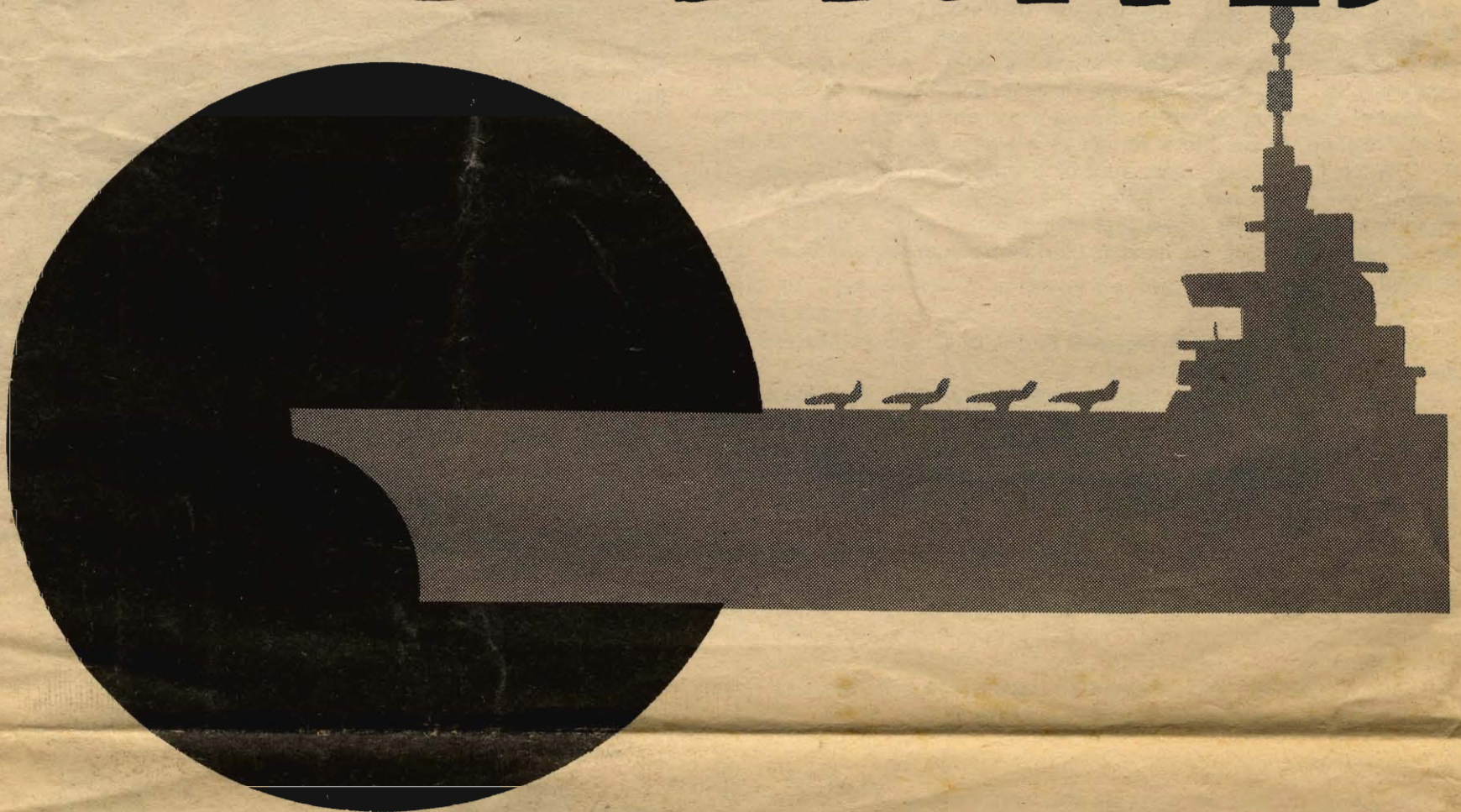


A WARSHIP CAN BE STOPPED



SUPPORT THE MEN OF THE CORAL SEA

The U.S.S. Coral Sea is one of a small number of aircraft carriers which form the life support system for Nixon's air war in Indochina. At any one time, two or three of these ships lie off the coast of Vietnam. The Marines and sailors on board know that although fewer ground troops are dying, the air war continues unabated, because they load the millions of pounds of munitions onto the fighter-bombers.

