

THE
Episcopal
CHURCH



To: Persons Inquiring about Conscientious Objector Registration

From: Registrar for Conscientious Objectors

Re: Registration Procedures

In response to your inquiry, we are sending you this packet which includes the following items:

1. *The Episcopal Church and Conscientious Objection to War*
2. *Military Service and the Episcopalian*
3. *Biblical Basis of a Peace Witness*
4. *What Do I Believe About War?*
5. *Advice to Episcopalians Facing Selective Service System Registration*
6. *A selected bibliography of books on non-violence theology and conscientious objection*
7. *Letters of Support for Conscientious Objector Claims*
8. *Worksheet on War Objection*
9. *Registration Form with instructions*

Items 1-4 should help you to decide whether you are a Conscientious Objector (CO). Items 5-8 will be of assistance to you should you decide to register as a Conscientious Objector.

Please be assured that any and all correspondence or questions with this office will be handled as confidentially as possible.

I want to be very clear about one point. Your registration as a Conscientious Objector (CO) **does not** exempt you from the Selective Service procedures, nor does it guarantee that you will be exempt from conscription or military service, or some other form of non-combatant service in the event that future legislation is enacted restoring the draft.

It has been our previous experience that many CO claims were denied because the registrant did not identify himself at the beginning. Between 1970 and 1972 only 20% of those who applied to the Selective Service Board for CO status were classified as COs. One of the reasons for this is that a claim for CO status was often filed late in the process leading to induction into military service. If you have made a decision, it is important to have your statement on file as early as possible.

If you think that you might want to register as a CO or if you have decided to officially register as a CO, please read through items 1 through 7 before making any final decisions.

Then:

1. Complete three (3) copies of the registration form. An online version of this form is available on this web site, but do NOT use the Selective Service System's online form.
2. Do not sign any of the copies.
3. Take the unsigned copies to your minister.
4. With the minister, sign and date all three (3) copies, and have your minister sign and date them as well.
5. Send the first copy to:

Registrar for Conscientious Objectors,
Office for Young Adult and Campus Ministries
The Episcopal Church Center
815 Second Avenue
New York, NY 10017-4503

6. Keep the second copy for your own records.
7. Hold the third copy for the Selective Service Board in the event that a draft is reinstated.
8. Note that you will also need to give the place and date of your baptism and confirmation.

This should complete the process. However, if you have any questions at all, please don't hesitate to contact the Registrar for Conscientious Objectors at the Episcopal Church Center: 800/334-7626 x6323 or FAX 212-682-5594.

rev. July 2011

Conscientious Military Service

A wide range of positions concerning military service is found within the Christian fellowship in general and within the Episcopal Church. The Church stands with its members as they make decisions in this area of their lives, providing pastoral support to CONSCIENTIOUS PARTICIPANTS, SELECTIVE CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTORS, CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTORS, AND CONSCIENTIOUS RESISTERS. The decision to participate or not to participate in the armed forces and in any particular war situation that may occur while they are in the armed forces has consequences for the rest of a person's life. This document is addressed to Episcopalians so that they may think responsibly about this decision and to consider carefully their loyalties to God and country.

Conscientious Participation

Many Americans go into the armed forces without particularly considering why they should. Christian citizens, however, should be ready to give themselves and others a reason for their faith and action. Most Christians participate for reasons of conscience in the armed forces because they believe that:

1. The Christian gives allegiance to the nation under God. All citizens are dependent on the common life for security, liberty and opportunity. The state protects these rights. Duty to one's country has been understood as including the obligation to bear arms, and 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 believe this to be their duty. One must soberly face the fact that we do not yet have a world order that can keep peace. The Christian serves in the armed forces and, if necessary, goes into combat because he or she believes that the responsibility for maintaining world order must be shared in this way.
3. Christian theologians have maintained that war is just when all of the following conditions are fulfilled. (All seven criteria must be met for a war to be considered just).
 - 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 opponent 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.

In modern warfare as in earlier times, it is difficult to insure that all these conditions are met. Nevertheless, Christians have participated in war because it seemed that the alternative of non-participation might bring evils worse than the war, and that the leaders of the nation acted as responsibly as possible within this framework.

Enlistment

Local recruiting offices of the various branches of the armed forces can provide specific information on programs and opportunities. The experience of military life sometimes provides an opportunity for clarification of personal values and objectives, but everyone should be clear that the primary purpose of the armed forces is to support national defense policy as determined by the President and Congress. Note that military recruiters have the job of encouraging people to enlist. Also, promises of special assignments are not binding on the military: the military can reassign people as it sees fit.

