

AT QUAKER HOUSE, WAR IS OUR BUSINESS. AND BUSINESS (UNFORTUNATELY) IS GOOD.



Dean Holland, Quaker House's first CO and first Director.

Dear Friends,

Fayetteville, NC—At Quaker House we mostly hear from GIs by phone. But sometimes we get letters, like this one, which came hand-written on lined notebook paper last December:

"My name is D—, I'm writing from Afghanistan. On Nov. 1, 2001 I started my experience in the military (Army). At first, I was inspired by the goings on of Sept. 11. I felt it was a way I could contribute to my country. So I enlisted. After 23 combat missions, serving with the 82d Airborne, I have come to a different place. I find my feelings have changed about the best way to make a difference.

"I graduated from the Infantry School, Fort Benning. from there I graduated from Airborne School and moved my wife P----- and two children to Fort Bragg. Then I was still a believer in my decision to join the Army. In June 2002 I was deployed to fight the war on terrorism in Afghanistan. the change occurred after the combat missions. Just seeing the people and children's faces I realized that I can't pull the trigger. I'm writing to request a copy of the Conscientious Objector regulations for the Army. I hope to talk to one of your counselors when I get back to the States, around December ——. Thank you."

This GI did talk to us when he got back. We worked with him as he wrote his CO claim (with answers to 25 probing official questions), and have walked with him through the lengthy process of interviews and investigations which follows. We don't know yet if his claim will be accepted (most are not), or what will happen if it isn't.

GI Counseling is how Quaker House got started in 1969, in response to a plea from Dean Holland, a Vietnam-era GI at Fort Bragg, for help in filing a CO claim. He had to hitch-hike eighty miles to Chapel Hill Meeting to find this help. Other meetings pitched in, organized Quaker House to continue the work, and named Dean Holland its first Director. In 2003, Quaker House remains as the only Friends peace project located by a major military base. Support from

meetings and Friends has kept it going, and is still very much needed.

After the Vietnam War and the draft ended, some thought that Quaker House and its GI counseling wouldn't be needed anymore.

Not so. Dissatisfaction with the military among "volunteers" has been widespread: thirty to forty per cent do not complete their enlistments. In 1994, Quaker House joined other GI counseling groups to create the GI Rights Hotline, to channel counseling calls through a nationwide toll-free number. (1-800-394-9544 —pass it on!)

Calls to the Hotline and Quaker House have burgeoned since then, as shown by this table:

Call Statistics for Quaker House and The GI Rights Hotline

2002 Total GI Hotline calls nationwide: **21,218**
(23 % more than in 2001)

Quaker House share of this total: **4,067** calls.
(30 % more than in 2001)

2001 -- Total Hotline calls: 17,267 – QH total: 3128
(1999-2000 data incomplete)

1998 Total GI Hotline calls: 4140 – QH total: 1872

1997 Total GI Hotline calls: 3294 – QH total: 1231

1996 Total GI Hotline Calls: 1734 – QH total: 727

560 % growth in Quaker House calls since 1996.

1225 % growth in GI Hotline calls since 1996.
(The Hotline began in 1994.)

More about the GI Rights Hotline at:

www.girights.com

Nowadays most of our GI counseling is done by two experienced activists: Steve Woolford and Lenore Yarger. They work the phones from their home, a Catholic Worker



Steve and Lenore, our counselor-activists

project in Siler City, NC.

But we do more than GI counseling here. We also serve as a Friendly listening post, reporting to Friends from the contentious border between Military America and its increasingly alienated and anxious civilian counterpart.

In the early years, we helped dissident GIs publish underground papers and plan antiwar rallies. We also fended off FBI and Army Intelligence spying, and overcame the firebombing of our first house in May, 1970.

With the onset of the “war on terror,” Quaker House has been put on a “war footing,” to cope with swelling GI call volume and to do our bit as a 21st century center for peace education and action. This has been expensive, and the need for Friends’ support has also increased.

Steve and Lenore have organized many peace vigils and nonviolent protests, earning a number of arrests along the way. Quaker House Director Chuck Fager works with a local peace group, and has conducted many peace workshops for Friends meetings.

Quaker House is also gathering resources on peace concerns on our expanding website: <http://www.quaker.org>. Among these are classic Quaker texts dealing with the Peace Testimony, its history and challenges, as well as current analyses of the impact of militarism on society at large, and on the GIs and families who bear its burden directly.

We’ve also created the **Draft-O-Meter** to help monitor the prospects for the return of the draft. Although the Defense Department and the White house currently oppose reviving a military draft, it’s not hard to see how the demands

of maintaining US “preeminence,” ensuring “homeland security,” and hunting “evildoers” will steadily build the demands on US military forces, demands which are already intense, and taking a heavy toll on GIs and their families.

Where’s the pointer on the **Draft-O-Meter** showing the level of risk today? Frankly, given the lead time for this magazine, and the breakneck pace of events, we have to leave it to you to fill in. But the trend is clear enough: with more war and more terror, the odds that a draft will become unavoidable continue to mount, whether the current Pentagon brass like the idea or not.

Working to serve GIs and Friends, in the face of all these issues and rapidly-changing events, has increased our costs at Quaker House, and the need for continued Friends support is greater than ever. We hope you’ll join our mailing list, to keep up with our work, and lend your support and your prayers. Please send in the form below, or contact us online.



Chuck Fager, Quaker House Director

Chuck Fager, Director

Dear Quaker House:

Please add me to your mailing list.

Name _____

Address _____

_____ **ZIP** _____

Here’s a tax-deductible contribution \$ _____

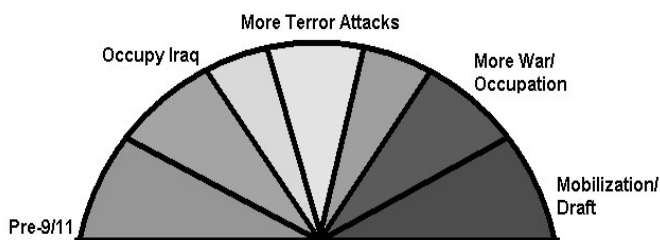
Return to: Quaker House

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Draft-O-Meter