

Are You a CO, and How Can You Prove It?

Selective Service Registration, The Draft, and Conscientious Objection

A PowerPoint Presentation
(with Activities and Reference Handouts)

by
NC Choices for Youth, October 3, 2007

(See Read Me First)

Featuring:



- Information about the Selective Service System (SSS), the draft, & conscientious objection (CO)
- Activities and exercises including a simulation filing a CO application & response to a “mock draft board”
- Reactions, explorations, discussion, & action plans

(See Agenda)

Context and Disclaimers

- ✓ Being a CO comes from a deep, inner belief or leading. It is not simply a way to get out of the draft or to avoid life threatening situations.
- ✓ Others feel called to join the military and put themselves in harm's way. They likewise should be "held in the Light."
- ✓ This presentation is based on prior experience, case law (when the draft existed), and current SSS (Selective Service System) law. Everything could change.
- ✓ SSS currently does not grant CO status; only a draft board does during a draft. But these steps may help.
- ✓ Claiming a CO exemption is not easy, and it does **NOT GUARANTEE** that one will be granted. That will depend upon the applicant and the draft board.

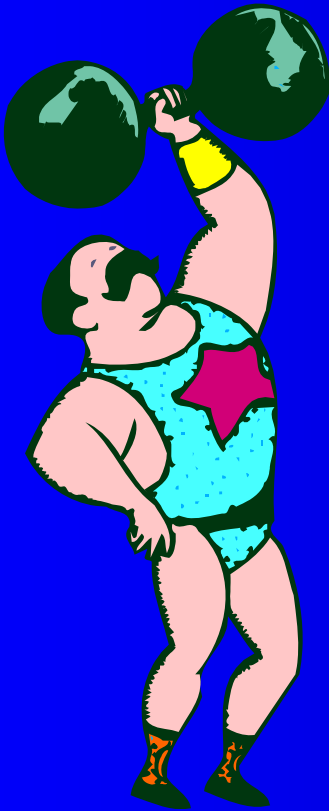
Three Criteria for Being a CO (Conscientious Objector)

1. Opposed to participating personally in any war and all war.
2. Based on moral, ethical, or religious beliefs (previously, religious training and belief).
3. Must be deeply held (previously, sincere).



(See HO p.1)

Opening Exercises:



- Pick one of these exercises, or make up your own:
 - Meaningful or Inspiring Quotes
 - Could You – Would You?
Some Real-Life Decisions in the Military
 - Could You Chant This at Boot Camp then Do It Later?

(See HO pp.27-31)

What is the Selective Service System?

- *In Non-Draft Times:*

A registry that holds contact and other demographic information of young men (possibly young women in the future) eligible and ready for military enlistment (a draft).

- *In Draft Times:*

A federal system/procedure that drafts young men (and perhaps women) into the military. Includes a lottery selection, induction notices, local draft boards, and procedures right up to enlistment or induction.

What Does the Current Selective Service Registration Law Say?

With few exceptions, all 18-year-old men in the U.S. must register within 30 days of their 18th birthday. Failure to register is a felony, with a fine of up to \$250,000 & 5 years jail.

And procedures for filing as a CO along with your registration do not exist.



(See HO p.1)

Is That What Actually Happens?

