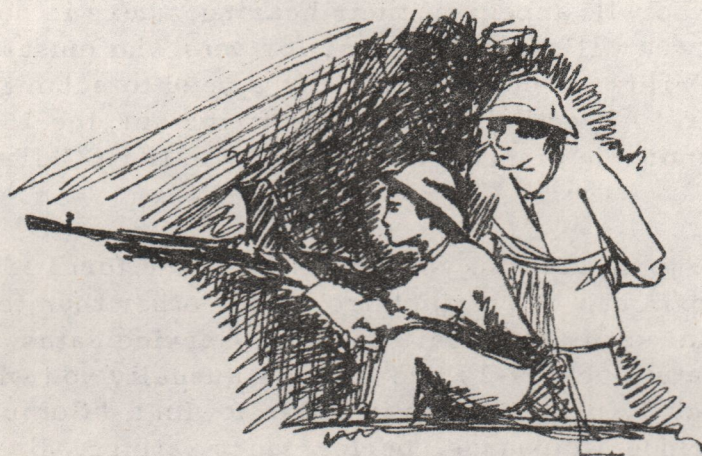
"Our strength is one against a common enemy -- the ruling class of this country. Because of our incommunicato enslavement in the dungeons of Leavenworth cesspool the past year, we have been unable to communicate our spiritual support to your particular struggle, which is an inseparable part of the over-all struggle against racism and political oppression, against capitalism and imperialism. We stand in unity with you and your every effort to defeat the vicious onslaughts of our

oppressors. Ultimately, we shall prevail for we the people are destined by historical necessity to give birth to a new and humane socialist society.

LONG LIVE THE WILL OF THE PEOPLE!  
DEFEAT CAPITALISM, RACISM AND POLITICAL REPRESSION!  
FREE ALL POLITICAL PRISONERS!

The Leavenworth Brothers,

Odell Bennett, Alfred Jasper, Alf Hill,  
Jessie Lee Evans, Armando Miramon,  
Jesse L. Lopez



### International Week of Concern

As part of the report to the NSCM by the Indochina Workshop was discussion of the International Week of Concern which runs from September 29 to October 6. Information about this week was mandated to be carried in the National Newsletter.

The information which has so far come into the NO is as follows (most of this comes from the most recent NCUUA newsletter). The Week of Concern is a joint effort of NCUUA (National Council for Universal and Unconditional Amnesty) and the United Campaign. Through such international organizations as War Resisters International and the Stockholm Conference on Vietnam support for the week, and activities during the week, are being urged throughout the world. The primary focus during the Week of Concern is Universal and Unconditional Amnesty, and End US Support for the Continuing War (with emphasis on freeing of Saigon political prisoners).

Local organizations will be organizing activities during this week in many places around the country, particularly groups affiliated with IPC, the War Resisters League, AFSC, CALC, WILPF, and the Union of Vietnamese in the USA. The VVAW/WSO NSCM endorsed the dates of the Week of Concern, and suggested that chapters support local actions--with the understanding that literature etc which VVAW/WSO chapters distribute specifically be anti-imperialist in content.

Further information about this week can be obtained from any of the above organizations, or from Indochina Mobile Education Project, 1322 18th St NW Washington, CD 20036.

## DUP and Paperwork Requirements

At the amnesty/DUP workshop at the Buffalo NSCM, it was revealed that there was a great misunderstanding about the amount of paperwork really necessary for filing with the Discharge Review boards. Following is the specific technical information necessary for filing for discharge upgrading.

In preparing cases of vets with bad discharges, cases should be broken into two categories: 1) those vets who will or who plan to appear before the Discharge Review Boards in Washington, and 2) those vets who will not go to Washington to appear at their hearing.

In the case of vets who will appear at their hearing, there is no real need to submit a brief. For vets who will not appear and for vets who must apply to the Boards for Correction of Military records, there is a need to submit at least an affidavit and possibly a brief. All vets discharged from the service 15 or more years ago and those with a dishonorable discharge must apply to the BCMRs rather than to the DRBs.

