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Parents, Siblings and Pacifism:
The Baxter Family and Others
(World War One and World War Two)

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Presented in partial fulfilment for the requirements for the degree of
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# Table of Contents

List of Abbreviations .................................................. ii
List of Illustrations .................................................. iii
Introduction ................................................................. 1
Chapter One: A Family Commitment ................................. 6
Chapter Two: A Family Inheritance ................................. 23
Chapter Three: Source of Pride or Shame? Families Pay the Price for Pacifism ............................... 44
Conclusion ................................................................. 59
Afterword .................................................................. 61
Bibliography ................................................................. 69
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CPS</td>
<td>Christian Pacifist Society</td>
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<tr>
<td>CWI</td>
<td>Canterbury Women’s Institute</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICOM</td>
<td>International Conscientious Objectors’ Meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>PAW</td>
<td>Peace Action Wellington</td>
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<tr>
<td>PPU</td>
<td>Peace Pledge Union</td>
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<td>RSA</td>
<td>Returned Services Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>WA-CL</td>
<td>Women’s Anti-Conscription League</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WIL</td>
<td>Women’s International Peace League</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WRI</td>
<td>War Resisters International</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
List of Illustrations

Figure 1. John Baxter
Figure 2. Military Service Act, 1916
Figure 3. Conscientious objectors stripped aboard the Waitemata
Figure 4. Artist’s Impression of Field Punishment Number One
Figure 5. Millicent Macmillan Brown, 1920
Figure 6. John Macmillan Brown, 1918
Figure 7. We Will Not Cease cover, published 1935
Figure 8. Terence Baxter, aged eight
Figure 9. James K. Baxter, aged seven
Figure 10. Prime Minister Peter Fraser
Figure 11. Peter Fraser, aiming a gun in Egypt
Figure 12. Objectors detained at Hautu Detention Camp, 1943
Figure 13. Terence Baxter aged twenty-four
Figure 14. Archibald, Millicent and James Baxter at their Brighton home in the early 1940s
Figure 15. Archibald Baxter
Figure 16. Millicent Baxter in her Dunedin home
Figure 17. Rita Graham interviewed in War Stories Our Mothers Never Told Us
Figure 18. British Propaganda Poster (from Imperial War Museum)
Figure 19. McCullough Family, 1892
Figure 20. Finland, 2004: Tunnelling into a prison where conscientious objectors are imprisoned
Figure 21. Amnesty International Logo
Figure 22. Peace Pledge Union – Anti-war Activity Header
Figure 23. Courage to Resist Poster, advertising Conscientious Objectors’ Day
Figure 24. Courage to Resist Logo

Figure 25. Wellington Anzac Day Protests, April 2007

Figure 26. Painting of Archibald Baxter, by artists Bob Kerr, exhibition at Milford Gallery, Dunedin, August – September 2007
INTRODUCTION

Before she died, Millicent Baxter, wife of notorious New Zealand conscientious objector Archibald Baxter, wrote a letter confessing one of her final wishes:

I hope to live long enough to see the production of the documentary of my husband’s book, *We Will Not Cease*... I think it has a message for the young. The future of the world is in their hands...1

Clearly pacifism was a shared commitment in her family, not just the passion of one individual member. This essay will seek to explore the importance of family in a pacifist stance. I will examine influences of, and effects on, various members of the family unit, and investigate the importance of familial support in aiding a conscientious objector to take the pacifist stance and cope with the consequent hardships confronted. My dissertation examines both the first and second World Wars.

This focus on the family distinguishes my research from scholarship which precedes it. At the close of the Great War, Member of Parliament H. E. Holland published *Armageddon or Calvary*, a discussion of the treatment of conscientious objectors during the war. His intended purpose was to expose the policies of the Government and bring to light the ‘shocking experiences the men of conscience’ underwent, in order to make it impossible for such ‘a stupendous wrong to ever again sully the annals of this country.’2 Holland’s work is a valuable source, though clearly biased in its blatant attack on the Government of the time, the book serving as a political tool for Holland’s own Labour Party.

Paul Baker’s 1988 work *King and Country Call* provides a comprehensive study of conscription in New Zealand in the Great War. The issue of conscientious objection is included with a section dedicated to opposition to compulsory military service,

1 Letter from Millicent: Baxter MS02381/002, Ginn, Noel: Papers (ARC-0401), Hocken Collections (HC), Dunedin

2 H. E. Holland, *Armageddon or Calvary*, (Wellington, NZ: Maoriland Worker Printing and Publishing Co. Ltd., 1919), Foreword
including the story of Archibald Baxter and the other deported objectors in 1917-1918. David Grant's *Out in the Cold* is devoted to the pacifists of New Zealand in the next war, providing a valuable overview of the men's treatment and the organisations they established in response, and of the Government's actions and reactions to this minority of defiant objectors. P. S. O'Connor has contributed to the field in various published articles and like Grant's work, O'Connor's tends to focus on the higher levels in the process of conscientious objection, investigating the role played by the government and the policies they formulated. Paul Oestreicher's 1954 thesis is similar, being a record and commentary on administration of war-time emergency regulations, and an examination of policies of World War Two in relation to conscientious objectors.

While available scholarship provides a significant wealth of detail on conscientious objection in New Zealand, this narrow focus on administration has led to neglect of the families of the pacifists, the people who actually felt the affects of the policies formulated by politicians in Parliament and who witnessed the persecution and punishment of their loved ones. Attention has not been paid to the role of the family and I endeavour to remedy this neglect. I wish to explore how the family members in both wars were affected by the pacifist stance adopted by men in their families, and how they responded.

Some objectors have published their own accounts of their experiences, such as Archibald Baxter with *We Will Not Cease* (1939), Ian Hamilton in *Till Human Voices Wake Us* (1953), and Walter Lawry with his 1994 piece *We Said No To War*. Writer W. F. Foote's *Bread and Water* (2000) is an account of Chris Palmer and Merve Browne's escape from Strathmore Detention Camp in 1944. These works are fascinating and valuable testimonies about the experiences of objectors in New Zealand from both wars, but the focus does not extend to reach into the lives of their family members, to explore how the men's experiences as conscientious objectors in turn affected their dependents left back at home.
Some biographies of James K. Baxter have touched on the effect that Archibald’s war experience, as well as Terence Baxter’s incarceration, had on James’ development, but have done so for the purpose of understanding him better as a writer. To understand James as the man that he was, one must recognise difficulties of his youthful period and that his experiences then had long-lasting consequences for his attitudes and outlook on life. Paul Millar, an English University Lecturer, was able to bring his literary criticism skills to the fore for a more in-depth analysis by highlighting examples of James’ work where effects from his upbringing are evident, and noting difficult to distinguish references to family members in poems which many readers may miss. Writer Frank McKay also provided a background to James’ family history to better understand him as a poet, whereas biographers C. Doyle and W. H. Oliver chose not to emphasise this aspect of James’s life as much.

The stand of a conscientious objector is ‘a protest against war and leads inevitably to conflict with the State.’ When a man elected to object to war and go against prevailing opinion at the time, he was putting himself forward to be ostracised, harassed and abused by the community, and be punished officially by the Government. This radical and life-changing decision to be a conscientious objector would likely have been a gradual process of thought and debate during the objector’s life, not a spontaneous snap decision. I wish to explore the role that upbringing played in this decision-making process, and to investigate the influence that parents consciously or sub-consciously had over their children’s views regarding peace and war.

For many New Zealanders the Baxter name will perhaps be associated most clearly with James K. Baxter, one of the nation’s best known poets, but for others it will be associated with pacifism, linked to the renowned conscientious objector Archibald Baxter. Archibald wrote a book between the wars, telling his experience of the Great War when he was sent to France and subjected to horrific cruelties and brutality. Archibald’s story is known throughout the world, and Michael King describes it as

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becoming 'a classic of anti-war literature.' Archibald’s work is available, to learn of his incredible tale of defiance, and his story is also included in many anthologies and collections on conscientious objection. American historian Peter Brock for example, included Archibald’s story in his anthology of prison experiences of conscientious objectors over three eras of the twentieth century. Archibald’s son Terence went on to be an objector in World War Two, detained for the duration of the war.

Archibald’s wife Millicent was significant in her own right, marrying Archibald in 1921 and adopting her own pacifist, anti-war views. Her memoirs were published in 1981. Information on the family can also be accessed from the Dictionary of New Zealand Biography, which includes biographical accounts of Archibald, Millicent and James Baxter. My dissertation is unique because it seeks to draw all stories together, not focus on one individual within the unit, but on the entire Baxter clan. It will explore the role that various members played within the family, and discover the importance of the support that each member was able to draw from each other in such difficult times.

Chapter one focuses entirely on World War One, investigating the experience of the conscientious objector by telling the story of Archibald Baxter and his family, a compact and devoted unit. Chapter two leads on to the next generation of Baxters, witnessing the incarceration of Archibald’s eldest son Terence. It concurrently provides an understanding of the experience of objectors in the Second World War, while exploring the dynamics and influences within the Baxter’s close-knit family. The ‘harsh and fumbling experience with conscientious objectors during World War One contributed directly to a more liberal and humane government policy toward conscientious objectors in World War Two,’ although in practice the guidelines for objection remained narrow and liberty remained restricted. The third chapter takes a

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4 Michael King “Foreword” to We Will Not Cease by Archibald Baxter (Auckland, NZ: Cape Catley Ltd, 2003), 10
5 Peter Brock, These Strange Criminals: An Anthology of Prison Memoirs by Conscientious Objectors from the Great War to the Cold War (US: University of Toronto Press, 2004)
more general focus, moving away from the Baxters and using other case examples of family influences, gain an understanding about how the pacifist stance affected every member in a family, and explore issues relating to support and assistance, or the alternative issues of shame, disgrace and disassociation.

By focusing on the family in research regarding conscientious objection in New Zealand over both Wars, this dissertation sheds light on hitherto neglected areas of investigation, and gives a voice to mothers, fathers, siblings and children who have until now often remained unheard.
CHAPTER ONE: A Family Commitment

Excitement swept through New Zealand in 1914 when the Great War was declared and the government pledged their support to the Empire. Sentiments of ‘home’ were very strong, and the sense of duty overwhelming. The country’s attitude was dominated by a jingoistic, patriotic, almost hysterical fervour, as men rushed to enlist, to perform their duty both as men and as members of the Commonwealth. One particular farmer at the far reaches of the south, did not. Archibald Learmond McColl Baxter did not join the thousands marching off proudly to fulfil their obligations and rush to the aid of the beloved mother country. Archibald Baxter stood out and espoused pacifism, objected to the war and refused to take arms. To do so was to belong to a distinct minority and to mark oneself with the label of coward or ‘shirker’. He stood out brave, determined, courageous, but not alone. Perhaps contrary to common belief, Archibald Baxter was a man supported and connected. He stood alongside others, including six of his seven brothers, who were part of a strong and devoted family unit. He had the complete support of his kin, the Baxter clan, and this family name came to be defined by pacifism, every member influenced or affected in some way by repercussions and consequences of the pacifist stance.

The Baxter family were part of the chain migration of Scottish immigrants who flowed into New Zealand in the mid nineteenth-century. Archibald’s father John Baxter, a farm labourer, migrated to the Scottish settlement of Otago in 1860.1 John Baxter and Mary McColl had married in 1879 and their first child, Archibald, was born December 13, 1881.2 Six more children followed; five sons Jack, Mark, Hugh, William, Donald, Sandy, and one daughter, Margaret.3 The clannish family were a compact group, working together, all supporting one another, all

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1 Letter from John Cookson, 29/1, Baxter Box Ten – Letters About Baxter, Beaglehole Room, Victoria University, Wellington
having to carry the burden of their heavy drinking father. The family lived hand to mouth, John Baxter unable to provide, and Archibald was forced to leave school aged twelve to work in a variety of seasonal farming occupations. He won in the lotteries a small parcel of land after the big runs had been cut up and distributed. He worked and stocked the land before handing it over to his father. Unfortunately, John Baxter failed to maintain the farm successfully and it was not long before the land was sold to cover debt. Archibald returned to buy back the farm and soon was drawing a good profit.

Archibald was well-respected in the Brighton district, and within the family it appears he emerged as the de facto leader of the Baxter clan. If there ever was any financial or emotional trouble in the family, it was Archibald who was asked to advise and resolve. In a way he was forced into this role of leader, because of his place as eldest child and because of his father’s failings. John was unable to manage his land and was constantly in financial trouble, harassed by bailiffs, and also his heavy drinking was a burden for the family. Archibald would travel with his father into town to deal with financial matters, and at the end of the day would have to search the pubs to find and take home his inebriated father.

By the time World War One began Archibald’s pacifist beliefs were well established. At the outbreak of the Boer war he had contemplated enlisting, but heard a Dunedin lawyer making a plea for pacifism and forming a strong case against war in general. He was convinced by the arguments and soon his distaste of war had developed into a determined personal rejection, and a commitment to refuse military service. He had reached the point of view that war was ‘wrong, futile and destructive alike to victor and vanquished.’ Archibald saw that Christianity was based on the Commandment, ‘Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself,’ and saw that war cut this position at its very roots.

