

The Gulf War on SDA Campuses

Our generation has been accused of smugness, complacency, and indifference to anything not stamped "For Me." Campus newspapers show something different.

Compiled by Harvey Brenneise

THE STUDENT NEWSPAPERS OF THE NORTH American Adventist colleges and universities gave information and expressed a wide range of opinion about the recent Persian Gulf War. This included a substantial amount of material that was not supportive of the war effort. Because of the short length of the war, the quantity of war coverage by a particular paper largely corresponded with its publication frequency. The most extensive coverage was at Andrews University and Walla Walla College, which have weekly papers, and the least at Southwestern Adventist College, which has a monthly paper. There was little coverage of the Gulf crisis prior to the outbreak of war, and it took as much as three weeks after the beginning of hostilities for the first reports to appear in some papers. There has also been little postwar comment.

A number of common themes can be seen.

Harvey Brenneise is an associate professor of library science and the head reference librarian at Andrews University. His compilations of student writing from Adventist campuses appear in Spectrum periodically.

Many students wished to express their opinion of the war. This is evident particularly in the editorial comment and letters to the weekly newspapers. Student opinion surveys were common. The only formal survey was conducted by the *Southern Accent*, in which 91 percent of Southern College students believed the allied forces would win. However, only 61 percent believed that U. S. forces belonged in the Middle East (45 percent of females, and 78 percent of males). Fifty-seven percent of the students did not think that the crisis marked the end of time.

The war in Bible prophecy was discussed at Loma Linda University and Southern College. Larry Christoffel at Loma Linda and Norman Gulley at Southern both disagreed with the views of some fundamentalists outside and inside the Adventist Church that the war would be Armageddon, although neither would deny that possibility. Religion Professor Gulley was responding to local media coverage of a Chattanooga Adventist church member who, in the Adventist tradition of finding eschatological significance in wars, stated that this war had

been predicted in the book of Daniel. Gulley dismissed this interpretation as speculative, and stated that Adventist hermeneutics of *sola scriptura* require that the Bible be its own interpreter. Given past Adventist eschatological speculations, it is unclear which position is more faithful to Adventist tradition. It is possible that the official church has learned from past failed prophetic interpretations, although it would be interesting to know what was said in Adventist pulpits and by Adventist evangelists during the latter part of January.

Individual students at Walla Walla and Pacific Union colleges attended local peace rallies, and Walla Walla students helped organize a rally. The photojournalism students at Southern reported a rally, but apparently did not otherwise participate. Lawrence Geraty, president of Atlantic Union College, stated that he would be supportive of student-organized programs such as teach-ins or rallies for or against the war, although demonstrators would not necessarily be immune from disciplinary action if they disrupted classes. The only actual demonstration was reported at Walla Walla, where pro and anti-war demonstrators took up positions on opposite sides of College Avenue. While only a few students participated in demonstrations, the campus appeared to have plunged into more vigorous debate over the Gulf War than any other Adventist school.

Concern about the possibility of reinstitution of the draft was common. At Walla Walla there was a packed worship for a talk given by the local draft officer.

The papers reported a number of ways for students to become personally involved in

expressing support for the troops. These included special blood drives at Southern College and Loma Linda, sending care packages (AUC) and letters (AU and LLU) to the troops, tying yellow ribbons (AU), and praying (AU, LLU, PUC, SC).

A growing acceptance by Adventists of members serving as active members or reservists in the professional military was apparent. The *Campus Chronicle* reported that 2,000 Adventists were serving in the Gulf, although no source for this information was given. The

papers gave considerable attention to students, faculty, relatives, and friends in the military who were called up or who might be. For example, La Sierra reported three Marine reservists called up, and AUC reported a student who was called up to serve as a Religious Program Specialist (whose job is to protect chaplains, who are not allowed to bear arms). Columbia Union, Pacific Union, and Southern colleges all reported students in the military. Andrews University reported the only faculty member called up, Keith Mattingly, a religion teacher sent to the Gulf as a chaplain. Ronald Tull, brother of a Southern College student, was the only survivor of a light armored vehicle hit by "friendly fire" at Khafji, Saudi Arabia.

