

MENNONITE CENTRAL COMMITTEE

AGENCY FOR RELIEF AND OTHER CHRISTIAN SERVICES

TELEPHONE EPHRATA 3-4915 • CABLE ADDRESS: MENCENCOM



ORGANIZED 1920
INCORPORATED 1937

AKRON, PENNSYLVANIA

September 27, 1955

Vernon Harms, Route 2, Whitewater, Kansas
Arthur D. Goering, Peabody, Kansas
Garlan Haarer, Shipshewana, Indiana

Dear Brothers:

During recent months I have been in correspondence with each of you concerning your efforts to secure discharge from the Army Reserves on the ground of the convictions to which you have come as conscientious objectors. Each of you had received a denial after repeated efforts. The latest of these, according to the records which I have at hand, was the negative reply received by Vernon Harms after the request which he made on July 22, 1955, with an additional letter on August 4. The replies which each of you received varied somewhat in language but were to the same effect, namely: "There is no authority under which an individual may be relieved from his Reserve obligation by reason of being conscientiously opposed to military participation."

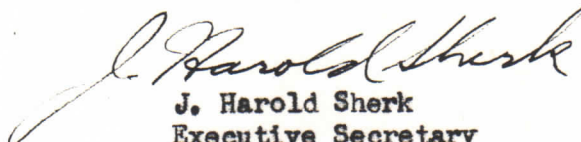
Of course, we had been aware of this situation before, but we also had the information that cases such as yours, if properly submitted, could be considered on an individual basis and action taken. The replies in each case indicated that no such individual attention had been given to your cases. After considerable reflection, I decided to write a letter to the Secretary of the Army, drawing attention to this situation as illustrated by your cases, and requesting further advice on procedures, and I took this letter to the Pentagon on September 21, 1955. There I conferred with a Chaplain Fitzgerald, from the Chief of Chaplain's Office, and with Lieutenant Colonel Richard E. Eggleton from the office of the Assistant Chief of Staff, G L.

I had met Colonel Eggleton when I was over at the Pentagon on August 11 in connection with one of these cases. From what I learned last Wednesday, as a result of the representations made at that time (and many more made earlier by several of us who have been concerned with this kind of situation) Colonel Eggleton had been assigned to do a study of this situation within the Army and to prepare a report and recommendations. Chaplain Fitzgerald and Colonel Eggleton showed me a copy of the report which he had prepared, apparently after considerable research, and we discussed it at some length. The gist of it is a recognition that provision should be made not only for the reassignment of persons who come conscientiously to the non-combatant position while they are still in the Reserves, but also for the discharge of persons who come essentially to the I-O position while still in

the Reserves. This report and recommendation is now under study by various offices concerned in the Pentagon. The persons with whom I conferred were hopeful that it would be adopted, but - knowing the difficulties we have encountered over such efforts in the past - I think that we must not allow our hopes to rise too high. However, from the fact that such a policy is actually now under consideration, and I have been invited to keep in touch with these officers until a decision is reached, I would suggest that probably your best course is simply to wait until a decision is reached and we can advise you further.

I feel sure that the consideration of cases such as yours, along with the general provision in the Selective Service Law for the recognition of conscientious objectors has helped a number of these officials to come to the conclusion that specific provision should be made for conscientious objectors in your position. But there is prejudice in high places too, as well as the fear that a specific provision for COs would invite a flood of spurious claims. We shall pray and labor to the end of securing a favorable provision for persons in your situation. In the meantime, I would appreciate word from you if there should be any new developments at your end.

