



Cover of the book from which this Editor's Choice is excerpted.

EDITOR'S CHOICE

Vietnam Experiences: A New York Draftee and a Northampton Draft Counselor

TOM WEINER



Editor's Introduction: *Our Editor's Choice selection for this issue is excerpted from the book, Called to Serve: Stories of Men and Women Confronted by the Vietnam War Draft, by Tom Weiner (Amherst, MA: Levellers Press, 2011). Weiner is currently a sixth-grade teacher at the Smith College Campus School in Northampton, Massachusetts, where he has worked for thirty-seven years. Many of the thirty men and women whose oral interviews comprise the body of his book are from Massachusetts.¹ Called to Serve is unique in that Weiner interviews those from many sides of the war. The book offers chapters on those who "served, left, refused, chose conscientious objection, and found ways to beat the draft," as well as interviews with women who "loved, supported and counseled." Weiner explains in his introduction:*

What this book does, which has not been attempted either in the immediate aftermath of the war or since, is bring to bear the wide range of possible outcomes of facing the draft and, in the case of the women interviewed, the war itself, into one volume. Given the full range of experiences captured here, the reader is able to recapture the fullness of the war's effects on those who did and did not serve.

Most of the Vietnam conflict (it was never officially declared a war) was fought under the aegis of the Universal Military Training and Service

Act of 1951, which had been passed during the Korean War. The 1951 act lowered the draft age from 19 to 18½, increased active-duty service time from 21 to 24 months, and set the statutory term of military service at a minimum of eight years. All males were to register upon turning eighteen.

However, the act also established many types of deferments and exemptions. For example, students attending a college, training program, or graduate school full-time could receive an exemption, which was extended as long as they were students.² There were also occupational deferments for those who worked in an industry that the Pentagon deemed essential to national security, as well as various forms of hardship deferments. In 1963 President Kennedy signed an executive order that granted an exemption for married men. Two years later, President Johnson rescinded the exemption for married men without children. (Men married before the order went into effect, however, remained exempt.)³

Despite these many exemptions, historian George Q. Flynn writes: “To Johnson, the [Selective Service] pool must have appeared a cornucopia. In 1964 some 16,850,000 young men were in the eligible age cohort of 18½ to 26.” However, of these, two-thirds (62%) were in deferment or other ineligible categories: for example, 2.3 million were veterans; 4.9 million held educational, job, or other deferments; and 4.1 million were physically or mentally disqualified for duty.⁴

As the fighting expanded, so too did the draft. As Weiner notes, “draft calls soared from 100,000 in 1964 to 400,000 in 1966, enabling U.S. forces in Vietnam to climb from 23,000 ‘military advisors’ in 1964 to 543,000 troops by 1968.”⁵ During the entire Vietnam conflict, however, only 25% of the six million men who served were draftees. Yet this percentage can be misleading. Draftees were overrepresented in the army’s fighting forces and thus had the highest casualty rates. In 1967 an estimated 48% of army troops in Vietnam were draftees. In 1965, 28% of army battle deaths were draftees; this figure increased to 57% in 1967.⁶ In 1968, draftees accounted for an astonishing 88% of the army’s infantry riflemen.⁷

The draft directly affected the lives of every young man in the United States. Before a national draft lottery was implemented in 1969, local draft boards were assigned quotas based on the population of registrants in their area. Local boards then selected the eligible men (aged 18 1/2 through 25 years old) in response to an increasing number of draft “calls,” with the oldest to be selected first. This system resulted in uncertainty for potential draftees during the entire time they were within the draft-eligible age group.

On November 26, 1969, President Nixon signed an amendment to the Military Selective Service Act that established conscription based on random selection ("lottery"). The first national draft lottery was held on December 1, 1969. Its purpose was to determine the order of calls to military service for men born between 1944 and 1950. The days of the year were represented by the numbers 1 through 366 written on slips of paper (February 29 was included, thus creating the unusual number of 366 days). These slips were placed in plastic capsules that were mixed and then dumped into a deep glass jar. On national television, the capsules were drawn from the jar one at a time and the dates announced.

*The first number drawn was 258 (September 14). All registrants with that birthday were assigned lottery number one. The second number drawn corresponded to April 24, and so forth. Thus, all men of draft age (born 1944 to 1950) who shared a birthdate would be called to serve at once. Men with the first 195 birthdates were later called to serve in the order in which they were drawn. A second drawing also occurred on the same day: this lottery held the 26 letters of the alphabet. Among men with the same birthdate, the order of induction was to be determined by the combination of the first letters of their last, first, and middle names. As a result of the lottery, all draft age men found out on a single day what their likelihood of being drafted was, based on whether their birthday fell on the low or high end of the number spectrum. This is where Tom Weiner begins *Called to Serve*, with his own personal account of that momentous day.⁸*

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*Called to Serve: Author's Introduction*⁹

I've been on a quest – for *forty* years and more. It began with the Vietnam War era draft lottery in December of 1969. The war was not going well, in Asia or at home, and in an attempt to blunt the anti-war movement and provide additional soldiers more democratically, the Nixon administration in its first year inaugurated a lottery. I will never forget the night, December 1, 1969, when the first drawing occurred. Several fellow Trinity College students and I didn't want to be just sitting in a room when we got our numbers, so we were listening to the radio as we drove around Hartford. As the capsules containing slips of paper with all of our birth dates on them were drawn from a water-cooler sized glass bowl, we held our collective breath hoping we'd be chosen in the latter half of the pool and thereby avoid the draft and all it betokened.

I still remember the nervous energy with which each number and accompanying birthday was greeted. One of my friends received a number in the 30s, and we offered sympathy along with a good measure of gallows humor. However, I had to wait a bit longer before my birthday, October 22, received number 117. I knew full well that unless the war miraculously ended before I graduated in May of 1971 and I lost my 2-S student deferment, a number like 117 meant I'd be receiving my draft notification even before graduation. . . .

I stared out the windshield at the surreal sight of people walking calmly through downtown Hartford. Didn't they know our lives were at stake? Didn't the announcer realize he was sending some of us to a terrible fate? Wasn't there something very wrong with how this was unfolding? How could driving around in a car lead to finding out whether you'd go to war? Were my parents listening? Did they fully realize what my number meant? I thought of my friend, Michael, who so desperately wanted to avoid the draft, he'd enlisted in the Marine Reserves. What number would he have received? Would he have been able to avoid the *six*-year commitment to the military already affecting his psyche?

I couldn't participate in the joking and silliness with which we defended ourselves. I sat in silence for several minutes. Now I knew my future. At the same time, all over the country other men twenty to twenty-five years old were also learning their fates, so I knew I was not alone. . . .

From the start, I was aware of the incredible lengths my age-mates were willing to go to avoid the war. There were those who feigned mental illness, who took strange combinations of drugs to flunk the urine test, who chose to attempt to starve themselves or to accentuate and document physical or mental ailments that did not actually affect their daily lives. One friend pretended he was gay. Each of these "performances" had risks attached and led to great anxiety, as did the decision to leave the country or face jail. After hearing many of these stories at the time they were unfolding, I became convinced that somehow, some day, I would do what I could to bring them to light.