The Stop Our Ship (SOS) movement is spreading from the Coral Sea to other carriers. But each time another sailor commits himself, the need for civilian support and encouragement grows. Massive, publicized support is their protection against being singled out and buried under military repression.

We are being asked for support by those inside the military who have decided that they are no longer cogs in the machine . . . but human beings who can use their collective leverage to stop the production of war.

The Coral Sea is supposed to sail on November 12. On Monday, November 8, the men's last liberty ends. Between 5am and 7am, the men change workshifts and a lot of crewmen will pass through the East Gate of NAS Alameda. SOS asks civilians to be there at 5am as a visible show of support for the men in the crucial last days before deployment. Take Nimitz Freeway south to Broadway/Alameda exit. Go through the tube. Take Webster Ave. to Atlantic. Right on Atlantic to the East Gate.

Also, call 431-8081 to add your phone number to the phone tree in case of contingencies. Be there to show them we hear their SOS.

5 am Monday November 8

Alameda Naval Air Station - East Gate

from the belly of the beast...

The feeling on the ship, the general feeling of the people when they're working. When you're busting your ass sixteen, twenty hours a day, you get to wondering why the hell you're doing that cuz you're sure not doing it for yourself. It seems you're doing it for an awful stupid cause. A lot of people really get together and talk about that too. One time in the Tonkin Gulf they had a show on closed circuit TV put on by Flight Ops. They explained everything they did over there—like how many bombs they dropped and where they dropped them. This guy explained how they were bombing the Ho Chi Minh trail and destroying the trucks, people, and ammunition dumps. He really seemed to get into that, really enjoy telling people they destroyed so many supply dumps, digging that there was a secondary explosion. The dude got up to show a point on the map and when he turned around, in big block letters on his back was written "Murder, Inc." When he did that, man, a lot of people were really up tight. He wasn't there thirty seconds before the Captain came running in and threw him out. He was afraid that people would all of a sudden think about what was going on. And it worked because everybody on that ship did.

Carrier duty is probably regarded as one of the worse. Most people don't want to come to a bird farm.

There were fatalities on the Hancock, two crashes. One was a cold cat. It just lobbed the plane off the front and the guy drowned. Another was a crash on the fantail. The pilot hit the ejection button and landed in the superstructure. The radar was going around with him. He was up there an hour before anybody even noticed that he was there. Like half of his neck was gone.

When they [on the Coral Sea] were coming back in and launching all the planes for Alameda, they were catapulting one plane and the front landing gear collapsed. Both of them ejected. One landed in the water, one landed on the ship. . . . Two people died in the yards. They were dropping the anchor chain from the focsle and one man got wrapped around the anchor chain and got pulled right through a pad eye. The other, a chief, both his legs were severed.

The first day on that sea trials (September 27, 1971) three of our brothers were busted for carrying anti-war newspapers. The executive officer gave them a direct order not to pass out any more literature or pass around the petition. We thought that order was illegal because it was our constitutional right to petition Congress. That night we did pass around petitions and we got busted and the three brothers who were given a direct order were put on report for disobedience of a direct order. The next day in protest of that we took more papers and petitions around from one end of the hanger bay to another passing out all this literature right underneath the Captain's nose. Twelve of us. The captain came over, busted us, and took our names and sent us up to his cabin. On the way to his cabin we all walked with clenched fists. When we got up there he and the executive officer gave us the same shit that they had given us before. That morning they had written up a regulation saying that we couldn't hand out any more literature, hang posters, and pass around petitions without prior permission from the Com Off.