A number of campuses reported canceled travel plans due to the threat of terrorism. Andrews canceled a tour of South Africa, and there was doubt about the summer archaeological dig in Jordan. Columbia Union College canceled a mission trip scheduled for spring vacation, and Southern called its student missionaries home from Israel. One of them reported that Palestinians in Israel opposed the

A growing acceptance by Adventists of members serving as active members or reservists in the professional military was apparent. . . . It was reported that 2,000 Adventists were serving in the Gulf.

Iraqi invasion of Kuwait until the allies sent in troops and Saddam brought up the Palestinian problem. They changed their tune and "would say things like, 'Saddam is going to kick your butt.'"

Student-written poetry and artwork relating to the war was printed by papers at Andrews University and Columbia Union and Walla

Walla colleges. The *Collegian* at Walla Walla included a peace poster as an insert. On the front it said, "Pray for Peace," on the back was "Live for Peace," and the middle was splashes of red and black, presumably portraying blood and oil.

Following is a brief synopsis of war coverage by school.

Andrews University: No "Quasi-Religion" in America?

Several non-American graduate students expressed surprise and consternation at the support American Adventists gave to the war effort. An American faculty member debated a German and a Ghanian.

Dear Editor:

I would like to respond to letters by Frank Hasel and Harold Tucker in the Feb. 6 *Student Movement*.

If Hasel's home country is Germany, then he should know that twice in this century German Seventh-day Adventists enthusiastically supported war and even dictatorship to a degree never seen among American Adventists.

European division President Louis T. Conradi led a majority of German Adventists in praying for the Kaiser, bearing arms in his army in WWI, and even attending school and working on Sabbath to support the war.

During the 1930s, German Adventists warmly supported Adolf Hitler and his rearmament efforts leading to WWII, as their pamphlets and official church magazines show (see Jack Patt, "German

Adventists Under Nazi Rule" and Erwin Sicher, "SDA Publications and the Nazi Temptation" in *Spectrum* 8, No. 3).

Hasel's closing words about Adventists' "quasi-religious devotion" to the state taking the place of "commitment to God and His Word" aptly describes what happened among Adventists twice in Germany, never in America! . . .

—**Brian Strayer**, Andrews University *Student Movement*, February 13, 1991, p. 5.

Dear Editor:

I would like to respond to a letter by Prof. Brian E. Strayer (*Student Movement*, Feb. 13) which takes me to task for my earlier letter to the editor (*Student Movement*, Feb. 6) in which I attempted to explain why some American Adventists support this war and participate in military institutions.

Let me begin by saying that Prof. Strayer rightly assumes that I am German. But it appears as if for Prof. Strayer this fact alone puts into question what I tried to point out, namely that alongside their faith there exists among many—though by no means all!—American Adventists a quasi-religious devotion to the American state.

It is unfortunate that Prof. Strayer failed to see the point of the argument.

What I said remains true whether it is stated by a German, a British, a French, a Russian, a Swedish, an African or any other person.

May I also remind readers that it was the American scholar Martin E. Marty who made the initial observation in his book "Christian Church in the United States" (1987). What I did was simply to quote him and apply the issue to the present situation in the Adventist community.

Prof. Strayer will be interested to know that as a German citizen (although I don't consider this earthly country my real home), I am not unmindful of the history of Germany in the two world wars. My own parents and grandparents suffered under Nazi rule because of their religious convictions.

Yes, I am well aware of what happened and I am not proud of



that at all; as a matter of fact, I am deeply ashamed.

This sad knowledge, however, makes me even more sensitive to the whole issue of war and participation in military institutions!

I know that God holds me responsible for my conduct today and not for what someone else did half a century ago, long before I was born (cf. Ezekiel 18).

It is precisely because of my concern about the current attitude of some American Adventists on the war issue that I called attention to some dangers.

To detract from the present problem and our current responsibility by referring to an incident that happened several decades ago is to commit a fallacy of which David Hackett Fischer has ably warned in his book "Historians' Fallacies: Toward a Logic of Historical Thought" (1970).

Prof. Strayer will also like to know that today the overwhelming majority of German Adventists do not support war in any form and for

any reasons, and almost all Adventist youth in Germany decide to do social service rather than non-combatant service in the army.

In Prof. Strayer's letter he mentions Ludwig R. Conradi and his "support" of Kaiser Wilhelm in WWI.

