

Project Return aids 'bad paper' vets

May 28th to June 3rd is Vietnam Veterans Week, proclaimed by the President of the United States and the Governor of Oregon.

Vietnam veterans — veterans of an illegal and immoral war — returned home to a nation that met them with mixed feelings — embarrassment, hostility, and neglect. Many of the same feelings that are held toward the war are now directed in the veterans of that war.

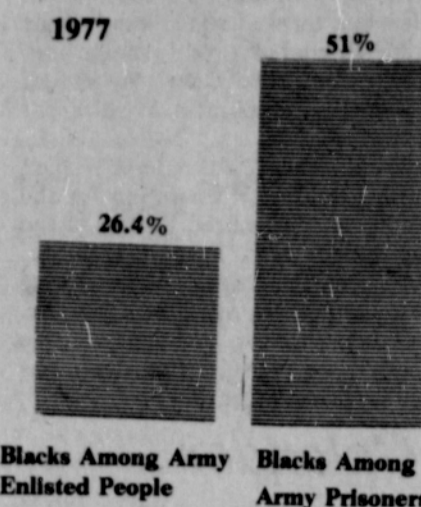
These men came home damaged by illness, injury, lack of training for peacetime careers, psychological stress, and in the case of Blacks, racial discrimination. They returned to unemployment, disrupted families, denial of education and training, inadequate medical care. They are denied the governmental support provided veterans of other wars and are denied the emotional support of the American public.

Article 15 . . . has without doubt resulted in irreparable damage to the service careers of Blacks."

Less than honorable discharge were introduced by the Army in 1893. In 1947 the terms "general" and "undesirable" were introduced for two types of administrative discharges — discharges not resulting from court martials but from administrative disciplinary action. Now there are three types of administrative discharges: honorable, general under honorable conditions, and undesirable. Bad conduct and dishonorable discharges can only result from court martial. Any discharge other than honorable is called "bad paper."

During the Vietnam war (1964-1973) more than 700,000 less-than-honorable discharges were issued. Since the end of the war, the percent-

ARMY PRISON POPULATION,

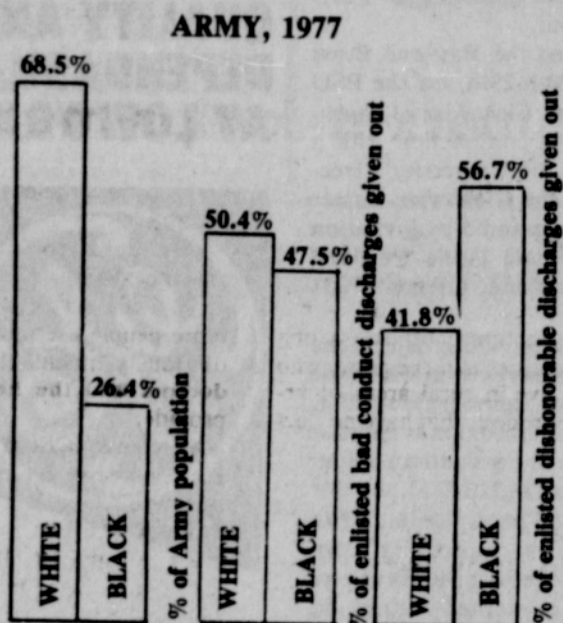


age of "bad paper" discharges has risen 15%. In 1978, 25% of the discharges were less than honorable. These discharges were imposed for being absent without leave, drug use, questioning military authority, and many actions that would not be illegal outside the military.

Blacks receive dishonorable discharges at 4½ times the rate of whites. In 1977, 57% of those receiving dishonorable discharges and 40% of those receiving bad conduct discharges were Black. Less than honorable discharges compound the already severe problems of unemployment and bar access to military benefits such as education assistance, medical aid, veterans loans, etc.

Veterans can apply for an upgrading of less than honorable discharges by applying to a military review board. The veteran must apply within fifteen years of discharge.

BLACKS RECEIVE A GREATER PROPORTION OF BAD DISCHARGES



*Total figures are less than 100% due to exclusion of other minority figures. Figures from Second Annual Assessment, 1978



"I learned my skill in today's military"

Six years later, these veterans who are Black face problems of even greater magnitude. Blacks were drafted, sent to the front, wounded and killed in greater numbers than other Americans. In the service they were the target of the same racism and discrimination as at home — or more. Representative Parren Mitchell (D-MD) has said, "Racism in the military is so deep, so wide and so effective that we can't possibly cope with it." The Army's 1978 review of its Equal Opportunity Program said, "Although the outward appearance is one of calm, racial tensions and institutional discrimination still exist."