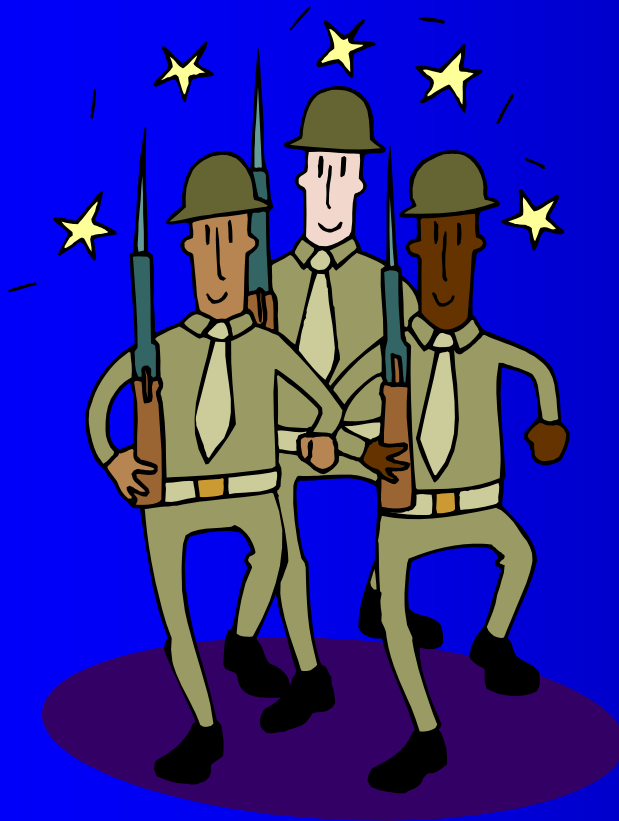


University?
BOUND!



- Few prosecutions within the past 20 years.
- Rather than fines and jail, those who don't register suffer subtle, hidden penalties and missed opportunities, such as driver's license, federal (& some state) aid for college, state and federal jobs/training, etc.

What's Going on Right Now with the Draft?



No Draft, yet...

though some legislators have posed various bills for a Universal Military Training Act. If a draft goes in place, COs may have as little as 9 days to make a CO claim.

Some say we have a “back door” draft now.

Do We Need a Draft?

- Rumsfeld, Gates and Bush say: **NO!**
 - The all-volunteer system works
 - We need a more “professional” military
 - Just need to push recruitment and incentives
- Rangel (and others) say: **YES!**
 - All classes, not just poor, should bear the responsibility of service
 - Two years of national service, including women
 - Murtha and other say military is depleted and not ready for other commitments

(See also HO p.21)

What Else Is Going On?



- Extension of Selective Service registration age limit
- Inclusion of women
- Continued budget & support of the Selective Service System
- Registration tied to driver's license
- Targeting of minors & minorities
- Universal training converts to draft
- Increased incentives for recruitment
- Specialty draft: doctors, computers
- Influencing parents

(See HO p.1)

History of COs in America, Pt. I

- Several colonial legislatures gave exemptions based on religious objections—including Quakers, Mennonites, Moravians, Schwenkfelders, Shakers, Church of the Brethren, etc.
- Individual conscience vs. church membership debate discussed but never really resolved.
- Civil War, \$300 in lieu of participation, and it could go to a special “Slave Fund.”
- WW I: Noncombatant COs, objectors from a well organized religious sect, decided within military structure, eventually alternative service an option.
- WW II: Civilian draft board decides deferment; by religious training or belief (not religious affiliation). Must be a belief in a Supreme Being. (See also HO p.20)

History of COs in America, Pt. II



- Korea and Cold War: Evolved from belief in Supreme Being to “religious, moral, or ethical.”
- Vietnam era key Supreme Court cases:
 - Sicurella, Seeger, Welsh, Gillette, Clay (aka Ali)
- How would the Supreme Court interpret the law now?

Some U.S. Supreme Court Rulings

1. Within *religious training and belief* would come “all sincere beliefs ... based upon a power or being, or upon faith, to which all else is subordinate or upon which all else is ultimately dependent,”
OR, if not, “does the claimed belief occupy the same place ... as an orthodox belief in God...?”
2. It is not for political or selective reasons. In other words, it “must amount to conscientious *opposition to participating personally in any war and all war.*”
3. “Spurred by *deeply held moral, ethical, or religious beliefs*, (that) would give them no rest or peace if they...become a part of an instrument of war”.

(See HO p.2)

What is a Conscientious Objector (CO)? Three Criteria!

1. Opposed to participating personally in any war and all war.
2. Based on moral, ethical, or religious beliefs (previously, religious training and belief).
3. Must be deeply held (previously, sincere).