I suppose that as a history professor, Strayer is well aware of the fact that not everything Conradi did and said was fully grounded on Biblical teaching. Conradi—his tremendous leadership qualities notwithstanding—made several theological and personal decisions which eventually led to his dissociation from the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

I suppose that Prof. Strayer is also aware of the fact that the warm support of the war by some Adventists, under the leadership of Conradi, was one of the major reasons for the split in the Adventist church in Germany from which the so-called "Reform Movement" resulted.

I for my part have esteemed America highly for its religious freedom which is based on a strict separation between church and state.

Could it be that this "public religion" of the nation, as Benjamin Franklin has called it, blurs this important distinction between church and state, a distinction which in America has been a source of blessing in the past and which is essential for our precious religious freedom in the future?

—**Frank M. Hasel**,
Andrews University
Student Movement,
February 27, 1991,
p. 7.



Dear Editor:

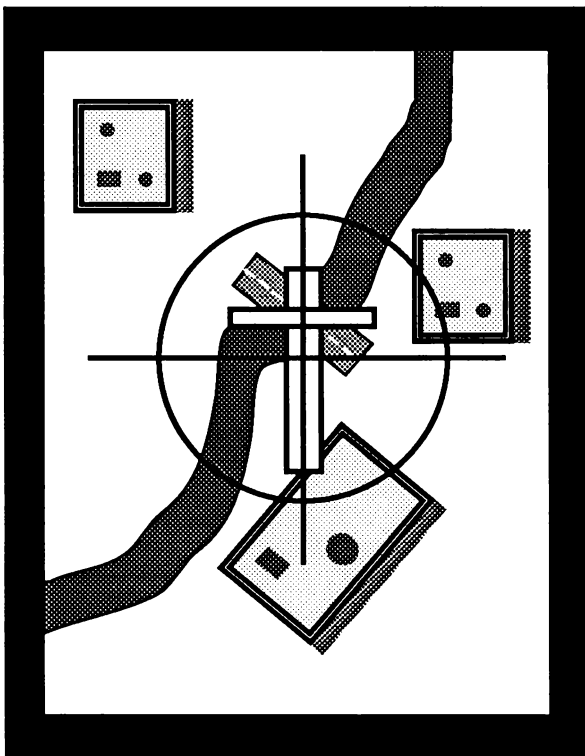
Some readers may disagree with the assertion by Professor Brian E. Strayer that "quasi-religious devotion to the state" describes only "what happened among Adventists in Germany, never in America" (*Student Movement*, Feb. 13).

My concern, however, is that the analogy he draws between the attitudes of German Adventists to World Wars I and II and the support of American Adventists in the Persian Gulf war, is on the one hand helpful and, yet, on the other hand misleading.

Dr. Strayer's letter is misleading because it leads readers to conclude erroneously that (i) German Adventists have no right to question the morality of any war since Adventists in that country "enthusiastically supported" WWI and II; (ii) since "a majority" of German Adventists followed their leadership in the war campaign, American Adventists may be justified by doing the same.

The reason why the above conclusions are objectionable is that it is based on a relativistic ethic which teaches that right and wrong are determined by each cultural matrix or by following the choice of the "majority." I hope that Dr. Strayer did not intend to give this kind of impression to his readers.

However, Dr. Strayer's analogy is helpful in that it exposes the dangers Christians face whenever they



adopt the "political religion" of their respective countries.

In the case of Germany, the war issue not only jeopardized the credibility of the church to the world, but also it resulted in a split within the Adventist church itself, according to the Biblical Research Institute's "The SDA Reform Movement," 1988, by Helmut H. Kramer.

Let us hope that in their attitudes to the present war campaign, SDA Christians will be humble and willing enough to learn from the past mistakes of others—even if it be the Adventists of Germany during WWI and II.

The wishy-washy position of some Christians is summarized by one Bible scholar who has correctly observed that as long as their country or tribe is at peace, Christians prefer and advocate peace. Strangely, however, when their country or tribe goes to war, they find ways to support the war, either as a so-called "necessary evil" or as a God-given crusade against other's evil.

Not willing to take the Bible seriously, such Christians neglect the teaching of the New Testament about peace, or treat it as an "impossible ideal in an imperfect world."

A similar position is held by some Adventists whose apathy on issues, such as the current one, is stronger than their conviction. Consequently, they are indifferent to challenges facing their church and how these challenges are resolved.

