

WHAT IS



**VIETNAM VETERANS AGAINST
THE WAR - WINTER
SOLDIER ORGANIZATION**

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WHAT IS VVAW-WSO

VVAW/WSO is a mass, anti-imperialist organization growing out of the struggle of Vietnam vets who are opposed to the war in Indochina. Now we have many other people in the organization besides Vietnam vets; veterans who did not go to Indochina and non-veterans who agree with our political outlook and work. By mass, we mean that anyone who agrees with and works to implement our objectives can be a member in full standing. We do not wish to be like the American Legion or VFW who have "Ladies Auxiliaries." We believe that excluding those people who have helped build the organization would be emulating the worst features of American society.

By anti-imperialist, we mean opposition to a system that breeds oppression and exploitation; a system that divides people against each other by race or sex; a system that NEEDS wars like the one in Indochina for its existence; and a system that treats working people and poor people like dirt -- veterans and non-veterans alike. To understand the nature of VVAW/WSO and what we stand for, remember that we have been struggling for over six years for our objectives. What we are today grows out of what we were yesterday. As we have seen changes in other peoples' consciousness, so ours has changed; when you work on something, you learn more about it and your ideas change with that new knowledge.

From our experiences, we have been able to see that the war in Indochina and the problems we are having here in America have common roots. We could see that besides veterans being unemployed, non-veterans are having a hard time finding jobs. We could see that besides the Veterans Administration being unable to pro-

vide adequate medical care, all poor people are denied good health care. We could see the rise of political repression; that is, people being thrown in jail for opposing a wide variety of problems in our society. Through our efforts to understand our experiences, it became clear that there was a consistent pattern to all these problems -- that the war and unemployment were closely related. It could be seen that all these problems stemmed from the fact that the big-money interests of this country wanted to increase their take, get richer. And to give this pattern a name, we found the concept of imperialism -- the conscious attempt to extend ones control and influence for profit.

This pattern -- imperialism -- can clearly be seen in the problems that veterans are now facing. First, veterans are drafted or enlist in the military, not particularly out of patriotism, but because most couldn't get college deferments or obtain exemptable jobs, or because there was nothing else to do. Once in the military, vets were faced with petty harassment and racial oppression by a machine that treats people like animals and robots. Many GIs were sent to Indochina and Korea



Throwing medals back at the Capitol during Dewey Canyon III, 1971

to fight and die to make these areas "safe" for American business interests; others are sent to places like Germany where we have no need for 300,000 troops. Most combat troops in Vietnam had disproportionately high numbers of third world people in the front lines. Yet, when these men and women return to the "world," they are forgotten, thrown back into the same miserable conditions they had left, misused for "patriotic" propaganda, and can only find menial jobs, if they can find jobs at all. "Veterans - Use Once and Throw Away!" is the attitude. And to top it off, those friends and family that did not "serve" their country face the same problems; no jobs, no money, no decent health care, and many other troubles. So, besides feeling angry for having "served" ones country and then being discarded, veterans face the same system at home that can't provide for their friends and family, let alone its war "heroes."

That is why VVAW/WSO knows that the only way veterans will really solve their problems is by joining with other

people with the same problems and fighting to see the system of imperialism ended once and for all. To stop us, the government will always throw a few "bones" our way in the form of a few dollars; bones meant to pacify the just struggle for decent lives that veterans are raising; bones meant to keep veterans from uniting with their real friends -- the poor and working people of America. That is why VVAW/WSO raises not only veterans demands, but demands that are in the interest of veterans and non-veterans alike.

VVAW/WSO did not always view our problems in this manner. When the organization first started, it was mainly opposed to the war in Indochina for as many reasons as there were members.

Our opposition to the war came from our direct experience of the U. S. military in Vietnam. It was through our many actions of bringing direct knowledge of the war to the American people that we began to gain a deeper understanding of what it means to fight a war for America.



VVAW's occupation of the Statue of Liberty, Christmas 1971

A History



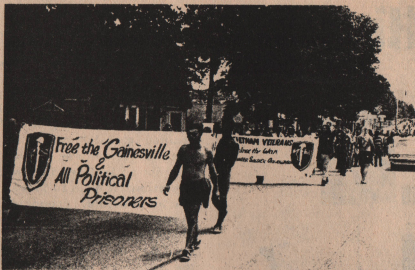
VVAW at Miami Conventions, 1972

In 1967, a gut level disgust with the war brought Vietnam vets into the anti-war movement where we joined with many others to protest against its continuation. Our first actions attempted to bring the war home to the American people; bring it home the way we had seen and fought it. In 1970, during Operation Rapid American Withdrawal (RAW), we conducted mock military operations, search and destroy missions on unsuspecting towns in the East Coast, duplicating our Vietnam experiences to show what the military was doing in Vietnam in the name of the American people, to let the people here at home experience what it felt like to be Vietnamese.

We knew there was something wrong with the way the U.S. military worked in Indochina... we had seen it. At the Winter Soldier Investigation in Detroit, 1971, we began trying to piece all our experiences together in order to understand why the war was wrong. Testimony piled up about the racism of the war and the military towards non-whites, how all of us had been trained in childhood and by the military to see the Vietnamese as sub-human. MyLai was not an isolated incident, but part of a systematic plan to kill as many Vietnamese as possible... genocide. The weight of our common experiences raised a fundamental question: was the war a "tragic mistake" or was it a natural outgrowth of the American system of imperialism.

An answer came during Dewey Canyon III, in April of 1971, where we threw back the scraps of metal we had been given for killing others and seeing Americans killed. For a week we lobbied in Congress, seeing our various state representatives; we testified before Congressional committees about the lies and deceit of the military. Yet all this direct testimony, and all the half-hearted attempts to placate us by our representatives in Washington, and the utter lack of any real attempts to end the war by Congress, led to the only conclusion possible -- the government would not change our course in Indochina of its own volition. We began to understand whose interests were behind the war, the same interests that controlled the government. Money, corporate power and profits -- that was the influence that dictated how Congress acted. Lobbying, even by veterans, could not bring change.

