Journal of the Catholic Peace Fellowship

# **The New Recruits**

Beneath the multi-billion dollar ad campaign, the reality is that our children are being sought for war

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How can the Church respond?



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# letters

We were asked to build a program to assist parents and youth in our diocese to understand the Catholic traditions on war and conscience. We are responding to the recruitment of vulnerable youth by the military.

I was then made aware of the program that you have put together for dioceses, as well as the "statement of conscience" to help youth prepare for a draft, should that return.

I would like to learn more about your program. It sounds like it does much or most of what we had in mind.

-Stan Taylor

I have been struggling with the issue of conscientious objection for a while now and am currently working towards building an application.

I am currently deployed and finding it very hard to continue as things are. It has been suggested that I wait until we redeploy to the states to submit the application but I'm not sure it can wait that long. It is very hard to wake each day feeling that what you are going to do is wrong and wondering how many may die because of what you do. God Bless. -U.S. Army Specialist Well, I'm 51 years old and this is becoming the most worrisome time in my life since the Cuban Missile crisis, what with the news out of Lebanon/Israel. The Gospels and all the Marian apparitions of the 20th century seem to agree: *repent, fast, and pray.* On the other hand, there's a guy here at work that keeps assuring me it's a great time to buy gold. -Will Bogdanowicz

Thank you so very much and God bless you and your organization for all that you do! My son Kyle [who is now out of the military] is doing much, much better, working full time and looking at doing some online college courses. You asked me to update you on what happened here it is. Can you believe attorneys charge outrageous prices and do not supply the correct information like you do. God bless you and I so thank Him for answering my prayers with your organization. Thank you again. My son would have committed suicide had you not helped us. You cannot put a price on what you did for me and my son.

-Deb Getz

Please send letters to our P.O. Box or to staff@catholicpeacefellowship.org

# Catholics and Muslims: The Future of an Alliance



A t around one billion each, the Catholic and Muslim communities share a tremendous responsibility for the future of world peace. If violence and threats of violence continue to reign in international affairs, it will be in part because our respective communities have failed to forge an alliance dedicated to finding alternatives to war.

Is hope for such a Catholic-Muslim alliance misguided? Hardly. Recent history offers great hope for just such a pairing. At the United Nations, the Vatican has regularly been aligned with traditionally Muslim nations—and against many Western nations—on questions such as abortion and "population control." In the fight against pornography and the disintegration of public morality, Catholics and Muslims have been the world's strongest coalition.

In 2003, when Pope John Paul II became the foremost critic of the Iraq War, the respect that Muslims already felt for John Paul became even more evident. Arab Muslims took heart that not all Christians seemed hell-bent on making war in their lands.

This growing trust was threatened this fall with Pope Benedict XVI's controversial speech at Regensburg. Some Muslims felt the only Western ally they had was now turning against them. The situation seemed grave, and many even feared for the pope's life on his trip to Turkey.

Now things have calmed a bit. Many Muslim leaders and scholars accepted Benedict's invitation to the Vatican for dialogue. The pope made clear he did not intend to insult Muslims. He affirmed the teaching of the Second Vatican Council. In *The Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christians Religions (Nostra Aetate)*, the Council Fathers declare that Muslims "adore the one God" and "value the moral life and worship God especially through prayer, almsgiving and fasting. (NA, #3)

Nonetheless, the situation remains tenuous. The Regensburg episode brought to the surface a latent belief among many Christians that Islam is, in fact, "evil and inhuman." Some Catholics expressed disappointment that, following the Muslim outcry over his remarks, the pope had "backed down." Many continue to hope for a papal condemnation of everything Islamic.

In the face of this, what can ordinary Catholics like us do to promote solidarity and reconciliation? How can we work toward the alliance of Catholics and Muslims that seems vital to peace? We will address these questions more thoroughly in the next *Sign of Peace*, but here we offer three suggestions.

First, we can continue the Christian critique of violence on theological grounds. A key point made at Regensburg was that religious violence is incompatible with reason. We thus can ask if political violence is any more compatible. Granted, questioning violence has not, historically, been a strength of the American Church. We think with sadness of the prolonged and present silence of our bishops on the subject of the Iraq War. But clearly, if we are to call Muslims to a critique of violence, we must continue to examine those voices in our own tradition that continue to justify violence.

Indeed, the voice that did more than any other to convince U.S. Catholics to support bloodshed and bombing in Iraq—the voice of George Weigel—was among the first to use Regensburg to critique Islam for a tendency to use theology for violence. If we as a Church are to move toward Christ's way of peace, our own voices for violence must give way to the Voice of Him who preaches peace.

Second, we can offer concrete support to Muslims who are in fact working for justice through nonviolent means. One such group is the Muslim Peacemaker Teams (MPT). Allied with Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT), MPT works in places like Iraq for concrete alternatives to terrorism. We have great hope in their personalist approach; they can be supported by contacting CPT.

Finally, in our local communities, we can show Muslims what our faith, at its best, looks like. We can do this by acting together with Muslims on local issues, and asking them to help us in our own need; there are few better ways to forge bonds with people than to ask them for help and to listen to them.

Is all of this accommodationist, being weak and cowed by the violence of heathens? No, and we do not suggest that an authentic return to the way of Jesus—with its hard choices for peace and simplicity—will bring total security. Yet the current practices of many Western Christians do not seem marked by security. Worse yet, they do not seemed marked by the Gospel. —The Editors

# **Peace Briefs** News Compiled by the CPF Staff

#### Ten Excellent Reasons Not to Join the Military by Elizabeth Weill-Greenberg Reviewed by Janine Schwab

This pocket-sized book offers ten essays on military service and the war in Iraq for young people to consider when making decisions about enlistment. Each essay in itself should be more than enough to give one pause before signing up. Taken togeth-



er, the essays create a damning picture of today's military and how it treats servicemembers, veterans and other victims of war. The reasons, which range from "You may be killed" to "You have other choices" are meant to actually dissuade young people from enlisting. They carry an edgy and persuasive tone that is refreshing.

Each essay offers anecdotes and stories that are heart-wrenching and horrible, but uplifting as well. Since so many of the experiences are particular to the experience of Iraq War veterans such as Adele Kubein's account of her daughter's injuries, the book might not stand the test of time. There are notable exceptions. Cindy Sheehan, whose son died in Iraq after being lied to by a recruiter, has crafted an appeal to the hearts of readers that is powerful and timeless. "They never tell you that you may die and put your mom in hell. Don't do it. It's not worth it." Tod Ensign, responsible for the chapter on long-term health consequences due to military neglect and misconduct manages nicely to place Iraq war experiences within the context of a long history of official military policy to do harm to its own personnel.

The final and most important chapter on other options, however, fails to paint the big picture. Rae Abileah fails to grasp fully the challenges facing the recruited. Her essay detailing how she got merit scholarships to attend a private, select college after her college fund is spent down will ring hollow for the majority of potential enlistees who never had a college fund in the first place. Students with poor grades coming out of lousy schools and faced with attending underfunded state school systems and community colleges need more role models than are provided in this book. Young parents with children, college and high school dropouts, and those requiring social services like health care and housing need skills to access those resources in the civilian world without resorting to the enormous defense budget to cover basic needs, but none of this is addressed either in Abileah's essay or in the otherwise

excellent resource guide in the back of the book.

While Abileah admits that funding has been cut for federal financial aid, political and activist solutions for social and economic justice are not explored, even while the moral and social dilemna posed by war are portrayed as solvable by those activist veterans who engage in counter-recruitment and peace work. More emphasis on the reality of that moment of indecision -- of uncertainty about enlistment and what the future holds -would be helpful. The moral issues raised by the veterans are told with powerful insight but young people need more than the benefit of other people's hindsight. More stories by high school and college aged youth experiencing that moment of not knowing what they want, while being sure of what they don't want would have gone a long way in making this book hang together as a really effective counter-recruitment tool.

Janine Schwab is the Program Assistant for the American Friends' Service Committee (AFSC) National Youth and Militarism Program.

#### First Female CO Sentenced to Jail

On May 23, Katherine Jashinkski, the Army National Guard Conscientious Objector (CO) who publicly declared her refusal to deploy last November, was sentenced to 120 days confinement and a bad conduct discharge after her court martial.

Jashinshki is the first female CO to be jailed during the current war. Katherine applied for CO status in 2004. While her request was pending, Katherine made every effort to honorably uphold her enlistment contract. Her command recommended disapproval based on the timing of her application, and after almost a year, the Department of Army's CO Review Board ruled that she did not present clear and convincing evidence to be classified as a CO. Despite this decision, Jashinski's commanders testified that she was sincere



in her beliefs.

In the public statement she gave last November, Jashinski declared, "Because I believe so strongly in nonviolence, I cannot perform any role in the military....I have come to the point where I am forced to choose between my legal obligation to the Army and my deepest moral values." contract."

Katherine Jashinski

#### **First AWOL Soldier Returns from Canada**

Darrell Anderson, an Army soldier who fled to Canada rather than redeploy to Iraq, surrendered to military officials on Tuesday, October 3, after asking for leniency.

Anderson, 24, said he deserted the Army last year because he could no longer fight in what he believes is an illegal war. "I feel that by resisting I made up for the things I did in Iraq," Anderson said during a press briefing before he turned himself in at Fort Knox. "I feel I made up for the sins I committed in this war."



Anderson joined the Army in January 2003 and went to Iraq a year later with the 1st Armored Division. He was wounded and received a Purple Heart in 2004. He fled to Canada in early 2005 after receiving orders to return for a second tour of duty in Iraq, becoming a highly visible war critic and spokesman for Canadian peace groups. He decided to return home to the U.S. when he discovered he suf-

Darrell Anderson

fered from severe Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

Mike Schorsch of CPF accompanied Darrell and his family to Fort Knox, and was with him before he crossed the border into the U.S. on September 30. Because of technical issues involving the base of Darrell's unit at the time he went AWOL, he received an Other than Honorable discharge and no time in military prison.

#### **GI Rights Hotline**

CPF continues to operate one of the busier segments of the national GI Rights Hotline. According to figures sent out by the Central Committee for Conscientious Objectors, we received over 1,000 calls between January and June 2006, making these six months our busiest period to date.

One alarming trend we have noticed is an increase in the number of calls from military service members who tell us they had been asked to lie about disqualifying medical conditions when they signed up for the military. Now, two weeks, two months, or two years into their enlistments, they have found they cannot perform their duties—but they are afraid to suddenly disclose their lengthy medical histories for fear of punishment. The long list of conditions from which these soldiers suffer includes ADHD, scoliosis, a torn ACL, and a central nervous system condition that rendered one soldier paralyzed. None of these young men and women ever should have been allowed to join the military. Thankfully, CPF was able to help most callers get the discharges they sought.

Finally, we have heard from a growing number of

Army and Marine reservists who are getting called up for active duty right before the date their enlistment contracts were set to expire. So far, those soldiers who are in the Individual Ready Reserve (IRR) have not been facing harsh consequences for refusing to show up, but the military may change its policies on punishing IRR no-shows as the number of reservists refusing activation orders increases—which undoubtedly will happen as this war drags on.