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5 McKay, *The Life of James K. Baxter*
6 Belinda Cumming, interview with Terence Baxter, 18/08/07, Dunedin
7 Archibald Baxter, *We Will Not Cease*, (Britain: Victor Gollancz Ltd, 1939), 9
8 Baxter, *We Will Not Cease*, 11
Following the outbreak of war, Defence Minister Sir James Allen hastened to assure the British military authorities that an Expeditionary Force of eight-thousand men would be made available, and the unit maintained at full strength for the period of the war. Recognising their ‘obligation’, men all over the country rushed to answer Allen’s call and volunteer service. However by 1916 it was quickly becoming apparent that the flow of recruits could not much longer be sustained by the current method. Speakers in parliament recognised that the voluntary system had done very creditably and New Zealand had raised a large force, but it obvious that the system had outrun its usefulness. On 11 May 1916, Mr. G. W. Forbes of Hurunui argued:

We have arrived at a time when the sacrifices it calls upon people to make are very unequal and very uneven. Some people are making great sacrifices, while others are making no sacrifices at all. The time has come when we should put in operation a better system, under which the sacrifices will be distributed fairly and equitably over the whole community.

The majority appeared to be calling for the introduction of a compulsory system of conscription for military service as soon as possible.

In May 1916 the Military Service Bill entered parliament. On the 9th of June it was carried by a vote 44 to 4, before becoming law on the 1st of August. The Bill allowed the government to conscript, by ballot, men between the ages of twenty and forty-six. It was expected that the

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9 H. E. Holland, Armageddon or Calvary, (Wellington, NZ: Maoriland Worker Printing and Publishing Co. Ltd., 1919), 7
11 New Zealand Parliamentary Debates, 09/06/1916, Vol. 175 (1916), 786
12 Letter to Sir James Allen, 29/01/1920, Reports on New Zealand Naval Forces, MS1085/044, in Allen, Sir James: Papers (ARC-0113), Hocken Collections (HC), Dunedin
introduction of conscription would spark major uproar in society and ignite protest nation wide. In reality the Bill was passed without extreme consequences in 1916, as the general feeling was one of nationalism and devoted patriotism, most New Zealanders recognising their civic duty to the Empire. Propaganda played a large role in entrenching such views, and the people were swept away with emotive speeches, such as one delivered by Mr. A. Harris of Waitemata, who proclaimed:

Everything is for the Empire today. It is not a local matter; it is matter for the Empire first and the Empire last, and undoubtedly the war must be the first consideration of the people and the Parliament of New Zealand.13

When first introduced, the Bill had contained no specific provision for religious or conscientious objection. It is likely the parliamentarians did not see the minority of objectors becoming an issue, assuming that the entire country would rally behind the cause and understand that ‘the State must come first.’14 After voting against the exemption of conscientious objectors on June 7, 1916, Parliament for some reason changed their mind, and proceeded to introduce a new clause which made it a ground of appeal that:

a man was on 4 August 1914 and had been continuously since, a member of a religious body whose tenets declared the bearing of arms and the performance of military service to be contrary to divine revelation, that this was also his own conscientious belief, and that he was willing to perform non-military work in New Zealand.15

The Bill was sent to the Legislative Council on June 9.

13 Parliamentary Debates, 11/05/1916, Vol. 175 (1916), 52
15 O’Connor, “The Awkward Ones”, 119
A Military Service Board was set up in 1916 to administer appeals against conscription. Sir James Allen had insisted that the Bill would:

enable a sensible Board to consider the appeal of a Quaker or of any man who can really show to the Board that he actually holds religious and conscientious objections... I have no doubt that the Boards will listen to these appeals.\endnote{16}

However, the provision for conscientious objection was clearly a very narrow interpretation. In practice it seemed to have applied only to Quakers and Christadelphians, both very small denominations and both conscientiously opposed to serving in the armed forces.\endnote{17}

Because the Baxter brothers were not communicant members of a religious body that believed armed service contrary to divine revelation, their appeals were turned down. It appears they lived by religious principals but did not necessarily attend church. Their spirituality or faith is apparent in a letter written home from Donald Baxter, when incarcerated in Waikeria Reformatory in 1919. The Baxter brother Hugh had died and Donald was writing to express his grief and send love to the family. He tells how hard it had been for him to be kept apart from his parents during the tough times, but that he knows ‘they draw their support from a higher source.’\endnote{18}

While Archibald came to be seen as leader of the Baxter family, the reality of the situation was not that he adopted his radical pacifist views and the family obediently followed suit, as one may assume. Nor is it true that he dictated to them what they were to do. In actuality the process was a lot slower and gradual. Terence confirms the idea that at first the family ridiculed him and teased him for his seemingly foolish views. But it became clear that the issue concerned him a great deal, and they entered

\begin{footnotes}
\item[16] O’Connor, “The Awkward Ones”, 119
\item[17] Peter Brock, These Strange Criminals: An Anthology of Prison Memoirs by Conscientious Objectors from the Great War to the Cold War, (US: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 6
\item[18] Letter from Donald at Waikeria Reformatory, 2/3/1919, Letters from Donald Baxter MS-0975/205, Baxter Family: Papers (ARC-0351), Hocken Collections, Dunedin
\end{footnotes}
into discussions with him, listening to his ideas. Archibald later explained that his family gradually came around, especially when Keir Hardy of the British Labour Party, admired by the Baxter family, put forward pacifist views.

All six Baxter brothers were called up and appealed on the grounds of conscience, based on fundamental Christian doctrines. They each entered prison, as there was no alternative for one truly committed to pacifist beliefs. On January 10th, 1917, the *Otago Witness* announced that five Baxter brothers of Brighton had appealed as conscientious objectors, believing that fighting was contrary to the Word of God. The brothers were not present at the hearing, nobody stood to represent them, and all cases were dismissed. The following January, the same paper announced the hearing of an appeal by Hugh Baxter. He did not appear and the case was dismissed. All Baxter brothers were denied exemption, and all faced imprisonment.

Archibald Baxter had been the first brother to be arrested. He had been realistic about his future, knowing he would be called up, so had taken a hard season’s shearing in the summer of 1916-17 so as to leave behind as large a cheque as possible for his family. However, before even receiving official notice from the army, Archibald was arrested. He was called outside his house under pretext of discussing farm issues, when a policeman jumped out from behind a hedge and seized him, taking him away without time to even collect any personal possessions. Two of his brothers were arrested in the same way, inevitably upsetting the entire family. Archibald was then marched down the middle of the street by four men with bayonets to the cells. He later recalled the event: ‘nothing ever cut me again like that first, deliberately inflicted, public humiliation.’ The Baxter brothers were handed over to the military authorities and here began their horrific journey. They could never have known what cruelty, harassment, maltreatment and torture lay ahead.
When men were denied appeal, they were officially declared military deserters and sentenced to imprisonment in either prisons or detention camps. The wider public of New Zealand supported this routine, openly expressing hatred and disgust towards the ‘conchies,’ the majority being fervently patriotic and in support of conscription. Conscientious objectors had at first been transported to Trentham Training Camp, but in 1917 the camp commandant had complained of his inability to deal with religious objectors and it soon became clear that a training camp was not a suitable place for them. A number of conscientious objectors were then sent to Wanganui Detention Camp, from which a number of complaints were released, reporting brutal and violent treatment of inmates. In that same year a different method was tried, the deportation of fourteen objectors to Europe; an experiment never to be repeated.

Archibald had been transported to several prisons before arriving at Trentham. At this point he was in the company of his brothers Jack and Sandy. They had all continued to refuse orders, and had continued to be punished with uncomfortable confinement and food deprivation. At Trentham, they were surprised to hear that their brothers Donald and Hugh were also there, but before they were able to reunite, Archibald, Jack, Sandy and eleven other men were forced aboard Waitemata. The ship sailed from Wellington to England, departing on 14 July, 1917. On July 15, a letter was received by the parents of the fourteen men taken secretly in the night:

The undermentioned Conscientious and Religious Objectors were forcibly put on board the transport Waitemata on July 13 and 14: -
JOHN BAXTER, ARCHIBALD McCOLL LEARMONT BAXTER, ALEXANDER BAXTER, Brighton, Otago... All well, in good spirits, and determined to stick out to the end.

The New Zealand public had no prior knowledge of the government’s intention to forcibly deport these men. Along with the three Baxter brothers were William Little,

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22 O’Connor, “The Awkward Ones”, 122
23 Holland, Armageddon or Calvary, 57
24 Holland, Armageddon or Calvary, 22
Mark Briggs, Fred Adin, Lewis Penwright, Harry Patton, Albert Sanderson, Garth Ballantyne, David Grey, Daniel Maguire, Lawrence Kirwan and Thomas Percy Harland. Their parents and relatives were not notified prior to their departure, and had no opportunity to make any kind of contact or communication before their family members were taken from them. The Baxter’s suddenly had three of their family members stripped from them, and one can only imagine the torment of such an experience for a close-knit family. Labour Member of Parliament H. E. Holland writes that the mothers were ‘shocked and almost prostrated with grief’ when learning that their sons had been dragged away. From this moment on, only scraps of information filtered through. The families had no way of accessing reliable facts concerning the whereabouts of their sons.

In Parliament in 1917, M.P. Paddy Webb notified the Minister of Defence of two letters received from the parents of conscientious objectors deported two months earlier. The parents had gained no information and were inquiring into the whereabouts of, and treatment received by, the young men. The Hon. Sir James Allen replied that the Defence Department could not state the whereabouts of these young men, because they did not know themselves at that time, but gave them assurance that he would attempt to gain some communication with the men. This was a terrible time of anxiety, shock and grief for the parents and families of the deported fourteen. It was a long wait before news of the terrible indignities and unbelievable cruelties to which the men had been subjected to, began to seep out.

Aboard the Waitemata, the fourteen conscientious objectors had been dragged up to the poop deck and in front of crowds of men assembled to watch, ‘stripped naked one by one and forcibly dressed in uniform.’ After a time behind bars in Capetown, they were transported finally to England. During their time in England and France the men were repeatedly beaten, denied food and medication and subjected to a variety of

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26 Holland, Armageddon or Calvary, 30
28 Baxter, We Will Not Cease, 57
horrific disciplinary measures. The object was to break their spirit, an angered Colonel threatening increasing violence if refusal continued: ‘It’s your submission we want, Baxter, not your service.’ A description of the most barbaric practice to which the men were subjected to, Field Punishment Number One, must be included here, for one to grasp the horror and atrociousness of the scene.

Figure 3. Conscientious Objectors stripped aboard the Waitemata (Baker, For King and Country Call)

Archibald was escorted to a punishment compound known as ‘Mud Farm,’ where two willow poles six to eight inches in diameter and twice the height of a man were inclined forward out of perpendicular. Archibald was tied to it by the ankles, knees and wrists, his hands taken round behind the pole, tied together and pulled up so as to strain and cramp the muscles into an unnatural and painful position. The slope of the post caused a large part of his weight to come on his arms, as his feet hung just above the ground. He was strained up so tightly that he was unable to move a fraction of an inch. The pain would grow steadily worse until seemingly unendurable:

Figure 4. Artists impression of Field Punishment No. 1 (Baker, King and Country Call)

29 Baxter, We Will Not Cease, 123
I could not allow myself the relief of groaning as I did not want to give the guards the satisfaction of hearing me. The mental effect was almost as frightful as the physical. I felt I was going mad.30

Two other deported objectors, Mark Briggs and Lawrence Kirwan, had both undergone Field Punishment and each had remained committed to their cause, failing to succumb. They both were sent to the Front, and it was at this point that Archibald saw Briggs again. Briggs had refused to walk up to the front trenches when ordered, so was dragged outside by his wrists, a long piece of cable wire tied around his body, before being dragged at the end of the wire by three soldiers for about a mile along duckwalk. His clothes were torn off, exposing his naked body to the battens and wire. He was dragged through shell holes, and was finally tipped into the water, a handful of mud shoved into his mouth. After being half dragged, half carried back to camp, Archibald was escorted to see him. He was shown the huge flesh wound in Briggs’s back and hip, about a foot long and nearly as wide and told ‘That’s the way you’ll be tomorrow.’31 At this point, with Briggs crippled and Kirwan sent away, Archibald began to sink into despair.

Although horrific and shocking, this account of treatment illustrates the depth of ill-feeling towards conscientious objectors. The officials ordering the punishment no doubt felt justified in their actions, taking it upon themselves to teach the men a lesson, to lead them to recognising the errors of their ways. The brutality of the conduct demonstrates the extent of anger felt about the betrayal of objectors. Men were dying at the front, maimed and ruined, and soldiers were unable to understand or respect their fellow men that would not lift a finger to fight for the benefits they enjoyed at home.

Such feeling explains the thinking behind the punishment next give given to Archibald. He was taken to a section of the front that was undergoing heavy

30 Baxter, *We Will Not Cease*, 105-6
31 Baxter, *We Will Not Cease*, 128-9
bombardment, and left there. The majority of men serving in the trenches, going over
the top daily, had little sympathy for those refusing sacrifice. Those losing limbs and
witnessing death on a daily basis were angered by others unwilling to sacrifice
themselves for their family and country.

Archibald’s experiences at the Front, combined with the effects of constant physical
abuse and starvation, led to his collapse. He regained consciousness in a hospital ward,
and was judged to be suffering from mental illness, a diagnosis which probably saved
his life by preventing a court martial which most likely would have ended in his
execution. Finally he was informed that he was being sent back to New Zealand.

On the 5th of March, 1918 from ‘Somewhere in France’, Archibald Baxter had written
to his parents in Dunedin:

...I am being sent up the lines tomorrow. I have not heard where Jack
and Sandy are. As far as military service goes, I am of the same mind as
ever. It is impossible for me to serve in the army. I would a thousand
times rather be put to death, and I am sure that you all believe the stand I
take is right. I have never told you since I left New Zealand of the things
I have passed through, for I know how it would hurt you. I only tell you
now, so that, if anything happens to me, you will know. I have suffered
to the limit of my endurance, but I will never in my sane sense surrender
to the evil power that has fixed its roots like a cancer on the world... I
never will.32

The letter somehow passed through the censors, and reached New Zealand unaltered.
This was the first the Baxter’s knew of their sons’ whereabouts and experiences, and
from here they could only imagine the worst. The next communication received was
on May 14, from Base Records Office, stating that Archibald had been admitted to

32 Millicent Baxter, Memories of Millicent Baxter, 51
Hospital in the United Kingdom and that his mental condition was causing anxiety.³³ This must have been an incredible shock for the family, and it was still many more weeks before they were informed that their son would be returning home.

