



The Center on
Conscience & War

The Reporter for Conscience' Sake

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Bill Galvin Receives Peaceseeker Award



Bill Galvin after signing the Legacy of Peace Quilt

This summer Bill Galvin received the Presbyterian Peace Fellowship's 2009 Peaceseeker Award. The Peace Fellowship selects an individual for this honor annually, but the awards are only presented at the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, which meets every two years. This year the General Assembly convened

in Minneapolis, Minnesota from July 2nd – 10th. During this week of discernment and decision-making, the Peace Fellowship hosted a breakfast on July 7th. It was at this event that Bill Galvin was honored.

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Founded in 1940, the Center on Conscience & War works to extend and defend the rights of conscientious objectors to war. In pursuit of this calling, the Center provides these services free of charge:

- Counsel military conscientious objectors.
- Provide legal support for military personnel.
- Lobby Congress to extend and defend the rights of conscientious objectors.
- Provide accurate information to the public on Selective Service registration.
- Provide support to COs who refuse to register for the draft through F.E.A.T student loans.
- Counsel soldiers on the GI Rights Hotline with accuracy and honesty.
- Military counter-recruitment information
- Provide workshops, training, and speakers on any of the above topics.

News Briefs

Muslim Objector Free

Turkey

Free to resume normal life after his recent release from a mental hospital where he was officially diagnosed as “anti-social,” Turkey’s first Muslim objector to military service has not wavered from his criticism of mandatory conscription.

“Even if [the Prophet] Mohammed were head of the state and instituted mandatory military service, I would have to stand against him,” Enver Aydemir told the *Hürriyet Daily News & Economic Review* in a recent interview after returning in June to Izmit.

Officially there are 120 other conscientious objectors in Turkey, who refuse to serve in the country’s military for different reasons. Aydemir made headlines when he was arrested in 2007 for being the first person reported to object due to his pious Muslim beliefs.

Conscientious objection is not a recognized right in Turkish law, so many of the country’s current 121 objectors are caught in a legal limbo, continually being imprisoned and released each time they refuse to report for national service.

(www.turkishweekly.net)

Carolyn Vadino, a State Department spokeswoman, said, “We continually press the Transitional Federal Government to make certain that they do not use child soldiers.” She also said the U.S. government took “appropriate steps” to verify that the Somali soldiers it was helping pay were 18 or older.

Several international treaties cover the issue. While the U.S. government has not ratified the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, which presses countries not to deploy soldiers younger than 15, the U.S. government has ratified an optional protocol to that convention avoiding the recruitment and the use of child soldiers.

(www.nytimes.com)

Swede Jailed for Desertion

Sweden

A 20-year-old Swedish conscript has been convicted for desertion, even though compulsory military service ended in Sweden three months ago. The man was among the last crop of Swedes forced into service under the country’s conscription laws, which officially came to an end on June 1st, ending more than a century of compulsory military service in Sweden.

But life as a soldier, professional or otherwise, didn’t sit well with the 20-year-old Halland native. The district court in Halmstad wasn’t sympathetic to the man’s reasons for deserting, sentencing him to two weeks in prison, despite pleas by the man’s attorney that the court refrain from handing out any punishment in the case.

(www.thelocal.se)

U.S. Taxes for Child Soldiers?

Somalia

The United Nations lists the Somali government as one of the “most persistent violators” of restrictions forbidding the use of child soldiers, and this week *The New York Times* documented several child soldiers, some as young as 12, toting assault rifles and working for the Somali transitional government in Mogadishu, Somalia’s capital.

While the U.S. government has expressed concern about the matter, it has given the Somali military millions of dollars in arms and paid soldiers’ salaries.

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and consider making CCW the
beneficiary of your IRA.**

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1 - 800 - 379 - 2679

ccw@centeronconscience.org

Brethren Volunteer Patrick Spahn Applies CCW Experience at Home in Germany

Patrick Spahn traveled from Germany to the United States as part of the Brethren Volunteer Service of the Church of the Brethren. He worked at the Center on Conscience & War for 18 months, and he held a variety of roles including editor of the Reporter. He shares the following memories of his time at CCW and his goals for the future.

I am already back in Germany for two months, and it feels like far longer since I edited the last *Reporter for Conscience's* Sake, or answered a phone call on the GI Rights Hotline.

Working at the Center was a very great time for me. I learned a lot about the issues, such as Recruiter abuse, conscientious objection, and American military culture and religion. I learned of many problems I hadn't been aware of previously, such as the recruitment of poor people, and the glorification of soldiers and their duty.