#### **Catholic Activists in Lebanon**

In August, Kathy Kelly and Farah Marie Mokhtareizadeh of Voices in the Wilderness traveled to Beruit during the war between Israel and Lebanon. They went to join a civilian convoy of Lebanese, Syrian, Saudi, Tunisian, EU, and US citizens, in a response to a call by Lebanese civilians to bring aid to the areas of south Lebanon that had been cut off by the Israeli offensive.

More than 200 people gathered on August 12 at Martyrs' Square from nineteen different countries. The convoy was forcibly stopped at a checkpoint, and was not able to reach its destination. However, the group continues its campaign of civil resistance.

#### Irish/Scottish Catholic Peace Movement

In July, an Irish court acquitted five members of the Catholic Worker movement who had made their way into Shannon Airport in February 2003 and nonviolently damaged a U.S. Navy war plane.

The "Pit Stop Ploughshares," as the group named themselves, released the following statement before their action, done as an attempt to stop the U.S. invasion of Iraq: "We act inspired by Brigid and Irish traditions of healing and peacemaking. We carry out Christ's commandment to 'love our enemies' by nonviolently resisting the slaughter of their children. We attempt to enflesh the prophesy of Isaiah 2 and Micah 4 'to beat swords into ploughshares.""

In early September, the Vatican announced that it backed Scotland's Catholic Bishops' opposition to the Trident missile system and its possible replacement. In April, the eight Catholic bishops of Scotland appealed to the government of British Prime Minister Tony Blair not to replace the Trident nuclear missile system, to begin the decommissioning of such weapons of mass destruction and to divert funds spent on nuclear weapons to social development.

Archbishop Martino, who was formerly the Holy See's representative at the U.N. said, "....Nuclear weapons represent a grave threat to the human family; the social doctrine of the Church proposes the goal of a 'general, balanced and controlled disarmament' (Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, 508). In this light, the statement issued by the Bishops' Conference of Scotland constitutes a service and a reason to hope in a more peaceful world."

### Only say the word and I shall be healed Christ's Centurion

#### **BY NATE WILDERMUTH**

n December 16th, 2003, I was discharged from the United States Army as a conscientious objector. On Easter of 2004, I was confirmed into the Catholic Church.

"Therefore, the sacrament by which spiritual strength is conferred on the one born again makes him in some sense a front-line fighter for the faith of Christ. And because fighters under a prince carry his insignia, they who receive the Sacrament of Confirmation are signed with the Sign of the Cross by which He fought and conquered."

- St. Thomas Aquinas

Today at mass I was struck by the prayer we say right before receiving communion, the last prayer Catholics say before consuming the body of Christ. It is the earnest groaning of a 'front-line fighter' – the humble plea of the Roman centurion who met Jesus 2,000 years ago: "Lord, I am not worthy to receive you, but only say the word and I shall be healed." (Mt 8:5, Lk 7:1). In this story, the local Roman commander asks Jesus to heal his dying slave, but refuses to let Jesus come under his roof, claiming to be unworthy. In Luke's account, the soldier feels so unworthy that he refuses even to meet Jesus, and instead sends out messengers to greet him.

And so I said this prayer of the centurion, and I reminded myself of my own unworthiness – recalling my life of sin. And suddenly a question occurred to me: why did the centurion, a pagan of power and honor, feel unworthy to be in the presence of a Galilean carpenter?

A more immediate question may help – why was a Roman centurion there in the first place? A brief history: In 63 BC the Roman General Pompey conquered Jerusalem, killing thousands. In 6 AD successive Roman procurators began ruling over a rebellious Judea, one of whom was Pontius Pilate. In 70 AD, after a Jewish uprising against the foreign rulers, the centurions of Titus crushed the rebellion and destroyed Jerusalem. Jesus was not the only one crucified during this 100-year period. Thousands were. Their dying bodies lined the highways as examples of those who

Nate Wildermuth was discharged from the United States Armed Forces as a conscientious objector . He currently lives and works in a transitional housing project for homeless men with AIDS and addictions in Washington, D.C. dared to resist the imperial might of Rome. And Roman centurions were the ones who crucified them. Roman centurions crucified Jesus.

Recalling this history, and recalling that Christ was murdered along with two 'revolutionaries', the story of the centurion becomes particularly compelling. It sends a chill crawling along my flesh, for I too was a centurion. I swore oaths of allegiance to banners and leaders. I declared my undying service to the eternal Republic, and fought back tears of pride, devotion, and love. Being a soldier wasn't just some job. Being a soldier meant something. It went deep – into my heart, a truth of my existence, of who I was. *I was an America Soldier: a centurion of the greatest nation since Rome.* 



Image from www.atheavensgate.com

And I was just like that Roman centurion. Though we served Caesar, something within us compelled us to seek Christ. Something was burning us from the inside and revealing our unworthiness and sinfulness, letting us know that something was missing. Caesar might own us, but only this Christ could heal us. And so we went out to him.

The Gospels don't record what happened to the centurion after Jesus met him. Did he return to his life as a centurion of Rome, worshiping Caesar as a deity? Or did he sell his possessions (including his slaves), lay the money at the feet of Christ, and become a disciple? Did the centurion remain a soldier of the Empire and go on

to help crush the Jewish insurrections? Or did he follow Christ to the cross and become a martyr?

I don't know what that centurion did afterwards. All I can share with you is my story, a story of how I was reborn as *Christ's Centurion*.

I enlisted into the Army on February 8th, 2000. I joined for all the typical reasons – I was a middle class military brat who'd wasted his time in college drinking and doing drugs, and in the process, had lost my grip on life's meaning. Maybe I had never had it. But somewhere along the way I pulled together all the different threads of all the 'wisest' men's sayings and found: "If you want to be happy, if you want meaning out of life, then



Motto for the Army Infantry School

serve others. Don't live for yourself. Live for others." With college debts piled up, with my family living a continent away, and with feelings of futility about my ability to do anything else, I joined the Army. The military told me that I'd get \$20,000 to become a forward observer. I didn't care what kind of job they gave me. If it paid that much, if it was being done in order to serve others, if my friends and family all applauded my decision to 'get some discipline', then heck yeah – I'd do it. So I did.

Three years later I was in a bunk at West Point, the United States Military Academy, crying. It was late at night, so I was trying not to make any noise. I didn't want to wake up either of my two roommates. What would they think? I'd been an elite Army Ranger. I was one of twelve out of more than one hundred to graduate from Ranger training. We'd gone through hell and come out burning for more. We were killers, everyone knew that. A Ranger would take his bayonet, stick it in your throat, twist, pull, plunge again, and then piss in your face as you drowned in blood. If America needed someone dead, anyone dead, it'd call us. And we'd do it. We'd hop in an airplane, spend 14 hours chanting about napalming churches and machine-gunning nuns, and then we'd jump out, land, pull out our bayonets, and start to kill. And then we'd come home with medals and laugh and laugh and... and now I was at West Point, and I was going to lead others in wars that I had only dreamt about. I would become a Green Berets officer, and I'd fight for their motto – De Oppresso Liber: "to free the oppressed." I would kill, yes. I would train others to kill, yes. But I would serve, and I would free those in darkness.

So why was I crying? Wasn't I an American Soldier?

Wasn't I a steely-eyed killer? Hadn't the Army given me pride and purpose? Didn't my parents love me for it? Didn't men and women buy me drinks at NYC bars, clap me on the shoulder and say, "You're a hero, soldier. You're a goddamn fucking hero. Now go kill those fucking terrorists!?"

So why was I crying? What was wrong with me?

The same thing that was wrong with me before I joined the Army, the same thing that's wrong with every human being. It's that emptiness we feel inside us. It's what divides us from one another, causing fights between loved ones, starting wars between nations. It's what the Church calls original sin – what makes us sinners instead of saints. But we don't need the

Church to tell us that evil exists in the world. We already know it does. We only have to look inside ourselves to know that. And that was exactly what happened to me at West Point. I looked at my life, I looked at my heart, and I broke down and cried.

I hadn't joined the Army because of Christ. I hadn't become a centurion for Christ. I'd done it for America, for my family, for my friends, and ultimately – for myself. And I was still as wretched of a sinner as I'd been before. I still only knew Christ from the fringes of half-forgotten liturgies and half-said prayers. And the last traces of faith were dying within the spiritual vice of Caesar's Army.

But then, I did what the Roman centurion did 2,000 years ago. Knowing that I was unworthy, knowing that I had no right to approach Jesus, I put away my pride and shame and walked out to him. And when I knelt before Christ, and opened my ears to his Word, he finally spoke. Jesus didn't want my oaths. He didn't want declarations of faith. He wanted something more than words. He wanted me to wage *his* war against our true

enemies: death, sorrow, evil. He wanted me to become a front-line fighter for the faith. He wanted me to be his centurion. And in three words, I received my new commission – Christ's mission: **Love your enemies.** 

These three words contradicted everything I had learned. The world had taught me that we could only fight against evil by being strong and powerful, by crushing our enemies. But Jesus hadn't been strong or powerful. Instead, lookAnd I was just like that

Roman centurion.

Though we served

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to him.

ing down from the cross, Christ's bloody eyes spoke of another way: we fight by loving our enemies, by conquering evil with good. Instead of killing sinners, we convert them. Mercy is our weapon. Sacrifice is our hope. Love is our Faith. Christ died to save his enemies. He died as the Father's perfect warrior.

Across the ages, countless centurions have served Caesar and found him lacking.

St. Maximilian, martyr: "I will never serve. You can cut off my head, but I will not be a soldier of this world, for I am a soldier of Christ." St. Marcellus, martyr: "I serve Jesus Christ the eternal King. I will no longer serve your emperors." St. Martin of Tours, bishop: "I am a soldier of Christ: it is not lawful for me to fight."

And add St. Victricius, St. Primus, St. Cyrinus, St. Theogenes, and all the other centurions who were persecuted because they refused to fight for Caesar. And we can't forget St. Francis and St. Ignatius. All of these men had once fought as centurions of the world, but in the spiritual prison of bloodshed, they turned to Christ for freedom. They had all been sinners. They had all been Caesar's centurions. But they became saints, and are now Christ's Centurions forever.

Who are we going to be? We can fight for Caesar or for Christ, but not both. One uses violence to forge its empire, the other uses love. One uses force, the other faith. Empires crumble, but the Body of Christ lives forever. For whom are we going to fight? Who will we be? A Centurion of the Empire or a Centurion of Christ? :



What about Hitler? Wrestling with Jesus's Call to Nonviolence in an Evil World (Brazos Press)

Jesus' admonition to love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us is a difficult injunction to put into practice. Is it ever permissible for Christians to respond to or retaliate against unmitigated evil? Robert Brimlow grapples with this thorny question in What about Hitler? Throughout the book, he elegantly weaves together scriptural mediations, personal vignettes, and lucid philosophical thinking on various Christian stances toward war and violence. In addition. Brimlow delves into the mind of German pastor and theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer, author of The Cost of Discipleship, who eventually conspired to assassinate Adolf Hitler.