One of the problems that most affects Blacks — and is directly related to racism — is military justice. Although Blacks made up about 30% of the Army in 1978, they accounted for 51% of the Army prison population. The Congressional Black Caucus said of military law permitting commanders to impose reduction in rank or loss of pay without trial, "No military procedure has brought forth a greater number of complaints and evidence of racial discrimination than . . . nonjudicial punishment.

Vet Week activities planned

Vietnam Veterans Week events include a keynote address by Senator Mark Hatfield, "Vietnam Veterans Today: Ethical Issues and Public Policy." He will speak May 31st, 7:30 p.m., at the First United Methodist Church, S.W. 18th and Jefferson. A panel discussion will follow.

Dr. John Wilson of Cleveland State University will speak at the second "Awareness Seminar," June 7th, First Presbyterian Church, 1200 S.W. Alder, at 7:30 p.m. Dr. Wilson will focus on post-Vietnam syndrome and implications for public policy.

During the week of June 3rd, Dr. Wilson will conduct a series of professional seminars at the Veterans Hospital, University of Oregon Health Sciences Center, and the PSU School of Social Work.

An 18-hole benefit golf tournament will be held at Rose City Golf Course on June 2nd. Proceeds will be used to install a wheelchair ramp at Project Return offices, entries, \$15 fee, should be sent to Project Return Golf Tournament, attention: Harry Dean, 1412 S.E. 25th Avenue, 97214 (234-0801).



Vietnam Veterans Week, 1979

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

We are a peace-seeking Nation and we are at peace, but we must not forget the lessons war has taught us, nor the brave men and women who have sacrificed so much for us in all our wars.

The decade now drawing to a close began in the midst of a war that was the longest and most expensive in our history, and most costly in human lives and suffering. Because it was a divisive and painful period for all Americans, we are tempted to want to put the Vietnam war out of our minds. But it is important that we remember—honestly, realistically, with humility.

It is important, too, that we remember those who answered their Nation's call in that war with the full measure of their valor and loyalty, that we pay full tribute at last to all Americans who served in our Armed Forces in Southeast Asia. Their courage and sacrifices in that tragic conflict were made doubly difficult by the Nation's lack of agreement as to what constituted the highest duty. Instead of glory, they were too often met with our embarrassment or ignored when they returned.

The honor of those who died there is not tarnished by our uncertainty at the moment of their sacrifice. To them we offer our respect and gratitude. To the loved ones they left behind, we offer our concern and understanding and our help to build new lives. To those who still bear the wounds, both physical and psychic, from all our wars, we acknowledge our continuing responsibility.

Of all the millions of Americans who served in Southeast Asia, the majority have successfully rejoined the mainstream of American life.

To them, and to all who served or suffered in that war, we give our solemn pledge to pursue all honorable means to establish a just and lasting peace in the world, that no future generation need suffer in this way again.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, JIMMY CARTER, President of the United States of America, call upon all Americans to observe May 28 through June 3, 1979, the week of our traditional Memorial Day, as Vietnam Veterans Week. On this occasion, let us as a Nation express our sincere thanks for the service of all Vietnam era veterans.

I urge my fellow citizens and my fellow veterans, and their groups and organizations, to honor the patriotism of these veterans, and to recognize their civilian contributions to their communities in America today.

I call upon the state and local governments to join with me in proclaiming Vietnam Veterans Week, and to publicly recognize with appropriate ceremonies and activities yesterday's service and today's contributions of Vietnam era veterans.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twentieth day of March, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and seventy-nine, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and third.

Jimmy Carter

VETERANS HELPING

VETERANS, IN
EMPLOYMENT
TRAINING
EDUCATION
READJUSTMENT
ALCOHOL
NARCOTICS
SOCIAL PROBLEMS
SINCE 1971

PORTLAND
Project Return INC.

Does Anybody Know I'm Here



PROJECT RETURN-VETS

1412 SE 25th Portland, OR. 234-0801

DISABLED
VETERANS
OUTREACH
PROGRAM

D.V.O.P.

