

Soldiers for God



A Brief History of American Military Chaplains and their Connection with Methodism in the Anchorage Alaska Community

June 2007

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The original title of this booklet, *Soldiers of God*, was changed so that readers would not be confused with any reference to the mujahidin Islamic Warriors of Afghanistan and Pakistan who were fighting the Soviets, or to the White Supremacists of the White Camelia Knights of the Ku Klux Klan. It does not have any relation to the Salvation Army terminology. It was chosen because of its identifying nature and is referenced in the Chaplain's report in the Alaska Missionary Conference Annual Journal of 1962, printed on page 81 of the Journal.

The photograph on the front cover of this booklet was taken in the late 1950s on Elmendorf Air Force Base. The people are identified as Rev. David Blackburn, Rachel and Rev. Jack Martin, and the unidentified chaplain (probably _____).

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The United Methodist Church
June 2007



Memorial Service
Chaplain Stephen Lee conducted a memorial service following the attack on the Pentagon September 11.

Acknowledgements

In 2004 while the author was writing the second volume of the history of Anchor Park United Methodist Church he noticed that many Sunday services throughout the church's 50 years had had military chaplain guest preachers. Chaplain (Colonel) Trevor and Lois Turner were participants in 1981 in Anchor Park.

And while on a tour of the Methodist Church Archives Building on the campus of Drew University in Madison, New Jersey, he picked up a booklet on one of the racks entitled: *Doing My Duty: A Brief History of Military Chaplains in the Northern New Jersey Conference* by Barbara Brooks Tomblin. These started the quest to do this booklet you are holding now. I wanted to find out how chaplains were assigned, which denominations were chosen and why; what geographic regions of the country chaplains came from; how long they are assigned; what were their duties; what kind of training they got in their military unit; etc.

I wish to acknowledge Eileen S. Blum from the Four Chaplains Memorial Foundation for the information on George L. Fox found in the appendix.

I wish to acknowledge the invaluable help of John Wesley Brinsfield, Jr., author of *Encouraging Faith, Supporting Soldiers – The United States Army Chaplaincy 1975-1995 Part One*, published by the Office of the Chief of Chaplains, Department of the Army, Washington, D.C. 1997. (john.brinsfield@us.army.mil)

I wish to acknowledge the assistance and mentoring of Chaplain, Lieutenant Colonel Daniel H. Nigolian, from the Elmendorf Chapel Center at 10427 Kuter Avenue (907) 552-4422. He is a United Methodist clergyperson, a member of the East Ohio Conference.

I wish to acknowledge the Corporate Chaplains of America for their information, found in the appendix.

I wish to thank Britta Granrud of the Women's Memorial Foundation for her assistance regarding women chaplains and many web links.

I thank the National Review for permission to excerpt the March 10, 2003 story by Rod Dreher: Ministers of War: The Amazing Chaplaincy of the U. S. Military

The photos and Why I Am A Chaplain came from the web site of the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry at www.gbhem.org and are used by permission.

I wish to thank Retired Air Force Chaplain and United Methodist Pastor Dr. Ken Colton from Elmendorf AFB for his insightful assistance in locating additional resources.

And finally I want to thank those people that helped proof and edit this publication, including Rev. Steve Lambert, Rev. Richard Siebert, and Jo Anne Hayden.

The ministry of the military chaplain is often forgotten in our local churches. These pastors are stationed all over the world and usually have different duties than the missionary pastor. Military people live and work around the world serving our country. Chaplains serve side-by-side with them, leading worship services and observances, providing pastoral care, and advising leadership.

The overseas chaplains during the early years and the first two world wars, including assignments in Alaska, were modern day circuit riders carrying their portable altars and communion sets. They apparently had little time off from assisting their fellow servicemen and women to enjoy other less serious activities.

When a minister puts on the same uniform worn by members of the armed services who are trained to wage war, a certain tension goes to work, since chaplains are non-combatants. But serving as a minister in the military doesn't change one's faith or understanding of the Gospel. Sometimes a chaplain takes the attitude expressed by martyred theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer "sometimes evil has to be opposed by force."

