

# Mormons and War

## I. LDS Views of War

A. Joseph Smith's Position. "We must proclaim peace; do all in our power to appease the wrath of our enemies; make any sacrifice that honorable people can to avert war." (Cited by Pres. George Q. Cannon, April 1898 general conference; *Conference Report*; April 1898, p. 86.)

B. Book of Mormon Position. "The Book of Mormon, first of all, dispenses with the traditional cleavage between the Old and New Testaments concerning war. The warlike Jehovah and the pacifistic Christ are re-presented as the same individual; commands to kill and exhortations to peace are uttered by the same divine being." (D. Michael Quinn, "The Mormon Church and the Spanish-American War: An End to Selective Pacifism," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Winter 1984, p. 12.)

1. Militarism. "The heroes of the book are involved in successive wars of defense against aggressors for which they are specifically absolved of wrong-doing. In the accounts of the valor of these defenders (especially with reference to the warriors called Sons of Helaman), there seems to be an enthusiasm for militarism." (*Ibid.*)

2. Pacifism. "Along with these examples of militarism, however, there are also evidences of pacifism in the Book of Mormon. One group refuses to participate in one of these 'defensive' wars and even allows itself to be massacred. Its members seem to feel their spiritual welfare precludes shedding the blood of their enemies. Although the dominant segment of the community has to jeopardize itself to defend these pacifists, praise rather than condemnation is given to the noncombatants who paid to their protectors a large amount of money to defray the military costs deriving from their nonparticipation. (Alma 24:1-22; 27:21-30.) Toward the end of the narrative one of the generals of the army refuses to lead his people into battle because of his disgust at their motives for war and atrocities they commit. His position is not condemned in the book but emerges as one deserving commendation (Morm. 3:11, 16; Moro. 9:9-10.) These two examples significantly contrast with isolated instances in which men who refused to defend the community are executed because they sought to subvert it in favor of the enemy. Conscientious pacifism is as much an accepted practice within the Book of Mormon narrative as is militarism." (*Ibid.*)

C. Obligation to Oppose War. On April 6, 1942, the First Presidency had this statement read at general conference: "Thus the Church is and must be against war. The Church itself cannot wage war, unless and until the Lord shall issue new commands. It cannot regard war as a righteous means of settling international disputes; these should and could be settled—the nations agreeing—by peaceful negotiation and adjustment. But the Church membership are citizens or subjects of sovereignties over which the Church has no control. The Lord Himself has told us to 'befriend that law which is the constitutional law of the land . . .'" (*Messages of the First Presidency*, compiled by James R. Clark, Vol. VI [1975], p. 158.)

1. Obligation to Serve. "While by its terms this revealed word related more especially to this land of America, nevertheless the principles announced are worldwide in their application. . . . When therefore, constitutional law, obedient to these principles, calls the manhood of the Church into the armed service of any country in which they owe allegiance, their highest civic duty requires that they meet that call." (*Ibid.*, p. 158.)

2. Servicemen Not Murderers. "If harkening to that call and obeying those in command over them, they shall take the lives of those who fight against them, that will not make of them murderers, nor subject them to the penalty that God has prescribed for those who kill . . . For it would be a cruel God that would punish His children as moral sinners for acts done by them as the innocent instrumentalities of a sovereign whom He had told them to obey and whose will they were powerless to resist." (*Ibid.*, p. 159.)

D. Many Righteous Will Be Killed. "Do ye suppose that, because so many of your brethren have been

killed it is because of their wickedness? I say unto you, if he have supposed this ye have supposed in vain; for I say unto you, there are many who have fallen by the sword . . . For the Lord suffereth the righteous to be slain that his justice and judgment may come upon the wicked; therefore ye need not suppose that the righteous are lost because they are slain, but behold, they do enter into the rest of the Lord their God.” (Alma 60:6, 12-13.)

E. God Will Determine Rightness of War. “In this terrible war now waging, thousands of our righteous young men in all parts of the world and in many countries are subject to a call into the military service of their own countries. Some of these, so serving, have already been called back to their heavenly home, others will almost surely be called to follow. But ‘behold,’ as Moroni said, the righteous of them who serve and are slain, ‘do enter into the rest of the Lord their God’ . . . Their salvation and exaltation in the world to come will be secure. That in their work of destruction they will be striking at their brethren will not be held against them. That sin, as Moroni of old said, is to the condemnation of those who ‘sit in their places of power in a state of thoughtless stupor,’ those rulers in the world who in a frenzy of hate and lust for unrighteous power and dominion over their fellow men, have put into motion eternal forces they do not comprehend and cannot control. God, in His own due time, will pass sentence upon them. ‘Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.’ (Rom. 12:19)” (*Messages of the First Presidency*, compiled by James R. Clark, Vol. VI [1975], pp. 157-8.)

F. Gordon B. Hinckley on War. In June 2007, President Gordon B. Hinckley wrote about the scourge of war: “Nearly ten decades have passed now since my birth, and for the better part of that time, there has been war among mankind in one part of the earth or another. No one can ever estimate the terrible suffering incident to these wars across the globe. Lives numbered in the millions have been lost. The terrible wounds of war have left bodies maimed and minds destroyed. Families have been left without fathers and mothers. Young people who have been recruited to fight have, in many instances, died while those yet alive have had woven into the very fabric of their natures elements of hatred which will never leave them. The treasure of nations has been wasted and will never be recovered. The devastation of wars seems so unnecessary and such a terrible waste of human life and national resources. We ask, will this terrible, destructive way of handling disagreements among the sons and daughters of God ever end?” (President Gordon B. Hinckley, *Ensign*, June 2007, p. 4.)

## II. Early Military Activities

A. Nauvoo Period. “‘Renounce war and proclaim peace,’ Joseph Smith recorded in a formal revelation. Moreover Smith advised against the unnecessary taking of animal life, even the life of predators. Yet he bore the title of Lieutenant-General, commanded over 2,500 troops, took sword exercises, possessed an ‘armor-bearer,’ exuded the expansionist spirit of ‘Manifest Destiny,’ and dedicated the sacred Nauvoo Temple while dressed in full military regalia. (Ronald Walker, “Sheaves, Bucklers and the State: Mormon Leaders Respond to the Dilemmas of War,” *Sunstone*, July-August 1982, p. 53.)

1. Joseph’s self-assigned rank of Lieutenant General was even higher than that held by George Washington during the Revolutionary War.

B. Nauvoo Legion. At the time the Nauvoo Legion was formed, the Nauvoo City Charter conscripted all men between 18 and 25 into the Legion. Many others beyond the age of 25 joined on their own. (Ronald Walker, *Sunstone*, July-August 1982.)

1. Size Compared with U. S. Army. “Nevertheless, the Nauvoo Legion’s curious blend of religion, patriotism, and military display was poorly conceived to allay the confusion surrounding the new faith. No more reassuring was the Legion’s manpower, numbering more than a quarter of the entire United States Army in 1845. Excessive and seemingly threatening, it made Smith appear to be a Mohammed bent on a religious crusade. The result was predictable. As in Missouri, Mormon force summoned counterforce. Smith was assassinated, and mobs again sought to expel the Saints from their homes.” (Ronald W. Walker, *Sunstone*, July-Aug. 1982, p. 45.)

2. Use of Military Titles. By 1844 the Nauvoo Legion had an enlistment of between 3,000 and 5,000 recruits, while the entire United States Army had only 8,453. Robert Flanders noted that “Colonel, Captain, or General’ came to replace “Brother, Elder or President’ in the address of the Saints. (Gary James Bergera, “Joseph Smith and the Hazards of Charismatic Leadership.” *John Whitmer Historical Association Journal*, 1986, 34.)

C. Calling of the Mormon Battalion. “The participation of the Mormon Battalion in the Mexican War has traditionally been heralded as self-sacrificing patriotism responding to the demands of the federal government. In fact, however, Brigham Young had sent an ambassador to President James K. Polk volunteering 2,000 Mormon men to enlist and be paid federal wages as an expeditionary force to precede the Mormon emigration into the Great Basin of Mexico, where he knew according to published reports of John C. Fremont there were no Mexican soldiers or settlers.” (D. Michael Quinn, “Christian Soldiers or Conscientious Objectors?” *Sunstone*, March 1985, 17.)

1. 500 Men Selected. Polk “countered the offer with the proposal that only 500 men be enlisted to march along the present U.S.-Mexican border to California, engaging the enemy where necessary. . . . Young complied with the counteroffer and persuaded the Mormons to enlist for the economic benefits. . . . The battalion brought cash in excess of \$50,000 to the common fund of the church.” (D. Michael Quinn, “The Mormon Church and the Spanish-American War: An End to Selective Pacifism,” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Winter 1984, 16.)

2. Mormons Initiated Plans. “Both Brigham Young and Wilford Woodruff knew that the enlistment of the Mormon Battalion was requested by Colonel Little, who represented the Mormon church, and that President Polk granted the request for the purpose of assisting the Mormons on their journey to the West, and not to oppress or injure them.” B. H. Roberts spoke of this plan: “The journal of President [John] Taylor states that President Young said, ‘We are pleased to show our patriotism for the country we expect to have for our future home. I think President Polk has done us a great favor in calling us.’” (R. N. Baskin, *Reminiscences of Early Utah*, 1914, pp. 194, 195.)

3. Story Later Changed. At the peak of the Utah War in 1857, Brigham Young, who knew the correct story, stirred up feelings against the U. S. Government with this address in the Bowery: “There cannot be a more damnable, dastardly order issued than was issued by the Administration to this people while they were in an Indian country, in 1846. Before we left Nauvoo, not less than two U. S. Senators came to receive a pledge from us that we would leave the U. S.: and then, while we were doing our best to leave their borders, the poor, low, degraded curses sent a requisition for 500 of our men to go and fight their battles! That was President Polk; and he is now weltering in hell with old Zachary Taylor, where the present administrators will soon be, if they do not repent.” (Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*, 5:231-2.)

4. Accomplishments. “Before beginning the march, Cooke had received orders from General Kearny that he was to blaze a wagon route to the Pacific with his battalion. Of all the accomplishments of the Mormon Battalion, there is hardly any more significant than the establishment of what is known in history as Cooke’s Wagon Road. The existence of Cooke’s Wagon Road was a major factor in the Gadsden Purchase of 1853, in which the United States bought a large chunk of present-day Arizona south of the Gila River for \$10 million from Mexico . . . Neither the Southern Pacific nor any other [rail] line actually followed the trail forged by the Mormon Battalion, but all lines went through the Gadsden Purchase territory, which might never have been obtained by the U. S. if the Mormon Battalion had not marched there.” (Bruce A. Van Orden, “The March of the Mormon Battalion in its Greater American Historical Setting,” *Regional Studies in Latter-day Saint Church History: Arizona*, 1989, p. 169.)

5. Those Completing Trek. “After traveling more than 2,000 miles in seven months, the Battalion

finally reached California, crossing the coastal mountains and entering San Diego on 29 January 1847.” Three separate detachments of sick soldiers left the march and met up with the pioneers on their way to the Salt Lake Valley. That left some 343 men who completed the march to San Diego. (Larry C. Porter, “The Mormon Battalion’s Two-Thousand-Mile March from the Missouri River to the Pacific Ocean,” *Regional Studies in Latter-day Saint Church History: California*, 1998, 45. See also Byron R. Merrill and Patrick J. Thurston. “Jefferson Hunt: Senior Captain of the Mormon Battalion,” *Ibid.*, 65.)

6. Casualties. All told, some 13,000 American lives were lost in the Mexican-American War, most of them taken by disease. As promised by Brigham Young, none of the Battalion members died in combat. However, 23 men died from a variety of causes during the active duty time of the Mormon Battalion. Three more men died after they had been mustered out of service when they were killed by Indians during their return to Utah.” (Bruce A. Van Orden, “The March of the Mormon Battalion,” *Regional Studies in Latter-day Saint Church History: Arizona*, 1989, p. 174.)

D. Mormon Battalion Mythologized. “The Mormon Battalion story is a good example of what typically happens as the historical event is ritualized. Without going into the complex history of the Battalion, we can safely say that the decision to call it was made at least in part at the instigation of the Mormons, who saw it as a means of obtaining government help for the journey west. Some of the Battalion’s pay did find its way back to the main body of the Latter-day Saints, where it doubtless was of help. As for the journey itself, there were few noteworthy events in the grand military tradition. Remarkably soon, however, this whole experience was trans-formed into a symbol of federal oppression, Mormon heroism, and the overruling omnipotence of God. It was told and retold in these terms; participants even started remembering it in these terms. The men of the Battalion (and later their descendants) were lionized as representatives of truth in a heroic struggle.” (Davis Bitton, *The Ritualization of Mormon History*, 1994, pp. 176-7.)

### III. Civil War

A. Favored South in Civil War. On April 6, 1861, Second Counselor Daniel H. Wells announced, “I do not think there is a more corrupt government upon the face of the earth. . . . They paved the way for their own destruction.” (*Deseret News*, April 24, 1861, p. 57; cited in Fred E. Woods, *BYU Studies*, Vol. 39, No. 1 [2000], p. 8.)

1. We Will Be Free. On that same day, Pres. Heber C. Kimball responded: “We shall make preparations for future events. The South will secede from the North, and the North will secede from us, and God will make this people free as fast as we are able to bear it.” (*Journal of Discourses*, 9:7.)