Historian P. S. O’Connor’s work on the subject is a valuable source of information, as he examines the formation of official policy regarding religious and conscientious objectors, to explore what the government intended for the fourteen men and how much information they in fact had during this period. The New Zealand government adopted a harsh attitude in 1916, because the New Zealand attitude as a whole was marked by a ‘very widespread, blind and hysterical jingoism.’³⁴ Defence Minister Sir James Allen remarked that he did not think it fair for a man to ‘enjoy all the privileges which belong to the State without undertaking the duties that pertain to the citizens of the State in its defence.’ He recognised that the system in place was not a deterrent – that it had ‘been softened almost to the point of a course in horticulture.’³⁵ The object of sending fourteen men to the Front was to serve as a warning to others ‘that refusal to serve would not ensure freedom from danger and a safe haven at home while others died aboard.’³⁶

As reports of the atrocities occurring on the other side of the world began to seep back, there was uproar in society from many. Mrs R. W. S. Ballantyne, mother of one of the fourteen objectors wrote to the Baxters in 1919 to tell them she had visited Sir James Allen on a deputation to gain information and request that Mark Briggs be returned because of reports that he was crippled. Allen professed to know nothing.³⁷ A year earlier Allen had submitted an explanation which was printed in the Otago Witness, in which he stated that his latest information received notified him that all but two objectors had ‘agreed to do their duty, either in the infantry or as stretcher bearers.’³⁸
O'Connor illustrates how little Allen really knew about the situation of the fourteen once they had disembarked in England. Evidently he did attempt on many occasions to gain information, but accurate details were difficult to receive, channels of communication were slow, and it was virtually impossible to keep close and continuous track of the men.

Archibald was the first conscientious objector to be returned to New Zealand. On arrival back into New Zealand, Archibald received a card ordering he report to Dunedin hospital or ‘be deemed guilty of absence without leave.’ The authorities were so determined to make Archibald a soldier that it was declared in the discharge report that he had served every day that he had been in the army. Upon discharge, Archibald felt that his war experience had ended, although inevitably the effects of war were to remain with him for a very long time.

Archibald was returned to his family in Otago, a shadow of his former self. He weighed seven stone, his original weight being eleven. Later he described the gap he felt between himself and all the people he knew. No one would be able to even begin to understand what the objectors had suffered through on the other side of the world. Archibald for a very long time continued to suffer from terrible dreams and night sweating. It took time to get used to being treated like a human being, after being subjected to such harsh inhumane treatment for so long.

Archibald’s parents and siblings too had suffered in his absence, their pacifist stance isolating them from the rest of society. Although perhaps not as bad as it would be in the Second World War, families of conscientious objectors met a great deal of hostility, ostracised for their radical and non-conformist views. Once war began, the very few who had been at all sympathetic to Archibald’s opinion, saw that the war

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39 NZEF Hospital Outpatient Certificate, Army Certificates MZ-1975/190, Archibald McColl Learmond: Literary and political papers (ARC-0350), Hocken Collections, Dunedin
40 Baxter, We Will Not Cease, 188
was justified and turned against the pacifists. Although there were certain organisations and societies established during this time, such as the Peace and Humanity Society founded in Wellington in 1902, the Baxter family were reasonably isolated down in Otago, with no other pacifist families to be allied with or to draw support from. John and Mary supported their sons, sharing the view that war was futile and destructive, although sharing their sons’ pacifist views also meant sharing the notoriety they inevitably gained, and made them hugely unpopular within wider society. The only Baxter sister, Margaret, inescapably suffered, as young men would want nothing to do with the sister of the infamous Baxter brothers.

With the loss of Archibald, the family lost their leader. Archibald had been the one to sort all financial issues, be consulted on major matters, and took charge of family concerns. In Archibald’s absence, the family struggled to maintain their land at a prospering level. The family had six of their sons taken from them, and to survive such an ordeal must have been nothing short of horrific. They would go for months hearing nothing, and could only expect the worst. Also during the war years, Hugh Baxter, one of the three incarcerated, died in the influenza epidemic. In times of mourning, close-knit families lean on each other for support, but the Baxter family were not united to draw support and strength from each other. The death of a brother was a tribulation Donald had to endure alone, locked away in a detention camp. He wrote how his comrades in the camp consoled one another, but also expressed his pain in being separated from his loved ones at such a time:

I have no doubt the past few months with this burden of grief has had a telling effect on the health of dear Mam and Dad... It has been very hard for me to have been kept apart from them.42

He wrote again to a returned Archibald to express his happiness that the day was ‘coming when ink on paper not be needed between us, the day when I will again grip the clean hand that refrained to be stained with the blood of its fellow man.’43 The

42 Letter from Donald, Waikeria Reformatory, 2/3/1919, Letters from Donald Baxter, MS-0975/205, Baxter family: Papers (ARC-0351), HC
43 Letter 9/1918, Letters from Donald Baxter, MS-0975/205, Baxter family: Papers (ARC-0351), HC
love and support in the family was clearly a great source of strength which enabled each member to deal with the hardships brought upon them.

After observing the enormous effect that Archibald’s adoption of pacifist views had on each and every member of the Baxter clan during World War One, it is fitting to note an important addition to the family a short while after the closing of the war: Archibald’s wife to be, Millicent Macmillan Brown. Millicent was the daughter of one of the founding professors of Canterbury University College, John Macmillan Brown. During the war, Millicent had returned to New Zealand after doing graduate work in linguistics in Germany. She found the war to be exciting, and had helped out with the war effort in Christchurch. By pure chance, Millicent came across a copy of the letter Archibald wrote his parents from France, and the letter marked the greatest change in her life. Its contents altered Millicent’s whole outlook:

My whole life changed. From that time on, I began to look at things quite differently. It was, I think anyone without prejudice would say, a very moving letter. It moved me right out of my shell and out into the open.44

Figure 5. Millicent Macmillan Brown, 1920
(McKay, The Life of James K. Baxter)

In 1920, while living in Dunedin, Millicent made a special trip to Brighton to meet Archibald. Six months after her first attempt, Archibald and Millicent finally met. 'Archie was everything I had hoped for; someone with something I had not really believed I should ever find – the perfect understanding.'

They were married on February 12th, 1921, against her father’s wishes. The two were of drastically different backgrounds and education, and of course Archibald was ‘known as a disgraceful character who behaved disgracefully.’ Her father told her she would regret it and that it was most unwise, but the two were very much in love and were determined to start a new life together. Their son Terence in later years, when asked about Millicent’s father, explained: ‘because he could see a very happy marriage going on, he softened to it a little, and he saw that she had a pretty good man.’

Millicent’s life changed overnight from a privileged, upper-crust city life, to a working class life on a farm, living with a notorious and marked man. Early marriage life was difficult as they were continually harassed by authorities and their farm-running kept strictly to government official regulations. For Millicent, the worst aspect of her new life was the ‘the great hostility in the district generated by the locals.’ Archibald and Millicent brought two sons into the world; Terence born on May 23, 1922, and James arriving four years later on June 29, 1926.

The married couple could never have dreamed at this happy time in their life, that less than two decades later New Zealand would enter another World War, introduce conscription and yet again cause suffering and pain to a new generation of conscientious objectors, including their very own children. Ultimately Terence and

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45 Millicent Baxter, *Memories of Millicent Baxter*, 58
46 Millicent Interview Cassette Tapes, (3/4/1979), Catley, Christine Cole: Material Compiled for biography of Millicent Baxter (81-035), Hocken Collections, Dunedin
47 Terence Baxter Interviewed by Frank McKay 8/7/84, Baxter Box One – Transcripts of Interviews No.1-20, Beaglehole Room, Victoria University, Wellington
49 Millicent Baxter, *Memories of Millicent Baxter*, 64 and 66
James would be immensely influenced and affected by their parents' beliefs and experiences, and would themselves come to suffer for the cause of pacifism.
CHAPTER TWO: A Family Inheritance

With the arrival of two healthy sons, Terence and James, Archibald and Millicent Baxter’s life was complete. This small family of four became a strong unit, holding tightly shared values. Terence and James were to inherit strong views from their parents regarding the sanctity of life and an abhorrence of war, and also were to feel the effects of a type of social inheritance. Both sons inevitably inherited difficulty and stigma because of Archibald’s strong stand taken in the First World War, and were clearly influenced strongly by Millicent’s passionate conviction. Both Terence and James became truly committed to the cause of pacifism. Millicent was a strong personality who held the family together, lovingly supporting Archibald as he continued to suffer from his experiences in the Great War, and dealing with all the hardships the next war was to bring upon the family. This was a family which allowed the men to adopt an unpopular cause, helping them cope with the consequences with love, understanding, and support.

The Baxter family spent most of their early life together farming at Kuri Bush, south of the Otago village, Brighton. As Archibald’s family had been a generation earlier, they were a very close family unit, although perhaps more advantaged because without an unreliable father. Millicent was strict but loving, raising her boys ‘to have excellent manners.’¹ What can be assumed from various interviews with both Terence and his mother is that Millicent was very influential in the family home. Terence describes Millicent’s strong personality, which he only really saw once she was no longer alive, believing that it was her strength which kept the family together. Millicent was the decision maker in the family and firm in her assessments once formed. Archibald by contrast was much more flexible, and would talk things over with his sons, with whom he had a close relationship. Archibald and James would enter into long discussions of literature, as they shared a passion for poetry, while Terence would thoroughly enjoy his experiences with his father up in the bush or on the farm. Archibald had been unlucky with the land, but he built it up and with a great deal of work it produced fairly well.

¹ Frances Mulrennan Interview, 17/5/84, Baxter Box One – Transcripts of Interviews No. 1-20, Beaglehole Room, Victoria University, Wellington
The family moved to Wanganui in 1936 so that the boys could attend a Quaker School, St John’s Hill, and also because they hoped the warmer weather would be better for Archibald’s health. Millicent was well connected with Quakers and thought it better Terence and James attended their schools rather than an ordinary public institution. Later when in England the boys once again enrolled at a Friends’ school, Sibford Boarding School in Cotswold country. The institution reflected the Quaker attitude to all wars, as inconsistent with their interpretation of Christianity. Religious instruction and Bible study were included in the curriculum. Terence recalls his mother reading the bible and singing hymns around the home during his childhood, and believes that this naturally had an effect on him. Much later in life, all but Terence were confirmed into the Catholic Church.

After Millicent’s father died in 1935, leaving behind a large inheritance, the family decided to travel to Europe. The trip ended up lasting almost two years. They took a pilgrimage to some of the places where Archibald had been sent to during the war, reaching the military camp Sling, where he had suffered incredible cruelties and torture before being taken to the Front. It was here that Millicent convinced Archibald to write *We Will Not Cease*, a record of his war-time experiences. It seems the whole family was involved in the process of recollecting and recording, as Archibald dredged up his memories of that terrible and torturous period of his life. In July of 1937, they journeyed to Denmark to attend the War Resisters International (WRI) Conference in Copenhagen where both parents and children mixed with pacifists from around the world. They continued on their travels before returning to settle in Brighton towards the end of 1938. Terence, aged sixteen,

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2 Letter from F. B. Naylor, 16/10/83, in Baxter Box Ten – Letters about Baxter, Beaglehole Room, Victoria University, Wellington

3 Manuscript of memoir of James K Baxter, 5, MS-1136/039, in Baxter, Millicent Amiel: Literary papers, (ARC-0370), Hocken Collections (HC), Dunedin.
went to work, while James attended school in Brighton for a few weeks, moving to Kings High School in Dunedin the following year.

Figure 8. Terence aged eight
(The Memories of Millicent Baxter)

Figure 9. James aged seven
(The Memories of Millicent Baxter)

Terence and James were not close as young children, Millicent believing that James’s arrival impacted on Terence who had been the only child for four years. Terence himself admitted in an interview with writer Frank McKay that he most likely resented the addition to the family, as illustrated by the occasion where Terence was found poking the baby James with a sharp straw broom, which went right through his skin. As they got older the boys were to become a lot closer, and when they were forcibly separated in later times, a nineteen year old James admitted to missing Terence ‘quite acutely.’ Terence continuously worried about his younger brother throughout his life and was pallbearer at his funeral in 1972.

Early life for the family was difficult, as Archibald’s war-time history would not be laid to rest. The family were continually harassed and faced considerable animosity from their local community. The authorities would not leave the Baxters alone, attempting to catch them out on regulation matters for the land. The family would

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5 Terence Baxter Interview, 8/7/84, Baxter Box One, Beaglehole Room, Victoria University
6 Letter from J. K. Baxter to mother, 1/10/45, Letters from Baxter to his parents, MS-0975/210, Baxter Family Papers (ARC-0351), Hocken Collections (HC), Dunedin
receive notices requiring them to clear all the gorse on the land, when every other gorse-grower in the district was ignored by the noxious weeds inspector, and there was reason to believe that the authorities were attempting to entrap Archibald on various sedition charges. His past record was not to be forgotten in a hurry.

Archibald was a notorious man whose pacifist past was common knowledge in the community, clearly also in the school yard. Reverend Joan Pascoe remembers playing with the Baxter children while at Brighton primary school, but recalls that the parents’ close friendship ended after the First World War when Archibald became a conscientious objector. Because Pascoe’s father and uncles had all fought in the war and were all wounded, a great rift developed between the two men, and any association ended. The attitudes of children reflected those of their parents, all supporting the war, all resentful towards the families of objectors.

