

South Negro Vets Seek Organization and Unity

By CLAUDIA JONES

"Southern Negro vets are organizing first of all among themselves, and they are ready and willing to have their white Southern brothers join them." That's what George

Murphy, Jr., ex-sergeant and Public Relations Officer for the Provisional Committee for a National Veterans Organization told me on his return from a southwide tour.

The tour, made in preparation for the national Chicago meeting on April 6-7 took him to San Antonio, Galveston and Dallas, Tex., New

statewide and local veterans' organizations, they are planning to go to Chicago "in convention style." Everywhere, he said, Negro vets express concern about the lynch violence directed against them.

"But they are participating in the protests to stop it," he said. An example of this is their participation in the El Campo, Texas case, where Pvt. L. C. Herman, Negro veteran is charged with killing an elderly white woman. Here, Negro vets are part of the protest movement demanding that this mentally deficient veteran be reprieved with a "clemency charge."

Murphy likes to sit down and talk to the vets themselves. You get the feeling this Quartermaster Corps Sergeant, with three years army service and 6 months who worked in the Philippines in the Army's Information and Educational Program, does it well.

Take his meeting at Fiske University with some 200 Negro veterans. Murphy told how "two carloads of indicted Negro veterans came in from Columbia, Tenn."

"You looked at these guys, some still had on their GI jackets, and they seemed like ordinary average guys. But when I asked them how they felt towards these veterans at Fiske who raised funds for their defense and about the protest meetings up North, they began to speak."

A spokesman for the group told Murphy that "you can depend on our being in Chicago" and then added:

"A few people said we shouldn't have done what we did. What makes us feel good is that all you folks have said you know we were right."

No wonder Murphy says today:

"From what I have seen in the South today, I would say that the vets in the South have shown that they are on the march for democracy."



GEORGE B. MURPHY JR.

Orleans, La.; Birmingham, Ala.; Columbia, S. C.; Richmond, Va.; Orangeburg and Nashville, Tennessee.

Of his experiences he said enthusiastically: "A keen awareness permeates the Negro veterans' spirit. It is the knowledge that they are right that impels them not to take a back seat but to fight back. Practically everywhere I went, it was the Negro veteran who said, 'yes they knew white veterans who would support their efforts and who would also be in Chicago.'"

The desire for organization is also strong, said Murphy. In Aiken College, Columbia, S. C., student veterans had elected delegates to go to Chicago on the basis of newspaper reports. In Texas, Georgia and Alabama, where World War II Negro veterans have already formed