

P R E P

# The <sup>SFChronicle</sup> Codes' on GI Discharge Papers

OCT 1 1973

San Francisco Chronicle 13  
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Mon., Oct. 1, 1973

## New York

On one veteran's DD 214 form, the record of his army discharge "under honorable conditions" was the code "SPN" followed by a number.

He wondered about it after a public utility here asked to see the form and then turned him down for a job.

The number meant a discharge for "disloyal or sub-service security program," according to William Pankratus, military justice associate for the Workers Defense League, a 37-year-old human rights and legal defense group here.

"I asked him if he had any idea why he had gotten it,"

Pankratus related. "He said he had received anti-war literature in the mail. But he said 'the hell with it'—he'd get another job elsewhere."

## LIST

The league says it has obtained a current list of 530 code listings for SPN's—the "Separation program number designators" maintained by the Defense Department for the armed services.

The group said the list was revised last November and is still in effect despite controversies over the last two years. Pankratus asserted that "virtually every large corporation in Ameri-

ca has had access" to at least earlier versions of the codes.

The numbers affixed to any kind of discharge from honorable to dishonorable cover such routine classifications as "Expiration of term of service" or "Dependency" or "Hardship."

But they also include such broad tags as "marginal producer," "unsuitably apathy, defective attitudes and inability to expend effort constructively"—individual evaluation" (meaning one superior's view), "importance to national health, safety or interest," "interest of national security," "convenience of the government,

other reasons, or as specified by secretary of the Army" and even only "other good and sufficient reasons."

Characterizations may be more specific, as "unfitness—unsanitary habits," "sexual deviate," "homosexual acts," "habits or traits of character manifested by sexual perversion," "unsuitable—enuresis—board action," (referring to an administrative board) which involves bed-wetting, "theft," "indebtedness—failure to pay," and "non-support of dependents."

## REVIEW

In Washington, Defense Department spokesmen said

that the entire procedure is "under review."

Twenty-five members of the House of Representatives, led by Edward Koch (Dem.-N.Y.) and Lee Aspin (Dem.-Wis.) have cosponsored bills to bar any statement on discharge certificates as to why a serviceman was released.

Koch has decried what he called "unfortunately common knowledge as to what the code number designate" and "invasion of privacy which may never end for a veteran with a pre-judicial SPN."

He said the same code number had been used to identify a discharge for her-

oin addiction or for simply smoking marijuana. Koch asserted that there had been "rank injustices" and that there are "surely thousands of people who are suffering silently as a result of Defense Department policy."

## BILL

A Senate bill has been introduced by George McGovern, (Dem.-S.D.).

Defense Department spokesmen said the numbers were for internal use by governmental agencies, with the original DD 214 form going to the veteran, copies to his branch of military service and to Selective Service for records and estimation of future availability.

ty, and one copy to the Veterans Administration for its use in dealing with benefits.

The reason for the number system, they said, is "to protect an individual against invasion of privacy."

New York Times