Considering issues of war and peace as matters for their nations and tribes to work out, Adventists in this group shirk their responsibility to "prove all things and hold fast to that which is good," (1 Thessalonians 5:21). Instead, they accept without question whatever their national, tribal or religious leaders say or do.

But there is another group of Adventists whose conviction is stronger than their apathy. While

members in this group may vigorously differ on the specifics of their positions, they stand united in their acceptance of the Bible as the sole basis for resolving their opposing views. At the same time, they are gracious enough to express their disagreements in the true spirit of Christian respect.

As they wrestle with the difficult question, "Are Christians free to engage in their nation's or tribe's warfare?" they seek to be informed by scriptural teaching alone. I would hope that the *Student Movement* will facilitate and steer the debate on war to a Biblical focus.

Questions such as the following deserve answers: What light can the nature of the Old Testament wars throw on the current problem? What is the relationship of war to the commandment, "Thou Shalt Not Kill"? How does the teaching about peace by Jesus and the NT writers influence our position? How do we deal with tests (i.e. Romans 13; 1 Timothy 2:1, 2; 1 Peter 2:13) that discuss the Christian's responsibility to the state? How does this responsibility to the state relate to the claims of God and the statement of Jesus that "My kingdom is not of this world; if my kingdom were of this world, then would My servants fight?" (John 18:36)?

If we fail to address this perplex-

ing question, members of our worldwide church may find themselves adopting different national versions of "civil religion" in which unquestioned loyalty to God and His Word is replaced by a religious commitment to the state.

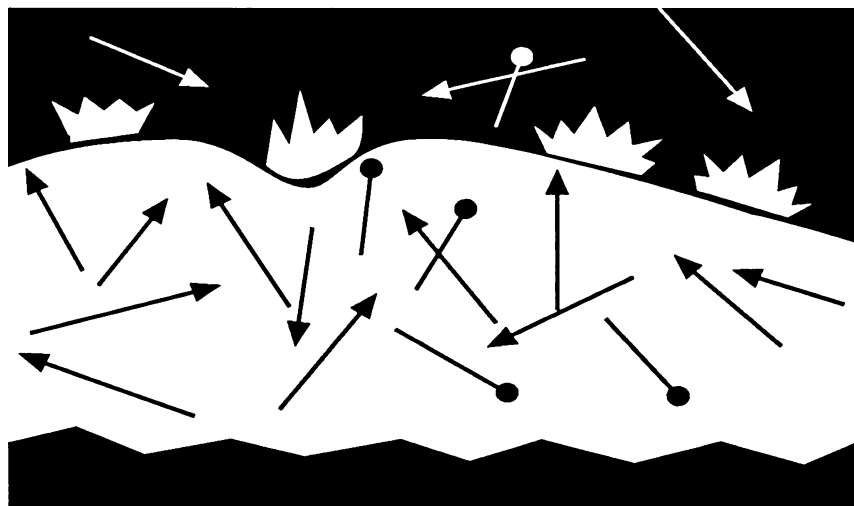
Dr. Strayer claims that this kind of pseudo-religion happened only in Germany but "never in America." Let us hope that the future generation of Adventists will not look back on events in our day and conclude sadly that it happened again in the Adventist world.

—Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, Andrews University *Student Movement*, February 27, 1991, p. 7.

Atlantic Union College: "I'm Not a Piece of Prime Meat"

In a column on December 5, David Stone, a senior English major, observed, "I don't like feeling like a piece of prime meat—Grade A, a fresh U.S. grown 21. I want to finish my senior thesis, own my own unenvironmental car, and dream of writing a book."

President Geraty stated that the college was not taking any official action in response to the war, but that students would be educated in



war-related activities such as medical training, should the need arise. Geraty also pledged financial relief to students who were called up. He stated that he had purposely kept a low personal profile because "I feel like I have an unpopular point of view in that I am not supportive of the war effort."

Biology Professor Gene Johnson, spokesman for the Adventist Environmental Institute at AUC, commented about the environmental damage in the Gulf area. He concluded that "our high standard of living is one reason there is a disaster there. People in developed countries have got to stop overusing their share of the world's resources."

Columbia Union College: Support Our Troops "to win this war"

The *Columbia Journal* reported (11/19) the story of a part-time CUC physics professor who had escaped from Kuwait just before the Iraqi invasion.