Conscientious Objection

Both the nation and the Church make provision for the person who believes that he or she cannot participate in war. The wording of the Military Selective Service Act of 1967, amended in 1971, concerning conscientious objection reads as follows:

Section 6 (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 objector position. Since the 1934 General Convention, the Episcopal Church has recognized "the duty of Christians to put the Cross above the flag and in any conflict of loyalties unhesitatingly to follow the Christ."

In 1940 a Registrar for Conscientious Objectors was appointed and a confidential Register established at the Executive Council of the Episcopal Church for conscientious objectors who are baptized or confirmed members of the Episcopal Church.

In 1962 the House of Bishops said: "We must not hesitate to offer a full ministry [to military personnel], 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 to see that we live in a society in which the dictates of conscience are respected."

In 1979 the General Convention again encouraged "young Episcopalians who consider themselves to be conscientious objectors to war to register that belief with the Executive Council of the Episcopal Church in the Register maintained for this purpose since 1940."

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

1. To take human life, or to participate in a process which may lead to the taking of human life, is immoral and unchristian. A Christian is called to witness to God's love by refusing to participate in war through any form of military service.
2. Under the conditions of modern warfare, it is impossible to wage a just war.
3. While some Christians believe limited war both justifiable and possible, many others object to any war on the basis that the present state of military art makes it impossible to have a "limited war" within the framework of Christian moral obligations. The danger of nuclear war, which may lead to the destruction of all human life, is so great that no considerations are strong enough to justify war of any kind.
4. Although it might be a Christian's duty in particular circumstances to support military action in the service of justice, there may be other occasions when some Christians may reject a specific military action as unjustified. (This is "selective conscientious objection" and is not recognized under current national law. See subsequent heading for this option.)

Options for the Objector

Two options for the conscientious objector are allowed under the Military Selective Service Act.

1. The term "noncombatant training" refers to any training unrelated to the study, use or handling of arms or weapons. "Noncombatant service" is performed in a unit of the armed forces, usually in the medical corps or in some other assignment not requiring the bearing of arms.

2. Instead of actual enlistment into the armed forces, work may be assigned by the Federal, state or local government or by a non-profit organization working for the "maintenance of the national health, safety or interest," including related educational and scientific activities. In the past, such work has included the Peace Corps, VISTA, the teaching trades, and work in social service agencies or community development projects. Many Church-sponsored programs have qualified. Such assignments may be available if the draft is activated.

The law does not protect the "selective conscientious objector" or the noncooperating resister to draft registration or induction.

Selective Conscientious Objection

The Church recognizes that some people who would be willing to fight in a just war would, in conscience, be unwilling to participate in an unjust war. There are at least two situations where this might occur:

- 1) A person is subject to being conscripted into the military to participate in an unjust war, or
- 2) A person who has volunteered or been conscripted prior to the onset of our nation's participation in an unjust war. This could include a career member of the military, whose spiritual development led to seeing a particular war situation as unjust.

While the Church respects both of these positions, neither is legal under current law. A person exercising either option would almost certainly be subject to legal consequences, including a substantial fine and a prison term. As noted below for Conscientious Resisters, such people should discuss in detail the proposed course of action with a qualified counselor.

Note that while some people may, prior to their joining the military, believe that the current war is unjust or is being conducted in an unjust way, others may not come to this belief until they experience the reality of that war or otherwise learn more about that war.

Conscientious Resistance

Some Christians believe that war as a method of settling international disputes is incompatible with the teaching and example of Our Lord Jesus Christ. This leads them to conclude that any form of cooperation with the Selective Service system or the military is contrary to the will of God as they understand that. This belief is most often acted out in one of two ways:

- a. by refusing to register for the Selective Service System at all;
- b. by registering for the Selective Service System but then refusing induction if and when the draft is reinstated.

It must be emphasized that such actions will almost certainly result in legal consequences, including a substantial fine and a prison term. Anyone considering such action is strongly urged to discuss in detail the proposed course of action with a qualified draft counselor. The Center on Conscience & War (CCW) provides this service (see page 5 below for contact information).

The House of Bishops has established guidelines for those who engage in acts of civil disobedience (House of Bishops Position Paper III on Christian Obedience, 1964; see page 25 of *Cross Before Flag* published by the Episcopal Peace Fellowship).