(See HO p.1)

Two Types of COs:

In the Military

Joins the military but does noncombatant training and service.

Does not carry or use a weapon, even in combat situations.

Might be assigned as a medic, chaplain, pot scrubber.

Classified as I-A-O.

Not in the Military

Has nothing to do with the military system; stays in civilian jurisdiction.

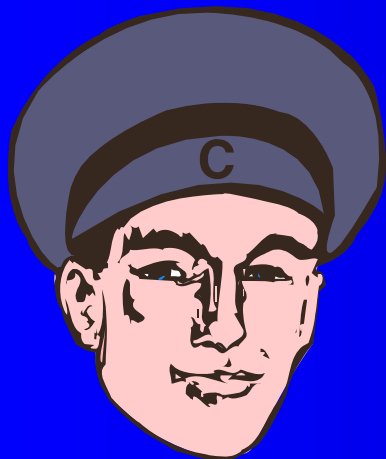
Must do equivalent time of alternative service (outside of military).

Might work in a mental hospital, prison, police force.

Classified as I-O.

(See HO p.1)

Desmond T. Doss



- 7th Day Adventist
- Refused to carry a weapon
- Worshipped on Sabbath, or 7th day
- Classified I-A-0, or noncombatant, as defined by President Roosevelt
- Served as Medic Pfc. in World War II – Guam & Okinawa
- In one battle, saved 75 wounded G.I.s under intense enemy fire
- 1st CO to receive the Medal of Honor
- CD/Video- [www/desmondoss.com](http://www.desmondoss.com)

Scripture vs. The Military Enlistment Contract

Hebrew, Christian, & Islamic Scripture

- i. Can you kill, or participate in the killing, of another human being? (*You shall not kill; Love your neighbor; Requite evil with good.*)
- ii. Can you subordinate or give up your obedience to God and place it the hands of another, i.e., your commanding officer? (*You shall have no other gods before me; No one can serve two masters; I believe in all the scriptures Allah has revealed. I am commanded to exercise justice...*)

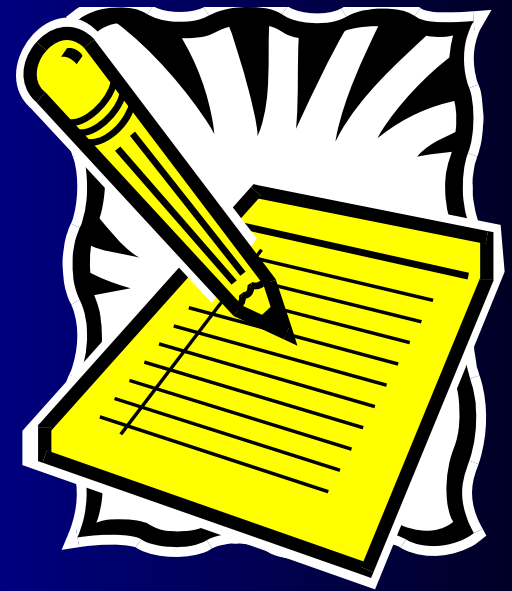
Enlistment Contract

- i. *Many laws, regulations, and military customs will govern my conduct and require me to do things a civilian does not have to do., Military Enlistment & Re-Enlistment Contract, Section 9.*
- ii. *You will be required to obey all lawful orders and perform all assigned duties and these laws, and regulations...may change without notice to me. Sections 9a(1) & 9b, of same.*

(See also HO pp.22-26)

Exercise: Worksheet Form 22

- Take 10 minutes and put yourselves in CO's shoes
- Check the appropriate box in Part I (if any at all)
- In Part II, answer questions #1, #2, and/or #3, starting wherever you choose
- Come back and report on one question



(See HO pp.3-4)

Can you
defend
your
position?



A place of conscience vs. fear
Not a “Test” but a “Testimony”

(See HO pp.5-6)

How do you register as a CO?