2. Message to President Lincoln. Brigham Young telegraphed Abraham Lincoln that Utah remained with the Union when the Civil War broke out, but privately he acknowledged that most of the Church leaders and members [including himself] favored the Confederacy.” (D. Michael Quinn, “Christian Soldiers or Conscientious Objectors?” *Sunstone*, March 1985, p. 17.)

3. None Wickedder than Lincoln. Brigham Young told an audience, “Most of the Officers which the Government have Sent here are a Hiss & a By word & a stink in the nostrails of all good men & there never was a wickedder man than the President of the United States [Abraham Lincoln] & so are his associates vary wicked men.” (*Wilford Woodruff Journal*, Dec. 24, 1861.)

4. Brigham Wanted Lincoln Captured. “In mid-September [1861], referring again to the Confederate victory at Bull Run, [Brigham Young] wrote that ‘he would be glad to hear that [Confederate] General Beauregard had taken the President & Cabinet and confined them in the South.’” (Brigham Young Office Jour- nal, Sept. 16, 1861; E. B. Long, *The Saints and the Union: Utah Territory During the Civil War*, Univ. of

Illinois Press, 1981, p. 41.)

5. “Dixie.” The song “Dixie” was so popular in Mormondom that it was sung in the general conference priesthood meeting in April 1863, at the height of the Civil War, though the minutes of the conference, as published in the *Deseret News* do not mention the song. (Michael Hicks, “Ministering Minstrels: Blackface Entertainment in Pioneer Utah.” *Utah Historical Quarterly*, Winter 1990, p. 53.)

6. No Prayers. Governor Steven S. Harding, who arrived in Utah on July 7, 1862, wrote back about the Mormon attitude: “In all their meetings that I have attended not one word, not one prayer, has been uttered or offered up for the saving of our cause and for the restoration of peace, but on the contrary the God of the Saints has been implored to bring swift destruction on all nations, people and institutions that stand in the way of the triumph of this people.” (*New Views of Mormon History*, edited by Bitton and Beecher, 1987, p. 319.)

7. Brigham Approved of Those Avoiding Participation in Civil War. See comment below, under “Conscientious Objectors,” for Brigham Young’s message to the October 1863 general conference about those trying to stay out of fighting on either side in the Civil War.

#### IV. Spanish-American War

A. Brigham Young, Jr. As entry into a war against Spain was imminent, Apostle Brigham Young, Jr. expressed his serious reservations in an April 1898 general conference talk. He urged a response patterned after the course of action adopted by his father for the Civil War. However, the “First Presidency voiced its strong displeasure to Young and moved quickly to disassociate itself from his position.” The Church, in the middle of the polygamy crisis, was extremely eager to be seen as loyal Americans. (D. Michael Quinn, “Christian Soldiers or Conscientious Objectors?” *Sunstone*, March 1985, p. 19.)

B. Deseret News Editorial. On 2 May 1898, the *Deseret News* editorialized about the growing war clouds over Spanish possession of Cuba: “If our glorious Union shall become involved in war, she will never number, in all her armies a truer, a braver, or better soldier than the Mormon recruit.” (*Deseret News*, 2 May 1898; cited by Ronald W. Walker, “Sheaves, Bucklers and the State: Mormon Leaders Respond to the Dilemmas of War.” *Sunstone*, July-August 1982, p. 48.)

C. Church Calls For Participation. The First Presidency issued this official statement at the start of the war: “. . . Utah is asked to furnish cavalry and batteries of artillery approximating 500 men. We trust that the citizens of Utah who are Latter-day Saints will be found ready to respond with alacrity to this call which is made upon our State.” (*Messages of the First Presidency*, compiled by James R. Clark, Vol. 3, p. 299.)

D. Church Response. The First Presidency “issued a statement which affirmed the absolute loyalty of the Mormon people. To prove its words, the Church leadership telegraphed local leaders to encourage troop enlistment, while the directors of the Church-related ZCMI department store apparently offered half pay to volunteer-ing employees for the duration of the war. With the names of prominent LDS families among its enlistments, Utah became one of the first states to fill its initial quota of 500 volunteers. The troops left Utah amid enthusiastic cheers and, in at least some cases, after receiving protective blessings administered in the Salt Lake Temple.” (Ronald W. Walker, *Sunstone*, July-August 1982, p. 48.)

E. First Casualty. The first conflict in which Latter-day Saints died in military combat was the Spanish-American War of 1898. The first casualty was a young LDS infantryman named George Hudson, who was killed on 24 August 1898. (Robert C. Freeman, “Latter-day Saints in the World Wars,” *Out of Obscurity: The LDS Church in the Twentieth Century*, papers delivered at the 29<sup>th</sup> Annual Sidney B. Sperry Symposium, BYU, 2000, pp. 109, 123.)

F. LDS Participation. The number of LDS members involved in the Spanish-American War was a few hundred. Of this number, approximately a half dozen died. (Robert C. Freeman, “Latter-day Saints in the World Wars,” *Out of Obscurity: The LDS Church in the Twentieth Century*, papers delivered at the 29<sup>th</sup> Annual Sidney B. Sperry Symposium, BYU, 2000, p. 110.)

## V. First World War

A. Whose Side is God On? At the outset of the First World War, President Joseph F. Smith denied the claims of the British and the Germans that God was on their side and would aid them in the war. Instead, President Smith said, “The Lord has little if anything to do with this war.” That position changed as the United States became involved in the war. (*The Improvement Era*, September 1914, p. 1075.)

1. By 1918, the *Improvement Era* announced: “. . . when our boys aim [their weapons] they will see as if they looked with the eye of God,” and “when the U.S. army strikes, the blow will fall as if from the arm of God.” (*Improvement Era*, August 1918, p. 914.)

B. Those Serving. “Included among the LDS contingent of servicemen were such future general authorities as Hugh B. Brown, Delbert L. Stapley, William J. Critchlow, and S. Dilworth Young. President Joseph F. Smith had six sons who served in the war.” (Robert C. Freeman, “Latter-day Saints in the World Wars,” *Out of Obscurity: The LDS Church in the Twentieth Century*, papers delivered at the 29<sup>th</sup> Annual Sidney B. Sperry Symposium, BYU, 2000, p. 111.)

1. LDS Generals. During The First World War, five Latter-day Saints from the United States served as generals: William E. Cole, Frank T. Hines, Briant H. Wells, Richard W. Young, and Edgar A. Wedgewood. The last named died of influenza, a disease that claimed more servicemen’s lives than did combat. (*Ibid.*)

C. Getting Missionaries Out of Germany. “Some missionaries in northern Germany, aided by funds dispatched by Mission President LeGrand Richards in The Netherlands, were able to arrange travel through that country on their way to Liverpool. Nevertheless, for more than a month after the outbreak of hostilities, Mormon missionaries remained haphazardly scattered about wartime Germany, forbidden to carry out their duties for fear of provoking reprisals against foreigners and cut off from their source of financial support by the suspension of postal and telegraphic service. It was only upon [Swiss-Austrian Mission President] Valentine’s arrival back at mission headquarters in Basel, following receipt of cables from church headquarters in Salt Lake, that the Swiss and German Mission president received what he considered to be the proper ecclesiastical authorization to evacuate the young Americans. That required a potentially hazardous ten-day trip back into Germany. Valentine withdrew twenty thousand Imperial Marks from the mission’s bank account and began tracking down the remaining dispersed missionaries, arranging for their safe passage home . . .” (David Conley Nelson, *Moroni and the Swastika: Mormons in Nazi Germany*, 2015, 50-51.)

D. Impact on Missionary Program. In 1913, the year preceding the outbreak of war in Europe, the number of young men set apart for full-time missionary service was 858. In 1918, the last year of the war, the number had been reduced down to 245. (Robert C. Freeman, “Latter-day Saints in the World Wars,” *Out of Obscurity: The LDS Church in the Twentieth Century*, papers delivered at the 29<sup>th</sup> Annual Sidney B. Sperry Symposium, BYU, 2000, p. 111.)

1. Missionaries in Europe. At the beginning of World War I, approximately 433 full-time missionaries were serving in Europe. Most had been evacuated by the fall of 1914. (*Ibid.*, p. 112.)

E. Liberty Bonds. Perhaps due to President Joseph F. Smith’s original reservations about the war, the

Church did not participate in the first Liberty Bond drive. However, at the October 1917 general conference, the members unanimously approved spending \$250,000 of tithing funds for the purchase of government Liberty Bonds to help the war effort. At the April 1918 conference, it was unanimously approved that the Church purchase an additional \$250,000 in Liberty Bonds. (*The Mind and Will of the Lord: Indexed Discourses of Joseph F. Smith Speaking in General Conferences*, edited by Harold W. Pease, 1999, p. 241.)

F. Propaganda Campaign. Mormons, like the rest of the nation, soon exhibited strong emotions concerning which was the “good” side and which the “bad” in the conflict. The *Relief Society Magazine* in October 1918 noted: “As yet we have no knowledge of human flesh being fed to prisoners [of the Germans], but we know that disease germs have been injected into their blood, and it has been said that women have been nailed to doors within churches, after the brutes into whose hands they have fallen have accomplished their wicked purposes.” (*Relief Society Magazine*, October 1918, p. 595; cited in Ronald W. Walker, *Sunstone*, July-August 1982, p. 50.)

G. Impact of Influenza Epidemic. Elder George F. Richards, who was president of the European Mission during World War I, made these notations in his journal: Oct. 5, 1918. The influenza is reported as being general and quite malignant. It is reported that at Knotty Ash Camp, 50 American soldiers were buried today.” (*A Family of Faith: An Intimate View of Church History through the Journals of Three Generations of Apostles*, Willard Richards, Franklin D. Richards, and George F. Richards, 1837-1950; edited by Kent Richards, 2013, 331.)

1. Nov. 5, 1918. “Had a visit from a Sargent Torgenson from Ogden. He told of their troop ship, 1700 men on board. ‘About thousand of the men had the influenza. 40 of them were buried at sea including 2 from his bunk room. He was taken from the ship on a stretcher to a hospital. He said 70 American soldiers were buried yesterday in Liverpool and that a week ago there were about 80 buried in one day.’” (*Ibid.*, 331.)

H. Relief Society Wheat. Near the end of the First World War, the general Relief Society delivered 250,000 bushels of badly-needed wheat to the federal government. It was sold to the government at the minimal price of \$1.20 a bushel, with the proceeds deposited in an account designated for future relief needs. In response to this generosity, U. S. president Herbert Hoover wrote a personal letter of thanks.” (Robert C. Freeman, “Latter-day Saints in the World Wars,” *Out of Obscurity: The LDS Church in the Twentieth Century*, papers delivered at the 29<sup>th</sup> Annual Sidney B. Sperry Symposium, BYU, 2000, p. 113.)

I. LDS Participation and Battle Deaths. Approximately 22,500 U. S. Mormons served during World War I. During the nineteen months of U. S. involvement, it is estimated that between 600-700 American LDS members were killed. (Robert C. Freeman, “Latter-day Saints in the World Wars,” *Out of Obscurity: The LDS Church in the Twentieth Century*, papers delivered at the 29<sup>th</sup> Annual Sidney B. Sperry Symposium, BYU, 2000, p. 111.)

1. German Members. Approximately seventy-five LDS Germans were killed during World War I, while fighting for Germany. (*Ibid.*, 111.)

a. Deaths by Year. “[R]ecords indicate 11 Mormon priesthood holders died on the battlefield for the Fatherland in 1914, 20 in 1915, 114 in 1916, 13 in 1917, and 17 in 1918. These casualties do not include the number of wounded LDS soldiers who survived. The willingness of faithful Mormons to serve in the German military and to spill their blood on the field of battle became a strong arguing point for the survival of LDS congregations in the subsequent Weimar and National Socialist [Nazi] eras.” (David Conley Nelson, *Moroni and the Swastika: Mormons in Nazi Germany*, 2015, 54.)

J. First LDS Medal of Honor Winner. “General John J. Pershing, commander of the American Expeditionary Forces, presented the Medal of Honor, (the nation’s highest combat award) to Private Thomas Niebar on Feb. 9, 1919, on a snow covered field at Chaumont, France. Neibar was the first Idahoan and probably the first Mormon to receive this prestigious award. When he arrived home at Sugar City, Idaho, on May 27 that year, 10,000 people celebrated, along with a bevy of politicians and Church leaders, the governor proclaiming the occasion as ‘Neibaur Day.’ Other than the heroic even itself—Private Neibaur’s single-handedly stopping a

German counterattack at a crucial hill, Côte de Châtillon—there is ‘precious little information on his personal life: . . .’

(Robert M. Hogge, book review, *Journal of Mormon History* 36:2 [Spring 2010], 266.)

K. Emergency Food Supplies Needed After the War. “On Sept. 2, 1919, [new German mission president Angus] Cannon cabled the church hierarchy in Salt Lake City: ‘Eight-thousand Saints of this mission are in immediate need of flour, corn-meal, condensed milk, fats, dried fruits, beans, peas. Can the Saints at home send such supplies immediately?’ . . . [Utah Senator Reed] Smoot used his political connections to help the church purchase provisions from the American Expeditionary Forces that had joined the war in late 1917.’ . . . No figures document the value of relief supplies provided from Swiss members and American Army sources, but one invoice from the American military garrison in Koblenz provides an approximation of the magnitude of a typical local effort: Church funds purchased fifty thousand pounds of flour, fifteen thousand pounds of rice, five thousand pounds of oleo margarine, twenty thousand pounds of prunes, and twenty thousand cans of condensed milk.” (*Ibid.*, 55-56.)

