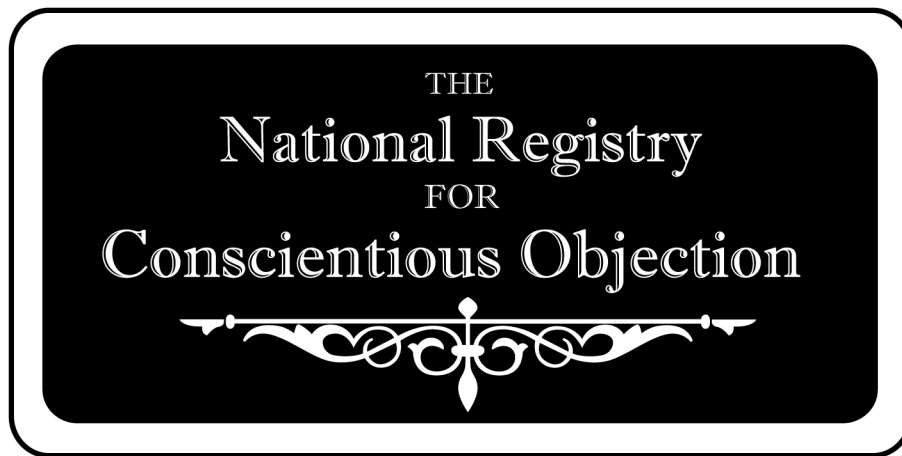


## Resource Packet for Conscientious Objectors



Compiled by Emily Luhrs, The Peace Abbey Nov 2009

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## Tools and Inspiration

### Anytime

Partake in peaceful dialogue, participate in nonviolent actions, write to your congresspeople, and be a peace ambassador in your community.

### Join Local Groups Working for Peace

**Help spread awareness on the National Registry for Conscientious Objectors and hold signings-** you or your organization can hold a signing ceremony in Worcester, as well as participate in local counter-recruitment. Sign the sign up sheet and/or contact your campus rep or National Conscientious Objector Campus Outreach Coordinator : Emily emilyluhrs@gmail.com

**Support Legislation for Peace** - letter writing, calling your congresspeople on the capital switchboard 202-225-3121

- Campaign for the National Department of Peace
- Peace Tax Fund
- Pulling out of Afghanistan- CURRENT legislation- ask your representative to co-sponsor NOW
  - HR 3699 Rep. Lee's bill prohibiting an increase in troops
  - HR 2404, Worcester's own Rep. McGovern's bill calling for an exit strategy from our military occupation of Afghanistan.for talking points and more info visit [www.noescalation.org](http://www.noescalation.org)

### Become a Taxpayer for Peace

-consider sending % of taxes spent on war to alternative fund  
-one way is sending \$10.40 "peace tax" to an ["alternative tax fund"](#) or to a local group working for peace, nonviolent conflict resolution, social justice, the environment, health, education, the arts, etc.  
-[Write letters](#) to your friends, local newspapers, your congress people, and the president explaining your action. [wartaxresistance.org](http://wartaxresistance.org)

### Helpful Links and Organizations furthering the cause of Peace:

#### Resist War

- Center on Conscience and War (NISBCO) [centeronconscience.org](http://centeronconscience.org)
- War Resisters League [warresisters.org](http://warresisters.org)

- Iraq and Afghanistan CO's [couragetoresist.org/x](http://couragetoresist.org/x)
- I will not Kill [iwillnotkill.org](http://iwillnotkill.org)
- Central Committee on Conscientious Objection [Objector.org](http://Objector.org)
- Committee Opposed to Militarism and the Draft (COMD) [www.comdsd.org](http://www.comdsd.org)
- War Resisters Support Campaign [resisters.ca/index\\_en/html](http://resisters.ca/index_en/html)

#### End the Iraq War:

- Iraq Moratorium [Iraqmoratorium.org](http://Iraqmoratorium.org)
- Iraq Veterans Against the War [ivaw.org](http://ivaw.org)
- National campaign for Nonviolent Resistance [iraqpledge.org](http://iraqpledge.org)
- Veterans for Peace [veteransforpeace.org](http://veteransforpeace.org)
- Military Families Speak Out [mfso.org](http://mfso.org)
- Campus Antiwar Network (CAN)- [campusantiwar.net](http://campusantiwar.net)

#### Counter Recruitment:

- CAMS- Coalition Alternative to Military in Schools [militaryfreeschools.org](http://militaryfreeschools.org)
- Counter Recruitment [counter-recruitment.org/website](http://counter-recruitment.org/website)

#### Other Peace Organizations:

- Student Peace Action Network [studentpeaceaction.org](http://studentpeaceaction.org)
- Fellowship of Reconciliation [forusa.org](http://forusa.org)
- American Friends Service Committee [afsc.org/newengland](http://afsc.org/newengland)

#### Documentaries:

- The Good War and Those who Refused to Fight It – WWII COs
- Soldiers of Conscience – featuring COs from Iraq and Afghanistan

#### Inspiration: Word's from CO's

**Ralph DiGia (WWII CO)-** There is a long, long history of developing efficient weapons of extermination. And where has it left us? Compared to this history, nonviolence is in its early stages. We need to put more resources and effort into developing nonviolent alternatives. Let us consider what our professed ideals are. Is war the method to achieve these ideals? Or is nonviolence the way? Some say nonviolence is idealistic and unrealistic, but studying the history of war and violence, we must conclude that nonviolence is pragmatic. Whatever we choose to call it, let it be. Nonviolence is the way.

