

STUDENTS FACE *the* *draft*

An in-depth special

America's military draft has been opposed and defended since its beginnings in the Civil War.

A limited conscription act passed in 1863 took draftees only when communities failed to produce a quota of volunteers. Wealthier men were able to avoid conscription by hiring a substitute or by paying the government an exemption fee of \$300.

Opposition to conscription was widespread during the Civil War. In New York, 10,000 troops were called out to suppress draft riots. Other rioting occurred in Massachusetts, Vermont, New Hampshire, and Ohio.

The Selective Service Act of 1917, which required all men 21 to 30 to register, was signed at the start of World War I after heated debate. "The draft is in no sense a conscription of the unwilling; it is, rather selection from a nation that has volunteered," said President Woodrow Wilson in defense of the law.

When the war ended the United States returned to a voluntary military system.

The United States adopted a new selective service law in 1940; it was the first time a draft had existed when the United States was not at war. The act provided that not more than 900,000 men be in service at any one time, and that service be limited to twelve months.

History OF SELECTIVE SERVICE

When the United States entered World War II a new act was passed, which made all men between 18 and 45 subject to military service. Over ten million men were inducted into the armed forces during World War II.

The act expired in 1947, but the next year a new law made all men between 19 and 26 liable for induction and 21 months service. They were to register at 18.

When the Korean War broke out in 1951, the Universal Military training and Service Act pushed the minimum age for induction back a little further -- to eighteen and one-half. It also extended the length of service to 24 months. The Reserve Forces Act of 1955 required six years of active and reserve duty.

The draft law has been renewed with little ceremony in Congress every four years since then, and remains basically unchanged.

Criticism of the draft has increased dramatically since the Vietnam war. Many say that the draft discriminates against the poor and the blacks. Others call it a form of slavery, and have gone to jail for refusing registration and induction.

While those who support the draft frequently admit that the system has its faults, they say that a draft is necessary for national security.

President Nixon has expressed the desire for an eventual all-volunteer army. Until such a system can be put into effect, he has asked Congress for the power to take younger men first on a lottery basis.

Resistor

Former SC president faults school's values

A former Ramsey Student Council president is now an active draft resistor.

Mark Larson, Student Council president in 1966, turned in his draft card to the Selective Service last November. He regrets having ever registered and accepted one. "I didn't think twice about registering at the time," said Mark in a recent interview, "because my school ignored the issue . . . men were being killed and it wasn't being discussed in school."

Because he turned in his draft card, Mark was classified as delinquent by his draft board. He later refused induction into the army.

Mark believes that high schools do not teach the truth about the draft and the war.

"The high schools teach a certain value system," he maintained, "and it is a value system that glorifies war. Consciously or unconsciously, the high schools keep us ignorant of real issues."

He stated that schools are set up to channel people into society the way it is, "rather than teach young people to make society more decent."

After graduating from Ramsey, Mark spent one year at Yale and another at the University of Chicago.

"For the most part, Universities wanted young people like me to stay in college and keep a deferment, and go on to become a member of the elite leadership in society." This didn't appeal to Mark.

"The common young workers are sent to Vietnam and killed. Or they find a lousy, low-paying, boring job," he said.

Mark advises students to "get out of the suburban isolation, and find out what's happening in this country."

While he thinks changing the draft is important, he doesn't think it is the crucial question.

"The crucial question is whether we are going to serve war, or the needs of human beings around the world for food, housing, and freedom from exploitation."

High school students should "look around and become part of a group that's working for change, that's really alive," Mark believes. He sees draft resistance as one way in which high school students can contribute to changing the society.

"A lot of people at Ramsey can go on to college, where they're still in isolation," said Mark. "But those who will be the workers -- including some Ramsey students -- will be caught right in the middle of it."

UNCLE SAM
WANTS YOU

HELL NO -
WE WON'T
GO

SELECTIVE SERVICE CLASSIFICATIONS

1. I-A-O--Conscientious Objector available for noncombatant duty only.
2. I-O--Conscientious Objector available for civilian work only.
3. I-D--In ROTC or reserves.
4. I-S--Student deferred till end of school year.
5. I-Y--Not presently qualified for military service.
6. II-A--Occupational deferment.
7. II-C--Agricultural deferment.
8. II-S--Student deferment.
9. III-A--Deferred because of dependents.
10. IV-A--C completed military service or sole surviving son.
11. IV-B--Officials deferred by law.
12. IV-C--Alien deferment.
13. IV-D--Minister or ministerial student.
14. IV-F--Not qualified for any service.
15. V-A--Overage.

Three seniors with different ideas about the draft agreed to air their views for Blueprint. The participants, Rick Kline, Tony Olivia, and Fred Wolf, brought up other questions such as war and killing. Editor Jeff Holman served as moderator.

The article features excerpts from a tape recording made two weeks ago.

Holman: Let's begin by talking about how each of us will be affected by the draft.

Wolf: I am going to register as a conscientious objector, reasons being that I don't feel we should be killing people. Killing is against my moral and religious backgrounds.

The draft in itself is a poor set-up. It keeps a guy sweating for six years. That's just too many years for a guy to sweat, because he's gonna lose a lot of weight.

Holman: How do you think the system could be changed to make it more fair, Fred?

Wolf: I think it should be abolished, period."

Holman: What about you, Tony?

Olivia: Okay. Right now I'm seventeen. And pretty soon I'm going to have to start worrying about the draft, whether I want to go in or not. I just don't think that I should be over there fighting for something I just don't believe in. I myself have no intention of going in...the grounds being bad health and certain problems that have arisen within my family.

Holman: What about you, Rick?

Kline: Before I say anything about me, can I comment about what the other two have said? Tony, you're not here to discuss over there or any place else, your here to discuss the draft, period. And Fred, we just want to know why--why is it you don't like the draft, period. Is it that you don't want to go in service, or that you're afraid?

Wolf: Well, I possibly am afraid. But then, again, I don't believe in killing. The army can't tell me it is anything but to kill, really, that's what you're taught in the army.

Kline: I think the draft, the way it stands. . . it's a weak system, it can be improved. But I'm not looking to get out. I'm not looking for anybody to kill, either,



'Quote--Unquote'

From the individual's viewpoint, he is standing in a room which has been made uncomfortably warm.

"Several doors are open, but they all lead to various forms of recognized, patriotic service to the Nation."

"The psychology of granting wide choice under pressure to take action is the American or indirect way of achieving what is done by direction in foreign countries where choice is not permitted."

-- From "Channeling," an official Selective Service memorandum issued in July, 1965, and subsequently withdrawn.