L. Prayers for Limitation of Armaments in 1921. At the October 1921 general conference, President Heber J. Grant presented the following resolution: “To the end that it may do so, the Latter-day Saints in general conference now assembled approve the appointment of a Sabbath day before the eleventh of November, 1921, on which in all the wards and stakes of Zion, and in all branches of the Church in the United States and in the Mis-sions throughout the world, the members of the Church shall be called together in their usual places of worship to engage in special and solemn prayer for Divine guidance of the International Conference on the Limitation of Armaments, that the cause of Peace may be thereby enhanced, and amelioration of the burdens of mankind secured. . . . There was a unanimous vote of approval.” (*The Mind and Will of the Lord: Indexed Discourses of Heber J. Grant Speaking in General Conference*, compiled and indexed by Harold W. Pease, 2005, p. 67.)

## VI. Second World War

A. Initial LDS Accommodation with Hitler. “By 1930, Germany had 12,000 Mormons, more than any [other] country in the world except the United States. . . . As early as December 1933 . . . the LDS church signaled its effort to seek accommodation with the Nazi regime. In an article, ‘Mormonism in the New Ger-many,’ the Church Section of the *Deseret News* enthusiastically emphasized the parallels ‘between the Church and some of the ideas and policies of the National Socialists.’ First, the Nazis introduced a ‘Fast Sunday.’ Second, ‘it is a very well known fact that Hitler observes a form of living which Mormons term the ‘Word of Wisdom.’ Finally, ‘due to the importance given to the racial question [by Nazis], and the almost necessity of proving that one’s grandmother was not a Jewess,’ there was no longer any official resistance against genealogi-cal research by German Mormons who ‘now have received letters of encouragement complimenting them for their patriotism.’” (D. Michael Quinn, *Elder Statesman: A Biography of J. Reuben Clark*, 2002, p. 283.)

1. LDS Basketball Team Gave Nazi Salute. “In January 1936 [the Church News] published a photograph of an LDS basketball team giving the Nazi *Sieg Heil* victory salute. The following July, it published a photograph of Apostle Joseph F. Merrill seated in front of the swastika banner of the Nazi Party during the Berlin conference of the Mutual Improvement Association for Mormon youths. In August 1937 there was a similar photo of LDS president Heber J. Grant seated in front of the swastika banner at the MIA conference in Frankfurt.” (*Ibid.*, p. 284.)

2. Plea for Understanding of Germany. Following a visit to Germany, President J. Reuben Clark reported to the other First Presidency members “that there was widespread support of Hitler among German members of the church. This was the context of his plea to the general conference of October 1938: ‘Let us not make a great body of the membership of our Church feel that they are outcasts from us because of the acts of their governments.’” (*Ibid.*, p. 285.)

3. Very Awkward for German Members. At first the Latter-day Saints fared quite well in the Third Reich. By 1937 there were 14,000 members in Germany, and no major conflicts had arisen between the Church and the Nazi state. Some members held pro-Nazi sympathies in the 1930s, and a few members joined the Nazi Party. "But in 1937, Nazi atrocities began to surface. Gestapo agents spied on members and Church services. . . . One by one, the Church's freedoms were curtailed. Boy Scouts and the Primary were eliminated so as not to compete with the Young Folks and Hitler Youth movements. Hymns could not be sung or missionary tracts distributed that mentioned 'Israel' or 'Zion.' Elder James E. Talmage's *Articles of Faith* was banned because it referred to Israel and Zion. Party officials sometimes prohibited street meetings and outlawed tracting. As censorship mounted, a few missionaries spent short stints in jail." All missionaries were evacuated in August, 1939, just on the eve of World War II. (Bruce A. Van Orden, *Building Zion: The Latter-day Saints in Europe*, 1996, p. 137.)

a. Five to Ten Percent of German Members Joined Nazi Party. "Steven Carter, using an unpublished paper authored by Douglas Tobler and Alan Keele, estimated that five to ten percent of German Mormons in the 1930s joined the Nazi Party." (David Conley Nelson, *Moroni and the Swastika: Mormons in Nazi Germany*, 2015, 281.)

B. Decision Not to Send More Missionaries to Germany. July 21, 1939. "Missionaries to Europe. I raised the question as to whether or not we wished to continue to send missionaries to Germany, pointing out that in case of war it might be a question of getting our missionaries out of Germany and having them thrown into concentration camps, with all the horrors that that entails. President Grant expressed himself as not feeling happy about the situation. He felt we ought to discontinue sending missionaries to Germany until matters quieted down. This was decided upon." (*The Diaries of J. Reuben Clark, 1933-1961, Abridged.* Privately published, 2010, 30.)

C. Missionaries Removed at Last Minute. "For most combatants in Europe, the Second World War began on September 1, 1939, when Hitler's army invaded Poland. For Mormons in Germany, the war effectively started one week earlier on August 23. From his office in Salt Lake City, connected by phone to his former State Department colleagues in Washington, D. C., First Counselor J. Reuben Clark monitored shocking event happening half a world away. The Mormons' second-in-command, a former undersecretary of state and ambassador, listened with apprehension to reports of a bilateral treaty being signed in Moscow. For the veteran diplomat and keen observer of international affairs, the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact between the Soviet Union and Germany could only mean one thing: war was inevitable. The unlikely alliance of a fascist and a communist state meant that Germany and the Soviet Union would divide the spoils. Several hours later, the First Presidency ordered all missionaries in Europe to evacuate." (David Conley Nelson, *Moroni and the Swastika: Mormons in Nazi Germany*, 2015, 225.)

1. Evacuation. Just before World War II broke out in Europe, the Church ordered all missionaries evacuated from Germany and Czechoslovakia on 24 August 1939. All over the Continent people were desperately seeking to get somewhere else. "Many missionaries had harrowing experiences before passing by fierce German border guards into the safety of neutral countries. When missionaries attempted to cross into the Netherlands, the Dutch authorities at the border rescinded their promise to allow the elders in. Thus, with very little money, these missionaries had to find their way north to the Danish border instead. The Lord's hand guided many in the evacuation. For example, in the West German Mission, the mission president assigned Elder George Seibold, a burley former football player, to search prayerfully in various German towns for 31 elders, many of them worried and without sufficient funds, and escort them to safety. At the Rhine city of Koln [Cologne], Elder Seibold got off the train at a large station filled with thousands of people. By whistling the missionary song, 'Do What Is Right, Let the Consequence Follow,' he located 8 missionaries. Through inspiration, he found all the others, usually in places other than their apartments, including one in a restaurant in an obscure village." (Bruce A. Van Orden, *Building Zion: The Latter-day Saints in Europe*, 1996, p. 140.)

2. Actions in Czechoslovakia. On July 1, 1939 the German Gestapo arrested 2 missionaries in Prague,

Czechoslovakia, and retained them in jail until Aug. 23. Early the next morning, a Gestapo agent escorted one of the detained missionaries to the mission home and commanded mission president Toronto to open the mission strongbox. The missionary distracted the agent, allowing Toronto to slip a large bundle of bills out of the box and into a desk drawer. The Germans confiscated the rest. The salvaged money would prove essential during the mission evacuation a few weeks later, just as World War II was commencing. (Kahlile Mehr, "Enduring Believers: Czechoslovakia and the LDS Church, 1884-1990," *Journal of Mormon History* 18, no. 2 [1992], pp. 112-122.)

D. Selective Service Act of 1940. "As a result of the U. S. Selective Service Act of 1940, which mandated service for those of military age, many young men entered the draft over a year before the events at Pearl Harbor compelled the United States to enter the war. For instance, the first wave of Latter-day Saint draftees in Utah took the servicemen's oath on 18 November 1940." (Robert C. Freeman, "Latter-day Saints in the World Wars," *Out of Obscurity: The LDS Church in the Twentieth Century*, papers delivered at the 29<sup>th</sup> Annual Sidney B. Sperry Symposium, BYU, 2000, p. 114.)

E. FBI Concerned About Some German Members in U. S. July 1, 1940. "Donoher-Mr. (Dr?) Came in pursuant to telephone from Orval Adams. Came in t tell me he had received word from very secret source that FBI people knew some of our German members were Hitlerites—Hitler spies. I explained our situation: the sympathy of our members; spoke of the foreign language meetings; the idle reports that were around about arrests e. g. Bp. Fetzer; read him from my conference talk in October lat [last?] (Germans vs Britons): our effort to keep our people (Germans) in line, etc. (I do not know why Donoher came to see me.)" (*The Diaries of J. Reuben Clark, 1933-1961, Abridged*. Privately published, 2010, 41.)

1. Temple Work Completed for Nazi Leaders. As one possible indication of strong Nazi sympathy in the Church, most of the high Nazi officials have had their temple work done. I recall an earlier time when those for whom temple work had been completed were listed on microfiche films, by country, at the Church Genealogical Library. While checking through the German microfiche, with all the names listed alphabetically I saw, as I recall, the names of Adolph Hitler, Eva Braun, Herman Goering, Joseph Goebbels, Adolf Eichmann, Heinrich Himmler, and others. These names were later removed from the available LDS records, for seemingly obvious reasons, but, nevertheless, their work has been done. (RW)

F. Missionaries and Military Service. On July 10, 1941, the First Presidency announced that missions in Europe were closed, but that missionaries would still be called to Latin America. They added: "*However, no young man should be recommended for a mission for the purpose of evading military service.*" [Emphasis in original.] Further, because of the higher risk of danger, no lady missionaries were to be called. (*Messages of the First Presidency*, compiled by James R. Clark, Vol. 6 [1975], p. 142.)

G. Church Against War in 1941. In October 1941, President J. Reuben Clark and the rest of the First Presidency wrote to the director of the U. S. Defense Bond program that "we do not believe that aggression should be carried on in the name and under the false cloak of defense." This was a reflection of Clark's pacifist views that he maintained throughout the war. (D. Michael Quinn, *J. Reuben Clark: The Church Years*, pp. 205, 207.)

H. Helmuth Huebener. While many LDS members in Germany were strong supporters of Hitler, at least at the start, a few came out in open opposition. Perhaps the best known was Helmuth Huebener, a fifteen-year-old deacon in Hamburg who served as the branch clerk. Convinced of the depravity of Nazism, Huebener and two of his young friends in the branch began secretly distributing anti-Nazi leaflets, which Huebener mimeographed on branch equipment. The three were soon arrested while sitting at their desks in school, and were charged with high treason on January 25, 1942. Eight months later, Huebener was beheaded with an axe and the other two were imprisoned until after the war. "Members of the Church in the entire Hamburg area were in a state of near panic, fearing arrests at any moment because members of the court had said that these boys must have been inspired by their parents and leaders." The district president was questioned for three days about the printing incident, but

was released when he convinced the Gestapo that the Church was not involved in this crime. . . . The young Huebener boy was excommunicated from the Church shortly after his death by worried Hamburg church officials.” In 1948 the First Presidency reviewed the case and posthumously reinstated Huebener as a member of the Church. (Gilbert Scharffs, *Mormonism in Germany*, 1970, pp. 102-4.)

1. Rudi Wobbe’s Account. In a review of Rudi Wobbe’s book, *Before the Blood Tribunal*, [which relates the story of the incident by one of the three boys arrested], the reviewer noted: “Each book recounts the increasing persecution of their Jewish neighbors, the sad occasion in early 1933 when the Nazi president of St. Georg Branch posted a sign forbidding Jews to enter, and the prouder moment when, after the death sentence had been pronounced, the three teenagers were led back to their cells. Onlookers from the courtroom lined both sides of the stairs and removed their hats in a quiet demonstration of respect.” (David Kitterman, *Journal of Mormon History*, Vol. 19, No. 2 [Fall 1993], pp. 165-6.)

I. Church Basically Isolationist. “The Church policy was more than an outcropping of submerged pacifism or an expression of World War I disillusionment. President Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal deeply alienated the Mormon Presidency. ‘Our nation cannot be preserved if the present governmental policies shall continue,’ the Presidency wrote. President Grant privately believed that Roosevelt was neither an ‘honest man’ nor wise in his policies. ‘It is one of the regrets of my life that I cannot take the stump against the . . . new deal,’ he wrote only eight days before Pearl Harbor. Grant, in fact feared that Roosevelt was seeking war to assume dictatorial power. Upon the Japanese attack, he privately accused the American president of ‘destroying the nation to the best of his ability by trying to get us in[to the] war when there was no need for it.’” (Ronald W. Walker, “Sheaves, Bucklers and the State: Mormon Leaders Respond to the Dilemmas of War.” *Sunstone*, July-August 1982, p. 51.)

1. Opposition to War Industries in Utah. Nov. 14, 1941 [three weeks before Pearl Harbor was bombed]. “Met this morning at 8:00 o’clock with the Friday morning welfare meeting. At this meeting was President Clark. He broke into the business of the meeting stating that he was trying to keep himself from getting excited but while he might forgive he could not forget that under the leadership of a group of men who had no concern for the future of our people, Salt Lake City was becoming the center of one of the most heavily fortified areas in the United States,—Fort Douglas on the east, the Ordnance Plant west of the city, the bombing fields out west of Tooele, and now the government is talking of putting \$24,000,000 in igloos for the storing of ammunition near the airport. He remarked that this group was headed by the Governor, H. B. Maw. He further stated that he could not help but feel that we are facing difficult times, that it looked very much like the President was going to take over all key industries in the country, and he, President Clark, had a feeling that labor was cooperating by creating situations which seem to force the President’s hand. The advice given this morning was that we urge our people to stay on their farms and in their permanent jobs and not to flock to defense industries for work.” (*The Diaries of Marion G. Romney 1941-1961, Abridged*; printed privately, 2010, 283.)