In all cases, the one form that the vet must sign is the form 180 requesting military records. This form can be obtained from none other than the VA. The vet prints his/her name, social security #, date of birth, service dates, service #, etc. in blocks 1-8, if appropriate blocks 9-19 are filed out (usually you will not fill these out). In Part II under block 1, print or type in the following: "Complete service records to specifically include all awards, performance ratings, discharge proceedings, disciplinary actions (Art. 15s and courts-martial, medical records, and transcripts of discharge hearings, if any) and actions of the DRB or BCMR (if any)." Then skip blocks 2 and 3. In block 4, print or type: "To seek a recharacterization of my discharge". In block 5, check "other" and specify "Discharge counsel," the counselor should sign block 5A. The vet signs block 6A, authorizing the release of his/her records. (You may also want to prepare a military records release form like the one used by Toby Hollander in St. Louis). In block 7, place your name and address.

The vet should also sign form 293, application for review of discharge (except for those who must apply to the BCMR, they sign form 149). Fill out the block for branch of service, name, service number/social security number, rank, military organization at time of separation, type of discharge, date of discharge, in blocks 1-6. In block 7, print or type: "Recharacterization of Discharge." In Block 8, print or type: "Supporting documents and brief to follow." (It does not matter if you forward any additional documents, this just allows you the opportunity to do so). In block 9 and 10, the vet should check "yes" that he wishes to appear and be represented by counsel. If at a later date, he cannot appear or does not have counsel, this can be changed, but again this is to keep the option open. The vets address, date and signature go in the appropriate place. In block 11, for name and address of counsel, VVAW/WSO will have to work something out to provide counsel for vets in Washington. More about this at a later date.

While you are waiting for records to arrive, besides plugging the vet with a bad discharge into concrete programs and action, have the vet begin writing a detailed chronology. This chronology should describe the vets entire military service, the dates and reasons for entering the service, training and schools, promotions



and awards, combat duty, etc., all disciplinary actions, Art. 15s, courts-martial, and the circumstances leading up to and the reasons for each of these. Also, the reasons for each AWOL, the events surrounding the vets discharge, what happened at the administrative discharge board, the vets reason why the discharge was unfair. Also, the chronology should include what the vet has done since being discharged, difficulties obtaining employment, and vets benefits. Any employment he/she has obtained, as well as types of community work, the completion of any drug rehabilitation programs, etc. should be discussed.

The chronology is not to be submitted to the board but is used by the counselor to help the vet prepare his/her case, to help make the decision if a case should be filed, to get the vets version of what happened in order to counter the military's version. The vet should, in addition to writing the chronology, begin obtaining character letters from persons he knows (employers, teachers, etc.) attesting to the persons good character, etc. If the vet can get in touch with people he/she knew in the service who can verify parts of their story about what happened in the service, this should be done and an affidavit from the person should be obtained which will verify the vets story.

Once you obtain the chronology, determine if the case has any hope of being upgraded by the DRBs. (Remember that the DRBs are composed of five officers, all Majors or above -- they are not lawyers). If the vet has good service in Vietnam, but problems later, it is usually a good case to file. It is also good to follow a case if the vet has a significant portion of his service spent in "good time." If the vet can document substantial racism, drug use, repression, etc., then you should file the case. The cases that should not be filed are cases where the person cannot appear and had no good time in the service and did everything just to get out. These cases will not be won at the DRBs and we should be honest with the vet whose case is like this. We should bring cases which raise our political position, however, if the vet is prepared for the possibility that the board will not be sympathetic.

After reviewing the chronology, the only item that needs to be submitted to the DRBs is the form #293. In most cases where the vet appears for a hearing, there is no need for a brief. Only in cases which actually raise complicated legal points is a brief necessary. Also, most of the officers on the board do not read the briefs which are submitted. The military prepares their own summaries from the military records and this is what most of the board members read. The Air Force and occasionally the Navy, seem to be the only boards where a couple of their members will take the time to read a brief.

