

American Quakers Support U.S. Military Resistors in Canada

By David Chandler

[This article was published in [The Canadian](#), based on a letter I sent to the Canadian Prime Minister.]

I am a member of the Visalia Friends Meeting in Central California. We have been staying in touch with a US military resistor and his family, from Visalia, who went to Canada. What follows is the bulk of a letter I wrote to the Prime Minister of Canada and several other officials in response to the "Pan Canadian Day of Action in Support of U.S. War Resistors":

[I] am writing to urge you to allow US military resistors who have fled to Canada to stay and be given legal residency status.

The war these people are being asked to fight:

- Is acknowledged, world wide, to be an illegal war;
- Is a war that won initial support from Congress and large numbers of citizens only because of blatant lies by this administration;
- Is a war in which over a million innocent civilians are believed to have been killed;
- Is a war in which human rights violations by the U.S. are rampant;
- Is a war in which more US veterans have committed suicide than have died in combat

We have what is supposedly an "all volunteer" military, but this is not the reality.

- Young people are drawn into the military through deceptive practices.
- There is a "poverty draft" targeting the children of poor communities who see this as their only hope of going to college.
- Once they have finished their tours of duty they are effectively drafted back in for multiple tours of duty.
- Those who sign up and then have a change of heart when they see the reality of the slaughter and practices that violate their consciences are often prevented from exercising their right to declare their conscientious objection.

These young people who have the courage to resist evil when they come to know it first hand are not deserving of long prison sentences for their refusal to participate. They have a fundamental human right to obey the dictates of their conscience, and that human right should be respected by the government.

However human rights are being violated wholesale by the U.S. government. It was recently revealed, through memos obtained by Amnesty International, that Canada

acknowledges that the U.S. government is a human rights violator. Canada therefore has an obligation to humanity not to repatriate those fleeing the repressive policies of this government.

I therefore urge you to support those who have had the courage to resist evil and have sought refuge in Canada. You have it in your power to be a beacon of hope for those with the moral courage to resist.

These are energetic young people who have demonstrated their maturity and courage. These people should be seen as a resource that will contribute to your society. I urge you to do the right thing.

About the writer: David Chandler is a member of the Visalia Friends Meeting (Quakers) in Central California. (The Quakers are a peace-oriented religious group officially known as the Religious Society of Friends.) The Visalia Friends Meeting has been staying in touch with a U.S. military resistor and his family from Visalia who left the military and sought refuge in Canada. Mr. Chandler maintains [a web site](#) to help young people think through issues related to war and participation in war.