2. Why Didn’t Church Speak Out? “By refusing any moral pronouncements, the First Presidency opened itself to the charge of subjugating principle to obedience, especially in view of the war’s fascist and anti-Semitic challenges. In the United States the effect was eased by the statements of other General Authorities who exceeded the narrow and cautious official declarations of the Presidency. However, in Germany, where Mor-monism in 1939 had over 15,000 adherents, the Church policy passively confirmed the Third Reich. Although isolated cases of Mormon resistance to Nazism did occur, including one teenager who was beheaded for distribu-ting anti-government propaganda, most members loyally if at times fearfully supported the regime. Perhaps 600 German Saints gave their lives for it.” (*Ibid.*, p. 52.)

J. Participation in Second World War. “Most of those who opposed intervention from 1939 to 1941 were supportive of the U.S. entry into World War II after the Pearl Harbor attack by Imperial Japan, an Axis ally of Nazi Germany, but [First Presidency Counselor] J. Reuben Clark remained implacably opposed to declaration of war against either Japan or Germany. Instead of regarding the Pearl Harbor attack as justification for war, he stated publicly and privately that Franklin D. Roosevelt had goaded both Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan into

attacking the United States so that there would be reason to declare war on the side of Great Britain. President Clark therefore regarded U.S. participation in World War II as unnecessary and criminal.” (D. Michael Quinn, *J. Reuben Clark: The Church Years*, 1983, p. 206.)

1. General Conference Statement. “In the summer of 1942 Reuben thought that Britain and Russia would soon be forced to capitulate to Nazi Germany, and he drafted a First Presidency message which condemned ‘hate-driven militarists’ and urged a negotiated and immediate end to hostilities. He read it as a statement of the First Presidency at the general conference of 3 October 1942.” (*Ibid.*, p. 206.)

2. Lack of Church Support for War Effort. “In view of J. Reuben Clark’s consistent hostility toward U.S. participation in World War II, it is not surprising that he used his considerable administrative influence to forestall any Church support of the war effort.” He opposed having members work in munitions plants. He wrote a lengthy letter to the Secretary of War “urging that there be no added munition plants or military installations in Utah.” He “grudgingly allowed the FBI to have the names of returned missionaries who could furnish information about ‘towns and cities in Axis countries’ during World War II, but he absolutely refused to allow returned missionaries to act as spies in the countries where they had served their missions.” In October 1941 he “drafted a Presidency letter to the director of the U.S. Defense Bond program stating that ‘we do not believe that aggression should be carried on in the name and under the false cloak of defense.’ After the Pearl Harbor attack he refused to cooperate in providing Church payroll deductions for war bonds.” As late as 1944 he stated, “the Church will not take over the responsibility of financing this war and in this area.” He also declined to allow the Salt Lake Tabernacle or its famed choir to be used for what he regarded as wartime propaganda films and victory rallies.” He worked to have members of bishoprics exempt from the draft. He wrote that the U.S. and England attempted “virtually to destroy the German people, a loss which is not only fiendish in its conception but in its execution. There is no people in the world to replace the German people.” Two days after the atomic bomb devastated Hiroshima, he wrote an editorial for the *Deseret News* “which said that the United States had perverted scientific truth, betrayed God’s trust, and used the atom bomb without justification, even though he acknowledged that it might save countless American lives . . .” He told the October 1946 general conference that the United States “committed the crowning savagery of the war” by using the atomic bomb against Japanese “men, women, and children, and cripples,” and said “God will not forgive us” for celebrating means of such wholesale slaughter and for continuing research on nuclear weapons. (D. Michael Quinn, *J. Reuben Clark: The Church Years*, 1983, 206-213.)

a. Charge That Church Was Unpatriotic. Jan. 27, 1943. “Hugh B. Brown—in re Soldiers Compendium—Approved his suggestion that strong paragraphs go in on Chastity, that ditto for word of wisdom, he to draft something; appvd his going over messages of Fst Pres., to find passages that could be used by Soldiers to combat Charge Ch was unpatriotic.” (*The Diaries of J. Reuben Clark, 1933-1961, Abridged*. Privately published, 2010, 63.)

1. Members Should Have Fewer Social Contacts with Soldiers. Jan. 29, 1943. “Pres. Grant—Reported yesterdays meeting at Temple—Ruling of Twelve that would not use Church instrumentalities to facilitate indiscriminate social contacts with soldiers, and to warn people against the dangers of such contacts.” (*Ibid.*, 63.)

3. No Help for Jews. “As Hitler intensified his repression of Jewish civil liberties and threatened a continental war of conquest in Europe, many of Europe’s Jewish millions tried desperately to escape by emigrating to the United States. . . . When Jewish families appealed to the First Presidency for returned missionaries to sponsor their exit from Nazi dominions, President Clark dictated the reply in January 1939 that ‘we have so many requests of this sort from various persons, including members of the Church, that we have found it necessary to ask to be excused from making the required guarantee,’ and recommended that the petitioners contact Jewish organizations for help. . . . From 1945 to 1951 he continued to use his personal and administrative abilities against what he perceived as national Jewish influence.” (D. Michael Quinn, *J. Reuben Clark: The Church Years*, 1983, 227.)

K. Church Purchase of War Bonds. In April 1942, the Church announced: “The Church itself and the three banks and one insurance company which it controls, own outright more than \$17,500,000 worth of government bonds, long and short term, which is more than \$23.77 for every man, woman, and child in the wards and stakes of the Church. This takes no account of the private holdings of the people which will run into considerable figures, though as the bulk of our people are moderately circumstanced, their private holdings will likewise be moderate. We feel this is a very large contribution, but anticipate it will be somewhat increased later.” (*Mes-sages of the First Presidency*, compiled by James R. Clark, Vol. VI [1975], p. 164.)

L. Efforts to Retain Missionaries. A message of the First Presidency dated April 6, 1942, stated: “. . . A man does not necessarily have to volunteer. In fact, it would be hoped that young members of the Church would have the strengthening, stabilizing development of missionary service, and perhaps some schooling, before they enter the service, if indeed they are required to do so at all. And sometimes they are required to serve. If so, the brethren have said: “. . . the members of the Church have always felt under obligation to come to the defense of their country when a call to arms was made. . . .” (*The Improvement Era*, May 1942, pp. 346, 348-49.)

M. Church Members Found on Both Sides. At the April 1944 general conference, Elder Joseph Anderson read a talk by President Heber J. Grant, who was too ill to participate: “Between forty-five and fifty thousand of the young men of this Church are now wearing the uniforms of their respective countries. . . . I pray the Lord to bless you, our young men in the armed forces of the world, that our Heavenly Father will be with you to sustain you and to increase your faith day by day; that you may be preserved in your trials, your hardships, your suffer-ing, with strength to face the eventualities of each day and with the assurance that the Lord, your God, will bring in his own way and time everlasting compensation to you for your sacrifice, as you walk in his ways for your sacrifice, as you walk in his ways and live lives that conform with the Priesthood you bear. I pray for the wives, the children, the mothers and fathers of these men who are serving their countries the world over, that they may be sustained in their waiting, that their anxious fears may be quieted, that comfort and assurance may come into their lives.” (*The Mind and Will of the Lord: Indexed Discourses of Heber J. Grant Speaking in General Conference*, compiled and indexed by Harold W. Pease, 2005, p. 468.)

N. Participation by American Members. The number of Mormons in uniform steadily increased through the war years to a high of approximately 100,000 in 1945. While Mormons constituted 0.5 percent of the citizenry of the United States in 1940, at the height of World War II, they made up approximately 1 percent of the total U. S. military force. (Robert C. Freeman, “Latter-day Saints in the World Wars,” *Out of Obscurity: The LDS Church in the Twentieth Century*, papers delivered at the 29<sup>th</sup> Annual Sidney B. Sperry Symposium, BYU, 2000, p. 114.)

O. Missionaries to Register for the Draft. On January 14, 1942, a letter from the First Presidency was sent to all mission presidents instructing them that “under the provisions of the Conscription Act of 1941 all mission-aries are to register for military service, giving their home address as their legal address.” (*Messages of the First Presidency*, compiled by James R. Clark, Vol. 6 [1975], p. 144.)

1. Church Won’t Assist Draft Evaders. May 2, 1944. “President Clark had prepared a draft letter to be sent, if approved by the Brethren, to Colonel Rich, calling attention to the principle of the First Presidency announced in their letter of March 8, 1944, that there must be good faith in all of these Church appointments, and if there were not good faith and there was fraud to avoid induction, that that changed the situation. The letter also called attention to the statements made by the First Presidency in their letter of March 24, 1942 where it told of the First Presidency’s refusal to assist draft evaders even to the point of taking three men off the train after they had started on their missions.” (*The Diaries of J. Reuben Clark, 1933-1961, Abridged*. Privately published, 2010, 75.)

P. Question of Garments. On October 30, 1942, the First Presidency announced: “Primarily the wearing of the garment is an individual responsibility. It is associated with sacred obligations entered into by the wearer with the Lord in the temple; consequently, the conscience of the wearer must guide when circumstances seem to justify

a modification of these obligations. The sacredness of the garment should be ever present and uppermost in the wearer's mind. One way to protect this sacredness is not to expose it to the view of scoffers, and where conditions arise making such exposure unavoidable, it would seem best reverently to lay aside the garment and then put it on again when such conditions pass. The First Presidency has felt that this policy might be followed by soldiers during their enlistment." (*Messages of the First Presidency*, compiled by James R. Clark, Vol. VI [1975], p. 186.)

**Q. LDS Chaplains.** The number of LDS chaplains in World War II was significantly larger than in World War I. Whereas in World War I there were only three LDS chaplains, by the end of World War II there were 46 commissioned by the U.S. military. One Mormon chaplain, Eldin Ricks, reported that he dedicated ten LDS graves in one day. (Robert C. Freeman, "Latter-day Saints in the World Wars," *Out of Obscurity: The LDS Church in the Twentieth Century*, papers delivered at the 29<sup>th</sup> Annual Sidney B. Sperry Symposium, BYU, 2000, p. 11.)

**R. Conference Restricted by War.** When the United States entered World War II, gas rationing began almost immediately. In response, beginning in 1942, general conferences were closed to the general membership of the Church, and were limited to approximately 500 priesthood leaders (general authorities and stake presidents). (James B. Allen and Glen M. Leonard, *The Story of the Latter-day Saints*, 1976, p. 544.)

1. The Sunday session of the April 1942 general conference was held in the fourth floor assembly room of the Salt Lake Temple. Nearly all of the stake presidencies of the Church were in attendance. The meeting commenced at 10:00 a.m. and ended at 4:30 p.m. At 12:30 p.m. the sacrament was administered to all those present by the Twelve Apostles. Elder Harold B. Lee recorded, "In the next four hours, 45 of the brethren bore testimonies, and in that time there was hardly a moment when tears were not in the eyes of the listeners. Testimonies of miraculous healing, raising the dead, divine guidance, power of cleanliness, and rewards for keeping the commandments of God were borne. President McKay testified that many of our loved ones were present in the meeting." (Harold B. Lee journal, cited in L. Brent Goates, *Harold B. Lee: Prophet and Seer*, 1985, p. 176.)

1. **Entering—But Not Beginning—a War May Be Justified.** At that April 5, 1942 general conference (held on Easter Sunday), President McKay preached: "Thus we see that war is incompatible with Christ's teach-ings. The gospel of Jesus Christ is the gospel of peace. War is its antithesis, and produces hate. It is vain to attempt to reconcile war with true Christianity." "McKay then used the war in heaven as an example of a war that is justifiable: 'In that rebellion Lucifer said in substance: 'By the law of force I will compel the human family to subscribe to the eternal plan, but give me thing honor and power.' Defending the agency of another, McKay stated, 'may justify a truly Christian man to enter—mind you, I say enter, not begin—a war.'" (*Conference Report*, April 1942; Boyd Jay Petersen, "The War in Heaven," *Journal of Mormon History*, 38:1 [Winter 2012], 33.)

**S. Teachers as Missionaries During War.** On Nov. 20, 1943, the First Presidency announced: "Sisters engaged as professional school teachers, being personally fitted and having acquired through experience and training in the Church the ability creditably to represent the Church in the proclamation of the Gospel, may be recommended to spend their vacations in the mission field as short-term missionaries, paying their own transportation and other expenses." (*Messages of the First Presidency*, compiled by James R. Clark, Vol. VI [1975], p. 205.)

**T. Conscientious Objection.** President Heber J. Grant approved a letter in January 1943 stating that "the Church leaves this matter of conscientious objecting to war to the individual." (D. Michael Quinn, *Elder States-man: A Biography of J. Reuben Clark*, 2002, p. 302.)

1. **National Service Board for Religious Objectors would Send Church Names of 7 LDS Objectors.** May 8, 1944. "Dr. E. LeRoy Dakon . . . came in to see me, representing the National Service Board for Religious

Objectors, being the field Secretary of the churches.” [He told Pres. J. Reuben Clark there were seven LDS men who were conscientious objectors.] . . . “they would send us the names of our own who are in these camps so that we might get in touch with them and save them to our church.” (*The Diaries of J. Reuben Clark, 1933-1961, Abridged*. Privately published, 2010, 76.)

