



The Center on
Conscience & War

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Semantics: Slowly Seizing CO Rights

by Theo Sittler

When I was in college I had the chance to study four semesters of ancient Greek, and it was intriguing to learn that many words in the English vocabulary in fact have Greek roots. The observation here is that words tend to get borrowed, and once a word or a phrase is reused in another context, it tends to pop up in many different places. The same concept seems to apply when it comes to speeches. Martin Luther King, Jr. was a gifted speaker, many of his speeches during the civil rights movement were inspiring, and so many of King's wordings and phrases have been borrowed. His *I have a Dream* speech has inspired many, and the concept of having a "dream" gets borrowed endlessly. The same borrowing effect can have negative consequences as well. In the wake of the September 11th terrorist attacks in New York and Washington, President Bush said, "this *crusade*, this war on terrorism is going to take a while." The wording, *crusade*, by the President virtually went unnoticed in America, but for the rest of the world it brought back dark thoughts about the clash of civilizations long ago, in a war between Christian crusaders and the Muslim world. And, for many Muslims today the war in Iraq is seen as a Christian crusade against Islam. Words are powerful. Giving him the benefit of the doubt, President Bush might not have had the Christian crusades in mind when he referred to the war on terrorism as a *crusade*, but the consequences of his words were damaging. In the same way, words and phrases can have equal or greater power in congress, when it comes to passing laws.

On January 7, 2003 Representative Charles Rangel (D-NY) introduced the *Universal National Service Act of 2003* (H.R. 163) in the House of Representatives. The bill was proposed to bring the military draft back into effect. There are many different things that are fundamentally flawed about this bill. Even Representative Rangel's argument in support of this bill is flawed, and there is little hope that this bill has any chance of going anywhere. Though it is most likely that H.R. 163 will not be

passed, there is cause for great concern. The Center on Conscience & War (CCW) is particularly concerned about the section in the bill concerning conscientious objectors (CO). The wording in the bill in regard to COs is very limiting. There are not sufficient provisions for COs in the Rangel bill. Under the provisions provided in H.R. 163,

(cont. on page 5 as *Language*)

"Conscience Under Fire"

by Tim Showalter

The Center on Conscience & War, along with friends from the Center's board and from far away places, convened at the Friend's Meeting House in Washington, DC for its Annual Advisory Council Conference. The conference, entitled "Conscience Under Fire", called for discussion on new ideas and concerns for CCW in the coming year. The time commenced with greetings from the executive director, J.E. McNeil and Board Chair, Jonathan Ogle. Trent Moyer, from AFSC, facilitated a workshop on "Military Out of Our Schools", where participants discussed the dangers of recruiters and the rapidly expanding JROTC (Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps) program. They were invited to brainstorm different ways to erase military influence from our schools and colleges. Bill Galvin, Counseling Coordinator, facilitated a workshop on the draft and the proposed Military CO Act; he also co-facilitated a workshop on GI Rights and conscientious objection in the Iraq War, with the Center's own Jen Flament. Marion Franz, the director of the National Campaign for a Peace Tax Fund (NCPTF), presented the history and current congressional attitude towards the organization and its goals. The NCPTF strives to set up a Peace Tax Fund, essentially, "to provide that the income, estate, or gift tax payment of...taxpayers who are conscientiously opposed to participation in war...be used for nonmilitary purposes."

Following the break for lunch, Stav Adivi, Israeli refuser of the resister organization The Courage to Refuse, held the participants' undivided attention (cont. on page 3 as *Advisory Council*)

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News Briefs

On 25 May 2003, four Catholic Workers participated in a Plowshares action aboard the USS Philippines harbored in New York City for Fleet Week. Susan Clarkson, Brian Buckley, Joan Gregory, and Mark Colville held a banner with the words 'Riverside Plowshares - Disarm and Choose Life' while they **hammered and poured their own blood** on the missile hatches. Their action was inspired by the words of Isaiah 2: "they shall beat their swords into plowshares." The USS Philippines fired missiles in the recent wars against Afghanistan and Iraq. The four Catholic Workers were arrested, released after several hours, and are awaiting charges.