The German people used to have a very skeptical relationship towards soldiers and military based on their experiences of the two world wars. Now I see tendencies in Germany that scare me. Recruiters go into schools, the Armed Forces get smaller but get ready for more deployments and many people are less skeptical about soldiers. Additionally a very popular young politician is the current Defense Secretary and his popularity boosts public opinion of the military a lot.

I am already in contact with the German War Resisters League, Mennonite Counseling Network (part of the GI Rights Hotline in Germany) and Iraq Veterans Against the War to get involved here in Germany. In mid August I met with my Congresswoman, Bettina Hagedorn, to talk about my service at CCW as well as German politics in regards to the military, Afghanistan, and conscription.

On a more personal level, I loved working at the Center. Working for a cause I am passionate about and truly believe in was very fulfilling and something I want to keep doing. Prior to working at the Center, I used to have a hard time choosing between two different college programs, Social Work or International Policy Management. Now I have decided to study International Policy Management. Working with Bill Galvin, J.E. McNeil, and Daniel Lakemacher was a big part of this decision, and part of the reason why I had such a great time. Each of them are role models in different ways, and just by working with them I learned a

lot about dedication, passion, and how to keep doing this tough work for a long time. I appreciate them a lot, and I am very sad not working with them anymore. I don't know if I will ever work with such great co-workers again, including Russell Ricks, Dan O'Conner, Thomas Bergman and Rebecca Rawls. However, I know that I will cross their paths sometime in the future, and I am already excited about that.

I will never forget the stories of the people who called CCW. The woman in the Air Force who thought about getting pregnant just to get out of the service, which doesn't work in that branch. Or the woman who was sexually harassed by men higher up in her Chain of Command while deployed on a ship, or the conscientious objector who is still struggling to get out after years of trying. I will remember all the conscientious objectors who turned their entire lives around with that decision, some who even lost contact with their friends and family because of their newfound beliefs that no longer allowed them to participate in the Armed Forces. I have deep respect for these courageous folks; all of them are examples for me of how important it is to live up to your own beliefs, convictions, and conscience.

In addition, I am remembering all of you, the supporters who send gifts year after year to the Center to keep up the work. I was amazed to see how many supporters the Center has.

I thank you for your support. Without it I could not have had all these life-changing experiences, and I could not have helped all these people. Take care, and from the bottom of my heart I say, Auf Wiedersehen!



Patrick Spahn meeting with his Congressional Representative, Bettina Hagedorn

J.E. McNeil to Step Down as Executive Director following over a Decade of Service to Men and Women of Conscience

Following over a decade of service to the Center on Conscience & War, J.E. McNeil has announced her decision to resign as Executive Director. McNeil has served in this capacity since September, 1999. The Board of Directors of the Center express appreciation for the years of leadership McNeil has provided and accept with reluctance her planned departure date of no later than August 31, 2011.

“J.E. has been the spirit, voice and face of this important work for over a decade. Her leadership has shaped this organization into a nationally, and internationally known body, that supports men and women of conscience in regards to war and its violence,” acknowledged Phil Jones, Chair of the CCW Board. “To think of CCW without McNeil at its helm seems almost counterintuitive. The Center and J.E. have been almost one and the same for such a long period of time.”

New Executive Director Sought

The Search Committee of the Board of Directors of the Center on Conscience & War will begin accepting applications for Executive Director immediately. Applicants should send cover letter and supporting documents to peace1st@email.com.

The job description is available upon request and at www.centeronconscience.org. The new director will be expected to begin no later than July 1, 2011.

During her tenure at the Center, McNeil has strengthened both finances and program, while developing and mentoring talented staff and countless committed volunteers. Bill Galvin, who has been working with conscientious objectors since 1971, has been one of McNeil’s strongest staff member hires, and continues as a loyal colleague.

McNeil is well regarded in the Peace Community for her solid legal skills as well as her financial acumen. McNeil is recognized within media and political circles as a professional who



J.E. McNeil at her desk in CCW's Washington, DC Office

can clearly articulate and outline the issues of conscientious objection.

Most recently this was reflected in a New York Times article concerning issues in regards to conscientious objectors in the military. McNeil was quoted at length in regards to legal and moral implications for those who seek release from military service. McNeil moved easily within both the faith based community and the legislative and political arena. To both she gave words of education and of challenge. McNeil advocated tirelessly for and with those who sought conscientious freedom of choice on moral or legal grounds.

“I am leaving the Center because it is time for me to do different work, and it is time for the Center to have new blood,” explained McNeil. “I could do this work for another ten years, but someone new could do it with more creativity and excitement. I love the Center and because of that I want someone else at its head.”