We pulled back in through the Golden Gate from sea trials. About seventy of us, Marines and sailors, were right on the bow of the ship and going underneath the bridge we formed SOS [Stop Our Ship]. (October 7, 1971)

All of a sudden when SOS comes on board no buttons are allowed anymore. Any person passing anything out would be written up under Article 82, willful disobedience of a direct order. Gathering in a number or in small numbers we couldn't get more than three in a group without the pigs coming by and telling us we couldn't have meetings. Sitting in the chow hall they have some big round tables, you fit eight people at it. We would usually get six or seven of us to sit at one of these tables some of us with our buttons and probably non-SOS people. Every meal we noticed that we were being watched by the Master At Arms. Almost a meal didn't go by without some form of harassment, somebody walking by and saying hurry up and finish eating, people need your trays and table. Or this isn't a place for a meeting. Or they would come over and tell us, you need a haircut or quit smoking. If you were walking down the hallway and saw two people that you knew—the hallways are pretty big, some of them are ten feet across—a Master At Arms or a lifer would come up and say, you can't congregate here. You're blocking the hallway.

My short naval career taught me how to eat with a big spoon, how to take a cold shower, and how to say motherfucker.

They want to get rid of us. Lifers on the boat they talk about people getting out of the Navy. If you leave with a general discharge you're a non-hacker. When you get outside, no one is going to hire you. You know, you're like the scum. They tell people this. Do your work, don't say nothing, don't listen to anybody and you'll be just fine.

Sometimes they [the brig guards] start acting like kids . . . all of a sudden one of them will yell out real loud. They usually picked on one prisoner. They asked him a lot of crazy things. And then if you mess up their names, it's hard. There are so many running around there and you're not supposed to look at them. You're not supposed to look at anybody when you're in the brig. So sometimes one guard goes out and another one comes in and you don't know and automatically calls you by the wrong name. Then they jump on you for that and make you do thirty push-ups.

Like the cell doors [in the brig] and the border lines around the bottom, some of the light switches, the ladder, door handles are painted red in case anybody wants to make a break. You have to request permission to touch red. When you step in your cell you have to say (I was Prisoner 05), "Prisoner 05, request permission to touch red." They say, "Touch it." Then you reach out and open your door. Everything you do you have to sound off what you're doing and then when you're finished doing it, you have to say, "Mission accomplished, aye aye Lance Corporal So-and-So," whoever told you what to do.

The thing is that when the Navy sees that people have started awakening to what is really happening in the world, the power structure and the way it works, and how the military is used as a club, it kind of scares them. Something like that could really destroy them.

We want to get out people together with the people from the [attack carriers] USS Ranger, Hancock, and Constellation, people from Travis Air Force Base, and Fort Ord. Everybody together to fight the thing collectively. With everybody together, there isn't much they can do to stop it.



Just A Few Of The Many Letters Of Support

Comrades and Brothers on the Coral Sea:

We at Great Lakes want to tell you what a great thing we think the SOS movement is. The fantastic support that you have developed on the ship is encouraging to us, and lifts our collective spirits immensely. I just don't know what to say, actually, since the implications of a successful SOS type thing are incredible. It would probably be the greatest thing in the short history of the GI Movement . . . We just want to take this opportunity to extend all our support (moral and anything else we can do) to all of you and your struggle on the Coral Sea.

All Power to the People!
Great Lakes Movement for a Democratic Military (MDM)

SOS brothers:

. . . As far as the "Harbor Project" goes, we've been getting a lot of info on it—mostly from squids in the SD area. Most of us were on the Coral Sea last year and would really enjoy seeing it stay in Alameda, or better yet, scrapped. I hope the effort of its crew is successful!

We'll be in Alameda the morning of November 6. So I'm sure many of the Midway's people will be more than happy to help out the last couple of days.