Ultimately, Brimlow emerges

as a staunch defender of Christian pacifism. Still, advocates of just war doctrine as well as pacifists will find their views strengthened by Brimlow's incisive and fair-minded approach. This work can be incorporated into undergraduate, graduate, and seminary courses dealing with Christian ethics and discipleship. It can also be used in adult study groups.

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#### A Catholic response to militarization

# Counter-Recruitment and the Church

#### BY THE STAFF OF THE CATHOLIC PEACE FELLOWSHIP

sixteen-year veteran of the Army who is now in the National Guard recently called the office of the Catholic Peace Fellowship. We receive many calls from military personnel seeking discharge, calls that often are exceedingly complicated: but this man's concern was straightforward. He told us he could no longer serve in the Army. Period. After sixteen years, he realized that war means killing and that he, with all his years of training, had become a trained killer. "And if I kill my neighbor," he said, "I'm going to have to answer for that before the Lord. And you know what? The government has a lot of power, but there's no heaven or hell they can put me in."

It is edifying to hear words like that. Powerful words of conscience. Proof of the God-given freedom of every person to discern and choose the good. But these words also raise a troubling question: How can a person spend sixteen years in the infantry and not realize that a soldier's job is to kill?

The answer is equally troubling: all too often, people join the military not to fight and die and perhaps kill for their country; they join because of benefits. And this raises another problematic aspect of life in the military: recruitment. In this piece, we want to highlight several aspects of military recruitment that muffle the voice of conscience and impede soldiers as they discern what their conscience is calling them to do.

#### Advertising the Military

A teenage girl clears her throat and broaches a difficult subject. She is

speaking to her father.

"I think I figured out what I want to do with my life," she says.

Her father seems non-plussed. He's heard this kind of thing from her before. "And that is?"

"Help people," she replies, "And be incredibly successful."

The father rolls his eyes. "Okay. . . ." "If I could help one hundred people have a shot at a decent life, then

have a shot at a decent life, then they would be successful. And that would make me successful."

"Sounds like a nice plan," her father says, a little sarcastically. "Someone's hiring for that?" An attempt at some reality therapy. He turns to look at her.

Suddenly, the TV screen turns black, a gold star appears in the center, and then the words below it: "US Army - Become A Soldier."

So goes one of the many commercials that advertise the military. It's one result of the \$2.8 billion annual recruiting budget, \$720 million of which is devoted to advertising alone. An advertisement like this one is effective. It sends a powerful message about joining the military, a message having to do with competence, serving others, living out one's ideals, and becoming an adult. Similar messages are delivered through other media as well. Billboards dot the streets of our cities, showing Marines in full dress uniform with the words "For Honor" emblazoned above their shoulders. Inspiring images such as this can be found in any number of youth-oriented magazines as well. Posters at college campuses promise speedy loan repayment as a benefit of military service. In one particularly creative effort (see next page),

the words "Money" and "United States National Guard," framed by a silhouette of soldiers, can be found on the envelop of Greyhound bus tickets. On the inside flap, it reads "This ticket will take you to where you're going - But this [phone] number will take you where you want to be." Taken together, television commercials, billboard advertisements, and other well-targeted recruiting messages deliver the promise a life of selfless, noble service combined with an income, job training and thus a future career. Not a bad deal. And yet, even with such promises, it is not easy for the military to reach its recruitment goals. Thus the Pentagon has undertaken more aggressive measures to get its advertising message out. Take, for example, the No Child Left Behind Act, the sweeping educational reform signed into law in early 2002. A key portion of that legislation (Section 9528[a].1) states that "each local educational agency receiving assistance under this Act shall provide, on a request made by military recruiters . . . access to secondary school students' names, addresses, and telephone listings." By "local educational agency," they mean high schools. And when a high school releases students' personal information to the military, no preapproval by parents is required. Parental consent is assumed. The only way to withdraw consent is for the parent (or the student) to sign an "opt-out" form, which schools usually do not even have (we provide one on page 12). This means that recruiters can initiate contact with minors without parents even aware of it.

Yet, since parents will surely be a crucial factor in young people deciding about the military, the Pentagon has launched a massive campaign to elicit their support of the military option. They are what the Pentagon recruitment specialists call "influencers," that is, adults whose opinions about the military impact a potential recruit's choices. The Pentagon rightly regards parents as the most powerful "influencers" on young people, but it extends this label to cover others who function as advisors and role models to young people as well, teachers, coaches, and clergy, to name a few. All these "influencers" are recipients of a broad advertising campaign that has been dubbed, "Today's Military."

Among the ads sent out under "Today's Military" is a thirteenminute video that appeared in April and May of 2006 on United Airlines' westbound domestic flights. It was screened along with the normal airline video repertoire of sitcoms and sports clips. While not an explicit military advertisement, the program highlighted four military jobs that are as unusual as they are inoffensive, including an animal care specialist who does humanitarian work and a Navy officer who instructs others how to safely operate ejector seats-not exactly typical jobs for enlistees headed for Iraq these days, but they do sound attractive.

Meanwhile, the website for Today's Military's focuses on allaving fears that the military may not have young people's best interests at heart. In addition to touting the educational and financial benefits available to service members, todaysmilitary.com also appeals to parents' concern for their children's emotional and even spiritual wellbeing. The section on military training assures us that "...more than just pushups and mess halls, the Army's basic training is a nineweek-long journey of self-discovery." Also according to the website, "it takes hard work, experience, and highly qualified instructors to turn

young diamonds in the rough into the finest force on the face of the earth." The language of the Today's Military campaign oozes with appreciation for the special gifts of young people, and taps into the desires young people have for a life of heroism and self-sacrifice.

But the approach here is, quite frankly, deceptive. The military promises young people and their



parents everything, from heroic self-sacrifice to personal enrichment, from the respect of others to self-confidence. What they leave out is that which most soldiers, like the National Guard sergeant who called our office, quickly learn is an indispensable part of their mission: to kill the enemy.

#### "It's Not What I Thought It Would Be"

It may seem harsh to boil down military life and training to killing. After all, the majority of military men and women are respectable and responsible people, as many would readily agree-indeed, as we ourselves agree based on our daily conversations with military personnel. But the fact is that respectability and responsibility can be put to lessthan-respectable ends, for which few people want to claim responsibility. And this goes for the end of killing other people. This is in part why many war veterans are reluctant to talk about what they did in the war. What they did was kill people. And killing people is not something that respectable, responsible people like to talk about. And with good reason, for killing people is an activity that runs counter to the deepest aspects of our nature.

This last claim is supported in a much publicized book by Lt. Colonel Dave Grossman, entitled simply On Killing. Grossman notes that surveys and other forms of research indicate that many soldiers, far more than one might expect, do all they can to avoid killing people. They drop back when they should be attacking. They purposely misfire their weapons. They aim high, low, left, right, anywhere but at actual people. In fact, the data on this remarkable trend stunned the military. A study by Brig. Gen S.L.A. Marshall found that only fifteen to twenty percent of U.S. riflemen in World War II combat fired their weapons on the enemy, many risking great danger to avoid doing so.

Not your typical Hollywood depiction of war or killing. That's because," Grossman says, "for those who have never experienced it," such depictions "appear to be about as useful in understanding killing as pornographic movies would be in trying to understand the intimacy of a sexual relationship."

Grossman relies on his experience as a soldier and a psychologist to conclude that "there is within most men an intense resistance to killing their fellow man, a resistance so strong that, in many instances, soldiers on the battlefield will die before they can overcome it."

Grossman is quick to note, however, that under certain conditioning

and circumstances, "almost anyone can and will kill," though combat threat to personal safety is often not one such circumstance.

What does matter is training, and as a result of the Marshall study, the military employed new techniques to yield significant jumps in firing rates during subsequent conflicts. Among the changes were the use of human-shaped targets rather than the impersonal bull's-eye, rendering soldiers more desensitized to the idea of aiming at actual people. In

recent times, the use of video games has served the same purpose.

Given Grossman's point about our natural aversion to killing, it is no surprise that killing is not a primary feaof military ture recruitment. Ads stress getting the paycheck, acquiring job training, being responsible, serving the country-everything but killing. So the overall purpose

of military service, accomplishing the mission by means of killing and threatened killing, is avoided, obscured, and therefore suppressed in the minds of recruits.

Yet after a while, especially during wartime, the gig is up. Many are now coming to the conclusion that the military is asking, indeed ordering, them to do things that come into profound conflict with the deepest part of themselves, with their humanity, with their conscience. Not all of them come to the explicit belief held by the National Guard sergeant who identified killing as the main problem and declared that he wouldn't train for it anymore. Many are simply not as eloquent as he. Many find it hard to explain themselves at all, like the young Marine we heard from who fled his base after being the brunt of much brutality, and whose mother committed him for a time to a psy-

chiatric hospital because of his paranoia and talk of suicide. Most common are those who cannot quite put their finger on their problem. More often than not, their explanation for seeking discharge is, "I don't know... It's just not what I thought it would be."

In any case, nearly everyone who calls us is suffering, suffering because the promises of the military-honor, respect, selflessness, security-tell only one side of a complex story. Given vague promisple, in large part because people with no combat experience are thought to lack credibility when they address issues of military life. Fortunately, now there are several veterans' groups that provide names of vets willing to discuss this difficult and delicate subject, as well as other aspects of military life, with young people: Iraq Veterans Against the War (www.ivaw.org), Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America (www.iava.org), as well as Military Families

Speak Out (www.mfso.org). Moreover, the Catholic Peace Fellowship conducts workshops that train people speak with to youth in ways that lead to fruitful reflection about the realities of violence and war (see ad on page 26).

Apart from this, there are several very effective tools for the counterrecruitment effort. For one thing,

I) THINK ABOUT THIS The Military Wants You for War Their priority is not your career. Since 9/11, a million Americans have been sent t War is Hell One in five Iraq Vets reports being responsible for civilian deaths One in six has Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.\* It's on Your Conscience ne killed? Are you ready to kill? ever killed anvone? Have you ever seen o The Church Supports Objection to War **Jesus Refused to Kill** Can you follow His example in the military? Are you signed up for the DEP but have changed your mind? DO NOT report for basic training, matter what your recruiter tells you. To discuss this and other options, call a CPF courselor at [574] 2322295. **Catholic Peace Fellowship** www.catholicpeacefellowship.org Resources like this color poster are available at catholicpeacefellowship.org

es of success and led on with halftruths about what they will actually be doing in the military, many recruits simply find themselves in a place they know they should not be. To be sure, these are not the sentiments of all soldiers, yet thy ring true for a growing number-our office alone has fielded calls from over one thousand soldiers in the past two years, and we handle only six percent of the calls for the GI Rights Hotline (not to mention the thousands who never even hear of this resource).

#### Truthtelling

Counter-recruitment starts with telling the truth, getting accurate information about the military to young people. One essential truth that needs emphasizing is that war involves killing and that killing is a dreadful, grievous thing. This is not easy to communicate to young peothere is that "opt-out clause" of No Child Left Behind, which allows parents or students to send a strong "No," both to the military and, by way of example, to their school's collusion with war. Organizing an opt-out campaign at your local school is also a good way to make connections with allies in your community, and to learn what draws youth from your own locality to join the military.