2. Possibly More Than Ten. “The number of these LDS conscientious objectors is uncertain but apparently exceeded ten.” (Ronald W. Walker, “Sheaves, Bucklers and the State: Mormon Leaders Respond to the Dilemmas of War.” *Sunstone*, July-August 1982, p. 56 , f103.)

U. Men Under 40 or 42 Not to Be Called into Bishoprics. April 1, 1944. As the war progressed, and the need for more military troops become urgent, the issue was raised about continued deferment from the draft for men serving in bishoprics. After consideration of the complexity of the issue, “we are willing to do this: that hereafter we will not call men below 40 or 42, whatever it is, into Bishoprics as either Bishops or First or Second Counselors, that we are willing not to call them in hereafter unless they already have a deferred status which would be more or less permanent.” (*The Diaries of J. Reuben Clark, 1933-1961, Abridged*. Privately published, 2010, 73.)

1. Church Wanted to Cooperate. April 3, 1944. After discussing the draft issue with a “General McConnel,” Pres. Clark talked with a Twin Falls, Idaho stake president about a bishop who had been deferred from the draft. The stake president noted that the general had been “very kind, very cooperative, and very appreciative of this position [of not calling younger men into bishoprics]. Pres. Clark, just to keep the record straight, responded: ‘We do want to cooperate. On the other hand, however, we cannot let a local [draft] board tell us who should be the Bishop of a Ward.’” (*Ibid.*, 73.)

V. LDS Casualties. “At the war’s end, a total of 5,714 Mormons in U.S. uniform ‘were killed, wounded, or missing in action’ . . . along with hundreds of other non-U.S. Mormons in Britain, continental Europe, the Pacific islands, and the British empire.” (D. Michael Quinn, *Elder Statesman: A Biography of J. Reuben Clark*, 2002, p. 304.)

1. By the end of the war, approximately 5,000 Latter-day Saint servicemen from Allied and Axis nations had died. (Robert C. Freeman, “Latter-day Saints in the World Wars,” *Out of Obscurity: The LDS Church in the Twentieth Century*, papers delivered at the 29<sup>th</sup> Annual Sidney B. Sperry Symposium, BYU, 2000, p. 114.)

W. Impact of War on Church in Germany. “By the end of the war over 600 German members died, including three acting mission presidents and three district presidents. . . . Also, over 2,500 members in Germany were listed as missing and 80 percent were left homeless.” (Robert C. Freeman, “Latter-day Saints in the World Wars,” *Out of Obscurity: The LDS Church in the Twentieth Century*, papers delivered at the 29<sup>th</sup> Annual Sidney B. Sperry Symposium, BYU, 2000, p. 121.)

1. Rape Victims. “Roger Minert, a professor of family history at BYU, interviewed a number of LDS survivors of the Red Army’s advance on Berlin. Rape was a threat they were determined to escape. Although no records provide the number of Mormon women assaulted by Red Army soldiers, author Anthony Beevor stated that two Berlin hospitals estimated the local rape victims to number between 95,000 and 130,000. One LDS mother successfully disguised her seventeen-year-old daughter as an old woman in order to protect her from marauding and raping Soviet occupation soldiers. Others sent their daughters to live with relatives in the countryside.” (David Conley Nelson, *Moroni and the Swastika: Mormons in Nazi Germany*, 2015, 237.)

a. Much Worse for Members in East Germany. “The records of the East German Mission do contain accounts of Mormons raped during the forced evacuations from East Prussia: ‘Women and girls, some just approaching adolescence, have been repeatedly ravished. One of the mothers was forced at the point of a gun to watch her daughter being ravished by a group of ten soldiers. Another girl, not yet twelve years old, has been

raped several times. One of the sisters, whose husband was snatched out of his sick bed and deported to Siberia, was ravished three times in one night, resulting in the birth of a little Russian baby boy for whom she is now caring along with her other two children.” (*Ibid.*, 238.)

2. Victims of Bombing Raids. “For women caring for children and elderly members, shelter became the next problem. Otto Berndt estimated that 60 to 70 percent of Hamburg’s Mormons lost their homes as a result of the horrific Allied aerial attacks in 1943, when the British Royal Air Force bombed by night and the American Army Air Force wreaked havoc by day. Only one Hamburg District branch meetinghouse, the rented Masonic Temple in Altona, survived the bombardment.” (*Ibid.*, 238.)

a. Members Flooding in from Other Less-Safe Areas. “Berlin’s Mormons had an additional problem. Not only did they have to provide shelter for bombed-out church members from their own city, but they also inherited the responsibility for accommodating German-speaking Latter-day Saints fleeing the relentlessly advancing Soviets from the East. . . . The problem of finding temporary shelter for the refugees arriving in Berlin had been compounded in 1943 when the Berlin mission headquarters was destroyed in an air raid.” An older mission leader took in 37 members to his apartment “at one time, while they awaited placement with Mormon families in Saxony.” He “wrote that during the war years he had sought refuge in the air raid shelters a total of 395 times.” (*Ibid.*, 238-39.)

b. Problems Even After War’s End. After the war, “from 1945 to 1947, the Latter-day Saints ran a home for displaced Mormons that housed as many as 99 families.” (*Ibid.*, 241.)

3. German Saints Using Potato Peelings for Sacrament Bread. “In 1945, the church received permission to send Elder Ezra Taft Benson, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, into war-torn Europe to visit the Saints and assess their needs. While attending a sacrament meeting, he found the Saints were using potato peelings for the sacrament because there was no bread.” (Trent Toone, “Fire and Steel,” *Deseret News*, Dec. 27, 2015, P11.)

4. First Church Aid Arrived in June 1946. “Except for the small quantities of relief supplies provided on an individual basis by American soldiers, the first church-dispatched aid for Mormons arrived in Germany in June 1946 by way of Geneva, Switzerland. The Salt Lake City hierarchy enlisted the aid of the International Red Cross for its distribution, as the Red Cross enjoyed the cooperation of the military occupation authorities. . . . A second shipment of American food and clothing arrived in Berlin in early October 1946. . . . Some 41 freight carloads of clothing and 99 freight carloads of food, with a total value of \$1,232,000, found its way from North American Latter-day Saints to European Mormons in 1947-47.” (*Ibid.*, 246.)

5. Rush to Emigrate. “The year 1948 saw the beginning of a substantial German Mormon migration to the United States. Through the year 1962, according to one estimate, 4,493 German Latter-day Saints immigrated to the Mormon Culture Region.” (*Ibid.*, 248.)

X. Use of the Atomic Bomb. While President Truman, and Americans in general, believed the use of two atomic bombs in Japan actually reduced the number of overall casualties that would otherwise have occurred, President J. Reuben Clark considered their use an unspeakable betrayal of God: “Its use to kill will become the aim and practice of all nations. Sometime our children’s children will have it turned against them, that they, too, may be exterminated, annihilated. When that time comes they will have no moral weapon against it, for we, their ancestors, will have cursed humanity by its first use; they may [also] no physical weapon to combat it. And humanity may be as depraved and Christian virtue as dead then as now. Our posterity must pay the penalty, to the last farthing.” (D. Michael Quinn, *Elder Statesman: A Biography of J. Reuben Clark*, 2002, p. 305.)

1. Dresden, Hiroshima and Nagasaki. At the October 1946 general conference, Pres. J. Reuben Clark condemned the American military for killing 250,000 German civilians in its two-day bombing of the non-militarized city of Dresden.” He continued: “Then as the crowning savagery of the war, we Americans

wiped out hundreds of thousands of civilian population with the atom bomb in Japan, few if any of the ordinary civilians being any more responsible for the war than were we, and perhaps most of them no more aiding Japan in the war than we were aiding America. Military men are now saying that the atom bomb was a mistake. It was more than that; it was a world tragedy. Thus we have lost all that we gained during the years from Grotius (1625) to 1912. And the worst of this atomic bomb tragedy is not that not only did the people of the United States not rise up in protest against this savagery, not only did it not shock us to read of this wholesale destruction of men, women, and children, and cripples, but that it actually drew from the nation at large a general approval of this fiendish butchery.” (*Conference Report*, October 1946 p. 89.)

Y. LDS Medal of Honor Recipients. “Five American Latter-day Saints received the most highly esteemed award of the United States military—the Congressional Medal of Honor: Mervyn S. Bennion (1942, post-humously), Leonard C. Bostrom (1945), William E. Hall (1943), Nathan K. Van Noy Jr. (1944, posthumously), and George E. Wahlen (1944). Additionally, Ed Michaels, a convert to the Church in the 1950s, also received the award.” (Robert C. Freeman, “Latter-day Saints in the World Wars,” *Out of Obscurity: The LDS Church in the Twentieth Century*, papers delivered at the 29<sup>th</sup> Annual Sidney B. Sperry Symposium, BYU, 2000, p. 115.)

Z. Marines in Nagasaki. Elder L. Tom Perry related this story: “There was an experience in my life which has often reminded me of the joy resulting from asking the question, what would the Savior do in this situation? I was among the first wave of marines to go ashore in Japan, following the signing of the peace treaty following World War II. As we entered the devastated city of Nagasaki, it was one of the saddest experiences of my life. A large part of the city had been totally destroyed. Some of the dead had not yet been buried. As occupation troops, we set up headquarters and went to work. The situation was very bleak and a few of us wanted to give more. We went to our division chaplain and requested permission to help rebuild the Christian churches. Because of government restrictions during the war, these churches had almost ceased to function. Their few buildings were badly damaged. A group of us volunteered to repair and re-plaster these chapels during our off-duty time so that they would be available for the holding of Christian services again. We had no command of the language. All we could accomplish was the physical labor of repairing the building. We found the ministers who had been unable to serve during the war years and encouraged them to return to their pulpits. We had a tremendous experience with these people, as they again experienced the freedom to practice their Christian beliefs.

“An event occurred as we were leaving Nagasaki to return home that I will always remember. As we were boarding the train, that would take us to our ships to return home, we were teased by a lot of the other marines. They had their girlfriends with them saying goodbye to them. They laughed at us and indicated that we had missed the fun of being in Japan. We had just wasted our time laboring and plastering walls. Just as they were at the height of their teasing, up over a little rise near the train station came about 200 of these great Japanese Christians from the churches we had repaired, singing “Onward Christian Soldiers.” They came down and showered us with gifts. Then they all lined up along the railroad track and as the train started down the tracks, we reached out and just touched their fingers as we left. We couldn’t speak, our emotions were too strong. But we were grateful that we could help in some small way in reestablishing Christianity in a nation after the war.” (L. Tom Perry, LDS Church Public Affairs Radio News 6 May 2000.)

AA. Names Used on Ships. “An interesting side note to the war experience was that two liberty-class navy ships that were commissioned by the U.S. Navy were named for LDS presidents. The U.S.S. *Brigham Young* launched on 17 August 1942, and the U.S.S. *Joseph Smith* was introduced to the naval fleet on 22 May 1943, both from California. Local Church members delivered speeches and provided music for each of the christening ceremonies.” (Robert C. Freeman, “Latter-day Saints in the World Wars,” *Out of Obscurity: The LDS Church in the Twentieth Century*, papers delivered at the 29<sup>th</sup> Annual Sidney B. Sperry Symposium, BYU, 2000, p. 119.)

BB. The Borgstrom Family. At a patriotic ceremony in Tremonton, Utah in August 2001, President Thomas S. Monson remembered an incident in World War II when four Borgstrom brothers were killed in combat.

He recounted a conversation between Gen. Mark W. Clark and the mother of the boys which took place following services held in the Garland Stake Center for the four brothers when their remains were returned to their home. With one son still serving in the war, the mother quietly asked Gen. Clark if their sixth and last son would also be taken by the military. "When Gen. Clark, commander of the 5<sup>th</sup> Army, offered his support to spare her youngest son, the father suddenly leaned forward and said: 'Mother, I have overheard your conversation with the general about our youngest, and I want you both to know that I will make no deals about his service. When his country needs him, he will go.' 'I could hardly contain my emotions,' wrote Gen. Clark. 'Here was a man with four sons lying dead from wounds received in battle, and he was ready to make the last sacrifice if his country required it.' President Monson then quoted Gen. Clark who said, 'the Borgstrom mother and father were the bravest and most inspiring Americans I ever met.'" (*Church News*, Aug. 25, 2001, p. 3.)

CC. Mormon Soldiers Assigned to Occupied Japan. The "number of Mormon soldiers in occupation forces [in Japan] may have numbered slightly less than 2,000, with perhaps several hundred religiously active. This estimate is consistent with the fact that about five hundred Mormon military personnel from Japan and the Philippines attended the first postwar LDS conference in Tokyo on 7 April 1946." (Shinji Takagi, "Church Beginnings in Occupied Japan, 1945-48," *Journal of Mormon History*, 28:2, Fall 2002, 108.)

## VII. Korean War

A. Armageddon? On April 8, 1951, President David O. McKay, newly sustained as President of the Church, said in general conference: "At the moment there is being enacted a great world drama, the final act of which we can only dimly surmise. In Korea, one of the bloodiest wars of modern time is raging. . . . Battling for the same cause are Buddhists, followers of Confucius, Moslems, and Christians. Opposed to these are Commu-nists, openly avowed to be anti-Christ. . . . It would almost seem to be the beginning of the great battle of Armageddon." (*Conference Report*, April 1951, p. 96.)

B. No Specific Instructions. Unlike World War II, when numerous official statements on war were announced by the First Presidency, during the Korean War, there were no official statements made in general conferences. (Ronald Walker, *Sunstone*, July-August 1982.)