Power to the People
R.S.D. and your brothers on the
USS Midway

Coral Sea Brothers:

I'm glad someone finally got the guts to do something. This constant WESPAC deployment that the 7th fleet has been doing is wasting our money in taxes and ruining the economy. . . . In my opinion, as far as accomplishing anything in Vietnam, we're doing nothing more but wasting money, people's lives, people's land, and American lives. . . . I'm behind you and so are many of the other human beings here on the Enterprise so don't feel like the Lone Ranger. You've got my vote for the petition.

signed,
K.K. and the Enterprise humans

GI REVOLT



These GIs are a few of the 66 guys in Bravo Company who sent a petition to Sen. Kennedy in support of six of their brothers who only the day before had refused orders to move out. The petition explained why: the mission was suicidal; it was going to be an illegal invasion of Cambodia; it was an offensive ground action; there was no medical evacuation possible. This is a photograph of them signing the petition while mortar rounds hit only a couple of hundred yards away.

The GI movement—hundreds of acts of resistance ranging from individual to collective actions, from passive resistance to sabotage, fragging and open mutiny—has raised the specter of mass rebellion in the military. The anti-war movement has mobilized and educated the majority of Americans. Despite overwhelming opposition to the war, the US has continued its genocidal attack on Indochina under the disguise of "Vietnamization" and troop withdrawals.

While Nixon has tried to continue the war behind a smoke screen of "peace" rhetoric, the men and women in the military are rapidly making it impossible for the US to stay in Indochina. They are ending the war now, but they cannot do it alone.

In Vietnam, our brothers are concluding their own peace with the Vietnamese. Dramatic acts of rebellion have reached us through the mass media:

- * In early 1969 the 196th Light Infantry Brigade publicly sat down on the battlefield and refused orders to move out.
- * Later that year a rifle company from the 1st Air Cav refused on CBS-TV to advance down a dangerous trail.
- * Troops refused to cross the border into Cambodia during the invasion of May, 1970.
- * During the Laos invasion, February 1971, Troop B of the 1st Cav refused to recapture their captain's command vehicle containing secret operation orders.
- * Six men of the Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 1st Cav were supported by 66 of their brothers at Firebase Pace when they refused to go on patrol October 9. In the next three days, two other units refused orders in solidarity with Bravo Company.

These are only the incidents that have broken through the tight shield of press censorship. What do we know of the Whiskey Hill Mutiny which occurred September 25 of this year, but was mentioned only in the back pages of the Washington Post on October 15? Fourteen black soldiers were blasted out of a bunker where they had armed and barricaded themselves after being refused permission to attend a memorial service for a black girl killed two years ago in Watts.

For more than two years an increasing number of men have avoided contact with "the enemy" so that now "search and evade" is the basic military principle being applied by combat troops in Vietnam. Often this kind of de-escalation is enforced by fragging or the threat of fragging directed against gung-ho officers whom the men see as "war-mongers" or racists. There were over 200 reported cases of fragging in 1970.

Riots and stockade uprisings have swept most of the major bases in the US including Travis Air Force Base in California (embarkation and re-entry post for troops to and from Vietnam), Fort Ord in California (a major basic and advanced individual training post for Vietnam-bound troops), and Ft. Dix in New Jersey (a major basic training post). Riots have also occurred at four major bases overseas. In the Philippines and Okinawa, GIs have demonstrated in solidarity with national liberation movements directed against US imperialism and military occupation.

When the ground war collapsed in Vietnam, GIs in the Navy and Air Force responded by calling attention to the new role of their branches of the service (see page 4). Inspired by the GIs resistance in Vietnam, nine sailors on the attack carrier Constellation refused to sail for Vietnam on October 1. When the sailors on the Coral Sea heard about the Constellation, they began organizing to stop their ship from sailing November 12 and to build a movement to Stop Our Ships throughout the Pacific fleet.