Tom Weiner, 1971

Now it feels especially important to tell the story. As those of us who were directly affected have begun to hit and



New York Representative Alexander Pirnie draws the first capsule in a lottery drawing held on December 1, 1969.

pass through middle age, it's clear that if nobody ever writes these memories down, the tales will not only be lost to our fellow Americans in general, but perhaps more importantly, they will be unavailable to the generation coming of age during the current controversial wars in Iraq and Afghanistan who could make use of their lessons.

In preserving these stories, I first thought to focus exclusively on the lottery's impact. However, as I dug deeper, it became clear that the draft itself, before and after the lottery, had changed the lives of everyone it touched. For some, facing the draft meant exploring alternatives to serving, which included conscientious objection, a jail sentence, or leaving the country. For others, the possibility of the draft, or of receiving a low number, caused them

to enlist or to participate in ROTC (Reserve Officer Training Corps), OCS (Officer Candidate School), or the reserves. Consequently, it seemed clearly important to include these stories as well.

The personal narratives in this book reveal in their complexity, their intensity, and their humanness, the deep emotional significance these pivotal moments had in the lives of those who experienced them. Yes, the war is about casualties, politics, strategies, victories and losses, but as the enormous outpouring of accounts of the Vietnam War convey, this particular war is also about what happened to a generation of men and women who were required to make life-changing decisions at too young an age, when their values, circumstances, and lives were still in flux. These decisions would have effects ranging from having military and selective service records that could follow and haunt a person throughout one's life, to alienation from one's family, to serving time in jail, to expatriation, to risking one's life. . . .

In virtually every interview I undertook, the subjects voiced the realization that the choices faced and the decisions made had an incalculable impact on their subsequent lives. The chance to remember themselves with as much power and vividness as memory can supply has also offered them help in coming to terms these many years later with whatever actions they ended up taking. Reflecting upon who they were, how their families influenced them, how the times – the music, the drugs, the protest movements, the politics – shaped them provided an opportunity to look back with the advantage of age and perspective. My only regret is this book has to have an end, because it's my belief there are countless other tales, equally compelling, that deserve to be remembered, told, and honored.

But why this particular book at this point in time? There are numerous other Vietnam oral histories, and I commend them all. In books like *We Won't Go: Personal Accounts of War Objectors* (1968) collected by Alice Lynd, and *Hell No, We Won't Go: Resisting the Draft During the Vietnam War* (1991) by Sherry Gershon Gottlieb, draft resisters speak their truth and tell their stories. So do African American men in *Bloods* (1984) by Wallace Terry. Lawrence M. Baskir's *Chance and Circumstance: The Draft, the War, and the Vietnam Generation* (1978) seeks to be comprehensive in its examination of the Vietnam generation and covers much ground but uses research and data, rather than first-person accounts of those who experienced the draft, to bring the reality to the reader. Moreover, the fact that it was published in 1978 allowed little time and distance for reflection.¹⁰

Individual memoirs such as Ron Kovic's *Born on the Fourth of July* (1976) and, of course, the great works of fiction that illuminate the Vietnam War—Tim O'Brien's *Cacciato* (1979) and *The Things They Carried* (1990); Larry

Heinemann's *Close Quarters* (1977); Denis Johnson's *Tree of Smoke: A Novel* (2007) —allow the reader access to all levels of an individual's experience. A recent memoir by Doug Anderson, *Keep Your Head Down: Vietnam, the Sixties, and a Journey of Self-Discovery* (2009), who is a subject of this project, enables the reader to get to know him even more multi-dimensionally than his interview allowed.¹¹

What this book does, which has not been attempted either in the immediate aftermath of the war or since, is bring to bear the wide range of possible outcomes of facing the draft and, in the case of the women interviewed, the war itself, into one volume. Given the full range of experiences captured here, the reader is able to recapture the fullness of the war's effects on those who did and did not serve. In addition, instead of simply recounting what happened at a physical or during basic training or even while in jail, the interview subjects contextualized their experiences, making it easier for the reader to more fully understand "where they were coming from" as the draft landed on them.

The stories clearly indicate more healing needs to occur for our country to learn Vietnam's lessons. Inevitably, there were painful disagreements between the various groups who felt strongly about whichever of the various approaches they took in response to the draft. Having their stories collected together makes it possible for veterans to see what the resisters were thinking and how their choices played out, while those who sought and received conscientious objector status can better appreciate the choice made by those who found ways to "beat the draft." Creating a broader understanding can go a long way to help the Vietnam generation stop re-living the war or seeking someone to blame for its outcome. . . .

THOSE WHO SERVED — ONE MAN'S STORY¹²

George Williams passed away on September 2, 2010. He was a retired New York City firefighter who had grown up in Brooklyn and was a father of two children. After returning from Vietnam, George devoted his life to seeking peaceful solutions to conflict. He moved to Northampton, Massachusetts, in the mid 1990s, where he became very active in two local veterans groups: the Veterans Education Project (VEP) and Veterans for Peace (VFP), of which he was president.¹³ For twelve years, he visited area high schools as a representative of these groups to speak to students about his Vietnam experience. Shortly before his death, he had been asked to mediate a dispute between military recruiters and students on the campus of Holyoke Community College where he had spoken

*numerous times. George was also a visual artist. Called to Serve is dedicated to his memory.*¹⁴

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I grew up in Brooklyn. I got my first real job while I was in high school working for Hayden, Stone and Co., a prominent securities firm, in 1965. My mother was very proud—there was a black man on Wall Street. I enjoyed the job, which involved working closely with the California office. I had an older brother, an older sister, a younger brother, and two younger sisters. My mother was a single parent, and my money helped out the family. I was living a fairly good life and figured it would go on that way. Then I got drafted in 1966.

I had been aware of the war, because Martin Luther King was speaking out more and more against it. My father served in World War II, and my older brother was in the Air Force, so I felt a responsibility to do something. It was just my turn to go into the military. Sure I had choices. I could have gone underground. I could have gotten a phony ID and gone to Canada. I could have gone to jail. My response, though, was just to accept the fact I would be sent to fight.¹⁵

The letter from the Selective Service told me to “Report to Whitehall St.” in downtown Manhattan. There even was a subway token taped to the top of it. I went down there, and they gave me a basic overall physical. During the exam you felt like you were part of a buffalo herd, and you just went along with it. There were a couple of people who probably took LSD or something, because they were bouncing off the walls. Some people were gay, and they pushed that issue right out in front. In all though, there were just a handful of people who seemed to be fighting what was happening. In fact, for me the physical was more like a reunion than anything else. A lot of people from my high school, guys I hadn’t seen in a couple of years, were there, and we were all going in together.

After my physical I started to hear more about the war, and I became more interested in it. However, despite what I was hearing, and even though all my folks, especially my sisters, were hesitant about me going, I just felt like it was something I had to do, like a rite of passage.

It took about six months before they told me to report. When I got the notice, I went down to get all my gear, get sized up, jump on a bus, and go get a haircut. Then they shuttled us back to our homes to say our good-byes. My father was home, and it was the first time he ever hugged me. I didn’t even know how to react to that, because he was always very standoffish, a

disciplinarian. I thought it was just him doing what he needed to do, but I was surprised. I almost couldn't feel anything; it was such a foreign experience.