C. Those Serving. Approximately 18,000 Latter-day Saints served in the Korean War. (D. Michael Quinn, *J. Reuben Clark: The Church Years*, 1983, p. 20.)

D. Church Position on War Bonds. April 24, 1953. "President [Stephen L] Richards called President [J. Reuben] Clark to see what he thought about the First Presidency posing with Mary Pickford to advertise the bond drive, that Don Christensen had been in touch with President McKay's secretary about it. President Clark said he did not wish to do it. Brother Adam S. Bennion has said he could take care of the matter if he were given authorization to do so. It was agreed that he should be asked to do so. This decision was given to Clare Middlemiss, President McKay's secretary." (*The Diaries of Stephen L Richards, 1951-1954, Abridged*, 2010, 278-79.)

E. Service to Korean Natives. Between 1951 and 1955, LDS servicemen in Korea "attained success without the aid of any full-time missionaries or the benefit of Church literature of any kind in the native language. . . . The initial labor was centered at Pusan, the largest port city in Korea, on the southern tip of the peninsula. . . . It was here that in January 1952, the servicemen offered English language and gospel investigator classes. These were advertised in the local schools, and by the end of that year attendance reached a peak of 327 Korean students and 32 GI's during one evening alone." Baptisms resulted, and branches were organized. As one Korean convert wrote in an open letter: "To LDS servicemen who have served in Korea. Every Korean person looks upon you with their joyful eyes, even with tears of gratitude. What a wonderful work you have done in the past and are now doing. The Korean saints have all been converted directly or indirectly through your honest efforts and sincere

conduct. They followed your directions that they might become more like you in their lives sooner or later if they are sincere enough. You LDS servicemen opened a wonderful chance to serve the people and promote your faith. Whatever may be the task, the results are good for you and for the Korean people.” (J. Spencer Palmer, *The Church Encounters Asia*, 1970, pp. 93, 98.)

1. Elder Harold B. Lee told a general conference crowd in 1954 that the servicemen in the Far East had raised enough funds each month to sustain 21 full-time missionaries in the Japanese mission. As a direct result, 47 converts were baptized in that mission during 1953 alone. (*Ibid.*, p. 100.)

2. As soon as the war ended in 1955, a mission was established in Korea. President Andrus noted: “The Lord blessed us greatly and by the time I was directed to organize the Korean Mission, the church had grown from about sixty Korean members converted by LDS servicemen, with no property owned by the Church, to a membership of over 1,500 Koreans organized into 5 branches each with meetinghouse property owned by the Church. All this was accomplished in the immediate aftermath of the Korean War while the cities and the economy lay in devastation.” (*LDSWorld-Gems*, Feb. 19, 2001.)

## VIII. Vietnam War

A. Early Views of Pres. Clark. In comments that now seem prescient, First Presidency member J. Reuben Clark wrote to a U. S. Senator in 1954, the year the U. S. started sending in military advisors to Vietnam: “I am impressed as to Indo-China, with this fact: That country is a colony of France. I am told that France has said she will not send some classes of her troops to Indo-China. If her colony is not worth her spending her blood for it, it is not worth our spending our blood for it. . . . Finally, while unalterably opposed to Communism, I can imagine that an enlightened Communism may be a whole lot better than a decrepit, deficient, corrupt colonial govern-ment. I rather feel that that principle could be applied to very much of the situation in the whole Far East. In my personal view, our greatest danger and greatest handicap is the concept, not yet more than half-expressed, sometimes, perhaps, not even fully recognized that we are destined to dictate to and rule the world, though we have not enough sense to rule ourselves wisely. That is the first step towards the ultimate decay that led to the downfall of Rome, that is carrying forward Britain, France, Italy, and of course, Russia.” (J. Reuben Clark to U.S. Senator Henry Dworshak, 17 May 1954; cited in *Sunstone*, March 1985, p. 21.)

B. Missionary Work During War. The first servicemen’s group in Vietnam was organized in 1962. By 1965 there were 1,500 LDS servicemen in Vietnam, as the war continued. By May 1966, there were 2,200 LDS servicemen there. They were responsible for the conversion of more than 30 Vietnamese. Catholic and Protestant missionaries had long been established in Indo China, and about 11% of the Vietnamese were Christians. When the Communists took control of the north, more than 800,000 Catholic refugees fled to South Vietnam. In 1971, the Saigon Branch was organized with a Vietnamese president. Four missionaries from Hong Kong were transferred to Saigon in 1973. They had to be especially careful, as the war made Saigon a very dangerous place for Americans. The missionaries’ parents were even asked to sign a consent form for their sons to be in Vietnam. An early convert, known as Sister Vy, translated the Book of Mormon in 1974, and by then, the local membership was about 100. Additional elders arrived, and brought to 15 the number who served there prior to the fall of Saigon. As the threat of a Communist takeover grew, many Vietnamese desired to learn of the gospel. By March, 1975, there were about 250 Vietnamese members in Saigon. (R. Lanier Britsch, *From the East: The History of the Latter-day Saints in Asia, 1851-1996*, 1998, pp.436-8.)

1. Many Servicemen Converted. “By the time the last vestiges of American presence were withdrawn from Vietnam in 1975, 200 local Vietnamese and 1,000 servicemen had joined the LDS Church.” (George M. McCune, *Gordon B. Hinckley: Shoulder for the Lord*, 1996, p. 410.)

C. The Evacuation of Saigon. By March, 1975, there were about 250 Vietnamese members in Saigon. That

month, a U.S. government civilian, Louis Eldredge, contacted Pres. Jerry Wheat in Hong Kong and “strongly suggested that the missionaries should begin exit procedures from Vietnam and apply for reentry visas into Hong Kong.” The elders, however, had in a sense become immune to the seriousness of their circumstances. “Had it not been for the visit of Paul Bennion, an LDS civilian who ran into the chapel and yelled hysterically, ‘Elders, get out of here!’ and a call from Sis. June Eldredge, saying, ‘You had better prepare your visas and get out of here,’ the elders might have questioned Pres. Jerry Wheat when he called and ordered them to leave the country.” The last two elders to leave, together with some Vietnamese members, destroyed all American-influenced materials and took the branch records with them to Hong Kong. (R. Lanier Britsch, *From the East: The History of the Latter-day Saints in Asia, 1851-1996*, 1998, p. 438.)

1. A few members got out of Vietnam during the week before April 27, the last Sunday when LDS worship services were held in Saigon. But most of the Saints gathered on that day to receive instructions and make plans for leaving. Years later, Pres. The recalled that painful hour: “So it was that on Sunday, April 27, 1975, with the enemy at our very gates, members of the Saigon Branch met to discuss our collective fates. Cut off by the war from our lines of Church authority, we were afraid and felt utterly helpless. We reverently and humbly . . . sang ‘Come, Come Ye Saints’ from the depths of our souls. Our tiny branch, so far away from the main body of the Church, conducted its own funeral. We knew that some of us might escape to freedom and others might be left behind. Some of us were not sure which would be worse.” Pres. The’s wife and children were flown to safety on one of the last airplanes out. “But Pres. The, Nguyen Cao Minh, Dr. Nghia, Sis. Vy, [and a few other branch leaders] were trapped in the city because of the unexpected rapidity of the Communist takeover. Saigon fell to the Communists on April 30. Just over 100 members of the Church are known to have left Vietnam during the evacuation. This left approximately 150 who were not able to escape.” (*Ibid.*, p. 439)

2. “The chapel was confiscated, and the membership was scattered. ‘The Saigon Branch had ceased to exist, except in our hearts.’ Before long, Bro. The and the others were imprisoned in ‘reeducation camps.’ Their experiences were always difficult and sometimes brutal. . . . Following many months of inhumane suffering, political indoctrination, and ‘reeducation,’ Pres. The (who spent 27 months in prison), Bro. Minh (who hid out until he fled), and many other Saints managed to escape from Vietnam.” Like hundreds of thousands of other Vietnamese, “they took to the sea in overloaded and unreliable boats and became part of the ‘boat people.’ By 1980 most of the 150 members who were not evacuated before the Communist takeover had left Vietnam. By 1985, all but 18 LDS families had escaped.” Sis Vy, the Relief Society president who translated the Book of Mormon and was such an educated and devoted member, spent several years hiding in a cave before emigrating. In 1996 the last of the families (the Nguyen Ngoc Thachs) was brought out of Vietnam. (*Ibid.*, pp. 440, 442-3)

D. Efforts to Rescue Others. In 1973, when the U.S. troops withdrew from Vietnam, there were almost 400 Vietnamese converts, and some 60 others who were waiting to be baptized who were left behind. Some 125-150 were able to flee in the final days of the war. A group of Mormon servicemen have organized the Veterans Assisting Saints Abroad Association (VASAA), to try and help those left behind. They have succeeded in locating 90 members in Vietnam, including the Relief Society president who, for her own safety, had been living as a recluse in a cave. VASAA member Lewis Ross of SLC was able to visit Saigon in March 1985, and meet with 7 LDS families there. It was the first time the families had been together in 10 years. He was able to distribute some church materials among the members. The organization will work to help others get out if possible. (*BYU Today*, Feb. 1986, p. 14.)

E. LDS Who Opposed War. According to D. Michael Quinn, “about 10 percent of LDS youth opposed the war [in Vietnam], sometimes becoming conscientious objectors, draft dodgers, or refugees to Canada.” (D. Michael Quinn, *Elder Statesman: A Biography of J. Reuben Clark*, 2002, p. 317.)

1. Reflecting on the turmoil of the times, Quinn notes that he and some of his missionary companions volunteered for military service during the Vietnam War. One died during the invasion of Cambodia in 1970. Another fellow missionary protested against the war and became a permanent exile in Canada. He adds, “Most of my LDS friends avoided military service through various kinds of deferments.” (*Ibid.*, p. 554, f286.)

2. During the war, I received a late-night phone call from a student I had taught at Ogden High School. He was calling from the East Coast, and told me he had tentatively decided to flee to Canada to avoid what he considered an unjust war. He wanted to know my opinions on the subject. He was a returned missionary (I spoke at his farewell) and a student at MIT. (RW).

3. While principal at Cottonwood High School, I was frightened by the intensity of the anti-war movement, but sympathetic with the feelings of numerous students who told me they would not fight. I recall one student who came to my office to find out the draft numbers just released nationally for those who would be called up. He became so agitated while I phoned a television station that he fainted. (RW).

3. At the April 1968 general conference, Elder Boyd K. Packer said: “A man answering the call now is not left in total comfort that all will sustain him. There have emerged in our society groups composed mostly of restless, unchallenged young people. In the name of peace and love and brotherhood, they criticize those who, obedient to the laws of the land, have answered the call to military duty. It is puzzling to see them renouncing their obligation, repudiating their citizenship responsibilities. They declare on moral grounds, as an act of virtue, that they will not serve. One can be sensitive, even sympathetic, to their feelings, for war is an ugly thing—a heinous, hideous, ugly thing! . . . Recently a college student about to graduate, and under notice from the selective service, came to my office. Confused and worried, he told me of the pressure from fellow students and from faculty members to refuse induction, to leave the country, if necessary. When the issues are so confusing—and they are confusing—what can a man do? How can he know which way to turn? First, the scriptures are not silent on the subject. These are not new issues; 75 years B.C., the Nephites faced such a challenge. There encircled them an ominous threat to liberty, the home, the family, and their rights of worship. While our present dilemma is not quite like theirs, all too soon the very circumstances they faced could come upon us. We would do well at least to ponder the words of their prophets: ‘Behold,’ said Moroni, ‘could ye suppose that ye could sit upon your thrones, and because of the exceeding goodness of God ye could do nothing and he would deliver you? Behold, if ye have supposed this ye have supposed in vain.’ (Al. 60:11.) . . . Though all the issues of the conflict are any-thing but clear, the matter of citizenship responsibility is perfectly clear.” (*Conference Report*, April 1968, p.34)

F. Doing Good During War. Elder Gordon B. Hinckley gave this message to the April 1968 general conference: “I have been impressed with the sacrifices of our people to construct houses of worship in many parts of the world, but I think I have never been so deeply touched as in witnessing the response to a suggestion made two years ago by our Vietnam zone president, a military officer. He suggested that our brethren, who were already paying their tithing, contribute their combat pay differential to a building fund. This represents the extra amount given men for battle duty. More than \$3,000 was contributed by men of the Saigon Branch on a single Sunday, and more than \$18,000 was given throughout Vietnam in 30 days. Where in all the world would you find a better expression of faith than that of these soldiers, airmen, and marines, who have given to the cause of peace that money paid them for the risks of battle? They gave it for the construction of buildings they will never use or even see, but which will someday bless the people whose liberty they have fought to preserve.” (*Conference Report*, April 1968, p. 23.)

G. Vietnam Statistics. About 100,000 Church members served during the Vietnam War, and more than 550 died. (D. Michael Quinn, *J. Reuben Clark: The Church Years*, 1983, p. 21.)

H. Missionary Calls Restricted. At the height of the Vietnam War, each LDS ward was only allowed to send one missionary out every six months, according to the researchers of the Saints at War project at BYU. (*BYU NewsNet*, March 19, 2003.)

