



CONCERNED OFFICERS MOVEMENT

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P.O. Box 2107
Kalorama Station
Washington, D.C. 20009

Common Sense

We are active duty officers in the Armed Forces of the United States. Some of us have served in Vietnam. We have not shaken hands with the troops, we have led them. We have not listened to the briefings with all their polish and precision, we have given those briefings and we know what they do not tell. Some of us are Academy graduates. We have seen "Duty, Honor, Country" perverted beyond recognition to "Duty, Honor, Army" or "Navy" or "Air Force" or "Marines." This we reject, for there is such a thing in these troubled times as being loyal to one's Army and disloyal to one's country. That we will not do. We have sworn to defend the Constitution and so we will.

Each of us is many things before he is a military officer. Each of us, as Richard Nixon has stated, is a "...citizen first and a soldier second." We are also human beings. And as human beings, citizens, and military officers, we reject the Vietnam war. One need only read General William C. Westmoreland's Report on the War in Vietnam as of June, 1968 to gain the flavor of this war, one characterized by both massive destructive technology and the inability to distinguish combatants from non-combatants. This is 1970 and the bombs have fallen for years and years and years. This is a war, some say, where, given Dow Chemical and more technology, the ovens are brought to the people instead of the people to the ovens. An estimated 3,000 Vietnamese still die each week.

And this is a senseless conflict. In pursuit of a series of myths we have proceeded to destroy another people's country and, in the process, tear and strain at the fabric of our own society. Over 50,000 American men have died over there, husbands, fathers, brothers, lovers. And to redeem lives already wasted, we waste more lives, about one hundred a week-- a "tolerable" level of death.

There is more to our thought. Our thoughts on the war force us to wonder, painfully, reluctantly, belatedly, in what other areas we march to the wrong drummer. It is a rude awakening. Some of us feel, for example, that the military system of justice places the officer in the position of a man sentenced to prison, who has time

removed from his sentence for each condemned man that he hangs. Freedom at the priceless and unredeemable expense of others. If this be justice in the Armed Forces, playing hangman, we reject it.

For those who have made the sacrifice of going to Vietnam, this newsletter is sadly dedicated. For those who have made the sacrifice of going to jail, or of beginning a life anew in a foreign land, this newsletter is also sadly dedicated. In the future may such sacrifices not have to be made. For this we work and for this we are unafraid.

WHY COM?

(This article appeared in the COM Norfolk Newsletter)

Why are we doing this? Or rather more pertinently, why am I doing this? Why am I lending my name to a group of concerned officers trying to form an anti-Vietnam War organization? Well, I have had my standard anti-War discussion with practically everyone I know for the past four years. I am awfully tired of it. As far as I can see, it has accomplished nothing. So why bother to write it down now? I no longer wish to be thought of by anyone as morally supporting the war. I have shot my mouth off to anyone who would listen and I am coming increasingly to feel like a college sophomore who has had three beers. So the hell with that. Now it is in print and anyone who cares to find out where I stand need only read this. The war has been, and shall continue to be, a total disaster. I regret the horrors which the people of Indochina must be suffering due to the continuance of the fighting. But more, I loathe the tragedy it is causing in our own country. The youth see their elders as hypocrites, foisting empty phrases upon them, speaking of honor and justice and freedom while uselessly placing them in a hopeless, kill-or-be-killed situation. The older people see the young as cowards, despising them for having lost faith in a system they have dedicated their lives to. The ending of the war has one beautiful point--when it is over it is over! Then, and not before, time can begin to heal the wounds.

However, that is only why I am against the war, and not solely why I am participating in COM. I do not wish to criticize the country, the Navy, or anyone else. The time for criticizing is long past, and is a fruitless exercise at any rate. I have joined in hopes of showing someone, anyone in a position to do something, not only the depth of feeling against the war in this country, but its breadth. Any of you who feel as I do, I beg of you, for your own sake and that of our country, please, please join us.