World War Two broke out in Europe in 1939 and once again New Zealand pledged their allegiance. The Labour Party had won a landslide victory in 1935, and with many of their members being past anti-conscription activists, pacifists nationwide felt secure in the belief that the party would remain faithful to their cause. However, to their dismay, Peter Fraser’s Labour cabinet introduced conscription of manpower once again in 1940. Fraser himself had strongly opposed conscription in 1916 and had been arrested during the second Anti-Conscription Conference, before being formally charged with publishing seditious words which had a tendency ‘to excite disloyalty in respect to the war.’ Fraser did not see inconsistencies in his conduct. He believed that each war required a different response judged on merits and nature, and, determined that New Zealand should participate to defeat the threat of fascism, was ‘as resolute in his prosecution of the second as he

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8 Flyer printed for the Anti-Conscription Campaign Committee (Canterbury), Papers relating to Conscientious Objection, in Malcolm, Ron: Papers, AG-775-006/101, Hocken Collections (HC), Dunedin.
had been in his opposition to the first. He took the view that World War Two was a different and decent war and in his eyes nobody had a right to opt out and get away with it easily.

Fraser clearly found dealing with conscientious objectors difficult and distressing, but the government took their first step in handling the issue by appointing six Armed Forces Appeal Boards as provided in Regulation 22 of National Service Emergency Regulations. Regulation 21(1) stated that ‘Every man so called up for service with the armed forces shall have a right of appeal to an Armed Forces Appeal Board’, and conscientious objection was included as grounds of appeal. Regulation 21(2) provided that:

An Appeal Board shall not allow any appeal on the ground [of conscience] unless the Appeal Board is satisfied that the appellant holds a genuine belief that it is wrong to engage in warfare in any circumstances. Evidence of active and genuine membership of a pacifist religious body may in general be accepted as evidence of the convictions of the appellant...  

Fraser’s cabinet was noticeably more liberal than the government of the First World War, but still seems to have clung to a relatively narrow definition of conscientious belief without recognising the sincerity of a variety of conscientious objections. Bob Semple, the Minister of National Service in February 1941 admitted: ‘If we are too liberal and too sympathetic with the fellow who wants to dodge we will have trouble.’

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10 ‘National Service Emergency Regulations 1940’ in *Statutory Regulations 1940*, (Wellington, NZ: Government Printer, 1941), 391
11 ‘National Service Emergency Regulations 1940’ in *Statutory Regulations 1940*, 392
It soon became clear that in many of the Appeal Boards, 'the individual conscience met a rough passage and a narrow gate.'\textsuperscript{13} Over a thousand young New Zealand males were dismissed by the boards, including Terence Baxter. The Appeal Boards had started operating in Otago in February of 1941, and Terence was the first to have been proceeded against in court and sentenced. The \textit{Otago Daily Times} reported that an objector aged nineteen, the 'son of a well-known objector in the last war,' had been called up for territorial service in the June ballot, his appeal heard on September 24.\textsuperscript{14}

Prior to the war Terence had been working as a welder at Reid and Gray, an agricultural machinery manufacturer.\textsuperscript{15} His manager had offered to lodge an appeal on his behalf by declaring him a good worker in an essential job to stop him going to war, but Terence had declined the offer, seeing it as 'important that he be seen to make a stand.'\textsuperscript{16}

Terence should have had sufficient grounds to be considered genuine in his appeal, because of his Quaker education and family history of conscientious objection, and his family had been hopeful of exemption. However, to their surprise and horror he was sentenced to detention for the duration of the war. He had refused non-combatant service after his appeal and was therefore gazetted as a defaulter on November 6\textsuperscript{th}, and charged in court on December 19\textsuperscript{th}.\textsuperscript{17} After failure of appeal, objectors then had the choice either of submitting and enlisting, or awaiting punishment. Sir Walter Nash, acting Prime Minister while Fraser was abroad, pushed for a more 'humane' concept of punishment than that dealt to conscientious objectors in the First World War, and announced on August 4\textsuperscript{th} of 1941 that defaulters would be sent to specially constructed work camps.\textsuperscript{18} Hundreds of objectors began filling these camps, Terence among the first transported to Strathmore base detention camp, in the central North

\textsuperscript{13} Nancy Taylor, \textit{The Home Front}, Vol. 1, (Wellington, NZ: Government Printer, 1986), 249
\textsuperscript{14} "The Treatment of Conscientious Objectors", \textit{Otago Daily Times} (27/12/1941), 9
\textsuperscript{15} Hocken Collections “Hakena: Hocken Library Archives and Manuscripts” http://hakena.otago.ac.nz/hreg/Welcome.html (November 2007)
\textsuperscript{16} Paul Millar, \textit{Spark to a Waiting Fuse}, (NZ: Victoria University Press, 2001), 42
\textsuperscript{17} "The Treatment of Conscientious Objectors", \textit{Otago Daily Times} (27/12/1941), 9
\textsuperscript{18} David Grant, \textit{Out in the Cold}, (Auckland, NZ: Reed Methuen, 1986), 143
Island. The camp was stark and isolated, an 8-foot-high fence with 16 strands of barbed wire surrounding a compound of pumice and scrub.\textsuperscript{19}

At first the atmosphere at Strathmore was relaxed and happy and the relationship between prisoners and officials friendly. However groups soon began to protest and rebel against their imprisonment and the futile and mundane nature of their work by refusing to cooperate. One prisoner wrote to his parents from Strathmore in November of 1941 explaining his reason for non-cooperation:

I have refused on principle because I do not acknowledge the State’s right to put me here for the reasons it has and therefore I cannot accept the authority of those controlling the camp... I have been set apart from society through faithfully following what I consider to be the Christian way of life... Consequently I must not of my free will, work where I feel I should not...\textsuperscript{20}

Such uncooperative behaviour was an early indication that some individuals were likely to prevent the smooth running of camps, and the authorities began to work on a second camp where the more difficult objectors might be detained.

\textsuperscript{19} Grant, \textit{Out in the Cold}, 146
Early in 1942 Terence was among the first batch of prisoners who were transferred to the new camp, Hautu, at the southern end of Lake Taupo.\textsuperscript{21} It quickly became regarded as the ‘bad boys’ camp, discipline was strict and conditions harsh. Terence’s relocation to Hautu was surprising as he was among the mildest of detainees. Terence personally believes he was transferred and picked on because of who his father was.\textsuperscript{22} Behind the barbed wire, under the watch of armed guards, the detainees in Hautu were assigned to gangs to perform routine labour jobs, Terence almost always working in the outside gangs, which he preferred. It was here where Terence cemented a strong friendship with Noel Ginn, who was to come to play a significant role in James Baxter’s life and writing, as they corresponded regularly between 1942 and 1945.

Rules were restrictive and camp life monotonous, but detainees found ways to help pass the time while in the camps. Two more camps were built in 1942 to cope with growing numbers of objectors, Paiaka Camp opened in July and Whitanui Detention Camp was built nearby in west Manawatu. Members of Whitanui Camp initiated a Drama Circle, with the intention of helping time pass faster and preventing men from ‘withdrawing into one’s own shell and enjoying self pity.’\textsuperscript{23} Letters home from Paiaka Camp describe games of football, soccer, rugby and table tennis, along with cards as common pastimes.\textsuperscript{24}

Terence established his own way of coping with his dreary and repressive existence within the camps, by making boat models, and even set about constructing an engine because he had always had an interest in mechanical things. Letters to his brother James often talked endlessly about boating, one of Terence’s greatest passions, and James would help his brother by sending him model diagrams and measurements for his boat-model hobby.\textsuperscript{25}

\textsuperscript{21} Mike Crean, “Memories of an Objector”, The Press, 25/03/2002, 9
\textsuperscript{22} Belinda Cumming interview with Terence Baxter, 18/08/07, Dunedin
\textsuperscript{23} Letter from Whitanui Camp, July 22, Letters from detainees at Paiaka Detention Camp, MS-2713-002, Godward, Robert Bruce: Papers (ARC-0509), Hocken Collections (HC), Dunedin.
\textsuperscript{24} Letter from Paiaka, 10/05/1945, Letters from Paiaka Detention Camp, Godward Papers, HC
\textsuperscript{25} A letter to Jim from Noel Ginn while detained at Hautu included a diagram of a boat and many requests for measurements and instructions. In: Letters from Noel Ginn and Myrtle Ginn MS-0975/175, James Keir Baxter: Literary Papers, Hocken Collections (HC), Dunedin.
Those measurements that you sent me a while ago have been very useful to me... I have made a model of the old boat and it certainly reminds me of her.\textsuperscript{26}

Terence was transported one last time to Whitanui Camp in 1943 where he remained until after the end of the war. According to his mother he found life better here than in Hautu, enjoying the warmer climate, and spent his time planting vegetables and other such practical work, although writer Paul Millar suggests that work was actually less pleasant here than at Hautu.\textsuperscript{27}

By December of 1945 many defaulters had submitted themselves for re-examination and been granted release, but the first objector was not to be allowed release until after the war was over. Even when Terence was released from camp, he was not free for almost another year. Both he and Noel Ginn were manpowered to the freezing works in Petone. Terence did not enjoy the work here, but saw that living next to the Wellington Harbour was compensation enough, as it allowed him to sail once again. During this period he wrote to his brother James expressing his joy at being out of camp life:

You can't believe how pleased I am to be living a real life again. The joy of being free still remains. I'm just losing the coldness towards people and the bitterness that I've felt towards my fellow men in the last few years... I'm just writing to let you know that life is worth living once more. Thank Christ I'm free!\textsuperscript{28}

He would go to the pictures or attend a dance in his weekends, and would write to his brother with news of girls he had met. He found that people were kind and friendly towards him and was very happy to be living a normal life again.

\textsuperscript{26} Letters from Terence to James, MS-0975/208, in Baxter Family Papers, HC
\textsuperscript{27} Millicent cassette tapes, March 1979, Catley, Christine Cole: Material Compiled for biography of Millicent Baxter (81-035), Hocken Collections (HC), Dunedin
\textsuperscript{28} Letters from Terence to James, MS-0975/208, Baxter Family Papers (HC)
Millicent believes that Terence’s wartime experience, from age nineteen to twenty-four, ‘during such important formative years, tended to set him apart.’ Terence himself was able to recognise some of the effect his incarceration had on his personality and life, explaining to Frank McKay in December of 1995:

... it’s had its effect, it’s done some sort of thing to me... I don’t mix in with people unless I’ve had a couple of drinks, not get drunk, but just enough to break the ice and be a bit more friendly.\(^\text{30}\)

Interviewed in August 2007, Terence described how difficult it was to adjust to normal life again, how he felt socially disabled. After the end of the war he would go to the pub but would stay quiet as all the men would tell their war stories, feeling rather uncomfortable in such situations.\(^\text{31}\)

Terence returned to Brighton where he went back to work at Reid and Grays. He was lucky to work for such a sympathetic company, other objectors were not so lucky; there are numerous stories of men refused work, being plagued by unemployment due to their war-time attitudes and detention. In 1947 Terence married Lenore Bond, and their first son Kenneth was born the next year.\(^\text{32}\) Lenore later explained that in her view it would have been ‘much harder for [Terence] to be incarcerated than it was for some... His freedom and his independence were integral to his personality.’\(^\text{33}\) Terence continues to live in Dunedin today.

\(^{29}\) Rob Pearson, *NZ Listener*, 15
\(^{30}\) Paul Millar, *Spark to a Waiting Fuse*, 123
\(^{31}\) Belinda Cumming interview with Terence, 18/08/07, Dunedin
\(^{32}\) Millicent Baxter, *Memories of Millicent Baxter*, 113
\(^{33}\) Millar, *Spark to a Waiting Fuse*, 34
Terence’s incarceration was clearly an issue which James Baxter struggled with, and he evidently had a difficult time at home in Brighton during this period. As the son of one of the most famous objectors in the country and the brother of a detainee, James’ harassment and isolation continued to intensify and a gradual process of withdrawal appears to have occurred as he struggled throughout his adolescent years.

Members of the Brighton community were bitter and hostile in their attitudes towards its pacifist members, and the Baxter family became very isolated. In a fiercely patriotic society, these pacifists did not fit in. Because of their anti-war beliefs, the Baxters were held under suspicion. James recalling his teen-years when: ‘we could not put on the light in the upper room at night, because such neighbours would imagine we were signalling to Japanese submarines.’ The nation was swept up in the hysterical patriotism of the time, and distrusted this minority group who refused to join in combat against the enemy. Equality of sacrifice was called for by all, and the Brighton community were angered and appalled that the Baxter family appeared to be enjoying the benefits of New Zealand life without making any effort to defend it.

James bore the brunt of a great deal of this hostility towards his family, experiencing severe antagonism and contempt during his years of secondary education. At school the ‘conchie’ was humiliated and bullied. Boys at school would grab his brief-case and throw it up onto the roof of the bike-shed, pulling off James’ shoes as he climbed to retrieve it. James later recalled the time when a crowd of boys surrounded him in a shelter shed at school, ‘shouting abuse and inflicting a certain amount of physical

violence.'\textsuperscript{35} School authorities made little attempt to protect the children of pacifists. James never told his parents of the bullying, but they heard later from Terence of the tough time their youngest had endured at school.

Another consequence of his parents’ beliefs for which James suffered and which further intensified his isolation, was his exemption from cadet corps training. This was a compromise between his parents and the school, and while the other boys trained, James would do gardening around the grounds with another boy who was too ill to train. He stood out visibly without military uniform, and paid the price for non-conformity, further isolated and ridiculed.