In basic training we were holed up in Georgia. The drill instructors were all white southerners. They hated New Yorkers, so they had us and the southerners in separate barracks. They were very harsh and not everyone was used to it. They told us, "We're going to break you guys from New York." They did things to us that were inhumane to say the least. There was one guy who couldn't do enough push-ups. They told him he was a monkey and needed to go climb a tree. They actually had this guy hugging a tree, humping a tree. One guy had a book with him, a paperback with a picture of his family tucked into it, and the drill sergeant took the book and ripped it in half. The guy broke down and cried.

There was a time when we were out in a field and we were looking at these rolling hills of Georgia. Everything was so green. I was just saying how beautiful the country was, when this southerner came up from behind where we were standing and said, "Hey, niggers, get off my property!" Back in New York, it wasn't that unusual to run into racist types, and usually we could just go our own way. Being in the military, though, we had to deal with it in other ways.

One way we dealt with it was to be the best that we could be, so they couldn't say anything to us. If we were faster than everyone else was, and did more push-ups and chin-ups, we were less likely to get mistreated. Or we could join one of the clubs. We could join the boxing club or something like that, because if you were in a club they treated you differently.

After basic training we went to advanced training in Fort Jackson, South Carolina. That's where the training got more intense. The rifle we learned on first was the M-14, which was before the



Retired New York City firefighter George Williams, in his home in Northampton, holds a drawing he made two months after the World Trade Center attack. Feb. 11, 2002. Courtesy: *The Republican*, Springfield, MA.

M-16. It was actually a better weapon, because it had a wooden stock. It was a real down-to-earth weapon. You could drop it and pick it up, and it would still work. When they gave us the M-16, everyone used to call it a Mattel toy because it would jam up at the drop of a hat. You got one little grain of sand in it, and it would jam up. Everyone knew it wasn't made for Vietnam. A lot of guys, when they got to Vietnam, said, "Either you give me an AK-47 or you take me home!" We also had more specific training at Fort Jackson, learning about weapons like the Claymore mine in addition to the M-14.¹⁶

In South Carolina we were put in barracks where, for the first time, instead of being with the whole group in one huge room, we were stuck in a dorm situation. There was one guy who had never been more than twenty-five miles from his house. He was the real country boy, the big guy, but we got along well because of our similar size. He was down to earth, and he was on the wrestling team, so we wound up wrestling. He kept offering to run down and get us some moonshine.

Some of us used to steal milk from the kitchen and bring it to a rural community near where he lived. Those people were mountain people, and they were really poor. They didn't know me, but they accepted me because I was in the military; it was automatic acceptance. The kids always got a kick out of me; I've always had a thing with kids.

When it was finally time to go to 'Nam, just stepping off the plane was a situation in itself. When the plane was coming in, there was mortar being fired. We made this really sharp turn, and the whole plane was shaking. All of a sudden it really hit home that I was in Vietnam and I could die. Then, when we opened the doors, we got this hit of air and it was like a hundred degrees. As we were walking along on the runway, the guys who were going home were passing us. They'd say things like, "You're going to go home with fewer guys than you got now," and "You've only got 364 more days to go!"

We jumped into a bus that was pitifully reinforced. It looked like somebody from a shop class just put some wire mesh on the outside. We went into the station where they told us where we were going. They just basically numbered us off and said, "All the one's are going there; all the two's are going there," and so on. I wound up going with the First Infantry Division, which was a rifle division that went into the jungles. We'd fly out on helicopters on some missions and try to spot any enemy going through the "boonies."

Fear was always a common denominator, no matter where you were, no matter what you were doing. Even when we were back at base camp, we weren't safe. We had been mortared there a couple of times, and one time somebody got blown up by a mortar round. That kept the fear with you. There were so many emotions, though; it's hard to pinpoint any one as the

strongest. Sometimes we'd get into a firefight, and it would be so chaotic. We'd get mortared, and at one point a mortar landed behind me in a tree, and that's how I got some shrapnel in my buttocks. I was treated in the field and was seen by a battalion doctor when I got back to the base camp, but for some reason the Army neglected to include it in my records. To this day I'm still trying to get my Purple Heart. The Army says I have to find the medic who treated me, because even though the battalion doctor treated me, the battalion doctor says he doesn't know how I got the wound. I say, "I was in Vietnam. I got wounded. Where do you think it came from?"

But I think also at that time a lot of guys were wounding themselves, trying to get out. I mean I've seen guys cut themselves on the shoulder, so they wouldn't have to carry a backpack. One guy I know drank a bottle of booze, and then told another guy to smash his hand. The range in people's attitudes was unbelievable. There were people who loved being in combat; really to the point that I thought they were psychotic. They loved the act of killing. Then there were guys who wanted to get out so badly they would do anything.

I was somewhere in the middle. I was trying to do my job, despite the fear that was with me all the time. That fear was so powerful; it was almost like it was strangling me. I just wanted to get my time over with. There was a calendar with a Playboy-type model posing, and it was a line drawing with 365 little blocks in the woman's body. Each day you would shade in the block, and where the vagina was, that was home. Everybody had one of these calendars, marking the days off.

There were a lot of Vietnamese children there. One day I noticed that, no matter where you went, there were kids running all over the place. As a child, I wasn't well off. My family was on welfare, but when I was in Vietnam what I had thought of as the poverty level was blown away. One little boy was holding his sister who was eating out of a sandbag that we threw our food away in. It was a really dirty sandbag, and he was feeding her out of it. His clothes were all tattered. More and more I saw kids like that. There was one ten-year-old boy, I remember; besides Vietnamese, he was able to speak German, French, English and Korean, and another dialect I didn't even understand. If you wanted any pot, he'd bring it to you. He would ride around on a little motor scooter, and if you wanted a girl, he would bring a girl. He was like a little pimp. I saw how war affected these children.

More and more I realized we weren't there for a legitimate reason. Even the way we fought the war showed how crazy it was. We would fight, take over certain areas and leave, and then they'd regain them, and we'd go back and have to take the same place over again. It just didn't make sense, strategically,

militarily. It felt like we could have been there forever. It was like constantly taking one step forward and one step back. It didn't make sense to a lot of soldiers, to a lot of ground soldiers at least.

It didn't take long for us to realize we needed to be numbed out, to become "self-medicated," just to get through all the craziness and danger. We drank, and we smoked pot. Pot was probably the most used drug of choice, but there were some people who went to Saigon and got opium and heroin. They used to say, "If you're going into an opium den, don't go in alone," because some soldiers would go in and get killed. If you were going for a night out, you had to be wary, because the Viet Cong were all over the place.

I was really opposed to the way the war itself was being fought. There were the "Zippo raids." I didn't like them at all. Even if the Viet Cong were around the area, why burn a whole village? If we got shot at, we used mortars until we could get an air strike, but a lot of the time we hit innocent villages. That's what the Viet Cong did. They hid behind the villages, but we took out the whole village killing many innocent people.

