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Dear Marcia,

WOW!! Do you realize what kind of an assignment you laid upon us?
I think it would take a psychiatrist to unravel my part in this, but I
will get my bad-speller's dictionary and input what I can and let you
do the analyzing.

I'll start with a few of the preliminary questions:

When were you in service? How long? Please give dates, if possible.
From 25 Oct 1951 to 25 Sep 1953, which is about 23 months, on the
active time of service.

Where?

Basic Training at Ft. Meade, Maryland, between Washington, D.C. and
Baltimore from Oct 1951 to about Apr 1952.

MOS (Military Occupational Sepciality) training at Fort Sam Houston,
near San Antonio, TX. This was Medical Field Laboratory Training from
about May 1952 to Sep 1952.

Overseas duty in Europe, at Landstuhl, near Kaiserslautern, Germany
in the Rheinland Pfalz with the 4th Army Medical Field Lab from Sep 52
to Sep 53.

Specific duties: Lab work in serology. I did much testing of serums
for syphilis. Other accompanying duties included driving jeep to
transport people arriving or leaving, on alerts, etc. I also
participated in a small way in a research project involving development
of an effective delousing agent. I acted as host to maintain the lice
population.

During my entire experience, those of the non-combatant category
were, of course, in the definite minority. To my pleasant surprise we
were not extremely abused nor objects of ridicule. The degree of
disfavor depended in some ways upon the extent that we were willing to
cooperate. Failure to do some chores such as transportation or
communication, for example, during rifle range -- though we were
already carefully exempted from actual fire-arms training -- might
result in some censure and/or extra KP duty. Walt Tieszen, for
example, who was in the same unit as I during my tour of duty, but
lived off-base after basic training, drew the line a little differently
than I did, and consequently did considerably more KP duty. In general,
the cadre as well as other servicemen pretty much respected our
positions although they were sometimes severe with those who were
perceived as shirking their duties or responsibilities.

Not being a volunteer, regular army, nor actively pursuing advancement in rank, I only advanced to Private First Class, which was all right with me. I did not want a supervisory role.

Close contact and shared experiences with some other servicemen resulted in some friendships during all phases of duty although the more lasting and deeper ones were from lab training and during the European experience. In those phases our backgrounds and interests were more similar than those of the basic training phase. I still exchange Christmas cards just to keep in touch with a couple of buddies of that time.

During the time at Ft. Sam Houston, I attended a Baptist church in San Antonio, where Dr. Wilbur was pastor, and I obtained an interview with him to explore some question or reservation I had about my involvement in the military as a "medic", so I must have had some concern about my position in the matter! I don't recall the details of the encounter, but I guess he must have allayed my questions at least to some extent. They also had a very active and engaging youth group who actively welcomed me and some others in their activities, including Sunday lunches, and some picnics.

Our unit was supposed to be a kind of showcase, so some of their regulations were a bit bizarre. A buddy and I were playing catch with a softball once on a grassy park-like area just a short distance from the road. The weather was warm so we took our shirts off. Wouldn't you know, we were gigged and grounded for about ten days being restricted to a confined area -- which allowed us to pitch horseshoes and to go to and from the mess hall -- except for our regular classes and duties. Also, we had the weekly GI Party to clean and shine the living quarters, latrine, etc. which ended with a highly polished floor, tightly strung bed covers, etc. This was in preparation for inspection on Saturday morning. Of course, after the party and until the inspection, you could not wear shoes on the floor nor sleep in the bunk! We sometimes felt tempted to plant razor blades into the wood above the doors to liven up the white glove inspection.

While at Landstuhl (4th Med. Field Lab), I took a night class in German at Kaiserslautern for a semester as an extension course out of the University of Maryland. It was an opportunity to get out of the "American enclave" and have at least some contact with some civilians. I also attended a couple of church services in Landstuhl although I didn't understand much of the language. I attended a concert in Kaiserslautern where the most dangerous part was surviving the crush to get ticket. The locals didn't seem to understand queuing or common courtesy. Among the numbers was the vocal rendition of The Blue Danube by Strauss.