In her memoirs, Millicent discussed how difficult a question it was, ‘to ask a boy early in his teens to go through unpleasantness and often persecution for a cause which at that age cannot really be his own.’\textsuperscript{36} It remained an unsettled question for her, but in the long run she came to believe it was for the best. James himself commented on this time, recognising that while it may ‘have been pleasanter’ to take part in the training routines, in the end it would have been just ‘one more mental jail which I’d have had to climb out of in life.’\textsuperscript{37} James did not himself elect to be withdrawn from training at that age; it was a decision made by his parents, while he paid the price by experiencing the unpleasant consequences the decision brought upon him.

Millicent claimed that James, ‘being the typical younger brother, seemed not affected by the distance which his father’s “sins” may have put between the family and society,’ claiming that he emerged unmarked by his experiences of bullying.\textsuperscript{38} This seems a rather naïve view. It must have been an incredibly tough time for an adolescent boy, and to witness such hostility and bitterness at this impressionable age would inevitably have had some lasting consequences. In retrospect James compared his childhood with ‘the experiences of a Jewish boy growing up in an anti-Semitic

\textsuperscript{35} James K Baxter, \textit{The Man on the Horse}, 123
\textsuperscript{36} Millicent Baxter, \textit{Memories of Millicent Baxter}, 106
\textsuperscript{37} James K. Baxter, \textit{The Man on the Horse}, 137
\textsuperscript{38} Pearson, \textit{NZ Listener}, 15
neighbourhood,' and explained that those experiences combined to give him 'a sense of difference, of a gap.'\footnote{James K. Baxter, \textit{The Man on the Horse}, 123} In analysing this period of James K. Baxter's life, Frank McKay argues that the boy retreated from this hostile environment into 'his own house where his mother saw there were plenty of books.'\footnote{McKay Book Chapter MS 17/2/1, Baxter Box Seventeen, Beaglehole Room, Victoria University, Wellington} James suffered for his fathers’ past actions, but he came to believe that 'these experiences were in the long run very valuable,' helping him develop as a writer.\footnote{James K. Baxter, \textit{The Man on the Horse}, 123}

Patricia Laurin, Baxter family friend, believed that the affect that the war had on James cannot be too strongly emphasised. As would be expected, war was the subject of discussion in the home everyday. British papers were received by airmail, radio broadcasts listened to and commented on, and:

> The ongoing pain of the relations and friends either in camp or battling in society because of 'unpatriotic activities' was constantly pressing on every aspect of living... It could not be ignored and was felt as an obligation of misery and anxiety underlying everything.\footnote{Patricia Laurin Comments, McKay MS17/7, in Baxter Box Seventeen, Beaglehole Room, Victoria University, Wellington}

James recalls the 'long discussions of moral theology' engaged in within the walls of his family home, debating for example whether or not a conscientious objector should obey the military order to report for medical inspection.\footnote{James K. Baxter, \textit{The Man on the Horse}, 123} War was all-pervading in James' life with no chance of escape, making for an endless dreary existence during this period.

While James spent the years of World War Two in his hometown of Brighton, he was inevitably plagued by the possibility that he too might have to face imprisonment like his brother. He reached the age of conscription in June of 1944, and at that point the end of the war was not close in sight. He wrote his letter of appeal and it is clear that
the impending ballot was weighing on his mind, as he mentioned it in various letters at the time. To Noel Ginn on November 11, 1944, he wrote:

My name will be in the ballot on Tuesday. I will send in an appeal on conscientious grounds. I may or may not get it according to the policy of the Board. If I don’t get it, I guess I’ll be joining the ranks of the faithful. Either way it’s a good thing – solidifies my principles. Of late I’ve not felt much like writing letters; a periodic wave of depression.44

The strong possibility that he too would be put behind the wire hung over him during the entire war period. Another family friend Patricia Gill explained to Frank McKay in 1983 how deeply James (affectionately called Jum by family and friends) was affected by the war, describing his ‘horror at the idea that Terry might have to suffer physically as the father had done’:

Jum was not brave physically and well knew that he could not have withstood the man-handling. We believe that this experience drove Jim further into the ‘inner world’.45

James clearly struggled with his Terence’s detainment, constantly worrying about how it would affect his older brother, and he would have inevitably felt some degree of guilt, knowing that he shared the same views as Terence but was safe at home, escaping imprisonment and avoiding the suffering his older brother was enduring. Surprisingly both brothers believed the other to be worse off during the war period. James struggled to think of Terence behind bars, repressed and punished for his stance against the war, while Terence (who was surrounded by like-minded people in the camps) was very aware of the persecution James was suffering back at home being the youngest of a prominent pacifist family: ‘In my mind James had it tougher than me.’46

44 Letter to Noel Ginn, 20/11/44, Baxter Box Nineteen (19/5/1 – 19/5/14 – Letters to Noel Ginn), Beaglehole Room, Victoria University, Wellington
45 Millar, Spark to a Waiting Fuse, 57
46 Belinda Cumming, interview with Terence Baxter, 18/08/07, Dunedin
After examining the wartime experiences of the boys and actions taken by them, it is clear that both felt very acutely the effects of their inheritance from their father. It is no surprise that both sons proved their commitment to pacifism when brought to the test, considering their pacifist upbringing, legendary objector father figure and Quaker education. Both Terence and James boys clearly adored and admired their father. They knew well what Archibald had gone through in the First World War, and they respected the strong stand he took, observing his remarkable strength of character to persevere and survive such horrific treatment. The interesting question arising out of this narrative is whether Terence and James had a choice. Could they really have taken any other path than that of pacifism?

Terence’s wife Lenore recognised how extremely difficult it would have been for Terence to assume a pro-war stance:

It could be said that he didn’t have a choice... it was a matter of choosing to be rejected by Society or rejected by his family, as it would have been a great blow to his much beloved father if he had not taken a stand.47

There was clearly a very close bond between Terence and his father, and it would surely have been very difficult for him not to have taken the pacifist stance in the next war. Terence explained how it felt natural to follow his father; how he felt he could not let him down. He laughed as he described how he would tease his parents about entering the navy because of his love of boats. It was in his nature to act that way, but in reality he did not really feel it was possible to join the war effort. There was a ‘sense in the family – that’s who they were and that’s what they were like’, he explained.48

Although Terence believed his parents would have learnt to accept any choice made by their sons, he knew they would have been very disappointed had he decided to take

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47 Millar, *Spark to a Waiting Fuse*, 43
48 Belinda Cumming interview with Terence Baxter, 18/08/07, Dunedin
a different path, his mother especially disapproving. Millicent’s role in the family and her influence on her boys is very important in this narrative. She created the family by choosing Archibald and rejecting the values of her own family. In this way she clearly had a strong conviction (never tested because women were not called up) that she passed on to her sons. This conviction was just as, if not more, important and significant as in the family as Archibald’s war-time stance. Millicent adopted pacifism after reading Archibald’s letter and never looked back. After marrying Archibald her involvement in pacifist activities continued until her death. Millicent was an intelligent and educated woman. She filled the house with books, initiated discussion and debate, and clearly would have encouraged her boys to think independently, valuing their ideas and observations in life.

In 1995 Terence admitted he was not entirely clear in his mind that he had been correct in his adopted war-time position:

I’m still not happy about whether I made the right decision, or what was the right thing to do over this situation, this business about the war. When you consider what happened in the war... I just wonder whether I did the right thing or not, thinking it over... You get in situations in war time where somebody might say, ‘Oh, I couldn’t kill another man.’ But in a situation where it was either you or him you wouldn’t be thinking about that at all, it’s out with the gun, that’s finished. Otherwise you’re letting your mates down, you’re part of a group too, that’s another important thing, you’re all together aren’t you?49

Of course the issue was never likely to be simple; Terence was always going to continue to debate the issue in his mind and question the correctness of his actions; any person would naturally have doubts.

49 Millar, Spark to a Waiting Fuse, 123
I believe that Terence was committed to pacifism, that he was inevitably influenced by his father's actions and beliefs, but that the cause was his own. His statement last quoted, which seems to exhibit a certain degree of uncertainty, is not surprising, because unlike many other pacifists Terence was able to observe all sides of the issue and understand why others did not share his views. He certainly did not judge others for their involvement in war-combat. In years following the war Terence was made supervisor at Reid and Grays, and he has commented on a degree of friction, with the men under him who disagreed with his views on war. This did not anger or surprise Terence, instead he saw it as natural and certainly did not blame them for their thoughts or intolerance. He easily comprehended their antagonism and resentment, because if someone was to lose a brother or father in war, it is no wonder they would feel strongly about it and naturally direct their anger towards those who refused to put their lives on the line.50

In this way Terence was very much like his father, both humble and humane, neither displaying any judgement or impatience towards those with opposing views. This is illustrated in Archibald's *We Will Not Cease*, in which he focuses on the generosity and compassion of other soldiers, making an effort not to direct any blame or condemnation on them for their war-time actions. Terence and Archibald were of similar nature, and came to be united by their war-time experiences, both enduring hardships and remaining committed to their cause. What is especially remarkable is the fact that neither man appeared to retain any bitterness following their war-time experiences.

Whatever the nature of Archibald's influence, what is clear is that James too clearly believed in his mission for pacifism and shared a vision with his father, seeing the futility of war. He clearly set out his reasons for adopting his anti-war stance in his Appeal Letter to the authorities, declaring his objections to military service were based on 'conscientious and logical grounds.'

50 Belinda Cumming interview with Terence Baxter, 18/08/07, Dunedin
During a trip to Europe in 1937 and 1938 I had opportunity to observe people of various nationalities, including Germans. My experiences reinforced my belief that the difference between nationalities are slight and that War in any circumstances is not more justifiable than any other form of murder... My conscientious objections are both religious and humanitarian. My logical objections are based on my knowledge of international politics and economics.

He went on to explain that he was brought up to regard 'all wars as futile and immoral,' but declared that despite his father's history and attitude: 'I have arrived at my present attitude in the main by independent thinking.' 51

James later adopted the same pacifist stance while he was a student at Otago University, in his position against the war in Vietnam. He quickly became involved in the protest movement, and when arguing a case for a pacifist view, quoted a Maori Chief who had explained to the Governor-General during the Maori Wars: 'The blood of man is sacred. It has been shed too much. We are Christians.' 52 James was an intelligent being, who had plenty of time and opportunity to form his own views on war. He came to his pacifist stance on his own and was convincing in his declarations of pacifism throughout his entire life.

Archibald's most enduring contribution to the cause of pacifism was no doubt his remarkable perseverance in the First World War, though he remained active in the peace movement long after that. He took the main part in forming the Dunedin branch of the No More War Movement, which had been established first in Christchurch in 1928. 53 He had represented New Zealand at the War Resisters International conference in Copenhagen, had campaigned against compulsory military training in schools, and during World War Two he interceded with authorities on behalf of

51 Letter from Baxter to Armed Forces Appeal Board, MS-0975/212, Baxter Family Papers (HC)
52 McKay Book Chapter MS 17/4, Baxter Box Seventeen, Beaglehole Room, Victoria University
53 Grant, Out in the Cold, 23
pacifists and conscientious objectors. He and Millicent also carried a petition asking for the rehearing of the cases of objectors in camps, and a short while later, many findings were reversed by newly established Revision Boards.

Figure 15. Archibald Baxter (The Memories of Millicent Baxter)

Millicent was also remarkably active during her life for the anti-war cause. As well as organising petitions, she also was president for a time of the local branch of the women's anti-war movement in Dunedin and attended nearly all sittings of the Appeal Board. In 1943 she personally visited parliament to ask for the revision of objectors' sentences, and she was given a private meeting with Sir Walter Nash. He claimed he had not known that the son of Archibald Baxter was in detention and although he could do little about it at the time, told Millicent: 'I regret it very much indeed.' Millicent carried on working for the cause of pacifism long after the death of her husband in 1970, being a member of Amnesty International, and active in the United Nations Association.

Figure 16. Millicent Baxter in her Dunedin home (The Memories of Millicent Baxter)

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54 Letter from John Cookson, 29/1, in Baxter Box Ten, Beaglehole Room, Victoria University
55 Millicent interview cassette tapes, March 1979, Catley, Christine Cole: Papers (81-035), HC
Millicent played a vital and significant role in the family, though her importance could possibly have been overlooked. As journalist Sue Stover illustrated, Millicent Baxter lived her entire life in the shadow of famous people: daughter of noted Professor John Macmillan Brown and the first woman to receive a masters degree in the British Empire, wife of the nation’s best-known conscientious objector and mother of one of New Zealand’s most legendary poets.  

However, in her own right she was a remarkable woman with incredible strength of character. She held her family together and functioning through terrible times, and continued to work for a cause she truly believed in until her death.

Millicent nursed Archibald as he continued to be affected by his horrific war experiences and plagued by ill health, suffering from bad circulation and heart problems. He could not have coped without her love and support. She had to endure seeing her eldest son be taken away and kept locked up for four long years, while also watching her youngest suffer through his difficult teen years, clearly paying for his father’s past actions. Unlike her sons who inherited the consequences that their fathers’ history brought upon the family, Millicent chose to leave her life of wealth and comfort, chose to associate herself with a notorious objector. Despite her hardships Millicent was never one to complain, and when asked what she would do if she could live her life over she immediately answered: ‘Marry my husband again.’

Millicent lived on to 1984, passing away aged 96.  

