



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
 ARMY REVIEW BOARDS AGENCY
 1901 SOUTH BELL STREET
 ARLINGTON, VA 22202-4508

SFMR-ASRB

3 November 2008

MEMORANDUM THRU DACORB

MEMORANDUM FOR ACTING DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE ARMY –
 REVIEW BOARDS

SUBJECT: Conscientious Objector Application – CADET KANAI, STEVEN L.
 [REDACTED]

I hereby vote to deny Cadet Kanai's application for Conscientious Objector (CO) 1-O status.

Cadet Kanai's application reads like a philosophical treatise with sociologic angles aimed at evidencing his beliefs about the philosophic wrongness of war. Cadet Kanai makes a logical argument and presents a somewhat convincing history of how his beliefs evolved.

However, one can argue philosophically and at great length and still not believe the argument or embrace it with sincerity nor does it necessarily satisfy the requirements set forth in AR 600-43.

So it is necessary to examine his treatise with the following questions in mind: Does he believe his assertions? Is he sincere when he states them? What is his guiding principle – his desire to depart USMA or his belief in nonviolence? Do they satisfy an impartial evaluation of his thinking and living in totality, past and present? While these assertions are definitely philosophical with sociologic angles, are they also moral or ethical? Are they deeply held? Does his conscience allow him no inner rest while he is in his current profession?

After examining his treatise again against these criteria, I find the following:

Does he believe his assertions? Yes, I think he does.

Is he sincere when he states them? Not sure. I think he is sincere in wanting out of USMA and wanting to avoid service.

What is his guiding principle – his desire to depart USMA or his belief in nonviolence? I believe that he has felt – probably for the entire time he was at USMA – that he didn't fit in. I believe he has always had an underlying current directing him to find peaceful resolution and avoid violence but in this circumstance I believe that his guiding principle is his desire to depart USMA.

Printed on  Recycled Paper

SENSITIVE

Do these assertions satisfy an impartial evaluation of his thinking and living in totality, past and present? With the exception of his alleged increase in chapel attendance and changes in his thought patterns, Cadet Kanai has presented no tangible evidence that illustrates an outward manifestation of his newfound beliefs nor satisfies the a discernible change between thinking and living in totality, past and present. The problem with the chapel attendance and thought patterns is that Cadet Kanai has not offered any collaboration to these alleged changes. It seems strange to me that someone who was fraught with these thoughts did not seek some sort of counseling – be it from a Catholic priest, a Buddhist Monk, a Psychologist, or a Philosopher – or didn't attend a prayer group – or reach out to one of the CO-dot-org groups – or something.

While these assertions are definitely philosophical with sociologic angles, are they also moral or ethical? What's missing here is the passion that would come with moral beliefs vs. philosophical beliefs. He has examined his way into these beliefs; he has mentally chosen them. They lack that "heart-felt" quality. While he says that "war is in all cases immoral", and you can mentally follow his logic and evidence, he lacks discernible conviction.

Are they deeply held? I don't know. I would suggest that Cadet Kanai has always believed in peaceful resolution and diplomatic solutions in preference to any sort of military action. This theme is not uncommon among thoughtful and philosophic soldiers. In terms of efficiency of life and resources, these means are unquestionably better. Based on Cadet Kanai's suggestion of how he mentally examined concepts and theorems, by turning them around and viewing them from all different angles, I suspect that these beliefs are deeply held. Nonetheless, I suspect that in 2003, when he applied for USMA and wrote "The most important reason [he wants to serve as an Army Officer] is [his] simple desire to serve and protect the United States of America. I view the Military Academy not as a vehicle with which to acquire a degree, but a preparation for a long career in the U.S. Army.", he was equally as sincere. It is my conjecture that within another four years, his beliefs will change again – and will again appear sincere and deeply held.

Does his conscience allow him no inner rest or inner peace while he is in his current profession? This is the key issue. Cadet Kanai does not evidence the distress one might imagine. He seems devoid of inner peace for his alleged moral convictions and devoid of distress due to his current profession. The conflict appears to be one of convenience or expedience not based on a religious, moral or ethical dilemma.

SFMR-ASRB-C (600-43)

SUBJECT: Conscientious Objector Application – CADET KANAI, STEVEN L.
[REDACTED]

I vote to deny Cadet Kanai's application for Conscientious Objector (CO) 1-O status and recommend that Cadet Kanai be ordered to report to Basic Training and assigned to a non-combat MOS.

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
DACORB President