Sincerely yours,


J. Harold Sherk
Executive Secretary
Peace Section

JHS:ep

cc: Cornelius Dyck
H. B. Schmidt
Paul Bender
Herbert Miller

MENNONITE CENTRAL COMMITTEE

AGENCY FOR RELIEF AND OTHER CHRISTIAN SERVICES

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ORGANIZED 1920
INCORPORATED 1937

AKRON, PENNSYLVANIA

January 10, 1957

Arthur D. Goering
3904 E. Elm
Wichita 6, Kansas

Dear Arthur:

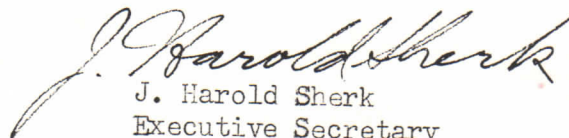
Thanks, cordially, for yours of January 5 regarding the status of your request for discharge from the Army Reserves. I note that you have no evidence of favorable action on your request since your reply to the routine Army Reserve questionnaire last November.

It appears to me that the nature of your reply was such that your request could have been reactivated and be in the works by now. However, it has been pending long enough so that there could be no impropriety in my making an inquiry concerning it the next time that I can go to the Pentagon.

For your encouragement, I might say that since I sent out my December 19 letter I have heard from Stanley Liechty, at Orrville, Ohio, to the effect that a discharge came through for him in November. So far I have no word from the other three to whom that letter was sent.

More later. In the meantime, be sure to let me know if you hear anything at all from the military.

Sincerely yours,


J. Harold Sherk
Executive Secretary
Peace Section

JHS:ep
cc: H. B. Schmidt
C. J. Dyck

Date Aug. 7, 1957

SELECTIVE SERVICE SYSTEM

Local Board No. 42
Marion County
Kansas

Court House
Marion, Kansas

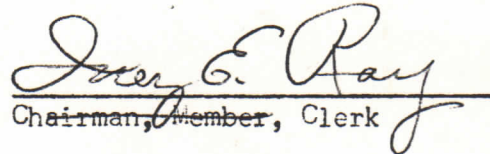
Subject: Standby Reserve Questionnaire, SSS Form No. 80

To: Arthur D. Goering,
Peabody, Kansas

1. A Standby Reserve Questionnaire is enclosed for your use. Information therein will be used by Selective Service in determining your availability for service in event of National emergency. Please read carefully the Notice to Standby reservist on page one, complete the form as accurately as possible and return in the addressed envelope by the date indicated at top of page one of the form.

2. Your cooperation in this matter will be greatly appreciated.

For the Local Board:


Chairman, Member, Clerk

Encl.

3904 East Elm
Wichita 6, Kansas
August 7, 1957

Local Board No. 42
Marion County
Court House
Marion, Kansas

Re: Availability for Standby Reserve

Dear Sirs;

You may recall your statement of July 28, 1954 on my behalf regarding my request for discharge from reserve status. I wish to thank you for the consideration you gave me in recognizing my religious convictions regarding military service.

My position at this time is the same as it was in 1954. Being a member of the armed forces produces a direct conflict with the core of my life's philosophy and my conscientious religious convictions. In light of the above statement, I feel that I can not be available for service in the armed forces but would accept an alternative service.

For the past several years I have been in correspondence with various army officials, but so far I have been unsuccessful in obtaining an official discharge. Your further consideration in this matter will be appreciated.

Sincerely yours,

Arthur D. Goering
Arthur D. Goering

HEADQUARTERS
KANSAS MILITARY DISTRICT
723 Quincy Street
Topoka, Kansas

ALKRP 201 - (Addressee)

16 October 1953

SUBJECT: Exemption from Assignment to a Unit of the Ready Reserve

TO: PFC Arthur D. Goering
Peabody, Kansas

1. It has been determined by the Chief, Kansas Military District that you should not be assigned to an active unit of the Ready Reserve due to the fact that assignment and participation would impose an undue hardship on you.

2. In the event conditions change in the future, and you are then able to participate in the Reserve Program, it is recommended that you accept an assignment to an active unit of the Ready Reserve in order not to remain vulnerable to recall to active duty as an individual in any emergency proclaimed by the President.