However, the more I was there, the more I understood the Viet Cong. I felt like they were doing a better job than we were, and some other soldiers felt that way, too. In fact, I just got a call from this guy who I was with in 'Nam. We talked about lots of things that happened, like how some guys always got separated after a firefight, and how our unit had to go look for them. Guys next to me got blown up, but I couldn't feel angry; I mean I understood all too well why the Viet Cong were fighting against us. In fact, I, and a handful of other soldiers, understood the whole war: they were fighting for their homeland, and we were fighting to prevent them from winning it back. The officers, on the other hand, tried to have us dehumanize the Vietnamese, so we would be more likely to follow orders. We could be as brutal as we wanted to, and there would be no consequences.

Fortunately for me, the neighborhood I was in when I was drafted was a blue-collar neighborhood. I had the support of the immediate neighborhood, even if there were some protestors. While I was in Vietnam, having good community and family support helped a lot, and we stayed in touch. Years later, in '85 or '86, I was on a TV show about the war with two other vets, one a paraplegic, the other a double amputee. While I was on the show, I started reading one of the letters I had written to my mother:

Dear Ma,

How are things back in the World? I hope all is well! Things are pretty much the same. Vietnam has my feelings on a seesaw.

This country is so beautiful; when the sun is shining on the mountains, farmers in their rice paddies, with their water buffalo, palm trees, monkeys, birds and even the strange insects. For a fleeting moment I wasn't in a war zone at all, just on vacation, but still missing you and the family.

There are a few kids who hang around, some with no parents. I feel so sorry for them. I do things to make them laugh. And they call me "dinky dow." [crazy] But it makes me feel good. I hope that's one reason why we're here, to secure a future for them. It seems to be the only justification I can think of for the things that I have done!

Love to all.

Your son, George¹⁷

All of a sudden, when I had gotten halfway through reading this letter, a wave of emotion came over me and I started crying. I was really surprised; I had no idea all this was pent up in me. It was reading what I wrote about the children that shook me up. We saw kids blown up, and they had nothing to do with the war. You were just ordered to bomb a village, and no one cared if kids lived there.

Something I didn't realize until I got back was the proportion of blacks on the front line. It felt like a good twenty-five percent, and everyone knew we weren't twenty-five percent of the U.S. population!¹⁸ It's hard for me to prove that not receiving my Purple Heart and not getting promoted to sergeant resulted from racism, but it sure looks like it. As to actual racial incidents, there was only one I saw personally. This black guy was test firing a rocket launcher. There's always a backfire behind, so the twelve feet behind you needs to be clear. But this time a white guy walked behind him. So of course he got hit by the backfire, and his response was, "Oh, you stupid nigger, I'm gonna get my gun. I'm gonna blow you up like you tried to blow me up." He was going for his weapon, so the black guy took out his bayonet and stabbed him. That was the only incident I saw.

Actually, it's hard to say which things that happened were products of racism. I know that while I was there, serving on the front line, being a black guy on the front line, I didn't always realize the effects racism had. It definitely felt like the only people promoted were white guys. I was an "acting jack," which meant that if a sergeant gets killed, promoted, or sent to another unit, they give you a band with sergeant stripes as a temporary promotion until a permanent replacement arrives. Usually when you get that, you get

promoted, and I was waiting for my promotion, but it never came in. Instead, a white guy who got his “acting jack” stripes after me was the one who got promoted. After that I said, “Either promote me or take these stripes.” I wasn’t promoted.

The day before I was going to leave Vietnam, some of the boys wanted me to have a bon voyage party. There was drinking, smoking and all of a sudden I realized that I had ten minutes to fly out. I missed my plane! Any delay in Vietnam was like walking on eggshells. You were just waiting for something to happen. Thankfully I got out the next day.

But getting out wasn’t like it used to be before the protest movement against the war. When I came back home, it was September of ‘68. By then the protesting was in full bloom. There were hundreds of thousands of people protesting. I joined the Veterans Against the War. I was with them in Oakland, California, but when they wanted to blow up places and burn draft headquarters, I didn’t want any part of that. I didn’t want any more violence.

So I returned to Brooklyn with no place to go, and once again I self-medicated. A couple of vets stayed at the bar all day only to come out at night to smoke pot. I did that for a couple of years. One of my closest friends, John, had to go to Vietnam after I got back. He was convinced he wasn’t going to come back, and I remember being at the bar and saying to him, “Listen if I can make it, you can make it.” He ended up dying in Vietnam. His brother gave me one of his dog tags, and I gave him one of mine. His brother and I have these dog tags that we always carry around with us. He was one of my best friends.

I know that when soldiers came back from World War II, the whole town came out to meet them and welcome them home. They got all these benefits. When we came home from Vietnam, we couldn’t even get regular VA benefits. Nor would the VFW allow us to join. They said Vietnam wasn’t a declared war, so we couldn’t even have a beer in their hall! World War II vets were calling us drug dealers and baby killers. Only in 1985 did the VFW finally hold a Vietnam Veterans’ Parade. It was the first parade, and it had taken *ten years* to happen! I don’t think the white guys were treated any better. I don’t think any of us got anything.

For me things didn’t really start to change until 1998 when I got involved with the Veterans Education Project. I read about the Education Project in the newspaper, and it was the first veterans’ group I wanted to be a part of. They were doing something positive, helping kids understand the realities of war instead of just glorifying it. I got to go to schools and tell my story to students, which felt important and meaningful. So I joined them, and through them, I joined another positive organization, Veterans for Peace.



NY City Firefighters George Williams and colleague celebrating Christmas with Squad #1, Brooklyn, N.Y. (undated, c. 1980s). Many from his squad were killed in 9-11.



Vietnam veteran George Williams of Northampton speaks to a group of eighth-graders at Northampton's John F. Kennedy Middle School during the school's observance of Black History Month. Feb. 24, 2004. Courtesy: *The Republican*, Springfield, MA.

It was about that time that I found out my records were messed up. As I said before, I had been injured by enemy mortar fire, and they owed me a Purple Heart. I had to have my aorta replaced and was in the VA hospital for three weeks and out of work for a month. Bills piled up. By the time I was back on my feet, I had to go to a credit company for help. I was on the edge, and my PTSD was intense. I finally went to the VA to see what was holding things up with my Purple Heart. I took with me the required paperwork: one sheet about where you've been, what your assignments were, and what your specialty was. So I gave them this sheet, and told them I was a combat Vietnam vet, and one of them said, "Oh, it states here (he pointed to some papers) you weren't in combat. We'll need to see your Army records."

When the records finally came three years later my separation papers (DD215) showed that I was in combat—I got the CIB (The Combat Infantryman's Badge)—that I had an honorable discharge, and that I received an Army Service Bronze Star.¹⁹ When the VA saw that, and more of my records, they admitted I'd been in combat and was due a Good Conduct Medal and a couple of Vietnam Service ones as well. Then, unbelievably, they told me I would have to buy them myself! Not only that, but I wouldn't be getting a Purple Heart, which would have given me a full disability check every month and prevented me from having to face all of the bills that had occurred while I was in the hospital. According to them they claimed my form gave no proof I was wounded by shrapnel from a mortar in combat, despite the fact an Army doctor had treated me! All these years later I am still trying to find the medic who treated me during that firefight as mortar rounds exploded upon us giving me my wound. The local newspaper wrote a front-page story about what happened to me and how unfair it is, but I'm still fighting the Army to get what I deserve.