Having learned that the channels within the system did not work, we went into our communities to build support among the people, to spread our awareness of what the war was. From this experience we also learned that many of the problems we saw in Vietnam existed where we worked and lived, and many people who had not fought in Vietnam understood our experiences and wanted to join with us.



National Demo in Gainesville, Florida

Veterans and non-veterans alike marched together in Miami Beach during the 1972 Conventions. We didn't make the mistake of seeing either the Democrats or Republicans as any different -- the interests of both were served by the war they forced us to fight. We looked at ourselves and saw that veterans were predominately from third world and working families, people who had no interests served by the war, who made no profits from that war. We saw, too, how many of the frontline units in Nam were largely Black and Chicano and understood that racism was not only used against the Indochinese, but was an integral part of the U. S. military and society in general.

While we were protesting at the Conventions, we learned that the government which suppressed the people of Southeast Asia was at work to attack dissent at home. VVAW/WSO was attacked through the indictments of 8 members in Gainesville, Florida, in 1972. This was a trumped-up attempt to discredit our anti-war work. We won total acquittal in 1973, DESPITE an array of FBI and police provocateurs, informers and agents. It was obvious that the legal system was being used by the government to protect the rich politicians, with little interest in justice. Again, we

went into our communities, involved ourselves in local struggles armed with the understanding that the U. S. government at all levels would consistently operate in the interests of the rich.

We helped bring the anti-war movement to people until the vast majority wanted the war to end. People began to understand that the U. S. government was backing the wrong side, the corrupt dictator who had little support from the Vietnamese people. The Pentagon Papers revealed that the warmakers would go to any lengths to maintain governments they could control, using our blood and money to do it. We support the struggle to get Washington to sign the Peace Agreements.

We continued to work for the signing of the Agreements even when the U. S. military unleashed the heaviest bombing in history at X-mas time 1972. Even against the wishes of the American people, the U. S. government would pursue its brutal policies. And while the interests of the corporations were being served by the wholesale murder of Indochinese, the politicians at home were exposed for what they are -- Watergate broke, corruption became more and more visible and the buying and selling of government became an



VVAW/WSO Demo in Milwaukee
to Kick Nixon Out

established fact. The crisis at home and abroad forced the government to sign the Peace Agreement.

However, we knew that the war-makers would not abide by the Agreement. We saw, too, that the promises the government made to us as veterans were not kept -- we had been sent to fight an imperialist war, but after the government was done with us, we were sent to miserable VA hospitals, given inadequate educational benefits, and no jobs. Our emotional problems were ignored. That same imperialism we had fought for, we learned, was on the backs of workers, women, third world

people as well as vets here at home. To recognize that the non-veterans who had grown with and helped us were integral to our struggle, we added "Winter Soldier Organization" to our name. This important step was to make clear that VVAW/WSO sees our non-veteran members as equal participants in our struggles; that they help provide the link between what veterans need and what all people need and want -- an end to racism, an end to joblessness, an end to poor health care, and end to exploitation -- an end to imperialism!

BUILD VVAW-WSO



VVAW/WSO occupies Saigon Information
Office in Washington DC, 1974

Unity Struggle Victory!

Imperialism Abroad

Indochina was just the tip of the iceberg of US foreign involvement that had long been distorted by the government. With the history of lies and arrogance about the US role in Indochina now openly before all of the American people, many are beginning to look at the rest of that 'iceberg' which has carefully been concealed among Congressional subcommittees and public statements about "national security," "national interest," "defending democracy," "stopping aggression" and "fulfilling our commitments."

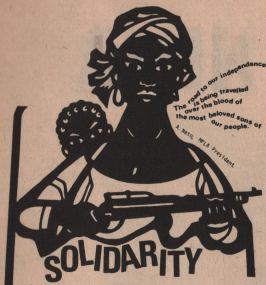
Based on our experience in Indochina, we are starting to ask questions about the rest of the world. Why is the US supporting a dictator in South Korea? in The Philippines? in South Vietnam? in Brazil? in Greece? in Taiwan? Why do we train the local police forces of Panama, Bolivia, Argentina, Chile, Haiti, Indonesia, Iran and at least 43 other countries with repressive governments? Why is Puerto Rico still a colony of the United States? Why

do we continue to import Rhodesian chrome despite a UN boycott? Why do we send millions of dollars worth of arms to repressive governments all over the world? Why is the US strengthening its position in Guam and the South Pacific? Why is the Pentagon now constructing a new base on the island of Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean? Why do we have 438,000 troops stationed all over the world?

The answer to these questions can be given in one word: imperialism. But one word is not enough to describe such a complex problem. Briefly, imperialism is a stage in the development of our economic system - capitalism. The imperialist stage is characterized by the merging of big industries with banks. What this merger produces is a new economic phenomenon: large amounts of money that are no longer used to directly produce goods and services - just more money. These large amounts of money are known as finance capital, and they are most visible in the



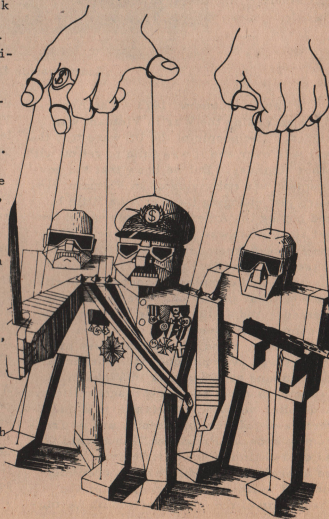
New York City VVAW/WSO Demo in support of one-Korea policy, 1974