3. It is your responsibility to immediately report any change in your status to this Headquarters.

BY ORDER OF COLONEL GRIFFITH:

Copy furnished:
Head Advisor
Wichita Sub-Dist


WALTER TARBUTTON
Personnel Management Officer

HEADQUARTERS
KANSAS MILITARY DISTRICT
723 Quincy Street
Topeka, Kansas

AIKRP-201--(See Addressee)

JAN 6 1954

SUBJECT: Military Occupational Specialty

TO: Pfc Arthur D Goering
Peabody, Kansas

The following primary and secondary Military Occupational Specialties have been designated for you, based upon information submitted on your recent Army Reserve Qualification and Availability Questionnaire.

PRIMARY MOS

1858

Medical Laboratory Technician

SECONDARY MOS

BY ORDER OF COLONEL GRIFFITH:

Walter Tarbutton
WALTER TARBUTTON
Personnel Management Officer

Peabody, Kansas
July 17, 1954

Matthew 6:24 No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

After much study and prayer I am convinced that there is a conflict between my present draft status and true christianity as revealed and exemplified by Jesus in the New Testament. This conflict has become increasingly apparent to me and cause much internal debate and uneasiness of conscience. I wish, therefore, to change my status from 1A0 to 10. I have accepted and encouraged the position of non-resistance and love.

When I was drafted in 1951, I believed that military service was acceptable provided that it was in a non-combatant role as in the Medical Service Corps. I have since that time become painfully aware that the Medical Service Corps is not truly a non-combatant service, but with the motto "To Conserve Fighting Strength" it is an integral part of the Army Fighting Team interested largely, if not primarily, in keeping men in fighting condition. Granted, it does good wholesome work, but with the fundamental motive in mind of keeping men in fighting trim. I can, therefore, no longer remain in this organization -- the army -- with a clear conscience. It can not be disputed that the function of any army is to apply coercion through fear and, if necessary, to destroy plunder and kill, and that the best army is the one which can do this most effectively.

Although the objective of the efforts of the Army may be wholesome -- the preservation of liberty, freedom, and the democratic way of life as opposed to slavery and the communistic dictatorial way of life -- the means employed in the attainment of these goals are of such a nature as to defeat the very things for which they are striving. The means employed must be commensurate with the ends desired. The employment of military might can not ultimately bring about real peace, friendship, understanding, security, love. These can be brought about only by friendship, understand and love.

The Army and its methods are, therefore, as I see them, in conflict with God as revealed most fully by Jesus Christ. Where such a conflict arises, I must choose God. To a Christian, loyalty to Jesus and his teachings is more fundamental and important than any other.

My case is built upon Christ's words and life including:

St. Matthew 22:37 Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

St. Matthew 22:39 And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

From the sermon on the mount:

Matthew 5:43-44 Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy.

But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;

Matthew 6:24 No men can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

My position as stated above has been formulated without any pressure or coercion from my church, or any other organization or individual, but as a result of my search for the truth and through prayer. I am, however, a member of the Mennonite Church which has for centuries advocated and encouraged the position of non-resistance and love.

In view of my position, I wish to forego ^{all} further G. I. benefits and willingly give up my military rank.

In light of the above statement, I request that my status be changed from 1A0 to 10, and I am prepared to meet any consequences which may arise from this action.

Arthur D. Goering
Arthur D. Goering

Local Board No. 42
Marion County

JUL 28 1954

Court House
Marion, Kansas

Mr. Arthur D. Goering,
Peabody,
Kansas

Dear Mr. Goering:

Pursuant to a review of your file the local board has decided that inasmuch as you have completed your tour of duty as a 1-A-O man in the Armed Forces and as you have filed in this office a statement indicating that you are willing to forego your benefits under the G.I. Act and that you recognize the possibility of later being called for Civilian Service as a man classified as 1-O, the local board will interpose no objection to your discharge from reserve status and is willing to recommend such discharge if requested by the Kansas Military District.