Some chaplains see the American form of government as upholding certain principles expressed in the Bible better than other forms of government.

The First Amendment to the United States Constitution justifies the need for a military chaplain corps because it allows the free expression of one's religious practices wherever they are stationed in the world:

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

Early History

The presence of religious leaders among armies is an ancient custom. The Bible records that the Israelites brought their priests with them into battle. The Romans did as well, and had their pagan priests perform ritual sacrifices and read auguries from animal entrails on the eve of battle. The word "chaplain" derives from the early Christian era. In the 4th century, a Roman soldier, Martin of Tours, is said to have divided his military cloak and given half to a beggar he found shivering in the cold. That night, he had a mystical vision in which he saw that the beggar was actually Jesus Christ. After converting to Christianity, Martin became a devout churchman, and when he died, he was canonized, becoming a patron saint of France. The Frankish kings would carry St. Martin's cloak -- called in Latin cappa -- into battle as a holy relic. The priest who cared for the cloak was called a cappellanus, and ultimately all priests who served the military were called cappellani. The French translation was chapelains, which is where the English word comes from.

In American history the custom of assigning chaplains to military units is a time honored tradition, one older than the nation itself. The origins of the custom are rooted in the colonial militia and the other traditions inherited from our English forebearers.

Chaplains had served with the New England militia expeditions since the Pequot War of 1637. By the eve of the Revolutionary War the assignment of pastors of militia units had become such a custom that one of the Continental Congress's earliest resolutions was to establish a Chaplains Corps. Enacted on July 29, 1775 the Chaplains Corps predated the Declaration of Independence by almost a full year.

General George Washington issued this order at Valley Forge on May 2, 1778 : "The Commander-in-Chief directs that divine services be performed every Sunday at eleven o'clock in each bridge which has chaplains... While we are duly performing the duty of good soldiers, we are not to be inattentive to the highest duties of religion."

During the war for independence that followed the Declaration, chaplains provided moral, spiritual, and political guidance for American troops and assisted the regimental surgeon.

Although many of the chaplains in the army were from the Congregational church the Chaplains Corps was noted for its lack of religious discrimination and had appointed a Roman Catholic priest as chaplain in 1776.

The Continental Navy was equally concerned about the moral and spiritual welfare of its personnel. Shortly after its establishment in the fall of 1775 the Continental Navy adopted official regulations that included an article calling for the commanders of ships of the thirteen colonies to "take care that divine service be performed twice a day on board, and a sermon preached on Sundays, unless bad weather or other extraordinary accidents prevent."

When the Revolutionary War was over the Continental Army's Chaplains Corps was disbanded. During the years of peace that followed the new nation called upon volunteers to minister to soldiers in the United States' small professional army. For thirteen years after the war and the disbanding of the Continental Navy the nation had no Navy Chaplains. But with the enactment of legislation in 1794 to build six naval frigates came authorization to employ one chaplain on board each of the 44 gun warships.

During the War of 1812 the army began appointing men to the chaplaincy and over the next forty-three year period eighty pastors served as chaplains to our military forces. Hundreds served during the Civil War (all of which were required to be ordained ministers), but on the eve of World War I the armed forces had only fifty Protestant and seventeen Roman Catholic chaplains on duty.

During the interwar years the Methodist church had "given little if any attention to or care for" the men who had left their conferences to accept appointments as military chaplains and they in turn had become almost completely divorced from their conferences. The **Military Services Act** of January 1916 introduced conscription and a conscientious objection clause. A **Peace Fellowship** was established in the Methodist Church in 1917. Methodists appointed dedicated Army chaplains for the first time in their history during World War I.

The Wesleyan Church provided services with “camp Homes” designed to provide servicemen and women with a place to relax off-duty away from the temptations of the public houses.