- Richard Jacobs, LTJG
Norfolk, Virginia

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Vietnam

Herman Goering: "... of course, the people don't want war. Why would some poor slob on a farm want to risk his life in a war when the best that he can get out of it is to come back to his farm in one piece. Naturally, the common people don't want war; neither in Russia nor in England nor in America, nor for that matter in Germany. That is understood. But, after all, it is the leaders of the country who determine the policy and it is always a simple matter to drag the people along, whether it is democracy or a fascist dictatorship or a parliament or a communist dictatorship."

Nuremberg Prison psychiatrist: "There is one difference. In a democracy the people have some say in the matter through their elected representatives, and in the United States only Congress can declare war."

Herman Goering: "Oh, that is all well and good, but, voice or no voice, the people can always be brought to the bidding of the leaders. That is easy. All you have to do is tell them they are being attacked and denounce the pacifists for lack of patriotism and exposing the country to danger. It works the same way in any country."

-Nuremberg Diary, pp. 255-256.

A Call to Action

The war drags on. Servicemen are still getting busted for being frank about their beliefs. What are you doing about it as a responsible officer? You don't like Vietnam; in private conversations with like-minded people you express your feelings. Salve for the conscience, affecting nothing. You know repression exists. It bothers you to hear of a G.I. getting court-martialed for having peace decals on his car, or to hear of an officer dismissed from the service for openly expressing about the war what a hundred million other Americans feel. You even get angry sometimes, but after all, what can you do about it? You could stick your neck out but you might risk getting chewed out by your C.O., you might jeopardize the comfortable billet you waited two years to get, you might lose your security clearance and God knows, you might even get an unfavorable fitness/efficiency report. You'd like to do something but it's not worth the risk. Besides, you "volunteered" for the military, so you might as well play the game their way for a couple of years.

Better to wait until you get out, then you can get involved. Then you'll be free, you tell yourself. Except then you'll be travelling, busy enjoying yourself, then you'll be going to law school, then you'll be raising a family, then you'll be working for an organization as monolithic and conformist as the military. Meanwhile, wars will drag on, ABM systems will be built, people will be getting jailed for speaking too freely.

If you don't act now, you never will. Inaction is being dishonest with yourself and is a trap that is hard to escape from. All anyone can ask of you is not to cover up, not to repress your beliefs because of an alien environment, not to do nothing because it is merely convenient. Bring it all out into the open, that is what it is all about.

We've heard all the excuses. You're newly married and don't want to get transferred. You need the money and don't want to get passed over for the next highest rank. You don't want to be an outcast every day at work. These are real problems, serious ones that should not be taken lightly. But they are also problems that will never be overcome if you just go on avoiding them. Think of the people that will follow you--should they have to face the same anxieties?

It is hard to stand up alone; and it is also easier for them to crush you if you are on your own. So get together, and communicate. Take off the mask you put on every day with your uniform and be yourself. Erase the artificial barriers that have been put up around you: officer-enlisted, staff corps-line, military-civilian. You will gather friends and supporters around you. It is easy for those in power to repress a disaffected few; when those disaffected few become a majority, it is not so easy. They can't send everyone to Vietnam, they can't put everyone in the brig, they can't dismiss everyone. The potential is there--but you must come forward first.

You must overcome paranoia. The important thing is to remember that you are doing nothing wrong. You are exercising your right to free speech, guaranteed by the Constitution you are sworn to uphold. You are engaging in constructive dissent because dissent is in the mainstream of American history and has always been a prime factor in positive change.

Don't let anybody call you disloyal; for your loyalty transcends your bars, uniform and petty role-playing. It is your loyalty to your country's ideals that causes you to speak out against injustice; silence and complacency are certainly not to be equated with loyalty (although they often are).

Don't let anyone say that you are violating your oath of commission for in it you swore to defend the Constitution, not a particular policy or a particular war. You are defending the exercise of constitutional rights for everyone and resisting those who would deny those rights.

Let your voice be heard, that is all we ask of you. The military needs it, the country needs it. How long can you go on justifying your silence when your conscience dictates otherwise?