Furthermore, most people enlist in the military through the Delayed Entry Program (DEP), or for reservists, the Delayed Training Program. The DEP is a "pre-military" program in which recruits meet regularly to exercise and become accustomed to military practices. Along with receiving lessons in military lingo and history, DEP members are frequently told by their recruiters that their membership in the DEP constitutes a bind-



ing agreement to join the military. Yet the fact is that someone in the DEP has *no* obligation to show up at boot camp. Publicizing this simple fact can be crucial for young people who hastily joined the DEP and now want to know if there is a way out.

Those wishing to disseminate accurate information about the military may also address the issue of enlistment contracts. There are numerous myths about what is and is not guaranteed in an enlistment contract. Many people who contact us through the GI Rights Hotline would not have joined the military had they known that their MOS, military occupational specialty (their job) could be changed without their consent. The same is true about their contract: they would not have joined had they known that it could be extended against their will. The insert in this issue of the *Sign of Peace*, put together by Quaker House, one of the leading counterrecruitment groups in the country, dispels some of the most common myths in a straightforward manner ("Sgt. Abe the Honest Recruiter," pp. 15-18).

The term "counter-recruitment," which simply refers to telling the whole truth about the military and urging young people to think before they commit, is quickly becoming a very visible and valuable part of the peace movement. One reason is that it can done locally. You can work to inform young people about military service in virtually any town or city in the country. Another reason is that it can be done by almost anyone who is interested and committed to taking a little time to learn how military recruitment works. And then there is the simple fact that counterrecruitment has concrete, personal results; it works on stopping war one person at a time. Unlike many anti-war tactics such as massive marches, blockades, political lobbying days, and pouring blood on the Pentagon, one does not have to be in Washington or New York in order to participate in counter-recruitment. In fact, it is better not to be in Washington or New York.

After all, most recruits do not come from places like Washington and New York, but from places like Kokomo, Indiana, Canon City,

#### No Recruit Left Behind: How to Opt-Out

Section 9528 (2) of the No Child Left Behind law states:

CONSENT – A secondary school student or the parent of the student may request that the student's name, address, and telephone listing not be released without prior written parental consent, and the local educational agency or private school shall notify parents of the option to make a request and shall comply with any request.

Unfortunately, many schools do not make it easy for students or parents to opt out. Notification about military recruitment is often buried in other school documents, and forms for opting out are often unavailable unless someone specifically requests one.

Local opt-out campaigns can thus begin with a request that local schools clearly notify families of their rights under NCLB. They can move from there to drives to get as many students and parents as possible to fill out opt-out cards (example below; these can be downloaded from our website).

Among the many groups offering excellent materials for counter-recruitment are:

American Friends Service Committee (www.afsc.org) Leave My Child Alone (www.leavemychildalone.org) National Priorities Project (www.nationalpriorities.org)

#### Students or Parents: Fill out this card and return it to your school administration

Name of High School:\_\_\_\_\_

#### I hereby request that my name/child's name, address and telephone number NOT BE RELEASED TO MILITARY RECRUITERS.

Student's Name	Student I.D. number	// Date of Birth
Signature (student or parer	nt) Print Name	// Date

Colorado, Buloxi Mississippi. Far from the nation's seats of power, a small, well-informed, well-organized counter-recruitment team in

Peoria, Illinois can be a lifesaver for a kid about to graduate from high school with no idea of what to do with his life.

Counter-recruitment is a necessary part of working for peace because, like it or not, the military's highenergy recruitment efforts are here to stay. The pressure for more military personnel is as high as it has been in thirty-five years, and it may well get higher. Since there is little support now in Congress for a draft, the military must rely on recruitment to meet its growing personnel needs. One sign that it is serious about this is the new sophisticated, evolving approach. In addition to the targeted advertisements, the focus on "influencers," and the use of No Child Left Behind already

mentioned, the military is building an extensive grassroots network of highly motivated, highly rewarded "recruiting assistants." These new recruiters are, in fact, regular members of the National Guard who are paid significant bonuses (\$1,000-\$2,000 per head) to enlist friends and family into the Guard. This strategy, along with ever-growing bonuses for those who re-enlist (maxing-out at \$90,000 as of July 2006), are a sign that the military is in this for the long haul, as it solidifies its base of current personnel and extends it through de-centralized, flexible, personal recruiting tactics. Another sign of this flexible, personal approach is the recent effort by the military to open files for recruitment purposes on "myspace.com," the file sharing program that is wildly popular among high school students. There is no end to the ways in which the military will reach into the lives of young people to tell them that, in the words of the recruiting posters of yesteryear, "Uncle Sam Wants You!"

#### The Delayed Entry Program (DEP)

Up to 95% of active duty service members join the military through the DEP. But during their time in DEP, many recruits change their minds about joining. More often than not recruiters tell them that if they do not show up to boot camp they will face serious consequences: criminal prosecution, jail time, dishonorable discharge.

None of this is true. Recruits in the DEP, even those who have signed an enlistment contract or sworn an oath, do not have to report to boot camp. This is the case even for non-citizens. There are no legal consequences, and dishonorable discharge is impossible. This is because DEP members are not yet members of the military and cannot be prosecuted under the Uniform Code of Military Justice. The only potential consequence for not going to boot camps is that a person may not be allowed to join the military in the future, yet with low recruitment levels even this is an unlikely consequence.

For more information on DEP, visit www.girights.org, or call a GI Rights Counselor at 800-FYI-95GI.

#### Recruitment for a Different Mission

The strength of that familiar poster was that it gave young people a sense that they often crave, the sense of being wanted. Many of the new recruiting techniques succeed on this score as well. They give young people a sense that their life in the military will be of the noblest purposes, that their efforts will be worthwhile, and that their time and talent will be devoted to a great cause. In one respect, counterrecruitment is designed to disabuse people of misinformation emanating from the military recruiting efforts. And more than this, it is designed to raise awareness of the dreariness, and sometimes gruesomeness, that simply is a reality of modern-day military service. But if this is as far as we go, then counterrecruitment remains an entirely negative task: urging people not to join the military. This raises the

question, "as we recruit people away from the military, what are we recruiting them *for*?" In our view, counter-recruitment should also

> entail the positive task of showing young people other forms of service, another kind of mission, under the direction of a different Commander.

The Commander. of course, is Christ, and the mission is the one given to His disciples. It is not unusual for Christians to think of themselves as members of a kind of divinely appointed army. When many of us were confirmed, we were told that we were being confirmed to be, in the pre-Vatican II parlance, "soldiers of Christ." This notion goes back to the earliest centuries of Christianity when theologians and spiritual masters conceived of the Church as the militia Christi, the army of Christ, standing in stout-

hearted opposition to the greed, violence, lust, and paganism of their times, the most intense manifestations of which could be seen in the Roman Army. In the minds of the early Christians, the militia Christi was a fundamental moral and religious alternative to the militia *Caesaris*. Here we can see the early Christians borrowing images from what they saw in the Roman Army: a band of brothers, living and working together, united by religious rituals of membership, set apart to fulfill an important mission, for which they would even be ready to die. Likewise for Christians: a family of sorts, brothers and sisters in Christ, living a new life together, working with new vigor and meaning, gathering for religious rituals, uniting themselves to Christ and carrying out His mission, for which they too, like Christ, are prepared to die. Therefore it is not surprising that the early Church cherished and preserved the memory of the so-called soldier-martyrs, who left one army to join another. As in the example of St. Martin of Tours, who left the military declaring *"Miles Christi ego sum, pugnare mihi non licet. . . .* I am the soldier of Christ; it is not lawful for me to do violence."

This story sheds light on how we at

In the earliest centuries of Christianity, theologians and spiritual masters conceived of the Church as the *militia Christi*, the army of Christ, standing in stout-hearted opposition to the greed, violence, lust, and paganism of their times, the most intense manifestations of which could be seen in the Roman Army.

the Catholic Peace Fellowship want to approach the task of counterrecruitment. The lesson is that we should convey to potential military recruits that working for peace and serving others, and in this way living out the mission given to us by Christ is every bit as respectable, responsible, meaningful, purposeful, heroic as a life of military service. In fact, it is more so, for the simple reason that all the desires that tend to capture the hearts of young people-the desire for purpose, meaning, maturity, discipline, the desire to give oneself in service, to be a part of something beyond oneself—are implanted in our hearts by God and therefore can only be truly fulfilled when we act in accord with God's will, as revealed to us through the teaching and example of Christ. It follows that the task of counter-recruitment, at least for Christians assigned to the mission of bringing Christ's peace to the world, should include recruitment in the positive sense, recruitment into the militia Christi, an "army" which asks as much of its members as do the more conventional armies of this world.

Consider the potential effects of an active, energetic, challenging recruitment program for the *militia Christi*. If the Church is to counter-

recruit young people away from falsehood and violence and at the same time to recruit young people into a life lived for the sake of Christ, then we must ask them no less than the military asks of them: their time, their energy, their whole selves. On this score, perhaps one of the reasons the Church has trou-

> ble recruiting young people for a life of Christian service is that it doesn't ask enough of them. A lot of young people spend Sunday mornings playing soccer. A lot of voung people

spend years training to play football or basketball or track. Others spend hours each day playing the piano or electric guitar. And when they graduate from high school or college, many young people dedicate themselves entirely to their job. All of which indicates that young people are prepared to make sacrifices. Perhaps the Church needs to urge young people to make similar sacrifices in the endeavor of making peace.

Peter Maurin was fond of saying that "the heart is made for heroism." Perhaps we in the Church, and we in the Catholic peace movement, need to speak to young people's hearts.

What would this kind of recruitment look like? Imagine first one young person, then another, and another, and at length at deluge of recruits clamoring to join the militia Christi. Imagine, as our counterrecruitment efforts take effect, that young people elect to serve abroad, not in the Army, Navy, Air Force or Marines, but with the Maryknoll Sisters, the Columbans, the Jesuits, Peacemaker Christian Teams. Imagine more and more young people thinking of "the service" in terms of living at Catholic Worker houses and L'Arche communities. Imagine the monasteries and the friaries slowly filling up again. Actually, these things are happening, in little ways, and the reason is that young people are feeling themselves invited, urged and challenged to (paraphrasing an annoyingly effective Army advertisement) be all that they can be.

#### The Truth Shall Set Them Free

What we envision as the effects of a full-blown counter-recruitment program seem already to have begun. Not long ago, a young sailor in the Navy contacted us with his application for conscientious objection. After attending Mass for the first time in his life at boot camp, he decided he wanted to convert to As part of that Catholicism. process, he read about St. Francis. At the same time, it so happened that his shipmates took as their unofficial motto "Putting Warheads on Foreheads." Repulsed by the humor, he took for himself the Franciscan motto: Pax et bonum, "peace and good." As soon as he is released from the Navy, he plans to enter the Capuchins and to discern whether or not he is called to the priesthood. His application for a discharge on the grounds of conscientious objection to war discusses the age-old conflict between Caesar and God. He acknowledges that Christ commands him to "render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's." But he is nevertheless finding, in the words of Dorothy Day: "If we give to God everything that belongs to God, there will be little or nothing left to give to Caesar."