A DRAFT COUNSELOR'S STORY: FRANCES CROWE²⁰

Frances Crowe was ninety years old at the time of this interview and had been an activist for over fifty years. She lives in Northampton, Massachusetts, and has three children and five grandchildren. She continues to protest against war and is now organizing against the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Born in Missouri in 1919, Crowe describes herself as a "born rebel." In 1939 she graduated from Stephens College (Columbia, Missouri) and then did graduate coursework at Syracuse University, Columbia University, and the New School for Social Research. In 1945, she married Thomas Crowe, a physician. Crowe and her husband began exploring pacifism shortly after hearing about the bombing of Hiroshima. In 1951, they moved to Northampton because one of

their sons was deaf and they wanted him to be able to attend the Clark School for the Deaf.

*In the 1960s, Crowe founded the Northampton chapter of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom; the Sane Nuclear Policy Committee; and the Valley Peace Center in Amherst, MA. Crowe has participated in countless protests that have led to arrests, trials, and imprisonment. In this remarkable oral interview, she describes founding the Northampton Draft Information Center in the basement of her home in 1968.²¹ For a comprehensive history of the draft resistance movement in Boston and its national significance, see Michael S. Foley's exhaustively researched and cogently written *Confronting the War Machine: Draft Resistance During the Vietnam War*.²²*

* * * * *

Prior to the escalation of the Vietnam War, I was a full-time mother, housewife, and homemaker with three kids, two of whom were adolescent boys. The kitchen seemed always to be filled with young men after school talking about what they were going to do about the draft. After hearing their stories, I decided I would go to the Central Committee for Conscientious Objectors to take a week's draft counseling training course. I came back and visited some draft centers, such as one in Cambridge, one in New Haven, and several others, but I didn't get to see what I considered draft counseling. I saw angry young men, mostly resister types, "conducting interviews." What they were really doing was telling other men about their (mostly illegal) options, such as how they could throw protein in their urine samples to indicate kidney problems, gain or lose weight, or see a psychiatrist. These crazy, demonizing things were very disturbing to me.

I came back and went to the University of Massachusetts' School of Education for a course in group counseling. I decided to take what I called the feminist approach to draft counseling, i.e. to do groups, similar to the consciousness-raising groups of the women's movement [in contrast to individual counseling].²³ We had a home with a large lower floor where I could have a draft-counseling center. I decided that Tuesday and Thursday afternoons, and Friday nights, I would do groups from two to five o'clock and seven to ten.

I went to our local paper, the *Daily Hampshire Gazette*, to see about putting an ad in announcing my groups. Their immediate response was it would be illegal to print that. I asked them to check with their lawyers; after all, all I was doing was telling draftees about their legal options under Selective Service. The lawyers affirmed my right to put my ad in, but they ran it as a

little ad in the classifieds. “Young Men, are You Conscientiously Opposed to Participation in War in Any Form? If so, come to a draft information session.” Nobody came.

Now remember, this was before there were Xerox machines. I had a big old mimeograph machine. It was very hard to cut stencils and grind out copies; nevertheless, I prepared flyers. In those days students at the five colleges in our area weren’t allowed to have cars, and there was no bus service between the schools. So everybody hitchhiked. I decided the thing I should do was to drive back and forth between the colleges in our area, Amherst and Northampton, picking up hitchhikers and giving them the flyers with information about the counseling sessions. The first Monday morning I went out, I managed to fill up the station wagon with young men going to Amherst. As soon as they got in the car, I asked them, “What are you going to do about the draft?” Oh, they had crazy ideas about going to Canada or Sweden, failing physicals, or cutting off part of their trigger finger. I talked



Frances Crowe in the basement of her Northampton house, where she conducted draft counseling sessions. (c. 1970s)

fast and drove slowly. Then I gave them stenciled maps to my house, with an invitation to my first draft counseling session, the following Tuesday at 2 o'clock.

I did that all day, and by Tuesday afternoon, I had a roomful. There were people *in* the military, people trying to decide how to *not* go into the military, or whether they would let themselves be drafted. There were girlfriends, mothers, wives, even at one point, a father of a potential draftee who was chairman of the Holyoke Draft Board, who came because he really wanted to understand the law. I was prepared for that: I had all the legal books, had studied the draft law carefully, and had even subscribed to the *Law Reporter*.

My fellow draft counselors and I had great success with people in the military. The only outward difference between them and the others was the way their hair was cut! In fact, we worked with the first CO (conscientious objector) in the Air Force: a pilot flying out of Thailand and bombing Vietnam. He was home on leave when our group, Women Against the War, blockaded the entrance to Westover Air Force Base. We dressed as Vietnamese women while this pilot, back in the States, was serving at the base. He had been given an M-16 and put on guard duty. He later told us that he had been struck by our group of women kneeling there in front of the gate, many of us crying.

While we had been leafleting there for over three years, the day he observed us happened to be International Women's Day. Inspired by the Vietnamese poetry we'd been reading aloud, we spontaneously just got down on our knees to honor all the Vietnamese women affected by the terrible war and to block the gate. He said that suddenly he had a vision of the people he had bombed in Vietnam. He wasn't aware of all his conflicting emotions at the time, but that night, while he was watching *West Side Story* with his wife, he started crying and he couldn't stop.

The next day he was ordered back to Thailand. He thought very seriously, and decided he could never bomb again. He went to see the Air Force chaplain, and I heard on the radio later that week that he refused an order to bomb and was going to be court-martialed in Westover. He was from Danbury. On the same radio piece, I heard his mother say, "My son is not a CO. He would have fought in World War II." I raced to the phone and began the process of trying to call his mother in Danbury even though I only had his last name.

Fortunately I got her on the third try. When I asked for her son, she said he was in Thailand. I told her, "Then I want to talk to you. Your son does *not* have to say what he would have done in World War II! That's something he will never know. He only needs to say how he feels about *this* war. I want to send him some material." So she gave me his APO (Army Post Office)

address, and I immediately ran downstairs, got all my best copies of things, and sent them to him. Luckily, he got the package just as he was getting on the plane to come home, so he called me when he arrived at Westover. We got together, and he got the help he needed. Now he's a lawyer doing really good anti-death penalty work. Of course, there were many others. This is just one of the stories I could tell you.

In addition to working with this pilot, we'd also begun counseling high school drop-outs from some depressed communities in our area, such as Chicopee. It was all word-of-mouth. One would hear about the sessions, and soon they would bring others. That meant we were fortunate to have a very diverse group of people. We had Amherst College students with Chicopee youth. The Amherst College students were often very articulate, but out of touch with their feelings. The Chicopee youth were really in touch with their feelings, but lacked the competence to express them. They helped one another, and out of that came a support network.

Some of the most difficult sessions involved those who were serving. There was one man who was AWOL [absent without leave] and we helped him talk about what he needed to do. I didn't consider myself a military counselor, so I sent these men off to get military counseling to help them sort through the issues. I remember at one point he turned himself in to go back to apply for a CO discharge, and of course, we helped him and others with the letters of reference. We had certain ministers in town who we knew would be willing to talk to these people and help them search their conscience if they felt they were sincere. Then they'd write them a letter of support. He told us later that at one point he was standing there in this wooden barracks some place down south, and he refused to put on his uniform. He had only his underpants on. They threw a gun at him that he was supposed to catch, and he didn't catch it. At that moment he knew he was a conscientious objector. He later said, "The group was with me." They tested him, and he used his feelings of solidarity to withstand their pressure tactics.

