

from the Freedom Organization were harassed. Sometimes, while black poll watchers were not present, whites who had already voted were seen reentering the polling place, some three and four times.

But the most common irregularity was the "assistance" given the many illiterate black voters in casting their secret ballot, a procedure sanctioned by Alabama law. According to a Justice Department source, this practice alone may have affected as much as 20 per cent of the black vote. The person chosen as "helper" by a high proportion of voters, the man who accompanied them behind the curtain and pulled the lever, was none other than the white election official; many said their boss man had told them to request the official's help. One voter who was told to, and didn't, was evicted from his house on the white man's land shortly after the election.

When the votes were tallied, Sidney Logan Jr. trailed the incumbent sheriff by 1426 to 1943, and the other six black candidates for county office lost by comparable margins. But their showing won them something very concrete. Their organization is now a legally constituted third party, with the Black Panther as its symbol.

In two predominantly black counties of Alabama, Negroes won the general election as nominees of the state Democratic party. Macon County (Tuskegee) now has its first black sheriff since Reconstruction, a black tax collector and a black member of the board of revenue; Greene County elected a Negro minister, running as a Democrat, to the board of education. But the independent black candidates in the black belt counties of Lowndes, Dallas, Greene, Perry, Wilcox and Sumter — where the candidates were responsible to no one but the people they sought to represent — will perhaps prove more significant. Their "freedom organizations" form one base for the future creation of a national Black Panther party, one of SNCC's announced objectives.

In Greene County, where blacks have a 2 to 1 edge in registered voters, the names of independent black candidates for sheriff and tax assessor were stricken from the ballot. A federal court ruled recently that the names should have been on the ballot, and or-

dered the election for these two offices postponed. The election, when it is held, may result in a Black Panther sheriff for Greene County.

In Dallas County, where blacks number 40 per cent of registered voters, the independents were roundly defeated by 8 to 1 margins. Their failure was a direct result of an alliance between whites and the Negro establishment of Selma, led by the Dallas County Voters League. The Voters League worked industriously for the election of moderate racist Wilson Baker for sheriff over extreme racist Jim Clark. They also endorsed the state Democratic ticket, including Lurleen Wallace.

"We did not give any endorsement to Negroes," said Reverend Frederick Reese, a League official. "First of all we felt they could not win. And we felt they did not necessarily represent the calibre of person that we think should have been running for office, in many instances."

"Those DCVL cats want to be white so bad, it shows in everything they say

and do," said a SNCC person. "Well, they'll stay on top of their little second-class kingdom for just so long, and then it's all over baby. The black folk won't want them around, and the whites *for sure* won't want them. They'll be like a man without a country."

But it was the carrot-and-stick system of white domination, a century old, of which the Voters League is only a symptom, that was responsible for the poor showing of black candidates in Dallas County. Open intimidation of voters and poll watchers, arrest of SNCC workers for inciting to riot (getting out the vote) — it's all there, just as if the 1965 "Battle of Selma" had never happened. It showed the futility, in terms of practical political organizing, of the kind of integrationist grandstanding that brought national attention to Selma just two years ago. And it explains why Stokely Carmichael and Sidney Logan aren't begging the whites for *anything*, not any more.

— David Welsh

## Bubble Gum Soldiers



*The author of this article is a Private First Class in the U.S. Army, now serving in Vietnam. Shortly after he wrote this account of 4th Infantry Division draftees facing combat duty in Vietnam, units of the Division suffered heavy casualties in fierce fighting near the Cambodian border.*

**C** PEOPLE ASSUME that "our boys in the service" almost all believe in this war, which just isn't true. In this country there are a small number of people who are really gung-ho in favor of the war, a small number articulately opposed to it, and a large number confused and apathetic who lie somewhere in between. It's the same in

the Army; men don't stop thinking when they get into uniform. As the Army is forced to take more draftees and more college students, dissenters in uniform are becoming a major military headache.

It's true that some soldiers actually want to fight in the war—but they are precious few. Before my company of 250 had been told it was being sent to Vietnam, only six of its members had volunteered to go. Three of these told me they were doing it for the money.

For the last few months before I left the United States, I was stationed at Fort Lewis, Washington, a base from which thousands of men have been leaving on the long journey to Vietnam each month. Most of them are not happy about it.

A unit, part of the U.S. 4th Infantry Division, shipped out for Vietnam early last summer. Hundreds of men desperately pulled strings to keep from going. During the month beforehand I worked as a personnel clerk. Each day my desk was flooded with applications for hardship discharges or compassionate reassignments (being discharged

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from the Army or assigned to a base in the U.S. because of some family emergency). The number of these requests rose rapidly as the troopships' sailing date drew closer. By the end the hardship discharge/compassionate reassignment request rate was more than several times the normal flow.

