

# The Central and Western New York Peace Tax Escrow Account

## Q&A

**Who are the depositors to the Peace Tax Escrow Account?** Anyone who is conscientiously opposed to participating in war through the payment of war taxes may deposit the portion of those taxes believed to be used for military purposes into the Escrow Account in lieu of paying them to the U.S. government.

**What is an escrow account?** An Escrow Account is usually formed to hold funds while a negotiation is in process. This account makes clear that taxpayers wish to pay lawful taxes for peaceful purposes, but believe the government has a duty to provide for conscientious objection to war, and to provide an administrative method which would respect this.

**Who administers the Account?** The Account is held in a local bank in the name of (and under the care of) Farmington Scipio Regional Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends or Quakers. The FSRM is a regional body of Friends in central and western New York.

**What happens if the Internal Revenue Service seizes money or assets from a depositor or if a depositor decides to pay the withheld money?** The depositor notifies the FSRM Treasurer and the Account will return to the depositor the paid money up to the amount he or she has deposited. Depositors should be aware that the government may take two or more years before attempting to collect the unpaid taxes, penalties and interest.

**Can a depositor ask for the return of funds deposited should he or she experience financial need?** No, the funds are only returned if the IRS levies them from other assets. They are considered to be taxes paid on time and in good faith, even though this is not recognized by the government, and are not available for other purposes.

**What happens if the U.S. government enacts the U.S. Peace Tax Fund Bill or provides other means to uphold one's right of conscience regarding paying for war?** FSRM, with approval of the depositor, may transfer the money to the U.S. Peace Tax Fund or follow another procedure to the extent permitted by law and conscience.

**How is the interest earned on the Account's deposits used?** FSRM uses the income from deposits to the Account or any gifts to the Account for life-affirming activities that may remove the occasion for war.

**Are there penalties for the use of the FSRM Peace Tax Escrow Account?** Currently, the U.S. government does not recognize the payment of taxes to an Escrow Account and typically seizes the amount withheld and imposes statutory penalties and interest on the "unpaid tax."

**How does a person deposit to the Account?** Prior to joining the Account, we advise that people seek spiritual and legal counseling. Interested people may request a copy of the formal contract from the contact listed on the back of this brochure. The depositor shall send to the FSRM Treasurer a signed contract, and a check (made out to FSRM Escrow Account) for the taxes or portion of taxes that the depositor wishes to deposit into the Account.

## Other Options...

Placing one's income tax money in the Central and Western New York Peace Tax Escrow Account rather than paying taxes to the U.S. government is one way to resist paying for war. Other ways that include:

### *Legal Forms of Resistance*

**Living below the taxable income by simple living.** An individual is not liable for income tax if he/she earns less than a threshold amount set by the U.S. government. Many who engage in this form of tax resistance have found that reducing their income for this and other reasons has its own reward in a healthy and satisfying lifestyle.

**Supporting legislative efforts** to establish the right of conscientious objection to military taxation (COMT) by advocating for the enactment of the Religious Freedom Peace Tax Fund Bill ([www.peacetaxfund.org](http://www.peacetaxfund.org)).

### *Varieties of Noncooperation*

**Refusing the federal tax on local telephone service**

**Nominal refusal.** Refusing to pay even a token amount of money, when publicly announced, can be a persuasive argument against the waste and immorality of military spending.

**Self-employment.** Many resisters choose self-employment to avoid income tax being withheld throughout the year. Then they can choose to resist all or some of the income tax due.

**Donating to life-affirming work.** Many resisters choose to donate tax money that otherwise would have been used for war to individuals or organizations that engage in life-affirming work.

# Does Paying for War Violate *Your* Conscience?

## Friends (Quaker) Corporate Witness

*The Living Spirit works in the world to give life, joy, peace and prosperity through love, integrity and compassionate justice among people. We are united in this Power. We acknowledge that paying for war violates our religious conviction. We will seek ways to witness to this religious conviction in each of our communities.*

Minuted by New York Yearly  
Meeting of the Religious Society of  
Friends, April, 2006

### Additional information, counseling, and support are available

The details, pitfalls, and challenges of engaging in war tax resistance and ways to control how much the IRS withholds from your paycheck can be explored with our military tax witness counselors.

### For More Information, please contact:

Lyle Jenks  
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*“...That as monies had of late years been raised by a tax to carry on the wars, [a Friend] had a scruple in his mind in regard to paying it and chose rather to suffer restraint of goods than pay it... whereupon I told him... that I had for some time been under the like scruple.”*

*The Journal and Major Essays of John Woolman (1770), Phillips P. Moulton, ed., p. 71.*