



The Center on
Conscience & War

The Reporter for Conscience' Sake

Volume 62

Winter 2005

Number 4

A Poisonous Stain Remains: Army's Cover-up

War's Environmental Effects Part 4

By Theo Sittler
CCW Lobbyist

This article is a follow up from an ongoing research project about the environmental effects of war. Parts 1, 2 and 3 appeared in the Spring 2004, Summer 2004 and Spring 2005 editions of the Reporter.

The environment has always been a casualty of war. Long before the bombs are dropped and long after the war is over, the environment has suffered the consequences. In past issues we reported on the disastrous effects of chemical weapons research during World War I. The Spring Valley community and American University (AU) campus in Washington, DC were home to the first U.S. chemical weapons research lab opened during WWI to aid in the war effort.

In 1986 AU discovered through old documents that chemical munitions were still buried in the area, and as a result the Army Corps of Engineers (ACE) conducted a cleanup project to clear the area of all contaminated items. In 1995 the area was declared to be free of contamination. However, due to the Army's carelessness

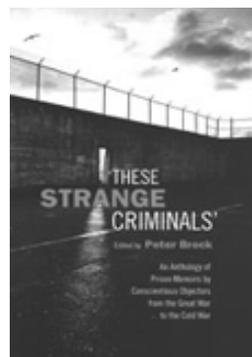
and lack of oversight, a new cleanup project had to begin on an area dubbed "Lot 18" after many area residents reported health problems and laboratory scraps dating back to WWI were discovered. Nonetheless, according to the *Northwest Current*, a

local Washington, DC newspaper, on Nov. 18, 2005 more laboratory scraps were found outside of the "Lot 18" area and the material has since been sent for extensive testing. Preliminary testing indicated the presence of "mustard agent," which is a deadly chemical that causes chromosomal damage and other major health risks.

The November 18th discovery goes to show that the Army Corp of Engineers has been conducting a haphazard cleanup mission. To further implicate the Army the *Current* reported on March 1st, 2006 that a former ACE Spring Valley project manager, Sheila Bloom, filed a civil suit accusing the Army of deliberately covering up evidence of widespread contamination. The *Current's* article went on to report that the Army also attempted to discredit DC health officials to end the cleanup project, which was turning out to be the most expensive project of this kind in the country.

See ENVIRONMENT, Pg. 6

'These Strange Criminals'



A Book Review

By Bill Galvin
CCW Counseling Coordinator

'*These Strange Criminals*' is an anthology of prison memoirs by conscientious objectors from World War I to the Cold War. While most of the writings are

from those imprisoned in the US and Britain, it also includes memoirs from those in Australia, New Zealand, Canada and Eastern Germany.

I found this book to be engaging, fascinating, and sometimes even funny. In part, it is a commentary (indictment) on the prisons of this world, but it is also about the communities that emerge in the oppressive prison culture
See BOOK, Pg. 4

Also Inside:

New Briefs.....	2
Center News.....	3
Operation Refuse War...6	
CO Memories.....	7



Board of Directors

Jonathan K. Ogle, Chair
Philadelphia Yearly Meeting

Jim Feldman,
At-Large

David Miller, Vice Chair
Mennonite Central Committee

Shannon McManimon, Sec.
Pax Christi

Phil Jones
Church of the Brethren

Irving Ruderman
Jewish Peace Fellowship

Anita Cole
At-Large

Jean Martensen, Treas.
At-Large

Rev. Bill Carroll
Episcopal Church

Staff

J.E. McNeil
Executive Director

Bill Galvin
Counseling Coordinator

Elizabeth Sprague
Outreach Coordinator

Theo Sittler
Lobbyist

Marcus Kroll
Law Clerk

Hannah Klierer
BVS Volunteer

The Reporter for Conscience's Sake is a publication of the Center on Conscience & War.

1830 Connecticut Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20009
Tel: 202-483-2220
Fax: 202-483-1246
Email: ccw@centeronconscience.org
URL: www.CenteronConscience.org

News Briefs

Vietnam War Deserter Arrested

Allen Abney, 56, was arrested as he crossed the border from British Columbia, Canada into Idaho on March 9th. Abney, a Canada citizen since 1977, left the U.S. Marine Corps for Canada 38 years ago during the Vietnam War and has since visited the US many times. It has recently appeared that the Marines are cracking down on deserters in an attempt to send a message to the men and women of the current war. Allen Abney is now waiting in their custody at Camp Pendleton, California. It is still uncertain what penalties will be brought against Abney; however, punishment for desertion charges can range from a dishonorable discharge to a court martial resulting in a prison sentence.