If your DUP has access to NLG lawyers or to local law students who are willing to work with you to write briefs (many law students can get credit at school for doing this kind of work) then you should use them to write briefs. The law student would then be given the vets chronology and military records and told to write a brief by a certain date. Once the brief is written, it can be forwarded to the DRBs -- you do not have to wait on the brief to file the form #293. You should use briefs in the cases of vets who cannot appear for their hearing, and those cases which raise complicated legal issues.

In cases where vets will not appear, in addition to a brief, and actually more important than a brief is a notarized affidavit signed by the vet which states his version of his service and his reasons for why the discharge should be upgraded. This

should be prepared after the chronology. Also, you might want law students to write the affidavit because they can then remove irrelevant items from the chronology.

The character letters and affidavits obtained by the vet will also be forwarded to the DRBs (again, you can file the #293 before obtaining these documents). A copy of everything submitted to the Boards should be retained by the DUP so that when the vet goes for his/her hearing, these copied documents can be given to the counsel representing the vet before the DRBs. If counsel is obtained in advance, or if we are able to set up a legal assistance program in Washington, then this information will be sent to them before the hearing date.

Finally, remember that VVAW/WSO is building a political discharge upgrading project. In doing so, we must be honest with the vets about his/her chances to get the discharge upgraded by "legal" means. Those chances are not good. Instead, we should be honest with the vet and organize them into the anti-imperialist movement by supplying him/her with a program that attacks the entire imperialist system demanding amnesty and a single-type discharge. The ACLU, National Council of Churches, etc. will organize enough of the legal assistance programs. We do not need to spend our time doing that.

by Terry Selzer  
Regional Coordinator  
Maryland/Virginia/Washington, DC

#### Guinea-Bissau Wins Independence from Portugal

Portugal announced on August 26th that it is withdrawing from the western Africa nation of Guinea-Bissau effective on September 10. Guinea-Bissau has been a colony of Portugal for 500 years. This is a tremendous victory for the people of Guinea-Bissau and the African Party for the Independence of Guinea-Bissau and the Cape Verde Islands (PAIGC) which has been leading the liberation forces in armed struggle for more than a decade. After liberating more than three-fourths of their country, the PAIGC declared the State of Guinea-Bissau last September 24th. Since then, more than 100 countries have recognized the new State.

Portugal has yet to grant independence to its other two African colonies, Mozambique and Angola. For more information on the struggle in Africa, write to: Southern Africa Committee, 244 W. 27th St., Fifth Floor, New York, NY 10001.

#### Resources on Indochina

For those chapters wishing to keep on top of the situation in Indochina and remain informed of recent developments, the following are good contacts and publish regular literature. People interested should write and ask for sample copies of these groups' literature and subscription information.

Indochina Resource Center, 1322 18th St. NW, Washington, DC 20036.  
Indochina Solidarity Committee, Box "C", Old Chelsea Station, New York, NY 10011.  
Group of Khmer Residents in America, PO Box 5857, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10017  
Focal Point, IPC, 181 Pier Ave., Santa Monica, CA 90405.  
Indochina Chronicle, PO Box 4000D, Berkeley, CA 94704.  
South Vietnam in Struggle, HT 1217 B-SVN, c/o Hai Ba Trung, Hanoi, DRVN.

# Regional Reports

## Chicago VA Takeover

On August 19, while President Gerald Ford was presenting his new choice for the head of the VA to the Veterans of Foreign Wars convention in Chicago, over 50 veterans, students, and workers stormed into the Regional VA offices in Chicago chanting "Single-type discharge is a must, Look out VA, this is a bust!"

The action was planned to follow a demonstration "welcoming" the new president to Chicago. From the Conrad Hilton, where Ford addressed the reactionary VFW, the demonstrators went to the regional VA offices; taking the VA completely by surprise, part of the group went to the sixth floor office of the director while the remainder stayed in the lobby, chanting and talking to the patients and employees. A couple of VA security guards couldn't figure out what to do next.