This kind of reflection is good news. In fact, it is *the* Good News. It reveals to us the truth that at the core of our being, in spite of all our tendencies toward evil, we are made not for killing and for death, but for peace and for doing the good. This is *the* Truth, and it runs counter to one of the oldest lies—that sacrifice, heroism, and gaining victory over terror and evil comes by killing. And this truth, that we are made for peace and good, is the truth that shall set them free. •:•



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\* For sources and more information: http://quakerhouse.org/counter-recruiting-01.html



# Nothing ought to be preferred to the eternal Commander Early Church Counter-Recruitment

#### **BY MICHAEL SCHORSCH**

The desire to get people out of the military is as old as war itself. No less an authority than the prophet Samuel describes the rule of militaristic kings in these words: "He will take your sons and make them serve with his chariots and horses, and they will run in front of his chariots... When that day comes, you will cry out for relief from the king you have chosen, and the Lord will not answer you in that day" (1 Sam 8:11b,

18). Samuel was a good shepherd and knew the dangers that went along with giving power over to kings and their armies—God had told him about them.

The logic of this biblical passage is simple: kings coerce their subjects to do things they don't want to do, often to do things that are wrong. Whether they refuse or obey the king, their lives are at stake. It is a miserable situation.

But it is not just their bodily lives that people risk losing when they go to war. Asked to kill obediently and without conscientious reflection, they also risk their souls.

Many pastors in the first few hundred years of Christianity also understood that there is no substitute for fullhearted obedience to Jesus. A few examples illustrate this vividly.

Eusebius, the ancient historian of the church, relates that in the 260s a Christian named Marinus was stationed in Palestine as an infantry soldier. Marinus' commanders selected him for promotion to centurion. However, it soon came out that because he was a Christian, he would not be able to offer sacrifices, as all centurions were required to do.

Marinus was brought before a Roman magistrate and accused of being a Christian. When Marinus admitted he was, the magistrate called a recess to give him time to reconsider.

Marinus had just a few hours to decide whether to apostatize or face execution. Theotecnus, the local bishop, approached him. He took Marinus into a church and had him stand before the altar. With a copy of the Gospels placed on the altar, the bishop pulled back Marinus's cloak, revealing his sword. He asked Marinus

Michael Schorsch is Associate Editor of this magazine and is CPF's main counselor for soldiers on the GI Rights Hotline. to choose one—the sword or the Gospel. Immediately Marinus placed his right hand on the Gospel. The bishop told him that God would give him strength, and Marinus went back to face his martyrdom.

Some argue that this case was really about paganism rather than military service. After all, Marinus had been a good soldier until asked to perform pagan sacrifices. Yet the two issues—idolatry and violence—are not so easily split, as seen in another case.

With a copy of the Gospels placed on the altar, the bishop pulled back Marinus's cloak, revealing his sword. He asked Marinus to choose one—the sword or the Gospel

St. Paulinus (354-431), bishop of Nola, was greatly admired by St. Augustine. Known for his cautiousness, Paulinus doubted that even a "Christian" army could be a godly organization.

Writing to a young officer named Crispianinus in the now-Christian Roman Army, Paulinus says, "There is nothing, my blessed son, which can or ought to be preferred to Him who is the true Lord, the true Father, the eternal Commander." He goes on to make the opposition between service to the emperor's army and service to Christ even clearer: "The Lord says, 'You cannot serve two masters,' the one God and mammon, that is, Christ and Caesar, even though Caesar himself is now keen to

be Christ's servant so that he may deserve kingship over a few peoples. For it is not some earthly king who reigns over the whole world, but Christ God."

Elsewhere in the letter Paulinus makes the case that all bloodshed is unholy, but here he is suggesting something that the prophet Samuel might agree with: even an apparently holy ruler risks displacing the authority of God, even a ruler "keen to be Christ's servant" is not to be trusted when loyalty to him means your own life and your neighbor's.

Both St. Paulinus and Theotecnus were revered bishops. Both of them also engaged in what we would now call counter-recruiting, and they did this in a specifically Christian and biblical way. By emphasizing the inherent, though latent, opposition between earthly rulers and the Heavenly King, they called soldiers to proclaim courageously—with their lives—the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The bishops' actions were part of their charism as leaders and holy men; it is from actions such as these that we know them to be, like the prophet Samuel, good shepherds. ::

# The Psychology of Enlistment Eighteen

#### **BY DARCIA NARVAEZ**

**F** or the U.S. military, the magical age is eighteen. It is at this age that the military deems adolescents "ready" to enlist for service and requires males to register for the draft. Yet, if we look at anthropological data and recent brain imaging research, we find increasing evidence that this practice is highly problematic.

In the human brain, several key systems are underdeveloped until the mid-twenties. In males, full decisionmaking systems are not developmentally complete until about age twenty-five, and a little earlier for females. Many in society have begun to recognize this reality: car insurance is higher for those under twenty-five; many life decisions like marriage are being pushed to a later age. For the military, however, eighteen has remained the magic number. Below, I will explain why this practice does not square with good science.

#### **Brain Development**

One of the areas of the brain that develops last is the *prefrontal cortex*, particularly its executive functions, which deal with initiation, planning, sustaining attention, organizing action, inhibiting reactions, shifting from one task to another, and, especially, regulating emotions.

During the time that the prefrontal cortex is not yet fully developed, decision-making takes place primarily through the *amygdala*. The amygdala, however, is the primary seat of emotion in the brain, and relying on it (especially since it too is underdeveloped until the midtwenties) can lead to an over-focus on the emotions of the immediate situation.

The amygdala system functions quickly, which is why it dominates until the prefrontal cortex system is fully in place. Reliance on the amygdala affects such things as the interpretation of fear and anger, levels of empathy for the plight of others, and control over one's emotional reactions.

A fully developed prefrontal cortex allows a more tempered decision-making style. Until then, however, the brain is highly susceptible to situational demands, making decisions based on the immediate circumstances at hand.

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#### **Further Complication**

Another physiological fact that offers insight into the question of development and decision-making is that the adolescent brain undergoes a lot of pruning of excess neurons. This is one of the reasons that the adolescent brain is very susceptible to addictions (e.g., nicotine, drugs/alcohol, violence, pornography). A still underappreciated fact is that these addictions are *stressors* that can actually inhibit the maturation of the prefrontal cortex (Bechara 2005)—not what you want when the brain is in its final developmental phase.

For example, researchers led by Dr. Vincent Matthews at the Indiana University School of Medicine in Indianapolis have documented the ill effects of playing violent video games. With greater exposure, higher cognitive areas related to thinking and emotional control are less active, suggesting that the brain becomes desensitized to violence. These brain patterns, found in normal children who play violent games, are the same as in children diagnosed with disruptive behavior disorder.

Dr. Akio Mori, a professor of neurology at Nihon University in Japan, found what he calls "Video-Game Brain"—a permanent suppression of brain functions such as those related to emotional functions, planning and self-control in children who played 2-7 hours of violent video games a day.

Under the influence of these stressors, quite common in adolescence today, the prefrontal cortex may *forever* remain immature, leading to poor decision-making—even in adulthood.

Moreover, until full maturity, the adolescent brain is attracted to high excitement and low-effort activities because of the different areas of the brain that are underdeveloped. Critically, because the adolescent brain is particularly impressionable, adolescents' choices can shape the type of adult development they will achieve because adolescents establish brain patterns for life by the activities in which they choose to participate.

#### What about Individual Choice?

One of the frightening aspects of the decision to join the military and the demands made on those who enlist is the ethos of individualism under which the decision is made. Recruiters, especially in the current milieu, often talk only to the recruit, and not to the family of the recruit. It is quite common today that parents do not even know their children are being recruited—because of a clause in the "No Child Left Behind Act, recruiters can get students' information directly from school records.

Moreover, a military contract itself is a binding document on the *individual*. Leaving the military is more difficult than many imagine—soldiers not only have a tough time applying for legitimate, legal discharges, but they also have to face outside, societal pressures. How often have we heard these statements: "You made the choice as an adult (eighteen-years-old)"; "it was your decision"; "you signed the contract, you have to live with it." Individualism pervades the whole process, from recruitment to decision-making to living with the consequences. It is, after all, the "Army of One."

Historically speaking, individualism has not been a standard context within which adult human beings have made decisions. It is documented that "primitive" societies were overwhelmingly communitarian—small bands of human families living together. It is helpful to look at these societies and how their structures contrast with ours. Even some of their most elemental practices impinge on the issue at hand.

For humans in "primitive" societies, contact with mother or caregiver was nearly constant in the first years of life, breastfeeding took place for several years, and sleeping was communal throughout life. These practices led to full and healthy brain development. In modern life, in comparison, babies are usually placed in separate rooms, car seats, or playpens, and fed formula—-formula which does not match breast milk's nourishment for brain development.

Because of these early and ongoing deprivations, modern culture forms individuals who are always looking for satisfaction through consumption (seeking and getting) or dominance (control). Children constructed under these circumstances are more self-centered and aggressive than children in "primitive" societies. Essentially, brain development in the modern Western world is thwarted by practices that put infants in harm's way, thwart natural motherhood, and develop an imbalanced process of moral decision-making.

Lloyd deMause (1995) finds that individuals and societies historically are violent when they mistreat their children. Mistreated children grow up to be violent and perpetuate a violent culture. The caregiver's treatment of the infant and child influences how the brain sets up its emotional circuitry and future brain development (Harlow, 1986; Bowlby, 1988).

These facts about brain development may help explain at least some "aberrant" behavior of soldiers who abuse detainees. These soldiers exhibit immature and situational decision-making, emotional immaturity, the inability to process fear reactions and intentions in prisoners, and low empathy. Moreover, when the brain is still developing, undue stress (such as combat) can derail executive brain function and subsequent development.



It is easy to see how late adolescents may be attracted to the military because of their own aggressive tendencies, or because of an immature attraction to an "exciting" lifestyle. They seem less able, however, to comprehend the possible negative consequences of their enlistment.

This is not to say that everything about military service has a damaging effect on adolescents. Military life

How often have we heard these statements: "You made the choice as an adult"; "It was your decision"; "You signed the contract, you have to live with it." Individualism pervades the whole process, from recruitment to decision-making to living with the consequences. It is, after all, the "Army of One."

often teaches its soldiers selfcontrol, how to be a member of a team, how to carry out orders and complete routine tasks all useful for many lines of work. On the flip side, serving in a war zone can have very harmful effects on an individual's brain develop-

ment and can last a lifetime, as can be seen with Vietnam veterans who have never recovered from their experience in combat.

Can the detrimental aspects of military service be countered? It is unknown whether the brain can be put back on the path to maturation. We do know, however, that the brain retains plasticity at any age, and so there may always be ways to help the healing process. More attention needs to be given to this.

