

Crewmen Protest Coral Sea's Return to War

A group of enlisted men aboard the attack aircraft carrier Coral Sea, now tied up at Alameda, claimed yesterday that nearly a fourth of the crew have signed a petition protesting the ship's return to Vietnam waters.

At least seven crewmen said at a news conference yesterday that they would refuse to be aboard the Coral Sea when she sets off on another war zone cruise next month. They claimed that about 30 others of the 4500-man crew also would refuse to go.

Navy spokesmen said the actual date of the carrier's

departure for Vietnam is secret, but the protesting sailors and Marines who conducted a brief news conference at the gates of the Alameda Naval Air Station yesterday said the ship is set to sail November 12.

TRIALS

The vessel is scheduled to leave for eight days of sea trials today, and the dissident servicemen, along with about 20 civilian supporters, said they planned to maintain an all-night vigil outside the gates of the naval base until the ship leaves.

"The ship will not go back to Vietnam," said Larry Harris, 20, a photo intelligence

crewman from Philadelphia. "If the petition doesn't work, we have other means." He declined to elaborate on the "other means."

Harris was one of the crew members who said he would refuse to go aboard the ship if she returns to Vietnam. He and others, however, said they would be aboard for the sea trials.

PETITION

The petition, which the dissident crewmen said will be presented to Congressman Ronald Dellums (Dem.-Berkeley), does not urge crewmen to refuse to go to Vietnam, but states that the signers "do not believe in the

Vietnam war," and that the Coral Sea "should not go to Vietnam."

Harris claimed that three crewmen were put in the brig for passing out the petition and that others have been "harassed" aboard the ship. Naval spokesmen said they could not confirm or deny that report since it was a holiday and the commander of the Coral Sea, Captain William Harris, was not available.

According to Seaman Harris, 1000 men aboard the ship signed the petition which reinforces a "moral obligation to voice our opinions." Harris and the other crew

members who said they will refuse to go declined to say where they might be when—or if—the ship sails for Vietnam.

"It's not going to be a thing like the Constellation," said Marine Lance Corporal Paul Lawrence, 21, of Orlando, Fla., one of the men who said he would not board the Coral Sea for Vietnam.

Two weeks ago, nine crewmen from the carrier Constellation, refused to go aboard when their ship left San Diego for Vietnam.

They took sanctuary in a church, but were picked up there by Navy authorities and flown out to the ship.