In an effort to satisfy the recent increase in requests for information about conscientious objection to war, Anne Yoder, of the Swarthmore College Peace Collection has created a website entitled, "Conscientious Objection in America: Primary Sources for Research." The site includes a brief history of conscientious objection in America, a listing of **over 175 archival sources from over 30 US institutions**, stories and accounts of real conscientious objectors, and links to non-archival sources as well. The site can be accessed at:

www.swarthmore.edu/Library/peace

In August, a coalition of about 60 organizations, including CCW, are organizing a **commemoration March on Washington**. It will have been 40 years, come August, since the 1963 gathering, where Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. called for a Poor People's Campaign and an Economic Bill of Rights. Dr. King's linkage of poverty, militarism, and racism continues to resonate today. **"We invite all people of conscience** to join us in that same spirit, to spread this call and meet us at the Lincoln Memorial, Washington, DC on August 22, 23, and 24, 2003." Watch urgent actions and keep in touch with CCW for further details and information.

The 215th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, USA, meeting in Denver, May 24-31, 2003, adopted an overture to uphold the registry for members who are conscientious objectors. The Assembly went on to reaffirm the church's "historic commitment for the right of individual conscience by expressing concern for conscientious objectors in the military and the dilemmas they often encounter, and by urging the Presbyterian Council for Chaplains and Military Personnel, to ensure that all **Presbyterian chaplains** are educated in both the PC(USA)'s policy **in support of conscientious objectors** and the appropriate military regulations and procedures for reclassifying and discharging conscientious objectors."

The Unitarian Universalist Peace Fellowship has recently made the decision to **award the Center on Conscience & War** with its Adin Ballou Peace Award. The Unitarian Universalist (UU) General Assembly has its continent wide annual meeting in Boston this year, during the last weekend in June. At the assembly, the UU will be making the official presentation of the award, which will be accepted by the Center's Bill Galvin, after which he'll give a short presentation on the efforts and business of the Center.

Marine Reservist and conscientious objector Stephen Funk, who declared his CO status publicly on April 1, is being charged with desertion under Article 85 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice. Funk went UA for a few weeks to prepare his CO papers for discharge. The Marines are **charging him with desertion** because he was "shirking important duty." Funk is only one of the marine reservists waiting for a discharge. Many other COs working with CCW are now being turned down. As Bill Galvin suggested in the last newsletter, our good luck with military CO cases may be coming to an end. These cases seem to be evidence that CO rights may be taking a **turn for the worse**. Hopefully, they are just a few bad luck scenarios.

A Servant

A servant of peace, love, and unity in a broken world. Hello, my name is Theo Sittler the newest staff member of CCW. I am a volunteer of the Mennonite Central Committee here on my two-year assignment. I will be doing lobbying for the Center; lobbying primarily for a Military Conscientious Objection Act to be introduced and passed. Have any questions? Contact me at tsittler@nisbco.org.

One More Willing and Helpful Volunteer

Hi, I'm Elizabeth Wyrsh a member of the Dorothy Day Catholic Worker in Washington D.C. and have volunteered here at the office a few times. I'm inspired by this group's commitment to supporting conscientious objectors.

Advisory Council (cont. from page 1)

with a recount of his decision to refuse to take part in the occupation beyond the '67 borders. With enthusiasm, he explained that the movement is gaining new members slowly, but is becoming too large a pain for the Israeli government to ignore. The refusers, he said, are very steadfast in their beliefs about the occupation, and are essentially incorruptible. Adivi finished with a plea that CCW hears again and again from refusers. He emphasized the importance of US intervention into the Israeli/Palestinian conflict; then he reemphasized the necessity of a movement here in the US, a movement of the people pressuring the government to take action.

