
Alternatives to Military Service:

- **Community Service**

For information on federally-funded national service programs to perform community work and earn tuition money for college, contact Americorps, 1-800-942-2677, www.cns.gov

- **College Aid Alternatives to the GI Bill**

Use your high school guidance office or library to explore scholarship and loan options. The Federal Student Aid Information Center can help: 800-4FEDAID. For information on over 180,000 private sector scholarships, grants, fellowships and loans: www.studentservices.com. Those who decide not to register for the draft may want to contact NISBCO on the question of alternatives to federal financial aid (back panel).

- **Non-Military Work**

Finding a full-time job with which to support yourself can be challenging. There are many types of jobs that contribute to the public good, from public interest advocacy and social service to positions in education, media, environment, and the arts. Trade unions are worth exploring, and many offer apprenticeship programs. The web, guidance offices, and libraries can provide you with a wealth of resources.

- **Volunteer Training**

Many volunteer programs provide you with room, board and a small stipend in return for full-time work as a volunteer. Lutheran Volunteer Corps (LVC) offers opportunities for those over 21 to give a year of full-time urban service in a supportive community living situation. Contact LVC at 1226 Vermont Ave. NW, Wash., DC 20005. (202) 387-3222, staff@lutheranvolunteercorps.org
www.lutheranvolunteercorps.org

For More Information:

National Interreligious Service Board for Conscientious Objectors (NISBCO)

1830 Connecticut Ave. NW
Washington, D.C. 20009-5732
(202) 483-2220
ccw@centeronconscience.org
www.centeronconscience.org

**American Friends Service Committee
National Youth and Militarism Program**
1501 Cherry Street, Philadelphia, PA 19102
(215) 241 7176
youthmil@afsc.org
www.afsc.org/youthmil.htm

Central Committee For Conscientious Objectors (CCCO)
405 14th St. #205
Oakland, CA 94612
(510) 465-1617
info@objector.org
www.objector.org

War Resisters League
339 Lafayette St.
New York, NY 10012
(212) 228-0450
wrl@warresisters.org
www.warresisters.org/

Lutheran Peace Fellowship (LPF) offers a variety of expertise, encouragement, and resources on peace and justice concerns. LPF's services include forums, workshops, leadership training, print and electronic resources, and advocacy support on such topics as conflict transformation, world hunger, youth and nonviolence, racial and economic justice, and biblical perspectives on peacemaking.

Lutheran Peace Fellowship
1710 11th Ave., Seattle, WA 98122
(206) 720-0313 lpfyouth@gmail.com
lpf@ecut.org www.LutheranPeace.org

YOUTH AND THE MILITARY

- **What do I believe about war and peace?**
- **Should I register for the draft?**
- **Should I serve in the military?**



Lutheran Peace Fellowship

What do I believe about war and peace?

For 2000 years, many Christians have seen military service as an appropriate and honorable calling. For other Christians, including much of the early church, our faith calls us to refrain from all violence, including military service. Points of view on this issue vary widely.

Why is it important that you think about this now? As a young man or woman in the U.S., you have decisions to make with regard to military service. Due to a 1980 presidential proclamation, all males age 18 through 26 must register with the Selective Service System.

Though women are not currently required to register, Congress has the power to include women in the draft. Plans for a draft of health care workers include women; women already make up 15% of the military.

The year that you turn 20, you become a member of the first group to be drafted in case of war. Even if you choose not to serve in the military now, the legal requirement for the draft requires a decision. **Here are your options:**

- register
- register, but seek recognition as a conscientious objector
- refuse to register as a matter of conscience

Should I serve in the military?

If you are considering military service, you face a number of important questions. First, remember that the job of military recruiters is to promote the military and meet their recruitment goals (the Pentagon spends over \$2 billion a year on recruitment). It can be easy to forget that the main purpose of the military is to prepare for and fight wars, not to provide civilian job training or college financial aid. As human

beings, citizens, and Christians, we are called to careful and prayerful decision-making.

Two Common Misconceptions

Two promises typically made to young people by military recruiters are job training and money for college. If these are important incentives, you would be wise to check the websites of any of the organizations listed on the back of this brochure for more information on the many ways these commitments may not be met. You may want to explore alternatives to military service, such as those outlined on the flap of this brochure.

Note: Your enlistment agreement will say that your status, pay, benefits, and responsibilities in the military can change without warning and regardless of any promises in your agreement.

The Delayed Entry Program

If you have enlisted to serve in the military through the Delayed Entry Program (DEP), many recruiters will tell you that you cannot get out of it. The truth is that you are not considered a member of the military until you arrive at basic training, no matter what a recruiter tells you.

Regardless of the military program you might be considering, *consult at least one of the groups listed below for more information and advice on talking with recruiters.* Because there is a sales job, it is important to be prepared and knowledgeable.

Should I register for the draft?

Registration for the military draft is not a neutral action. Registering includes involvement in the message that it is acceptable or appropriate to threaten or take the lives of others as a response to the threats and challenges a country faces.

Reasons for Not Registering

- **Principle of Nonviolence** – Some young people oppose registration as a matter of conscience; believing it is wrong to serve a system that helps make war possible.
- **Principle of Liberty/Personal Cost** – The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that conscription is justified only on the basis of a compelling national defense reason. Without such a compelling reason, some feel it is wrong to burden youth with penalties for not registering.
- **No recognition of Conscientious Objection** – In past generations, those who registered could apply for conscientious objector status right after registering. But currently one can't apply for this status until he is about to be drafted.

If you decide to register, but oppose participation in war, write that on the registration form and make a copy for your own records. Contact NISBCO (over) for more information on documenting your conscientious objection beliefs; this will be necessary should the draft be initiated.

If you decide not to register, the consequences of breaking the law should be faced now. There's a slight chance you might be prosecuted for non-registration. It's almost certain that you would be denied federal assistance for higher education and job training, as well as employment with the federal government. Some states have similar penalties, including regulations barring conscientious objectors to draft registration from registering at state universities.

If you choose to conscientiously object from registration or service in the military, the groups listed on the back of this brochure can help support you in your decision. NISBCO and CCCO both provide free counseling services by phone, mail, and e-mail, and offer publish aids to help you think through what you believe and what you might do.