When war came again in 1917 the Federal Council of Churches in America created a General Commission on Army and Navy Chaplains to oversee the large number of chaplains needed by a rapidly expanding armed forces. Bishop William F. McDowell chaired the Commission which served as a liaison between the nation’s denominations and the 2,363 chaplains commissioned during the First World War.

The **Military Chaplains Association** began on April 25, 1925 when seven regular and thirteen reserve Army Chaplains met and organized the Army Chaplains Association. In 1940 a representative group of Navy Chaplains accepted an invitation to join the Association which became known as the Army and Navy Chaplains Association. When the Department of the Air Force was established in 1947 the present name was adopted.

The Military Chaplains Association was finally incorporated on September 20, 1950 by an Act of the 81st Congress of the United States (Public Law 792), and membership was expanded to include chaplains of the Civil Air Patrol, Department of Veterans Affairs and the Air National Guard. The Military Chaplains Association is therefore the only chaplains association comprised of chaplains of all faith groups and all military services. The Military Chaplains Association represents the interests of chaplains in the United States Congress, the Military Coalition and the National Veterans Day Committee. Associate membership is open to anyone who desires to support the work of the Association. www.mca-usa.org See more about this group in the appendix, page 28.



Alan Roscoe Easton's Baptism

Born May 3, 2001, Alan is the son of Damage Control Chief (Diver) Alan Easton, USN (Ret) & Elda Easton. The sacrament occurred at the Naval Base San Diego Chapel, August 1, 2002.

The 1940s -- World War II

In 1941, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt signed Congressional Bill HR-3617 authorizing construction of 604 chapels within six months. Prior to this, only 17 posts had chapels and services were held wherever there was space. This massive building project enabled chaplains to develop full religious programs where soldiers could come for counseling and private devotions, or to escape from loneliness. Overseas, many soldiers built unofficial chapels out of salvaged materials. In England, Chaplain Edward R. Fitzgerald built a chapel from glider shipping crates. Chaplains often held services in out-of-the-ordinary places. Vaults below castles, barns, stables, wine cellars, attics, railroad stations, palaces, caves and in the open, served as places for worship.

Events of the moment shaped wartime ministry. The majority of chaplains saw themselves as clergy in uniform, preaching, conducting baptisms, weddings and funerals, praying, counseling and making pastoral visits to the infirm. Daily service with troops who were uprooted from their families and the settings in which they found themselves, distinguished chaplains' ministry from that of civilian clergy. During basic training, they bolstered the morale of men civilians becoming soldiers. Although chaplains presented mandatory Character Guidance lectures and venereal disease talks, the counseling sessions were the most valuable. Chaplains were there at training sites, rifle ranges and mess halls. They joined the road marches and gas mask drills. The phrase "Tell it to the chaplain" became a familiar response in this war. In every possible setting, officers and troops sought out the chaplain for pastoral advice. In 1942, each chaplain conducted an average of 53 personal conferences a day. The largest number of consultations dealt with personal and family problems including homesickness, suicidal feelings, marriage, alcohol and sickness at home. Military problems, mostly in adjustment to military life, were next in frequency followed by religious problems.

World War II also provided chaplains with new, specialized ministry. They worked in hospitals, embarkation ports, in stockades and on troop ships. Chaplains serving on troop transports were not new. As far back as the 1920s, chaplains had been assigned to ships traveling to the Philippines, but in World War II, the numbers and the dangers were far greater. Interfaith cooperation on transports was the rule. Often only one chaplain served all personnel. In addition to their regular duties, transport chaplains organized boxing matches, orchestras and athletic events, showed films and arranged classes.

Chaplain Assistants

Not until World War II did Army Regulation 60-5 provide for chaplain assistants. They were classified as clerk-typists, but their jobs included much more. Chaplain assistants drove and maintained jeeps and trailers, typed, played the organ, led choirs, carried weapons to protect themselves and the chaplains, set up altars for all three religious groups, maintained records and prepared reports. Assistants were usually versatile individuals who, very often, served as intermediaries between chaplains and troops. Their enlisted status enabled them to inform chaplains on unit morals and opinions. An official report said, in part:

Tribute should be paid to chaplain assistants without whose energy the chaplains could not have carried on. In addition to their regular duties

they were carpenters, common stone masons, landscape engineers.... The good humor and patience of a chaplain's assistant were often a boon to the chaplain's morale.