I. LDS Prisoners of War. In opening the Priesthood Session of the 143<sup>rd</sup> Annual General Conference, on April 7, 1973, President Harold B. Lee announced: “We have here Captain Larry J. Chesley, Major Jay C. Hess, and Lieutenant Commander David J. Rollins. Will you stand up, please? Captain Chesley, United States Air

Force, was a prisoner of war for seven years. He comes from the Burley Stake, Star Ward. Major Jay Hess, United States Air Force, was a prisoner of war for six years, from Bountiful East Stake. Lieutenant Commander Rollins, United States Navy, a prisoner of war for six years, is from the San Diego North Stake. These three young men represent many of those boys who have gone through the fire of adversity. We just want you men to know that our hearts have been touched by the announcement of your faith, your confidence in your country and in your commander-in-chief, that you have come through thus far. We want to say to you that we have been praying, we have been hoping with every means at our command; and we now say to the priesthood brethren, will you put your arms around these boys, and help them now to make their adjustments as may be necessary in their homecoming. The Lord bless you, brethren. We love you and the many others who have been in these circumstances and have come through the fire, and have now been prepared to go forward. You will be the kind of men that we look to for the standards of our youth in the years that lie ahead. Thank you, brethren. We welcome you home.” (*The Mind and Will of the Lord: Indexed Discourses of Harold B. Lee Speaking in General Conference*, compiled and indexed by Harold W. Pease, 2002, p. 28.)

1. Those Not Coming Home. “Our hearts go out to the many others, to the mothers and fathers in the thousands of homes where the boys didn’t come home. We are having an Easter program where they have asked me to respond, seeing what might be done to ease the aching hearts of the thousands of others who didn’t come home. There is hope. Thank God for the promise of the gospel and the blessings that lie beyond the grave.” (*Ibid.*, p. 28.)

J. Immorality Caused Defeat. Apostle Boyd K. Packer, speaking at the American Freedom Festival in Provo in 1989, blamed defeat in Vietnam on immorality in America: “While we were never to a man ‘Simon Pure’ and there have always been some of us bad enough not to deserve the title of a good, moral Christian people, there have always been enough of us who have been good enough to deserve it. Strength that comes from decency, from morality, is the one essential ingredient required for the preservation of freedom,, . . . and there is reason to believe that we are losing it. Something changed [from earlier times, when we won]. The balance, which mea-sures the morality of all of us put together, is slowly tipping in the wrong fatal direction. The War in Vietnam did something to us. We had the military might, the arms, the ammunition, the manpower, the planes and ships and instruments of war undreamed of in the past. But we could not conquer! What happened did not happen at Dae Nang or Saigon. It only surfaced there. It happened first in and to the universities of America. It happened when agnostics and atheists were protected in teaching their philosophy of religion in public institutions of higher learning. . . . It had been different in Korea as well, for we had our motives more securely in place. And what was to happen later to the moral fabric of our nation had not happened then. . . . A clouded conscience cannot conquer, not in the end it cannot. A clear conscience cannot be defeated.” (“Apostle [Elder Packer] Blames Vietnam War Defeat on Immorality,” *Sunstone* 13, no. 4 (August 1989): 45-46.

K. One Outcome of War. Elder Gordon B. Hinckley gave this report at a general conference during the Vietnam War: “. . . I see a silver thread shining through the dark and bloody tapestry of conflict. I see the finger of the Lord plucking some good from the evil designs of the adversary. I see coming out of this conflict, as I have witnessed in other conflicts in Asia, an enlargement of the Lord’s programs. I am convinced that there are many and will be many in that land who someday will respond to the message of the restored gospel. I do not know when that day will come, but I am confident that it *will* come, and that the efforts of your sons who are there in military service will make that day possible. . . . I make no defense of the war from this pulpit. There is no simple answer. The problems are complex almost beyond comprehension. I seek only to call your attention to that silver thread, small but radiant with hope, shining through the dark tapestry of war—namely the establish-ment of a bridgehead, small and frail now; but which somehow, under the mysterious ways of God, will be strengthened, and from which someday shall spring forth a great work affecting for good the lives of large num-bers of our Father’s children who live in that part of the world. Of that I have a certain faith.” (Elder Gordon B. Hinckley, cited in Richard O. Cowan, *The Kingdom is Rolling Forth*, 1981, pp. 81-2.)

1. Many Refugees Joined Church. The Oakland California Stake and the California Oakland Mission have baptized 1,345 Southeast Asian refugees and created 4 branches for them, as a result of a special

program to meet the needs of the refugees. Some 350 Asian refugees have joined the Church in Oakland. Homes were found for some 600 Asian refugees in Bellevue, Washington, many of whom became interested in the Church. Soon an Asian branch numbering 400 was formed there. (*Church News*, July 28, 1985, p. 11; *The Ensign*, June 1993, pp 60-61.)

2. Missions Opened. At the end of August, 1993, announcement was made of the new Vietnam Hanoi Mission which opened in October, 1993. At the end of 2001, there were just over 100 members in the new mission. The Cambodia Phnom Penh Mission opened in March 1997. On Dec. 31, 2003, there were 6,089 members in Cambodia, organized into 16 branches and 3 districts. (*Deseret News 2003 Church Almanac*, p. 297.)

## IX. Persian Gulf War

A. LDS Participation. During the brief war in the Persian Gulf early in 1991, over 5,000 LDS members participated. They were organized into one hundred plus groups, ranging from as small as five to larger than 200. There were 21 LDS chaplains serving as well in the Gulf region. (*Ensign*, April 1991, p. 75.)

B. Church on Fridays. Most of the LDS groups in the Persian Gulf area during the war worshiped on Sun-days, although some groups met on Fridays, the day of worship in Muslim countries. (*Ensign*, April 1991, p. 75.)

## X. War with Iraq and Afghanistan

A. Civilian Call-Up in Wyoming. Some 30 men from the Afton Wyoming Stake were recently called into active military duty as the U. S. prepares for war in Iraq. Among those called up were three young men serving on missions, one in Russia, one in Venezuela, and the third in New Mexico. Military leaders said the missionaries were needed for tasks that could not readily be performed by others. "The military's decision to bring the full-time missionaries home early for deployment is believed to be unprecedented." (*Church News*, March 15, 2003, p. 6.)

1. Call-Up in Idaho. Five LDS missionaries in Franklin County, Idaho were called home from their missions and given two days to report for active duty in Iraq after their national guard units were activated. The five were serving in Argentina, Louisiana, Honduras, and two unspecified missions. Their unit, the 1-148 Field Artillery Battalion, will be reporting for duty at the Preston Armory on June 28 to begin an 18-month to two-year deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. (*Herald-Journal*, June 27, 2004.)

a. "More and more Church of Latter Day Saints missionaries are being called off their missions and called to Iraq. So far 20 Idaho soldiers, all part of the 116th Cavalry Brigade, have been sent home and are being sent overseas." (*KIFI-News*, June 27, 2004.)

B. President Hinckley's Comments. At the October 2002 general conference, President Hinckley announced: "I have just been handed a note that says a U.S. missile attack is under way. I need not remind you that we live in perilous times. . . . You are all acutely aware of the events of September 11, less than a month ago. Out of that vicious and ugly attack we are plunged into a state of war. It is the first war of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The last century has been described as the most war-torn in human history. Now we are off on another dangerous undertaking, the unfolding of which and the end thereof we do not know. For the first time since we became a nation, the United States has been seriously attacked on its mainland soil. . . . Now we are at war. Great forces are

being mobilized and will continue to be. Political alliances are being forged. We do not know how long this conflict will last. We do not know what it will cost in lives and treasure. We do not know the manner in which it will be carried out. It could impact the work of the Church in various ways. . . . Those of us who are American citizens stand solidly with the President of our nation. The terrible forces of evil must be confronted and held accountable for their actions.” (*Ensign*, November 2002, p. 72.)

1. None Called-Up from Utah. “A spokesperson with the [LDS] Church says since the war began missionaries have been called home early from the mission field. However, none of those missionaries are from the Utah National Guard. The policy of the guard is not to bring home missionaries. We have been fortunate to meet our commitments without doing that.” (*KSL News*, June 27, 2004.)

C. LDS Service Group in Iraq. A special Church unit based on Iraqi soil was formed in April, 2003 at Tallil Air Base in southern Iraq. At the first meeting, three members attended. By April 27, there were 18 people in attendance. Tallil is about 200 miles south of Baghdad. With the war ending almost as soon as it started, it is not expected that the numbers of members will increase significantly. (*Church News*, May 24, 2003, p. 12.)

D. Casualties. “At least three LDS soldiers have died in Iraq, and a fourth has been rescued after spending three weeks as a prisoner of war. LDS fatalities include Navy Lt. Nathan D. White, of Mesa, Arizona, whose fighter jet was apparently shot down by a Patriot missile, and Marine Staff Sgt. James Cawley, from Roy, Utah, who was killed in a Humvee accident during combat. Both White and Cawley had served missions in Japan, married Japanese nationals, and leave behind wives and children. LDS fatalities also include Chief Warrant Officer John Darren ‘J. D.’ Smith, of Taylorsville, Utah, whose Black Hawk helicopter went down in a sandstorm in the Kuwaiti desert. Smith had been stationed in Italy, where he had earlier served an LDS mission, and leaves behind a wife and two daughters. (“LDS Casualties, POW, in Iraqi War,” *Sunstone*, May 2003, p. 73.)

1. “Chief Warrant Officer Ronald D. Young, Jr., was one of seven POWs whose photographs were taken by Iraqi authorities and broadcast around the world. Young’s Apache helicopter went down 24 March [2003] during a combat mission south of Baghdad. After being captured, beaten, and taken to Iraqi authorities, he was rescued south of Tikrit on 13 April. Ronald and his wife, Kaye Young belong to the Lithia Springs Ward in the Powder Springs Georgia Stake.” (*Ibid.*)

2. Army Spc. Alyssa R. Peterson of Flagstaff became the fourth LDS fatality in the war in Iraq. She always had an amazing ability to learn foreign languages. Peterson became fluent in Dutch even before she went on an 18-month mission to the Netherlands in the late 1990s. Then, she cruised through her Arabic courses at the military’s Defense Language Institute in Monterey, Calif., shortly after enlisting in July 2001. With that under her belt, she was off to Iraq to conduct interrogations and translate enemy documents. Then, for reasons still being investigated, Peterson became the third American woman soldier killed since the war began on March 19. President Bush declared the end of major combat operations on May 1, but clashes have continued, and more than 150 U.S. soldiers have been killed since then. Since hostilities began, 297 U.S. soldiers have died. Peterson, 27, died of a gunshot wound to the head Monday from what was described as a “non-combat weapons discharge.” (*Arizona Republic*, Sept. 18, 2003.)

3. As of March 2005, thirteen servicemen from Utah had been killed in Iraq. I have seen no religious breakdown, but likely a majority of them were LDS. The number of LDS members killed from outside Utah is unknown to me.

E. Large Numbers in Iraq. The BYU Daily Universe featured a story in October 2006 about the LDS Church organization among U.S. servicemen in Iraq. “An estimated 1,000 LDS military men meet weekly to practice the values and teachings of their church—in places relatively close to the Bible stories they studied at home. Though they live in difficult and demanding circumstances, they conduct two-hour worship meetings, and, whenever possible, they even organize home teaching. These are truly stalwart men and women who teach us that

we can carry our beliefs wherever we may go.” (*BYU NewsNet*, October 11, 2006.)

1. In February 2009, as the Iraqi War was beginning to wind down, the *Church News* reported “there are some 36,000 Church members serving in the U. S. Armed Forces. Sixty-five are serving as chaplains—with just more than half on active duty.” (*Church News*, February 14, 2009, p. 6.)

F. Chaplain School Offered at BYU. “The U. S. military requires chaplain candidates to earn graduate degrees that include at least 36 hours of course work in religious study. In the past, such a rule posed an uneasy challenge for Church members in uniform hoping to become an Army, Navy or Air Force chaplain. Without a traditional ‘divinity’ school of their own to attend, LDS candidates often enrolled in a graduate school operated by another religion to satisfy ‘religious study’ requirements. Now, LDS candidates have another option. Since last summer [2008] seven LDS chaplain candidates have been enrolled in Brigham Young University’s masters of religious education program. They are participating in graduate courses generally populated by seminary and institute teachers. . . . Beyond the traditional graduate religion courses, the chaplain candidates at BYU also enroll in several courses specific to military chaplaincy. The candidates also spend dozens of hours serving in area hospitals and care facilities working with people in need of spiritual support.” (*Church News*, February 14, 2009, p. 6.)

G. Members Serving in Army or Army National Guard in 2010. During 2010, soldiers in the army or army national guard or army reserve, were asked if they had a particular religious preference. Of the total of 1,129,275 serving, 293,765 indicated they had no preference. Another 201,305 listed the Roman Catholic Church; 185,546 listed Christian, but with no denominational preference; 168,437 listed Baptist, and 17,071 listed Mormon. There were 4,100 who listed Atheist, and 2,951 who chose Islam. This was during the war in Afghanistan, and the tag end of military operations in Iraq. Many others chose one of numerous religious denominations not listed here. (*Deseret News*, Jan. 17, 2011.)

