



Chip Scheuer

Girl ties red band, symbolizing support for peace, on arm of a fellow student.

# SC High students protest visit by Air Force recruiter

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Santa Cruz High School students, angered by a proposed school visit by an Air Force recruiter, brought in peace activists yesterday for a noon-time protest against militarism.

The event, attended by about 50 lunch-munching students, was organized by a group of about 10 students.

The organizers said they were protesting recruiting tactics such as the Army's slick series of "Be all that you can be" commercials.

"We just organized it because we want everyone to get the full picture of what's going on," said 16-year-old Richmond Scott. "The recruiters will tell you the military offers you a great education and career training, but they won't describe the fighting. You might end up fighting a war. It's like Russian roulette. Is it really worth it to risk getting killed for an education?"

"People who are joining the military don't always know they can't leave when they want to," said student Emily Wittman. "They need to see

both sides before they join. Once you are in Nicaragua or the Middle East fighting a war, you can't realize in the middle of the war that it's wrong and turn back."

The rally was held as one of a series of weekly "free speech days," said Principal Caroline Keller.

"I feel it's really important for us to present all sides of controversial issues," Keller said. "That's what school's all about: to look at what's going on, hear the background of the issues, and let the kids make decisions for themselves."

Invited by the student organizers, five members of Veterans for Peace attended the rally. They spoke to the crowd and distributed leaflets.

"When recruiters come to schools, the military sells itself. It shows its best face. Nobody is speaking the other side of the story these days — the ugly side. The pain, the sorrow, the fear, the destruction. Plain old death," said Jim Bush, who served in the army during the Vietnam War, though not in Vietnam.

Bush said he supported the rights of military recruiters to ply their trade on high school

campuses, but only if groups like his were offered equal time to tell their side of the story.

The student and veteran speakers got a mixed reception from the students looking on. About 50 students tied on red armbands symbolizing support for peace, but other students jeered quietly during the speeches.

"I think (the presentation) was one-sided," said student Sam Parnianfar. "I personally feel both sides need to be presented. I don't mind the Air Force recruiter coming. Some people do look forward to careers in the military. Some people don't go to Vietnam and die. Some people get something out of being in the military."

Student Leif Bertrand also said he didn't object to having recruiters on campus.

"They're just offering something. You don't have to take it," Bertrand said. "I'm not going to be stupid enough to join, but I don't mind them coming."

The Air Force recruiter who was scheduled to interview students during lunch hour yesterday in the school learning center did not show up, said the school secretary.