

Differing Views of Australia's Involvement in the Vietnam War

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Dear Grandpa,

I appreciate your previous letter and have taken this situation into deep consideration. I understand your point of view, your perspective and your opinions and I respect them, but I have my own ways of thinking and I will stand by them for several reasons. I want to explain my views and my actions to you and I want you to take them into serious consideration. I do not believe that conscription makes sense; you should have the freedom to choose whether or not you want to participate in battle, in war. You should be allowed to express your views towards what you believe in. I am a conscientious objector, an individual who has claimed the right to refuse to perform military service. I am writing to explain why.

Communicates effectively personal views about conscription

Conscription is against basic human rights, the right to freedom. It takes away our freedom to choose whether or not we should fight in the Vietnam War. Whether or not we want to risk our lives and face the consequences and if we think we are fighting for a good cause. This is what objection to conscription is all about not being forced to fight a war that we don't need to fight and free will. I am a conscientious objector, as I actively object to the Vietnam War, as do thousands of others like me.

Groups like the Draft Resistance Movement, Students for a Democratic Society, the Monash Pacifist Society, Youth Against Conscription and Save Our Sons (SOS) were all formed to counter conscription, but all became firmly anti-war as the conflict in Vietnam dragged on year after year. In 1968, a group called the Draft Resistance Movement who not only opposed conscription, but wanted to destroy it. They introduced a more forceful way of protesting, like members chaining themselves to army barracks gates and were an influence on the younger age groups who opposed conscription. In 1969, the government had finally realised that conscription could no longer just think of objectors to the war as a small group, as they had become quite an influential force not only inclusive of the aforementioned groups, but gaining support from regular citizens and members of the community. The fact that this war is the first "live" war (first war in which actual footage is seen of the atrocities of the war) has helped to boost numbers in the anti-conscription/anti-war movement.

Shows knowledge of groups involved in the moratorium movement

Effective use of historical information

The Vietnam Moratorium Movement, earlier this year, was a turning point for the anti-war movement, as it was the first time that all the anti-conscription/anti-war groups had come together and rallied for their cause as one. We wished to, firstly, force a withdrawal of Australian and other foreign troops from Vietnam and secondly, repeal the *National Service Act 1964*. Our strength during the movement did in fact, shock the government. We plan more, for future years, to really bring everyone together, break down conscription and bring back our troops in Vietnam.

I realise that you expect me to "do my duty for my country" but have you stopped to think why we are fighting this war? Why did Australia go to Vietnam in the first place? This war is not in the ANZAC spirit. The spirit which you hold so highly - the "fight for our country" spirit. People in Australia are deluded into thinking that we have gone to Vietnam to stop the spread of communism, through the government and the media, when really; we are fighting a civil war against North Vietnam. We are just following our allies, the United States and fighting a war that we didn't need to fight. I object strongly to the reasons for which we are fighting in Vietnam and thus I'm not objecting to protection of Australia or duty for Australia, rather the sense in fighting with the concept of "Forward Defense" and fighting a war in which it was unnecessary for Australia to intervene. Many people object to conscription because the government of Australia conscripts people to fight overseas, in a time of peace in Australia. Most of us believe conscription should be used for home defense only, not to fight a war which we didn't need to fight in the first place.

Thorough understanding of international relationships

War, in general, always brings death and destruction and for the reasons we fight this one for, is it worth it? Is it worth the physical and psychological impacts brought upon not only the soldiers themselves, but their families and the rest of the Australian people? The experiences of war scar people forever, if they even survive. The people who have come back so far have immense trouble re-adjusting to normal life. They've experienced paranoia, depression, stress and nightmares since their return. This has led to violence, family breakdowns and a few suicides, also, to drug dependency, alcoholism and crime. The war, apart from the visible physical injuries, had given the soldiers exposure to a chemical referred to as Agent Orange, which has caused cancer and will surely cause birth abnormalities with their offspring in future years.

An effective argument that demonstrates a strong awareness of the psychological effects of war

As you can see Grandpa, I have strong views towards conscription and the Vietnam War and I am a conscientious objector. I object to the war because of the reasons for which we have joined the war, conscription for a war that should be barely any of Australia's concern and the physical and psychological impacts of the Vietnam War. Again, I respect your views and opinions of fighting for Australia and doing my duty as the younger generation of Australian but I oppose these views as do hundreds of thousands of others who protest alongside me. We will continue our marches, our rallies, and our fight, through the Vietnam Moratorium Movement. We will continue rising against conscription, the government and the war. Hope to keep in touch soon.

love,
John

Bibliography (Please note these links have not been verified and may not work)

1st Source- Website Author- Unknown Title- Vietnam War

Website- <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/VietnamWar>

Date Accessed - 29/03/2012

This website, although being Wikipedia and possibly altered by other readers, is a decent site with some useful information relevant to the topic. It has a large references list, if further information is necessary and was a good starting point in my understanding of the Vietnam War.

2nd Source -Website

Author-Unknown

Title - Conscientious Objector

Website- <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conscientiousobjector>

Date Accessed - 29/03/12

Again, even though it's Wikipedia and possible altered by others, it gave quite a clear definition of conscientious objectors and what they stand for.

3rd Source -Website

Author- Unknown

Title- The Developing Anti-War Movement-The Vietnam War in Australia

Website- [http://www.skwirk.com.au/p=c s-14 u-116 t-315 c-1064/the-developing-anti-war- movement/nsw/the-developing-anti-war-movement/australia-in-the-vietnam-war-era/responses- of-various-groups](http://www.skwirk.com.au/p=c%20s-14%20u-116%20t-315%20c-1064/the-developing-anti-war-movement/nsw/the-developing-anti-war-movement/australia-in-the-vietnam-war-era/responses-of-various-groups)

Date Accessed - 29/03/12

This webpage was extremely useful in understanding the anti-war/anti-conscription movements along with the reasons, the groups, and the

Grade Commentary

Drew demonstrates a thorough knowledge and understanding of the differing views of Australia's involvement in the Vietnam war. This response shows a high level of impact on Australian Society. The letter would benefit from a more detailed explanation of the Grandfather's experience and more appropriate use of language for a letter format. This work sample demonstrates characteristics of work typically produced by a student performing at a grade B level.