Making It in the U.S. Army

By Edward L. King
Lt. Col., Retired

(The following are excerpts of an article which appeared in The New Republic, May 30, 1970. Lt. Col. King served in the U.S. Army for 22 years, including combat-duty in Korea, U.S. infantry advisor to the Spanish Army, and, shortly before he resigned from the Armed Forces on grounds of his objections to the Vietnam war, three years of duty with the Office of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. For his duty with the Joint Chiefs, he received the Presidential Legion of Merit "...for exceptionally meritorious conduct in the performance of outstanding services." Lt. Col King, who now resides in Chevy Chase, Maryland, has attended our meetings.)

Major General Samuel W. Koster, until recently the Superintendent of West Point, and 14 other US Army officers have been charged among other things with suppressing information about alleged murders of Vietnamese civilians at Songmy in 1968. Americans find such charges against senior officers hard to credit. But the real culprit may prove to be the Army's atmosphere of almost total self-deception. In the climate now prevalent in the Army, it is not inconceivable that some men might compromise their principles and try to hush up murders of civilians, either convinced this is what their superiors wish, and that not to stay silent would damage their own careers, or believing they could get away with keeping such information from higher authority.

Organization-man conformity has become the pattern for success in the US Army Officer Corps. This is not the zippered lip of the professional soldier, rather it is the cover-up of the "get on the team" bootlickers. It has produced unthinking, subservient yes-men who practice deception and concealment in order to cover up any error or failure which, if revealed, could harm either the system or the individual career. The conformity and deception are enforced by adverse "efficiency ratings" against officers who dare speak out. A single unfavorable rating can be an effective and absolute bar to promotion. The alternative to concealing, suppressing or falsely swearing may be professional ruin for an officer. Such a system inevitable produces fearful, over-cautious men, oftentimes dishonest men. Thus the Army has become a nightmare for the intelligent and honest man, and a haven for the mediocre and callous...

That army today is a support-heavy, overstaffed force that is not tactically organized to win. More than 400,000 Army troops have served in Vietnam, but at no time during the war have more than 100,000 of them been available for combat. And considering the leadership at high levels it seems amazing that we have managed to stay in Vietnam at all.

In general, the men of the Army have fought in Vietnam with a bravery that has greatly exceeded the ability of the leadership. But there is widespread dissatisfaction and lowered morale as is shown by constantly rising dissent, AWOL and desertion rates. In the

absence of a real military objective in Vietnam, the make-do tactics of "search and destroy" and "sweeps" of the countryside have accomplished little beyond getting many young Americans killed, or crippled and blinded by mines and booby traps. These blunderbuss tactics have also killed or maimed many Vietnamese civilians. And no doubt some Americans have shot innocent civilians out of hand, because of "body counts" and the frustration and despair they felt at seeing comrades lost in tactical operations that produced few tangible results. We lose the war while we win most of the battles against a fourth-rate foe who lacks air power. Yet there are repeated predictions of victory, turning the corner, light at the end of the tunnel, "Vietnamization." In 1968, the US military said Vietnamization was not possible, even though we had been advising and equipping the South Vietnamese armed forces since 1955. Now, in spite of Vietnamization being hailed as the final solution, it is intended to maintain a residual base force of around 200,000 US troops indefinitely in Vietnam. This comes as a cruel shock to this country which is thoroughly tired of the war. The armed forces' job is to fight to defend the nation against a threat to its freedom, not to cover up diplomatic blunders, committed thousands of miles from our shores, where no real threat to the national security exists...

The Army's moral climate tempts officers to do anything that will advance their careers however wrong. Among many of my superiors and fellow officers, I could detect no stirrings of conscience at profiting professionally and financially from a war they admitted had no legitimate military objective and caused the needless death and maiming of thousands of young Americans.