#### **Neurobiology and Ethics**

Neurobiology and ethics are more closely linked than many would imagine. By not paying attention to human development, today's society is perpetuating violence. A more scientific understanding of moral decision-making is desperately needed.

I propose that three distinctive ethical systems have evolved over time and that only a proper balance among them will yield healthy moral action. I name these three systems the Ethic of Security, the Ethic of Engagement, and the Ethic of Imagination (Narvaez, 2006).

Looking at these three systems takes us briefly beyond the specific question at hand (18 as the age of enlistment) but is quite pertinent to the larger issue of learned violence in our society.

The Ethic of Security is based primarily on instincts for survival and physical flourishing that emerge from brain-reward circuitry. This ethic maintains physical survival through self-protection, exploration, and autonomy, as well as through status enhancement (hierarchy or pecking order) and in-group loyalty.

The Ethic of Engagement involves the emotional sys-

tems that drive us toward intimacy. These systems are found among mammals, particularly among our closest hominoid cousins, the bonobos (de Waal & Lanting, 1997). They were identified as the locus of human moral sense by Darwin because they are the root of our social and sexual instincts, empathy, and parental care (Darwin, 1891; Loye, 2002). While human morality has roots in these engagement systems, we are dependent on proper care in infancy to develop the brain circuitries necessary for successful social engagement and cultural membership (Greenspan & Shanker 1999; Panksepp 1998; Schore, 1994).

The third ethic, the Ethic of Imagination, links to the more recently evolved parts of the brain, including the prefrontal cortex (Giedd, Blumenthal & Jeffries 1999). Although humans have evolved to favor face-to-face relationships and have some difficulty imagining those not present (such as future generations), the prefrontal lobes unique to humans provide a means for a sense of community that extends beyond immediate relations.

In modern life, the Security Ethic predominates. The received view is that humans are by nature violent, self-interested, and hierarchical, like chimpanzees (e.g., Bloom, 1995). Thus, one must learn to secure oneself against all "enemies."

In contrast, Franz de Waal (with Lanting, 1997) and others (e.g., David Loye, 2002) have argued that humans actually are closer genetically to the peace-loving bonobos than to chimpanzees. So what explains the human inclination to violence?

Joseph Chilton Pearce (2002) argues that we have thwarted our peaceful nature with harsh parenting. James Prescott (1996) points to evidence that the downfall of our moral nature occurs in the first moments and months of life when we thwart the needs of the child for constant physical touching and breastfeeding. Societies where these are practiced are largely peaceful. Eisler (1987) suggests that historically, human societies were largely peaceful, like the Semai (Knutson, 1968), up to about 4000 years ago.

The Ethic of Imagination, when not hijacked by the Security Ethic (e.g., with "terror management," Mikulincer & Florian, 2002), is able to combine compassion with problem-solving. Humans are at their moral best when the Ethic of Engagement is linked with the Ethic of Imagination, and the Security Ethic is at peace.

We have immersed our children in a culture of violence, desensitizing them (and ourselves) to the pain and suffering of others. Is it any wonder that an adolescent would be interested in joining the military?

Eighteen-year-olds are not able to make a rational decision to enlist in the military. We should not rely on our young men and women to be mature enough to deal with the uncertainties of today's warfare. Perhaps the age of military enlistment, much like the current debates over trying juveniles as adults, needs to be the next frontier of battle in the courts. Our children need our protection, from violence and from the military.

### Military recruiters take aim at growing pool of Latinos

# An Army of Juan?

#### **BY TITUS PEACHEY**

n February 12, 2006, the *Brownsville Herald* (TX) ran a cartoon from the comic strip *La Cucaracha* which in three pithy frames portrayed the current focus of military recruitment in the U.S. In frame one, a military recruiter stands erect outside a military recruitment office. Above the office is a large sign which offers a slight revision to the Army of One slogan, reading: An Army of Juan. Frames two and three show the increasing desperation of the recruiter to find recruits as the sign above the office changes to: Some Juan, and Any Juan!

The military's strong effort to increase the number of recruits from the Latino community is stated much more formally in the U.S. Army Recruiting Command's Strategic Partnership Plan for 2002-2007, "Priority areas [for recruitment] are designed primarily as the cross section of weak labor opportunities and collegeage population as determined by both [the] general and Hispanic population."

In other words, if you are a young Latino/a, the military is looking for you, and is laying out some big bucks to get you to enlist.

#### **The Numbers**

In 2004, Latinos made up 10.2% of active duty military forces, lagging behind their 16.4% share of the population in the 18-44 age bracket. Military officials are eager to close this gap, but also have to contend with the projected rapid growth of this population. Studies show that Latinos are the fastest-growing group in the U.S. In fact, the Latino share of 18-year-olds in the U.S. population is expected to grow from 14% to 22% over the next several decades. This projection considers not only immigration rates, but also the higher fertility rates of immigrant populations. These studies help the military determine where to invest recruitment resources, and it is clear that the Latino population is a high priority.

This focus on Latinos is part of a larger phenomenon popularly known as a poverty draft. For 20 years (1983 to 2003), African Americans consistently made up 21% of all military personnel, even though their share of the total population was only 14%. Many analysts viewed these disproportionate numbers as a reflection of the

Titus Peachey is the Director of Peace Education for the Mennonite Central Committee, U.S. To learn about their peace education resources, go to www.mcc.org/us/co or email Titus at tmp@mcc.org for details. racism and lack of opportunity that placed many African Americans in settings of poverty. Indeed, an Army survey of new recruits in 2003 that probed their most important reasons for enlisting tends to support these assumptions.

	Education \$	<u>Benefits</u>	Pay
African American	29%	12%	6%
Latino	24%	7%	4%
Caucasian	12%	6%	2%

Thus while nearly half of African Americans and just over 1/3 of Latino recruits listed education and economic indicators as their primary motivation for enlisting, only 20% of Caucasians enlisted for these reasons.

In recent years, as U.S. casualties in the Iraq and Afghanistan wars continue to mount, the enlistment of African Americans has declined dramatically. African American enlistments in the Army have dropped from 22% to 14% over the past four years. According to military sociologist David Segal, "The fear is that the military is going to try to replace, consciously or unconsciously, African-Americans with Hispanics" (*New York Times*, 2/13/06).

#### **Recruiting Latinos**

Military recruitment of Latinos means hiring Spanish-speaking recruiters, working in Latino areas, and showing sensitivity to Latino values and culture in advertising. According to a US Army Recruiting Command study, the primary focus for recruiting Latinos is in the Southwest, including southern California, Sacramento, and Phoenix.

Kurt Gilroy, who directs recruiting policy for the Office of the Secretary of Defense, notes that it is important to "maximize return on the recruiting dollar [because] the advertising and marketing research people tell us to go where the low-hanging fruit is. In other words, we fish where the fish are."

In a *Los Angeles Times* (4/5/05) article, Erika Hayasaki chronicles the differing levels of attention military recruiters give to high schools in southern California. At Sylmar High School, attended primarily by low-income Latino students, military recruiters walk around freely during lunch. Yet sixteen-year-old Erika Herran comments, "I can't even remember a time when I have seen a college recruiter on campus." In contrast, San Marino High School, in the affluent San Gabriel Valley neighborhood, rarely sees recruiters. According to career center director Shanna Soltis, 98% of the graduates at San Marino attend college.

This can be seen on a larger scale in the contrasting number of Army recruits between Eugene, Oregon and Brownsville, Texas, cities of similar size. The population of Eugene is 88% Anglo, while the population of Brownsville is 91% Latino. In 2005, Eugene provided 54 Army recruits. Brownsville provided 125 Army recruits.

According to the *New York Times* (2/13/06), the budget for military advertising focusing on Latinos has increased by \$55 million in the past four years. The effort to recruit Latinos includes Spanish-language ads on Univision and Telemundo, the two largest Spanishlanguage networks in the U.S.

Lt. Col. Jeffrey Brodeur, one of the Recruitment Battalion's commanding officers, notes that Latinos are "extremely patriotic." Immigrants and children of immigrants typically feel a strong sense of gratitude to the United States and the opportunities that it offers. National Defense Authorization Act, include waived fees, a streamlined application process, posthumous citizenship for non-citizens who die while on active duty, and special preferences for immigration purposes of immediate family members.

However, in no case does military service guarantee a successful citizenship bid. All citizenship requirements still remain. In addition, there is the risk of combat, which is perhaps why non-citizen enlistment applications are now dropping. According to ABC 7 News in Los Angeles, between 2001 and 2004 non-citizen enlistments dropped 20%. While the Pentagon simply states that the numbers fluctuate from year to year, part of the explanation may be in another statistic. As of March, 2005, 142 non-citizen troops had died in Iraq and Afghanistan. These non-citizen casualties represented about 9% of the total, while non-citizens make up less than 3% of active duty military personnel.

Indeed one of the first casualties of the war in Iraq was Lance Cpl. Jesus Suarez del Solar, a Mexican-born



Recruiters also try to tune in to cultural dynamics. Knowing the importance of families and the importance of a mother's support for a young enlistee, recruiters spend time with Latino families. The Spanish-language DVD, "Yo Soy El Army" emphasizes the value of family, and features mothers speaking with pride about their children who have enlisted.

A recent policy change in the Army allows the number of enlistees without a high school diploma to rise to 10%, up from 8% last year. While high school drop-outs can be found among all racial groups, the rate is particularly high among Mexican-Americans. U.S. born Mexican-Americans have a drop-out rate of 30%. The number doubles to 61% for new immigrants.

Beyond changes in military recruitment strategies, there are other government initiatives aimed at increasing Latino enlistment rates. In July of 2002, President Bush announced that "non-naturalized soldiers serving honorably in the war on terrorism could significantly step up the process of citizenship and apply immediately or upon enlisting" (Carol Amoruso, *Hispanic Village*, November 30, 2003). While this opportunity is open to all nationalities, the high number of Latino immigrants makes it particularly appealing to this group.

The benefits to military personnel applying for citizenship, as a result of the executive order and the 2004 Marine who died after stepping on an unexploded cluster bomb. His father, Fernando Suarez del Solar, said that his son joined the military because recruiters told him the experience would help him become a civilian police officer. Suarez del Solar now warns youth from Mexico to remain in their country so that they can escape the high pressure sales pitch of recruiters.

The Hispanic Access Initiative "...provides for ROTC recruiters to especially target colleges and high schools with a sizable Latino student body." And while not officially a recruiting effort, around 40% of Junior ROTC graduates enlist in the military. African American and Latino students make up over 50% of its participants.

Charles Moskos, a military sociologist at Northwestern University, believes the military will continue to recruit the new immigrant population despite the recent drop-off in enlistments. "We can't get enough middle-class kids to die for our country," he said. "This is the next step" (ABC7 News, Los Angeles, 4/14/05).

#### Why Does This Matter?

Why does it matter that military recruitment is focusing so intently on recruiting Latinos? The problem is the impact of the military recruitment system on all communities that are burdened by racism and poverty. Given their rising numbers and the aggressive recruitment in their communities, Latinos are particularly vulnerable to the dishonesty within the military recruitment system.