Through our newspaper, WINTER SOLDIER, we are educating ourselves and others about US foreign involvement, and local chapters are beginning to involve themselves in discussions and demonstrations in support of struggles against US foreign involvement in South Korea, Chile and other countries. Our programs - amnesty, working with political prisoners, GIs, veterans - constantly attempt to place these struggles within the context of the fight against US imperialism and illustrate that veterans, GIs, prisoners and all American working people face one common problem. Through continued public education and united action with all oppressed people in the US and abroad, we are working to defeat US imperialism, both abroad and at home.

form of money lending and corporate stock trading. The main trend that marks the development of imperialism is the formation of monopolies - conglomerates, multinational corporations, holding companies and so on. The constant search for more profit forces American businesses to constantly consolidate, monopolize and expand. There is no other choice but to expand and exploit, both abroad and at home. And that's why we say that imperialism is responsible for the recurring problems we face today in America - constant inflation, layoffs, the 'energy crisis,' the wage freeze, ridiculous food prices. These economic problems are all the result of the anarchy of our economic system which is inevitable under imperialism.

Outside of the boundaries of the US, imperialism differs from past eras of foreign exploitation since the world is now, so to speak, all divided up; there are no more countries to be colonized; the only option left is to gain economic control of different countries through trade and investment, and through international lending institutions which the US controls, such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the Export-Import Bank. This economic control is then maintained through the increasing use of local police forces.



INDOCHINA



Inauguration Day, 1973

Paris - January, 1973 - The Agreement on Ending the War in Vietnam was signed. The people of the US were told the war was over and it was time to get on with other business. But we knew that the government was not giving up in Vietnam; they were just changing their story a little bit and hoping the American people would forget about what was going on there. While the Peace Agreement provided for the release of all political prisoners, national elections and common democratic liberties, none of these provisions have been implemented. And as long as the US continues to support the government of Nguyen Van Thieu, there is no chance that these provisions will ever be honored. With inflation running at 60% a year in Vietnam, a scarcity of rice, an ever-present military and police network, constant arrest and torture of political opponents, and no freedom of speech, President Thieu would face an overwhelming defeat if he ever presented himself as a candidate in an open election. The liberation forces, under the leadership of the PRG(Provisional Revolu-

tionary Government), control 80% of South Vietnam and could quite easily win any elections, whether they be local, district, provincial or national.

The aftermath of the signing of the Paris Agreement is an exact re-run of the events that followed the signing of the Geneva Agreement to end the war in Vietnam in 1954. The elections scheduled for July, 1956, were cancelled by President Diem, who was supported by the US. Bloody reprisals and imprisonment followed the 1954 French withdrawal. Today, President Thieu is keeping 200,000 people in prison who oppose his undemocratic government, and in January of 1974, he declared that the elections called for in the Paris Agreement would not be held. Vietnamese people living under Thieu's control who speak out for peace and an end to foreign influence, or even associate with anyone who does, are constantly subjected to intimidation, harassment, imprisonment and torture by the military and the National Police. All newspapers that maintain a



neutral or pre-liberation position have been forced to shut down, and petitions by students, workers and religious leaders calling on Saigon to honor the Peace Agreement are forbidden. In addition to all this, the Saigon army is constantly undertaking offensive operations against the liberated areas. Without the aid of the US government, none of this could continue.

Just as the US provided the French and President Diem with the bulk of their monetary and material support, today our government continues to send over one billion dollars a year in military and economic aid to Saigon. And, contrary to what we are told, the US government still maintains thousands of US advisors and technicians in Vietnam. The clothes are now civilian; the units are re-named; the pacification program is now the Resettlement and Reconstruction Directorate; more money is being maneuvered through the Food for Peace program - all in an effort to deceive the American people and continue the war.

CAMBODIA AND LAOS

The government is also continuing its policy of deception about the situation in Cambodia and Laos. Many people believe the Cambodia bombing halt of August, 1973 meant the end of all bombing; although very significant, it was only the end of B52 missions - the other planes and helicopters continued to drop bombs and carry out military operations. As in Vietnam, the US government also maintains a dictator as President of Cambodia, and we continue to send over \$500,000,000 in military and economic aid, despite the fact that the lib-

eration forces now control 90% of Cambodian territory. In Laos, steps toward a settlement have progressed more rapidly than in Vietnam or Cambodia, but the CIA continues its attempts to influence events in Laos.

Developing out of the Indochina experience, we have been continually speaking and demonstrating about the war: from the first march in 1967 to the RAW march and guerrilla theatre actions of 1970 and 71; from the Winter Soldier Investigation testimony about US war crimes in Indochina to Operation Dewey Canyon III and the throwing away of war medals in Washington, DC; from Operation Peace on Earth at Christmas, 1971, to the takeover of the Statue of Liberty; from the Democratic and Republican Conventions to the actions during the Christmas bombing of 1972; from the Inauguration Day march in Washington, DC, to the Week of Solidarity With the People of Indochina in the Fall of 1973; from the takeover of the Saigon Information Office in Washington, DC, to the 4 days of demonstrations in Washington, DC, during July of 1974, and the countless local demonstrations and Winter Soldier Investigations, we have constantly worked to keep the Indochina war before the eyes of the American people.

Our current programs dealing with Indochina include showing slides about the continuing war, showing movies about the war, leafletting, speaking at schools, churches and civic organizations, rallies and demonstrations, and of course, selling our newspaper, WINTER SOLDIER, which always carries an article about the continuing war. Our other programs, especially our amnesty program, continue to raise the issue of Indochina, what caused the war and why people resisted. Although varied from one chapter to another, our programs continue to focus on telling the American people the truth about the continuing war and urging them to call for the implementing of the Paris Agreement and the end of all military and economic aid to the dictatorships in Saigon and Phnom Penh.