**David Dellinger (WWII CO)-** On remaining in a crowded prison cell for serious violent offenders for a month after his arrest for resisting WWII draft...“I waited that long because the one thing you can’t do as a serious nonviolent activist, especially in prison, is to run away from threats or danger. If you do, the wrong reputation will follow you wherever you go or are moved.”

**B.P. Clark (WWII CO)-**

“Our principle must be to build, not destroy, to create, not to crush.”

President of Antioch College, Arthur E Moran, on CO, B.P. Clark-...”for in his own way he is undertaking to make a contribution to human society which must be made if mankind is not to destroy itself by violence. In 1918 the Allies achieved overwhelming victory in the “War to end war.” The tragic aftermath of that victory suggest tolerance and respect for those who sincerely and thoughtfully seek a different solution. **Most great social advances were begun by a few persons. A wise society will not destroy a minority that, without violence to society is committed to finding a better way.”**

**Staff Sergeant Camilo Mejia (Iraq CO) Court-martialed and sentenced to one year in military stockade-**

“I will sit behind bars a free man, knowing that I did the right thing. I was ready to lay down my freedom. I strongly believe it was something that had to be done. I followed my conscience and provided the leadership I thought I should provide.”

“Let us, collectively, free our minds, soften our hearts, comfort the wounded, put down our weapons, and reassert ourselves as human beings by putting an end to war.”

**Chris King, attender Wellesley MA Monthly Meeting (CO)-** “An army is different from a defender, a sportsman, or a police officer because a soldier is carefully trained with one aim in mind, to kill other people. None of the other activities has as its specific intention the desire to end the life of another human being. . .In addition, the process of learning to be a soldier is a 'dehumanizing process'. A young person changes his or her appearance to lose individuality. The uniform depersonalizes the person. The soldier is rigorously taught to respect and fear commanding officers more than the enemy. Many of his or her civil rights are removed. Above all, other human beings are reduced in training to "targets" so that the soldier can eliminate them impersonally. . . It would also reduce me to less than human and blunt or even eliminate the very compassionate perception I have as a thinking, caring individual. It was also discriminatory in that it stated that some people were to be protected and

defended and others killed "with extreme prejudice." I could not willingly cooperate with a process, which deliberately sought to train out of me my deep seeded moral and religious belief that killing another human is wrong."

### **Sergeant Kevin Benderman**

#### **Facing courts martial for refusing 2nd deployment to Iraq**

I always felt there was no higher honor than to serve my country and defend the values that established this country....I have come to the conclusion that there are no valid arguments for the destructive force of war.... I cannot tell anyone else how to live his or her life, but I have determined how I want to live mine - by not participating in war any longer, as I feel that it is stupid and against everything that is good about our world.

### **Monica Benderman Wife of Sgt. Kevin Benderman**

Life is the greatest gift we have been given, and we do not have the right to take it away. One person stops, and there is one less person killing....The honor they receive will be knowing they stood strong in their commitment, they stood for their faith, and they honored the highest order, and respected Life.

### **Quotes**

Every war already carries within it the war which will answer it. Every war is answered by a new war, until everything, everything is smashed. – Kathe Kollwitz

To kill a man is not to defend a doctrine, but to kill a man. - Michael Servetus

In a war, there are no unwounded soldiers. – Jose Harosky

If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor. If an elephant has his foot on the tail of a mouse and you say that you are neutral, the mouse will not appreciate your neutrality. –Desmond Tutu

Violence does not necessarily take people by the throat and strangle them. Usually it demands no more than an oath of allegiance from its subjects. They are required merely to become accomplices in its lies. – Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn

There never was a good war or a bad peace - Ben Franklin

Not all heroes fight on the battlefield. – excerpt from "The Good War and Those Who Refused to Fight It"

The wars we haven't had saved many lives. – William Stafford

We look forward to the day when the love of power will be overcome by the power of love. Then will the world know the blessings of peace. - William E. Gladstone.

Let every man make known what kind of government would command his respect and that will be one step toward obtaining it. -Henry David Thoreau

Must the citizen ever for a moment, or in the least degree, resign his conscience to the legislator? Why has every man (human) a conscience then? I think that we should be men (human) first and subjects afterward...The only obligation which I have a right to assume is to do at any time what I think is right. - Henry David Thoreau

It is fitting that the pacifist be bold in the knowledge that he or she (however unworthy) is with the prophets, and his or her inquisitors (however worthy) are speaking for the dead past out of which humankind is creeping. It is not right that the advocates of love should apologize or flinch.

-Handbook for Conscientious Objectors Eighth Edition, 1965

## Statement of Conscientious Objection

*I Hereby Affirm That: Because of my deeply held beliefs about peace, justice and non-violence, I am opposed to the use of violence to settle disputes.  
Furthermore, I wish to make public my decision not to participate in any group, organization or agency of government that would require from me acts of violence against a fellow human being.  
I sign The Registry for Conscientious Objection to have my position on peace, justice and non-violence duly recorded as a way of life that I embrace and am totally committed to.*