Those Already in the Military

Conscientious Objection to war has, in the past, been thought of only in terms of persons who face military conscription. However, many people experience major changes in their religious beliefs as they mature while in the military. The actual experience of war itself may accelerate such changes. If the person has also directly participated in killing, the effect may even further accelerate such changes.

The situation then is one of getting an appropriate military discharge rather than one of the draft. Under current law this can be a very difficult process and the person will likely need expert assistance (e.g., CCW).

The Church's Concern

Your Church is concerned for the welfare of all its members. While the conscientious participant, the conscientious objector, the selective conscientious objector, and the conscientious resister must accept the consequences of their decision, all are the concern of the Church's pastoral ministry.

If you are in the armed forces, make worship a regular part of your life. Get to know your unit chaplain or the priest in the area where you are stationed, and keep in touch with your priest at home. For those in the armed forces, the Episcopal Church maintains a program under the direction of the Rt. Rev. James B. Magness, Bishop Suffragan for the Armed Services and Federal Ministries, The Episcopal Church, 110 Maryland Avenue, N.E. Suite 203, Washington, DC 20002. (646-434-0299 or jmagness@episcopalchurch.org)

If you are a conscientious objector, you should register this decision as soon as you can in the confidential Register at the Episcopal Church Center. The Registrar for Conscientious Objectors at the Center will supply you with registration forms and information on the Church's position on request. There are several national organizations listed below which can counsel and support you as you make your decision and afterwards provide fellowship, printed materials and other resources that may help you to clarify your position.

Contact Information

Registrar for Conscientious Objectors
Office of Adult and Campus Ministries
Episcopal Church Center
815 Second Avenue
New York, NY 10017-4503
(212) 716-6000 or
(800) 334-7626

Center on Conscience & War (CCW)
1830 Connecticut Avenue N W
Washington, DC 20009-5732
(202) 483-2220
Website: www.centeronconscience.org

In whatever position you find yourself, as a conscientious objector, a selective conscientious objector, a conscientious participant or a conscientious resister, 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 others in penitence for the evils that still make conflict possible. Finally, work as a Christian citizen for justice, mercy and love.

SELECTIVE SERVICE SYSTEM • PRINT ONLY IN BLACK INK
AND IN CAPITAL LETTERS ONLY
REGISTRATION FORM • YOU SHOULD RECEIVE A REGISTRATION
ACKNOWLEDGMENT WITHIN 90 DAYS

UPO

DO NOT WRITE IN THIS SPACE

1 DATE OF BIRTH: (MM-DD-YYYY) 2 SEX: (Mark with "X") Male Female 3 SOCIAL SECURITY ACCOUNT NUMBER

4 LAST NAME SUFFIX (Mark with "X") JR III OTHER SUFFIX

FIRST NAME & MIDDLE NAME

5 CURRENT MAILING ADDRESS: STREET ADDRESS & APARTMENT NUMBER

CITY ZIP CODE

6 PERMANENT MAILING ADDRESS: STREET ADDRESS & APARTMENT NUMBER

CITY STATE ZIP CODE

7 CURRENT TELEPHONE NUMBER (Area Code First)

8 TODAY'S DATE: (MM-DD-YYYY)

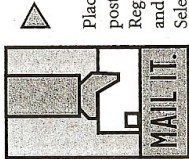
9 I AFFIRM THE FOREGOING STATEMENTS ARE TRUE

SIGNATURE UPO

Mark this box if your permanent address is the same as your current address

I AM A CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTOR TO WAR IN ANY FORM.

SSS Form 1M (OCT 95) OMB APPROVAL 3240-0002



Place the proper postage on the Registration Card and mail back to the Selective Service System.

After You Register...

Watch Your Mail!

Within 90 days after registering, you should receive in the mail a Registration Acknowledgment from Selective Service which will provide you with a copy of your registration record. Safeguard that document since it will serve as official proof of your registration. If you do not receive a Registration Acknowledgment within 90 days after registering, it is very important that you write to the address below, or call (847) 688-6888 to verify that your registration has been received.

Selective Service System
Registration Information Office
P.O. Box 94638
Palatine, IL 60094-4638

Keep Us Informed of Changes

Once you register, the law also requires you to keep Selective Service informed of your address changes so you can be reached without delay. You can inform Selective Service of an address change by writing to the address above, or you may go to any post office for a Change-of-Information Form (SSS Form 2), fill it out and mail to Selective Service.