Peter Justesen seemed to reflect the feeling of several at CUC and other Adventist campuses when he wrote, "We need to support our troops in the Middle East, no matter if we think the policy is good or bad. The troops need our support to win this war."

La Sierra University: "There is no enemy"

The *Criterion* was the only Adventist college newspaper to print a letter President Bush sent to college students defending U.S. policies in the Gulf.

A writer for the paper visited several Iraqi students in the Southern California area, and reported their feelings of sadness, anger, and despair. He concluded, "I now realize there is no 'enemy.' The people of Iraq, like the people of any country, do not seek war. It's not 'us against them.' It's 'us WITH them', joining for a common universal wish—one of peace on earth."

Loma Linda University: "Come home safe"

Loma Linda Today and the *Courier* reported very little Gulf-related news. The counseling center was opened especially for sharing and support. Students expressed experiencing difficulty in studying in an environment of war crisis. Loma Linda also established a Desert Storm Prayer Center. A group of staff at the LLU Medical Center were pictured wearing special tee shirts with a U.S. flag, yellow ribbon, and the slogans, "Come Home Safe" and "Come Home Soon."

Pacific Union College: "We should be very grateful to Saudi Arabia"

The *Campus Chronicle* followed its usual magazine format, concentrating virtually all of its coverage to the January 24 issue. One writer protested the anti-war protesters, and another criticized the media for making money out of the latest crisis.

Some PUC students established a Persian Gulf Warline, a free war news updating service provided by Looking Up Youth Ministries.

A January editorial declared:

"I think one of the most ridiculous sayings by protestors is "No Blood for Oil." This is only a small part of why we are over in the Middle East. We could survive a Middle East monopoly by Hussein. If Hussein has never heard of competition he would learn about it. We can get oil from other locations. Our main interest in Iraq is to destroy those nuclear, chemical and biological plants that we deem as a threat to our society. We should be very grateful to Saudi Arabia for inviting us to protect them because this gave us an excuse to do what we have wanted to do for a long time."

In the same issue, Mike Wiggins wrote "On Protesting Protesters," which concluded:

"I think that everyone should be able to voice their opinion but these groups often don't have even a general idea of what the protest is about. There was even an advertisement in the *San Francisco Chronicle* for professional demonstrators.

"Protesters jump at every trendy thing to demonstrate and in the process shoot themselves in the foot. Next week they will have forgotten that our country is at war, if they even really realized it in the first place, and will be burning more cars for the cruelty with which heartless humans can kill spiders in cold blood."

—Mike Wiggins, Pacific Union College *Campus Chronicle*, January 24, 1991, p. 8.

Southern College: "Pits of hell" and Burning Bushes

The food service director at Southern blamed the crisis for contributing to increased food costs in the cafeteria.

In one of the more bizarre incidents reported by student newspapers, Southern's FM radio station, WSMC, received a call during an on-air call-in show which stated, "George and Barbara Bush are going to descend to the pits of hell in a robe of flames." WSMC turned this incident over to the FBI, which reported it to the Secret Service. Officials checked with Southern College's administration to see if there might be a Middle Eastern student whose voice matched that of the caller. WSMC also went to 24-hour coverage of the war, including broadcasting war news on Saturday.

Southwestern Adventist College: Fighting Without Even "Seeing the face of the enemy"

There was very little war coverage in the monthly *Southwesterner*, but an editorial in January stated:

"We also like to fight our wars from a safe distance. Fortunately technology has allowed us this luxury. Techno-War waged using smart missiles launched from hundreds of miles away or bombers flying thousands of feet up, allows us to attack and destroy without ever seeing the face of the victim.

"Although we have managed to keep war distant, and therefore clean, we still find ourselves somewhat ill at ease with the concept of organized killing. Each time it arises we find ourselves searching our collective consciousness.

"We should be thankful that we live in a nation where debate is still allowed. I pray that our country never enters a war without an emotional/intellectual/moral struggle.

"When the flag-draped coffins of American personnel start appearing

on the nightly news, all of us will see for a moment the true price of our endeavor in the Gulf. Technology may allow us to keep things distant and sanitized, but it cannot save us from all of the consequences of war."

