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Clemency Panel Planning TV Ads to Spur Response

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The presidential Clemency Review Board is undertaking a nationwide television and radio campaign to try to salvage its flagging program for Vietnam-era military violators.

As of yesterday morning, only 890 of the more than 90,000 Americans convicted of Selective Service offenses between 1964 and 1973 have asked the board for clemency.

Of the 6,200 Americans indicted or under investigation by the Justice Department for draft evasion, only 163 have turned themselves in.

Of the 13,000 military deserters, 2,627 have submitted to authorities at Indiana's Ft. Benjamin Harrison, and of those, 500 already were in military custody.

The clemency program expires Jan. 31.

Clemency Board Chairman Charles E. Goodell, in announcing 47 new grants of presidential clemency yesterday, said that radio and television commercials urging people to come forward were being sent out immediately.

Board members Lewis Walt,



CHARLES E. GOODELL
... defends program

retired Marine commanding general in Vietnam, and Father Theodore Hesburgh, president of Notre Dame, each have taped 30- and 60-second television and radio spots, and Aida Casanas O'Connor has taped one radio spot in Spanish.

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CLEMENCY, From A1

Mrs. O'Connor's tape has gone to 71 radio stations in the nation that broadcast in Spanish, while the others have gone to 2,100 radio stations and 268 television stations in the largest 100 cities.

Each of the spots warns that applications must be made before the end of this month.

Says a portion of one of Father Hesburgh's commercials:

"You may recall that I spoke out for a long time against the Vietnam war. Now I'm also working with the President's Clemency Board.

"Most important to me as a priest and an educator, our program is conceived in the tradition of forgiveness. The best evidence of this is to read the decisions made thus far.

"It's an honest program that protects your rights and integrity, or I wouldn't be a part of it."

Meanwhile, another set of spots has also gone out, these prepared by the National Council of Churches and

American Civil Liberties Union, advising draft and military violators to check their options before submitting applications to one of the three clemency apparatuses set up by the Ford administration in September.

"This is a bad program, badly designed," ACLU executive Henry Schwarzchild said from New York yesterday. "Its principal purpose is to indicate that war resisters were wrong. This program is a hype, and a useless one."

Goodell insisted yesterday that the program was not a failure.

"I wouldn't call this program a bust, by no means," he said. "Unfortunately, we are not reaching all those that we'd like to. But any program that substantially and meaningfully helps a thousand people is not a bust."

The Clemency Board itself handles only those men who have been convicted of Selective Service-related offenses, while the Defense Department

is handling deserters and the Justice Department is handling evaders who have not been convicted.

At Justice, spokesman John Russell said that about 6,000 men have been indicted, and about 200 more are still under investigation.

Of the 167 who have turned themselves in, he said, all have signed up for alternative service, with 90 per cent of receiving 24 months' service and the rest somewhat less, ranging down to a year's.

Of the 6,200, said Russell, the Justice Department figures that around 4,000 are in Canada, another 1,000 are in other parts of the world and the rest are still at large in the United States.

A Defense Department spokesman said that the 2,627 deserters had received undesirable discharges, which can be upgraded to clemency discharges upon completion of successful alternative service.

Schwarzchild said, however, that servicemen are learning the government has no way of forcing them to fulfill their alternative service pledge, and that those who do not mind carrying the stigma of undesirable can be off "scott free" after turning themselves in and receiving undesirable discharges.

The 47 new dispositions that Goodell announced yesterday bring the total of clemency cases settled to 65.

Of the 65, 20 have received unconditional presidential pardons and the others will be pardoned after they perform alternative service—the terms of which range from three to 12 months.

Yesterday's announcements included "the first occasion on which the Clemency Board has recommended and the President has granted clemency to military personnel," said Goodell, "including three outright pardons without alternative service."

Goodell noted that most of the applicants to the board are not draft resisters of the 1960s campus variety, but almost all are non-college graduates from the "lower end of the educational and economic scale, making it more difficult to communicate with them."

Goodell, insisting the program was a good one, blamed the low number of applications on misunderstanding of the program, lack of knowledge about it, and "a general lack of trust in the government by individuals out there."

Goodell added he did not expect President Ford to approve any extension of the clemency application period.