Life in the military is consciously designed to degrade and intimidate, to make men and women willing instruments of their own and others deaths and dehumanization. Intimidation hasn't worked and now as the military faces collapse and rebellion, the brass has been forced to rely more and more on naked force.

Many so-called trouble makers have been transferred to combat posts, a kind of death sentence, while others have ended up in God-forsaken places like Adak, Alaska. The brigs and stockades are filled to overflowing. Daily life for the politically active is a constant hassle from mindless robots, the lifers.

But none of this has stopped our brothers and sisters in the military. Their movement has continued to grow to the point where they can say, as the men of the Coral Sea have, "We are going to stop our ships and we, the military men and women, are going to end this war."

Berkeley City Action Regarding The USS Coral Sea

1. The City of Berkeley supports the men of the USS Coral Sea in their petition to Congress and in their other nonviolent efforts to have the ship stay home from the war.
2. The City of Berkeley encourages people to support the men of the Coral Sea by participating in the November 6 anti-war march in San Francisco and in the November 8 rally at the Alameda Naval Air Station.
3. The People of the City are encouraged to aid in the welfare and legal protection of these men.

Passed by the Berkeley City Council 11/2/71



Delta Company arrives at Firebase Pace to "relieve" Bravo Company, which had just refused orders to move out on a suicide mission. It would have meant following ARVN troops at night into Cambodia at a time when no MEDEVAC helicopters were able to land due to heavy small arms fire. The next day, these guys also refused to move out.

NIXON NEEDS THE CORAL SEA

In his talk of withdrawal Nixon has carefully ignored the issue of the air war. While the media confirms the continued and even escalated air war.

"Jets Napalm and Firebomb Cambodian Village" (Washington Post 8/4/71)

"250 US Planes Hit DRV panhandle in One of the Biggest Strikes in the Last Three Years." (Washington Post 9/22/71)

Nixon in December 1970 and March 1971 "greatly broadened ground rules under which US warplanes would strike North Vietnam." (W P, 9/24/71)

"US Bombing in Laos No Longer Subject to Vientiane US Embassy Approval (W P, 9/27/71)

Laotian and Thai forward air guides "seem unclear in their attitudes toward the distinction between civilian and military targets." (W P, 9/27/71) "The Carrier Enterprise in the Gulf of Siam is launching raids into Cambodia, Laos, South VN and the DRV" (Nguyen Minh Vy at the Paris talks, 10/14/71)

"We are flying 1000 offensive sorties (missions) per day in Vietnam." (Senator Mondale, April, 1970)

What does the air war mean to Nixon and Thieu? Air power is Nixon's strategy for maintaining a strong American presence in Indochina that 1) is acceptable to the American people and 2) might bring victory. By bringing ground troops home, he hopes he is pacifying the 73% of the population which is against the war. Ground troops have disadvantages strategically. They are human—they die, frag their officers, become addicts, react to and relate their experiences, and are beginning to cause trouble when they return to the States. An air strategy involves far fewer people and the work is highly depersonalized.

Peoples Liberation Guerilla forces are gaining control of the nonurban areas in Laos, Cambodia, and most of Vietnam. So for Thieu, the air war is a means to protect the urban areas from the Liberation Armies. Bombing and electronic battlefields can 1) cut supply lines and destroy enemy sanctuaries 2) provide support for troops in the field 3) demoralize both the liberation armies and the peasants.

If the liberation forces are forces to spend their time rebuilding, regrouping and hiding, they have little offensive energy.



"The roar of the bombs and the noise of the planes frightened me terribly. Our life became like one of animals who run to escape the butchers. It was without tomorrows. Each day across the forests and the ditches we sought only to escape from the bombs. While looking at the face of my innocent child I could not stop crying for his future." This is the meaning of the air war to a thirty year old Laotian woman as reported by Fred Branfman, an American correspondent. The air war also means the Plain of Jars, which was a society of 50,000 people and is now a wasteland. To South Vietnamese women the air war means that not only is their agricultural land defoliated but those same chemicals are causing chromosome damage to their unborn children.

