

# ANTIWAR OFFICERS SEE RETALIATION

They Say Services Seek to Penalize Them for Views

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WASHINGTON, Oct. 22 — Three weeks after their spokesmen denounced the Vietnam war, members of an officers organization are facing armed forces retaliation, according to the dissenters.

The retaliatory steps include discharge, early release from service, demands for resignations, summary relief from "sensitive" duty and transfers to other posts, the dissenters said in interviews.

Twenty-eight of the dissenters, members of the Concerned Officers Movement, announced at a news conference here on Sept. 26 their intention to speak out publicly against the war in Vietnam.

## Tale of Five Spokesmen

The movement's spokesmen sought to stress their "responsibility" and moderation. They said they wished to avoid violating military regulations and hoped to complete their military obligations.

This hope was expressed in spite of the summary discharges given three of their former colleagues last July after they had expressed publicly their opposition to the war.

The Navy explained that those discharges had been part of a mandatory July reduction of 1,200 officers for budget reasons.

At the September news conference five officers said they were speaking for the 28 offi-

cers present and for about 250 members of the Concerned Officers Movement at Army, Navy, Marine and Air Force bases in the United States and abroad.

One of the spokesmen, Lieut. (jg.) Robert Claflin, 25 years old, of Boston, said he was notified last Friday that he would be released on Nov. 1, 16 months ahead of schedule.

"They are denying the fact of individuality and dissent in the Navy," Lieut. Claflin said. "How do they think they are going to manage when today's teenagers become tomorrow's officers? They are in a lot of trouble."

Another spokesman, Maj. Albert S. Braverman, 33, of New York, said he had been summoned by his commanding officer two days after the news conference, threatened with court-martial or transfer, and finally offered "a form to resign my commission." Major Braverman, a physician at Walter Reed Army Medical Center here, said he had signed the form.

A third spokesman, Ens. Robert Brown, 22, Mansfield, Ohio, said he had been reassigned from a post in the Navy's division of nuclear reactors under Vice Adm. Hyman G. Rickover to what the Navy calls a "less sensitive" post in research and development of hydrofoils. He suggested that he had not been penalized further because his news conference statement may have seemed "even more moderate" than the others.

Mr. Brown said he had been notified of the transfer two days after the news conference.

The Navy, in response to a query from Senator Stephen M. Young, Democrat of Ohio, said the young officer's transfer was "to some extent the direct result of Mr. Brown's association with a group of individuals who describe themselves as the Commissioned Officers Movement."

The two other news conference spokesmen have experienced no military repercussions. Both are Army officers who had previously applied for conscientious objector status and whose cases are pending before courts or boards. They suggested that no action had been taken against them because their military futures were still in litigation. The two men are Lieut. Louis Font, 24, an honor graduate of West Point in the class of 1968, and Capt. Edward Fox, 25, a Chicago biologist who is a reservist.

## Navy Denies 'Purge'

At the Pentagon, Capt. William Busik, public affairs officer of the Bureau of Naval Personnel, denied the charges of the organization members that the Navy, in particular, was conducting a "purge" of antiwar officers. Captain Busik said that the Navy's concern about antiwar officers becomes grounds for official action "when they go public."

Public statements, Captain Busik said, "Draw the radicals to them like bees to honey." He added: "They then become duck soup for radicals in the civilian world. This raises questions about the officers' reliability."

The Navy statement did not appear to explain all of the separations of the antiwar organization's members, however. Some officers who hold but have not articulated their antiwar views are also on the way out.

Lieut. Robert Wilkes, 28, a Navy aerospace psychologist from Omaha, Neb., who sat quietly in the last of three rows of officers at the news conference, said he had been informed 48 hours later that he would be released from duty on Nov. 20, eight months ahead of his three-year military obligation.

"Officially I am going out for budget reasons, in a reduction in force," he said. "But unofficially I've been told that it's because of C.O.M."

The news conference agenda also included the reading of a letter against the war sent to the Secretary of the Navy by 29 California members of the organization. Reached by telephone in San Diego, Lieut. (jg.) John Kent, 24, who said he had originated the letter, reported that he had been removed from advance fighter pilot school and had also had his pilot's wings "lifted."