(CBCNews 3/12/2006)

Turkish CO Unexpectedly Released

A Military Court of Appeal in Ankara ordered the release of conscientious objector Mehmet Tarhan from a military prison in Sivas. The surprising March 9th decision exhibited a power that the Court of Appeal does not normally possess; however, the court reasoned that if Tarhan was to be sentenced, it would not likely be higher than the time he had already served. While Tarhan is currently visiting family, he could be re-arrested at any point for again failing to serve. Although the European Court of Human Rights recently ruled in favor of CO Osman Murat Ulke in a similar case, Turkey continues not to recognize the right to conscientious objection, leaving nearly 80 current Turkish conscientious objectors to face arrest after arrest.

(War Resisters' International 3/10/2006)

Military Access In Schools Upheld

On March 6th the U.S. Supreme Court unanimously upheld the Solomon Amendment, a law that denies federal funding to schools that do not give military recruiters access equal to other job recruiters. The Forum for Academic and Institutional Rights (FAIR), a coalition of law schools, argued that the law violated schools' First Amendment right of free speech by forcing an endorsement of a discriminatory organization that openly excludes homosexuals. However, Chief Justice John G. Roberts Jr. wrote, "Nothing about recruiting suggests that law schools agree with any speech by recruiters and nothing in the Solomon Amendment restricts what the law schools may say about the military's policies." Federal aid adds up to about \$35 billion a year, and while most schools could not afford to lose this funding, some, like the Vermont Law School, have sacrificed these funds for their anti-discrimination policies. Others will be forced to use their freedom to protest.

(Washington Post 3/7/2006)

Bills To Standardize Recruiting

As military recruitment becomes more aggressive, two bills before the Washington State Legislature would standardize recruiting procedures. House Bill 2986 and Senate Bill 6681 would require schools to openly inform families of their rights when it comes to student information and student contact with all recruiters, including post-secondary schools, agencies, and the military. Says Rep. Shay Schul-Berke (D), sponsor of the House bill, "It's all about protecting student privacy and parental rights in the disclosure of their personal information."

(The Bellingham Herald 2/13/2006)

What A Steal

The Center received quite a bit of attention over the last month - perhaps more than we would desire as one weekend we suffered a robbery. Our front door window (a thick, wire-enforced variety) was smashed in, offices were ransacked, and one garbage can was urinated in; however, we were lucky to sustain only minor, recoverable losses. The crime, of no political nature, is still under investigation, and the office is taking precautions against another incident. As our office is located in a church that receives a regular amount of visitors, especially on the weekends, it is increasingly important for us to take security seriously. Oddly enough, the responding police officer was an Army Reservist and was incredibly appreciative of the work that we do.



The remains of our window



CCW front door

Ok, We'll Give You A Clue...

A little piece of history became a little piece of fame this February for CCW executive director J.E. McNeil as she was interviewed for the PBS series History Detectives. Working on a mystery surrounding a Civilian Public Service document, producers of the show contacted McNeil earlier this year and ultimately brought her to the Brethren Service Center in New Windsor, Maryland, a previous training and housing facility for CP Ser's, where she discussed the document on camera. The episode should air sometime this summer as part of History Detectives' fourth season. Check our website for future details. www.CenteronConscience.org

A New Volunteer Just In Time



Rebecca Rawls is the newest addition to CCW's rich history of volunteers. Having met executive director J.E. McNeil last summer at the Friends United Meeting Triennial, she has been a valuable part of the office since the new year. Especially as International CO Day nears, Rebecca's time proves to be an asset throughout this planning process.



Have you
marked your
calendar?

Lobby Day May 16

Help fight for the rights of military
conscientious objectors.

*On **Capitol Hill** or In **your own state***
www.CenteronConscience.org for more info

Stories from Prison

BOOK, *From Pg. 1*

and the human spirit that allows people to survive in those circumstances. Equally important are the thoughts of these imprisoned people of conscience on the war they are resisting and at times the effectiveness of their witness. This book brings to life their struggles, their doubts, and their fears, as well as their courage.

The words of Michael Frenzel, who was imprisoned in East Germany in the 1980's shows this well.

