Delve Deeper into “Soldiers of Conscience"
A film by Catherine Ryan and Gary Weimberg

This multi-media resource list, compiled by Rebecca Federman of the New York Public Library, provides a range of perspectives on the issues raised by the upcoming P.O.V. documentary “Soldiers of Conscience” that premieres on October 16th, 2008 at 10 PM (check local listings at www.pbs.org/pov/).

When is it right to kill? In the midst of war, is it right to refuse? Eight U.S. soldiers, some who have killed and some who said no, reveal their inner moral dilemmas in "Soldiers of Conscience." Made with official permission of the U.S. Army, the film transcends politics to explore the tension between spiritual values and military orders. "Soldiers of Conscience" follows the stories of both conscientious objectors and those who criticize them. Through this clash of views, the film discovers a surprising common ground: All soldiers are "soldiers of conscience," torn between the demands of duty and the call of conscience.

**ADULT NONFICTION**

*Benderman, Sgt. Kevin. Letters from Fort Lewis Brig: A Matter of Conscience. The Lyons Press, 2007.* Written by one of the soldiers featured in "Soldiers of Conscience," this book is written by a soldier who, after seeing the horrors of war, decided he could not return to Iraq for a second tour of duty, and was court-martialed and imprisoned as a result.

*Casteel, Joshua. Letters from Abu Ghraib. Essay Press, 2008.* Written by one of the soldiers featured in "Soldiers of Conscience", this book is a collection of email messages sent from Joshua Casteel to his friends and family during his service as an U.S. Army interrogator and Arabic linguist in the 202nd Military Intelligence Battalion.


*Goosen, Rachel Waltner. Women Against the Good War: Conscientious Objection and Gender on the American Home Front, 1941-1947. The University of North Carolina Press, 1997.* During WWII, more than 12,000 male conscientious objectors were allowed to do work through Civilian Public Service, as an alternative to military service. This book focuses on the more than 2,000 women who joined them in defying social expectations by not supporting the war effort.


*Hutto, Jonathan W. Antiiwar Soldier: How to Dissent Within the Ranks of the Military. New York: Nation Books, 2008.* A basic handbook that educates servicemen and women on their rights with regards to non-participation.


*Swain, Henry. Why Now? The Evolution of a Conscientious Objector. Lotus Petal Publishing, 2006.* The author explores the mindset of conscientious objectors, under his own belief that their actions are one of the only viable alternatives to the destruction of civilization itself.

*Tick, Edward. War and the Soul: Healing Our Nation’s Veterans from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. Quest Books, 2005.* This book addresses how war damages the psyche, while teaching how to heal war trauma in veterans, their families, and our communities.
Tollefson, James W. *The Strength Not to Fight: Conscientious Objectors of the Vietnam War – in Their Own Words*. Potomac Books Inc., 2000. This book explores the mindset of conscientious objectors of the Vietnam War; the depth of their convictions, their struggle to prove sincerity in the face of persecution, and their feelings today about their actions then.


Wright, Ann and Susan Dixon. *Dissent: Voices of Conscience*. Koa Books, 2008. Profiles men and women, who risked careers, reputations, and even freedom in order to protest government actions, which they believed, were against the rule of law.

**ADULT FICTION**


Chaplin, Ralph. *Bars and Shadows: The Prison Poems of Ralph Chaplin*. New York: Leonard Press, 1922. As a member of the International Workers of the World, Ralph Chaplin was put in prison for speaking out against World War I. These are the poems he wrote in prison.


**NONFICTION FOR YOUNGER READERS**

Freedman, Suzanne. *Clay v. United States: Muhammad Ali Objects to War. Springfield: Enslow* 1997. As a Muslim, Muhammad Ali refused to fight for the army during the Vietnam War. This book explains why Islam forbids it, what conscientious objectors are, and how Ali’s decision changed the way the government deals with C.O. status. (Grades 7 and up)


**FICTION FOR YOUNGER READERS**


Kerr, M.E. *Slap your Sides*. New York: HarperTeen, 2001. Jubal’s brother Bud is a devout Quaker who refused to fight in the military during World War II. This decision creates friction among the family and townspeople and Jubal must decide for himself what to do.

Lynch, Janet Nichols. *Peace is a Four-Letter Word*. Berkeley: Heyday Press, 2005. Emily is living her normal California life until a new teacher comes into her life and awakens her to ideas about the world she’s never had before.


Myers, Walter Dean. *Sunrise Over Fallujah*. New York: Scholastic Press, 2008. Robin decides to join the Army after September 11th and is soon sent to Iraq where he sees destruction and death all around him.


**FILMS/DOCUMENTARIES**

*The Best Years of Our Lives*. A film by William Wyler. MGM, 1946. (168 mins.) Winner of seven Academy Awards, this film tells the story of three World War II veterans who return home and try to adjust back to regular life.

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**Body of War.** A film by Phil Donahue and Ellen Spiro. Docurama, 2007. (87 mins.) A soldier returns home from Iraq with sustained injuries and a new outlook on the administration and the war.
www.bodyofwar.com/

**Born on the Fourth of July.** A film by Oliver Stone. Universal Studios, 1989. (145 mins.) Based on the true story of Vietnam vet Ron Kovic, who left for Vietnam as a dedicated soldier, and came back an outspoken antiwar protestor.
www.amazon.com

**The Deer Hunter.** A film by Michael Cimino. MCA/Universal, 1979. (183 mins.) A film about the personal impact of war that follows three friends as they deal with their experiences in the Vietnam War.
www.amazon.com

www.bullfrogfilms.com

**In the Year of the Pig.** A film by Emile de Antonio. Homevision, 1969. (103 mins.) Interviews with journalists and government officials regarding the United States’ involvement in Vietnam.
www.amazon.com

**Jarhead.** A film by Sam Mendes. Universal Studios, 2005. (123 mins.) During the first Gulf War, the day-to-day existence in the life of a group of U.S. Marines.
www.amazon.com

**Stop-Loss.** Directed by Kimberly Peirce. Paramount/MTV, 2008. (111 mins.) When a soldier is told to report back to Iraq for another tour of duty, he questions his loyalty to his country.
www.stoplossmovie.com/