By Direction of the Local Board:

Inez E. Ray, Clerk

HEADQUARTERS
KANSAS MILITARY DISTRICT
723 QUINCY STREET
TOPEKA, KANSAS

ALKRP 201- GOERING, Arthur D.
ER 55 190 598

8 September 1954

SUBJECT: Discharge from the Army Reserve

TO: PFC Arthur D Goering, Ameds-USAR
Peabody, Kansas

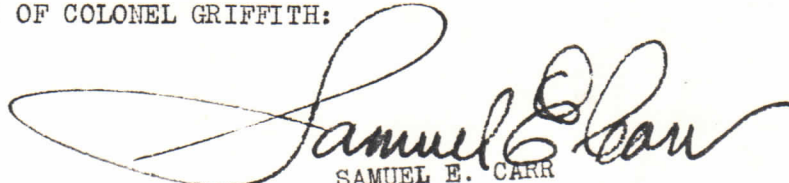
1. Reference is made to your recent request for discharge from the Army Reserve.

2. The Commanding General, Fifth Army, has advised that you are not qualified for discharge from the Army Reserve under the provisions of paragraph 3b (21), SR 140-177-1.

3. If applicable, discharge may be requested under the provisions of paragraph 3b (26), SR 140-177-1, which is quoted for your information:

"Upon application by an obligated reservist for the purpose of pursuing theological studies, obtaining ordination, and/or the taking of final vows in a religious order. Each such application will be processed as an individual action through The Adjutant General, Department of the Army, ATTN: AGPR-F. Each will be accompanied by a statement or certificate, signed by the appropriate official of the seminary or religious order, showing that in order to proceed further with his training and/or acceptance into a religious order it is required that the applicant be separated from any military status he may have. The document must further state that the applicant is otherwise fully qualified and acceptable to further pursue his religious training, and must give the date upon which it is anticipated he will qualify for ordination or the taking of final vows. Discharge will not be effected prior to receipt of reply from The Adjutant General".

BY ORDER OF COLONEL GRIFFITH:



Copy furnished:
Mr H. B. Schmidt
Route 2, Newton, Kans.

SAMUEL E. CARR
Captain AGC
Asst Adjutant

SUBJECT: Request for Discharge from the U. S. Army Reserve

TO: Chief, Kansas Military District
723 Quincy Street
Topeka, Kansas

1. In accordance with the provisions of paragraph 3b (21), SR 140-177-1, it is requested that I be discharged from the U. S. Army Reserve. The following personnel data is submitted:

- a. Name: Arthur D. Goering
- b. Grade: Private First Class
- c. Service number: US 55 190 598
- d. Present assignment: 5105 USAR Control Group (Reinforcement)
- e. Current term of service: (active) Oct. 25, 1951 - Sept. 24, 1953
(reserve) Sept. 25, 1953 - Oct. 24, 1959
- f. Date of expiration: October 24, 1959

2. Request for discharge is based or predicated upon the following conditions: My request for discharge is based upon a deep religious conviction that any participation in warfare is in conflict with the life and teachings of Christ and what he expects of His followers, of which I endeavor to be one. Holding this conviction, I can no longer with a clear conscience continue to be a part of the army. A more detailed statement of my conviction is attached to this request for discharge.

Name:

Grade:

Service Number:

Incls.

- 1. A personal statement of my convictions
- 2. A statement from my Local Board No. 42, Marion County, Kansas
- 3. A statement from my pastor
- 4. A statement from my Church Board
- 5. A statement of the official position of the Mennonite Church

Dear Rev. Schmidt,

First I wish to thank you for what you have already done on my case, and now would ask further counsel.

Enclosed is a carbon copy of a letter I received yesterday from the Kansas Military District in Topeka informing me that I can not get a release under the provisions previously stated (paragraph 3 b (2), S. R. 140-177-1. I forgot just how that paragraph reads and would surely like to check on that. ~~They state that I could request for discharge under another for other provisions as stated in the letter;~~ namely, if I were studying and intended to go into the formal ministry.

This would be of small consequence if I felt the Lord's calling me into the ministry, but I am to teach and am pursuing studies in that field of endeavor.