Finally, the whole group of demonstrators occupied the director's office where they confronted the acting VA director with VVAW/WSO demands, and hung banners out the 6th floor windows. From the director's office they called the Chicago media (which soon appeared on the scene) and, after 3 hours in the director's office, the demonstrators held a rally in the VA lobby. There were no arrests and, in a sum-up leaflet passed out at the VA a week later, the demonstrators promise to be back.

A political analysis and sum-up of this action is being prepared by the Chicago Chapter of VVAW/WSO, and will be included in a future newsletter. Taking part in this action were VVAW/WSO from Chicago and Milwaukee, the Revolutionary Student Brigade, the Revolutionary Union, and People's Voice.

## New York City VVAW/WSO Attacked

On August 19th, several members of the New York City chapter of VVAW/WSO went to Shea Stadium where the Yankees were dedicating a ball game to Vietnam Veterans. Chapter members leafletted outside the stadium, while approximately 6 members went inside Shea and ended up sitting in box seats. While inside the stadium, these VVAW/WSO members raised a VVAW/WSO banner. Ball park guards then told them that no banners were allowed. After the presentation on Vietnam veterans was over, the National Anthem was played. The chapter members then rose and again raised the banner, at which time, 25-30 guards jumped over the railing, began beating on the demonstrators, dragged them into a nearby locker-room, and finished the job. The result of the guards' beatings was several broken noses, cracked ribs, and 8 stitches in one of the brother's head. Following the beating, VVAW/WSO members were charged with second degree felonious assault. Chapter members counter-charged against the guards from Shea, but when they gave the badge number of one guard who had been particularly anxious to crack heads, Shea Stadium said that no such badge number exists. At this time, these people do not have lawyers, and they are to appear in court for a preliminary hearing on September 9th. Charges against Shea Stadium are expected to be filed by VVAW/WSO in New York. We will get more information out to people as we receive it in future newsletters.

## Philadelphia VVAW/WSO Plans Demonstration

September 6th is the 200 year anniversary of the founding of the Continental Congress. A ceremony is planned for Independence Mall in Philadelphia and approximately 1500 "heads of state" (governors, congresspeople, state officials, and possibly even Jerry Ford) are expected to attend this "historic event." The Philadelphia chapter of VVAW/WSO is also planning to be at Independence Mall on Sept. 6th. If other chapters are interested in demonstrating along with the Philadelphia chapter against this farce of democracy, contact: John Wineland, Box 3791, Philadelphia, PA 19125. We will try to have the details on the demo in the next newsletter.

## Buffalo Chapter Postering of Winter Soldier

Having gained experience in postering as a result of work for building for the July 1-4 demonstration, the Buffalo chapter decided to carry their "expertise" into other areas. They have found that a good way to get out back issues of W. S. is to poster a variety of articles around the city. They paste up articles, back-page posters, centerfolds, etc. in appropriate places so that the articles can be read by all. Other chapters may want to consider the possibilities of giving this idea a try. It doesn't take much time, doesn't cost much, but Buffalo feels that it is an effective way to get political education out to people who may be waiting for a bus.



## DC VVAW/WSO Chapter Makes Appearance at Nixon Resignation

In case you missed it, shortly after Nixon announced that he would resign, a very large VVAW/WSO banner appeared behind Dan Rather of CBS News. Rather was interviewing some of the people who had gathered around the White House during Nixon's speech, and you guessed it, the D.C. chapter of VVAW/WSO was out there with their banner to show the world that VVAW/WSO is alive and kicking. Though the cameraman seemed to be trying to avoid getting the banner in the picture, since Dan Rather was standing directly in front of it, the cameraman didn't succeed. There we were for all CBS viewers to see.

# National Office Reports

## What's in the NSCM Minutes?

Enclosed with this mailing are the minutes from the Buffalo National Steering Committee Meeting. Many important things went on at the Buffalo meeting, and we would like to point out to people just what is included in these minutes and some of the items that will require discussion and action by the regions. Of course, we hope that all regions will go over these minutes in detail and be fully prepared for the next NSCM, so this will be a brief highlight.

