

# February 2005 Peace Zine

Monthly Newsletter from Peace No War Network

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## **WARNING: Joining The Military Is Hazardous To...**

Central Committee for Conscientious Objectors

630 20th Street #302

Oakland, CA 94612

510-465-1617

URL: <http://www.objector.org>

### **Special Counter Recruitment Issue**

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**M**ilitary recruiters tour the country selling a dangerous product with glamorous ads, just like tobacco companies or drug pushers. The ads promise opportunity and adventure -- but don't believe the hype.

#### **Joining the military is hazardous to your education.**

The military isn't a generous financial aid institution, and it isn't concerned with helping you pay for school. Two-thirds of all recruits never get any college funding from the military. Only 15% graduated with a four-year degree.

What about going to school while you're in? Many GIs report that military life leaves them too busy and exhausted -- and doesn't really make time for them to go to class.

#### **Joining the military is hazardous to your future.**

Joining the military is a dead end. After you've spent a few years in the military, you're 2 to 5 times more likely to be homeless than your friends who never joined. And, according to the VA, you'll probably earn less too. The skills you learn in the military will be geared to military jobs, not civilian careers; when you come out, many employers will tell you to go back to school and get some real training. As former Secretary of Defense Cheney declared, "The reason to have a military is to be prepared to fight and win wars...it's not a jobs program."

#### **Joining the military is hazardous to people of color.**

During the Gulf War, over 50 percent of front-line troops were people of color. Overall, over 30 percent of enlisted personnel but only 12 percent of officers are people of color, who are then disciplined and discharged under other than honorable conditions at a much higher rate than whites. When recent studies showed a slight dip in young African-Americans' (disproportionately high) interest in the military, the Pentagon reacted with a new ad campaign. They're targeting Latino youth with special Spanish-language ads. The recruiters' lethal result: tracking high achieving young people in communities of color into a dead-end, deadly occupation.

#### **Joining the military is hazardous to women.**

Sexual harassment and assault are a daily reality for the overwhelming majority of women in the armed forces. The VA's own figures show 90 percent of recent women veterans reporting harassment - a third of whom were raped. Despite the glossy brochures that advertise "opportunities for women," the military's inherent sexism is evident from sergeants shouting "girl!" at trainees who don't "measure up," to the intimidation of women who speak out about harassment and discrimination - not to mention military men's sexual abuse of civilian women in base communities.

#### **Joining the military is hazardous to your civil rights.**

If you aren't willing to give up your rights, the military isn't for you. Once you enlist, you become military property: you lose your right to come and go freely, you're ordered around 24 hours a day, and you can be punished by your command without trial or jury. Free speech rights are severely limited in the military. You can be punished for being honest about being lesbian, gay or bisexual. Worst of all even if you hate your job, you can't quit.

#### **Joining the military is hazardous to your health.**

The military can't guarantee you'll be alive at the end of your eight-year commitment: they can't even promise you won't be desperately ill from "mystery illnesses" like those of the Vietnam and Persian Gulf wars. Whether it's atomic testing in the 1950s, Agent Orange during the war against Vietnam, or experimental vaccines and toxic weapons in the Persian



Gulf, the military shamelessly destroys the health of its personnel -- and then does its best to downplay and ignore their suffering.

### **Joining the military is hazardous to your mental health.**

Through callousness, intimidation, harassment, physical and psychological abuse, and lies, the military can seriously damage your mental and emotional well being.

### **Joining the military is hazardous to the environment.**

The US military is the single largest and worst polluter in the world, from toxins at bases to nuclear-tipped missiles to the destruction of ecosystems from South Vietnam to the Persian Gulf. And in today's military, the tanks and weapons are coated with depleted uranium from toxic nuclear waste!

### **Joining the military is hazardous to our lives.**

The "adventure" in the commercials is code for war, the "discipline" code for violence. The military trains recruits to employ deadly force, yet recruiters rarely discuss the dehumanizing process of basic training, the psychological costs of killing, or the horrors of war.