At the same time, the whole Army structure is pervaded with fear of reprisals that stifles any whisper of dissent. Reprisal can come in many forms - the "efficiency report," secret "security" investigations, character assassination, professional ostracism and humiliation. The consequence is to keep many good officers gagged in obedience to the Army's protective self-deceptions, and free the less observant to get away with anything. One self-deception is that the end justifies the means; that doctrine when practised by the Japanese Army in World War II resulted in a 1945 Supreme Court decision by which we hanged their supreme commander in the Philippines, General Yamashita; in our case it seems to have led only to battlefield frustration and degradation as at Songmy. Isn't our supreme commander equally responsible?

What should be done? Those who fight should also be freely heard. The men who serve in the Army must be permitted the right of uncensored freedom to speak out without fear of reprisal. Those who fight in the name of freedom should be the first to expect to be able to think and live in freedom. The serviceman is entitled to exercise all the rights guaranteed by the Constitution he is sworn to defend. These rights ought not to be abrogated by court-martial or banishment to Vietnam for daring to dissent. There must be no repetition of the trials at Fort Jackson, Fort Bragg, Fort Dix and the Presidio. The tone of the US Army must cease to be one of deception, concealment and self-interest, combined with an aura of constant terror of acknowledging failure or error...

Ode to Kerr, Pahura and Thomas on Their Retirement

In June and July, Lts.(j.g.) Gordon Kerr, Randy Thomas and Jim Pahura were dismissed from the Navy, ostensibly as part of a budget cut program but, let's face it men, they were active "ON men".

Kerr, Pahura, Thomas
naval officers, clean-cut, all-American
loyal, patriotic, trustworthy...
the fulfillment of every grandmother's dream
what did you do to deserve this?

The exalted Major urges citizens
"to voice their convictions"
says it is "part of the American Way of Life"
you took him seriously
thought there was honesty and sincerity
in that old Alabama soul
He expelled you from his family.

They say separated, released, discharged, fired
perhaps liberated is a better word?
liberated from the strait-jacket stifling
unthinking conforming all-powerful Defense Complex
a five-sided cell guarded by obsolescent braided
and ribboned men who play cold war games
on Dulles' grave.

Kerr, Pahura and Thomas
you dared celebrate life in the dungeon of death
you dared speak of peace in the citadel of war
you dared speak of freedom on the altar of hallowed discipline.
Your heroes were the Berrigans, Ginsberg and Janis Joplin
not Patton, not Westmoreland
how naive of you to think they could understand
you talked of "opening communication", "creating dialogues"
Tell us now, is it possible?

On the day you were set free and still today:
the fleet sails
grey destroyers pursue red submarines
gunboats sink peasant sampans
phantoms drop jellied fire
how madness consumes jingoist politicians
led on a cycle of destruction
for the greater glory of General Dynamics.

Has anything changed?
who will ever know?
let it be said that at least you tried
you stood up
you were honest
you overcame the paranoia that is their greatest weapon:
the fitness report--security clearance--transfer--
harassment--court-martial--no promotion--

think of your family--isolation psychosis
that so many others fear
but is so insignificant before 40,000 dead and dying
you knew that
you acted and that is what matters.

Kerr, Pahura, Thomas
lonely voices of truth, honesty and idealism
rejected by the Masters of War
rejected but not stilled
for you are not the beginning
and not the end
there will be more, many more
to rattle the windows and shake down the walls
and we shall not be overcome.

- Phil Lehman

Reservists Denied Basic Civilian Freedoms

Several cases have reached the attention of COM in recent weeks, by mail and in person, of incidents whereby Officers (and enlisted men) have been deliberately harrassed and intimidated by officials of their reserve units (obviously directed by higher authority) for publicly stating their personal opposition to the Vietnam war.

One reserve LT(jg)'s case received national attention when he was threatened with court-martial proceedings, this summer, refusing to go on two weeks active duty for training because of his conscientious objections to the war... and with three years honorable service to his credit!!! All he wanted was out. Recent Federal Court decisions regarding conscientious objectors will, I' sure, help his battle considerably.

