

GI CIVIL LIBERTIES DEFENSE COMMITTEE

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FT. JACKSON ANTIWAR GIS HOLD NEWS CONFERENCE TO ANSWER ARMY OFFICIALS

**"GIS UNITED AGAINST THE WAR IN VIETNAM" IS CIRCULATING PETITION
ASKING FOR PUBLIC ON-BASE MEETING TO DISCUSS WAR**

**ANTIWAR GROUP PROTESTS PUNITIVE TRANSFER OF PVT. JOSEPH MILES, A
BLACK LEADER OF "GIS UNITED"**

The Ft. Jackson "GIS United Against the War in Vietnam" held a news conference in Columbia, S.C., on Saturday, February 15. They set up the meeting to make known their activities at Ft. Jackson and to protest arbitrary and summary harassment and attempted intimidation of their group by Army officials.

GIS United has been circulating a petition asking for facilities on base for a meeting open to all at Ft. Jackson to discuss the war in Vietnam and recent developments on post. Over 400 petition sheets are now circulating and over 200 signatures had been turned in after only 2½ days of petitioning.

The GIS protested most strongly the punitive transfer of Pvt. Joe Miles, a leading spokesman for the group. In a highly unusual move, Pvt. Miles was given three hours to clear post on Friday, Feb. 14, and to report to Ft. Bragg, North Carolina. The GIS believe this is a deliberate attempt to intimidate their group and prevent them from circulating their petition. This frantic Army action followed the summary arrest of five black GIS on trumped-up charges in the last two weeks.

At their news conference, spokesmen for GIS United answered the official Ft. Jackson statement on their petition. As reported in the Columbia newspaper, The State, the Army position was that "The Army does not recognize any collective bargaining unit representing members of the armed forces." GIS United charged that the Army was purposely avoiding the issue. GIS United is petitioning for facilities where GIS may exercise their constitutional rights to free assembly and free speech. They desire solely to discuss the war in Vietnam and are asking the Army to uphold their constitutional rights. "Collective bargaining" is not at issue. The GIS believe the collective bargaining statement is a subterfuge to prevent GIS from discussing the war in Vietnam, as is their right.

Enclosed are copies of the Ft. Jackson petition now in circulation, the statement released to the press on Feb. 15th, and the statement of aims which Ft. Jackson GIS have addressed to their fellow soldiers.