The concept of the All Volunteer Army suggests that people freely choose to join based on reliable and equal access to information. While we must acknowledge that for some people, the choice to enlist is indeed a free choice, based on values of service, patriotism, and family tradition, it is also important to face the serious questions about the honesty and justice of the recruitment process. Communities of color, immigrants, and persons living in impoverished areas are particularly vulnerable to exploitation.

#### Honesty

Military advertising is less than honest. Military recruiters are sales people who present their product with all the gloss and power that a multi-billion dollar budget provides. If the product were four years of active duty with the National Park Service or the Environmental Protection Agency, there would be little reason for concern. But military advertising puts danger, suffering, death, and killing into a cheery package wrapped in money for college, duty, honor, and discipline. There is no open talk about dying, no serious discussion about what it means to kill, no warning about the physical and psychological scars that can burden a person for a lifetime. This lack of honesty affects all potential enlistees, but is particularly harmful to persons desperate for some opportunity to advance.

So it is especially important that those most desperate for meaningful options engage in lively and honest debate about the benefits and risks of military service:

 military service can be very difficult and stressful; running away from problems at home is often not a good enough motive to sustain a soldier through the high stress and risks of military service;

 military enlistment does not guarantee anyone money for a college education or U.S. citizenship...early dismissal and/or a less than honorable discharge may disqualify you for educational benefits and citizenship;

• the military enlistment contract is one-sided and

promises made by the recruiter do not have to be kept;

 no enlistee is immune from being sent to combat, or from the physical and psychological scars of war;

• military service does not shield one from racism and exclusion in civilian life after one returns.

#### Justice

It is not possible to reduce new enlistees to statistics depicting the factors of racism and poverty. Yet it is clear that these realities do influence peoples' decisions about military enlistment. It is also clear that military strategists and recruiters are increasingly savvy about recruiting where racism and poverty push young people toward military options because few other options are available.

This does not mean that individual recruiters have deliberately set out to target low income or marginalized groups. Rather, it is a market-based system that leads recruiters to these groups as surely as if it were part of a carefully designed plan.

To repeatedly dangle money for college in front of a population of high school youth who have no resources and then require a commitment that may take their life is not just. Whether in settings of wealth or poverty, young people should not have to engage in a potential trade of their lives for a college education. For a government agency to place its impoverished youth in this position is an act of exploitation.

There are other options. Our government could offer young people who serve in AmeriCorps, Vista, the Peace Corps, or other civilian service agencies the same benefits as those who serve in the military. Secondly, military advertising and recruiters could address the realities of war and combat with every recruit, including the possibility of death and long-term psychological disorders. We require serious health warnings on cigarette packaging. Why not on military ads?

Until a more just and honest recruitment process is in place, youth of color and those living in poverty need to be especially vigilant to make sure that a recruiter's promise does not become an act of exploitation with lasting consequences. Otherwise, the Army of Juan will become a reality.



#### **Conscience Formation as a tool for counter-recruitment**

An effective way to counter the military's efforts to recruit our youth for war is to make sure that young people are able to make decisions based on consciences that have been*formed* by Church teaching on war and peace and *informed* about military life and selective service law.

CPF has developed an interactive presentation to fit these needs. Role-plays are designed to activate the consciences of youth, taking them through the steps of a military draft with opportunities to discuss choices, and the morality and legality of their decisions.

CPF offers a training program for college students, teachers, youth ministers, parents, and other community members. Through the workshops, you will learn how to give interactive presentations on the draft, war, and conscience. You will learn about, prepare for, and rehearse basic talks for draft-age youth and parents.

Email staff@catholicpeacefellowship.org to schedule a workshop in your area.

# Perspectives from the frontlines of the recruiting battle Yo No Soy El Army

#### **BY TANYA CABRERA**

t Benito Juarez Community Academy in Chicago, 97% of the students are of Latino descent. Most Lare first generation immigrants whose parents work at *fabricas* (factories) or low paying jobs. The average family size is six, not including parents.

I have to allow military recruiters in throughout the school year for visits, but I place limits on their outreach to students. For many, the military is a way to lift the financial load of college off of their parents and provide a more feasible way to go to school.

As the coach for postsecondary education, I stress to students that college is their first option and that the

#### **BY ARLENE INOUYE**

t's been said many, many times, "it's not about military recruiting." Isn't it amazing how many pro-**L**grams, activities, advertisements are *not* about recruiting our youth into the military?

It all begins at birth with the introduction of toys that the adults bestow on their children—the GI Joes, toy airplanes, cute camouflage clothes. This is about *playing*, and has nothing to do with the military.

When our boys and girls turn eight-years-old, they can join the Young Marines, which "isn't about recruiting." The three week basic training teaches military customs and courtesies, Marine Corps history, military drill, discipline, etc.

All this and more is

available

Yet this year at

Garfield's

"Military

to

High.

military should be their last resort for for paying it. Students hear that the military will pay for their schooling. They do not hear that most soldiers and marines do not complete their education at a postsecondary institution.

The reality is that the students I work with come from low-income families. They often do not see college as an



part of the Pentagon's billboard campaign aimed at Latino recruitment

option if they don't get scholarships or qualify for FAFSA. Also, we have a large population of undocumented students who hear they can become citizens if they enlist. (The issue here is complex—see pg. 24)

This past summer two of my top ten girls said they were going to enlist - it broke my heart. Both girls thought it would be best not to place any more pressure on the family and enlist to travel and get a free education. I told them that it should be their last resort and that I would work with them to find the means to the end of going to college. They have the grades, they have the desire to continue their education and they do not have to resort to the military to make their dreams of becoming a veterinarian or prenatal doctor possible. 💠

Tanya Cabrera is the postsecondary education coach at Benito Juarez Community Academy in Pilsen, Chicago.

Day," we at the Coalition Against Militarism in our Schools (CAMS) responded with tables of information about colleges, things you should know before you Enlist, "I Will Not Kill" cards to sign and surveys on the war in Iraq. Over a dozen students with hand painted T-Shirts and signs like "Books Not Bombs" and "Proud 2 be Anti War" paraded past the career center where two military recruiters were present to talk with interested students. According to first-hand accounts the room was empty, and the recruiters could only read their newspapers. Later on they just took off.

The voices of many students, parents and veterans are piercing and powerfully cutting through the hype. "Diga, yo no soy el army." 🕂

Read more about the projects and resources of CAMS at www.militaryfreeschools.org

# "Life on Earth is Warfare" (Job 1:7) Spiritual Combat, Carmelite Style

BY KEITH J. EGAN



Ruins from the original Carmelite monastery

armelite monasteries are cherished as oases of prayer, peace and nonviolence. Yet Carmelite origins are traced to a place where violence was, and is, routine. About the year 1200 CE a small band of laymen gathered in a ravine on the western slope of Mount Carmel that faces the Mediterranean Sea about four kilometers south of Haifa (in present-day northern Israel). These hermits settled by design near the spring dedicated to the prophet Elijah, whose exploits on Mount Carmel made that mountain range sacred to Jews, Christians and Muslims. It is a site where wars among Jews, Muslims and Christians have raged too often over the centuries.

Elijah was no pacifist; his slaughter of the four hundred and fifty priests of Baal on Mount Carmel showed him quick to avenge the Lord with ferocious violence; in

Keith J. Egan is the Aquinas Chair in Catholic Theology Emeritus at Saint Mary's College and Adjunct Professor of Theology at the University of Notre Dame. Christian art Elijah has been depicted holding a flaming sword. Yet Elijah was more than an avenger of the Lord. His journey on bread and water from Carmel to Horeb, his encounter with God at the mouth of a cave "in a sound of sheer silence" (1 Kgs 19: 12) have long captured the monastic imagination. Elijah's intimacy with God on Horeb/Sinai where Moses had encountered God and later his appearance with Jesus and Moses at the Transfiguration have made Elijah an archetype of contemplative experience. Elijah's intimacy with God took hold of the medieval Carmelite imagination, first with the thirteenth century hermits and later with their inheritors, Teresa of Avila and John of the Cross, who spoke of the prophet as "our Father Elijah."

Not only did the hermits of Mount Carmel turn for inspiration to a prophet with a violent past, they settled in the remnants of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem where Christians from the West constantly battled Muslim armies. The Carmelites had arrived on Mount Carmel not long after the death of the gallant Muslim warrior Saladin who was born in Tikrit (in present-day Iraq) and who died at Damascus in 1193. What shall we make of these eremitic imitators of Elijah, some of whom could have been former crusaders and all of whom now lived in a crusader state where warfare was a way of life? What did all that violence say to and about this little band of hermits on Mount Carmel?<sup>1</sup>

#### The Birth of an Order

The hermits of Mount Carmel sought approval for their way of life from Albert, the Patriarch of Jerusalem, who resided in nearby Acre because Jerusalem was in enemy hands. Albert arrived in the crusader state in 1206; he was stabbed to death during a procession on September 14, 1214 by the Master of the Hospital of the Holy Spirit (Albert had reprimanded the Master). Once again hermits on Mount Carmel knew a thing or two about violence. In fact, a legend tells of the martyrdom of some Carmelites who were still in the Holy Land when the Muslims took possession of the whole territory in 1291, a legend preserved in a poem by Joachim Smet, O. Carm., entitled "The Salve Regina Hour."

Mount Carmel's sides are tall and steep And bright with many a flower, But not too steep for the Turk to climb At the Salve Regina hour.

The sun sank down in the western sea, Sank down in his blood-red bower, But not so red as the choir stalls At the Salve Regina hour.

We heard the tinkling of swords and spears, Like a Vesper-bell's brittle shower, And the puffing of horses that rode from dawn To the Salve Regina hour.

"Some Christian knights are come," we thought "To mingle their voices with ours To pray for the weal of the Savior's tomb At the Salve Regina hour."

But the Turks rushed in with their scimitars In a flashing tide of power, And they butchered the hermits as they sang At the Salve Regina hour.

We pray you, brethren, to think of us Whom the sword has sought to devour, And finish the song that we once began At the Salve Regina hour.<sup>2</sup>

Albert had approved in a *formula of life* the quite simple lifestyle of the Carmelites. They lived in small separated cells around an oratory dedicated to Mary; later they were known as the Brothers of Our Lady of Mount Carmel. These first Carmelites prayed the psalms in their cells where each one ate his meals alone. If a priest could be had, they gathered daily in the early morning for the Eucharist. They met once a week to reflect on their way of life. They had a long period of strict silence; all talk was kept to a minimum. They ate no meat and followed a monastic fast. At the heart of their life was the injunction to meditate day and night on the law of the Lord (Ps 1:2) and to watch in prayer (1 Pet 4:7).<sup>3</sup>

Around 1238, some of the hermits migrated to the West as the Muslim armies were encroaching on land nearby. In 1247 the hermits met in a general chapter in England where they took steps that led them into the ranks of the friars, the Dominicans and the Franciscans. When the hermits became friars, they were committed not only to a life of contemplation but now also to the evangelization of the people who crowded into the cities of Western Europe. The formula of life, with only slight changes, became in 1247 an official Rule that called for a more communal and ministerial life than that of the hermits on Mount Carmel.