Thieu cannot gain control of the countryside. He is limited to trying to allow US technology to weaken the enemy by isolating or destroying the countryside. For example, the NLF ("Viet Cong") and Cambodians have re-established their Cambodian "sanctuaries" in the areas 90 miles northwest of Saigon which were invaded by ground troops in May, 1970. These areas have been leveled by bombing driving the liberation forces underground.

The air war is highly technologized. Planes drop not only bombs but a wide array of electronic sensing devices in the new electronic battlefield strategy. These sensing devices are plugged into computers via relay aircraft, followed and charted by the computers. Strike planes are being outfitted with small computers which are linked to the main information centers? these units guide them directly to the pre-defined targets. A small number of technicians can oversee the operation of locating the enemy by sensor. Few Americans are lost in this kind of war. And, as the lifers put it, the air war is "a public relations man's dream."

Aircraft carriers from the Seventh Fleet have played a crucial role in the air war. Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Moorer stated before the Joint Senate-House Armed Forces Committee April 1970, "Almost half of all combat sorties (missions) into Vietnam were flown from carriers. There is a current requirement for CVA's (aircraft carriers) in Southeast Asia to support the war in Vietnam. This requirement is not expected to diminish. The projected withdrawal of land-based forces from SEA will require an increased proportion of tactical air power." Representative Stratton added in the same hearings, "If we eliminate those carriers, we might as well say we don't want any tactical air support." (p 214) Five carriers are assigned on a rotation basis to the coast of Vietnam? two or three are there at any given time. The Coral Sea is one of the carriers.

Aircraft carriers provided the air support and offensive air power during the initial stages while land based air strips were being enlarged or built. Moorer explains the place of aircraft carriers within the American strategy: "The carrier can deploy quickly, can remain over the horizon out of sight in order not to upset a delicate situation, and still be available to use its air power at a moment's notice; or should the situation so indicate, the carrier can appear on the scene and by its very presence provide a stabilizing influence by serving as tangible evidence of U.S. interest. Without vast networks of overseas bases the carrier is the only means by which the US can provide tactical air support for overseas military operations in response to enemy actions and protection of logistic supply lines for material and oil essential to sustain our industrial and military capability." (p. 315).

The reasons for an air rather than ground strategy also point to a carrier rather than land based air force. Land bases outside of the urban enclaves in Southeast Asia are targets and very difficult to protect, and the supply and communication lines with urban centers must be maintained through hostile territory. Land bases are dependent on the host country for civilian workers and supplies. But even in the urban centers, Asian students, women, workers and veterans are resisting the blatant American presence. Carriers have political as well as military advantages.

In February of 1965 the Coral Sea took part in the first strikes against North Vietnam. The focus at this time was saturation bombing, so the Coral Sea concentrated on destroying the cities of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. The same strategy was employed during its second cruise from July 1967-April 68.

In 1968 the air war became supportive rather than offensive, as the ground troop strategy was emphasized. During its fifth cruise (September 19-June 70), fighter-bombers from the Coral Sea flew missions 24 hours a day against Cambodia. In June 1970 the ship was sent to be completely overhauled and refurbished. About this time the protracted air war strategy was adopted by Nixon as his best alternative.

The Coral Sea is technically ready to return to the Vietnam Coast leaving November 12. With the electronics warfare equipment and 85 fighter bombers, the military plans to use it to continue their latest Vietnam strategy. All the aerial tasks outlined in the discussion of the new air strategy can be performed by Coral Sea squadrons—airal and electronics surveillance, planting of sensor devices and the bombing. But just as there was a flaw in the ground troop strategy and the Vietnamization strategy, there is also a flaw in the air war strategy. It takes 4200 men to make the Coral Sea go. These men are human and create military problems—1200 of them have said they don't want to go to Nam again. Nixon-Thieu, how are you going to computerize the operation of aircraft carriers?