The Chaplain Assistant Specialist Career field was created in 1948.

The effect of chaplains and their assistants on the morale and well being of World War II GIs was immeasurable. They lived and worked with their troops and provided strength, courage, help and consolation. Chaplains earned 2453 decorations during the war; 77 were killed.



United Methodist Paratroopers

Five United Methodist pastors, ordained elders of 4 different annual conferences, took a literal leap of faith as they donned 5 parachutes and stepped off the back end of an aircraft at 1550 feet.

It was during World War II that there was an increased emphasis on professionalism: ordination by an authorized ecclesiastical body became a requirement; commanders were made responsible for providing adequate facilities for worship; and the noncombatant status of chaplains became policy.

The number of military and naval chaplains quadrupled in World War II and in response the Methodist church created the Methodist Commission on Chaplains with Bishop Adna Leonard serving as chairman. By the end of the War there were 1,747 Methodist chaplains serving with our armed forces, usually working with an ecumenical team at stately chapels, Quonset huts, and in open fields.

Part of the chaplaincy's response to the Cold War was to employ chaplains as educators and to provide moral training to uphold democracy. "Universal Military Training" evolved as a

principle. In this plan, though never implemented, chaplains would prepare and present lectures on topics relating to citizenship and morality. The series of 88 lectures, written by Chaplain Martin H. Scharlemann, was originally known as "Citizenship and Morality Talks." Topics included "Purity in Thought, Word, and Deed," "Marriage as a Sacred Institution," "The Ten Commandments" and "Grounds for Moral Conduct." Eventually chaplains received copies of all the lectures for distribution to their soldiers. "The Chaplain's Hour" was published in conjunction with these lectures, which contained material for lectures on citizenship and morality. In its 25-year history, topics such as promiscuity and Communism would eventually give way to discussions of drug abuse and race relations.

The 1950s -- Korean Conflict

In many respects, the Korean War was a religious conflict. Although most Koreans claimed no religious affiliation, Catholic and Protestant missionaries had brought Christianity to Korea as early as the 1700s. This heritage manifested itself in the struggle. Communist forces took pride in publicly persecuting missionaries and desecrating churches. Chaplains accompanied forces in the South Korean Army. On 11 April 1951, two missionaries serving as auxiliary chaplains created a Republic of Korea (ROK) Chaplain Corps. The ROK chaplains were civilian volunteers serving without pay. They were not officially commissioned until 1958.

The rest of the decade was basically a time of calm and renewal for the chaplaincy. With military members and their families on posts throughout the United States and abroad, chaplain sponsored programs became a vital part of their ministry. These lay groups would meet for social gatherings, Bible study or chapel projects, and each community had one or several. A plan to unite these groups originated in Europe and eventually spread to the United States. Under the names of "Protestant Men of the Chapel" (PMOC), "Protestant Women of the Chapel" (PWOC) and "Protestant Youth of the Chapel (PYOC), they provided a common bond throughout the Army. Catholic and Jewish personnel followed suit and began their own lay organizations.

The same principle was applied to religious education. Chaplains established Sunday schools, but at first there was no unified curriculum. A plan was suggested and adopted providing a continuing program of religious instruction to be used throughout the Armed Forces. The "Unified Protestant Sunday School Curriculum for Armed Forces" became available in 1953-54; the "Catholic Family Program of Religious Instruction" in 1954; and to serve all Jewish personnel, the "Religious School Curriculum for Jews in the Armed Forces" was published.