—Kevin Wells

Union College: Christians Simply Don't Fight

The *Clocktower* gave some coverage to the crisis leading up to the war. Several essays were critical of U.S. policy:

"From a Christian perspective, the only feasible position would be simply not to fight. From a military perspective, the U.S. would strike swiftly with its air power at the Iraqi leadership and hope that Saddam's forces turn tail. This may be practical. The Christian perspective may not sound practical. However, it is Christian."

—W. D. Fitts

Walla Walla College: Freedom Bought With Someone Else's Blood

By a considerable margin, the *Collegian* had the most extensive coverage of the war. It also had the largest number of antiwar opinion pieces and letters. Walla Walla students participated in a Persian Gulf debate held at Whitman College. It is evident that the student body was quite polarized about the war, with definite pro- and anti-war camps.

Dear Editor,

Dan Rather spoke in discerning terms. War is no longer anticipated.

it is here, and a peaceful future of the free world had taken on a challenge. I wasn't always afraid of war. I used to wish I could have lived during World War II when patriotism was rampant, victory was in sight, and bold headlines ran across the papers daily. I figured if history was an amusement park, war would definitely be the roller coaster.

I was in clinical lab in the labor and delivery unit of Portland Adventist Medical Center when the onset of war was announced over the TV. My patient, a young Filipino woman, didn't know what to expect as she was heading into labor for her first child. I explained, "When the contraction is too painful, I want you to take a cleansing breath by breathing in through your nose and slowly exhaling out your mouth." I called her mamma, and her eyes came alive. Her husband came over to the bedside, and she told him he was going to be a papa. They had dated for four years and been married for three; it was time.

Grandpa used to take me to the Navy docks in San Diego when I was so young I had to reach up for his hand. Grandpa also took me to see the movie Top Gun. I've watched



that movie more times than I dare count, and I still feel like a hero just for being an American. I pictured boys sent off to war to return as men with a tough masculinity and heroism all of their own.

A dozen pink and red roses were delivered to mamma by a delivery boy. "I don't know who they're from. There's a card on the top there," the boy said. Papa stood there just holding the roses as the room of medical personnel and mamma leaned forward waiting for him to open the card. Then he grinned and said they were from him. I helped him disassemble the wrapping and placed the buds close enough for mamma to smell, but she turned away because a new contraction had started.

My brother will be eighteen in October; my cousin is twenty. I want to be selfish. I don't want to share my life with the war. On the other hand, Hitler invaded Czechoslovakia. What if yesterday's history had melted into today's? It's not easy to distinguish between a greedy man and an insane man, especially when it comes to politics.

Baby wasn't ready to face the world yet. Mamma had been in labor for almost a day, and we were anxious to speed up an apparently tardy Mother Nature. We started

mamma on Pitocin, which increased the intensity of her contractions. Her wrinkled face signaled a new intense level of pain. A quiet and retiring woman was coming forth with aggressive pants, "he-he-he-he." Papa was holding her left hand; I was holding her right hand, and we were both squeezed.

I looked up at the TV to see Dan Rather still chatting with experts. They show the enemy on a map with little play ships and borders. I am remote from details and am more interested in the "end" than the "means." I want peace and freedom, but I don't want to see the "means" of war to be the big round eyes of children barely old enough to understand absolute evil or the gurgling blood of a freshly fallen enemy. If the opposite of love is apathy, then why doesn't everyone just ignore their enemies?

Mamma's body is shaking. Her face is sobbing, and I have to take control and force her to pant, "he-he-wo." "Just take this one contraction. You can do it. Come on, 'he-he-wo'." Oh, when is the doctor going to be here! She needs her epidural shot now; she can't handle the overexpansion of muscles and tendons anymore.

Casualties. They're given in numbers and not names. Everyone who makes important decisions wants low numbers of casualties. A soldier who returns home and struggles to find a job and a marriage that lasts, is he a casualty? A happy homecoming parade isn't a band-aid that cures all ouchies.

The doctor has come and gone, leaving a sleeping woman who is in labor.

A soldier becomes America's hero who takes less of himself to the grave—whether he makes it home for the parade or not. Freedom is a privilege that comes with a high price tag. A privilege bought with someone's blood, sweat, and tears. The sacrifices offered for America by its soldiers are not worth it for themselves. We, as free Americans, have the right to support or demonstrate against war. It is our veterans and those veterans yet to come who give us that right.