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## **How to declare a conscientious objector (CO)?**

**From: Peace Out URL: <http://www.peace-out.com>**

### **SO YOU WANT TO BE A CO?**

Making the decision to be a conscientious objector is hardly an easy one. There are a number of different factors that may influence you, but let's start with the most important:

There's 3 steps you need to follow--Step One: The Decision, Step Two: Create The Packet, Step Three: The Interviews.

### **Step One: The Decision**

#### **1) YOUR BELIEFS**

Do you feel that war is wrong? Do you feel uncomfortable carrying a weapon or training for combat? Was there one particular experience that changed the way you look at war? Do these beliefs come from religious conviction or a more personal, philosophical position?

Here are the important things to remember about your beliefs in regards to CO application:

1. The military does not allow for a nuanced position on war and violence. To be granted CO status, you **MUST** be opposed to **ALL** wars. If your application to be a CO is based on the wrongness of a particular war, your packet will be rejected. Additionally, you must be personally committed to peace over violence in almost every situation.
2. Your beliefs on war cannot be political in nature to be considered a CO.
3. Assuming that you volunteered to join the military, you must have come to the conclusion that war is wrong **AFTER** your enlistment.

#### **2) FRIENDS AND FAMILY**

Everyone around you will have an opinion on the subject of conscientious objection, and it is likely that not all of them will be supportive towards your feelings about war. Though the people around you are clearly important, you have to remember that this is a deeply personal decision, and no one can make it for you. If you truly feel that war is fundamentally unethical way to solve problems, then you may need to seek CO status regardless of what those around you think. Once you make the decision to say "no" to war, you can hope that friends and family have the maturity to recognize your conviction.

#### **3) OTHER SOLDIERS**

Some soldiers in your unit may not be supportive of your decision to seek CO status, but others may understand what you are doing and feel similar. It is likely that someone will give you a hard time, accusing you of being a coward or saying that you are just trying to get out. Remember, the most courageous thing a person can do is to stand up for what they believe in. Other soldiers may believe that war is good, so they are acting on their ethics by remaining in the military. Why should you be denied the same right? You will be following a perfectly legal process recognized by the Uniform Code of Military Justice, and if they don't agree with the process, they should take it up with the Pentagon.

#### **4) YOUR BENEFITS**

## **Step Two: Create The Packet**

Congratulations. Now that you've made the decision to file as a CO, you'll be joining a long history of soldiers who have spoken out against war. It is crucial to remember at this stage that you are not alone, which is why this site provides contacts you can speak with about your decision.

The first thing you need to do is download a copy of **DOD Directive 1300.6, Conscientious Objectors [November 21, 2003]**

Also try to find the regulation governing conscientious objection for your specific service:

- Army Army Regulation 600-43
- Navy MILPERSMAN (NAVPERS 15560 C) §3620250
- Marines MCO 1306.16 E
- Air Force AFI 36-3204
- Coast Guard COMDTINST 1900.8

Print these out and read them back to back, as many times as you need to. This is going to become your legal bible over the next few months.

### **PREPARING YOUR PACKET**

Though the first step to filing as a CO is notifying your chain of command, it is best to prepare your packet ahead of time. I have heard stories of Unit Commanders who, after being notified of the soldier's decision to seek CO status, have given the soldier only one week to submit their request.

### **Components of the CO Packet**

#### **DA FORM 4187**

Make sure this, like all forms, is filed correctly. Check for typos and make sure every block is filled out, because small errors can seriously delay your packet.

#### **REFERENCES**

These should be written by anyone who can vouch for your religious or philosophical conviction, your character, or your integrity. If your beliefs are religious in nature, try to get references from someone within your religious community.

#### **REQUIRED INFORMATION**

This is the heart and soul of your packet. I'll go over some of the important parts:

##### **a. General Information**

This is just personal information, similar to what might be on a college application.

