

A Soldier's CO Story

by Lee Loe

Chas Davis of Alvin, Texas, enlisted in the Army in October of 2002. He was 19-years-old, a high school drop out with a GED and no money for college who wanted to do something for his country.

He began basic training November 21, 2002. In "My Conscientious Objector Story," an article published in the Axis of Logic web page (www.axisoflogic.org), he says: "The only thing that never really sat right with me in basic was the cadences that we would sing. We would sing about machine-gunning all of the "commie kids" in the church, murdering entire "commie" families. The worst one was called "Sniper Wonderland." Here is how it started:

*"See the little girl with the puppy;
Lock and load a hollow pointed round...
Take the shot and maybe if you're lucky;
You'll watch their lifeless bodies hit the ground.....
Through the fields we'll be walking;
Cross the rooftops we'll be stalkin'.....
One shot, one kill from the top of the hill....
Walkin' in a sniper wonderland."*

"Is that not one of the sickest things that you have ever heard? And as uncomfortable as it was to sing this stuff, I did it anyway, because if you don't, then you are punished. So I went along with it. I was a good little soldier, and on top of it, I am a people pleaser by nature, so I wanted the drill sergeants to think I was a good soldier. I didn't want to let them down."

And so Chas remained in the military and was shipped to South Korea April 26, 2003. Things that happened there and on a visit home got him to questioning the militarism of which he was a part.

He writes: "When I got back to Korea, I started educating myself. I started reading and doing research on the internet about what was really going on in the world. God, had I been blind. I read Michael Moore, Howard Zinn, Noam Chomsky, and others, and I read first-hand accounts of what soldiers and civilians were experiencing in the "War on Terror." I was utterly disgusted. So for a few months I just soaked up all of the information that I could. And by the time I was done, I had come to the realization that all war is, is a never-ending cycle of violence, and that we have the ability as a nation to stop it.

"What did these wars solve? Who did it help when we invaded Iraq? The thousands upon thousands of innocent dead people? No. It did not help anyone except the war profiteers - the defense contractors, weapons makers, politicians like Bush. But God, what could I do about it? How could I get out of this murder machine that I was caught up in? How had I been so blind and naive?"

Chas' mother had been doing her own research. On the GI Rights Hotline she found information about a military regulation for getting conscientious objector status while in the military. She put him in contact with two gentlemen who helped him write his letter requesting CO status from the Department of the Army Conscientious Objector Review Board.

"They taught me what mutual respect was. . . [T]hese people [on the Board] were proudly serving in the military, and ...I should show them respect for fighting for what they believe is right. In turn, I simply asked for the same respect to be given to me." (Axis of Logic)

Chas went through many hoops before being granted CO status. One of the first steps was to give written answers to seven questions required by the Review Board, the final stop for his "packet" requesting CO status. Question #1. "A description of the nature of the belief which requires the applicant to seek separation from the military service or assignment to non-combatant training and duty for reasons of conscience."

Chas' answer: "To begin with, I get a knot in my stomach every time that I hold a weapon. Though I may be able to use one well, it does not change the fact that picking up a M-16 goes against everything that I think and feel. The weapons that I pick up every day are used to injure and kill people. The training that I participate in every day is conducted for the purpose of learning to hurt and kill people. I feel that I must tell you now that I WILL NOT kill people. I do not believe that I have the right to

decide whether another human being gets to live or die.

"I often wonder who, so many years ago developed this idea of killing to create peace. It really seems like an oxymoron to me. I don't believe that you make peace by causing more war.

"I know that all of these terrorists are going to keep trying to kill us because we keep invading their home lands and taking their oil.... but I don't believe that we are making things better if we just bomb them right back. It appears that we are caught in a never ending cycle of violence that we have the ability to stop. I think that we should redirect all of those billions of dollars that we are putting into blowing up aspirin factories and killing women and children and men, too, to beef up air - and seaport security, immigration - so we don't have these terrorists living under our noses; getting pilot's licences.

"The bottom line is that I believe that any act that causes the deaths of innocent people...people period, is wrong; plain and simple. No matter what someone has done, I can't see how I would be any better than that person if I turn around and do the exact same thing that they just did. This belief does not come from religion that I've found or from a preacher, it comes from my head, my heart. And I can no longer be a part of an organization who's sole purpose is to learn to kill, kill, and/or assist others in killing.

"Recognize that peace is the wholeness created by right relationships with oneself, other persons, other cultures, other life, Earth, and the larger whole of which we are all part.' That is a quote from the Earth Charter, a document that has been created for the betterment of the entire world. I think that quote has a lot of depth and meaning in it. It, for the most part, sums up the way that I feel, the things that I believe."

In the early part of January 2004, Chas got a call from his former platoon Sergeant First Class telling him his "re-enlistment paper finally came in!" He knew what she meant and thanked her profusely for all her help and support. "And then," he says "I yelled at the top of my lungs." He returned to his home in Alvin, Texas on January 15. Now he is helping others go through the process required to get CO status.