We now have an almost complete new set of objectives. For the text of the objectives which were just accepted and are now in effect, see pages 2-4 and also the Objectives Workshop report (which includes the proposal for a new objective on the oppression of women). Also at this NSCM, Cairo and Operation County Fair were dropped as National Projects and a brief discussion as to why these projects failed is included in the National Projects Workshop Report. Internal Funding was adopted and is now in effect. This means that all members are to pay \$1 per month to the National Office, and the mechanism for the collection of these dues is left for the Regional Offices to decide. Also, at this meeting, as a national organization, we endorsed Attica Memorial Week and the rally being held in New York for Puerto Rican Independence Day.

Those people who have been involved in the process of getting our National Defense Committee together should see the NDC Workshop Report and remember that there will be an NDC weekend workshop in Milwaukee on November 2-3. People have already been assigned specific papers, and it is imperative that these papers be completed so they can be discussed at the November NDC meeting. Chapters should also begin discussing the Internal Organizing Workshop because the workshop suggested that we begin to define our membership more concretely, discuss how we can achieve a more democratic method of representation at meetings, and the revising of the Working Paper.

The two most important discussions of the meeting were the struggle that went on around the nature and future of VVAW/WSO and the discussion of our National Program. So that we can carry the struggle as to who we are to a further level at the next NSCM, people should study the Mass Organizations/Nature of VVAW/WSO Workshop Report and the National Office Position Paper (which was previously mailed to all chapters). Close attention to the Amnesty/DUP Workshop report and the outline for the National Program (which is contained in the National Office Report) is necessary if we are to see our new Program implemented successfully. This Program is not just an idea to be thought about and then cast aside, but it is a plan for action that we hope will be implemented in all regions and on all levels of the organization. We learned from the success of our last National Program, which culminated in the July 1-4 demonstration, and it is now time to take our remaining four demands and take them to our communities in an even more effective way.

## Working Paper

Included in this mailing is a copy of the VVAW/WSO working paper, an accumulation of organizational rules and regulations. At the Internal Organizing Workshop during the Buffalo NSCM, there was agreement that the present working paper was badly in need of clarification. That Workshop came up with tentative definitions for what is a member, a chapter, and a region, but did not deal with the numerous other items in that working paper.

Instead, the Workshop decided that the working paper should go back to regions and chapters, that input from the organization should be sent to the NO by the 15th of October; it will be compiled at the NO and sent back out to the chapters and regions at the end of October.

Delegates at the NSCM agreed that we need clear guidelines to avoid some of the problems which we have had in the past as a result of the loose nature of the organization (see the Internal Report in the NO Report). At the same time, we are a mass organization which means that we cannot define members or chapters so narrowly as to exclude people whose potential for gaining an anti-imperialist consciousness has not yet been realized. In discussion of the Workshop report on the floor of the NSCM it was also noted that not all chapters or regions will want to spend large amounts of time on this working paper; it was pointed out that the compiled version which will be sent out from the NO will be made up of input from the membership, but that chapters and regions will have the new version to discuss before the next NSCM.

## Letters to United Front of Cairo and Operation County Fair

At the Buffalo NSCM, we voted to drop Cairo and Operation County Fair as National Projects of VVAW/WSO. This does not exclude chapters from doing what support work they can, but our involvement as a national organization is now completed. As decided in Buffalo, the National Office has notified both the United Front of Cairo and the Board of Directors of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Clinic of these decisions. Following are the texts of the letters we sent to Cairo and Bogue Chitto.

### United Front of Cairo

Dear Friends:

VVAW/WSO began supporting the efforts of the United Front of Cairo in the summer of 1971. Since that time, many of our chapters, primarily in the Midwest, have continued to send supplies and attend regular events in Cairo such as the yearly solidarity gatherings. During the last year, however, our organization has had little contact with the United Front of Cairo, and it was felt by our National Steering Committee that we should investigate the situation in Cairo to determine if support should continue.

