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Teens Frustrate Military Recruiter's ASVAB Scam

by Scott Horton

With MySpace.com bulletins and a handful of homemade flyers, two teens have struck a blow against the American Warfare State, Lindale, Georgia Division.

On a Friday afternoon the 17th of November, 17-year-old high school seniors Robert Day and Samuel Parker decided to act after Day overheard some teachers at **Pepperell High School** saying that first thing Monday morning the school's juniors would be made to take the ASVAB military aptitude test.

Often administered under the guise of a career aptitude test, the ASVAB's purpose is to better equip the State to prey on young people tricked or pressured into taking the test. According to Debbie Hopper of **Mothers Against the Draft**, it is often given under the pretext of being a "career placement" test. (In some cases it has in fact been used that way, no doubt in an attempt to legitimize what many Americans regard as not legitimate: the use of government schools as military recruiting grounds.)

The school board answered a concerned email from Parker's mother with a suggestion that the test is not mandatory but "customary." Sane Americans might ask, "Where, in **Prussia**?"

As a senior, he would not be made to take the test, but Day confronted the high school principal, Phil Ray, in defense of students younger than himself, and was told that the test was mandated by federal law. Day says he already believed that to be false, since he remembered the test being given only to the kids actually trying to join the military the year before. Regardless, the principal dismissed his objections. The juniors who were to be tested for their military "aptitude" were not to be told before the weekend.

Principal Ray did not return repeated calls to his office.

Not easily deterred, Day and Parker decided they would do what they could to "warn" the juniors themselves. They talked to a few kids at the end of school Friday afternoon, and over the weekend sent out more than 20 messages to MySpace bulletin boards discouraging cooperation. Arriving early Monday morning, Day and Parker picked out spots soon to be populated with kids waiting for the bell to ring, and with the help of some others who quickly volunteered, rapidly distributed their 200 homemade fliers to some and also spoke to many others, encouraging all to refuse to report to the cafeteria or to sabotage the test – either by ripping it up or filling in false information.

One of the military recruiters present attempted to snub their efforts, claiming the No Child Left Behind Act allows access to all of their information anyway, and so they might as well take the test.

Journalist and author James Bovard says the NCLB does indeed "roll out a red carpet" in terms of empowering the military to demand school records, but says that the ASVAB is far beyond what even it allows. The pushing of this military aptitude test, Bovard says, is "typical of how government guides kids – to an early funeral."

Despite the recruiter's interruption, Parker says that he, Day and their volunteers made sure every junior who may not have wanted to take the test had a chance to hear them explain its purpose and to understand that it

was not mandatory.

They estimate that about half of the school's juniors refused to even leave their regular classes to report to the testing site in the school's cafeteria. Some of the teachers, apparently learning about this at the last minute like most everyone else, and confused as to the nature of the proceedings, insisted that their students at least go to the cafeteria even if they did not mean to cooperate with the military. Once they were there, the kids were informed that anyone who showed up in the cafeteria would be made to take the test.

The old lunch room Catch-22.

Some of the students decided to deliberately fill in faulty information. Perhaps that will go on their permanent record instead. "Listen kid, we're looking for test-refusers just like yourself. Do you have what it takes?"

The soldiers told the students that if anyone ripped up their test, then all the tests, including those belonging to the one-third or so of the kids who actually wanted to take it and receive their scores, would be thrown out. This bit of blackmail apparently worked on the kids who had reluctantly taken it, as no one physically destroyed their tests. Day and Parker estimate that less than a third of Pepperell's juniors went along with their government's scheme.

The high school counselor, Ms. Nixon, made it clear to the juniors that she was very disappointed in them for embarrassing principal Ray, but so far, no punishments have been handed down.

All in all, Parker and Day said they were pleasantly surprised by the help and encouragement of kids who they thought would not have cared at all.

We could all learn from their example.

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