We also had one young man who was totally out of the system. He was a drop-out living out in the woods in Chicopee. He had trouble expressing himself, but he was a very good woodcarver. Encouraged by the group, the way he decided to express himself was to use his art. He made this beautiful box. On the first side of it was Gandhi, on the second, Martin Luther King, on the third, Dorothy Day, and on the fourth, César Chávez. All four of these people were his non-violent heroes, and he took that in to the draft board to show them. Of course, their first reaction was that there was a bomb in it, which still makes me laugh. He got his CO!

There were others who joined us for the meetings, including mothers and fathers whose sons were confronting the draft. Some were very skeptical at first. “What are you doing?” “Who are you?” “What’s this all about?” But we were just right out there with our efforts to support their sons. We were honest and trusting, and soon they trusted us. It was a wonderful open process.

I was very glad to see parents coming. I feel parents have the responsibility to really level with their kids about what *they* feel about participating or not participating in war, rather than saying, “It’s your life. You have to decide.” I also believe that parents are responsible for promoting their moral and philosophical lives.

I have a son, Tom, who was away at a farm high school in Vermont when he first began thinking about the draft. He was trying to be very objective about the idea of conscientious objection; with his mother so deeply involved in encouraging this approach, he was a little skeptical. Eventually he said, “I think I’m going to go into the Army and find out for myself what it’s really like.” My husband and I were very concerned about this approach, so I called him and said:

Tom, you’ve got to come home and spend a day with us. We’ll talk this through, because we feel this is not you. Come on a Wednesday when I don’t have a group. We’ll take the phone off the hook, I won’t answer the door, and we’ll be there totally for you.

He came, and we talked all day. We really talked it through, and at the end of the day he said, “I will apply for a CO but I’ll do so on environmental grounds. I am doing so to help protect the earth. War damages the planet, and animal life, and endangers species,” so he applied for his CO on those grounds. He stressed to us that he was not a Quaker as we were, but he grew up around the Quaker faith and we sensed it was that belief system that he tapped into. Then Tom got a [high draft lottery] number that didn’t put him at risk, and I was very glad for him.

However, soon after he learned his high number, he said, “That was really important what you did, having me come down and us talking things through for the whole day. If I had waited to get drafted or volunteered it would have been a big mistake.” So I think parents should be encouraged to get actively involved, and I was very glad that our counseling sessions provided an opportunity for that to happen.

When people first arrived at the draft counseling sessions, I had them fill out a form with their name and address, their draft status, whether they qualified for any physical exemptions, and if there were other exemptions for which they thought they might be eligible. I kept those forms, so if they happened to be on vacation when they heard about a change in the draft law, they could call me, and I could look at their record and say, “Yes, I think you should do this,” or “No, I don’t think this change applies to you.”

Once the forms were filled out, I invited everyone to sit in a circle. We went around the circle, with each young man telling his particular story. As we went around the circle, they gained confidence by hearing one another. They could identify. “Yes, that’s the way I feel.” We asked them questions such as, “What’s the basis of your belief and where does it come from?” and “What do you think are the seeds in your background for these ideas of conscience?” They shared stories. One told about how he had accidentally killed a squirrel with a BB gun when he was young and shared his emotional response to taking a squirrel’s life. Another would tell about a book he had read, such as *Johnny’s Got His Gun*.²⁴ I showed slideshows such as Don Luce’s *Remember Vietnam*, which really helped them get in touch with what was going on there.²⁵ The slideshow made viewers think about Vietnam a lot. We talked about similar books, music, and films. Those who weren’t familiar with the titles became eager to get their hands on them to see if they were helpful.²⁶

They came back week after week, clarifying their thoughts and beliefs. They also began to slowly write their answers to the CO application questions. As new people came in, they were helped by those further along in the process. We went over their applications together as a group. Often people would strengthen their CO responses as they heard ideas others expressed and recognized they felt the same way. We also role-played personal appearances in front of the draft board, so people would feel as prepared as possible.

First we challenged people with the crazy questions draft boards might well ask them, such as, “What would you do if someone tried to attack your grandmother?” And then we coached them to respond, “That’s not war and my grandmother locks her doors. She doesn’t have guns and I don’t have a gun.” People asked, “What if the draft board says, ‘You pay taxes, so you must obey the law?’” We would counsel them to say, “It’s illegal to not file a tax form, just like it’s illegal for me to go into the Army if I am a CO.” So, we were helping by showing them the relevant law.

We based a lot of these role-plays on what members of the group told us after they had been to a draft board hearing. Using their experiences, people in the group took turns being the chairman or members of the board.

They loved doing that, and it helped everyone prepare for their own personal appearance.

I had copies of all of the medical regulations, but I really urged them not to take a medical or illegal way out because I said:

It's going to be on your record for the rest of your life. It may influence your health insurance coverage. It may influence a job you want to get if it says you are psychologically unstable. It's hard enough to figure out who we are and if you've got this label of being unstable... There are times when you think well, maybe I am. And I don't think it's a good way to see yourself.

I think it was a very positive experience for me and for the young people.

Along with this work, we had coffee and tea, and people would bring cookies or cheese and crackers. We stayed up late, and sometimes it was hard, Friday night particularly, to get them to leave because they had developed into a group. It was a community. Whenever someone who received a 1-O classification as conscientious objector came back and shared their experience, we celebrated! Those who had been successful kept coming so they could help the others. That first year, '68 through '69, I had 1,776 come for counseling. 1776: it's a wonderful number, don't you think?

We went on for three years until the draft finally stopped. Out of all those who came to the counseling groups, only one person went to prison. He was a non-registrant from New Hampshire and had his trial up there. We all went up to support him. We also wrote to him while he was in prison, and I picked him up when he got out. We didn't forget about him when he was no longer coming to the group: we saw him through his choice. Only one person went into the Army. He went in as a 1-A0, as a medic, because his brother was in Vietnam. Everybody else ended up as a CO!

[Editor's Note: In 1971, the Military Selective Service Act was further amended. All student deferments were ended, except for divinity school students. All registrants were classified as either: 1-A (eligible for military service) 1-AO (Conscientious Objector available for *non-combatant military service*), or 1-O (Conscientious Objector available for *alternate community service*).]

We tried to help people who got their CO classification find creative alternative service employment. The law says your alternative service has to be in the national interest and has to force you to disrupt your personal life in some way, usually by moving from your local community. We got churches and non-profit organizations to sponsor COs, so they could work

for alternative schools, health care centers, food banks, and shelters. Many worked in hospitals.

I frequently run into people in all walks of life who say, “I came to your draft counseling sessions, and that was the turning point of my life. Facing the draft, figuring out who I was and where I wanted to go with my life and why, and seeing that I had a conscience that I could follow and take control of my life; that changed my life forever!” Our “graduates” are all doing wonderful things now, such as being a principal of a high school or working on all kinds of very interesting and useful alternative things.

This was confirmed for me a few years ago when I got an honorary degree at UMASS at their graduation. Afterwards, one of the people ran up to me and said, “Jesus Christ! I can’t believe you’re still here doing this stuff. I was one of your COs. My son is one of today’s graduates, and I’m just so happy you’re here!”