A plenary discussion followed the the speaker, addressing the immediate and longer-term initiatives of CCW. These points were discussed and deemed "important" issues to focus on.

- Educate Congress - See "Semantics: ..." article on page 1.
- Educate the Heartland/Youth - Through extended outreach to churches, peace organizations, schools, and with your help, we can make CO education sustainable.
- CO Registration/Abolish Solomon Amendments - Lobbying efforts will be key and we need your help.
- Be Aware of Future Invasion - With current discussion on Iran mirroring early talks on Iraq, not to mention Syria and North Korea, we must be prepared for the worst.
- Talk to Congressional Allies (you, too!) - An important lobbying task, one that we want to keep focusing on.
- Build Communication/Network - In order to build a movement, to change the world, we must stick together, join hands, and support one another.

These goals are attainable and the hope is that, by next spring, the members of the conference will list a whole new set of goals, pushing CO rights to a completely different, exciting, new level.

JOIN THE CENTER IN LEARNING HOW TO STOP WAR WHERE IT BEGINS ...

STILL GAINING ALLIES, STILL MAINTAINING STAMINA

By James Reichard

On 14 May, the Center on Conscience & War and the National Campaign for a Peace Tax Fund collaborated in lobbying congress. CCW's objective was to inform key representatives and senators of the danger of the language of Charles Rangel's (D-NY) draft bill, HR 163. The fundamental danger of this bill is that it does not allow for conscientious objectors to perform non-military service. Only recognized non-combatant military service is seen as a valid form of conscientious objection. (Story on page 1) Language similar to this was seen in Nick Smith's universal conscription bill, as well. CCW is concerned this language may be a precedent among upcoming draft bills.

Staff at CCW visited one of our strongest, though seemingly unlikely supporters, Representative Ron Paul (R-TX). Paul was busy at that point, so the staff

(cont. on page 4 as *Lobby Day*)

by Jen Flament

As the war in Iraq slows, conscientious objectors continue to be faced with difficult choices.

Though the constant bombing has ceased and the violence has dwindled, challenges to the American conscience have not experienced the same lull. The dust of war is settling and we are finally able to begin accessing where things stand. The War on Terrorism has left the United States in a constant state of warfare against an ever elusive enemy, color coded alerts warn of impending attack, security checkpoints in airports increase the appearance that we are living in a war zone and nightly news programs advise Americans to be prepared and on alert.

This culture of fear and anxiety is creating serious repercussions across the nation. With the public distracted by the "shock and awe" campaign in Iraq, many in power took advantage of the window of opportunity to push their own agenda.

The first example that comes to mind is the Patriot Act, which has led to an alarming degradation of civil liberties. The Department of Homeland Security now has access to library records, phone conversations and internet usage, in a move towards an invasive and watchful government.

In a TomPaine.com "op-ed," Daniel Kurtzman even accused George Bush of plagiarizing George Orwell's *1984*, using the book as a how-to manual rather than a warning. Kurtzman acknowledges that we are nowhere near the repressive state of Oceania, but draws some frightening parallels.

It seems the country is rapidly edging down a slippery slope. We now find ourselves with less and less media options and diversity and the threat of a second Patriot Act looms on the horizon.

The United States is in an ever more hostile environment as whispers of empire, unilateralism, and an American military threat ripple through the international community. President Bush's insistence that the United States does not need broad international support and calls for pre-emptive strikes have generated increasing anti-American sentiments even in countries that have traditionally been our allies.

