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Page 3 Wednesday, January 10, 1973 College Station, Texas

# **Navy Demoralization: Familiar Signs Reappearing**

#### LY \$1.04 ALTERNATIVE FEATURES SERVICE

Is the U.S. Navy in for the same fate that destroyed the American Army as an effective fighting force in Vietnam? For EVENING the past eight months, the Navy has been doing the bulk of the fighting and the familiar signs ED BEER of disintegration have all appeared-increased anti-war dissension, racial tensions and riots, acts of sabotage, and growing use of hard drugs. Even if the fighting stops soon, it will take years for the Navy to recover from the "Vietnam curse" that has demoralized the American military.

Serious racial clashes on aircraft carriers have received wide

erately sabotaged in other parts for four months. of the Pacific.

views as more ominous the rash water with aviation fuel, fire in er been active in any kind of were responsible for keeping the craft carrier USS Forrestal. Al- blacks accused of rioting on the of sabotage incidents keeping U.S. the auxiliary room, flooding of a warships immobilized and away gun compartment, and assorted from the Gulf of Tonkin. Since damage to the generators and oil the air war has intensified, mys- pumps. But the most spectacular terious explosions have ripped sabotage was done to the ship's case is going through its prelimithrough several huge aircraft car- reduction gear. Someone had riers stationed just off North thrown a paint scraper and two Vietnam. Millions of dollars bolts into the gear causing \$800,worth of repairs have been done 000 worth of damage and keeping on these ships, and others delib- the 78,000 ton 4600 man ship idle

The Navy has singled out a The carrier USS Ranger, while 21-year-old ship's fireman, Patstationed at Alameda Naval Sta- rick Chenoweth, as the culprit and tion, suffered more than two doz- charged him with "wartime saben documented acts of sabotage otage" a crime carrying a 30in two months. These included cut- year sentence. Chenoweth is a of them say they thought he was ting of fire hoses, telephoned quiet, unassuming sailor from joking. We have evidence that bomb threats, plugging of a fire Puyallup, Washington who grew many of the men on the ship way patrolman, guilty of setting publicity recently, but the Navy main, pollution of the ship's fresh up in a foster home. He has nev- talked like this-bragging they a \$7.2 million fire aboard the air-

political group. Presently he is in the brig at Treasure Island, where he has been held without bail for four months while the nary hearings.

"The Navy has an incredibly shaky case," says Eric Seitz, at-torney for the young sailor. "There are no eyewitnesses, fingerprints or any other physical evidence linking him with the act. The prosecution case rests entirely on statements of three witnesses who claim Pat admitted doing the sabotage, but two

ship away from Vietnam."

Seitz says his investigation has shown that some 350 men had access to the room that was sabotaged. "I believe there is so much sabotage on the ship the Navy is frustrated and looking for anyone to serve as a scapegoat," the attorney says. "The charge of wartime sabotage is being used to boost the punishment and to make my client an 'example' to the rest of the crew."

A similar sabotage trial was completed last month in Norfolk, Virginia. In that case, a military judge found Jeff Allison, the son of an Oakland, California high-

though the maximum penalty Kitty Hawk have been dealt with could have been 350 years, Allison was sentenced to five years of hard labor.

But while the Navy is putting on the "show" trials, the reports of sabotage persist. The USS Constellation, scene of the mutiny by 120 black sailors, reports that some of its sensitive equipment has been "tampered with." Other small scale acts of sabotage go unreported in the American press, but rumors of them spread as ships pull in for unscheduled repairs at US bases in the Pacific.

Racial problems such as the riots on the USS Kitty Hawk and the oil carrier Hassayampa, and the mutiny by 120 blacks on the USS Constellation, are new to the Navy simply because the Navy has had a long tradition of excluding blacks. When Admiral Elmo Zumwalt took over two years ago, he publicly stated he wanted to change "the lily-white racist image of the Navy." He instituted a number of changes, ranging from relaxed rules on hair and dress to the active recruitment of more blacks into the service. Still, the percentage of blacks on the ships is only 5.8, much less than any other branch of the military and less than one percent of the officers are black. At the officer training college at Annapolis, 131 of the 4400 in the

new class are black. Most of the whites come fro conservative small towns and have little or no experience in dealing with minority groups.

dissatisfaction has been to use swift repression. In the case of them out of the service. The nam experience.

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more severely. They are being court-martialed, with some receiving prison sentences. Such outward symbols of black solidarity as the fist salute have been banned. No whites have been punished in any way for their part in the riot.

Because of the reactionary way the Navy is dealing with the situation, more racial fights are expected by most sailors. Crewmen on the Coral Sea, which sailed for Vietnam in November, said that both blacks and whites are arming themselves with knives and that tensions are high. "Every brother is getting harassment from these big fat white petty officers," said a black sailor. Both black and white crewmen said dope was a big factor in the tension, something the Navy brass has yet to mention. Grass, opium, and increasingly heroin are used widely on the ships, with both races competing for the best prices and highest quality. This dope dealing on the confines of a ship has led to numerous fights and beatings, most of which go unreported.