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<http://www.centeronconscience.org>

A Conscientious Perspective

“Positive Psychology” in War?

CCW Board Member Jim Lieberman assesses the Army's new attempt to mitigate psychological injuries from war.

Our military system is having psychological problems. The U.S. Military recently turned to civilian professionals for help with problems of family distress, demoralization and suicide among soldiers. This comes in at a time when, according to *Navy Times* (“Medicating the Military,” March 17, 2010), one in six service members takes at least one psychiatric drug; many of those taking two or more in combination. Use of antipsychotic drugs, sedatives, and tranquilizers by military personnel has more than doubled in the last decade. Most of these drugs have side effects, including increased suicidal risk.

The U.S. Army plans for all 1.1 million of its soldiers to take training in positive psychology and emotional resiliency. Army research psychologist Capt. Paul Lester, who leads the assessment of the program, told the *National Psychologist* (“Army to Train its Own in Positive Psychology,” July/August 2010), “As far as I can tell this is the largest, deliberate, psychological intervention in human history. . . . We don’t know when the global war on terrorism is going to end so we’re preparing to have to be engaged for a long period of time.”*

The Pentagon has recruited University of Pennsylvania psychologist Martin Seligman: his positive psychology approach is sensible enough--catch it on YouTube. He rates the Pleasant Life below the Good Life, which, in turn, is below the Meaningful Life. This sounds like grist for chaplains, but apparently it’s not enough to bless and counsel troops in traditional religious context. Chaplains bless those who kill under orders, but can they deal with the aftermath of guilt, disinhibition, and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder?

Rising suicide rates suggest that a line has been crossed into an emotional and ethical minefield. Training normal people to kill means compromising their religious teachings, ethical sensitivity and natural, normal, necessary inhibitions--in other words, their psychological immune system. Such training risks permanent damage to the psyche (modern word for “soul”).

Col. Dave Grossman has studied the history of close combat and developed training methods to increase effective use of lethal weapons by our troops. For centuries--probably forever--most combatants have found it easier and better to die than to kill in face-to-face combat. Distance killing with artillery or bombs is different. Conditioning methods and psychiatric drugs have raised the percentage of combatants who are effective killers to 90% since Vietnam--compared with 20% in World War II and Korea. Now we may be facing the aftermath of more effective training: when the lethal genie is let out of the bottle, it’s hard to put it back. (“On Killing,” 2nd ed. 2009)

Ironically, the same people who want their wars to have divine sanction require that conscientious objectors have a recognizable religious history and rationale, not individual conscientious reckoning. When there is no draft, COs do not apply for military service; however, some people discover only after enlisting. At present, most of our effort at CCW involves helping those who learn on the job, so to speak. After all, “informed consent” for soldiering is an oxymoron if you have no idea what it means to shoot-to-kill other than as a gamer, a movie buff or a hunter. (Even the National Rifle Association has some CO members).

U.S. suicide rates are average compared with other countries, but guns are uniquely our method of choice, averaging 50 gun suicides every day. Despite what you gather from the daily news, U.S. suicides have long outnumbered homicides. A decade ago the suicide:murder ratio was 3:2 (annually, about 30,000:20,000). Now it approaches 2:1 (33,000:17,000). Suicide rates among soldiers are even higher than those of civilians. That’s no surprise: soldiers are trained to shoot guns.

Even a temporary license to kill, such as soldiers receive, increases the potential for violence in the future. The fear that one might lose control and hurt or kill a loved one or stranger may well trigger suicide. Soldiers are vulnerable to anger with family, friends and strangers that surpasses what they felt toward the designated enemy. Despite conditioning routines that dehumanize the enemy, our human targets are more like ourselves than otherwise.

Can positive psychology resolve the hypocrisy that demands temporary fratricide followed by civilian restraint? It’s doubtful. Professor Seligman may discover that there is no sure way to turn civil recruits into disciplined killers and back again into peaceable citizens. If so, the result may be positive in the best sense.

E. James Lieberman, M.D.
Clinical Professor of Psychiatry, Emeritus
George Washington University School of Medicine

*References from Bruce Levine, Ph.D., American Soldiers Brainwashed with “Positive Thinking.” *Alternet*, July 29, 2010

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Up to 30% of a purchase you might have made anyway can go towards supporting the Center. Just log on to www.goodsearch.com/goodshop.aspx, and search for your favorite online store. Make sure you select “**Center on Conscience & War**” as your charity of choice, and proceeds from your purchase will go towards our efforts at defending the rights of conscientious objectors, at no extra charge to you!