In 1939 war had arrived on Archibald’s doorstep to test his convictions once more, and once again each member of the Baxter family was to suffer. The inheritance gained by Terence and James explored in this chapter has two aspects to it, firstly in family customs, in terms of values and attitudes held, shaped by their upbringing and Quaker education; and secondly their social inheritance of stigma, every member of the family facing hostility and antagonism from wider society. The supportive family

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56 Sue Stover, “Being a pacifist proved far from peaceful”, *New Zealand Herald*, (22/09/1979)
57 Stover, *New Zealand Herald*
58 Michael King, “Foreword” *We Will Not Cease*, by Archibald Baxter (Cape Catley Ltd, 2003), 11
network allowed the men to take a difficult position in society and enabled them to face the hostility inevitably brought upon them.

Clearly, in this case pacifism was a family commitment, adopted and shared by the entire Baxter clan across generations. However, for many families pacifism was the cause of upset and chaos, tearing kin apart and destroying familial relationships. The adoption of pacifism never simply affects one soul, it affects entire families, and these families are forced to find different ways of coping with having a conscientious objector in their midst, or alternatively, turn their backs and walk away.
CHAPTER THREE:
Source of pride or shame? Families pay the price for pacifism

When a man decided to adopt pacifist views prior to 1960, to espouse radical anti-war ideas, to resist conscription and go against the dominant view of his country, he did not change only his own life. His entire family was affected, their lives changed forever. Whether or not a conscientious objector was supported by his kin, every member of that unit paid a price for his commitment to pacifism. Families could choose to support and assist the objector or to turn their backs in shame and disgust. All had to find ways to deal with the hostility inevitably faced in their communities, and cope with what they inherited from the family member electing a non-conformist pacifist way of life.

J. R. McCreary asserts in his 1948 thesis on social deviation, ‘a child receives from the home... most of his basic opinions, attitudes, values and modes of behaviour.’ A parent will always inevitably influence their children to some extent, but the strength and nature of that influence can be a conscious decision on the part of the parent. In the case of Ray Weeber, an objector from World War Two, it appears his mother consciously influenced her son’s beliefs after she herself was transformed from a ‘fervent patriot’ into a determined pacifist. She had felt so strongly about the Great War effort that she had sent white feathers to conscientious objectors but, after hearing about her brother’s experience in Gallipoli, had changed her attitude. She took Ray to Wanganui to show him where objectors from the Great War had been unfairly detained, and clearly helped Ray arrive at his point of view that ‘war was the most stupid thing that a man could think about’, and was clearly proud when her son decided ‘never to go to fight in a war,’ appearing as a witness at his appeal.

Many parents, like Archibald and Millicent Baxter, encouraged and valued independent thought in their children, and made conscious efforts to not influence them unduly. Terence Baxter was convinced that he should allow his own son

Kenneth to make up his own mind, and he and his wife Lenore made it clear they would not forbid Kenneth to undertake compulsory military training when it came to the Vietnam War. Kenneth independently discovered his own views on war and on his own came to the decision not accept the ballot.\(^3\) Jack Rogers, another conscientious objector detained in the Second World War, shared Terence’s views about consciously influencing offspring. He tried ‘to emulate his own father in not influencing his own children’s views,’ but when his son ‘drew a ballot’ for military training during the Vietnam War, was proud to support his appeal.\(^4\)

It never would have been easy for a parent to watch their children adopt pacifist views and take the stance of an objector when it was clearly going to make life far more difficult and inevitably place them in unpleasant situations, enduring hardship and hostility. However, it must be compared to the experience of a parent watching their sons depart for war, never knowing if he was to return. Communities were suffering terrible pain, the majority of people with sons at the Front constantly worrying about the safety of their loved ones. Suffering was widespread, the war time being a terrible and difficult time for parents of both conscientious objectors and soldiers alike.

Conscientious objectors were punished by being imprisoned, incarcerated behind prison bars or camp fences for indefinite sentences. The story of the fourteen men deported to the Front Line during World War One was the most infamous and publicised case of ill-treatment. However, men were also ill-treated and brutally abused behind the gates of Wanganui Detention Camp during that time, this chapter in history less well-known.\(^5\) Conscientious objectors in both wars were publicly harassed, and subjected to Fabuse and hostility. Works such as Ian Hamilton’s *Till Human Voices Wake Us* tell the story of the men’s experiences of imprisonment, but what is often looked over is the effect on the objector’s family.

\(^2\) Belinda Cumming interview with Terence Baxter, 18/08/07, Dunedin
\(^3\) Mike Crean, “Memories of an Objector”, *The Press* (25/03/2002), 9
\(^4\) In May 1918 complaints were publicised about brutal and violent treatment of conscientious objectors in Wanganui Detention Barracks. A magisterial enquiry ordered by Sir James Allen found the allegations to be substantially true. For more information see: O’Connor “Wanganui Detention Barracks, May 1918”, Conscientious objectors in WWI, MS-5969-2, O’Connor, Peter Selwyn: (1926-1994): Papers (MS-Group-0487), Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington
The entire family of a conscientious objector suffered, as victims of hostility and antagonism in their communities. The Baxter family are a telling example of the type of harassment to which families of objectors were subjected. On one occasion faeces were emptied all over the lawn of another Brighton family suspected of being pacifists. Families with an objector in their midst experienced harassment to varying degrees, most suffering social ostracism and all paying the price for that member’s actions and beliefs. Conscientious objectors were despised in communities, misunderstood and detested. War service was seen as the ultimate duty of a man, and patriotism the ‘noblest of all civic duties,’ so ‘to belong to an anti-conscriptionist group was tantamount to being traitor to one’s own country.’

Some conscientious objectors acknowledged that their families felt the effects of their stand more than they did as individuals. Raymond Hansen, a World War Two objector, believed that his sentence fell on his mother more than on him: ‘It is the equivalent of a holiday for me... not so for you... you will be the greater sufferer in the long run.’ He believed his actions added to her burdens, and worried about her struggles far more than his own. Chris Palmer, also a Second World War pacifist, was philosophical about his own views and emerged from his experience without bitterness or anger, but recognised that his father Theodore suffered and lost a great deal because of his son’s pacifism and incarceration. Theodore’s pacifism was only confirmed after his sons adopted such beliefs, and he suffered for such beliefs in his Methodist church. He had been a local preacher but after his sons were placed in detention, people stopped attending his services and he was forced to resign and join the Quakers.

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7 Jan Catherine McLeod, “Activities of New Zealand Women during World War One” (BA(Hons), University of Otago, 1978), 55
8 Prison and Detention Camp Correspondence MS 84-204-53, Hansen, Raymond Ernest, 1910-1985: Papers (84-204), Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington
9 Belinda Cumming interview with Chris Palmer, 2/6/07, Upper Moutere, Nelson
Politician H. E. Holland's book *Armageddon or Calvary* published in 1919 is dedicated 'to the women who suffered'; as Holland believed that during the Great War 'the wives and the mothers suffered most.' Janet Barrington wrote an unpublished account of her war experience as the wife of Archibald Barrington, an extremely active and outspoken conscientious objector. She discussed the difficulties of bringing up three young children with her husband gone, and described how she 'worked fiercely to make time pass quickly.' She would constantly worry about the safety of her husband, often imagining him 'thrown in the harbour, or being tarred and feathered, or with broken limbs.' Worry was a constant emotion for wives of conscientious objectors imprisoned during the war. Husbands were transported between camps without warning, and removal of privileges meant that months could pass without any news received by the women at home. Little information was ever given to the public concerning the running of detention camps, letters were heavily censored and visiting was restricted and difficult.

Rita Graham spoke of the emotional trauma of her war years, her husband Allen being taken away when their daughter Heather was only twelve months old. Allen saw his daughter the day he left, and never again; Heather died while Allen was incarcerated in Strathmore Detention Camp. He was allowed compassionate leave for three days to attend Heather's funeral but was not allowed to leave the house or interact with large groups and had to report daily to the police station. On returning to the camp, Rita received notice that Allen's privileges had been taken from him and he was unable to write. Rita found herself overwhelmed with anger; in a time when she desperately needed the support of her husband, he had deserted her and left her alone to mourn the death of their daughter. The wives and mothers of conscientious objectors did not suffer

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10 H. E. Holland, *Armageddon or Calvary*, (Wellington, NZ: Maoriland Worker Printing and Publishing Co. Ltd), 20
11 Janet Barrington, "My War", Barrington, Archibald Charles: Papers (MS-Papers-5230), Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington
incarceration in prisons or camps, but suffered psychologically from the forced separation from their loved ones and from coping without the emotional and financial support of their husbands and sons.

In a 1986 review *Out the Cold*, David Grant’s record of the experiences of men detained as conscientious objectors, Ross Annabell observed that there had clearly been ‘some progress between the wars.’ She recognised that although the men were treated harshly and barbarically, ‘instances of cruelty to objectors in World War Two were nothing like the inhumanities dished out to Baxter.’\(^\text{13}\) Many letters written home to families from conscientious objectors behind prison walls or camp fences portrayed a life not unpleasant, which helped comfort parents. A Strathmore inmate in 1941 reassured his parents there was no need to worry about him, for his ‘trials and tribulations have about as much effect upon my spirit as water has on a duck’s back.’\(^\text{14}\) Other letters explained that the men were getting plenty of food and exercise and some were in fact enjoying life. Raymond Hansen clearly did not find prison life trying, making the most of his time, and a poem composed by him sent home began:

Misfortune to be here? Why think so?
Grievous travesty of right and reason? No.\(^\text{15}\)

Positive reports of life in detention reassured and comforted families, informing parents, siblings and children their men were safe and in healthy states of body and mind.

While the suffering of women during the wars has been identified, the increased activity and involvement of women in public affairs can also be identified. Millicent Baxter serves as a model, illustrating the increased social and political activity of women during the wars, as discussed in chapter two. Mothers of the boys detained on

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\(^\text{15}\) Letter 13/7/45, Prison and Detention Camp Correspondence MS 84-204-53, Hansen Papers (84-204), Alexander Turnbull Library
Ripapa Island in World War One became involved by writing letters to local papers and calling on Members of Parliament ‘to stop this iniquitous persecution of our lads.’ In 1916 a women’s branch of the Anti-Conscription League (WA-CL) was formed, which worked in close cooperation with the Women’s International Peace League (WIL) and the Canterbury Women’s Institute (CWI). Women attended meetings and conferences, increasingly voicing their opinions, and the WIL sent a deputation to Parliament, protesting on behalf of mothers whose sons had been taken away and deported. Jan McLeod focuses on women’s involvement in her 1978 thesis, concluding that ‘the anti-conscription movement was an important vehicle by which women could emerge publicly and voice their protests.’

Ripapa Island was in Lyttleton Harbour, and a group of men were detained there in 1913 for refusing to do compulsory military training. When the outspoken mothers attacked Sir James Allen for taking away their sons and not allowing them to visit, the Minister of Defence responded: ‘If mothers would persuade their boys to keep the law he would let them go to the island every day.’ He was clearly insinuating that it was the mothers’ duty to bring up their sons in the correct way; it was their responsibility to keep them in line. As well as facing hostility and harassment, families of conscientious objectors also were constantly confronted with images and messages of propaganda calling for the nation to support the war effort and carry out their duties. For women at home the message was clear – pull your weight on the home front, and help husbands, brothers and sons to follow the law and enlist for service.

Children were confronted with propaganda of the state, and they naturally would have considered and responded in some way to the messages about war and duty which their fathers and brothers were denying. Holland recognised that the children of objectors ‘were made to pay the bitter price of want and destitution.’ School life was made difficult for offspring of pacifists, and ever-present propaganda reminded

16 __ __, “Foolish Boys or Martyrs?” Timaru Herald (22/03/2003)
17 McLeod, Activities of New Zealand Women, 57
18 McLeod, Activities of New Zealand Women, 60
19 __ __, “Foolish Boys or Martyrs?”
20 Holland, Armageddon or Calvary, 20
children of the war effort and the expected roles of their parents. A British poster presenting an image of a father with his children, accompanied by a text reading ‘Daddy what did YOU do in the Great War?’ had the intended purpose of shaming a father into enlisting, and the message was also conveyed to young children. Progeny of pacifists often experienced harassment and isolation because of the stance their fathers elected to adopt. However, when Archibald Barrington’s son John was asked ‘What does your daddy do?’ the four year old proudly responded ‘My daddy stops wars.’

In the eyes of a patriot, a conscientious objector is a despicable dodger. As Walter Lawry explained, an objector is ‘in the eyes of the public, a coward; in the eyes of the law, a criminal.’ The overwhelming majority of the population were extremely patriotic in both wars; ‘equality of sacrifice’ the catchword of the time. It appeared blatantly obvious to these patriots that ‘men who remained safely at home were deficient in public spirit; while men willing to volunteer were the responsible citizens the country could least afford to lose,’ and pro-conscription organisations were established to urge the government to adopt compulsory military service regulations.

Clear indications of attitudes of the time can be observed in the newspaper columns, one correspondent suggesting that the presence of a ‘yellow streak’ explained the real reason for an objector refusing to undertake military service.

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21 Janet Barrington, “My War”, Barrington Papers, (MS-Papers-5230), Alexander Turnbull Library
22 Walter Lawry, We Said No To War! (Dunedin, NZ: Wordspinners Unlimited, 1994), 7
23 McLeod, Activities of New Zealand Women, 54
under the pseudo-name ‘Staunch Still’ during the Second World War illustrates the type of view dominant at the time:

I had four years of active service in the last war, and have recently returned, invalided, after three years campaigning in this, the greatest of wars, to find the conscientious objectors still sleeping well o’nights, in comfortable camps, well fed and housed... they should not be kept here in comfort, but they should be shipped to the Pacific to work with Japanese prisoners o’ war... 25

Loyalty to the Mother Country was strongly felt, and those who would not take arms to perform their duty and protect their homeland, along with their families, faced contempt and social ostracism.

