

**MILITARY
SERVICE
AND THE
YOUNG
CHURCH-
MAN**

These words are addressed to young churchmen of draft age in the conviction that they wish to think responsibly about their service to God and to their country.

Since 1940, every man turning eighteen has registered for the draft and has received one of eighteen classifications. This year, almost two million young men will register under the Military Selective Service Act of 1967. Next year, an even greater number will become eligible for the draft. Each month, draft calls are issued to thousands on the draft rolls who have not enlisted in one of the military services or are not deferred for other reasons.

Every man must present himself to his local draft board within five days of his eighteenth birthday to register in the Selective Service System. After his registration, the local board mails him a Classification Questionnaire which he must complete and return within ten days of the date on which it was mailed to him.

SELECTIVE SERVICE CLASSIFICATIONS

CLASS I

Class I-A Available for military service.

Class I-A-D Conscientious objector available for non-combatant military service only.

Class I-C Member of the Armed Forces of the United States, the Coast and Geodetic Survey, or the Public Health Service.

Class I-D Qualified member of reserve component, or student taking military training, including ROTC and accepted aviation cadet applicant.

Class I-O Conscientious objector available for civilian work contributing to the maintenance of national health, safety, or interest.

Class I-S Student deferred by law until graduation from high school or attainment of age of 20, or until end of his academic year at a college or university.

Class I-W Conscientious objector performing civilian work contributing to the maintenance of national health, safety, or interest, or who has completed such work.

Class I-Y Registrant qualified for military service only in time of war or national emergency.

CLASS II

Class II-A Occupational deferment (other than agricultural and student).

Class II-C Agricultural deferment.

Class II-S Student deferment.

CLASS III

Class III-A Extreme hardship deferment, or registrant with a child or children.

CLASS IV

Class IV-A Registrant with sufficient prior active service or who is a sole surviving son.

Class IV-B Official deferred by law.

Class IV-C Alien not currently liable for military service.

Class IV-D Minister of religion or divinity student.

Class IV-F Registrant not qualified for any military service.

CLASS V

Class V-A Registrant over the age of liability for military service.

CONSCIENTIOUS PARTICIPATION

Many young Americans go into military service without particularly considering why they should. The Christian citizen, however, should be ready to give himself and others a reason for his faith and action.

Most Christians participate for reasons of conscience in the armed forces because:

- 1.** The Christian gives allegiance to his nation under God. Except for the claim of God, Himself, his country makes the highest claim on his loyalty. All citizens are dependent on the common life for security, liberty and opportunity. The state protects these. Duty to one's country has normally been understood by Christians as including the obligation to bear arms. The Christian, therefore, accepts this as his duty unless he is clearly convinced that it is his duty to do otherwise. This duty can be overridden only by strong reasons of conscience.
- 2.** Many Christians recognize the problem that each nation determines for itself what is right. Thus Christians have often fought one another because they believed this to be their duty. This is tragic, but it is part of the world we live in. One must soberly face the fact that we do not yet have a world order that can keep the peace. No nation has yet found a way to avoid the responsibility of defending itself and other peace-loving nations. The Christian serves in the armed forces and, if necessary, goes into combat because he shares the responsibility for maintaining world order.
- 3.** Christian theologians have generally agreed on certain conditions for a "just" or "justified" war. Very briefly these are:
 - a.** The war must be waged by legitimate authority. In the case of the United States, that is the President and Congress.
 - b.** The object must be to vindicate justice. A defensive war, or one to protect rights that have been infringed, is generally held to qualify.
 - c.** The intention must be peace with justice.
 - d.** The war must be waged without hatred and with love and reconciliation as the ultimate aim.
 - e.** The conduct of the war must be just. The enemy has human rights that must be respected. Noncombatants must be protected and not made the object of direct attack. Discrimination must be observed in the targets selected and the weapons used.
 - f.** The damages inflicted must not be out of proportion to the injuries suffered or threatened, and there must be a reasonable prospect of success.
 - g.** The war must be a last resort only after every possibility of peaceful settlement has been exhausted.

It is often difficult to insure that all these conditions are met. Nevertheless, a Christian often participates in war because he believes that the alternative of non-resistance would bring evils worse than the war, and that the leaders of his nation have acted as responsibly as possible within this framework.

- 4.** Christians often believe that their ministry as Christians can best be fulfilled if they share the experiences and dangers of others of their generation. The inconvenience, disruption, risk and sacrifice involved in service in the armed forces can be made a part of the Christian's ministry in the world.

Volunteering Before Registration

If a young man wishes to volunteer for the draft or enlist in one of the military services after his seventeenth, but prior to his eighteenth, birthday, he can read: *G I Guide—What Every Young American Should Know*, by Elton Fay. (The Associated Press, 1966). This booklet describes the programs of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps and Coast Guard. It also lists service opportunities for women.

Other publications that describe service programs in more detail are available at recruiting centers and school and local libraries.

CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTION

Both the nation and the Church make provision for the man who, after thought and prayer, believes that he cannot participate in war.