A recent poll of 45 countries from Gallup International verified the suspicion that there is widespread animosity toward the US. The results revealed that in most countries, more people believe that military action in Iraq was

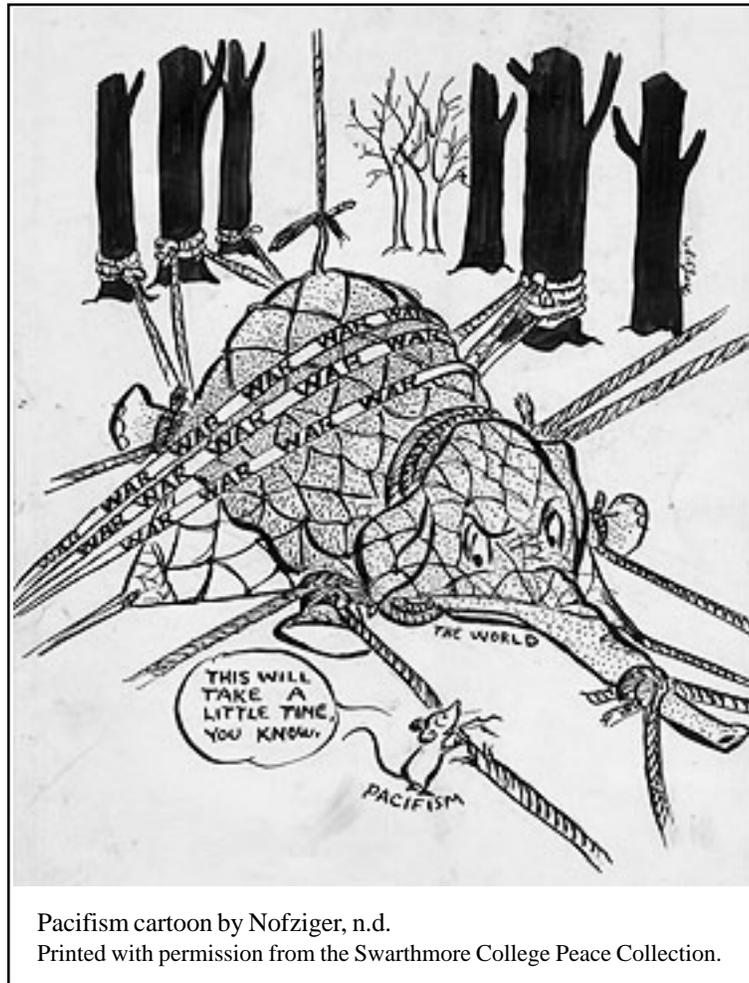
(cont. on page 5 as *Challenges*)

thanked his aide for their continued support proceeded to Representative Mike Doyle's (D-PA) office. They told CCW that they support conscientious objection and assured the staff that they would watch the language in future draft bills. When presented with the Peace Tax Fund Bill (refer to article on page 1), they showed concern about the precedent that it would create, a precedent for legalizing the withholding of taxes because of objection to their destination. They reiterated their concrete support for the rights of the conscientious objectors and dismissed Rangel's bill as "dead in the water." The next stop was Joseph Pitts (R-PA), where an aide discussed the Center's concerns. He was completely unfamiliar with the Peace Tax Fund Bill, but listened to us, and showed genuine interest in what we had to say. He brought up some important points about the tax bill and also dismissed the recent draft bill as "dead in the water." He said that he would bear in mind the importance of the CO

language. At Chris Van Hollen's (D-MD) office, staff talked with legislative assistant Bill Parsons who forwarded Van Hollen's support for the rights of conscientious objectors, but showed some apprehension at the Peace Tax Fund Bill's potential precedence. The staff also stopped by Rangel's office to chat with one of their aides, Elbert Garcia, with whom CCW has a close relationship.

Generally, Congressional staff did not seem aware of the negative ramifications towards COs as a result of the language of the Rangel bill,

and other bills like it. CCW made new contacts and identified potential sympathizers. Over all, it seemed fairly successful. It is, however, an ongoing process for CCW to educate Congress about the dangers of recent and future draft bill language.



Pacifism cartoon by Nofziger, n.d.