In another case, another reserve LT and Vietnam veteran was severely harrassed by Federal agents for appearing at a large public high school, at the invitation of school officials and in a non-drill status, and telling the Vietnam story like it really is to kids just begging to hear the truth. He told the truth so well, that he was immediately labeled a subversive, threatened with legal action, and almost kicked out of his reserve unit. The entire purpose of the reserve program is to have available, military personnel in the civilian community to draw upon in time of national crisis. Yet, reservists are denied the basic fundamental, Constitutional freedoms their fellow civilians enjoy.

Obviously no one in the reserves has the freedom of speech. They, more than anyone else in the service, are closer to the hearts and minds of the civilian community on feelings about the war issues, yet they are ignored by their active duty seniors.

In another recent case, nine Marine reservists in California were threatened with court-martials because their "sideburns were too

long." COURT-MARTIAL FOR SIDEBURNS!!! It is almost a requirement that these reservists, all really civilian members of the community, live and work in an atmosphere of style and fashion to be a success these days. And in some cases, it is an absolute requirement for a job. Yet, after sacrificing their free time to serve their country, they are humiliated, threatened, and may now possibly lose their jobs.

My God, doesn't the JAG Corps have more important things to do than court-martial men for long sideburns??? There are enough ships running into each other and massacres to keep them busy for a long time to come.

Someone had better sit back and take a long hard look at the rights of reservists and start respecting them and demand that others do.

A Concerned Reservist

"I bet that Russian Army is jealous as hell. Our troops are here getting all this experience, we're learning about guerrilla warfare, helicopters, vertical envelopment, close artillery support. Those Russian generals would love to be here... Any true professional wants to march to the sound of gunfire."

— General William C. Westmoreland
quoted in Military Justice Is to Justice as Military Music Is to Music, by Robert Sherill

The Army Handbook for Vietnam

The following are direct quotations from the U.S. Army Handbook for Vietnam, Department of the Army pamphlet 550-40, published in September, 1962, reprinted October, 1964.

The Origin of the Armies

South: "The Vietnamese National Army in the South grew out a militarized police force which was formed in 1947 and operated until 1954 as a component part of the French Union Forces in Indochina." (p. 347)

North: "In the North, on the other hand, the People's Army of Vietnam, organized officially in 1946, developed out of the Communist-led forces which, after World War II, took the offensive against French colonial rule." (p. 347)

"The Viet Minh Army (North) grew out of this opposition to foreign influence and had the support of a majority of the population." (p. 22)

"The communists came to power in a war against the French which, in the minds of the non-Communist bulk of the population, was a struggle for national liberation from foreign domination." (p. 20)

Upper Classes

South: "This national upper-class has patterned itself very closely on their former French governors. Both in outlook and in mode of living it is highly urbane and Westernized in comparison with the rest of the population. Almost all the men and many of the women speak French, and a rapidly increasing number of both sexes speak English as well. They drive late-model American cars, or by second choice, high-powered European cars. Living mainly in Saigon, they tend to concentrate in the French Quarter of the city and reside in French-style houses. Modern appliances such as refrigerators and radios are commonplace in their homes, as are western foods and beverages. The men have adopted western clothes, while the women retain the national dress, although in Saigon some of the young women have adopted western clothing, accessories and hair styles." (P. 78).

North: "...is an intellectual and professional group derived from somewhat different origins than the counterpart in South Vietnam. Its members appear to come from that segment of the mandarinate which could not adjust to the French, and from the less well-to-do landowners. They have generally received less formal education, and they owe their standing to demonstrations of practical ability and devotion to socialism than to formal educational achievement." (p.85)

History:

1946 In March, 1946, France concluded an agreement with Ho Chi Minh, recognizing the Democratic Republic of Vietnam as 'vnu State' within the Indo-Chinese Federation and the French Union. The new State was to have its own national assembly, manage its own finances, maintain its own army." (p.25)

In November, shooting broke out in Haiphong, and the subsequent French bombardment of the city reportedly killed more than 6,000 Vietnamese. The French demands which followed were so completely unacceptable to the Viet Minh government that it decided to risk a long war of liberation rather than accept. On October 19, 1946, it launched the first attack in a war to expel the French. In this act of resistance against foreign troops, the Viet Minh had the active or passive support of a majority of Vietnamese." (p.26)

1949 In March, 1949, France finally approved of self-government for Vietnam within the French Union. Dai assumed the role of Chief of State, but the principal nationalities failed to unite behind him since they claimed that the French did not offer real independence." (p. 27)

1950 In February, 1950, Spain, Britain and the United States recognized the State of Vietnam headed by Dang Dai as the government of Vietnam.