- The Selective Service Registration form has no place to indicate an interest in declaring a CO status.
- How then does one demonstrate a belief that is “deeply held?”
- Solution: Add to the form with these suggested procedures

(See HO pp.7-8)

Some Procedures...

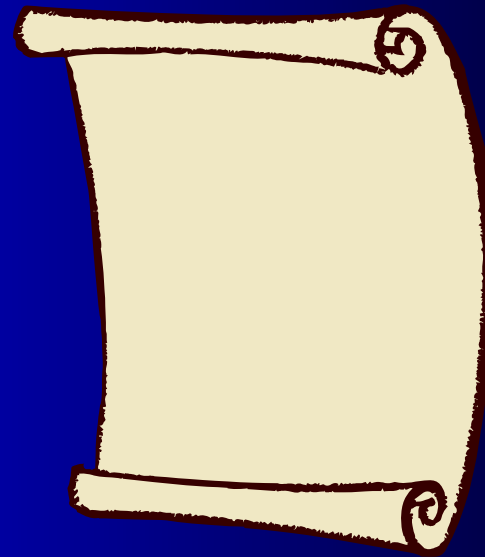


- For the 18 year old
 - SS Registration Form
 - Worksheet #22
 - Letter to your support or faith community
 - Record to others (like CC&W)
 - Letters of Support from others
- For the Support Community
 - Clearness or Support Comm.
 - Official record and rigor
 - Witness SS Registration Form
 - Keep Safe Records (or use www.CORegistry.org)

(See HO p.10)

The CO's Letter To His or Her Support or Faith Community Asking for Recognition and Documentation of the Claim

- A “generic” sample with main points to include
- Some specific, real-life examples



(See HO pp.11-12)

Letters of Support

- Need four to ten eventually
- Get from “respected” people, use a cross section
- Can attest to CO’s *sincerity and integrity*
- Is familiar with CO’s position, but doesn’t have to agree
- Start collecting now, especially because contacts tend to fade through the transitions in early adulthood

(See HO pp.13-14)

DOCUMENT

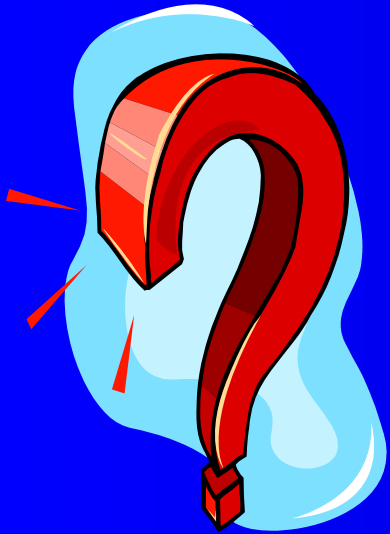
DOCUMENT

DOCUMENT

- Keep a CO folder. Include workshops, readings, journals, homework assignments, movies, discussions, songs, activities, volunteer work, etc.
- Your support or faith community's records and minutes, letters of support, national registries, agencies.
- Let Selective Service help you: Change of address form and their reply back.
- Trifold: Copy, fold in thirds, send to self.

(See HO pp.15-16)

Did We Miss Anything?



- Don't worry: You can always go to www.FGCQuaker.org, scroll down the right side and click on *Peace*, then on *Raising CO Consciousness among Our Youth* for free download OR purchase a hard copy from FGC bookstore.
- See also www.afsc.org/youthmil.
- Other handouts: Induction Notice, Scripture Quotes, Bibliography, and Contacts and Resources

(See also HO pp.17, 31, 32-34)

Let's Review:

1. What are the three criteria for a CO?
2. What's the difference between Class 1-A-O and Class 1-O?
3. What are some types of documentation?
4. What is trifolding?
5. Feedback questions on the presentation:
 - ✓ What was most helpful to you in this workshop?
 - ✓ Did this meet your expectations? Why/why not?
 - ✓ How could it be improved or help you better?

“War is not the answer.”

Martin Luther King, Jr.

from *A Time to Break Silence* speech

April 4, 1967

Riverside Church, N.Y.C