"Why was I putting myself through this? Was it going to make the world a better place? Who was helped by my decision? These questions tormented me. The situation often seemed hopeless . . . Only one thing helped and that was remembering that if I had not chosen prison, I would have been in the army. It was a choice between 2 evils . . . I still don't believe that the song of peace can be played on the instrument of violence. Peace can only grow from trust and a mature attitude. What has been the effect of my decision? The world has not changed. Many children still have to make do without their dad while he is in the army. But maybe my example will encourage some of them to follow along the same path. It was and still is the only right one. Of that I am convinced." (497, 499)

One thing that comes through pretty clearly in this book is that while each prisoner had unique experiences and perspectives, all of them, no matter what country put them in jail, found prison to be a dehumanizing, worthless institution that seeks to crush the human spirit. Of course, some weathered the storm better than others. That is the genius of this book, for in it one finds a variety of experiences. People of strong religious conviction, people of no religious faith, those who are intimately involved in the political movements of their time, and those who are not involved in politics at all. There are glimpses of the same prison, decades apart, and descriptions of the diversity of prisons that have held these 'strange' criminals.

Al Hassler, imprisoned in the US during WWII wrote,

"The immediate and overwhelming impression of prison, and one that continued through

my sentence and beyond, was the feeling of humiliation. This is the reality of prison, more even than the all-too-frequent physical brutality, the occasional sadism of prison personnel . . . planned indignities and degradation . . . totalitarianism . . . Within days after my incarceration I found my sympathies heavily with the convicts and against the authorities, even though my natural inclinations were to support a law abiding society and its rules . . . prison actually serves no useful purpose." (333-5)

I am pretty well grounded in the history of conscientious objection, especially in the US. I knew quite a bit about how poorly conscientious objectors had been treated during WWI, which is why CCW (NISBCO/NSBRO) was created in 1940 as the US government geared up for WWII. However, this anthology opened my eyes in new ways. It is not just brief quotes from those who went to jail, but it is often prison journals (which in some cases had to be smuggled out of jail) that provide detailed accounts of the daily life and experiences of those in these institutions. It's one thing to know statistics about long sentences (not to mention death sentences) given to COs in WWI. It's quite another to hear the words of Arthur Dunham who in the midst of his description of his experiences said,

"I have since been asked how I felt when I knew that I was sentenced to 25 years imprisonment. Frankly, the only sensation I remember was a slight paradoxical relief . . . I don't want 5 years. A man might have to serve that! I never for one moment considered it a possibility that an American CO would be left actually to serve an atrocious sentence of 15 or 20 years or longer. I did feel that the length of the sentence was usually something of an index of the impression made upon the military by the CO's stand." (134)

Also included are the memoirs of Donald Benedict, one of the "Union 8," seminary students who publicly refused to register for the draft in 1940. He wrote, "I have never regretted a day that I spent in jail." Like most of the
See BOOK, Pg. 5

BOOK, From Pg. 4

Union 8, he was required to register upon his release from prison and he refused, which resulted in another prison sentence. By that time, he wasn't as certain of his pacifism, and his memoirs reflect the inner struggle that ultimately led him out of prison and into the army.

These prison journals bring to life the sense of fear, the oppression and sense of hopelessness, and the genuine humanity of the people in prison, as well as the community that evolves, and how people cope. Recounted in detail are how prisoners continued to resist even while incarcerated, a remarkable feat considering how completely their lives were controlled by the prison. Also recounted are the lengths to which prison authorities responded (often brutally) to work strikes and hunger strikes. And how the prisoners sometimes won!

Author Peter Brock points out, "Even though 'the costs of becoming a CO declined significantly between the declaration of World War I and the conclusion of the war in Vietnam,' after 1948 COs had continued to be jailed; there was 'an unbroken witness...'" While I enjoyed the diversity of accounts, as part of the Vietnam Generation, these particular stories were most familiar to me. One CO who was from the 'counterculture' reported not being able to see the faces of the judge and jury who convicted him because he had wire rim ("hippie") glasses, and his lawyer thought he would get a longer prison sentence if he wore them into court! Another selection is from a booklet, "Going to Jail," written by COs in jail for those facing prison. It includes advice based on personal experience about how to cope with the prison environment including information on prison rape and how to avoid the sexual advances of predators.

This book also contained some surprises. While most of us in the U.S. tend to think that Canada has a more enlightened approach to conscientious objection than most countries, a Canadian Christadelphian experienced the most brutal treatment of all the COs in this book. He was viciously beaten on several occasions. It was also interesting to learn that some things never change. Even the World War I COs got the supposedly sincerity-proving question about the 'ruffian' attacking his mother/wife/girlfriend/daughter.