There are not enough groups counseling the many people wanting CO status. He is working with Perry O'Brien (recently discharged from Afghanistan) who has launched the site, <http://www.peace-out.com> to assist people in their efforts to leave the military honorably.

Chas laments the fact that so few people know there is a regulation pertaining to this issue. He urges every one to work to get the word out that this CO regulation exists for those within the military. He wants to "start a counter-recruiting program" in Alvin.

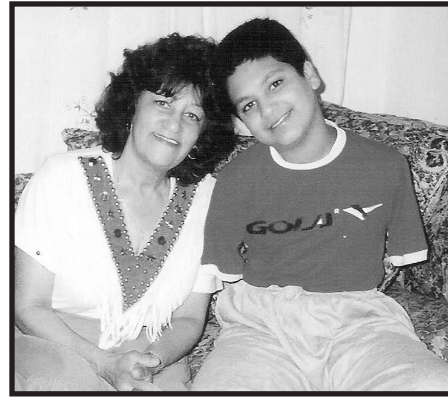
To read his initial CO application and Q&A, visit his personal website at http://www.freewebs.com/the_intermind/. His mother calls herself "Proud Mother of a Conscientious Objector." Her CO signed his article in Axis of Logic, "Fighting the powers that be, Chas Davis." Read it at <http://www.axisoflogic.org>. The site is edited by Beth Moore, who met Chas at the Eyes Wide Open exhibit in Houston in February of 2005.

Dan Webster on Conscription

January 14, 1814—"Where is it written in the Constitution, in what article or section is it contained, that you may take children from their parents and parents from their children, and compel them to fight the battles of any war in which the folly and wickedness of the government may engage itself? Under what concealment has this power lain hidden, which now for the first time comes forth, with a tremendous and baleful aspect, to trample down and destroy the dearest right of personal liberty? Who will show me any Constitutional injunction which makes it the duty of the American people to surrender everything valuable in life, and even life, itself, whenever the purposes of an ambitious and mischievous government may require it? ... A free government with an uncontrolled power of military conscription is the most ridiculous and abominable contradiction and nonsense that ever entered into the heads of men."

~ Daniel Webster (1782-1852), US Senator; Speech in the House of Representatives

Ali y Ahmed *Continued from pg. 1*



Al arribar en Estados Unidos, Ali se reunirá con el doctor Scout Kozin, cirujano especializado en manos y extremidades quien practica en el hospital Shriners. Kozin explica que se pueden llevar a cabo un número de acciones para mejorar la habilidad de Ali en operar sus prótesis. Entre ellas es el proveerlo que prótesis más ligeras que no sean tan pesadas como las que tiene actualmente o a través de cirugías que alarguen sus brazos o injertos que ayuden a fortalecer sus músculos.

Cuando no se encuentra en el hospital, Ali sale en excursiones que visitan la Estatua de la Libertad, u otras muchas atracciones en New York. También se le ha facilitado el encuentro con niños musulmanes que residen en Staten Island. "El conocer a niños musulmanes que ahora residen en America puede tener un fuerte impacto para Ali, explica Stephen Fiala, quien fue concejal de Staten Island. Este es un caso de obligación moral que debemos cumplir."

Maureen Seaberg, "A ray of hope: Bosnia victim's video inspires Iraq boy who lost arms," March 31, 2005. Escogido. Traducción por Maria Elena

Desde Soldat a Objector de Conciencias por Lee Loe

Chas Davis de Alvin, Texas entro al ejercito in octubre 2002. Tenia 19 años y dejo de la escuela para conseguir su GED, y sin dinero para colegio él queria hacer algo para su pais.

Empezo su entreno military en noviembre 21, 2002. En el artículo "Mi historia de ser objector de conciencia" publicado en la página roja Axis of Logic (www.axisoflogic.org), dice: "La única que no gustó en el entrenamiento fueron las canciones. Cantamos de balaziar los "niños comunistas" en la iglesia, y asasinando familias "comunistas". El peor fue uno llamado "Sniper Wonderland". Empasaba así:

*"Mira la niña con el perrito;
Pon la bala en la pistola,
Apunta y si tienes suerte;
Veras sus cuerpos caer...
Por el campo caminamos;
Por el techo con cuidado...
Un tiro, una matanza desde el monte,
Caminando en el camino encantado de aesinos."*

"No es lo más enfermo que haz oido? Y aunque es incomodo cantarlo, lo cante, porque si no cantas, te penalizan. Entonces lo hice. No queria fallar al sargento."