Vietnam Veterans

Winter Soldier

Object

1. To demand an immediate cessation of fighting and the withdrawal of all American troops, planes, and military and economic aid from Southeast Asia. We cannot allow one more human being to be killed in Southeast Asia. We support as a basis for the cessation of these hostilities the various peace proposals of the Peoples of Southeast Asia or such future plans as they develop based on their right of self-determination and actual control of their own destinies.
2. To demand the immediate termination of all other operations by the United States Government, its agencies, and American business interests that are designed to suppress the rightful struggles for liberation and self-determination of the Peoples of Africa, Asia and Latin America. This includes the maintenance of dictatorial governments, economic domination, and the theft of the natural resources of other countries. The United States should make reparations in a program acceptable to the Indochinese for all of the damage done by the United States.
3. To demand that all active-duty servicemen and women, reservists and national guardsmen be afforded the same rights that are guaranteed by the United States Constitution and Bill of Rights that are presently denied by the Uniform Code of Military Justice. We are appalled that our active-duty GIs are treated as less than first class citizens. We endorse the efforts of our active-duty sisters and brothers in their struggle to democratize the military.
4. To support all military personnel refusing to serve against their consciences in wars at home and abroad. We demand that Congress enact legislation for the immediate repatriation of those brothers and sisters who are in prison or in self-exile by reason of their refusal to serve in the military. It must also involve an end to all repression and a freeing of all political prisoners.
5. To demand there be no distinctions as to types of discharges and that a single type of discharge be issued, and that this be retroactive. We also demand all veterans receive all rights and benefits under the VA; and that compensation for disabilities be based solely upon the degree of disability for veterans and their families, without regard to sex, race, rank or length of service.
6. To make clear that the United States has never undertaken an extensive, open investigation of American war crimes in Indochina. In its war in Indochina, the principles of Nuremberg have been violated. As active-duty and former GIs, we recognize the responsibility and guilt of the individual soldier to refrain from committing war crimes. We also recognize that the responsibility and guilt of war crimes committed in the name of America lies with our policy makers at all levels.

Against the War Organization tives



7. Resolved to fight racism, to show Americans that our society is permeated by racism, which manipulates whites into viewing non-whites as inferior or less than human. This racism pushes Third World People through inferior schools to inferior jobs and into combat arms. Thus Third World People are sent off to die in disproportionately high numbers as we kill Asians indiscriminately. We also demand the US military recognize its complicity in America's domestic and international racism.

8. Resolved to fight sexism, to show that sexism plays a major part in promoting war. We must show Americans our society is permeated by sexism, which forces an inferior status upon women, reducing them to subservient sexual objects, and which robs both men and women of their natural growth. This institutionalized sexism channels women into unfulfilling, lower paying jobs which are servile in nature and purpose; it exploits their bodies for sex and profit; and it degrades and dehumanizes them by a double standard of morality wholly dependent on the myth of male supremacy. This sexism is exploited by the military, officially defining servicewomen as subordinate and thoroughly subjugating them to servile work and the role of a sexual object. We resolve to fight sexism within our society, within our own organization and within ourselves.

9. To support the democratic right of Americans to unionize and strike to protect their income and safeguard their employment. We consider all legislation designed to suppress these rights, including mandatory arbitration, to be illegal and not in the interests of the American working people. We also demand full employment for all Americans, including free educational and vocational training for all who need or want it. We refuse to participate in the efforts being made to separate us from other working people, making veterans enemies by giving us the charade of employment priority. We condemn this as a method of encouraging enlistment by the false promise of employment after service. We also condemn the use of active-duty GIs, reservists and national guardsmen as strikebreakers.

10. To dedicate ourselves to these principles and objectives which directly relate to the imperialist suppression of the People of the World by the United States government. We understand this war is imperialist in origin and affirm that the membership of VVAW/WSO is not only concerned with ending this war, but with changing the domestic, social, political and economic institutions that have caused and perpetuated its continuance.

VETERANS

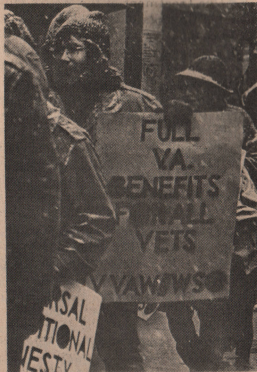
The Tonkin Gulf, August 4, 1964.

That is when our most recent involvement in Indochina "legally" began. Since then, 6.7 million men and women have spent time in the military during what is known as the Vietnam Era; nearly 3 million of those in Indochina. And now that these men and women are back in civilian life, they are finding that the government does not have any more regard for them than it had for the people of Indochina. Inadequate education opportunities, miserable medical benefits, bad discharges, no jobs--these are the problems that face millions of Vietnam-era vets today.

EDUCATION: The Veterans Administration (VA) gave single vets from World War II \$75 per month in living allowances and paid up to \$500 in tuition and fees directly to the school or college. That covered all the costs at 89% of the private schools in the country at that time. Today, the single vet gets a lump sum of \$220 a month for him to cover living expenses and tuition for nine months.

Tuition at Harvard in 1948, for example, was \$525 for an academic year, just \$25 over the GI Bill allowances. Today, the tuition at Harvard is \$3,200, which is \$1,220 over the current GI Bill allowance --and that doesn't even count what inflation has done to the cost of living. And it's not that much easier at state schools--there the average cost is \$1,765. This leaves the Vietnam-era vet with a total of \$215 to feed and house himself or herself for nine months!