##### **b. Training and Belief**

This is it. Other than your interviews, this is the most important part, the section that is going to be reviewed and read by every approving authority all the way up the chain of command. Your goal in this section is to be as clear as possible, leaving no room for speculation regarding the nature and character of your beliefs.

## **Step Three: The Interviews**

"After the application has been received by the person's commander, the commander will arrange for the applicant to be interviewed as soon as possible by a military chaplain and a psychiatrist."

Once you notify your chain of command and give your commander a copy of your application (make at least two copies to keep for yourself), it will be the commander's responsibility to set up three interviews: one with a psychiatrist, one with a chaplain, and one with an investigating officer.

From the minute you submit your completed application, along with the DA 4187 and Privacy Act Waiver, your chain of command is on the clock. Your unit has 90 days from the day of submission to forward your packet on to the highest approving authority.

### **1) Psychiatrist's Interview**

This is little more than a psychological checkup, designed to determine whether or not you are mentally fit to apply as a CO (only in the military would they suspect you of insanity for NOT wanting to kill people). This interview should have little

bearing on your packet, but take it seriously. Giving the psychiatrist any reason to suspect you of insanity is a sure way to slow down the processing of your application.

## **2) Chaplain's Interview**

Within a few weeks of submitting your application, your commander should arrange a time for you to speak with a chaplain from outside your unit. Normally, anything said to a chaplain is protected, but this is NOT true with the CO interview. After the interview, the chaplain's job is to write a detailed report describing your beliefs, your demeanor, and assessing your sincerity. The chaplain does not make a recommendation to either approve or deny your request, but his opinion can certainly influence the officers that are going to scrutinize your application.

## **3) The Investigating Officer**

Shortly after the submission of your CO application, your unit Commander should appoint an investigating officer, grade O-3 or higher, to take charge of your case. The selected officer cannot be in your direct chain of command, but he or she can come from your battalion. The officer is supposed to be "knowledgeable in policies and procedures relating to conscientious objection," but almost no one in the military is. In fact, unless he or she has been through the process before, your investigating officer may have to do just as much reading on conscientious objection as you do.

It is the job of your investigating officer to make a final recommendation regarding your request for CO status. The officer will review your application, familiarize him or herself with the appropriate regulations, interview your leadership and fellow soldiers, and conduct a hearing designed to establish the nature and sincerity of your beliefs. This is arguably the most important part of the CO process. Other than your own submitted application, the investigating officer's report is what will be used by the higher-ups to make their decision. The final decision-makers will probably never meet you or talk with you. All they will have to go on is what you submitted and what the investigating officer says about you.

## **4) Preparing for the Hearing**

Because the hearing is so important, you should make sure you are well-prepared. The first thing to start doing, well in advance, is to come up with the hardest questions you can possibly imagine regarding your beliefs on war.

Put your beliefs to the test to the best of your ability, and have friends and loved ones help.

Write down your beliefs, and do your best to punch holes in them. The investigating officer will have your application for a few weeks before the hearing, and he or she will have plenty of time to come up with things you may not have thought of. Don't be caught off guard.

**For the complete information, please visit their website: <http://www.peace-out.com>**

## **Useful URL Links, Contacts**

### **American Friends Service Committee**

<http://www.afsc.org>

### **Central Committee for Conscientious Objectors**

<http://www.objector.org>

### **Iraq Veterans Against the War**

<http://www.ivaw.net>

### **Selective Service System: Fast Facts**

<http://www.sss.gov/FSconsobj.htm>

### **Veterans For Peace**

<http://www.veteransforpeace.org>

### **Bring them Home Now**

<http://www.bringthemhomenow.org>

### **Veterans against the Iraq War**

<http://www.vaiw.org/vet/index.php>

### **Center on Conscience and War**

<http://www.nisbco.org>

### **GI RIGHTS**

<http://girights.objector.org>

### **Mennonite Central Committee: Profiles of Conscientious Objectors**

<http://www.mcc.org/ask%2Da%2Dvet/conscientiousobjectors.html>

### **The Christian CO**

<http://www.peacehost.net/christianCO>

### **Gold Star Families For Peace**

<http://www.gsfp.org>

### **Military Families Speak out**

<http://www.mfso.org>

### **Mothers Against the Draft**

<http://www.mothersagainstthedraft.org>

## **Alternatives to Join the Military You Can Stay Free of the Military and Still Find Money For College!**

Luckily, alternative ways to finance college exist. We help you sort out the (often confusing) financial aid process to find the money you need.