Similarly, last winter someone who had seen something on the Internet about me immediately emailed, saying, “I want to see you. I was one of your early people when I was a student at UMASS.” He came to visit on his way through town with his wife and children and we had a lovely time. I learned he had become very active in the U.S.-China People’s Friendship Association, going to China and participating in talks. Now he’s an immigration lawyer in New York City, working with Chinese immigrants. He clearly felt proud of what he was doing. That pleased me, because always the most important thing about our work with all those we counseled about the draft was that they ended up feeling good about their decision and themselves.

The [1969 draft] lottery changed things for sure [by ending most forms of deferments]. We were no longer doing draft counseling, but there were more calls from men asking about their eligibility for CO status. I would always be saying, “Look at the law. Read the law. You are qualified.” I told them, “The government doesn’t want anyone who is conscientiously opposed to the war. If you fit that description, you are actually violating the law if you go in.”

I shared with them a landmark case during World War II, which involved a man named Dan Seeger. He was not religious, but he held a moral, ethical, and philosophical objection to participation in war. He declared his beliefs with the same degree of intensity as one would if the appeal were based on a religious belief. His lawyers challenged his conviction all the way up to the Supreme Court. Unfortunately, it was a long time before the Supreme Court heard that case: it was about a WWII soldier and the decision only came down in the early ’60s! Dan was actually in prison when the Supreme Court finally ruled on his behalf. It essentially said if a person holds a moral,

ethical, and philosophical objection to war, belief in a supreme being is not essential.²⁷

That decision in the Dan Seeger case was really a *pivotal* turning point in the understanding of what defined a conscientious objector. I keep stressing that, and have even printed a letter explaining the role of this case, because most people don't understand its significance. There was a family who lived not far from me that had three sons. The local draft board had turned down the oldest one's application for CO on the grounds that it wasn't religiously based, and as a result, he had gone to Canada. When his younger brothers finally gained an understanding of the law, they said, "Our brother shouldn't have been denied. There was no reason for him to have to refuse induction." We brought him back from Canada, and the government dropped the indictment against him.

An important part of the draft information work I did here was monitoring our local draft board. They met on Monday nights, and I would go down Tuesday mornings, when they posted the draft meeting minutes, to be sure they were drafting people in the right order and weren't skipping over people who had political connections. We monitored them closely, and when they knew we were monitoring them, it made a difference. I even parked out in front of the draft board. I would park there and observe who went in for a personal appearance and who came out.

I could check to see how honest the draft board was being, but it took that kind of vigilance, and I think most draft counseling centers didn't put that kind of energy into it. We also kept records on draft boards outside of our local area. I knew the draft boards in New Jersey, Vermont, New Hampshire, and even places like Long Island. With that information we were better able to be of service, and that's what we were all about.

I didn't care if I was taking risks, because I, too, was acting on my conscience. I knew the government watched me. They even sent someone into one of our sessions, who was very bumbling with a tape recorder, and I knew he had a wig on. So I said, "Look, take off your wig. It's too hot in here. Put your tape recorder away." And he bumbled and fled. Having the sessions at my house wasn't always easy. My neighbors objected to all the motorcycles, and the kids coming in with jeans torn at the knees, and my having so many people coming to my house. One Friday night, in fact, there were seventy-nine of us, and we had to break up into small groups all over the house and yard.

Our neighbors may have taken note, but there was no media coverage of what we were doing. Now as we've been counseling soldiers about their choices in Iraq and Afghanistan, there's a little bit. Recently, our local

newspaper let me tell the story of my work in the late '60s, but one local article is obviously not enough. Unfortunately, people are still so socialized into an artificial patriotism that any talk of not wanting to fight for the U.S., regardless of the nature of the war, is considered totally un-American. The advertising and propaganda that promote this feeling is just so unrelenting that people become fearful and their minds are totally paralyzed.

Only people like Amy Goodman and her news show, *Democracy Now*, are breaking through the awful misinformation and inertia, trying to wake people up. People need to pay attention and listen. That's why I want to tell people what the law actually is, and give them the GI Rights Hotline number where they can get help, so we don't have to have other soldiers committing suicide like the one that happened in a nearby town!²⁸

HJM

Editor's note regarding top image on opposite page:

In 1973, the Secretary of Defense announced the creation of an all-volunteer armed forces, negating the need for the military draft. Two years later President Ford signed a proclamation which eliminated the registration requirement for all 18–25 year old males. However, on July 2, 1980 President Carter signed Proclamation 4771 in response to the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan. It retroactively re-established the Selective Service registration requirement for all male citizens. It was this act that Crowe was protesting.



Francis Crowe speaking at an anti-selective service draft registration rally at Amherst Common. The proposed reinstatement act was being protested even before it was formally signed by President Carter on July 2, 1980.

Feb. 2, 1980. Courtesy: *The Republican*, Springfield, MA.



Frances Crowe is presented with an award for her lifetime of social justice activism by Victoria Safford, then minister of the Unitarian Society of Northampton and Florence. Stafford wrote an Afterword for *Called to Serve*.



Anti-Vietnam War Demonstration, Amherst Town Common, c. 1970.

The sign in back addresses “Mothers of America.” The protestors, including Frances Crowe, were dressed to resemble Vietnamese women. The front sign shows a photo from the My Lai Massacre (see next photo).



Note that this is the photo on the placard that the Amherst protesters were carrying (previous page).

The My Lai Massacre was the murder of between 347 and 504 unarmed civilians in South Vietnam on March 16, 1968 by U.S. Army soldiers of “Charlie” Company. Most of the victims were women, children, infants, and elderly. While 26 U.S. soldiers were initially charged with criminal offenses for their actions at My Lai, only Second Lieutenant William Calley, a platoon leader, was convicted. Found guilty of killing 22 villagers, he was originally given a life sentence, but only served three and a half years under house arrest. The incident prompted global outrage when it became public knowledge in 1969 and these photos were released. This photo was taken by U.S. Army photographer Ronald L. Haeberle. In his new book, *Kill Anything That Moves: The Real American War in Vietnam* (Metropolitan Books, 2013), Nick argues that the intentional killing of civilians was quite common in a war that claimed an estimated two million civilian lives, with 5.3 million civilians wounded and eleven million refugees.