While Brock provided a huge range of CO stories, there

are a few that really stuck with me. One is Jeffery Porteous who was a conscientious objector drafted into the army during the Vietnam War. He consistently told his superiors that he was not going to go to Vietnam, and he was eventually court-martialed. He later wrote that he was "eighteen, intellectually arrogant, confused, inarticulate, and up against the United States Army." Of his time in jail he wrote, "It was a time in my life, perhaps the only one, in which I knew exactly what I was doing— and why." He was in the stockade (military jail) and his account reflects some of the apprehension ("I was tongue tied") and fears (he could hear men being beaten) that were discussed by others. He finishes his account with these words:

"Given the same circumstances would I do it again? Yes, I would, over and over and over again. . . Ultimately conscientious objectors are as common as dirt, and as old as time. Conscientious objectors are the young men who have simply said 'no' to the old man's war. . . And yes to love, yes and yes and yes again to love. Hell, I think we are all conscientious objectors— until we are swindled out of it." (427)

I commend *'These Strange Criminals'* without reservation. It is a must read for anyone who is advocating or considering war resistance.

'These Strange Criminals': An Anthology of Prison Memoirs by Conscientious Objectors from the Great War to the Cold War can be purchased online at www.CenterOnConscience.org/store

Be on the lookout!



The Reporter for Conscience' Sake will soon be online.

Check out the archives at
www.CenteronConscience.org

Army's Cover-Up

ENVIRONMENT, *From Pg. 1*

Richard Albright and Don Campbell, DC Department of Health officials, have been strong critics of the Army's cleanup methods and conclusions. Because of this critical stance, Albright has come under fire from the Army. Sheila Bloom, referring to him, said, "they told me Richard was crazy, right from the beginning, they wanted to discredit him." Meanwhile Bloom has filed a claim for "whistleblower protection," maintaining that the Army "has been engaged in a systematic campaign of retaliation by systematic on-the-job harassment."

Based on Bloom's advice Don Campbell, who now works for the Veterans Administration, further examined old enlarged aerial photographs and discovered areas of disturbed earth. Campbell convinced the Army to search the area and on the first dig they found a 75-millimeter artillery shell just a few inches from the surface. Even after this discovery, Bloom, Campbell and Albright have been

under constant scrutiny.

The military, which created this toxic mess during WWI, is still proving to be irresponsible and incompetent in clearing the Washington, DC neighborhood of contamination. Almost ninety years after the "Great War" ended, DC residents are still struggling with its effects, and in light of recent events, the struggle to clean up this neighborhood is far from over.

Sources:

Berpohl, Charles. "Whistleblower cites Army Corps failures." The Northwest Current 1 March 2006, Volume XXXIX, No. 9: Page 1.

Berpohl, Charles. "1918 lab debris field found near American U. building." The Northwest Current 30 November 2005, Volume XXXVIII, No. 48: Page 2.

OPERATION REFUSE WAR

An International Conference of Resisters to Global War

MAY 13-16

WASHINGTON D.C.

- **WORKSHOPS**
- **CO LOBBY DAY**
- **EYES WIDE OPEN EXHIBIT**
- **SILENT MARCH TO END THE WAR**

Registration required for participants.

www.CenterOnConscience.org/orw

SIGN UP TODAY!

Co-sponsors include: War Resisters League, War Resisters International, American Friends Service Committee Youth and Militarism Program, the Washington Peace Center, the National Youth and Student Peace Coalition, and Student Peace Action Network (SPAN), Military Law Task Force of the National Lawyers Guild, Fellowship of Reconciliation Disarmament Program

Cudjo's Cave

The following is another excerpt from Southern Heroes: The Friends In War Time by Fernando G. Cartland. Published in 1895, it serves as a record of the actions of Friends and conscientious objectors during the Civil War.

William J. Hackney did not believe in secession; neither did he believe that men, whether Friends or not, should be forced into the army to fight against their will and for a cause which they disapproved. As he was too old to be a conscript, he freely moved about among men, though he was fully aware that freedom of speech was not at all times as wise as was taking observations without comment.

Near where he dwelt, and just across the creek from the meeting-house, is a large cave, the existence of which few then knew. Into this cave William J. Hackney carried provisions and bedding, and made necessary preparations to secrete men for days or months as might become needful.