In May, 1950, the United States announced a decision to give aid to Vietnam through France, and a United States Economic Mission arrived in Saigon.

(During the Indochina War, 1946-54) The United States is estimated to have given aid through France and directly to the State of Vietnam totalling over \$1 billion. (p. 26)

Telling It Like It Is

"...I want to tell you so you won't be surprised. They'll first strip you of your clothes, but they'll go deeper than that. They'll shuck off any little dignity you have--you'll lose what you think of as your decent right to live and to be let alone to live. They'll make you live and eat and sleep and shit close to other men. And when they dress you up again you'll not be able to tell yourself from the others. You can't even wear a scrap or pin a note on your breast to say, "This is me, separate from the rest."

"...After a while, you'll think no thought the others do not think. You'll know no word the others can't say. And you'll feel the danger in any difference whatever--a danger to the whole crowd of like-thinking, like-acting men."

"...Once in a while there is a man who won't do what is demanded of him, and do you know what happens? The whole machine devotes itself coldly to the destruction of his difference. They'll beat your spirit and your nerves, your body and your mind, with iron rods until the dangerous difference goes out of you. And if you can't finally give in, they'll vomit you up and leave you stinking outside--neither part of themselves nor yet free. They only do it to protect themselves. A thing so triumphantly illogical, so beautifully senseless as an Army can't allow a question to weaken it. Within itself, if you do not hold it up to other things for comparison and derision, you'll find slowly, surely, a reason and a logic and a kind of dreadful beauty. A man who can accept it is not a worse man always, and sometimes is a much better man. Some men there are who go down the wrack of soldiering, surrender themselves, and become faceless. But these had not much face to start with."

—John Steinbeck
East of Eden

Equal Protection of the Laws

Article 127 of Navy Regulations which was reported on in the last issue prohibits, among other things, "combinations of persons in the naval service for the purpose of influencing legislation..." This regulation was the main reason COM did not publicly support the McGovern-Hatfield amendment and Navy officials have cited it when warning COM members of possible court-martial action. We are often told by superiors that military officers "just don't get involved in politics."

However, on August 14, a CBS-TV news report revealed the extent of the Pentagon's influence-peddling on Capitol Hill. It was reported that the military employs some 300 officers in "Congressional liaison" and has an annual budget of three million dollars for this purpose. To put the figure in perspective, there are a total of 369 civilian lobbyists registered with Congress with a total annual expenditure of 5.1 million dollars. CBS states that the military liaison offices were involved in helping Congressmen with routine work, providing information, arranging congressional trips, working for committees, even drafting legislation. A Pentagon spokesman claimed their primary role was one of an information service. But, as Rep. Morehead (D, Pa.) said, the information becomes harder to get if one is on the liberal side or is known as a persistent critic of the military.

Once again, it appears that political involvement is acceptable if one is on the side of the establishment.

REPORTS FROM NEAR AND AFAR

COM Washington celebrated the early retirement of fellow members, Gordon Kerr, Jim Pahura, and Randy Thomas (see "Ode to Kerr, Pahura, and Thomas" this newsletter) with a Saturday night dosing out party at the Washington Navy Yard Officers Club. The festive occasion was attended by COM members from Washington and vicinity, their wives and dates, and friends of COM, among them Jane Fonda, Rennie Davis, and Mark Lane.