“Spreading the word...”

Continued from page 1

Galvin received an engraved plaque with a personal dedication written by one of his mentors and CCW Executive Director Emeritus, Bill Yolton (full text of the dedication in the box below). Lois Baker, whom Galvin respectfully refers to as “one of the saints,” presented the award with Andrea Leonard. The two were paired to represent the past and future of the Fellowship with Andrea in her 20s and Lois in her 80s. The Peace Fellowship chose to recognize Galvin as the 2009 Peaceseeker because of his four decades of work supporting and counseling conscientious objectors to war.

Beginning his remarks, Galvin told the crowd he was “overwhelmed” by the ceremony, and in particular the dedication. He went on to say the following:

“That’s amazing what Yolton wrote--and Yolton is also one of my mentors and somebody who trained me when I was younger.”

“I want to say though, at work every day I talk to soldiers who are struggling with issues of conscience and war. And when I reflect

back on my own becoming a conscientious objector--and yes, it was shaped by this church and Warren Wilson College, but my church never talked about conscientious objection. And it wasn’t until I said I was a conscientious objector that I learned that there had been a conscientious objector from World War II in my church who actually went with me to my hearing as a support.”

“But I think that our church has in many ways failed to raise issues of conscience and war. Not just our church, the church in general. Not just the Presbyterian Church, but across the board, because I talk to people all the time in the military who never really confronted their values--their religious training--what they believe and how that’s going to affect them and relate to what it means to be on the battlefield.”

“We really have to do a better job on that. We have this whole thing about how we have to ‘support the troops,’ so we’re almost afraid to say something that might be perceived as being critical. But I think the worst thing we can do for our soldiers is to put them out

Continued on next page

Dedication of 2009 Peaceseeker Award, Text by Bill Yolton

For living Your Life as an Example of the Active Nonviolence of Jesus
For combining with Grace

Expertise in the law and regulations of conscientious objection to war &
Compassionate support for all who struggle to clarify their relationship with the violence of the nations
So that their integrity as peaceable humans can endure.

You were raised up in the life of the congregation gathered in Relay, awakened at Warren Wilson College to your identity as a conscientious objector to war and violence, and supported in your claim while at Princeton Seminary by the General Assembly. You have continued a journey of ministry for those who object to the killing fields of war.

You have served in the Church’s Ministry on Conscience and War, traveled as an evangelist for the Central Committee for Conscientious Objectors, anchored the work of the Center on Conscience and War and upheld the witness of conscience before the church and before the Presbyterian Peace Fellowship.

You have helped many to stay out of war, and still others to end their involvement in war. Through your work, hundreds have been trained to be counselors to people who question their own participation in war. Thousands have been touched by your writing, by your technical advice and by your personal witness to the ups and downs of living in a world that promotes death while seeking to stay on track with one’s own dedication to life and service to others.

The Peace Fellowship and a cloud of witnesses acclaim your dedication to love others as Jesus has loved us
by living for peace and justice.

“Extending the rights of conscience...”

Continued from previous page

there without them having thought through this kind of moral, theological and ethical reflection. If this award can do anything, I hope it will inspire our churches to do a better job of this.”

After the awards presentation, the keynote speaker, Camilo Mejia, was introduced as one example of the innumerable conscientious objectors counseled by Bill Galvin. As an Army Staff Sergeant, Mejia became the first public resistor to the Iraq War, and he later went on to serve as President of Iraq Veterans Against the War. Mejia gave a powerful speech emphasizing the critical importance of supporting COs. What follows is an excerpt of Mejia sharing how Bill Galvin fulfilled this significant role in his own journey out of the Army.

“... when I decided that I didn’t want to go back to Iraq, and when I decided that I was going to follow my conscience, I was incredibly confused. It was a very lonely road to walk on - there was no Iraq Vets Against the War at that time, Veterans For Peace was just becoming reorganized, we only had about 500 members I think at that time... And there wasn’t really a whole lot of help out there--there wasn’t really a whole lot of places--a whole lot of people to go to and speak about conscientious objection.”

“It was just like an incredibly lonely thing to do, it was an incredibly confusing and scary thing to do and for someone in that situation who is faced with this decision that could be so life changing, to have a mentor, to have a counselor, to have a friend like Bill on the other side of the phone, yes, maybe it’s not someone you’re seeing face to face but someone who is there to guide you, comfort you, and tell you you’re not wrong. Not only do you have every right to do what you are doing, but it’s the natural thing to do--the human thing to do to not want to kill your fellow human beings...”