Printed with permission from the Swarthmore College Peace Collection.

those who are conscientiously opposed to military service will be placed in military non-combatant rolls. This notion is unacceptable to some COs; many COs refuse to do any sort of military service. Even non-combatant rolls can be seen as contributing to the military machine, and those who morally oppose cannot participate with good conscience. Many, who in good conscience, can not participate in any military service, would be forced to break the law and, as a result, be put in jail. These provisions would take the United States backwards to the World War I era, where COs were mistreated due to their belief about participation in any military service.

The text of the section for conscientious objectors in H.R. 163 states that COs "shall, when inducted, participate in military service that does not include any combatant training component." It provides for a "transfer to civilian service...at the discretion of the President" for "any such person whose claim is sustained." The transfer comes, apparently, after a noncombatant training period with the armed forces.

The CO language in the current law under the *Selective Service Act*, where a CO can perform alternate non-military service, is comparably better than the proposed H.R. 163. The *Selective Service Act* is a bill that was passed in order that all men who are between the age of eighteen and twenty-six will register with the military. The law states that if one is "found to be conscientiously opposed to participation in such noncombatant service, in lieu of such induction, [he/she will] be ordered to...perform...civilian work."

As mentioned before wording and language tend to get carried over into other contexts. The language regarding COs in H.R. 163 may produce the same borrowing effect. As the United States engages itself in more military campaigns, the military personnel will get stretched thin. At that time more serious calls for the draft could resound from major Congressional players. When this happens, the CO language from H.R. 163 will, we expect, get borrowed, which will make the situation for COs detrimental.

CCW's efforts are to ensure that those who are conscientiously opposed to military service have legal means to practice their beliefs. The main reason that H.R. 163 has such bad language regarding COs is because Congress is uneducated about the needs of conscientious objectors. The first step in working for the rights of COs is to educate Congress, so that future bills will provide adequate provisions.

Words and language have powerful effects, which can have positive or negative consequences. The CO language in the *Universal National Service Act* is one that will have negative effects on future bills if Congress does not realize the needs of COs. It is up to us to educate Congress. It is up to us to contact our local representatives and senators so that they are aware of this important issue. We, the citizens, must engage ourselves for the cause of freedom and equal rights for all.

Please contact CCW if you need tips on lobbying and/or need help in getting in contact with your Senator or Representative. 202.483.2220 or nisbco@nisbco.org

unjustified than those who believed that it was justified. Of the surveyed countries, only in the United States, Albania, and Kosovo do the majority believe that the world is safer because of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. Majorities in every other country feel that the world has become a more dangerous place.

In this new world, the question of what conscientious objection means and what responsibility that title carries becomes harder to define. Often described simply as an "opposition to participation in war in any form," conscientious objection has often been associated exclusively with military service. Yet we are facing a world where it seems warfare is permeating every corner of our culture.

Each time I turn on the news or read the paper I find my conscience in turmoil. It is increasingly difficult to determine what constitutes participation in war. Without declarations of war, the boundaries are grayed. In both Iraq and Afghanistan, there is no clear line between combatants and civilians.

So what does that mean for conscientious objectors? In an atmosphere when anyone questioning the administration is labeled un-American or accused of supporting terrorism, standing up for your beliefs can be a daunting task. Even in times of peace it can be difficult to determine your personal beliefs and defend them when confronted. For many, it is now even more difficult to stand up for their conscience because it can mean challenging family, friends, neighbors and coworkers.

Is it enough to personally avoid military service and raise awareness about conscientious objection? Should I pay taxes when my tax money is funding a military I disagree with? If I am not active and involved enough, does that imply my consent and complicity? Questions like these and others cloud my thoughts daily and can be overwhelming. I am come to realize that the more important question may be, "How does your life remove the causes of war?" It is a way to think about our actions, however simple, as essential and contributing to the greater good.

Single-handedly, it is impossible to prevent a war or end the violence that plagues the globe. But that does not mean that motivated and compassionate individuals cannot play a part in this struggle. There are countless factors that make war and violence possible, and we can each do simple things to erode the 'causes of war.'