For more information, see back panel.

Conscientious Objector Registration Form

For Members of the Episcopal Church Who Are Conscientious Objectors to Military Service

Full name: _____

Mailing address: _____

Diocese: _____

Date of birth: ____/____/____ Social Security Number: _____ - _____ - _____

Place of birth: _____

Present occupation: _____

Marital status: _____

Spouse's name (if applicable): _____

Name of church: _____

Address of church: _____

Date and Place of Baptism or Confirmation (indicate which):

Approximate date of becoming a conscientious objector: ____/____/____

Peace organization(s) of which you are a member:

Write a brief statement of your reasons for conscientious objection and of the types of service in which you are willing to participate:

Signature of Conscientious Objector

I hereby certify that _____ is a baptized member of my congregation, and that the above statements, to the best of my knowledge, are true.

Signature of Priest

Date

Mail a copy to: Register for Conscientious Objectors, Office for Young Adult & Campus Ministries, Episcopal Church Center, 815 Second Ave., New York, NY 10017-4503.

Bibliography

Cross Before Flag: Episcopal Statements on War and Peace

Publisher: Episcopal Peace Fellowship

Year: rev. 2003

When War is Unjust: Being Honest in Just War Thinking

Publisher: Orbis Books

Author: Yoder, John Howard

Location: Maryknoll

Year: 1996

War, Peace and God: Rethinking the Just War Tradition

Publisher: Augsburg-Fortress

Author: Gary M. Simpson

Location: Minneapolis

Year: 2007

War & the Christian Conscience: Where do you Stand

Publisher: Abingdon

Author: Fahey, Joseph J.

Year: 2005

Choosing Against War: A Christian View

Publisher: Good Books

Author: Roth, John D.

Location: Intercourse, PA

Year: 2002

What Would You Do? A Serious Answer to a Standard Question

Publisher: Herald Press

Author: Yoder, John Howard

Location: Scottsdale, PA

Year: 1983

Description: Expanded edition. In the first half of this class and lucid book, Yoder himself examines the question frequently asked of applicants for conscientious objector status, "What would you do if a violent person threatened harm to a loved one?" He discusses the relevance and irrelevance of this question to the problem of modern warfare and provides perspectives from an historic Anabaptist-Mennonite tradition. In the second part of the book, a number of famous people give their responses to the same problems.

Nevertheless: Varieties of Religious Pacifism

Publisher: Herald Press

Author: Yoder, John Howard

Location: Scottsdale, PA

Year: 1971

Ain't Gonna Study War No More: Biblical Ambiguity and the Abolition of War

Publisher: Westminster / John Knox Press

Author: Winn, Albert Curry
Location: Louisville
Year: 1993

Peace is the Way: Writings on Nonviolence from the Fellowship of Reconciliation

Publisher: Orbis Books
Author: Wink, Walter, ed.
Location: Maryknoll
Year: 2000

Just Peace Church: The Peace Theology Development Team

Publisher: United Church Press
Author: Thistlewaite, Susan, ed.
Location: NY
Year: 1986

Just Peacemaking: Ten Practices for Abolishing War

Publisher: Pilgrim Press
Author: Stassen, Glenn, ed.
Location: Cleveland
Year: 1998

Of Love and War

Publisher: Orbis Press
Author: Soelle, Dorothee
Location: Maryknoll
Year: 1983

Pacifism, Church and State

Publisher: Anglican Pacifist Fellowship
Author: Savage, D.S.
Location: Milton Keynes, England
Year: 1998

On War and Morality

Publisher: Princeton University Press
Author: Holmes, Robert L.
Location: Princeton
Year: 1989

Why I Am a Conscientious Objector

Publisher: Herald Press
Author: Drescher, John M.
Location: Scottsdale, PA
Year: 1982

The God of Peace: Toward a Theology of Nonviolence

Publisher: Orbis Press
Author: Dear, John
Location: Maryknoll
Year: 1994

Peace

Publisher: Chalice Press

Author: Brueggemann, Walter

Location: St. Louis

Year: 2001

Living Toward a Vision: Biblical Reflections of Shalom

Publisher: United Church Press

Author: Brueggeman, Walter

Location: NY

Year: 1976

Bibliography by Dr. David A. Mycoff for the
Episcopal Peace Fellowship
637 S. Dearborn St.
Chicago, Illinois 60605
epfnational@ameritech.net
epfnational.org