MEDICAL CARE: The VA runs the largest and sorriest health care program in the country, with 170 hospitals and a medical budget of more than \$3 billion a year. While the VA does have a few model hospitals, most of them are under-



Action at New York City Regional VA Office, 1974

staffed and at best indifferent to the needs of patients; the special needs of Vietnam vets aren't dealt with at all. A recent Ralph Nader report concluded that the VA was "utterly incapable" of delivering services to the Vietnam-era veteran because the VA is geared primarily to provide custodial care to chronically ill old men--and even these older vets aren't treated very well.

The VA doesn't know or care how to deal with the problems of Vietnam-era vets, problems such as drug addiction or psychological problems which came from fighting an unpopular war. Psychological problems resulting from Vietnam service (PVS--the Post-Vietnam Struggle) are not "service-connected disabilities" according to the VA, and therefore don't

qualify the vet for treatment. The care of veterans with drug problems is simply criminal. The common "treatment" is moving the patient from heroin to methadone--from one drug to another--and the methadone habit is even harder to kick.

Many vets just reject the cold and ineffective treatment of the VA as indicated by the findings of the Nader report: "High dropout rates plague VA programs, though many clinics obscure the problem by retaining patients on their roles long after they have ceased making visits. (Of course--hospitals are paid by the number of patients carried on the books.) On the average, VA drug programs seem to list about twice as many patients as they really have." Vets who have bad discharges because of drugs--and who have the greatest need for treatment, are not even eligible since their bad discharge disqualifies them for VA care.

Though the VA mismanages the largest hospital system in the country, its 100,000 beds are not an indication of what it can do. There is a ratio of 140 employees to 100 patients in VA hospitals nationally. By comparison, community hospitals average 292 employees for 100 patients; university hospitals have between 350-400 employees for 100 patients. And of the 140 employees per patient in the VA hospitals, only 90 are involved in direct patient care; the rest are shuffling papers.

JOBS: Listening to government propaganda, one would think that a vet could just walk off the street into a high-paying fulfilling job. Not quite. First, many vets enter the service straight from high school leaving little room for job experience. 60% of the enlisted men in the military have never gone beyond a high school diploma, and these are the men who end up in the combat arms. Military training doesn't carry much weight in the civilian world--would you hire a doorgunner as a TV repair man? Employers want civilian job experience--several years of it. So where is the vet? Pumping gas, working

as a janitor, pushing a wheelbarrow... or, more likely, in the unemployment lines.

Vietnam vets, especially non-white vets, have a much higher unemployment rate than the general labor force. Even those who have some kind of useful skill face the same meager job opportunities which face the rest of the American workers. For those with a bad discharge or an unfavorable SPN number, the struggle is even greater.

BAD DISCHARGES: There are five



"Honor Viet Vets Day"

classifications of discharge: Honorable, General, Undesirable, Bad Conduct, and Dishonorable. The first three are given administratively; there is no trial or hearing. The last two require a court martial (trial). The use of multiple dis-

charges has compounded the many other problems of vets, especially since the VA can use its own discretion in granting benefits--and will usually rule against them. There are no legal guidelines, no clear definitions, and no opportunity to appeal VA rulings through the courts. The vet is at the mercy of the VA, which doesn't care about the Vietnam-era vet in the first place.

A bad discharge is a lifetime brand which only a few vets will ever be able to change on their own. The solution is to eliminate the multiple discharge system, and establish a single-type discharge for all vets.

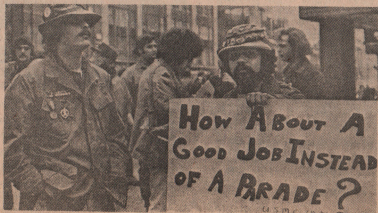
To deal with this discriminatory discharge system, VVAW/WSO has set up discharge upgrading projects (DUP) across the country to help vets with less-than-honorable discharges. We realize we can never process the paperwork for all the over 500,000 bad discharges, but our DUP work is a step toward organizing to achieve the goal of a single-type discharge, the only real solution to the problem.

PVS: VVAW/WSO was one of the first groups to develop an understanding of PVS. When many of our members began having nightmares and other head problems from the war, we recognized that there were far more "casualties" than the VA would admit. In fact, the VA states that vets with head problems are not troubled because of their experiences in Indochina, but because of "bad" childhoods. So we started what are now called PVS rap

groups where vets could really get down about their experiences. Even though we are a political organization, we avoided laying trips on peoples' heads, and there are now groups in several cities. We have set up a clearing house on PVS which has developed an extensive library to help people research this critical problem.

VA: VVAW/WSO knows that we do not have the resources to become an alternative VA--we can't provide the needed services to vets. So, our main task is to expose and pressure the government to really serve the people. Many chapters, particularly Milwaukee, has occupied the VA offices in the area to dramatize existing conditions and raise demands to obtain reasonable treatment. By organizing into a political force, we can bring about the needed changes.

It's pretty clear to most vets that the traditional "service" organizations only pay lip service to vets' problems, particularly the vets of the Vietnam era. The VFW and the American Legion form a tight circle with the VA hierarchy and the Pentagon. The only real strength vets have to force proper care out of the government is unity; and that unity will come through an organization capable of forcing those powerful few out of control to see that REAL care is given. VVAW/WSO is such an organization; we're in the same boat, and we have shown in the past that we have the determination to see our struggle through to the final victory.



AMNESTY

A basic part of the drive for amnesty is discharge upgrading, a national project of VVAW/WSO. There are offices all over the country to help vets with their discharge problems. Demonstrations and publicity are vital to pressure the government into action on this problem. VVAW/WSO will continue to sponsor nationwide actions and demonstrations as part of the fight for amnesty, for a single-type discharge, and for discharge upgrading.

WHO NEEDS AMNESTY? Terry is in his late twenties, has three purple hearts, some shrapnel in both his knees, and a lot of bad memories from the battle of Hue. He also has an Undesirable Discharge (UD).