How involved we are and what actions we take must be personal choices. Each person must determine what actions are necessary in order to put their conscience at rest. For some it is enough to avoid serving in the military. Others feel called to educate, resist war taxes, protest or lobby. No decision is better than another, for we all have different beliefs and talents. With each person's unique efforts we can chip away at the task before us. Even the smallest act is an important step towards peace and justice.

CO Memories

Submitted by:

Tim Coil
friend of the Center

My wife was working at the PX [Post Exchange, military store] in Nurnberg, Germany and she made a friend there named Patty. Patty was married and her husband's name was Scott (later changed to John). My wife introduced us and we became good friends. Scott and I would talk about the Bible and war on occasions when we would get together. Scott was already a conscientious objector at that time. We would go around and around about different passages in the bible struggling to make each side see the other's view. I thought he was crazy. I wasn't brought up to think the way he was, even though I considered myself a Christian at the time. One thing I remember him specifically saying to me was, "If you don't believe me, or the passages I just shared with you, then go ask your unit chaplain why he doesn't carry a weapon but his assistants do." So I did ask him, his name was Chaplain Payne. He said he didn't know why. Then I asked him why he would go around telling soldiers that it was okay to kill, but that he himself would not carry a weapon and kill. Again I got no real answer. So I realized that being a Christian and war was wrong, but I still was a little bit reluctant to change my beliefs. After all, they were the rocks that my foundation of belief was built upon.

During the buildup before the first Gulf War, I was really excited to go and I was ready to do my part, but I had also been weighing heavily what Scott had taught me during our times together. I had a lot of friends who were anxious to go also, they wanted to kill some "rag heads" as they called them. They were really into proving they were tough, "real men." I must admit, their attitudes started to repulse me. I mean, my grandfather was in WWII and he told me of the things he saw and had to do, so I knew it wouldn't be glamorous and that most soldiers would not come home the same if they came home at all. My wife was pregnant at the time and I was helping my unit get things ready for the buildup at the time. My commanding officer and 1st Sgt. [Sergeant] knew that my wife was pregnant and they gave me permission to see her deliver my son two days before the unit deployed to the Gulf. Once all the equipment was aboard the ship to the Gulf, I went and spent every minute I could with my wife, time was short and so precious then.

I can't describe the feeling of loss during that time, other than it was gut wrenching. I was unwillingly walking away from my best friend in her greatest time of need. I watched my son being born and knew that going to war was something that wasn't right. Everything Scott told me was true. War is not of God.

God is not willing to let anyone die. We should do good to our enemies, no one ever became truly a follower of Christ staring down the barrel of a loaded gun, and that I was called as a Christian to be a follower of Christ and to carry the cross with him. I knew that I didn't want to continue the cycle of war and the only way to do that is to be a nonparticipant. I didn't want my children to inherit a world that is violent, and the only way to make it not violent is to stop practicing war. I didn't want to see my child have to go fight wars and I didn't want to go fight wars

killing others and their children. This is not the way of Christ. Christ was about love. He said that all the laws are based on love, loving your neighbors, loving your enemies. I immediately saw the hypocrisy of myself, and those who claim to be Christians, at the moment my son came into the world. I realized that destroying his creation was, and will always be, wrong. When my wife came out of the delivery room we were holding my son and just looking at him and each other, and I must say it seemed like time was standing still. I told my wife that I couldn't kill another human, not after what I had just experienced, not after what God has shown me. She asked me, "So, what are you going to do?" I told her I was going to claim conscientious objector status.