Tactics got more desperate as the shipping-out date approached. One poor fellow took an overdose of sleeping pills when everything else failed. They just pumped out his stomach and put him on the boat. Another G.I. showed up on crutches at the last minute claiming he'd sprained his ankle. One private I knew quietly made a standing offer of \$500 to any clerk in my office who would change his orders so he wouldn't be sent to Vietnam.

Men were due back from a final, brief home leave the day before the boats left for Vietnam. When the troopships finally sailed, 146 men had not come back. Some of these straggled in when the ships were safely gone. Most claimed they had been held up by the airlines strike, which was then on. But there was an unspoken assumption in my office that hardly anyone had been delayed who didn't want to be. Some of these 146—I don't know how many—never came back at all.

Once, several months later, I had the job of tracking down an enlisted man who had been shipped to Vietnam with that unit. I found the Army had a record of his getting on the ship, but had none of his getting off in Saigon. I later heard of others like him. I hope they were good swimmers.

A subtle despair, a fear people don't understand, permeated the base. Of course I wasn't in the Army in World War II, but I imagine the mood was pretty different then. Though there undoubtedly were men afraid of being killed or wounded in combat, there surely wasn't the same pervasive doubt. Someone attacked *us* at Pearl Harbor, and I'm sure you wouldn't have found many soldiers who would seriously argue that fighting back wasn't justified.

This mood of fear and discontent now shows up in many ways. For example, there were posters of the Army's Commander-in-Chief—LBJ to you civilians—all over Fort Lewis. You never saw one that wasn't defaced. Usually the President had bubble-gum on his nose, sometimes there was a moustache

or horns.

Another thing is the attitude toward the men who manage to avoid getting shipped out for Vietnam. If a guy can beat the system by filing C.O. papers, by claiming a dying mother, by going AWOL, by *any* means, he's not scorned by his fellow enlisted men, he's envied.

**Q** WHEN WE JOINED or got drafted, we were all given the usual Army recruiter's pitch about how we'd be given jobs that would use our various skills. When we were inducted, the Army desperately needed infantrymen for Vietnam—cannon fodder—and everyone was hastily trained as a combat soldier. This happened to a friend of mine here who was a professional pilot with 350 hours flying time before he got drafted. A guy I know who graduated from Columbia and speaks fluent Russian is a mortar man. Another fellow with a B.S. in chemistry is in a chemical warfare company—as a truck driver. The Army needs men to fight and die in those rice paddies, and they're taking us.

Morale was already low while our unit was going through infantry training, and it did not improve one day when a soldier complained of chest pains in the middle of a PT exercise. He was forced to keep exercising anyway, and then collapsed and died—of a heart attack at the age of 19.

Then there were the chaplains. I remember one who taught a class in "character guidance" while I was still in basic training. He began with a slightly off-color joke to prove he was one of the boys. Then he lectured us on the virtue of obedience, and about how this virtue was institutionalized in the Army chain of command. You had an obligation to obey your company commander, who was responsible to the battalion commander, and so on up the line until you got to the secretary of defense and then the President, who, it turned out, took his orders from God Himself. Thus, the chaplain reasoned, disobeying an order ultimately meant disobeying the Almighty.

Another time we heard a talk by a chaplain who wore a .45 on his hip. He told us it was not against God's law to kill a Viet Cong. "After all," he said, making an analogy, "if a mad dog foaming at the mouth attacked you, you'd shoot him, wouldn't you?"

**Q** HELPLESS PEASANTS in Czarist Russia used to cut off their trigger fingers to avoid being drafted. It takes sheer desperation to make men maim themselves, but I understand now how they felt.

Sometimes I no longer feel able to compromise with my beliefs. One day I simply told my superiors, "Look, I'm just not going to type anything more. I don't believe in it and I won't do it." But an officer said to me, "Here's a stack of papers to be typed, and you'll stay here until you do them." I gave in.

There is little you can do. Once you're in the Army, the alternatives to fighting are too grim: You can refuse to cooperate, and be put in the stockade, but then they simply put you on the ship under armed guards—I saw that happen to men at Fort Lewis. You can desert, and spend five years in prison if you're caught. Or, to try to avoid jail, you can leave the United States forever. I considered these things but decided I couldn't face any of them. Sometimes I worry about explaining that to my children. I got on the troop ship when it was time to leave, unable to express my real feelings any more effectively than by putting bubble gum on Johnson's nose.

Society



### THE YELLOW SUBMARINE

**Q** WHILE A REPORTER asks if "Yellow Submarine" is a drug song and a Beatle replies, "You have a dirty mind," the not necessarily psychedelic branch of the New Left is initiating a revolutionary change in the nature and style of protest by launching a yellow submarine in the Hudson River.

There are those who contend that "yellow submarine" is an underground name in England for the capsule which LSD comes in; there are others who contend that the lyrics have definit