The Washington law firm of Arnold and Porter is preparing to file a law suit for declaratory judgment in the Washington, D.C. District Court on behalf of COM against the Department of Defense. The suit maintains that fear of reprisal by the military has had a chilling effect on the willingness of military officers to exercise their First Amendment rights and participate in COM activities. If the suit is successful, the DOD will be forced to state clearly its position on COM with regard to legality of the organization itself and the freedom of officers to participate in the organization. The brief for the case cites instances of harassment of military officers because of their involvement in COM. Anyone interested in having his particular experiences included in the brief may send them to COM Washington. Please be as specific as possible.

Also in the works is a full page newspaper ad which will be placed in either the New York Times or the Washington Post. The ad will contain a statement against the Indochina War and will be signed by a number of COM members. Over 75 officers have stated their willingness to have their names included in this ad, but many more names are needed. Anyone wishing to have his name included is requested to send a signed statement to that effect to COM Washington. REMEMBER: Newspaper ads cost money.

Some COM Washington members are participating in Operation RA (Rapid American Withdrawal), a three-day march beginning September 4 from Morristown, N.J., to Valley Forge, Pa. The march has been organized by the New York Chapter of Vietnam Veterans against the War, and its purpose is to present as authentic a picture of an army "search and destroy" mission to the American people as is practical.

COM Washington continues to meet weekly on Wednesday nights at 2122 Massachusetts Ave., N.W., Apt 826. Recent meetings have been attended by many friends of COM. Unlisted men have related their stories of repression and harassment. A representative of the JMW, a newly-organized Washington coffee house, urged COM participation in this activity. Don Duncan and Marilyn Moorehead, who have been active in the GI Movement, recently established a Washington GI Information Center. Don is a former Green Beret who spent more than 10 years in the Army. Don and Marilyn spoke at a recent meeting. A representative of the Concerned Academy Graduates (CAG) attended a meeting to explain his group's program. CAG membership includes many service academy graduates who are no longer on active duty. Currently they are lobbying with Congress for an early end to the war. Lt. Col. Charles West USA (Ret), who served 20 years in the JAG Corps, has also spoken at a COM meeting. He is under contract with Random House to write a book on the trial of Lt. Calley.

COM Grand Forks (P.O. Box 593, Grand Forks, N.D. 5801). The Grand Forks chapter of COM received extensive local TV coverage during the week of August 10. Four members were interviewed and excerpts from the interview were featured on news broadcasts during the week. COM members and sympathizers are being investigated and have been told that there is "a communist in the group." The investigators would not reveal the name of the officer accused of being such, and it appears to be just another tactic to discourage membership. Grand Forks incidentally is one of the two sites selected for initial installation of the ABM system.

COM Norfolk (1104 Bedgate Ave. Apt. 2, Norfolk, Va.). After writing an antiwar letter to the Virginia Pilot, the Norfolk chapter had a meeting covered by local TV and press. The next day, the spokesman of the group LTJG H. Peter Schaeuss, was stripped of all his military responsibilities, told he could not give orders to any enlisted men and was threatened with court martial if "sufficient grounds could be found." The following week, Schaeuss lost his security clearance. No other member has received any harassment beyond informal consultations with commanding officers. COM Norfolk is working on its own newsletter.

COM San Diego (4910 Coronado Ave., San Diego, Cal. 92117). News of COM San Diego, founded on July 25, appeared in a local independent paper as well as in the "underground" Street Journal. The co-ordinator of the group, LTJG John Kent is an aviator and a Naval Academy graduate. He is reportedly under investigation and has even received threats on his life from an unreciprocative populace. There has been no official heat directed against any member, however.

Interest has been expressed in forming COM chapters at San Francisco, Westover AFB, Pensacola, Fla., Keflavik, Iceland and on board several fleet ships. Write us if you are interested in contacts at any of these places.

Jim Pahura and Phil Lehman, both recently released early from the Navy, are travelling across country making COM contacts and gathering data for an independent office dealing with servicemen's problems. They plan to travel down the East Coast across the South and Southwest, to the West Coast. People interested in feeding, lodging or talking with them should contact COM.