Jingoistic patriotism dominated the mood throughout the entire country during both wars, so to identify oneself as an objector was clearly a very difficult move to make, even more difficult without the support of loved ones. But to connect yourself to a despised objector and admit to having someone regarded as a ‘shirker’ in your midst was not an easy stand to take either. Some families inevitably found it too trying, gruelling and challenging to stand behind the men in their families who adopted an anti-war stance, and were not able to give their support.

Unlike many conscientious objectors who were blessed with support and understanding from their families, Ronald Megget was not supported in his stand as a conscientious objector. He had to suffer hardships and detention alone, his family feeling ashamed, disgraced, angry and hurt, clearly unable to accept his pacifism. Letters written between family members illustrate the extremity of their feelings about Ronald’s objector. His sister Dorothy wrote him a letter in June of 1940 explaining that the entire family felt ‘quite ashamed’, could not understand his ‘religious mania,’ and saw him as making a ‘perfect ass’ of himself. She asked, or told him, to consider

25 Urquhart, Searchlight on R.S.A.’s and C.O.’s, 14
his family and come to his senses: 'I might smoke, and use lipstick, and have my hair permed, but I'm not a coward... and unless you change your tune, you will be an outcast as far as your Dunedin friends and relations are concerned.' Public perception of her and her family was clearly a key concern for Dorothy Megget, who focused more on the family's shame and social standing than on Ronald's difficulties and hardships. She complained: 'I can't stand hearing everyone talking about you the way they are.'

Letters sent home to parents from detention camps often discussed the feelings of shame that might understandably be felt by parents who did not share their sons' beliefs and ideals. In a letter sent from Wi Tako Prison in October 1941, an inmate acknowledged the shame and disgrace felt by his parents, understanding such feelings to be inevitable to some extent. He admitted that he could do little to help them overcome their feelings but suggested they be consoled by the fact that he was imprisoned for conscience sake and not as a 'bad egg', asking them to 'be thankful that your sons have at least some standard of character.'

An inmate in Strathmore Detention Camp also asked that his parents not think his behaviour to be 'the result of any ingratitude' to them, and recognised the burden his actions had placed on them, but explained that he felt he must act on his principles.

Rita Graham, along with her mother and mother-in-law, found herself unable to openly admit that her husband Allen was an objector in detention because of the shame attached to his position, fearing abuse and isolation. It was not for some time that she found herself ready to admit to the crime of having a conscientious objector as a husband. After admitting publicly that Allen was in detention she experienced significant abuse and was sent white feathers on several occasions, but believed that

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26 Letter 21/06/40, Inward Correspondence relating to Conscientious Objectors MS-7655-06, Megget, Ronald Calvery, 1913-1996: Papers (MS-Group-1344), Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington
27 Letter 21/06/40, Inward Correspondence, Megget Papers, Alexander Turnbull Library
28 Letter 26/10/1941, A. J. Handyside Letters 1941, Handyside Papers, Papers (MS-Group-0099), Alexander Turnbull Library
her public confession marked a positive change in her life, a move which gave her
great strength and confidence.30

Pacifists supported and encouraged in their mission by their families no doubt
appreciated the cost of such support. Familial support helped the men to cope with
hardships and hostility, as illustrated in the Baxter family case example. Chris Palmer,
along with his brother Arthur, appreciated the support of Theodore during their
ordeal.31 Chris’ father had been in two minds before the war but came to support his
sons who spent the duration of the war behind bars. In 1945, when Chris was in
solitary confinement at Hautu Detention Camp, Theodore brought a case against the
Prisons Department in the Magistrate’s Court in Hamilton for their treatment of
inmates. It was quickly apparent that the case was destined to fail, but the publicity
helped alert the public to what was going on.32 Such public actions were a clear
indication of Theodore’s support for his sons.

When men were not supported by their family, their faith could provide a source of
strength. While one would expect religious institutions to be a source of support for
religious objectors, in reality many found they were rejected by their church. Chris
Palmer explained how his church during World War Two favoured volunteers and
frowned on conscientious objectors. Despite Methodist Church resolutions of 1935
appearing supportive of pacifism, when it came to the occasion members openly
supported the war. Church members individually defended the right to opinion but as
a united body publicly supported the war.33 Basil Dowling, a Presbyterian Minister at
Seatoun, felt betrayed by his church when the Presbyterian establishment looked the
other way as he was tried and jailed for sedition. His church would not stand by him
while imprisoned and he was never again offered a parish.34 Some men had to make
the decision to object to war and face the consequences alone, without support from

30 Preston, War Stories: Our Mothers Never Told Us
31 Belinda Cumming interview with Chris Palmer, 2/6/07, Upper Moutere, Nelson
33 Belinda Cumming interview with Chris Palmer, 2/6/07, Upper Moutere, Nelson
34 Peter Kitchin, “Conscientious Objector Paid Price for Beliefs”, Evening Post, (21/09/2000), 5
their families or from the institutions representing the faith which led them to making such decisions.

Families were literally torn apart by the issue of conscientious objection, loyalties split and drastic and life-changing actions taken. In the case of the Barrington’s, the war was a very sad and confusing time for Archibald’s mother, who had one son abroad as a Lieutenant-Colonel and one imprisoned as a conscientious objector.\textsuperscript{35} Another objector in the same war, Neil Smith decided he was a Christian pacifist while his two brothers rushed off to join the Air Force.\textsuperscript{36} The McCullough family function as an ideal example of a family torn apart by pacifism. During the first World War Jack McCullough was a prominent political trade unionist in Christchurch and, being a pacifist, was greatly affected by the war. His brother Jim had been a regular pacifist speaker, and Jack’s sons William and Roy joined the Passive Resister’s Union, leading a campaign against compulsory military training. Jack’s third son Frank was jailed for street speaking and was eventually exempted from compulsory military training. Frank ultimately fled to the United States in 1915, finding life as a conscientious objector intolerable. Jack’s last son Jim volunteered in 1916 and Jack had to endeavour not to dissuade him, or show feelings of disappointment. The war and the issue of pacifism tore Jack McCullough’s family apart.\textsuperscript{37}

Various organisations were established during the wars to provide support for objectors and their respective families, which gave solace to objectors who worried about their families. From a limited number of organisations in World War One, a significant network of organisations had been established by World War Two. The Fellowship of Conscientious Objectors was set up in December 1941 by a small group

\textsuperscript{35} Janet Barrington, “My War”, Barrington Papers, (MS-Papers-5230), Turnbull Library
\textsuperscript{36} Pat Baskett, “Prisoners of Conscience”, \textit{NZ Herald}, (28/04/1990), 2
\textsuperscript{37} Melanie Nolan, \textit{Kin: A Collective Biography of a New Zealand Working Class Family} (Christchurch, NZ: Canterbury University Press, 2005), 76
of people to help defaulters and their dependents. The intended purpose of the organisation was to:

provide fellowship, advice to members, and financial advice to members, and financial relief to those victimised; to be a means of voicing opinions to and making enquiries of the Government.\textsuperscript{38}

The Conscientious Advisory Board was set up also to provide advice for objectors in Appeal Board hearings, but also to ‘keep open the lines of communication among them and their families.’\textsuperscript{39} Groups such as the Peace Pledge Union (PPU), the Christian Pacifist Society (CPS) and the Society of Friends were available to families of objectors, providing support and understanding, and allowing people to associate with allies in their cause, allowing a break from the ostracism and isolation often felt in wider society. Conscientious objectors were comforted to know that their families could find some support in their communities in the form of such organisations.

Men would have been relieved to hear of some financial assistance available for their wives and children, who struggled to survive with their bread-winners behind bars. In January 1918 a group of women organised and formed a Conscientious Objectors Dependents Fund. Their aim was to raise money by means of picture shows, dances, concerts and produce sales, for the dependents of the conscientious objectors who were either imprisoned or forced to leave the country. By June of that year the fund had grown so that one pound for a wife and five shillings for each child per week was being paid out to dependents.\textsuperscript{40} During World War Two, men in detention camps were able to send out five or six shillings per week to their dependents, wives receiving nothing apart from this unless they had children. The Social Security Department made a weekly allowance of thirty shillings for a wife with one child, with ten shillings extra for each child.\textsuperscript{41}

\textsuperscript{38} Meeting 28/9/41, Minute Book for Dunedin Branch of the Fellowship of Conscientious Objectors, (MSX-3884), Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington
\textsuperscript{39} David Grant,\textit{ Out in the Cold} (Auckland, NZ: Reed Methuen, 1986), 129
\textsuperscript{40} McLeod,\textit{ Activities of New Zealand Women}, 62
\textsuperscript{41} Lincoln Efford,\textit{ Penalties on Conscience} (NZ: Caxton Press, 1945), 30
The Christchurch branch of the Fellowship of Conscientious Objectors used a method of collecting money from each member, viewing sacrifice as essential to support victimised cases and their dependents. The PPU was another group which organised funds for dependents. In June 1941, the President of the organisation wrote of an advance that had been made to assist a Mrs Lyttle, ‘whose husband is in prison for his pacifist convictions, and who has several children to support, including a very young babe.’ She had not made an appeal for assistance, but the organisation’s National Headquarters had heard of her situation and understood it to be necessary.

The allowances granted to dependents were indeed low, and additional assistance could not be organised for all cases, but a lucky minority were helped by the few supporters they had in their communities. Janet Barrington was fortunate to have good friends who helped her through her financial difficulties, while the story of Rita Graham’s financial assistance is even more extraordinary. Before the war Allen had worked in the Auckland Savings Bank, which had a policy of awarding each member of staff a gold watch when they left the firm. Allen, of course, was not presented with a watch when he was taken into detention. One worker in the bank by the name of Campbell Patterson made a special request to the manager for a watch for Allen, which unsurprisingly met an angry and negative response. A returned soldier echoed the request to the manager, only to meet the same reply. Campbell then went amongst staff collecting money, and for all three years that Allen was in detention, ten shillings was paid into Rita’s bank account weekly. To Rita, this was ‘far more than any gold watch and of so much greater value.’

Financial difficulties for dependents of conscientious objectors did not cease after the war ended in August of 1945. It was not until 31 May 1946 that the last conscientious

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42 Meeting 24/8/1941, Minute Book for Dunedin Branch of the Fellowship of Conscientious Objectors
43 PPU Notes, 3/6/1941, Pacifism MS 82-213-08, Roth, Herbert Otto, 1917-1994 Papers (MS-Group-0314), Turnbull Library, Wellington
44 Preston, War Stories Our Mothers Never Told Us
objector was released from detention.\textsuperscript{45} Employers were not keen to employ conscientious objectors, making life difficult for their family members, and financial stabilisation was not restored to families for some time. Teachers who had been detained were not allowed to return to their profession for about ten to fifteen years after the war, conscientious objectors were not allowed to return to government jobs, and any who had been employed in private enterprise found it very difficult to get work.\textsuperscript{46} This varied from place to place and some were more fortunate than others in finding employment, but financial concerns remained a reality for many conscientious objectors.

The Returned Services Association (RSA) demanded that objectors be 'deprived of civil rights for ten years after cessation of hostilities, or until all men and women from overseas have been rehabilitated.'\textsuperscript{47} This organisation appeared to sway the government considerably, and with public opinion behind them, politicians were able to continue to deal with pacifists harshly and severely, not restoring voting rights to conscientious objectors until the 1951 election.\textsuperscript{48}

The end of the war certainly did not mark the end of intense negative feelings towards pacifists, who continued to face social ostracism and harassment. Ian Hamilton continued to experience personal animosity after his detention in the Second World War, most obviously illustrated when his house was set alight.\textsuperscript{49} Families of conscientious objectors continued to suffer, constantly bearing the burden of having a pacifist among them. Also, social readjustment back into the family home may not have felt natural or easy for a pacifist who had been detained for years. Both Terence and Archibald Baxter commented on the feeling of a gap which had been created between them and the people they knew, Terence especially identifying his social disability after his war-time experience. Neither the New Zealand government nor the

\textsuperscript{45} Russell Thompson, Sedition (Wellington, NZ: Vanguard Films, 2005)
\textsuperscript{46} Thompson, Sedition.
\textsuperscript{47} Urquhart, Searchlight on R.S.A's and C.O.s, 21
\textsuperscript{48} Kitchin, Conscientious Objector Paid Price for Beliefs, 5
wider public were willing to forget the past, continuing to make life for conscientious objectors and their families difficult.

The stance of a conscientious objector was difficult to take, one that would clearly hurt the entire family. Every member paid the price for the beliefs and actions of pacifists in their midst. Wives were left at home to struggle with financial hardship and social ostracism, bringing up children alone. Mothers were plagued with worry and concern for their sons, cold and hungry behind bars, subjected to varying degrees of verbal and physical abuse. Children without their fathers around faced harassment and bullying at school for having non-conformist parents who were regarded as shirkers and cowards. Family support made taking a stand a lot easier and allowed men to cope with the hardships and hostility faced. However in a number of instances families found it too hard to stand behind these men, because they were unable to comprehend the principles behind their stance or understand why they would not want to fight, or, because life became too difficult in the community for those connected to the despised pacifists.
CONCLUSION

'A conscientious objector is against his own – his herd.' A conscientious objector paid the price for going against the prevailing opinion of the time and opposing what others fervently supported and celebrated: war. The family of the objector also suffered, and the role they played was both significant and important. Every member of the family was affected by the pacifist stance and all had to adapt to cope with the struggles it invited into their lives. If the family were able to comprehend the objectors' pacifism in a time where hysterical patriotism swept through the country, and were capable of supporting the men, the stand of an objector was far easier to take and the consequences made much more bearable.