The racial inequality, dissension, sabotage, and drug abuse have brought the Navy's morale to its lowest point since Pearl Harbor. Yet, surprisingly, the congressional committee which is investigating the Navy's problems is only dealing with these issues in a peripheral way. Chairman Edward Hebert, a hard line hawk who heads the committee The Navy's reaction to racial is focusing on "permissiveness" as the root cause of the Navy's malaise. With this kind of diagthe sit-down mutiny by black nosis, and the continuing war, it crewmen on the Constellation, the will be a long time before the Na-Navy has quietly showed most of vy will recover from its Viet-

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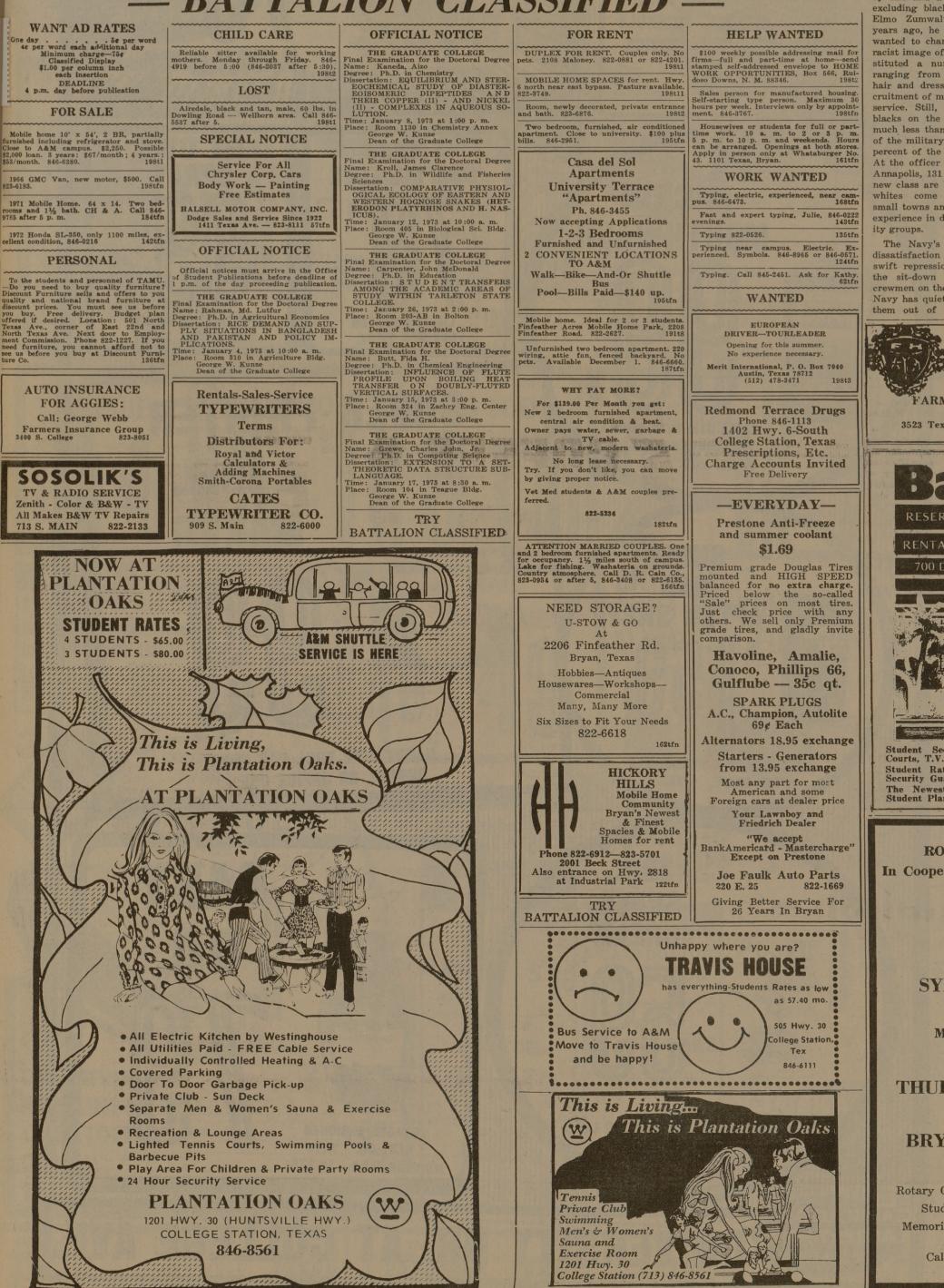
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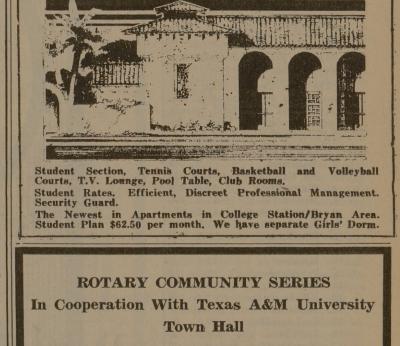
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