Peter Hagerty (former Navy Ensign) who was featured in the first newsletter, will be in Long Binh and Saigon from late August through most of September. He will be working with an attorney for the Lawyers' Military Defense Committee, whose purpose is to provide much-needed legal counsel to servicemen in Vietnam. Hagerty hopes to set up a permanent counselling office in Saigon.

1/Lt. Louis Font, West Point graduate and conscientious objector to the Vietnam War, lost his first appeal to the Federal District Court in Baltimore. The judge ruled that although Font is "obviously sincere," it is constitutional to deny a selective service claim. Lou Font awaits his appeal while working at the Family Housing Office, Ft. Meade, Md.

CORRESPONDENCE

The mail is coming in even faster now. We continue to be heartened by the fantastic support, the checks, suggestions and comments on COM's activities:

"You guys are doing a wonderful thing--don't let your enthusiasm wear off."

"What you are doing is unique in history for its boldness and sincerity...Many people may accuse COM of treason and treachery but I believe it expresses the ultimate loyalty to the principles upon which this country was founded."

Letters have been arriving from all over the world as well as around the country. There's a chapter starting in Iceland; an Annapolis graduate with a CO discharge has carried COM to Hawaii; a high-ranking Officer overseas is quietly lending his influence towards ending the war. In Vietnam, too, officers have reached the same conclusions about the war as have we:

"I have been especially interested in the movement since I have been in-country. As a Coast Guard advisor I have witnessed the inability of the U.S. military to solve what is essentially a Vietnamese political problem...I don't think I can explain to you the absurdity of our Indochina pursuits."

Beyond a strong and uniting opposition to the war, the letters you have been sending us reflect a variety of opinions on what an officer should do to try to affect the things he believes. One COM member has written an "officer letter through channels" to the Secretary of the Navy. Another states that:

"You can believe that you can and should reform the military and save it as a peace/war organization. I don't wish to save it or keep it at all, but enough of that. Too many people in the movement are emphasizing their differences rather than their common concerns and this is where I am with you all the way." (Lt. jg/bs, USA graduate)

"The in-service voices of reason and compassion have been too few and too small in recent years." (Capt./US Army)

"I have decided that the only way I can justify my position in the military is to work actively to change American military policy and practices. I am not optimistic about achieving any dramatic results, but at least when my grandchildren ask, "What did you do in the Vietnam War?" I can say that I spoke up for my beliefs."

WHAT YOU CAN DO

COM is a young, burgeoning organization. It can't afford to lose the momentum it has built up. COM needs enthusiastic, active support from its current members, a growing membership, and funds. The strength of COM is in its group solidarity, but the success of COM depends on its individual members. Here's what you can do:

1. Show this newsletter to your fellow officers. Explain COM's purpose. Talk it up every chance you get.
2. Send the names and addresses of any officers friends you have to COM Washington so that they can be added to the mailing list. Were your college classmates ROTC or DCS? Send us their names. Write to your college alumni magazine and get them to give you a sentence or two of publicity so that classmates whose addresses you don't know can get in touch with you.
3. If you want to organize a COM chapter on your base or post, write to COM Washington. We have a file of people from military activities all over the world who have expressed interest in COM. We can bring together people at the same base who might not otherwise know each other. (This is how COM San Diego was organized).
4. Keep COM Washington informed of your chapter's activities or your individual activities so that they can be included in this newsletter. The stories of your COM experiences encourage others to participate. The newsletter is COM NEWS--it's your newsletter.

5. Encourage the financial support of your friends, both civilian and military. Keep the sheckles flowing to Washington, and we'll keep putting the COM newsletter in your mailbox. Remember: newspaper ads and newsletters cost money.

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*Denotes inactive duty.

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Disclaimer

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The opinions expressed here are not necessarily those of every COM member.

 Consider me a member of COM and keep me informed of its activities.

Add my name to the mailing list.

Name _____ Rank _____ Branch _____

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Mail to COM, P.O. Box 21073 Kalorama Station, Washington, D.C.
20009.