Retreats

Chaplains established the concept of religious retreat. A retreat is "a period of group withdrawal for prayers, meditation, study and instruction under a director." Yet, retreats were not just for chaplains but were to be for all servicemen and women. To further this, United States Army, Europe (USAREUR) Staff Chaplain Edwin L. Kirtley recognized the need to secure an area set apart in which the group withdrawal could occur. He chose hotel facilities in Berchtesgaden, Germany in the Bavarian Alps. Established in 1954, the American Religious

Retreat Center was officially dedicated on the site of a former rest hotel for the Nazi air force. It quickly became the hub for every major military religious gathering in Europe. Chaplains of all three faiths scheduled year-round retreats for their servicepeople. Within 10 years, 100,000 soldiers and their families had used the Center.

In 1954, John A. Dunn, Staff Chaplain of the U.S. Army Forces Far East, visited Berchtesgaden. Impressed with the center, he obtained approval to establish a similar center in Japan. Located in Oiso, "The Kapaun Religious Retreat House", named after Chaplain Emil J. Kapaun, was dedicated in 1954. It continued until 1957. The Eighth Army Religious Retreat Center opened shortly thereafter on Nam San Mountain in Seoul, Korea. Both it and Berchtesgaden have provided a setting for religious meditation and programs under chaplain sponsorship and guidance.

Specialized training continued outside of the school. The Office of the Chief of Chaplains arranged for many chaplains to take courses in other subjects such as financial management and journalism, and also to attend other military schools. This increased the technical knowledge necessary to deal with an increasingly technological Army. Yet it was in the role of the chaplain as counselor where additional coursework was needed to increase ministry skills. To accomplish this, **Clinical Pastoral Education** (CPE) was established for chaplains. Training in emotional distress, marriage and family problems, human relations and drug and alcohol abuse also became prime areas for chaplain training.

In the late 1950s, the chaplaincy saw the completion and publication of a new **Armed Forces Hymnal** and the adoption of the **Seal of the Army Chaplaincy**. A July 27, 2005 broadcast on National Public Radio's program All Things Considered focused on military chaplains and discussed a number of issues relevant to this topic. One was the placing of military emblems on the privately published The Soldier's Bible (by Holman Bible Publishers of Nashville, owned by the Southern Baptist Convention). The leather cover comes in a choice of green for the Army, black for the Navy, burgundy for the Marines, blue for the Air Force, and blue also for the Coast Guard.

In the early 1960s, the armed service branches also saw new challenges to its (chaplaincy) constitutionality. This criticism continued and grew along with increasing unpopularity of America's involvement in a new war on the Asian mainland, Vietnam.

Women's Commissioning

When the **Women's Army Auxiliary Corps** (WAACs) was established, women ministers challenged the all-male limitations and urged that female chaplains be assigned to large contingents of women. A survey indicated that few WAACs desired female chaplains so the matter was dropped. Many female ministers became chaplain assistants and directors of religious education.

In 1974, more than 100 years after Edwin M. Stanton rejected the commissioning of Mrs. Ella Hobart as a chaplain during the Civil War, the Reverend Alice M. Henderson accepted her commission and became the first woman to officially serve with the Chaplain Corps. With women now a growing element in the chaplaincy, it was inevitable that there

would be two spouses serving as military ministers. On January 14, 1979, Georgette Beltran was commissioned and joined her husband Francisco as the first married active duty chaplain couple.

The UMT (Unit Ministry Team)

The doctrine of **AirLand Battle** has become the cornerstone for American military operations. It is based on securing or retaining the initiative and exercising it aggressively to defeat the enemy. Victory is achieved by throwing the enemy off balance and then preventing the enemy's recovery. Added to this is the Army doctrine called Forward Thrust under which religious support is pushed to the battlefield. In order to achieve this, the concept of the **Unit Ministry Team** (UMT) was proposed.

The UMT at battalion level is one chaplain and one chaplain assistant. It provides religious support to soldiers in combat by nurturing the living, caring for casualties and honoring the dead. Under Forward Thrust, the UMT moves continuously among the forward elements ministering to soldiers before, during and after contact with the enemy on the battalion and equivalent level units. In order to provide effective ministry, the chaplain and chaplain assistant need to share in the rigors of battle. At higher echelons, the UMT assures essential religious ministry to rear areas.