The entrance of the cave was by the side of a road not very much traveled, among boulders and surrounded by a thicket, and it was so small that a passerby would not notice it. A man could barely crawl into it, and a tree had been felled or blown down so that the branches covered the spot and hid it entirely from view. This cave would comfortably accommodate fifty men at one time, and that number were soon hidden in it. The echo of their footsteps could be heard to its remotest depths, and the smallest sound produced a startling effect within the cave. Whenever a light was made, the glistening stalactites produced a picture of marvelous beauty.

William Hackney's wife was in full sympathy with her husband in his loyalty to the Union and in the work which he proposed to do for relief of those who did not wish to enter the army. She assisted him by cooking and otherwise providing for the wants of those who came to them in need. He did not at first intend to extend his care beyond his brethren in the church, but others sought his assistance and pressed their need upon him, so that he soon found the work to require much of his time. He became so interested in its prosecution that upon one pretext or another he visited the soldiers when camped

near, and in some way he would learn who among them were anxious to escape from the Southern Army. To these he would give directions, and soon they were secreted with others in "Cudjo's Cave."

When the provisions grown upon friend Hackney's farm were exhausted, the family bought more, and actually impoverished themselves by feeding the hungry, clothing the naked and caring for the stranger, very few of whom were able to recompense them in any way. William Hackney did not require that a man should be of his opinion in all things in order to receive any assistance in his power to give. If a man was in need of help to get away from the South, and was able to satisfy William that he was not in sympathy with the Confederacy and wished to quit her borders, William considered it his duty and privilege to do what he could to aid the man on his way. When a company had been gathered and there seemed no obstruction, on a favorable night he would lead his willing prisoners out of their prison, get some of them on his own beasts and silently take up the line of march westward. He acted as conductor to the next station on the Underground Railroad, where he consigned them to care of some friend, "tried and true." Here they rested in the woods, a barn, or an outhouse during the day, and at night were conducted farther on their way. William Hackney would then return to his home, again fill his cave and feed the hungry refugees.

He was under suspicion, and the Confederate officers as well as his neighbors believed that he was in some way working against them, but just how and to what extent they were unable to find out; nor did they see the way to complain against him, for he had always been a peaceable and industrious farmer. Some suspected a secret hiding-place, but could not find it, although in their search they sometimes came so near the cave that the men inside heard their muttered oaths as they talked at the very entrance, and with feelings of relief listened to the sound of their horses' feet as they rode away over the stones.

On several occasions William Hackney came near being discovered during his work, but native shrewdness and a kind Providence favored him throughout the war, so that more than two thousand people were received in that cave and helped on their way.



Center on Conscience & War
 1830 Connecticut Avenue, NW
 Washington, DC 20009-5706

Address service requested

Non-Profit Org.
 U.S. Postage
 PAID
 Washington, DC
 Permit No. 6346

From the Desk of the Executive Director

It's been a hard couple of weeks at the Center. Staff has had surgery and been ill. We all have suffered tragedy and death.

A difficult time to work.

Delton Franz, the husband of Marian Franz the outgoing executive director of the Peace Tax Fund, died. Delton was a peace activist in his own right prior to being taken away bit by bit by Alzheimer's. Marian was already suffering from surgery and chemo when Delton died. Bill Galvin and I, both on the Peace Tax Fund boards, have been in the process of interviewing potential new directors.

Tom Fox, of course, was murdered. I knew Tom. I will not pretend to have known him well, but knew him when I saw him as a member of my Yearly Meeting. Knew his commitment to the Christian Peacemakers Team. Followed his witness. Admired him. Grieve his loss.

A difficult time to work.

The third anniversary of the U.S. invasion of Iraq is upon us. The potential of a new invasion of Iran looms. The invasion of Afghanistan sits nearly forgotten in the background.

Kathryn Jashinski's habeas petition was denied and she faces court martial charges. Canadian citizen Allen Abney was arrested at the Canadian border on 40-year-old deserter charges. Some think this is intimidation tactics by the Marines.

A difficult time to work.

The GI Rights Hotline had over 4,000 calls in January. The Center went to Toledo and Iowa and New York and Virginia.

Tons of things still need to be done before the May 15 International CO day. Money needs to be raised. People need to be informed.

Difficult or not, the work goes on. It is the least we can do in the memory of Delton and Tom and the thousands of U.S. military who have died and the hundreds of thousands of civilians who have died.

Time to work.

Yours for Peace and Justice,

J.E. McNeil