On returning from Vietnam, Terry found he could no longer handle his remaining tour of duty with the USMC and tried to drop out. A number of psychiatrists, both civilian and military, agreed that he should be given a medical discharge for his inability to readjust emotionally on returning from the war.

The USMC saw things differently, and threw him in the stockade. Ultimately, the Corps threw Terry out of the service, but with a UD! Today, Terry is unable to receive any GI Bill benefits, is severely limited in job opportunities, and is denied any medical treatment from the VA. When the shrapnel in his legs causes them to swell up, Terry is not only unable to get any medical treatment and unable to get any compensation; but he is also unable to go to work and earn a living.

There are thousands of Americans in the same situation as Terry. Contrary to Nixon's deliberate distortions about a "few hundred" antiwar exiles, there are 60,000 to 100,000 of them. Moreover the majority of war resisters are inside

the U. S. , not in exile. They are the thousands of GI's and civilians in stockades and prisons for resisting the war; the estimated 200,000 fugitives--AWOL's and deserters--still underground, and the 1/2 million veterans with less-than-honorable discharges. They share a common need: Universal, unconditional Amnesty.

RACE AND CLASS: Amnesty also speaks to the racism and class divisions in our society. It's no accident that the cannon fodder for Vietnam was basically made up of poor and Third World (non-white) Americans--especially in front-line combat units. For this group of people, society's alternatives are very few. They have traditionally been taught by the system that the military is a way out of their economic situation, a way of helping their families.

Many poor and Third World Americans did not have information available about legal resistance. They didn't have the privilege of avoiding the war by going to college, or money for sympathetic psychiatrists. They were forced into the military, and forced into having to resist the war.

Their acts of resistance, conscious or unconscious, whether they were refusing to go into combat, deserting, slugging their officers, or taking drugs to escape the oppression of the military, were and are attacks on the military machinery that created their problems in the first place.

Their response must be seen in the same light as the response of those who burned their draft cards and refused induction for reasons of moral belief: both groups resisted the war. Amnesty for those GI's in military prisons, or for those vets with less-than-honorable dis-

charges, would strike a major blow against the racism and class oppression in our society.

DOUBLE JEOPARDY: These Americans must receive amnesty. It should include a release of all those still in military prisons. It would have to include the upgrading of all their discharges to a single, universal discharge. The case for the single-type discharge can be simply stated: those with less-than-honorable discharges for resisting the war are being punished unjustly. They have had discharges--and they shouldn't have been given them in the first place.

The military must cease to prosecute



its personnel for acts that are punishable under civilian law, or that aren't even crimes outside the military. They should be tried in civilian courts, not military tribunals. People who are court-martialed and sentenced to prison and given a less-than-honorable discharge are being punished twice. This is double jeopardy, illegal in civilian courts.

NO CASE-BY-CASE REVIEW: We must be careful to avoid accepting an individual or case-by-case review for amnesty. Amnesty is a collective problem, not an individual one. For the government a case-by-case review would imply that vets are getting "pardon" as specific individuals rather than correcting the injustice and punishment given to a group of people for war resistance. With a case-

by-case review, the government wouldn't give amnesty at all to the poor and Third World Americans who need it most.

War resisters are not criminals. The real criminals are the government and Pentagon war-makers who have violated the US Constitution and international law in waging the war in Vietnam, and the corporate profit-makers who pushed the war for their own monied interests. As veterans of the war, we know this--and we know that the U. S. government used us in that war. Even as we were used as the instruments of governmental policy in Indochina, that government is now trying to use our name and the names of our dead brothers to justify that war. In our name Nixon says that amnesty cannot be granted because it would do us and our dead comrades dishonor.

We won't be part of the hypocrisy of Nixon's lies. The war was wrong, and resistance to it was right. Understanding this, we actively seek universal and unconditional amnesty for all war resisters.

VVAW/WSO and AMNESTY: Universal and unconditional amnesty is a national project of VVAW/WSO. Each chapter of the organization works to bring the issue of amnesty to the American people whether through providing speakers on amnesty, taking petitions for amnesty door-to-door, distributing leaflets, holding rallies or demonstrations, or operating DUP centers. We give nation-wide support and publicity to specific cases such as Melvin X Smith, Richard Bucklin and Robert Johnson, always remembering that it is the people of this country who will have to demand amnesty. The criminals who planned and supervised the war have no interest in amnesty; only mass, grassroots pressure from the people will bring amnesty to reality. We see our task as building that awareness and that pressure; and we invite all people who share our views on amnesty to join with us in this struggle.



As long as there is oppression and exploitation, there will be resistance. As long as resistance on the part of the American people continues and grows, the justice system (police, courts, prisons) will be used as a tool for political repression. VVAW/WSO recognizes that this "justice" system presently serves the interests of the rich and powerful, while it suppresses the majority of poor and working people. In light of this, VVAW/WSO will struggle for the freeing of all political prisoners -- whether they be behind prison walls, facing trials, or objects of government attacks in our communities.

As part of our struggle to end the increasing repression directed against the people of this country, VVAW/WSO has been working with prisoners -- both vets and non-vets. In 1973, we established our National Prison Project with the following purpose in mind: "To develop unity inside and outside prisons around the oppression and exploitation in prisons, in the context that it is part of the exploitation and oppression caused by imperialism everywhere." This Project was initiated because we felt that the struggles of the prisoners of the U. S. system of government have too long been overlooked, yet prisoners are perhaps the most blatant "victims" of the imperialist system here in the United States.

PRISONS

We recognize that the majority of people in prisons are there because they could not afford the monetary cost of "justice;" and at a time when our judicial system operates to preserve the interests of the rich, poor and working people don't stand a chance. The majority of people in prisons (poor and third world people) are the same groups of people who have continually been brutalized and repressed by our government outside prison walls. In light of this, we feel that all prisoners being incarcerated under the present system of government are political prisoners in that they are isolated for the political reason of having, in some way or another, resisted the oppression and dehumanization which is coming down on us all.