Jim, a younger brother, during this time was at Backnang in the PAX program. They were involved in construction of apartment complexes or living quarters for refugees. The trip by train, by myself, was in interesting experience. Mannheim was still in considerable ruins. I don't recall if I had a train connection in Mannheim, but I am sure there was one at Stuttgart to get to Backnang. The cars were often

very crowded, its being on weekends, with standing room only. I visited him at Backnang several weekends and through his contacts, he, I, and Walt Tieszen visited a few times with the Blickensdorfers, a German family living at Kohlhof, a small village in the Pflaz. We had some meals there, visited a Jugend Treffen, attended a church service and a funeral. They also gave me some coffee cake to take back to the base. Although I couldn't speak the German with them as well as Jim, nor the low German as well as Walt Tieszen, it was still a welcome contact with German culture.

A highlight of my time in Europe was a tour through parts of Germany, Switzerland, France, Italy and Austria. Jim arranged our renting a Taunis Ford and we got at least some of the fuel through Army supplies, so Jim, Walt Tieszen, Walley Arrington, and I had the opportunity to see part of Europe that way.

During my time at Landstuhl, I had some occasion to read, reflect and attempt to sort out values and basic convictions. I remember reading a book by a Russian philosopher, Berdaev (sp?). I don't remember the specifics, but he made pretty good sense to me at the time. I was developing a growing awareness of the impossibility of separating the combatant from the non-combatant aspect of the military in the sense that without the support personnel of the military team, the combat troops could not function. Of course, the same conclusion can be drawn with regards to the entire Nationalism enterprise, including financial institutions, agricultural production, manufacturing, processing and transportation of goods, etc., so there is no complete escape from complicity.

I was developing a distinct dissonance in my participation in the overall military enterprise. In retrospect, I guess I was counting the days till I could complete the two years and apply for a change of classification rather than continue the next six years in the reserve. After receiving the honorable discharge from the army and receiving the orders to report to the U.S. Army Reserve Training Center in Newton, I applied for exemption for religious reasons from assignment to a Unit in the Ready Reserve.

I received the exemption and then pursued the course of changing my draft status from IAO to IO. Included is much of my correspondence involved in that effort. Part of this activity included a personal trip to Topeka to present my case to the Chief, Kansas Military District, accompanied by H. B. Schmidt, member of the Kansas State Counseling Committee for Religious Conscientious Objectors, another pastor and my brother, Leonard, who tells me that he went along to investigate possibilities for I-W service in Topeka. The military powers-that-be seemed to elect to put my case into a dormant file to allow it to become obsolete through time -- thus avoiding the assignment of the I-O status.

Our family's move to Canton just after my ninth birthday, shortly after my mother's death, out of the immediate environs of the Eden

Mennonite community and into the environs of an "Englischer" community; also out of a small one-room country school into a town school with larger classes, separate grades, and many teachers probably impacted upon my psyche in many ways. My immediate non-family friendships were with other-than-mennonite persons in school and with some affiliation with Methodists and others, although we usually drove the twenty miles to the home church of Eden. In those days, twenty miles seemed a long distance after spending all of my life just one and three-fourths miles from church.

The gathering clouds of war were rapidly approaching with the civil war in Spain, and then Germany's aggressions in 1938 and the bombing of Warsaw in 1939 with the ensuing hostilities of World War II. I especially remember the Warsaw bombine and the German treachery at that time. My older brothers were of draft age or close to it and there was some concern as to how it would affect us personally. Of course, the U.S. was not yet in the war directly, but the sides were rapidly being drawn. Patriotism was on the rise, German-bashing was increasing and there was intense polarization regards the innocent victimization of nations and people as opposed to the evil designs of the Germans, Italians, and Japanese. Being of what I thought to be German background and having the same name as the Luftwaffe chief, did not substantially contribute to a feeling of security and well-being.