The next morning I got up my courage and told the commander of my decision. He yelled at me and told me that I wasn't going to do that. I told him his intimidation tactics were not going to work and he told me to go spend time with my wife till he could figure out what to do with me. Later that morning I was called back in to the Unit CO's [Commanding Officer] office and told that the Commanding General said that I would be taken down by force if necessary, they would hand cuff me and drag me there. At that point I was in a real dilemma as I didn't know my rights about CO regulations at that time. I knew one thing for sure, that being disrespectful or violent was not the answer. (Although looking back on it now, I regret I hadn't been insubordinate and had them drag me there.) I informed my wife that they were going to take me one way or the other, so I submitted to them. I decided to try to get my packet together along the way, but it was really hard to do because they wanted to have records that I had never thought of needing to apply for CO status.

During this time, the fact that I was a CO caused everyone to shun me. I heard that the commander and 1st Sgt. told the troops to not talk to me. So there wasn't anyone to talk to. They didn't have a job for me so they asked me to do C.Q. (Charge of Quarters) duties in the tent, which meant basically listening to the phones and the military communications radio. During this time I was asked to recharge the batteries in the radios using the vehicle recharging system, which I was doing. I was sitting in the vehicle when a fellow soldier passed right by me into the tent and asked where I was. The Staff Sgt. Gamache was in there at the time and said he didn't know. The other soldier told the Staff Sgt. that he just found out that he would have to ride with me in the truck if we were attacked. The soldier said he would shoot me himself and blame it on a sniper, so he could get rid of me. Basically there was no use for me, I was dead weight and he hated me for my stance. The Staff Sgt. did nothing to discourage the soldier from his outburst, basically agreeing with him.

I decided to report this to the 1st Sgt. I asked him if I could get transferred to another unit because it was too much to take, being threatened by people on my base, not to mention the Iraqi people. There was another incident where another soldier had a weapon stolen, and then reported that it was taken. The 1st Sgt. asked me if I knew where it was. I told him I did not. I had no use for a weapon as I refused to carry one since before we left to

the Gulf. A few hours later, I found that someone had placed it under my bunk. I immediately took it to the 1st Sgt. He gave it back to the soldier. Then sometime later in the day someone had placed a scorpion in my boot. They were trying to send me a message. I again requested a transfer. They agreed and I was transferred to motor pool to drive a water truck.

Once I got back I got my packet together and had my Chaplains interview, the chaplain's wife had a miscarriage. We felt for her as she was a great friend to us before the war. The chaplain gave me a favorable review and told me that he thought I was right about not killing. I think that the miscarriage gave him the opportunity to see what life was about and God changed his heart. It was a blessing for me to see this as it gave me hope that I was doing something right and was working for God. My review with the investigating officer went well also. Then it was sent up the chain of command. Around this time, my commanding officer told me I had to stand in a change of command ceremony and that I would have to carry a weapon. I respectfully refused and told him that I didn't carry a weapon during the

had been sitting on the General's desk all that time, waiting, because the name and address of my unit was supposedly missing. But, the information was on the very first page when I turned it in. So, they were using stall tactics on me. During this time I was asked to take my physical training test, which I failed, intentionally. My commander asked me if I wanted out on a physical discharge, I told him no. I wanted my CO packet approved. He said that the unit was being disbanded in a few weeks and that I would be reassigned to another unit and would have to go through the whole process again. I then talked it over with my wife and we decided that it mattered more that I stood up for my beliefs in God than in getting the packet approved. So, we decided that taking the physical discharge would be the best thing instead of going through the whole procedure again. We had been through enough at that point.

Things were never the same as before the war, my wife and I became distant, we struggled to stay together. We struggle to this day, but we are making it, one day at a time. The war has left many scars, on our hearts and minds. Many of our friends have

ended their marriages in divorce, as a fact, most of them ended this way.

At one point, not even my family wanted me. Many would talk about me when my back was turned. That hit me harder than anything I had faced up to that point. But, I guess God knows there are better days

ahead and that I have to stand firm and have faith in him. So, I can do no other. I have a desire to know that no one else ends up like I did. That is why I want to help. Right now, that is my purpose in life. I really don't find anything else worthwhile.