Departing from previous scholarship on conscientious objection in New Zealand, my focus on the family has most clearly indicated that the entire family was affected by one man's adoption of pacifism. When a man publicly espoused anti-war ideals he changed the lives of all his family members, not just his own. Families not only had to suffer the pains of separation from their loved ones, but had to face constant hostility and antagonism from their communities. The attitudes and principles of a conscientious objector went against prevailing opinion, against the majority, and made them a despised minority, suffering for their beliefs. The families also suffered and were targeted by the wider public, viewed as traitors. To be connected to or associated with a pacifist in many ways was seen to be just as bad as adopting the position themselves, and families were harassed and ostracised within their communities.

Having a focus on the family has illustrated how values may be shaped within a family, the Baxter family providing an appropriate case example. A parent could to an extent consciously choose how much they influenced their children, but clearly some kind of influence would always have been inevitable. It is natural that a child would

1 Stephen Hunter, “'Til Human Voices Wake Us: Stephan Hunter Interviews Ian Hamilton” New Argot (July/August, 1974), 13, in Roth, Herbert Otto, 1917-1994 Papers (MS-Group-0314), Turnbull Library, Wellington
have received most of their attitudes, values and opinions from the home, as J. R. McCreary asserted 1948 thesis. The effect of pacifism on the family of an objector is an interesting aspect of research, and is an area previously largely ignored.

This exploration into the role of the family has also revealed how family support could determine the experience of an objector. Understanding and encouragement from family made assuming the position of an objector a far easier task; it allowed men to take the difficult stand and confront the negative repercussions. The generations of both World War One and World War Two had been brought up with a respect for war, and the sentiment of ‘Home’, with a duty to Britain, remained very strong. To oppose war was simply incomprehensible to the majority of New Zealanders, and parents in many instances were unable to understand or give their support to conscientious objectors in their families. Another reason why some families could not support and assist conscientious objectors in their stand was fear of the social consequences, as communities were openly hostile to pacifists and their families. In these cases, where the objector was not supported by his family, life was particularly difficult to endure. I have attempted to remedy the neglect of hitherto overlooked areas in research, to explore and analyse the role of the family of a conscientious objector in New Zealand, in both World War One and World War Two.

This dissertation opened with Millicent Baxter. Millicent remained involved in anti-war activities until her death, her commitment to pacifism unaltering. Sadly she did not get her final wish; she did not witness the production of her husband’s book, We Will Not Cease. However it seems her dream just might come to fruition in the near future, as there are indications that Archibald’s work might soon be produced as a film. The children of today may well learn the truth about this committed minority of men who stood to their principles and opposed war even though to do so was to invite hostility and harassment into their lives. These children, who ‘hold the future in their hands,’ may discover the remarkable story of the Baxter family from Brighton, who stood together, supported one another with love and understanding, and all paid the price for pacifism, their life-long family commitment.
AFTERWORD

The issue of conscientious objection remains in many parts of the world, with pacifists facing imprisonment and punishment for refusing compulsory military training or service. Over the course of the last half century, societal attitudes in New Zealand regarding war have changed, which has meant that families can speak openly and proudly about their pacifist pasts.

The men introduced and discussed in this dissertation endured hardships and detention because they believed wholeheartedly in the cause of pacifism, because they detested war and violence, and because they saw no alternative to refusing military service and suffering the consequences. While conscientious objection may appear to be a closed chapter in history, in reality there are still conscientious objectors in many countries at present, many nations failing to accept people’s objections to military service because of moral or religious convictions. In Armenia, men continue to be arrested for ‘draft-dodging’ if they refuse compulsory military service, and in Finland conscientious objectors who have refused both military and alternative service have been sent to prison.1

In Turkey, military service is compulsory and refusing to serve is punishable by imprisonment. Conscientious objection is not accepted and ‘there have been grim reports of harsh prison conditions and even torture.’2 Amnesty International has continuously expressed concerns about Israeli conscripts and

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2 Peace Pledge Union, “Conscientious Objection Today”
reservists being imprisoned because of their refusal to perform military service, and have campaigned on their behalf, these ‘refuseniks’ gaining international fame and recognition. A person who is imprisoned as a result of their refusal to serve is considered by Amnesty International to be a ‘prisoner of conscience.’

War Resisters International publicise issues of conscientious objection and campaign on behalf of imprisoned pacifists. In September of this year WRI reported the sentencing of four Finnish objectors charged with ‘alternative service crime’, and called for letters of protest to the Finnish Prime Minister Matti Vanhanen or Finnish embassies abroad. Men and women from all around the globe are still conscientiously objecting to military service and continue to face imprisonment and punishment, the cause of pacifism still clearly prevailing in contemporary society.

Conscientious objectors such as Archibald Baxter were engaged in a campaign against war and violence, and this struggle continues for many today, as the world continues to experience violence and suffer its consequences. The Peace Pledge Union recognises that violence continues to be a destructive force in the world and believes war to be a ‘crime against humanity,’ vowing to ‘work for the removal of all causes of war.’

Figure 22. Peace Pledge Union – Anti-war Activity Header (http://www.ppu.org.uk/indexa.html)

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3 Peace Pledge Union, “Conscientious Objection Today”
Ray Weeber, a conscientious objector in New Zealand during World War Two commented on the war in Iraq, ‘War does not cure anything except makes things worse. Wars are never won. Everybody loses, except the munitions makers and the oil companies.’7 Ian Hamilton identifies that ‘there is a lot of violence in society now and until a person understands the meaning of violence there will always be the threat of war.’8 Finally, Millicent Baxter asserted in her Memoirs, ‘Violence of any kind breeds violence. Wars breed other wars.’9 Millicent’s view appears to ring true. The Great War, the war to end all wars, was followed by another World War only two short decades later, and today the world continues to witness war, as the grim and devastating conflict rages in Iraq.

There is now an international Conscientious’ Objectors’ Day, 15 May being the established joint day of action. The day is closely linked to the International Conscientious Objectors’ Meeting (ICOM), organised between 1981 and 1997 by groups affiliated to WRI.10 Courage to Resist is a group concerned with supporting service members who have resisted war and who are facing punishment. They produced and distributed posters to publicise Conscientious Objectors’ Day, calling for groups, organisations and individuals to take up May 15 as a day of action in support of conscientious objectors and war resisters.11

7 Cathy Casey, “Wars are never won – everybody loses”, Red and Green, no. 1 (2003), 134
8 Pat Baskett, “Prisoners of Conscience”, NZ Herald, (28/04/1990), 2
9 Millicent Baxter, Memories of Millicent Baxter (NZ: Cape Catley Ltd, 1981), 143
11 Courage to Resist, “May 15: Int’l Conscientious Objector Day”, www.couragetoressist.org/x/content/view/33/1/ (September 2007)
For an international day of conscientious objection to be celebrated annually, a huge shift in ideas must have occurred since the time of the Second World War. New Zealand men adopting pacifism were subjected to hostility, hardship and abuse; their families also paid the price for non-conformity. Many families, because of the public perception of an objector as a coward, denied the existence of a pacifist in their midst, unable to publicly admit that one of their own was in detention. However, this aspect of shame has diminished and dissolved over the past decades with the changing of public attitudes concerning conscientious objection. This change in attitudes can be observed in many arenas of everyday life for New Zealanders.

Anzac Day is traditionally a day to pay respects and celebrate the memory of the men who fought for their country at Gallipoli. The most recent Anzac Day anniversary in New Zealand witnessed a march of protest in the nation’s capital city, where members of Peace Action Wellington (PAW) demonstrated at the dawn service displaying banners that read ‘Lest We Forget: Already Forgotten – Afghanistan, Solomon Islands, Timor Leste’ and ‘Conscientious Objectors: the real heroes.’ Spokesperson Valerie Morse explained that the group was protesting the message being given on Anzac Day, believing the anniversary to be ‘a celebration of the New Zealand military and the glorification of war.’ Naturally the protests stirred a great deal of controversy and the group were condemned by those who saw the protests as an insult and disgrace to the country, but they clearly demonstrate that for many, conscientious objectors have come to be celebrated and that attitudes towards war have changed significantly since the mid-twentieth century.

A new Anzac Hymn was composed this year by Shirley Murray and Colin Gibson, which includes in its verses the plight of the conscientious objector. The second verse calls for the conscientious objector to be honoured, a call which would have offended the majority of New Zealanders for a long time following the World Wars, when pacifism was detested and the objector perceived as an unpatriotic coward:

Honour the brave whose conscience was their call,
Answered no bugle, went against the wall,
Suffered in prison of contempt and shame,
Branded as cowards in our country’s name.\(^{13}\)

The conscientious objector is placed alongside the soldier in this hymn, their bravery exhibited and suffering experienced honoured equally, signifying and highlighting an enormous shift in attitudes since the time of war.

Articles in the media further illustrate these changes in attitudes, with conscientious objectors and their cause coming to be publicly celebrated; a conscious effort made to bring to light the realities of this chapter in New Zealand history previously unknown to many. Journal and newspaper articles have criticised the New Zealand government for its policies towards objectors, highlighting the illiberal practices and noting the absence of tolerance shown towards a minority group, a tolerance perhaps expected of the young nation who prided itself as being enlightened and liberal. Historian J. E. Cookson wrote:

There was little sign of the painstaking respect the liberal democratic state should have for diversity and dissent, particularly when the conflict is over values and beliefs.\(^{14}\)

Paul Baker observes Anzac Day as a ‘chance to remember the less glorious aspects of New Zealand’s role in the war’, believing the ‘dark episode in our military history’

\(^{13}\) Ken Russell, “A Hymn for Anzac Day” (29/04/07) http://homepages.ihug.co.nz/~Serlewis/mind/anzachymn.htm (September 2007)

(the treatment of conscientious objectors) to remain ‘a potent blemish on’ the Great War effort.\textsuperscript{15}

Columnist Raybon Kan published a witty, sarcastic and clever article in the \textit{Sunday Star Times} in April about the spirit of Anzac. He understands Gallipoli to be:

\begin{quote}
the human, armed equivalent of lemmings hurling themselves off a cliff. It’s a tragedy. A waste of life. Why do lemmings do it? Well, because the others are. That’s the Anzac sprit. They don’t seem to ask why. The social pressure is enough reason. Even if it kills them.\textsuperscript{16}
\end{quote}

He calls for a celebration of ‘those people with vision, who objected to war,’ arguing that Anzac Day ‘should be run by a group of messy conscientious objectors, who can scream with loudhailers, ‘I told you so.’’\textsuperscript{17} Families of pacifists during both wars in New Zealand never could have imagined such strong and un-patriotic anti-war sentiments being voiced publicly, yet now they are prevalent and acceptable in contemporary society.

A week earlier the same paper published an article by Karen Tay about the real heroes of Anzac Day: ‘the pacifists who stayed and went against prevailing opinion at the time.’ In line with Raybon Kan’s premise, Tay believes Anzac Day should not be a celebration but ‘a remembrance that the cost of war is too high.’\textsuperscript{18} Going a step further, member of New Zealand Writers Guild Dean Parkers admits that his heroes of Anzac Day are those in the war resisters ranks who gave their reasons for refusing service as simply ‘scared.’\textsuperscript{19}

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\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{15} Paul Baker, “Prisoners of Conscience,” \textit{NZ Listener}, (25/04/1998), 70
\item \textsuperscript{16} Raybon Kan, “Raybon Kan” \textit{Sunday Star Times}, (29/04/2007)
\item \textsuperscript{17} Raybon Kan
\item \textsuperscript{18} Karen Tay, “Men of War” \textit{Sunday Star Times}, (22/04/2007), 19
\item \textsuperscript{19} Dean Parker, “The heroes who did not fight, \textit{New Zealand Herald}, (24/04/2006)
\end{itemize}
These articles portray a very different image of conscientious objectors than that depicted during both World War One and Two, images which continued for a long time after 1945. This change of image consequently means that New Zealanders need not now be ashamed of their members who once adopted a pacifist stance. Rita Graham, who appeared on Gaylene Preston’s 1995 documentary *War Stories Our Mothers Never Told Us*, spoke at the photo shoot before the New Zealand premiere, explaining that for so many years her husband’s past had to be hidden, not spoken about, bottled up. But the production, by including Rita in the group of women talking about the War, allowed Rita to emerge in public and speak openly and confidently about her experience as the wife of a conscientious objector detained for the duration of the war.\(^\text{20}\)

This year in August, an exhibition called ‘Number One Field Punishment’ by artist Bob Kerr was displayed at Dunedin’s Milford Gallery, which was a visual account of Archibald Baxter’s experience, ‘a harrowing account of one man’s war.’\(^\text{21}\) Archibald’s granddaughter, Terence’s daughter, Katherine Baxter attended the official opening of the exhibition and spoke proudly of the courageous actions of her grandfather who is now a celebrated hero of war-resistance. Archibald is admired and respected, his incredible strength of character which enabled him to endure horrific suffering and hardships now recognised.

With the distance from war time, people have come to recognise New Zealand’s harsh treatment of conscientious objectors, especially in contrast to Australia and Britain, and have come to celebrate the courage and determination of the small minority who objected to the war, stood by their principals and refused to take arms. Significant shifts in ideas and beliefs have allowed families such as the Baxters to speak publicly and proudly of conscientious objectors in their families.


\(^{21}\) Nigel Benson, “Fighting a better, brutal fight”, *Otago Daily Times* (16/08/2007), 33
Figure 26. Painting of Archibald Baxter, by artists Bob Kerr, exhibition at Milford Gallery, August – September 2007 (http://www.milfordgalleries.co.nz/exhibition)
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