

A Quaker and Three Marines

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Scarsdale Friends Meeting

I became a Quaker after the United States declared war in Iraq. At the time I was surrounded by several people who were pro-troops, pro-president, and pro-war. I found the Quaker Peace testimony and other testimonies very helpful and, little by little, I became a member.

A couple of years later, my oldest nephew graduated from college after several volunteer service jobs and decided to join the Marine Corps. I tried to dissuade him, but eventually I realized he was joining the Marines because of his idealism and the desire to serve his people and his country.

Even though I truly believed in Quaker values about war, my first job was to be an aunt and to send love and prayers to my nephew. Luckily he became a reserve officer and has now finished his military career. My two other nephews also joined the Marine Corps following their brother's example. My only comment to one of them was, "You know we are in the midst of a war, don't you?" He answered that (the Marine Corps) represents what he stood for and believed in.

I knew once again that wisdom dictated me to accept the situation and put my role as an aunt before that of peace activist or Quaker.

I now feel deeply for war veterans and believe they need to be welcomed and treated fairly after all they go through. My only contribution is to give hand-knitted afghans (I am an artist) to the VA hospital in Montrose, NY, through different knitters' groups. Every day that passes I am grateful that none of my nephews have (yet) been called to war.