War tears our souls apart and it tears up marriages, children's lives, and destroys the joy of living, the sense of purpose. No one wins, no one. In the end I can say even today that sometimes I feel that I would have rather died in the war, than to have come back. But God doesn't see it that way I guess, so I am trying to do my best to keep my promises to those that I love. To be a father, a husband and a good Christian.

Since the war, my daughter was born and my family has found a great church (Aurora Mennonite Church in Ohio) where we feel very comfortable. It's a church that believes in Christian nonviolence. I believe that loving peace and Christ is what sets apart true Christianity from hypocrisy. It is peace and love for others that make Christians the salt of the earth that Jesus spoke of.

Tim Coil will respond to questions/comments at tleecoil@yahoo.com.



“How does your life help to remove the causes of war?” bumper stickers are on sale from CCW for \$5.

(“WAR” is written in red on actual sticker.)

entire war; and I wasn't going to now, as it would mean that I would be counted as a combatant. He then assigned me to do C.Q. duties, basically watching the living dorms and signing people in and out. After the ceremony was over the 1st Sergeant sent me home. I was informed that I would be given Article 15 proceedings [punishment for misconduct]. I objected to the accusations, refused the proceedings, and requested a court martial. I then filed an Article 138 [an official complaint] against my commanding officer that issued the order to carry the weapon. They then had the order to carry a weapon revoked and the court martial was dropped, as the commander was in the wrong. I was then assigned to the Chow hall [cafeteria], to assist there. I was to help deliver food to the hall from the main supply area. This helped out tremendously as it gave me the opportunity to get a few last minute things in order for my claim. I asked my commander what was taking my packet so long to approve; he didn't know. I then asked the investigating officer and he didn't know either. I found out about three months later that it



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From the Desk of the Executive Director

“Of course the people don’t want war. But after all, it’s the leaders of the country who determine the policy, and it’s always a simple matter to drag the people along whether it’s a democracy, a fascist dictatorship, or a parliament, or a communist dictatorship. Voice or no voice, the people can always be brought to the bidding of the leaders. That is easy. All you have to do is tell them they are being attacked, and denounce the pacifists for lack of patriotism, and exposing the country to greater danger.”

— Herman Goering, at the Nuremberg trials

“My definition of a free society is a society where it is safe to be unpopular.”

— Adlai E. Stevenson Jr., Speech in Detroit, 7 Oct. 1952

“They that can give up essential liberty to obtain a little temporary safety deserve neither liberty nor safety.”

— Benjamin Franklin, Historical Review of Pennsylvania, 1759

There are people in power today who believe that what makes the United States great is its military might. They have made this abundantly clear for decades. They view war through rose colored glasses. Or more accurately through the soft focus lenses of “Hollywood goes to War.” There is no better time for the United States than when we share a sacrifice, their argument runs. But, of course, when we are sacrificing to stop evil, we must sacrifice more than our lives and our money, we must sacrifice our freedoms to obtain the safety we long for.

The reality of their dream has begun in recent times.

Our country’s founders and their followers were not made of such weak stuff as our country’s leaders of today hope we are. They are counting on us to be willing to give up essential liberties in the name of safety. They are counting on us to tolerate indignity and invasion of privacy to fight terrorism. They are counting on us to be quiet while they ignore the rights of people in the name of patriotism. They are counting on us not to speak out when they continue on the same course as the one which led us to this place of fear today. They are counting on us to hide under bushel baskets so that we will not be the next targets.

But the United States is a free society only as long as we seize that freedom and do not allow it to be taken from us or others. We do not seize it by killing. We seize it by refusing to kill or to be part of killing. We seize it by standing up and teaching others to stand up.

The opportunities to stand up are legion. Many chances are listed in this newsletter.

Our country and world deserve nothing less.

They are counting on us.

Yours for Peace and Justice,

J. E. McNeil

