

Decide where you stand concerning the draft

To the Editor:

You must decide where you stand with regard to military service. Perhaps you feel you have an obligation to serve in the military, or maybe you are just sort of hoping you never get called. One thing must be clear, it is your choice. Morally, each of us must decide, and he must recognize that he is free to make the decision.

Many young men behave as if serving in the military were an automatic, necessary thing that everyone has to do. This is not true. Some people hope to avoid military service by obtaining a student, or working in an industry considered necessary to national defense or in other ways. This may work for a time. But it is not really facing up to the issues, and thinking them through.

You must realize that the basic function of the military is to wage war, not to "build men."

It's really quite a sad commentary on the wealthiest nation in the world that many young men who want to better themselves feel forced to join an organization that destroys other young men who doubtless would also like to better themselves.

No matter what slogans you may have heard-- and they are almost exactly the same in every country--armies are for killing. As you consider your decision about military service, the question you must ask yourself is what you think of the war: its purpose, its methods, its results. Each side in every war claims to

fight for high and honorable objectives--"To defend freedom," and even "to end the war and establish peace". In the first public statement by the International Committee of Conscience on Vietnam, "THEY ARE OUR BROTHERS WHOM WE KILL," the Committee described the apparent sincerity of both sides in that war.

We do not question the sincerity of either side. On the contrary, the passionate conviction that each side has its own absolute rightness profoundly alarms us. Their determination seems to have no terminal point; to prove its case, each seems willing to risk the ultimate nuclear conflict and jeopardize the future of the human race.

Does not all war work this way? Even though we may believe that the objectives of a particular side are honorable and just, does not the waging of war itself always work to defeat the very objectives sought for? In Vietnam, for example, one side claims to defend freedom, and in the process of waging war defends dictatorships and destroys the people and the land it is fighting to defend. The other sees its objectives as self-determination and social justice, but terrorizes and kills many persons who also seek to determine their own future. In such circumstances do not the claims of both sides become a mockery of the noble words they use? Freedom and justice

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are for men. Can they be achieved by tormenting men?

Each year most young men just drift into the armed forces. Some may have doubts about the rightness of war in general, or this one in particular. But, unable to reach any decision, they resign themselves to just hoping they will not be called up, that they will fail their physicals or perhaps get one kind of deferment or another until they are too old for the draft call. Such a drifter is liable to suffer a rude awakening when

he suddenly finds a "report for induction" call in his mail. His power of choice has vanished.

As informed citizens, everyone should know what legal alternatives are offered to military service. Young men who face the draft--face the issues now. Remember, the earlier you make your decision whichever it is -- the easier will your future be if you have made it in good conscience. Now it is your choice. Later, it may not be.

For more information come to the draft counselling table in Wilson Hall or call me, Jim Heayn at 531-8297.

**Jim Heayn
Student**