“... as a conscientious objector I want to say that I love this man, I want to honor him with every cell of my body, I want to tell you that people like Bill are invaluable to the movement and to the world that we want to build for peace. I think that if we had more Bills in the world we would see that change, we would see that promised land. We will build it. So I am very honored to be here and very honored that Bill chose me to come here and give this keynote. Thank you all, and thank you Bill for all the work that you have done.”

Following Camilo Mejia’s address and the end of the official program, Bill Galvin signed the Peace Fellowship’s Legacy of Peace Quilt. The quilt contains the names of each recipient of the Peaceseecker Award, and it thus serves as a dynamic symbol of the Presbyterian Church’s history and continuing tradition of seeking peace in our world.

A CO Memory from the Days of CPS

Robert J. Kleinhans, born 1920
Methodist drafted from Elizabeth, New Jersey
CPS from June 1, 1943 - June 7, 1946

Forest Service with American Friends Service
Committee, Campton, New Hampshire

National Park Service, Gatlinburg, Tennessee

Malaria Treatment Program, Boston, Massachusetts

“I first became a CO when I was in high school in Elizabeth, NJ. One of our teachers was Carl Voss, a Quaker and also our baseball coach. Later I attended a Quaker Meeting about peace.”

“After I graduated, I soon signed on the draft for World War II. One day we all met in a local theater, and I was singled out as a CO. In June I was shipped off to a work camp in Campton, NH. We started what was called ‘Work of National Importance.’ We all laughed at that since we were raking a dirt road in a National Park! I did rake as was asked, but some of the men started singing funny songs.”

“In the Fall, we were shipped by train to Gatlinburg, TN. I became Camp Manager for keeping items in working condition. One task was to keep the large refrigerator running. Another assignment was to keep the plumbing in order.”

“The camp had electricity for lights at night. A colleague of mine was concerned that there were no mufflers on the noisy gasoline engines. He was Bud Hawkins. Bud was a true genius and was able to get the administration to permit us to do other items to improve the CPS Camp. We were able to build a small hydroelectric system to generate electricity at no cost for fuel. This helped the American Friends Service Committee.”

“I recently had my birthday and am 90-years-old. A few years ago I joined the Peace Corps and went to Ghana.”

(signed)

Bob J. Kleinhaus

Send your CO memory to
ccw@centeronconscience.org

and your story can be included in an
upcoming edition of

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From the Desk of the Executive Director

The rush and pressure of modern life are a form, perhaps the most common form, of its innate violence. To allow oneself to be carried away by a multitude of conflicting concerns, to surrender to too many demands, to commit oneself to too many projects, to want to help everyone in everything is to succumb to violence. More than that, it is cooperation in violence. The frenzy of the activist destroys the fruitfulness of her/his own work, because it kills the root of inner wisdom which makes work fruitful.
 ~Thomas Merton

Well, the word is out. I am ready to move on. I will be working at the Center for some time yet, however, while the Board selects my successor. When I first told my family, staff and Board I was ready to move on, the initial question was: "Why?"

It is actually a hard question to answer other than by taking the refuge of a tired parent: "Because." Part of it has to do with where I wanted to take the Center when I first took on the job. I wanted to bring the Center back into view. When I first took this job and traveled people would say, "Oh, do you still exist?" No one says that any more. The Center has a respectable place in the Peace Community and is looked to for expertise from churches, media and governments from around the world.

I also wanted to bring the Center into a stable financial situation. In this, too, we have been fairly successful. We went from a declining income in 1999 to more than doubling our income until the recession. No one could entirely compensate for the depth of the recession, but we have not had the wholesale losses many organizations have had, in part because of a decade of steady work to build this organization. So I have, on the whole, succeeded in what I set out to do for the Center.

Part of my decision has to do with my belief that nonprofits do better not becoming too identified with one person, and, therefore, need a certain amount of turnover in the leadership. (The Peace Tax Fund is still reeling from the loss of Marian Franz who was so integrally connected with that organization for more than 15 years.) The organization, not the personality, should be paramount.

But I would be being disingenuous not to admit part of it has to do with my personal goals in life. I feel that, although I could continue to do a good job here, both the Center and I would be better off with fresh starts. After eleven years of staying focused on the fairly narrow issue of conscientious objection, I want to spend more time working on the underlying causes of war. I want to live up to the Center's bumper sticker: "How does your life remove the causes of war?"

I want to stop war with a broader brush than "one soldier at a time."

But even when I finally leave, I will continue to support the Center with my prayers and my money, because I have never changed in my belief that the Center does valuable, hands on, concrete peace work, and deserves my full support.

Yours for Peace and Justice,

J. E. McNeil