For these reasons, VVAW/WSO views the struggles of prisoners as part of the over-all struggle against imperialism. Without the prison system which now exists, the government's ability to wage battles of suppression against the people of this country would be greatly weakened. The elimination of the present prison system would be a blow to U. S. imperialism because it will do away with the largest means of silencing protests and hiding the problems which exist in America by locking people behind bars, hoping that they will be heard from no more.

As we work to tie the struggles of prisoners in with the struggles of all people, our National Prison Project has become a tool for building unity. The work being done inside this project is varied because it is the decision of our individual chapters as to how much time and energy they can commit to organizing in and around prisons. Several of our chapters are work-

ing with the prisoners in their area and doing educational and agitational work in their communities on the conditions existing in prisons (i. e. lack of civil and human rights, behavior modification, etc). Much of our work is in on-going communication with the prisoners, simply providing correspondence which is of a political nature to brothers and sisters who are interested in the work of VVAW/WSO. Other work includes the national support of the Leavenworth Brothers, and the formation of the defense committee which is working to see that these brothers are freed from the trumped-up charges brought against them following the July 31st rebellion in the Leavenworth Federal Prison. Along with this, we also publish a newsletter for prisoners which is designed to be an organizing tool. It discusses the problems and successes of building unity inside prisons and the ways in which this unity relates to the work that is going on in the "outside world."

Our Prison Project has produced a large and growing prison membership, consisting of veterans and non-veterans alike. Several VVAW/WSO Prison chapters have been formed and chapter work is conducted inside the prison walls. As the prison movement has continued to grow, so have the number of VVAW/WSO chapters and members inside prisons. This membership, along with all of our prison work, encompasses the federal pri-

son system, state prison systems, and county jails.

Just as Vietnam-era veterans witnessed, first-hand, the height of imperialism abroad, prisoners have witnessed the height of imperialism here at home. The two experiences and the two struggles cannot be separated. In the following words, written by Alf Hill (one of the Leavenworth Brothers and coordinator of the Leavenworth VVAW/WSO chapter), the closeness of our struggles is expressed.

"In the prisons we note the sudden imminent influx of thousands of brothers who not long ago word the U. S. imperialist uniform and still vividly recall the rice paddies, jungles, and sounds of the most respectable AK-47s. In placing the war in its proper perspective, bringing it to the very head of the monster, these brothers in their newly acquired and developing revolutionary consciousness (a fact influenced by the courageous and victorious struggle of the Vietnamese people) in theory and practice are proudly joining their fathers, brothers and sisters: the people who have long been fighting the enemy from the fox-holes within this country -- the maximum security prisons! In the real definition of the term we are all Vietnam Veterans Against the War."



Repression

VVAW/WSO also supports those who are under government attack but who are not behind walls. Throughout the country there are men and women trapped in the so-called "justice" system, going through the racist and repressive courts which the government uses against the poor, workers Blacks, Chicanos and other minorities.

LAWTON/GARDNER: The frame-up case of Gary Lawton, a VVAW/WSO member, and Zurebu Gardner is a national project of the organization. The Riverside

Political Prisoners Defense Committee is supporting the brothers who are charged with the murder of a policeman in Riverside, California. Neither of them fit the description given by eyewitnesses; they have already been tried twice--both times with hung juries. The State of California is now set to try again--for the third time.

Gary Lawton has been active in organizing among black, third-world, and poor communities since 1968. He was unanimously elected to head the city's Black



Zurebu Gardner and the Lawtons

Congress. As Chukia Lawton puts it, "Gary spoke out because situations of unemployment, poor housing, segregation, and police brutality in the minority communities existed." It is easy to understand why he was singled out as a target by the white businessmen, police, and officials who rule Riverside. After Gary was arrested, Nehemiah Jackson (since released) and Zurebu Gardner were arrested to bolster the prosecution case. All were indicted for murder and conspiracy, even though they had never met before.

What the government does not seem to realize is that the dissent which is growing in this country cannot be "convicted" away. Gary Lawton is a symbol of racism repression, and injustice. Yet, he realizes himself that the struggle does not end with the silencing of a few. He said: "I will continue to SAY ON and with whatever tools are left at my disposal, I will continue to struggle against the principles of evil and against the traditional misuse of black people. And if my enemies should succeed in ripping me off, I am more than confident another will come to take my place."

LOCAL POLITICAL PRISONERS: Our chapters work in support of local political prisoners and political trials. Police brutality, especially in the Black and other Third World communities, has been a recent target of work for many chapters. Increasing repression causes increasing resistance, and VVAW/WSO is part of that resistance.

ORGANIZATIONAL DEFENSE: Because of the organization's credibility, the government has used--and is continuing to use--its weapons of repression against us. The indictment and trial of the Gainesville 8 was a clear attempt to destroy VVAW/WSO. Because of mass support around the country the trial ended in acquittal; despite the use of informers, provocateurs, and agents, the government lost in another attempt to silence dissent.

The attacks go on: Bob Hood, a VVAW/WSO leader in Oakland, California, was recently arrested and charged with "assault on a police officer with a deadly weapon," a completely false and ridiculous charge. As a known VVAW/WSO representative in the area, he is being used as part of a campaign of police terror and repression, hoping to discredit the organization by tying us in with the SLA. We have mounted a campaign around Bob's defense, particularly in the Oakland area.

Through our national defense committee framework, VVAW/WSO stands ready to support its members who are attacked as part of the government campaign against political dissent. Our support work will continue as long as the government continues to attack those who resist exploitation. We have come to understand, and to adopt as our own, the words of Gary Lawton: "Freedom for one is not enough; Free us All."