Do you think ^(for me) that it would be wise to prepare a statement reminding them that the teachings and life of Christ, God's perfect revelation, especially crystallized in the Sermon on the Mount does not introduce a double standard of morality and conduct setting the ministers apart from the laity, but rather that all who would follow Jesus must sincerely strive to follow His precepts and example, ministers and laymen alike? It is my duty to live in Christ outside as well as inside the formal ministry.

As I see the situation now, I can only advise them of my position and leave the rest to them, come what may.

I am attending Wichita University beginning September 13 and my address will be % Mrs H. S. Keagy

1537 Fairmont
Wichita, Kansas.

In the event of a conference

6. We ought carefully to abstain from any agitation, propaganda or activity that tends to promote ill-will or hatred among nations, which leads to war, but rather endeavor to foster good will and respect for all nations, peoples and races, being careful to observe a spirit of sincere neutrality when cases of war and conflict arise.

7. We ought not to seek to make a profit of war and war-time inflation, which would mean profiting from the shedding of the blood of our fellow men. If, however, during war time excess profits do come into our hands, such profits should be conscientiously devoted to charitable purposes, such as the bringing of relief to the needy and the spreading of the Gospel of peace and love.

Our Substitution for War

In so far as our convictions are based on religious principles, in which we hold that war is contrary to the spirit, life and teachings of Christ, who renounced the weapons of worldly passion and used methods of love and self-sacrifice in their place, we therefore express our willingness, as a substitute for carnal warfare, at all times to aid in the relief of those who are in need, distress or suffering, regardless of the danger in which we may be placed in bringing such relief, or of the cost which may be involved in the same. We are also willing to render such services as housing, road making, farming, forestry, hospitalization, and recreational work during time of peace as well as during time of war. Whenever we render such service it shall always be our purpose to spread the Gospel of Christ by word as well as deed.

An Expression of Appreciation

We want to express our appreciation to the governments of the United States and Canada to which we are grateful in that they have recognized our desire to exercise the freedom of our conscience in not bearing arms, or taking any part of service in the military machine, and that, in lieu of such service, we render service of national importance to our country and relief to those who are in need, distress or suffering at home or abroad in the war zones. We also pray that the blessing and guidance of a beneficent God may continue to rest upon these nations, their institutions, and their people.

A STATEMENT OF THE POSITION OF THE GENERAL CONFERENCE MENNONITE CHURCH

On Peace, War, Military Service, and Patriotism
as approved by the General Conference at
Souderton, Pa., August 17-22, 1941, and
reaffirmed in 1950

In view of the present troubled state of world affairs, and the present conflict ... which threatens the peace of the world, we as representatives of the General Conference Mennonite Church, desire to set forth in the following statement our faith and convictions concerning participation in war, military service and our concept of patriotism.

In stating our convictions, we establish no new doctrine among us, but merely reiterate an age-old faith of the church which has been held precious by our forefathers from the time that the church was founded in Reformation times in Switzerland (1525) and in Holland (1533), and which we have set forth on a number of former occasions since our settlement in America.

Our Position on Peace and War

1. Our peace principles are rooted in Christ and His Word, and in His strength alone do we hope to live a life of peace and love toward all men.

2. As followers of Christ, the prince of Peace, we believe His Gospel to be a gospel of peace, requiring us as His disciples to be at peace with all men, to live a life of love and good will, even toward our enemies, and to renounce the use of force and violence in settling our problems as contrary to the spirit of our Saviour and Master. These principles we derive from such Scripture teachings as: "Love your enemies;" "Do good to them that hate you;" "Resist not evil;" "My Kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world then would my servants fight;"

"Put up thy sword into its place; for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword;" "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves;" "If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink; for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head;" "Be not overcome of evil but overcome evil with good;" "The servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle to all men;" "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal;" "Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: who when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not;" "Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing; but contrariwise blessing;" "If a man say I love God and hateth his brother, he is a liar. . . . And this commandment have we from him, that he who loveth God love his brother also;" and other similar passages, as well as from the whole tenor of the Gospel.