### **Finding the Money**

It may take some digging to find the right combination of loans, scholarships, grants and work. You can start at your public library, your school counselor's office, or look on the web at **FASTWeb** [<http://fastweb.monster.com>] and **FinAid!** [<http://www.finaid.org>]

FASTWeb features a service in which you describe yourself and they email you listings of possible scholarships. The **Scholarship Resource Network (SRN)** [<http://www.srnexpress.com>] is another free search service, geared especially for portable scholarships and loan forgiveness programs. For national-minority students, there is a subset of the SRN called the MOLIS Scholarship Search that may also be valuable.

### **Federal Aid**

All schools will require that you fill out a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), available from your high school counselor or college financial aid offices. You must fill out FAFSA to be eligible for any federal aid and to be considered for any other aid by most colleges. Since the amount of money available from the federal government is limited, it is essential that you submit your FAFSA as early as possible. Unfair as it is, if you're male, 18 years or older, and haven't registered for the draft, the federal and some state governments withhold financial aid to coerce you into doing so. The FAFSA asks everyone to attest that they have registered.

### **Scholarships and Grants**

There are so many different types of scholarships and grants that most anyone can qualify for one! There are scholarships for people with specific skills or interests; for students who want to pursue certain majors; for employees of large companies and their children; and for members of particular ethnic and religious groups, and many more. Most scholarships and grants have deadlines. The sooner you begin your research, the better your chances. Books like *The Scholarship Book* (Cassidy, 1996) and *College Scholarships and Financial Aid* (Arco, 1996) contain listings of scholarships and contact addresses for applying. Most public libraries have scholarship books, and you can ask a librarian for help.

### **Loans**

While often considered a last resort, loans can actually be a good way to finance your college education. The Federal government provides Direct Students Loans, Stafford and Perkins loans, which are available at low interest. You don't have to start paying them back until six months after you graduate or leave school. Your parents can take out a federal Plus Loan, regardless of your financial need. Plus Loans have variable interest rates and must be repaid within ten years. For information about other types of federal loans, call the Guaranteed Student Loan Center at (202) 708-9167. Your local bank can give you information about low-cost private sector loans, with repayment terms of up to 30 years.

**For the Complete Information, please check: <http://www.objector.org/before-you-enlist/financingcollege.html>**

### **Peace No War Network**

**War is not the answer, for only love can conquer hate  
Not in our Name! And another world is possible!  
URL: <http://www.PeaceNoWar.net> Tel: (213)403-0131**

**Please Join PeaceNoWar Listserv, send e-mail to: [peacenowar-subscribe@lists.riseup.net](mailto:peacenowar-subscribe@lists.riseup.net)**

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1013 Mission St. #6 South Pasadena CA 91030**

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(additional donations are tax deductible!)**

# onlinePeaceResources

## Organizations

[www.peacenowar.net](http://www.peacenowar.net)

ActionLA

[www.actionla.org](http://www.actionla.org)

PeaceNoWar

[www.peacenowar.net](http://www.peacenowar.net)

Interfaith Communities

United for Justice and Peace

[www.icujp.org](http://www.icujp.org)

Iraq Occupation Watch

[www.occupationwatch.org](http://www.occupationwatch.org)

Labor Against War

[www.laboragainstawar.org](http://www.laboragainstawar.org)

Not In Our Name

[www.notinourname.org](http://www.notinourname.org)

Iraq Peace Team

[www.iraqpeaceteam.org](http://www.iraqpeaceteam.org)

Amnesty International

[www.amnesty.org](http://www.amnesty.org)