Notes

1. All but one of Weiner's interview subjects (Bob Brown) lived in Massachusetts at the time they were interviewed. Weiner conducted 61 interviews over seven years then chose 30 for inclusion in his book. He sought a balance—racially, socio-economically, and experientially.
2. George Q. Flynn, *The Draft, 1940-1973* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1993), 168.
3. For a study of the class bias of the Vietnam era draft (particularly due to college deferments), see the classic study by Christian G. Appy, *Working-Class War: American Combat Soldiers and Vietnam* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1993).
4. Flynn, 169.
5. Weiner, 11-12. Weiner's first chapter is devoted to a history of the draft.
6. Flynn, 171.
7. Weiner, 12.
8. Flynn, 254-258. Draft lotteries were also conducted in 1970, 1971, and 1972. Men receiving draft numbers issued in 1972, however, were never called into service. On January 27, 1973, Secretary of Defense Melvin R. Laird announced the creation of an all-volunteer armed forces, negating the need for the military draft.
9. Tom Weiner, *Called to Serve*, excerpted from pages xi and xiv-xvii.
10. Alice Lynd, *We Won't Go: Personal Accounts of War Objectors* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1968); Sherry Gershon Gottlieb, *Hell No, We Won't Go: Resisting the Draft During the Vietnam War* (New York: Viking Press, 1991); Wallace Terry, *Bloods: An Oral History of the Vietnam War by Black Veterans* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1984); and Lawrence M. Baskir and William A. Strauss, *Chance and Circumstance: The Draft, the War, and the Vietnam Generation* (New York: Knopf Publishers, 1978).
11. Ron Kovic, *Born on the Fourth of July* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1976); Tim O'Brien, *Going After Cacciato* (New York: Delacourt Press, 1978) and *The Things They Carried* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1990); Larry Heinemann, *Close Quarters* (New York: Vintage Books, 1977); Denis Johnson, *Tree of Smoke: A Novel* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007); and Doug Anderson, *Keep Your Head Down: Vietnam, the Sixties, and a Journey of Self-Discovery* (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 2009).
12. Weiner, reprinted from Chapter Two, pages 36-44.
13. The Veterans Education Project (VEP), founded in 1982 by Vietnam veterans, is an independent non-profit organization based in Amherst, Massachusetts. VEP trains and supports local military veterans to share their personal stories of war and homecoming in Western New England schools and public venues.
14. The editors have expanded upon the brief biography of Williams provided in Weiner's book chapter. One eulogy after his death (sponsored by Hampshire

College's Civil Liberties and Public Policy Program), described Williams as "a poet, photographer, visual artist, an actor/playwright, a mediator, a story-teller" and added that he "played a mean blues harmonica." It concluded: "Many who knew and worked with George in the movement for peace and justice describe him as a warm, gentle, big-hearted man." Civil Liberties and Public Policy Program, "Celebrating the Life of George Williams." (Amherst, MA: Accessed January 15, 2013) <http://clpp.hampshire.edu/node/1641>.

15. For the experience of those who fled to Canada, see the following two studies that offer very different interpretations of who these men were and why they chose to flee. David S Surrey, *Choice of Conscience: Vietnam Era Military and Draft Resisters in Canada* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1982) and Frank Kusch, *All American Boys: Draft Dodgers in Canada from the Vietnam War* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2001).

16. The Claymore mine is an explosive device. It's about the size of a Frisbee, but it's rectangular and concave, so when all the little pellets exploded out of it, they shot outwards. You would use it to clear away the enemy from in front of your foxhole. It had a wire attached, and all you had to do was squeeze the trigger.

17. This letter was first published in Bernard Edelman (ed.), *Dear America: Letters Home from Vietnam* (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1985).

18. According to Weiner, 88.4% of the men who actually served in Vietnam were Caucasian, 10.6% were black, 1% belonged to other races. Of the 58,156 men who died in Vietnam, 86.3% were Caucasian (including Hispanics), 12.5% were black, and 1.2% belonged to other races.

19. The Combat Infantryman's Badge is the U.S. Army combat service recognition decoration awarded to enlisted men and officers holding colonel rank or below who *personally* fought in active ground combat while an assigned member of either an Infantry or a Special Forces unit.

20. Weiner, reprinted from Chapter Seven, pages 303-11.

21. The editors have expanded upon the brief biography of Crowe provided in Weiner's original book chapter. For another interview with Crowe that explores her entire life history, see Frances Crowe, Interviewed by Sarah Hunter, November 6 and 13, 2008, Women's Activism and Oral History Project, Sophia Smith Archives, Smith College, Northampton, MA. See also Crowe Papers, 1960-2008 (ongoing), 61 boxes, Collection number: MS 249, Sophia Smith Archives, Smith College. According to the finding aid, Crowe's papers "document over twenty years of social activism in the Pioneer Valley of Western Massachusetts, including activities of local chapters of the American Friends Service Committee, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, Women Against the War, War Resisters' League, and Amnesty International."

22. Michael S. Foley, *Confronting the War Machine: Draft Resistance During the Vietnam War* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2007). "Focusing on Boston, one of the movement's most prominent centers, Foley reveals the crucial

role of draft resisters in shifting antiwar sentiment from the margins of society to the center of American politics. Their actions inspired other draft-age men opposed to the war—especially college students—to reconsider their place of privilege in a draft system that offered them protections and sent disproportionate numbers of working-class and minority men to Vietnam.” (Book jacket excerpt)

23. For more, see Sara Hunter interview, 28-30.

24. *Johnny's Got His Gun* is an anti-war novel written by American novelist and screenwriter Dalton Trumbo. It was written in 1938, published in 1939, and adapted into a film by the author in 1971. It tells the story of Joe Bonham, a young soldier serving in World War I, who wakes up in a hospital bed after being caught in the blast of an exploding artillery shell. He gradually realizes he has lost his arms, legs, and face, but that his mind functions perfectly, leaving him a prisoner in his own body. His wish is to be put in a glass tube and taken around the country to show people the true horrors of war.

25. This filmstrip, made in 1970 by Don Luce, shows the beauty that was Vietnam before the start of the war with the U.S. and its subsequent devastation.

26. For an excellent introduction to the history of anti-war movement in the 1960s and 1970s, see Melvin Small, *Antiwarriors: The Vietnam War and the Battle for America's Hearts and Minds* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2002). Vietnam historian Marilyn B. Young writes that, “*Antiwarriors* is a finely balanced history of the antiwar movement that is mature in its judgments, persuasively argued, and a crisply written account of a passionate period.” Marilyn B. Young offers one of the best introductions to the Vietnam conflict, see, *Vietnam Wars 1945-1990* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1991).

27. In the 1965 case *United States v. Daniel A. Seeger* the U.S. Supreme Court unanimously ruled that the exemption from the military draft for conscientious objectors “could not be reserved only for those professing conformity with the moral directives of a supreme being,” but also for those whose views on war derived from a “sincere and meaningful belief which occupies in the life of its possessor a place parallel to that filled by God.” For a first-hand account, see Daniel A. Seeger, *Silence: Our Eye on Eternity* (Wallingford, PA: Pendle Hill Publications, 1994).

28. Editor's Note: Crowe is referring to the suicide of Jeffrey Lucey of Belchertown. His suicide gained national attention, partly due to his family's efforts to see justice. Lucey was a corporal in the U.S. Marines assigned to a special operations unit in Iraq in 2003. After he returned home, he began acting erratically and suffering from nightmares. He later claimed that he had been ordered to kill two unarmed soldiers. In May 2004, Lucey was admitted to the Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Leeds. The facility discharged him four days later after diagnosing him with alcoholism and mood swings. On June 22, 2004, Lucey hanged himself in the basement of his parents' home. He was 23. His parents subsequently filed a wrongful death suit against the government. The U.S. Department of Justice admitted that Lucey's suicide

while under the Veterans Administration's care was a "tragedy for the VA" and offered \$350,000 to settle the case. See: Fred Contrada, "U.S. to Pay \$350,000 to Family of Belchertown Veteran," *The Republican*, January 15, 2009. There was widespread news reporting on his case.