



OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS
SELECTIVE SERVICE SYSTEM

1724 F STREET NW.
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20435

ADDRESS REPLY TO
THE DIRECTOR OF SELECTIVE SERVICE

MAY 11 1967

Sheikh, Al-Haj, Daoud Ahmed Faisal
Religious Head and National Director
of the Islamic Mission of America
143 State Street
Brooklyn, New York 11201

Dear Sir:

This acknowledges your recent letter with reference to the status of Mr. Cassius Clay, also known as Mohammad Ali.

The protection of religious freedom and the right of conscience has always been one of the cherished traditions of our way of life. Realizing this, the Congress, when it passed the Universal Military Training and Service Act, as amended, granted an exemption to those persons subject to training and service in the Armed Forces of the United States, who, by reason of religious training and belief, are conscientiously opposed to participation in war in any form. Religious training and belief in this connection means an individual's belief in a relation to a Supreme Being involving duties superior to those arising from any human relation, but does not include essentially political, sociological, or philosophical views or a merely personal moral code.

In the Universal Military Training and Service Act, as amended, Congress has given each local board of the Selective Service System the power to determine, subject to appeal, all claims for deferment of individuals within its jurisdiction. Each case is considered on its individual merits.


Cassius Clay claimed exemption as a conscientious objector and after being placed in Class I-A by his local board, he exercised his right of appeal. As required by law, his case was referred to the Department of Justice for hearings and a recommendation. The Department of Justice forwarded a report of their findings to the appeal board of jurisdiction and that board, after review of the information, placed Mr. Clay in Class I-A.

During the time that Mr. Clay's appeal as a conscientious objector was pending, he presented additional information to his local board and requested a deferment as a minister of religion. Upon review of the new evidence, Clay's local board determined that he was not eligible for a ministerial deferment and again placed him in Class I-A. His claim for ministerial deferment was subsequently reviewed by the state appeal board and the National Selective Service Appeal Board, and both of these boards classified him in Class I-A.

Sheikh, Al-Haj, Daoud Ahmed Faisal -2-

As is evident from the above, Mr. Clay has enjoyed all of his procedural rights, and in each instance it has been determined that he was not eligible for a deferred classification.

Sincerely yours,


DIRECTOR



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Lewis B. Hershey

DIRECTOR