American Friends Service Committee

<http://www.afsc.org>

Global Security

[globalsecurity.org](http://globalsecurity.org)

Federation of American Scientists

[www.FAS.org](http://www.FAS.org)

Citizens For Legitimate Government

[www.legitgov.org](http://www.legitgov.org)

Center for Defense Information

[www.CDI.org](http://www.CDI.org)

Fellowship of Reconciliation

[www.forusa.org](http://www.forusa.org)

War Resisters League

[www.warresisters.org](http://www.warresisters.org)

American Arab

Anti-Discrimination Committee

[www.adc.org](http://www.adc.org)

Veterans For Peace

[www.veteransforpeace.org](http://www.veteransforpeace.org)

School of the Americas Watch

[www.SOAW.org](http://www.SOAW.org)

Stop FTAA

[www.stopFTAA.org](http://www.stopFTAA.org)

MoveOn

[www.moveon.org](http://www.moveon.org)

United for Peace and Justice

[www.unitedforpeace.org](http://www.unitedforpeace.org)

National Lawyers Guild

[www.nlg.org](http://www.nlg.org)

Iraq Action

[www.iraqaction.org](http://www.iraqaction.org)

Anti-War Network

[www.antiwarnetwork.org](http://www.antiwarnetwork.org)

Voices in the Wilderness

[www.vitw.org](http://www.vitw.org)

Electronic Intifada

[www.electronicintifada.net](http://www.electronicintifada.net)

Stop the War - U.K.

[www.stopwar.org.uk](http://www.stopwar.org.uk)

Voices in the Wilderness

[www.vitw.org](http://www.vitw.org)

## Media & Commentary

Inter Press Service

[www.ips.org](http://www.ips.org)

Aljazeera.net

<http://english.aljazeera.net>

IndyMedia

[www.indymedia.org/](http://www.indymedia.org/)

CommonDreams

[www.commondreams.org](http://www.commondreams.org)

TruthOut

[www.truthout.org](http://www.truthout.org)

Pacifica

[www.pacifica.org](http://www.pacifica.org)

Z Magazine

[www.zmag.org](http://www.zmag.org)

AlterNet

[www.alternet.org](http://www.alternet.org)

Counterpunch

[www.counterpunch.org](http://www.counterpunch.org)

BushFlash.com

[www.ericblumrich.com](http://www.ericblumrich.com)

## Graphics

[www.igc.org/inkworks](http://www.igc.org/inkworks)

[www.art-for-a-change.com](http://www.art-for-a-change.com)

[www.earthflag.net](http://www.earthflag.net)

[www.peaceflags.org](http://www.peaceflags.org)

[www.politicalgraphics.org](http://www.politicalgraphics.org)

only love  
can conquer hate

## Useful Links

Iraq Body Count

[www.iraqbodycount.net](http://www.iraqbodycount.net)

U.S. Bombing Watch

[www.ccmeep.org/usbombingwatch/2003.htm](http://www.ccmeep.org/usbombingwatch/2003.htm)

U.S. Cost of the War

[www.costofwar.com](http://www.costofwar.com)

Global Peace Protest Information

[pax.protest.net](http://pax.protest.net)

To Translate A Web Page

to Arabic, visit [ajeep.com](http://ajeep.com)

[tarjim.ajeep.com/ajeep/default.asp?lang=1](http://tarjim.ajeep.com/ajeep/default.asp?lang=1)

to French, Spanish, German,

Italian or Portuguese, visit Systran

[www.systransoft.com](http://www.systransoft.com)

## Afghanistan, Iraq

Electronic Iraq

[www.electroniciraq.net](http://www.electroniciraq.net)

Al-Muajaha (The Iraqi witness)

[www.almuajaha.com](http://www.almuajaha.com)

Afghan Info Center

[afghan-info.com](http://afghan-info.com)

Revolutionary Afghan Women's

Association

[www.rawa.org](http://www.rawa.org)

actionla  
affinity group

