

Duncan Campbell reports fresh evidence of drugs on nuclear submarines

Getting high on Poseidon

DISCARDED United States Navy documents show that on at least one occasion, controlled drugs have been brought into Britain by means of a nuclear submarine on 'deterrent patrol'. The documents - records of US Navy official courts-martial held at the Holy Loch submarine base - also show that even serious drug offenders are neither discharged from the US Navy nor sent home. Local residents in the Dunoon area, near the Holy Loch base, say that they have been repeatedly assured by US officials that drug offenders were both discharged and sent home.

Last week's report of an accident with a Poseidon nuclear missile at the US Base suggested that the crane operator responsible may have been drunk or drugged, a possibility the US Navy continues to deny. The new evidence on the drugs serves to highlight further the differences between official and unofficial versions of what

SUMMARIZED
RECORD OF TRIAL
(and accompanying papers)

of

HOUCK, William L. 209-46-0023 EA/E-2
(Last name, first name, middle initial) (Social Security Account No.) (Grade)
U. S. Navy USS HOLLAND (AS-32) at
(Organization and armed force) Holy Loch, Scotland
(Station or ship)

By

SPECIAL COURT-MARTIAL

Convened by Commanding Officer
(Title of)

Specification 1: In that Fireman Apprentice William L. HOUCK, U. S. Navy, USS HOLLAND (AS 32), did, at the Harmony House Public Bar, Dunoon, Scotland, at or about 6 January 1976, wrongfully violate a lawful general regulation, to wit: Article 1151, U. S. Navy Regulations dated 1973, by having in his possession ten (10) tablets of lysergic acid diethylamide and one-half gram of cocaine.

Specification 2: In that Fireman Apprentice William L. HOUCK, U. S. Navy, USS HOLLAND (AS 32), did, at the Harmony House Public Bar, Dunoon, Scotland, at or about 6 January 1976, wrongfully violate a lawful general regulation, to wit: Article 1151, U. S. Navy Regulations dated 1973, by selling or transferring ten (10) tablets of lysergic acid diethylamide and one-half gram of cocaine to Fireman Recruit Timothy L. HEBDING, U. S. Navy.

took place. Asked about their policies on drug offenders, a spokesman for the Holy Loch base would make no comment.

One of the documents obtained by the *New Statesman*, concerning a Discharge Board hearing in October 1976, reveals how one seaman (who was both a nuclear weapons guard and a radio operator responsible for communications on patrol) had stashed marijuana in his locker on the *USS Casmir Pulaski* - a Poseidon nuclear missile submarine - before leaving its home base at New London, Connecticut. The canna-

bis was discovered during a search after the submarine reached the Holy Loch to take on a new alternate crew. Although he said he was a regular user, and had repeatedly failed to turn up for official duties, he was neither discharged nor sent home. Instead, his Top Secret security clearance was reduced to Secret, and he was 'disqualified for assignment to nuclear weapons position'. A report on this seaman prepared a week after the marijuana was discovered noted that he had 'a significant history of unauthorised absence and indebtedness, tried to avoid

intended responsibility' and 'had proven totally irresponsible when not accounted for daily by direct supervision'.

Until he was apprehended for having drugs, he had been, according to a message sent from the Holy Loch to Washington, a 'nuclear weapons security guard', with access to special controlled areas.

Another set of papers revealed how a fireman on the *USS Holland*, the submarine mother ship based in the Holy Loch, was trading in a host of drugs - specifically acid (LSD), cocaine and amphetamines. He sold the acid and cocaine to another fireman on the *Holland*, and the amphetamines to a machinist on the ship, all in the Harmony House bar in Dunoon. The accused fireman also admitted using acid and cocaine.

The fireman was sentenced to four months' hard labour and fined \$1,200, but the records do not indicate that he was either discharged or told he would not return to the Holy Loch.

The papers sent to the *New Statesman* form part of a large collection of confidential US Navy papers which were dumped on a tip near Dunoon. One local resident and former employee at the Holy Loch base, who has seen all the papers, commented that 'the problem is much more widespread than the Navy would have us believe, and may (now) have reached epidemic proportions'. □