

Officers Form Anti-War Group

Washington

The anti-war movement has reached the U.S. military officers corps.

Calling themselves the Concerned Officers Movement, about 25 Washington-based officers, mostly Navy men, have banded together to provide a forum for what they say is growing disillusionment among their ranks with the Indochina war.

A leader says the small group is probably the first anti-war organization at the officer level.

"Most of the junior officers are somewhat disillusioned about the war in Indochina," Lieutenant j.g. Phil Lehman, a Harvard graduate with eight months of Vietnam duty behind him, told a reporter.

CONCERNS

Lehman, now in a supply billet here, said the group has broader concerns than the war—military justice and what he called "the quality of life in the military." The group reportedly has contacted other bases with favorable responses coming from California, Florida and Rhode Island.

The chief tool the organization uses to spread its views is a monthly newsletter.

PURPOSE

The first issue of the newsletter, distributed in April, contended that United States policies had "turned an internal political struggle into a nation - destroying blood bath" in Vietnam.

Through its newsletter, the organization said its purpose is to "serve notice to the military and the nation that the officer corps is not part of a silent majority, that it is not going to let its thought be fashioned by the Pentagon."

Lehman said his commanding officer discussed the matter with him but there was no harassment.

Nobody has suggested he stop his activity—"not yet"—Lehman said.

The lieutenant said the newsletter is being put out in conformity with regulations, since no government facilities, materials or time are used.

RHETORIC

Lehman indicated the organization makes strong efforts to avoid inflammatory rhetoric in getting its ideas across.

Lehman said most of the members of the organization entered the service, as he did, through ROTC or received commissions from officer candidate schools. None are "career motivated," he said.

They range in age from 23 to 30, several are doctors and a number of them have served in Vietnam.

Asked why he joined the ROTC, Lehman said he was perfectly willing to serve.

"I felt I had to serve my military obligation and that being an officer in the Navy was the best way to do this," he said.

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