H. Hard to Defend Actions in Iraq and Afghanistan, if We Believe Book of Mormon. “If ever there was a war that had crossed over every doctrinal and ethical line of our Latter-day Saint religious belief, it was the United States’ invasion into Afghanistan and Iraq. The Book of Mormon could not be clearer that the very moment we begin to take the war to our enemies and invade their lands, we have become the very evil we deplore—especi-ally when we wage war against those who have never attacked us. As required by the Lord’s immutable covenant of peace found in section of 98 of the D&C:

- Did we as a faith specifically ‘renounce’ the invasion of Afghanistan or Iraq?
- Did we renounce those voices that called for vengeance and promised retribution?
- Did we accept either Afghanistan’s or Iraq’s own standard of peace when they claimed that they had not attacked us nor would they ever attack us in the future.
- Did we accept their ‘prayer for peace’ and forgive them ‘seventy times seven (D&C 98:40)?
- Did we consider living a higher law and not seeking retribution?
- Was revelation sought for and obtained before choosing to invade these countries? (Ron Madson, “The Restoration of Conscientious Objection,” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, 51:4, Winter 2018, 93.)

## XI. Conscientious Objectors

A. Civil War. During the Civil War, shortly after the battle of Gettysburg, Brigham Young preached at the October 1863 general conference: “Multitudes of good and honorable men become enrolled in the contending armies of the present American war, some to gratify a martial pride, and others through a conscientious love of their country; indeed, various are the motives and inducements that impel men to expose themselves upon the field of battle; but a portion of those who are peaceably disposed, and wish not to witness the shedding of the blood of their country-men, make good their escape from the vicinity of trouble. It is chiefly this class of men who are now passing through this Territory to other parts, and I think they are probably as good a class of men as has ever passed through this country; they are persons who wish to live in peace, and to be far removed from

contending factions. As far as I am concerned, I have no fault to find with them.” (Brigham Young, October 6, 1863; *Journal of Discourses* 10:248.)

B. World War II. In September 1945, the *Deseret News* editorialized: “The earnest, sincere, loyal conscientious objector, who, because of his religious convictions, asked to be relieved of military service which would necessitate his taking the life of a fellow man, is entitled to his opinion just as much as the man who felt that poison gas should be used and the enemy annihilated completely. And the chances are that the objector would prove to be the better citizen of the two.” (*Deseret News*, Sept. 11, 1945; cited in *Sunstone*, March 1985, p. 20.)

1. “President J. Reuben Clark carefully monitored the treatment of those Latter-day Saints who were placed in conscientious objector camps (similar to relocation centers for Japanese), and after World War II, he persuaded the Church president to reimburse the Quakers for the expenses of maintaining these LDS conscientious objectors.” (D. Michael Quinn, *J. Reuben Clark: The Church Years*, 1983, p. 20.)

C. Vietnam. Those who wrote to the First Presidency during the Vietnam war about conscientious objector status received this statement from Joseph Anderson, secretary to the First Presidency: “I am directed to tell you that membership in the Church does not make one a conscientious objector. As you are aware, there are thousands of young men of the Church assigned to the various services in the military. As the brethren understand, the existing law provides that men who have conscientious objection may be excused from combat service. There would seem to be no objection, therefore, to a man availing himself on a personal basis of the exemption provided by law.” (Cited in *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Spring 1968, p. 8.)

1. The following clarification was sent out from the First Presidency on October 21, 1971: “Conscientious objectors may teach in the Church (home teach, Sunday School, priesthood, etc.), provided they are worthy of these positions and with the understanding that they avoid teachings or discussions pertaining to war and their attitude toward it. The same would apply to the matter of their holding office in the Church. There certainly could be no objection to their partaking of the sacrament if they are otherwise worthy. They could also be given recommends to the temple provided they are sincere in their beliefs and are maintaining the standards of the Church. It would be contrary to Church policy to disfellowship men because they have conscientious objections regarding participating in military combat activities.” (Cited in *Sunstone*, March 1985, p. 22.)

D. Persian Gulf War. President Monson stated to the press after the 1990 Iraqi war: ‘You rarely find any Latter-day Saint in the role of conscientious objector. . . . Our church has always taught members to obey the nation. . . . In time of war or stress, we have no hesitance in following the flag. . . . We don’t believe in marches and protests and carrying placards. . . . You won’t find any more patriotic group.’ (Cited in *This People Magazine*, Fall 1991, p. 11.)

E. Book of Mormon. One writer noted: “Is it not interesting that this story [Alma 24:12-27] stands in contrast to that of Captain Moroni told later in this same book [Alma 43]? Could not the Lord be teaching a powerful lesson by illustrating the different results of the two approaches to violence and war? In the one, pacifist Christians de-escalated a war, experienced fewer deaths, and converted many of the enemy to Christ by their unswerving faith and ultimate example. In the other, warrior Christians escalated an arms race. ‘Thought it no sin’ to conduct a war by cunning and stratagem, killed more people, converted no one, and ultimately lost the spiritual war (even while ‘winning’ the physical battle.) Is it significant that Brigham Young, George Q. Cannon, J. Reuben Clark and other Church leaders have praised war resisters and encouraged conscientious objection? Is it inconsequential that there have been LDS conscientious objectors in every war with ‘approval’ of the First Presidency? (Letter to the Editor, *Sunstone*, February 1992, p. 9.)

F. No Place for C.O.s in LDS Church. On May 7, 1981 the *Deseret News* printed the statement of press spokesman Don LeFevre concerning the LDS position: “There is no place in Mormon philosophy for the

consci-entious objector.” (D. Michael Quinn, *J. Reuben Clark: The Church Years*, 1983, p. 23.)

G. Current Position. The quasi-authoritative *Encyclopedia of Mormonism* states: “While any member of the Church is free to object to military combat service because of conscience, simply holding membership in the Church in and of itself is not a justification. Church leaders have discouraged conscientious objection in every conflict of the twentieth century. Although it is opposed to war and recognizes that going to war is a very poor alternative means of resolving conflicts, the Church considers it the loyal duty of citizenship for members to answer the call of their various countries for military service. At the same time it recognizes the right of individual members to determine for themselves whether their deep spiritual consciences will allow them to serve in combat or require them to request assignment to alternate service. The Church will not support a member in that request until he or she has consulted with the appropriate bishop and stake president and has spiritual confirmation that the way decided upon by the members concerned is acceptable to the Lord.” (Charles D. Tate, Jr., “Conscientious Objection,” *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, edited by Daniel H. Ludlow, 1992, Vol. I, p. 310.)

## XII. Conclusions

A. Consequences of War. One man vividly recalled the stories his father told about what happened at Dunkirk in World War II: “The thing that got to him the most was not the cold, not the dark, nor the uncertainty of ‘Will I get home?’ It was British bodies floating in the harbor water—with British bullets in them. In the terror of those night hours, men tried to jump the queue. Officers shot soldiers, and soldiers with their rifles shot officers. . . . The truth was that Dunkirk and other war experiences had mentally injured my father, and that was one of the reasons for the shadow across our family as I grew up. . . . I have come to suspect that war corrupts every army, damages every soldier, and causes tragedy for every family.” (Andrew Bolton, *Restoration Studies VII: A Collection of Essays About the History, Beliefs, and Practices of the RLDS Church*, 1998, p. 13.)

1. War’s Utter Waste. “I accompanied twenty high school students on a trip to the area of the River Somme in Flanders. We visited some of the thousands of First World War cemeteries there, row upon row of young men and boys, slaughtered. The largest ones are the last resting place of thousands of soldiers. Thousands more whose bodies were swallowed in the mire are merely names engraved in lists on the huge walls at the graveyards. The smallest graveyards hold only hundreds of bodies. Alive, these young men were filled with the patriotic fervor of ‘For the Fatherland,’ or ‘Kill the Kaiser.’ Dead, they are a grim reminder of war’s utter waste.” (Deborah J. Sheridan, “From Flanders Fields,” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Spring 2004, 149.)

a. Britain Lost 57,000 on First Day. “About 57,000 British lives were lost on the first day of the Battle of the Somme alone, with about 420,000 perishing over the course of the battle.” (Norman Davies, *Europe: A History*, Oxford University Press, 1996, p. 896.)

b. Death Toll from Battle of the Somme. One of the bloodiest battles in all of history was the Battle of the Somme in World War I. A mission president in Germany wrote this dispatch to Salt Lake City: “Wilhelm Kessler, a local elder of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was killed in battle on the west front, near Mametz and Montauban, in France.” “That happened on July 1 [1914], the first day of the Battle of the Somme, in which Germans eventually lost half a million soldiers, the British, four hundred thousand, and the French two hundred thousand.” (David Conley Nelson, *Moroni and the Swastika: Mormons in Nazi Germany*, 2015, 53-54.)

B. Only Defensive Wars Justified. Eugene England, a prominent LDS pacifist who taught at BYU for many years, chided his fellow members: “Our Mormon Congressmen have apparently become more Republicans than legislators or Mormons. They seem to be more committed to the obsessive anti-communism of their party, which has allowed them to endorse violent efforts to overthrow governments we do not like, than they are to the clear teachings of Mormon prophets, which categorically reject such means. The Book of Mormon is perfectly clear on this, generally condemning *all* violence and only justifying as acceptable to God warfare that is *purely* defensive, warfare that is a measured response to a direct attack on a people’s own territory and is carried out within its own

borders (See Alma 24:17-19; 25:32-33; and 43:45-46.) But in case that was not clear enough, David O. McKay, speaking for the First Presidency, at the beginning of World War II [*Conference Report*, April 1942, p. 72] outlined for modern nations the conditions under which such purely defensive war is justified, emphasizing carefully the limitations, especially this one: ‘Nor is war justified in an attempt to enforce a new order of government . . . however better the government . . . may be.’ The United States directly violated that prophetic principle in Vietnam and Grenada and is now doing so in Angola and Nicaragua.” (Eugene England, *Sunstone*, May 1988, p. 29.)

1. “Yet most Mormon Republicans approve, apparently willing to accept the argument of government and party leaders. ‘We’re for peace in Nicaragua, but you can’t have peace without democracy.’ That is simply another way of saying we will use force to make other governments do what we want them to do and makes as much sense as a reason for invading Russia or China as for supporting the Contras. Such an argument could be used, as rationally and probably more morally, to support intervention in South Africa for the disenfranchised black majority—or any number of other places in the world we might want to enforce a government more to our liking. But, as our prophets have insisted, the argument is morally wrong, and as history has shown, it merely leads to perpetuation of violence, not to either peace *or* freedom.” (*Ibid.*, p. 29.)

C. Duties of Members in Wartime. At the October 1940 general conference, as war raged in Europe, the First Presidency issued this official statement, which was read at the opening session on October 4: “Our brethren and sisters are found on both sides of this terrible struggle. On each side they are bound to their country by all the ties of blood, relationship, and patriotism. . . . The Saints on either side have no course open to them but to support that government to which they owe allegiance.” (*Messages of the First Presidency*, compiled by James R. Clark, Vol. 6 [1975], pp. 115-16.)

D. Does State Have Higher Claim than Conscience? The Church’s formal position on war, as expressed in the 1942 message from the First Presidency quoted above, specifically concludes that “when constitutional law . . . calls the manhood of the Church into the armed service of any country to which they owe allegiance, their highest civic duty requires that they heed that call.” Church historian Ron Walker notes: “Thus leaders renewed their allegiance to military service and, in an important departure, frankly admitted the higher claims of obedience to government over any personal or ecclesiastical objection to war.” It seems strange that such a position has caused so little discussion or anxiety among members at large. Is there never a time when Latter-day Saints should morally oppose the requirements of their State? (Ronald W. Walker, *Sunstone*, July-August 1982, 51-52.)

1. What if State is Wrong? “While dispassionately removed from the excessive moralizing of World War I, the official Mormon response [to World War II—and beyond] raised serious questions. By refusing any moral pronouncements, the First Presidency opened itself to the charge of subjugating principle to obedience, especially in view of the war’s fascist and anti-Semitic challenges. In the United States the effect was eased by the statements of other General Authorities who exceeded the narrow and cautious official declarations of the Presidency. However, in Germany, where Mormonism in 1939 had over 15,000 adherents, the Church policy passively confirmed the Third Reich. Although isolated cases of Mormon resistance to Nazism did occur, including one teenager who was beheaded for distributing anti-government propaganda, most members loyally if at times fearfully supported the regime. Perhaps 600 German Saints gave their lives for it.” (*Ibid.*, p. 52.)

2. Elder Nelson. At the October 2002 general conference, Elder Russell M. Nelson gave an address he entitled, “Blessed Are the Peacemakers.” His main thought was that “peace is a prime priority that pleads for our pursuit.” He concluded with this statement: “Now, as members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, what does the Lord expect of us? As a Church, we must ‘renounce war and proclaim peace.’ As individuals, we should ‘follow after the things which make for peace.’ We should be personal peacemakers. We should live peacefully—as couples, families, and neighbors. We should live by the Golden Rule. . . . We should bring divine love and revealed doctrines of restored religion to our neighbors and friends. We should serve them according to our abilities and opportunities. We should keep our principles on a high level and stand for the right.

... Ours is the cause of eternal glory for all humankind. And as peacemakers, we shall be called the children of God. I so testify in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.” (*Ensign*, November 2002, p. 41.)

a. These comments were made as the U. S. Government moved closer to a decision for a preemptive strike on Iraq. When various news media linked the talk with current government policy, the Church responded with a formal “clarification” from the Public Affairs Office. Elder Nelson’s remarks, it was emphasized, were not to be seen as taking a stand against going to war with Iraq.

E. Atomic Holocaust Inevitable? Elder Bruce R. McConkie, at the April 1979 general conference, said: “It may be, for instance, that nothing except the power of faith and the authority of the Priesthood can save individuals and congregations from the atomic holocaust that surely shall be.” (*Conference Report*, April 1979, p. 133.)

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