3. Peace within the heart as well as toward others is a fruit of the Gospel. Therefore, he who professes peace must at all times and in all relations with his fellow men live a life that is in harmony with the Gospel.

4. We believe that war is altogether contrary to the teaching and spirit of Christ and the Gospel; that therefore war is sin, as is all manner of carnal strife; that it is wrong in spirit and method as well as in purpose, and destructive in its results. Therefore, if we profess the principle of peace and nevertheless engage in warfare and strife, we as Christians become guilty of sin and fall under the condemnation of Christ the righteous judge.

Our Concept of Patriotism

As members of an historic peace church we love our country and sincerely work for its highest welfare. True love for our country does not mean hatred of others. It is our conviction that only the application of the principles of peace, love, justice, liberty, and international good will makes for the highest welfare of our country; and the highest welfare of our country must harmonize with the highest welfare of humanity everywhere. Our faith is in security through love, protection through good will; and for such we are willing to make the necessary sacrifice. We are opposed to war as a method of settling disputes because it is un-Christian, destructive of our highest values, and sows the seed of future wars. We feel that we are true patriots

because we build upon the eternal principles of right which are the only foundation of stable government in our world community.

Our Position on Military Service

In the light of the above principles of the Scriptures, we are constrained as followers of Christ to abstain from all military service and all direct means in support of war. Specifically, our position entails the following commitments:

1. We can have no part in carnal warfare or conflict between nations, nor in strife between classes, groups or individuals. We believe that this means that we cannot bear arms personally nor directly aid those who do so, and that, as a consequence, we cannot accept service under the military arm of the government, whether it be combatant or non-combatant, which ultimately causes us to be responsible for the destruction of the life, health, and property of our fellow men. This applies to all wars whether they be designated defensive or offensive.

2. On the same grounds consistency requires that we do not serve during war time under civil organizations temporarily allied with the military in the prosecution of the war, which, under military orders, become a part of the war system in effect, even in method and spirit, however beneficial their peacetime activities may be.

3. We feel that we cannot consistently take part in the financing of war operations through the purchase of war bonds, and we are very sensitive to making voluntary contributions to organizations or activities which may indirectly make us supporters of war and the military program.

Instead, we urge that we make our contributions to civilian and church organizations which are directly engaged in administering relief to those in distress, or to other constructive enterprises.

4. We cannot knowingly sanction the participation in the manufacture of munitions and weapons of war whether in peace time or in war time.

5. We can have no part in military training in schools and colleges or in any other form of peacetime preparation for service as part of the war system.

HEADQUARTERS
KANSAS MILITARY DISTRICT
723 QUINCY STREET
TOPEKA, KANSAS

ALKRP 201- GOERING, Arthur D.
ER 55 190 598

23 November 1954

SUBJECT: Request for Discharge

TO: PFC Arthur D Goering
Peabody, Kansas

1. Reference is made to your letter, dated 5 October 1954, to The Adjutant General, Department of the Army, Washington 25, D. C., requesting discharge from the Army Reserve.

2. After careful consideration, it has been determined that you are not eligible for discharge from the Army Reserve for the reasons stated in your request.

3. Current regulations provide, in cases of this nature, for the discharge of obligated Reservists for the purpose of pursuing theological studies, obtaining ordination, and/or taking of final vows in a religious order. Such applications are processed through The Adjutant General, Department of the Army, and each application must be accompanied by a statement or certificate, signed by the appropriate official of the Seminary or religious order, showing that in order to proceed further with his training and/or acceptance into a religious order it is required that the applicant be separated from any military status he may have.

4. The Adjutant General has advised that your case does not meet the requirements for discharge under the provisions outlined in paragraph 3, above.

BY ORDER OF COLONEL GRIFFITH:


WALTER TARBUTTON
Personnel Management Officer