At our national meeting held in April of this year, the St. Louis Chapter of VVAW/WSO was delegated to investigate the situation in Cairo and report back at the next national meeting. On the basis of that report, the Steering Committee felt that our support for the people of Cairo should no longer continue in the form of an ongoing National Project. It was pointed out that little, if any, political ac-

tivity was taking place on a regular basis in Cairo, and that there was a split in the leadership of the United Front which has left the United Front in a very weak position.

The Steering Committee felt that support for a struggle such as the one in Cairo would require strong leadership on the part of the local community. The absence of such strong leadership among the community of Cairo led us to the decision that we should not commit our membership to ongoing support of a struggle whose political direction is uncertain and its leadership dwindling. We do, however, wish to be informed of any specific events that you have planned.

The Steering Committee extended its feelings of solidarity to the people of Cairo and expressed the desire to continue to communicate with the United Front through our chapter in St. Louis.

If you have any questions regarding our decision, please contact us at the National Office. We will be happy to print any response in our national newsletter which goes to all of our chapters.

In Solidarity,

for the National Steering  
Committee of VVAW/WSO

Board of Directors  
Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Clinic

Dear Members of the Board and the Community of Bogue Chitto:

As you are all well aware, our participation in helping you to build the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Clinic has been very sporadic. With the exception of a few dedicated individuals, the efforts of our organization in helping you to build your clinic have been very poor. Having taken on this project almost two years ago, we have learned much in that time about the capabilities of our organization to take on such a project.

At the National Steering Committee Meeting of our organization, which was held in Buffalo, New York, during the weekend of August 10, 1974, we discussed our involvement with the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Clinic over the past two years. The Steering Committee agreed that the original decision of our organization to take on the task of helping you to build a clinic was based on a very immature political outlook. That outlook was basically very paternal, that is, we approached this project with a "missionary" attitude, hoping to make an active attempt to fight racism. Although the intentions of our members were good, we should not have made such a longrange committment to your community that we were unable to fulfill. Our organization has very few members in Alabama, which has made it very difficult to maintain the type of support for your clinic that is necessary. Furthermore, many of our chapters had difficulty interesting their members in supporting your clinic. In spirit, all of our members want to see your clinic become a reality, but as you know, spirit is not going to get your clinic built.

The Steering Committee felt that it would be hypocritical of us to continue to say we were supporting your clinic as a National Project of our organization. We also felt that it was beyond the financial and physical ability of our organization to offer the full support that you need. In light of this, we voted to discontinue the committment that we made several years ago to provide support for your clinic.

ic with supplies, money and members travelling to your community. We ask that you accept our apology for failing to live up to our original committment.

The Steering Committee expressed its solidarity with the community of Bogue Chitto and hopes that your clinic will soon be a reality. Good health care is a human right, but as you are certainly aware, human rights must be fought for in our system. We will do what we can to publicize your fight in our local work and hope that the small amount of energy that we have contributed to your community has helped to bring your fight closer to victory.

Please keep us informed about developments in your community, especially with regard to the clinic.

Solidarity in our common  
Struggle,

for the National Office and  
the National Steering Committee

Statements of Solidarity to MIDWAY and Iwakuni 5

At the Buffalo NSCM, we voted to send letters of solidarity to the Iwakuni 5 and the MIDWAY brothers. These letters were written by the National GI Project offices and have been sent to Japan. We encourage all chapters to write similar letters of support and solidarity to these active-duty brothers. Below are the texts of the letters that were sent from the National Steering Committee.

VVAW/WSO

New Peoples Center

P.O. Box 26

Yokosuka-shi, Kanagawa-ken

Japan

To the MIDWAY Brothers:

The 13th National Steering Committee Meeting of VVAW/WSO, which took place in Buffalo, New York, on the weekend of August 10th, 1974, extends its full support and political solidarity with the courageous actions that you have taken in fighting back against the MIDWAY Command.