It's five o'clock at night. I'm tired because I've been here since six-thirty this morning. I don't have to stay in lab any longer. I have the freedom to go. I think I will because the worst of her pain is over. She may need moral support, but I have theory class to study for.

—**Shirley Hervig**, Walla Walla College *Collegian*, January 24, 1991, p. 11.

The paper included yet another chapter in the apparently never-ending campus debate about whether or not Walla Walla's engineering graduates should work for the defense industry.

Work for the Military?

YES

What? You're not still debating that, are you? This has been going on for years now! I understand that local theologians still make an annual pilgrimage to the engineering building to discuss Christians employed by military organizations. One once said (to the best of my memory) that whom one worked for and the type of work that they did was a matter of individual feelings, commitment, and Christian experience. Another, on the other hand, left little doubt about his views.



Working for the military was immoral and the school should not allow recruiters from military organizations to enter the campus. You could not work for the military if you were a Christian. Bad! He even said that you could not be a Christian and a policeman both! Wow, that stuff is kind of heavy. I always hoped that if I ever needed a policeman, that he or she would be a Christian! Well, I'm not saying that he was wrong, just that his viewpoints differ from mine.

This question of working for the military has been raging for so long now, and due to the diverse differences in backgrounds and viewpoints of us all, the answer is not very easy.

As for me, I work for that part of the military called the Navy. I am proud of it and I enjoy my work. Of course some of you will immediately say, "How could you! You must enjoy killing people." I am about as guilty of that as anyone working for Boeing, Ford, or General Motors. All are respected companies worthy of Christian employment, right? Well, Boeing has a military airplane division, Ford has their aerospace company, and General Motors owns Hughes Aircraft Company. All of which build "war machines."

I am not going to debate the morals of our country having a strong military defense. The fact is, we do have a military system, and our citizens, young and old, man and woman, Christian and non-Christian alike are serving in it. Unfortunately though, military bases, planes, and ships are very dangerous places to work. It comes with the territory. In one instance alone, a fire on an aircraft carrier resulted in 143 deaths. There was not an enemy in sight. The deaths resulted from our own weapons. It seems that when bombs and missiles are engulfed in a jet fuel fire, they have a habit of exploding. In a wartime

situation, our pilots will be shot down by enemy missiles. These two realities of both peacetime and wartime are tragic.

At the Naval Weapons Center where I work there are about 3,000 scientists employed. Some of them are working to make our weapons more lethal, some are not. If you work for General Motors and don't want to design radars for F-15's, you can choose to spend your time designing seat belts for Chevettes. At the Naval Weapons Center, I do not personally choose to build more lethal weapons. I choose to spend my time in activities which will save the lives of our sailors. About half of my time is spent trying to make our weapons safer to handle. My efforts directly affect the safety of our bombs and missiles when subjected to fires, impacts by fragments and bullets from guns. The result of this work often is a weapon that is also less powerful when used as intended. Is that good or bad? The other half of my time is spent analyzing the weapons that would be used against our pilots in a wartime situation. By analyzing the hows, whens, and whys of a potential enemy's weapons, our pilots and aircraft designers can develop techniques and countermeasures to use to save that pilot's life in the event someone wants to shoot him down. I have the choice to work almost anyplace on the base. I choose to do what I do because I get a great amount of satisfaction knowing that my work directly saves lives. Whether we are at peace or at war, I am responsible for the increased safety of our troops.

Well, I am sure that not everyone who reads this will agree with me. I never said that I could justify my decision to work for the Navy to everyone, but if you pay taxes, then you are paying my wages. Is that not support? Other reasons I work there are I love the desert and I enjoy traveling. I get to travel all around

this country (and occasionally beyond) and I get to drive big ships all over the ocean from time to time.

—**Bob Van Stee**, Walla Walla College *Collegian*, February 14, 1991, p. 6.

Work for the Military? NO

Would I accept employment to develop or produce military equipment? No, and I don't recommend it for others. But, the issue is complex. Let me begin by analyzing some of that complexity.