Entonces Chas fue mandado a Korea Sur en Abril 2003. Lo que paso alla y en llegar al EEUU lo puso a pensar. El escribo: "Cuando regrese a Korea, me eduque. Empeze leyendo y viendo por la roja internet lo que estaba pasando en el mundo. Dios, fui tan siego. Lei Michael Moore, Howard Zinn, Noam Chomsky, y otros, y cuentos reales de soldados y gente civil que vivieron la "guerra anti-terrorista". Me disguste. Hací fue por unos meses y cuando termine, vi la realizacion que la es, es un ciclo de violencia sin para, y tenemos como un pais, el poder de pararlo.

"Que resuelve la guerra? Quien aprovecho cuando atacamos a Iraq? Los miles y miles de muertos inocentes? No. Nadamas aprovecharon las industrias de guerra - los contratistas de armas, politicos como Bush. Pero dios, que podia ser yo? Como podia salir desda maquina de muerte en que me encontraba? Como podia ser tan siego y tonto?"

La mamá de Chas tambien averiguo los derechos de su hijo hacerse objector de

conciencia. Lo puso en contacto con hombres quién le ayudaron escribir su carta solicitando un nivel "CO" desde el Departamento de Ejército Junta de Revisos de Objector de Conciencias.

"Me enseñaron lo que es el respeto mutual... esta gente (en la junta) orgullosamente servian en el ejército...y yo simplemente queria el mismo respeto."

Despues de muchos requerimientos, a Chas le dieron el estado de CO. Le hicieron siete preguntas:

Numero uno: "Una descripcion de su creencia por la cual tiene que separarse de el servicio militar o entrenamiento no-combatante por razones de conciencia."

Su respuesta: "Por empezar, me da asco cuando tengo una arma. Lo puedo usar correctamente pero no deja de ser una carabina M16 que va contra mis creencias y razones. Esta arma causa lesiones y mata. Mi entrenamiento es para matar gente. Y NO LO VOY HACER. No tengo el derecho de decidir quién vive y quién muere."Y digo, quién invento que tienes que matar para creer paz? Es una idea ironica. No inventas paz por causar guerra.

"Las terroristas nos matan porque invadamos sus tierras y robamos petroleo...no resuelve nada si les hechamos bombas. Estamos en un ciclo de violencia que podemos parar. En vez de invertir billones de dolares en bombardiar fabricas de aspirina y matando a mujeres y niños y hombres, en vez deberiamos invertir en seguridad de los puertos marinos, en inmigracion - que no les damos licencias de navegar avianos a las terroristas que viven de frente.

"En fin lo que creo es que cualquier acto que causa la muerte de gente inocente...cualquier gente, es simplemente incorrecto. Si alguien me hace mal, es incorrecto que yo le hago lo mismo. Esta idea no viene de religion que yo sepa, viene de mi mente, de mi corazon. No quiero ser parte de una organizacion que existe para enseñar a matar.

"Reconoce que paz es el total creido de las relaciones correctos con uno mismo, otras personas, otras culturas, otra vida, la tierra, y el gran total de cual somos todos! Esta idea es de Carta de la Tierra, un documento creido para el mejoramiento del mundo. Esa idea es muy profunda. Describe mis sentimientos, mis creencias."

En enero 2004, el sargento de Chas le llamo con buena noticia. "Tire un grito recio!" Volvio a su casa en Alvin, Texas en enero 15. Ahora ayuda a otros obtener estado CO.

No hay suficientes organizaciones ayudando con la gente queriendo estado CO. Chas esta trabajando con Perry O'Brien (quien sirvio en afghanistan) quien mantiene la pagina www.peace-out.com para ayudarle a gente quien quieren salir de el ejército con estado de honor.

Chas lamento que tan pocos saben de las regulaciones cuales gobiernan el estado CO. Quiere que mas gente sepan del. Quiere empezar un programa de contra. La solicitud de Chas, en su pagina roja http://www.freewebs.com/the_intermind/. Para mas informacion, puede ir a <http://www.axisoflogic.org>. Traducción por Rosa Guerrero

Dan Webster sobre Servicio Militar Obligatorio

14 de enero, 1814 - "¿Donde esta escrito en la Constitución, en que artículo o sección se lo contiene, que se puede tomar los niños de sus padres, y obligarles a librar las batallas de cualquier guerra en la que la necesidad y maldad del gobierno puede embragarse? ¿Bajo que ocultación se ha acostado este poder, lo cual ahora por la primera vez sale de escondite, con tremendo y aciago aspecto, a pisotear y destruir el mas entrañable derecho de libertad personal? ¿Quién me demuestra cualquier entredicho Constitucional que lo haga el deber del pueblo americano a rendirse todo de valor en la vida, y hasta la vida misma, cuando quiera que los propósitos de un gobierno ambicioso y travieso puedan requerirlo? ... Un gobierno libre con un poder descontrolado de servicio militar obligatorio es lo mas ridículo y abominable contradicción y tontería que jamás entro en las cabezas de los hombres."

~ Daniel Webster (1782-1852), Senador EEUU; Discurso en la Camara de Representantes