Your actions were a brave example of the militant action that is necessary to fight back against the racism, brutality, harassment and poor conditions in the U.S. Navy. Such action should serve notice on the command that GIs are not going to continue taking their crap lying down.

Your actions have been an inspiration to us all, both in the military and in civilian society, and we hope that such militant action will continue in the struggle against the oppression of U.S. imperialism.

In unity there is strength. Continue the struggle!

In Solidarity,

for the National Steering Committee

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VVAW/WSO  
P. O. Box 49  
Iwakuni-shi, Yamaguchi-ken  
Japan

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

The 13th National Steering Committee Meeting which took place in Buffalo, New York, on the weekend of August 10th, extends its solidarity and support to our five active duty brothers at Iwakuni MCAS who are facing court martial charges.

The courageous and progressive stand that you have taken against the repressive regime of Park Chung Hee of South Korea is yet further proof of the rising consciousness and militancy of the GI Movement. Your actions, and their conscious anti-imperialist nature, will serve to bring home to the U. S. military and government that GIs will no longer serve as willing tools to carry out their policies.

Spirited resistance, such as you have exhibited, will serve as an example to all of us and will be a source of encouragement in our daily work. We will do all that is possible to both lend support here and to apply what you have done to our common struggle.

In unity there is strength. Keep up the struggle.

In Solidarity,

for the National Steering Committee

#### National GI Conference

To clear up any confusion about who is invited to attend and who is not, only those chapters which are doing GI work are invited to attend. Those chapters have already received their invitations. No one else is invited. The purpose for this is that the intention of the Conference is that it is to be a working meeting with input from people with experience; it is not intended to be an educational forum. The results of the Conference, however, will be distributed to all chapters for discussion and review. Hopefully, some concrete ideas will emerge from this conference which we can all discuss at the next NSCM as we begin to develop an ongoing program of work among GIs. If you have received an invitation, please let us know how many are coming, ASAP.

#### VVAW/WSO Patches

VVAW/WSO patches which the Miami chapter had made before the DC Demo have now been sent to the NO. We have 360 of them and will sell them to chapters at 75¢ apiece--the money will go to the Lawton/Gardner Defense Committee as decided by the Miami Chapter. Arrangements for discounts for quantity should be made with the NO--it should be possible for chapters to resell the patches at a profit. Capitalism strikes again.

### 3rd Class Mailing

As before, in the interests of saving money, we will be mailing out material which is not of immediate importance by 3rd class mail. This mailing will include the most recent issue of GI News, a single-type discharge petition (for possible use as an example), and information/catalogues from United Front Press and the Peoples' Press. The mailing should go out around the end of August.

## Information Requests

### Winter Soldier orders

Winter Soldier should go to the printer on the 9th of September (if there is sufficient money). If your chapter or region wants to change its order as to how many copies of the paper are sent to you, let the NO know as soon as possible so we can make the necessary changes in the number printed and the number mailed.

### Regional Analyses & Chapter Lists

In the National Office Report to the Buffalo NSCM, the Internal Report states that it is time for a good house-cleaning. We are asking all regional offices to make a realistic assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of their region and get this information into the National Office. We also need to clean up our chapter list, since we have a feeling that a good number of addresses on the current chapter list are non-existent chapters. Therefore, regional coordinators/collectives should take some time to analyze where VVAW/WSO really is within their regions. This will enable us to determine where we are around the country, and how and where we must continue to build. Regional offices should contact those names and addresses on the chapter list and let us know what exists and what is idealistic dreaming. This information is to be sent to the National Office as soon as possible, and we would hope that regional offices could complete this house-cleaning within the next two weeks.

### Send in Your Photos!

If you are tired of seeing photos of the Chicago chapter in Winter Soldier, there is something that you can do about it -- send us the photos of your actions! We are expecting a large number of demonstrations to be occurring around the country during the next several months because of our newly adopted National Program. We will be reporting on these actions and the implementation of the Program in the newspaper, so your photos will be very important. So, don't forget that no matter where you go and for all demonstrations and actions, take a camera with you and get those glorious black and whites into the National Office.