When I finished graduate school with a Ph.D. focused on control systems (the things that keep the space shuttle flying straight or make a new car engine run well), I had naively failed to think enough about potential employment. Funded by NASA, I had ridden the wave of enthusiasm over getting to the moon a little on the late side. It was 1972; NASA shriveled, Boeing shrank, and the instrument industry sank. So, I aimed for Bell Laboratories with its emphasis far away from military applications, and, six years later, was working on the most exciting project of my life. But, irony had struck—I was designing a new world-wide military communication system. What I would not have chosen to begin with became a source of excitement. I did not refuse the assignment because I rea-



soned that there was a difference between a general-purpose communication system and weapons. Many would challenge that view.

Why would anyone choose to work on military applications when there are so many other things to be done? For one thing, military projects often work with the most advanced technology. Someone says: "Let's push the frontiers. See what you can do and send me the bill later." Excitement and creativity often reach their peaks under such circumstances. (Corruption may also thrive, but that's another topic.) For me, a world-wide encrypted communication system was a true engineering challenge, and the people I worked with were the best I had ever encountered. I had one terrific year before Congress cut the funding.

For many, technology is exciting. Take the Patriot missile, for example. That's something I could have worked on. It's loaded with the best computer control, electronics, and radar yet conceived. What kid doesn't find a thrill in trying to knock down a stone with another stone? Missile technology simply adds intellectual challenge to an innate excitement of life.

Exhilaration and excitement are strange parts of our psyche. I remember my great glee over shooting English sparrows. Birds were thrilling targets because they were evasive. And, I thought, English sparrows were the most brat-like intruders, fully deserving of annihilation. Then, one day, my target burst into a puff of yellow and brown feathers. A sick feeling displaced my exhilaration; it must have been a female goldfinch, I concluded. English sparrows have been safer ever since; I no longer shoot anything.

How strange that a few yellow

feathers had such a big effect. But, that is very human. We often recoil from the implications of what we do. Do you know why we have the Nobel prizes? After inventing dynamite, Alfred Nobel wanted to be sure that his profits from its sale would reward those who worked for the "good of humanity." He knew that dynamite didn't always produce enough good to offset its harm. Somehow, he was both exhilarated and chagrined by the explosions he made possible. More recently, the Manhattan Project to develop the atomic bomb brought even greater thrills and despair to its teams.

What strange creatures we humans are: we shoot birds, but cry when the feathers are yellow; we unleash powers that we cannot control; we build bombs to ensure our safety. How long, Lord, how long?

Most days, I qualify as a pacifist; I've never fought with anyone and I hate to see others fighting. Surely no one needs better weapons. On other days, I think about Adolf Hitler and Saddam Hussein. Can we always avoid war? Is the Patriot missile a force for good or for evil? My mixed feelings are very frustrating.

Teaching is a great job for a pacifist; students are such gentle creatures. But what if my students graduate and want to work on the Patriot missile? What should I say? After all, we can't all be teachers.

To those of you who want to stay out of the military-industrial complex, I say: "Good choice. That's where I want to be. I think the most important things waiting to be done are non-military."

To those of you who believe that a strong military can prevent war or at least end it sooner, I say: "I respect your choice. Remember that Congress won't ask your opinion before declaring war, and others may sell your product to almost anyone. Our

leaders and businessmen are not always noble."

Finally, the big question for everyone: What does it take to turn our energies toward finding the best for humanity? Can it be just as thrilling to save energy as to shoot a missile with a missile? When you go to work, remember that our grandchildren will live in the world that we leave to them. Let's see if we can leave it with fewer bombs and less pollution than we have today. Isn't our biggest challenge to explore the frontiers of peace and to reverse the present forces of environmental destruction?

—**Carlton Cross**, Walla Walla College *Collegian*, February 14, 1991, p. 6.

The first-year president of the college, Nils-Erik Andreasen, congratulated the campus:

"... College students ought to get involved with an issue as important as the war. It should be discussed vigorously from many perspectives—the perspectives of America and its allies, of the Iraqis and the Arab world, of oil and economics, of ethics and religious principles, of the future world order and eternity. . . .

"... Because next time a war threatens, you may well be legislators, industrialists, teachers, pastors, counsellors, community leaders or decision makers on behalf of many other people. And we would like to think that such future leaders and decision makers, as you will surely be, have had a little practice in clear and sensitive thinking. . . .

"... I am particularly pleased that we have remembered these principles here, because in addition to being a college community, we are also a Christian community, which means that we bring certain values to the discussion. . . ."