Although most of the young men at Eden, after Pearl Harbor and the U.S. entry into the war, chose the traditional Peace Church response of CPS, I personally did not remember any specific endeavor on the part of our church to address the issue in a positive way in terms of instruction or counseling. Maybe I was considered too young to be included, but I was not aware of any such emphasis. I do remember that after Bill, older brother, joined the Air Force (I guess to avoid getting drafted into the infantry), he was severely disciplined and in effect excommunicated from our church.

What my brothers chose to do regarding the draft and service may be very much different than my perception of the same. My perceptions were pretty much as follows: Walt must have been too old and/or with family responsibilities and was exempted from service. Dan chose the conscientious Objector status and was assigned to CPS work building a dam in South Dakota and later transferred to work in a mental hospital in Pennsylvania, during which time he met his future wife, Grace. Apparently he became dissillusioned by the Hypocrisy of his colleagues in service and decided to change status and joined the Navy. Martha's fiance, Archer Sundgren, was in the Marine Corps and served in the Pacific Theatre. Herb registered as IAO (non-combatant for religious reasons) and after basic training was assigned as an MP(Military Police) and later as a counselor. I, Art, register as IAO. John registered as IAO and served in Korea in medical service, I understand as an ambulance driver. Len registered as IW and served in Topeka, I understand as a Public Health Lab Technician. Jim, with some financial support from home, served in PAX in Germany where he was involved with building housing for refugees, also during the Korean War era. I guess Harry escaped military service or alternate thereof. Larry joined the Navy--I don't know exactly why.

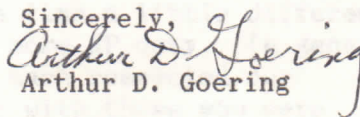
Some of the background for my experiences and decision making: In the Canton community and school during the war years:--1941 - 1945 (my high-school years), of course, propaganda was intense, patriotism was extreme--families of schoolmates, as well as our own, were intimately affected by dangers and losses of loved ones, etc. Dehumanization of the enemy was prevalent. School activities were geared to the war effort including some close-order drill led by a World War I veteran. Our band gave a concert at Shilling Air Force Base in Salina. The Methodist Church I attended sometimes in Canton had the honor roll of servicemen and was very patriotic in flavor. Frieda, a sister, was denied the right to vote because she was a CO. There was some yellow-painting and/or vandalism of some homes and/or businesses in town--Haury's Auto Supply was threatened. A schoolmate graduated a semester early to join or be drafted.

I remember that some of our family and friends attended an air show at Salina just after the war and saw some of the fighters fly by as well as the then-new jet engine fighter.

After graduation from high school with the draft question ever present, which made career decisions and/or further schooling indefinite, I almost decided to join the Air Force to get my service obligation out of the way. After the wheat planting, I guess I drove to Shilling AFB in Salina to possibly volunteer. Before I got through the initial paper work, (I guess you could call it) my conscience got the better of me and I felt very guilty so I just dropped it there, got into the car, and still made it back in time for the football game.

Subsequently I got a couple of short-term jobs--got a loan from Elva, oldest sister, started college at McPherson College, roomed with my brother, Herb, and some others at a professor's house for one semester. After that I got student deferment from the draft until after I graduated from Bethel in 1951. Then, again, I was at the mercy of the draft. School districts did not want to hire a teacher that would be drafted so I worked on a farm for a short time until I was drafted in October, 1951.

I still had a relatively naive view of my country's role in world affairs. I considered it as basically good and seriously concerned for the welfare of other nations and peoples as well as our own, therefore I decided that could enter the military on a limited non-combatant basis. Hopefully, I could get into the medical branch where I might be able to do something constructive. It was with that perspective that I was drafted and began my tour of duty. By the time I finished my two years of active duty, my perspective changed.

Sincerely,

Arthur D. Goering