FREEDOM!

Active-Duty G.I.s

The struggle of active-duty GIs is an important part of VVAW/WSO's work. Since 1972, the organization has had an office that deals solely with the struggles of active-duty people in an effort to link together the common struggle of GIs and veterans. Today, the VVAW/WSO National GI Project has two offices, one in Dayton, Ohio, and one in Chicago, Illinois. The Project offices publish a monthly news bulletin for GIs called GI NEWS, they edit the GI news section of WINTER SOLDIER, correspond with members and supply them with literature.

VVAW/WSO now has active-duty chapters in Yokosuka, Japan; Iwakuni, Japan; Koza, Okinawa; Kin, Okinawa; and Heidelberg, West Germany. There are also many members who are imprisoned at the US Disciplinary Barracks at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, and hundreds of members scattered among ships and bases all over the world.

Yokosuka - The off-base center for VVAW/WSO is at the New People's Center where GIs get together to rap, work on projects, obtain counseling advice, purchase reading material and put together the bi-weekly, VVAW/WSO paper called FREEDOM OF THE PRESS. The women in the Yokosuka chapter put out a paper for military-connected women called WOMEN HOLD UP HALF THE SKY. Much of the work at the New People's Center revolves around the constant struggle for basic GI rights and is complemented by the invaluable assistance of staff people hired by Pacific Counseling Service in San Francisco. Legal help is provided by the National Lawyers Guild Military Law Office. The chapter is also involved in the movement in Japan against the homeporting of US naval vessels such as the USS MIDWAY, (Yokosuka is the major Seventh Fleet naval base in Asia.)



Sailors of USS Connie on Strike, 1973

In October of 1973, and again in June of 1974, the chapter sponsored rock festivals that were attended by hundreds of GIs who discussed the issues of homeporting and other demands being raised by VVAW/WSO.

Okinawa - VVAW/WSO has two chapters here. The People's House in Koza and the United Front in Kin Ville act as gathering places for GIs. Activities reached a high point in the summer of 1973 when 1500 people came to their outdoor "Let Us Out" rock/soul concert. It was the only interracial concert in Okinawan history. Beside music, they showed films about Indochina and VVAW/WSO. Most of their work today revolves around sexual and racial discrimination, and helping GIs fight for their rights within the military and raising peoples consciousness about imperialism.

Iwakuni - The SEMPER FI celebrated its 4th birthday in January, 1974, making it the oldest GI movement paper still coming out regularly. People working on the paper decided to become a VVAW/WSO chapter in March, 1973. They realized the importance of being part of a larger organization to fight US imperialism and struggle for servicepeople's rights. The chapter

has a long history of fighting military repression and is continuing the struggle by holding legal rights classes and publishing their paper at SEMPER FI House.

Heidelberg - As the newest active-duty chapter, they are holding their first big event on July 6, 1974, at the GI Center in Heidelberg. The gathering will be a show of solidarity with the July 1-4 actions in Washington, DC sponsored by VVAW/WSO and will involve discussions around the 5 demands, issues facing GIs in Germany and plans for fighting back during the coming months.

US Disciplinary Barracks, Ft. Leavenworth

The members here face the worst of US military oppression. Racism, harassment, solitary confinement, beatings and the denial of basic human rights characterize the daily life at the USDB. To make things worse, mail to and from our members has been totally cut off. Currently we have a program underway to restore the right to send and receive mail, provide legal referrals, publicize the racist and degrading treatment of prisoners and provide political literature upon request.



Following the defeat of the US military in Vietnam, the Pentagon was forced to re-evaluate the role of the military. Faced with increasing resistance to military service, the Pentagon began trying to 'sell' the military through the Volunteer Army (VOLAR). But VOLAR is increasingly being regarded as a "mercenary force"

by the blacks, Puerto Ricans, Chicanos, Indians and poor whites who are forced to join because of the lack of meaningful alternatives in the civilian economy.

Strategy is also changing. The vision of the future is for heavily armed mobile troops backed up by a powerful navy and air force. The increasing importance of the Navy is evidenced by the homeporting of the aircraft carrier USS MIDWAY in Japan and the expansion of Naval facilities in Guam and Micronesia. Local repressive governments will be receiving increased aid to police their own region while the US Navy and Air Force will serve as a backup force just hours away.

The one feature of the US military that has not changed is repression. A military that is designed to support imperialism must always maintain an iron hand over its soldiers. If it didn't, discipline would soon begin to crumble. Just as in the later years of massive US troop involvement in Indochina, soldiers will eventually react strongly to being forced to participate in a situation that they can clearly see is not in their interest. It has become necessary, then, for the military to maintain a system of discipline based on fear.

There are 3 formal ways, and many informal ways, of maintaining this discipline. The bad discharge system represents the most threatening prospect for the GI, since it means a lifelong mark. The other discipline methods are the UCMJ (Article 15, Captain's Mast, Court Martial, etc.), which is used most regularly, and the US Disciplinary Barracks at Ft. Leavenworth.

VVAW/WSO is dedicated to building the campaign for a single-type discharge throughout the US military; fighting for basic Constitutional rights and an end to repression; fighting for decent working and living conditions; and working to prevent the possible use of GIs in any future wars like Vietnam.

I would like to join VVAW/WSO

I am an active-duty GI

I am enclosing \$ _____ to
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Membership in VVAW/WSO
only requires agreement with
the ten objectives and
willingness to work toward
their implementation.

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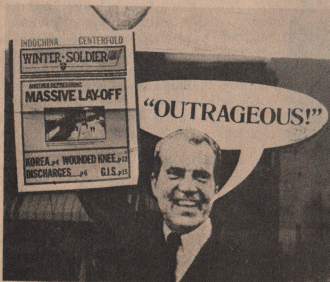
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