The Draft and Purdue Grad Students

Who is that holding a gun to my head, anyway?
How the Draft Worked: Misc

- Young men must register at age 18
- Preferred age (for drafting) was 25, working toward younger ages as the pool was depleted
- (Later, a lottery was implemented.)
- Deferments – generous at first, reduced as the pool was drawn down
- Exemptions – few categories
- Classification 1A – you’re under the gun
How the Draft Worked: Appeals

• First level, within 30 days after reclassification
• A personal appearance before the board
• Appeal to a second level
How Dick Smiley Escaped

• Superior paperwork skills … and a backup plan
• Paperwork: the Druid option
• Backup plan: emigrate to Canada
The Druid Option

• Apply for an exemption as a minister
• When the draft board questioned this, supplied supporting documentation – the more the merrier:
  • Printed up business stationery for the Purdue Grove and the Carleton Grove.
  • Got the Arch Druid of the Carleton Grove to write a letter or two of wishy-washy support
The Druid Option (Cont’d)

• Had a friend mail my letters from San Francisco
• First appeal rejected
• Personal appearance, where I made it difficult to tell whether I was serious
• Rejected again
• Sent appeal to next level, certified mail, return receipt requested
The Druid Option (Cont’d More)

• Ordered to appear for pre-induction physical
• Passed physical
• Ordered to appear for induction on August 18, 1969 (Happy 26\textsuperscript{th} birthday from Uncle Sam!)
• Called draft lawyer (pro bono), who urged me to call the draft board
• Called the draft board, spoke to chief clerk
The Druid Option (Finally)

- Chief clerk found my request for appeal
- Stapled behind a letter from the Arch Druid of the Carleton Grove
- No substantiation that it had been mailed on time
- “I have a return receipt. Shall I send you a copy?”
- Asked me to decipher signature, which I did
The Druid Option (Happy Ending)

• Induction notice rescinded
• Reclassified as beyond prime age
• Happy birthday after all!

• Filed Canadian information pamphlets for future reminiscences
How Richard Ragan Coped

• The closing window curtailed his academic career.
• Undergraduate: 3 years
• Graduate:
• Job:
How Hal Hart Escaped

• Doomed by the draft … but wait!