

March 1, 1972

TRAVIS PROJECT PROPOSAL

Travis GI Project

The Travis Project is a GI project located in Suisun City, near Travis Air Force Base, California. The project has been in existence for eight months. One major activity is the publishing of a newspaper, the Travisty, which is distributed on base to servicemen. Another thing the project does is to show movies and discuss them each week. The films are about the war in Indochina, about ecology, about Third World struggles in the U.S., about the GI movement, etc. A third major area of work is counselling. Active-duty GIs who are in need of legal help are counselled by project staff and where possible by civilian lawyers. In its first eight months, the project has also been involved in several other activities, which will be taken up shortly.

Background

Travis Air Force Base has been a mainstay in U.S. materiel and personnel supply for the war in Vietnam, but the anti-war movement has only recently come to the base.

Travis is the busiest military air base in the U.S. and the main air supply point for the Indochina war. Locally it is known as the "gateway" to Southeast Asia. Each month, over 500 thousand tons of cargo are shipped on the C-141 and C-5A transport jets. Each month, over 70,000 passengers, including many draftees from Oakland Army Terminal, are flown to Asia. Travis will continue to be the "principal aerial port of embarkation for Southeast Asia" and its cargo tonnage will increase almost double. Travis has been chosen as the home for the largest fleet of C-5A's in the U.S. (34). They will be used for massive and instant deployment when the U.S. wishes to intervene in the affairs of another country.

Although Travis is only 45 miles from the Bay Area, no anti-war work had been done near the base until this year. Last May GIs and civilians met and decided to begin putting out a newspaper. A project house was found and two civilians began working full time. During the summer and fall, the project became known around the base and a large group of GIs worked together on the newspaper, saw and discussed movies, and began classes in the barracks on the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ). Both GIs and civilians attended a course on military law and counselling in San Francisco and took classes with the experienced military counsellor who is working on the project. Two civilian lawyers began working closely with the project. In these ways, many airmen have become aware of their rights under the Constitution and military law, of how oppressive the military is, and of how to stand up for their rights.

GIs and civilians worked together on other activities as well. An attempt was made to bring the FTA Show to Travis. It was squashed by the Solano County Board of Supervisors; however, a highly successful press conference was held right off base with Jane Fonda and 75 airmen. The San Francisco Mime Troupe performed the "Dragon Lady's Revenge" outdoors to about 200 enthusiastic service people. Travis GIs also helped organize the Veteran's Day March in Sacramento with Vietnam Veterans Against the War and participated in the Coral Sea picnic and vigils at Alameda.

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In mid-November Congressman Ron Dellums held an open hearing at Travis on racism in the military. The hearings gave the blacks on base a rare opportunity to speak out without fear of the usual repression, and over 100 airmen participated and did so. The Travis Project did the local coordinating work in setting up the hearing. In December blacks on base organized a press conference expressing support for Pvt. Billy Smith.

Black participation in project work has been more extensive than in most GI projects, and the Dellums hearings showed there is a tremendous potential which we have just begun to tap.

The project has also been involved in educational work off base. GIs held workshops at the "Hot Town Festival" in Berkeley, showed movies and spoke in local high schools in an anti-recruiting week, and have participated in talk shows on area radio stations.

Most recently, a 24-hour vigil was held outside the main gate to protest Nixon's escalation of the bombing of North Vietnam. About 200 GIs and civilians attended.

Current Situation and the Future

The Travis Project currently operates out of a small house 9 miles from the base. Three civilian staffers work full-time at the project and a fourth helps out with fund-raising and movies while working part-time in Berkeley. Six GIs are involved on a day-to-day basis, six more are somewhat less active, and a large number of other airmen and airwomen participate in one way or another. The principal ongoing activities remain the newspaper, movie showings, and counselling. There is a woman's group which meets regularly.

The project has outgrown the small living room through which most of the project work has been coordinated. The GIs involved cannot feel the house "belongs" to them, and the house lacks space for large meetings. We feel that opening a GI center is crucial to the Project's growth. The center would have many functions: it could be used for counselling and as a combined library and bookstore. It would provide enough space for weekly meetings, film shows, for putting out the paper, and for a coffee-and-rap area. In addition, there could be folksingers, speakers, GI skits, and other forms of education or entertainment.

Our most pressing need is for funds to establish and maintain the GI center.

While we receive support from United States Servicemen's Fund (USSF), it is not adequate to meet project expenses. Part-time work by three civilian staffers helps support the project, as does some local fund-raising. In addition USSF re-imburses the project in part for the cost of printing the Travisty and provides a monthly stipend for film rentals and literature.

We have recently (mid-February) rented a place for a GI center three hundred yards from the main gate of the base. The location is ideal. We have received some money to help us open the center, and USSF has promised us an initial grant, but we urgently need additional funds for furnishings and to purchase books for a small bookstore-library within the center. We also will not have enough money to pay the rent and maintain the center during the coming year unless additional funds are raised.

In our minds there is no question that the GI center should be opened when seen against the large question of the so-called winding down of the war. As is well known, the war is changing from a ground war to an air war. The air war will continue for some time in Indochina, and Travis will figure heavily in any future major intervention abroad. Expanded organizing, in general and at Travis, is essential if we hope to stop the country's war machine.

In early February the Travis project became incorporated as a non-profit, tax-exempt corporation. The name of the corporation is Vocational and Educational Opportunities for Servicemen (VEOS). Contributions to VEOS are tax-deductible.

Travis Project Budget Proposal

(Jan-Dec 1972)

Expenses

A.	<u>Ongoing</u>	\$200	rent (2 houses, 4-5 people)
		60	telephone
		55	utilities
		85	food (5-6 people)
		40	house supplies
		85	project cars (2) For gas, oil, maintenance
		<u>\$525</u>	month X 12 = \$6300
		\$6300	
B.	<u>One-time</u>	\$150	electric typewriter (for <u>Travisty</u>)
		\$170	mimeo machine
		\$150	purchase of films (<u>Only the Beginning</u> , Army, etc.)
		\$300	purchase of car (one project car has broken down)
		\$100	portable tape recorder
		<u>\$870</u>	
		\$870	
C.	<u>GI Center</u>	\$125	rent
		150	maintenance, supplies, refreshments
		75	telephone
		<u>\$350</u>	month X 12 = \$4200
		\$4200	
		\$3000	
D.	<u>Films and Literature</u>	\$3000	initial outlay for furniture, books, equipment etc.
		\$100	for rentals and purchases monthly (This is from a stipdned from USSF.)
		<u>\$100</u>	month X 12 = \$1200
		\$1200	
E.	<u>Travisty</u>	\$875	for seven issues of <u>Travisty</u> (approx.)
		\$875	
TOTAL		<u>\$16,445</u>	

Income

A. Ongoing	\$200	USSF stipend
	200	part-time work, local fund-raising
\$4800	<u>\$400</u> X 12 =	\$4800
B. Films and Literature	\$100 X 12 =	\$1200
\$1200		USSF stipend
C. <u>Travisty</u>	\$100 X 7 =	\$700
\$700		USSF partial reimbursement for each issue of <u>Travisty</u>
D. Foundation	\$1500	Sunflower Foundation (given in 1971 toward a GI center)
\$1500		

TOTAL \$8200

Deficit

\$16445
- 8200

TOTAL \$ 8245

Donors-1971

Institutions

USSF	\$2500
Support Our Soldiers	700
Sunflower Foundation	1500

Individuals

Tony and Virginia	
Madden	\$ 120
Estelle Bern	75
Others	120
TOTAL	<u>\$5015</u>