#### **Spiritual Combat**

Albert's formula of life earlier in the century was a call to solitude and contemplative prayer as the Carmelite way to follow Christ. Life on Mount Carmel was reminiscent of the early desert dwellers in Egypt and Palestine who endured what came to be known as "spiritual combat."<sup>4</sup> Whether or not any of the Carmelites had been crusaders, these hermits, like the desert dwellers of earlier centuries, had to do battle with the inner demons that arise in every human heart, demons that lure the heart from a life of love to one of self-absorption. Even Jesus did battle in the wilderness with the tempter who tried unsuccessfully to derail Jesus from his ministry to the kingdom. Then, at Gethsemane, Jesus struggled to do his Father's will. Imitation of Jesus as enjoined by their formula of life called Carmelites to similar struggles.

Women and men in the deserts of Egypt and Palestine had done combat with demons that plagued their commitment to a life of prayer. When the Carmelite hermits arrived on the scene, they realized that their following of Jesus would not go unchallenged. They too would have to do battle with powers and principalities. Albert's formula fortified the hermits with wisdom from a scriptural tradition that spoke of struggle in athletic and military metaphors. Saint Paul had spoken of his own inner struggle: "For I delight in the law of God in my inmost self, but I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind, making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members." (Rom 7: 22-23) Timothy was instructed to "fight the good fight" (1 Tim 1:18) and be "a good soldier of Christ Jesus" (2 Tim 2: 3).

Life on Mount Carmel was to be no different. So it was that Albert reminded the Carmelite hermits that life on earth is a warfare (Job 7:1) and that to follow Christ means persecution (2 Tim 3:12). Albert's words of warning to the hermits, virtually unchanged in 1247, remind the Carmelites that a life dedicated to solitude and contemplation is no guarantee against the wiles of the evil one. They must don the armor of God in order "to live in allegiance to Jesus Christ" (*Rule*, Prologue). Albert's admonition to spiritual combat, which reads as follows, is a pastiche of biblical quotations. The italicized words are from Ephesians 6:10-20.

But because life on earth is a time of trial, and all who seek to live devoutly in Christ suffer persecution, and because your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion prowls about seeking someone to devour, every care must be taken to *put on the armor of God, that you may stand firm against the cunning devices of the enemy*.

Albert's words of warning remind the Carmelites that a life dedicated to solitude and contemplation is no guarantee against the wiles of the evil one. They must don the armor of God if they were "to live in allegiance to Jesus Christ."

Encircle your loins with the belt of chastity. Defend your breast with holy meditation, for Scripture says: Holy meditation will save you. Put on the *breastplate of justice* so that you may love the Lord your God with your whole heart and your whole soul and your whole strength, and your neighbor as yourselves. In all things take up the shield of faith by which you can extinguish every flaming dart from the evil one, for with-

out faith, it is impossible to please God. *Then set the helmet of salvation on your head*, that you may place your hope of salvation only in the Savior, who rescues his people from their sins. *Next may you possess the sword of the spirit*, which is God's word, abundantly in your mouth and in your hearts. Just so whatever you do, let it be done in the Lord's word.<sup>5</sup>

The Ephesians excerpt, known as the charge to don the armor of God, emphasizes that to wear God's garments is to be like God in opposing "the cosmic powers of the present darkness" (Eph 6:12). Albert's formula of life warned the Carmelites that their hermitages did not assure them of a placid, no worry existence. Rather in silence and solitude these hermits could count on being confronted by the "wiles of the devil" (Eph 6:11). They could not escape what their model Jesus endured when he went out into the wilderness. These new followers of Jesus could expect to battle the demons ensconced deep in the human heart. Reports of the early desert dwellers (e.g., by John Cassian) named the eight principal vices that lay embedded in the heart: gluttony, fornication, avarice, anger, sadness, acedia (the vice of the noonday devil), vainglory and pride.<sup>6</sup> These eight vices (seven in other versions) are tendencies that infect the human psyche. Donning God's armor enabled the Carmelite hermits to combat these tendencies that interfere with love of God and love of neighbor, the command of Jesus that Albert relayed to the hermits in the same long excerpt above.

#### **Spiritual Combat in a New Millennium**

The formula of life of the hermits of Mount Carmel remains a charter for Carmelite women and men to be a beacon of sanity and hope for Christians in our time. This Carmelite witness to quelling the inner demons invites all of us to don the armor of God, so that we may fight the good fight and, with God's help, uproot from our hearts the seeds of aggression and self-absorption. The more of us who combat these inner demons, the less likely, at least from our side, will be the brutal clashes between nations and peoples that have for too long made war so inhuman and, in our day of scientific weapons, intolerable. The words of Pope Paul VI, speaking in 1967 to the United Nations, should be the legitimate aspiration of every human heart: "Never again war, war never again. Peace, peace ought to guide the destiny... of all humanity." Modern warfare, ubiquitous, ugly and endless, must become obsolete; spiritual combat, the cure of the human heart, can surely diminish in the human heart the tendencies that lead to unconscionable conflicts, large and small. The hermits on Mount Carmel thought so and from their ranks have risen three saints and doctors of the church, Teresa of Avila, John of the Cross and Thérèse of Lisieux, who bid us to seek the transformation of the human heart in God through love. This following of Christ which emphasizes prayer, purity of heart through spiritual combat and finally love of God and love of neighbor can still be that beacon of sane living in a world where insane wars diminish God's creation. 🔹

#### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> *The Crusaders: A Short History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), 256.

<sup>2</sup> The Sword 2 (1938), 388.

<sup>3</sup> For the texts of the formula of life and the 1247 Rule, see *Albert's Way*, ed. Mulhall (Rome: Institutum Carmelitanum and Barrington, IL: Province of the Most Pure Heart of Mary, 1989), 1-21.

<sup>4</sup> The phrase spiritual combat became well known much later in a widely dispersed work, *The Spiritual Combat*, originally composed by Lorenzo Scupoli (1530-1610) but added to by others over time. For an extensive commentary on spiritual combat in the Carmelite formula of life/rule, see Kees Waaijman, *The Mystical Space of Carmel*, trans. John Vrend (Leuven: Peeters, 1999), 153-198.

<sup>5</sup> Albert's Way, 13-15, no. 14.

<sup>6</sup> John Cassian, *The Institutes*, trans. Boniface Ramsey (NY: Newman Press, 2000), Books 5-12.

#### Read more on spiritual combat at our CPF NEWSBLOG Find it at catholicpeacefellowship.org

# How one book became this man's defense against recruiters Next Door to the Library

#### **BY DAVID GRIFFITH**

ne afternoon when I was seventeen years old, I walked into the to the downtown branch of the Decatur Public Library, a low brick building with no windows that sat right next door to the Army recruiting office. It was in this library five or six years earlier that I found stuffed into a rickety spinner rack *Hiroshima*, John Hersey's journalistic profiles of the first to witness and survive the arrival of the atomic age.

The worn-out cover bore the word HIROSHIMA in bold letters and a black and white photograph of a

gigantic mushroom cloud. I doubt that I knew the term "mushroom cloud" then, but I recognized the towering grey cloud from somewhere—TV? A comic book? But to be sure, the word and the image together held no associations for me.

I sat cross-legged on the carpet of the library and read the opening paragraphs with violent wonder, while my father looked for books on deck building and do-it-yourself plumbing. How could I have known then that this book would forever change me? I was in the throes of puberty—painful zits and awkward crushes, but no sense that the world was unjust—but Hersey's firsthand observations, the cold objective details of the aftermath, awoke a deep fascination in me, a curiosity to know

why and how it was that human beings could unleash such cruel power on other human beings.

Never before had I read a book that described the ravages of war so explicitly. It was not the complete flattening of the city that unhinged me but the way the survivor's bodies, the elderly, young mothers and young children, all bore the burns of the invisible radiation and tremendous heat. The skin of people's hands sloughed off in glove-like pieces, a woman's naked torso was emblazoned with the flowered pattern of the kimono she was wearing when the intense heat and light irradiated her.

That afternoon, I felt that I needed to read the book

David Griffith lives and writes in South Bend, Indiana. His new book, "A Good War Is Hard To Find," can be purchased at Amazon.com again and again. I needed to know if I would still feel the same outrage and, if so, what that meant.

Looking back, I suppose I was drawn to the subject of Hiroshima because it was about suffering. In fact, one of Hersey's subjects, Reverend Mr. Kiyoshi Tanimoto, says to the mortally injured as he runs through the burning streets, "Forgive me for having no burden like yours." The word burden reminded me of Christ's burden, the suffering he endured on the cross. I uttered the word "suffered" at mass during the Creed. He was cruci-

> fied under Pontius Pilate. He suffered, died and was buried. For some reason it was important that I believe and understand that Christ endured suffering. I didn't quite know why then, but it was beginning to make sense—at least I thought it did: Christ's suffering was to be the end of suffering. But now I was curious: Did this mean the abolition of war?

> This was on my mind because I had begun getting weekly phone calls from the local Army recruiting office. Each time it was someone different. Each of them spoke with the same this-is-the-REAL-world-I'm-calling-from voice, as if whatever plans I was making for after graduation were tragically romantic and naïve, pie in the sky. Their script was the same too. They would say:

What're your plans for after high school? You know college is expensive. How you gonna pay for it? "Uh, my parents are paying for it," I said, as if this was the stupidest question. This information signaled to them that I was not the kind of kid they were looking for.

I checked out the book and walked to my car. As I rounded the corner to the parking lot, there stood two recruiters standing in their crisp, beige uniforms, waiting for young men to walk by so they could begin their pitch. One of them called out to me: "Hey, there. Whatcha reading?" "Hiroshima," I said, holding up the book, so he could see the black and white picture of the towering mushroom cloud. "Oh," he said. "What's it about?" •:•

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# CPF Spring Retreat: March 24, 2007

In the last issue of *The Sign of Peace*, we asked you to save September 16th as the date for a CPF gathering. However, we discovered this summer that one of our main speakers and recipients of this year's St. Marcellus Award, Jim Forest, was unable to attend due to health issues. But we can happily announce now that...

The CPF Retreat has been moved to March 24, 2007. Jim Forest and Tom Cornell, co-founders of CPF, will lead us in this year's theme...

### NEITHER LEFT NOR RIGHT: THE HEART OF CHRISTIAN PEACEMAKING

Also presenting will be Michael Baxter, CPF national secretary, Joshua Casteel, Iraq War Vet and conscientious objector, and Farah Marie Mokhtareizadeh, Catholic activist of Irish-Iranian background. Join us for lively reflections, good discussion, common prayer, meals, the St. Marcellus Award Ceremony, and entertainment (including open-microphone time!)

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To all of you who are listening I say: do not believe in violence; do not support violence. It is not the Christian way. It is not the way of the Catholic Church. Believe in peace and forgiveness and love; for they are of Christ.

POPE JOHN PAUL II 1979 Drogheda, Ireland

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