The Military Selective Service Act of 1967, amending the former Universal Military Training and Service Act, was signed by the President on June 30 and is now in effect. In the new act, the clause defining "religious training and belief" as meaning "an individual's belief in a relationship to a Supreme Being involving duties superior to those arising from any human relationship" has been deleted.

The new wording of the law concerning conscientious objectors is as follows:

(j) Nothing contained in this title shall be construed to require any person to be subject to combatant training and service in the armed forces of the United States who, by reason of religious training and belief, is conscientiously opposed to participation in war in any form. As used in this subsection, the term 'religious training and belief' does not include essentially political, sociological, or philosophical views, or a merely personal moral code.

The Episcopal Church and other communions have recognized the conscientious objectors position. The 1934 General Convention resolved that "it is the duty of Christians to put the Cross above the flag, and in any conflict of loyalties, unhesitatingly to follow Christ" and, further, that "all Christian people, who though willing to risk their lives in noncombatant service, are unwilling for conscience' sake to take human life in war, and shall have signified their intention by placing themselves on record at the national headquarters of their respective churches, be accorded by the United States Government the status in fact accorded members of the Society of Friends as respects military service."

The 1940 General Convention appointed a Registrar at the Executive Council for conscientious objectors who are baptized or confirmed members of the Episcopal Church. In 1962, the House of Bishops issued the following statement:

"... we must not hesitate to offer a full ministry (to the military establishment), realizing the political and military complexity of our national situation, and the fact that the situation for all of us, military and civilian alike, is not totally of our own making. With equal — in some cases, even greater — poignancy, we recognize the validity of the calling of the conscientious objector and the pacifist and the duty of the Church fully to minister to him, and its obligation to see that we live in a society in which the dictates of conscience are respected."

Those who decide for conscientious objection today usually do so because of the following personal convictions:

1. To take human life, or participate in a process which leads to the taking of human life, is immoral and un-Christian.
2. To wage a "just" war as Christian theologians in the past have understood is impossible under conditions of modern warfare.
3. While many Christians believe limited war justifiable and possible, there are others who object to any war on the basis that nuclear conflict may result. Such persons believe that the danger of nuclear war, which may possibly lead to destruction of all human life, is so great that no considerations are strong enough to justify war of any kind.

Options for the Objector

Currently, there are two ways by which the conscientious objector can serve his country in lieu of military service:

I-A-O NONCOMBATANT TRAINING AND SERVICE. The term "noncombatant training" refers to any training unrelated to the study, use or handling of arms or weapons.

Transfer to this status can be made from combatant status. It is "service to any unit of the armed forces which is unarmed at all times, service in the medical department of any of the armed forces, wherever performed; or any other assignment the primary function of which does not require the use of arms in combat; provided that such other assignment is acceptable to the individual concerned and does not require him to bear arms or be trained in their use." Noncombatant service in time of war often means work to relieve the suffering of wounded men, both friend and foe.

I-O AND I-W ASSIGNMENT TO CIVILIAN WORK. Work may be assigned by the Federal Government, a state or territory or by a non-profit organization working for the health and welfare of the general public through educational and scientific programs. Such work would include teaching trades or conducting classes in migrant work camps and working in slum clearance, engineering projects or agricultural development. Certain Church-sponsored programs are found in this category.

Types of Objection Not Sanctioned by Law

The law does not protect a person who refuses to register or keep his draft card in his possession. Such a person may incur fines of up to \$10,000 and a maximum sentence of five years in prison. The same penalties apply to the person who has made claim as a conscientious objector, but whose claim has been denied, and who still refuses induction.

Likewise, the law does not protect a person who is willing to participate in some, but not all, wars on the ground that a specific conflict is "unjust." The "selective objector" may make his claim on S.S. Form 150, but he faces the penalties of the law.

THE CHURCH'S CONCERN

Your Church is concerned for the spiritual welfare of its young members, whether they are in the armed forces or elsewhere. Both the participant and the objector must accept the consequences of their actions. Both are the objects of the Church's pastoral ministry.

If you are in the armed forces, make worship a part of your service life. Get to know your unit chaplain or the clergyman in the area where you are located. You are also urged to keep in close touch with your pastor at home.

For men in the armed forces, your Church maintains a program of service under the direction of the Bishop for the Armed Forces, Episcopal Church Center, 815 Second Avenue, New York, New York 10017.

If you are a conscientious objector, you should know that the General Convention has established a confidential register and a Registrar at the Executive Council office. Conscientious objectors may write to The Registrar for Conscientious Objectors, Department of Christian Social Relations, Episcopal Church Center, at the above address.

You may obtain the *Handbook for Conscientious Objectors* from the Central Committee for Conscientious Objectors, 2006 Walnut Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19103.

The Episcopal Peace Fellowship, 229 East 59th Street, New York, New York 10022, offers its services to conscientious objectors and others who are considering this position. This organization provides fellowship, printed materials and a bibliography which may help you to clarify your viewpoint.

In whatever position you find yourself, in the armed forces or elsewhere, try to maintain your attitude as a Christian. Act in such a way that you can respect and live with yourself. Respect the rights and consciences of others. Join with other Christians in penitence for the evils that still make conflict possible. Finally, work as a Christian citizen for justice, mercy and love.



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