

SAILORS DESCRIBE RACIAL BATTLING

Say Fight Lasted 15 Hours
on Kitty Hawk Last Month

PEARL HARBOR, Hawaii, Nov. 23 (UPI)—Crewmen aboard the U.S.S. Kitty Hawk, which left here for San Diego today, said it took club-swinging marines to quell a bloody 15-hour racial battle on the carrier last month.

Newsmen were barred from boarding the huge ship, and the crew was instructed not to discuss the disturbance in which 46 persons were injured, according to the Navy.

However, sailors on shore liberty gave anonymous accounts of a series of all-night brawls during which about 100 black and white sailors "used knives, forks and chains and anything else they could get their hands on" as weapons.

The Navy's terse account of the incident said that 40 whites and six blacks were injured. Four persons had to be flown to shore for medical treatment.

"It was getting too hot to handle," said one sailor. "I heard that the captain ordered that guns be brought out . . . and to shoot if necessary. I heard shouts, screams, swearing and chairs being broken."

The carrier, which docked here yesterday from Vietnam, is scheduled to arrive in its home port, San Diego, next Tuesday.

The trouble began, sailors said, when a drunken white attempted to push a group of blacks in a Philippine night club. "The next night," one said, "the whites hired a bunch of black belts [Karate experts] to beat up blacks."

They said tension had escalated when the ship was abruptly ordered to turn around and head back for Vietnam waters. Sparked by an incident in the mess hall concerning food rationing, full-scale rioting broke out and lasted all night and into the next day, the sailors said.

"Blacks began tearing through compartments and began pulling out whites and began beating them up," one crewman said. "My friend was beaten to a pulp."

Most blacks and whites agreed that tension in the crew, now anxious to get home, has subsided, but they said rioting could erupt again.

The Kitty Hawk incident was the first recently reported riot, and was followed by a similar incident a week later aboard the fleet oiler Hassayampa.

Reports of the riots as well as sabotage and disobedience of orders aboard the Navy ships has prompted a Congressional investigation.

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