The Methodist Commission on Chaplains encouraged Methodist members to remember and honor the service and dedication of these men and women who “left the comforts of their parsonages and the fellowship of their congregations and the relative security of civilian parish life to become Chaplains with the Armed Forces. The Methodist Church has reason to be justly proud of these men and women. Some paid the supreme sacrifice, some were wounded, some suffered privation and exposure, some endured terrific strain. All acquitted themselves nobly and gave their utmost in the Master’s name.”

The Alaska Connection

The Alaska Missionary Conference was the recipient of many of these clergy. I could find no records that any Alaskan resident had become a Methodist clergy and then served as a military chaplain elsewhere around the globe and if a reader is aware of such please notify the author with documentation which can be included in the archives. This was probably because each clergy needs to come from a full annual conference.

In 2007, the Reverend Steven Lambert, from the Texas Conference, was appointed as military chaplain for the Fort Richardson Army Base, after having Alaskan pastorships at Fairbanks, Juneau, Homer, Unalaska, and Chugiak. In 2002 he was a Chaplain with the U.S. Army Reserve and in 2003 he came onto active duty status with the U.S. Army.

Since the purchase of Alaska from Russia by the United States in 1867 the military has been a main part of Alaska’s economy and community growth.

Fort Richardson Beginnings

The Municipality of Anchorage benefits greatly from a strong military presence, provided by the Elmendorf Air Force Base and the Fort Richardson Army Base, located just north of Anchorage and encompassing 6 percent of the Municipality's 1,958 square miles of land. These bases came into existence just before World War II. The Alaska Missionary Conference-owned Birchwood Camp was purchased just east of Fort Richardson in 1958.

History of Ladd Field/Eielson

Many political and military leaders advocated building military bases in Alaska several years prior to World War II. Finally, when the United States was threatened in 1939, Congress granted \$4 million to construct an Army cold-weather experimental station at Fairbanks.

The purpose of the station, named Ladd Field, was to test aircraft operations in arctic conditions. However, when war broke out with Japan in late 1941, Ladd Field became a critical link in the Alaska-Siberia Lend Lease route.

Eielson Air Force Base was built shortly after the Army Air Corps separated from the Army and became the U. S. Air Force by act of Congress in 1947. At that time Ladd Field was also under Air Force control. On January 1, 1961 the Army reassumed control of Ladd Field and renamed the installation Fort Wainwright, after General Jonathan M. Wainwright, one of the leaders of a gallant defense of the Bataan Peninsula and Corregidor Island in the Philippines during the early months of World War II.

History of Fort Richardson/Elmendorf

The construction phase began June 8, 1940 and since then has been an important part of Alaska and Anchorage.

On November 12, 1940 the War Department formally designated the installation Fort Richardson. The air facilities and flying field on the post were named Elmendorf Field in honor of CPT Hugh M. Elmendorf, killed in 1933 while flight testing an experimental fighter, the Consolidated Y1P-25, near Wright Field, Ohio. Though he apparently had no tangible ties to Alaska, Captain Elmendorf was a contemporary and friend of many of the leading Army Air Forces commanders prior to the war, and he would have figured prominently in the command hierarchy.

After World War II, the Army moved its operations to the new Fort Richardson and the Air Force assumed control of the original Fort Richardson and renamed it Elmendorf Air Force Base.

On July 28, 1942 Chaplain Charles Carpenter was named to fill the newly created office of Air Chaplain under the Director of Base Services, HQ Army Air Force. He was a captain at the time of the appointment but by October 1943 he was promoted to the rank of Colonel. After the separation of the two services in 1947 he was ranked as a Major General and was appointed as the first Air Force Chief of Chaplains and served from 1949 to 1958, just at the time that

many Alaskan Methodist churches were established. This was not just an Alaskan appointment but was service-wide.

The first Air Corps personnel arrived on Elmendorf AFB on August 12, 1940. The Air Force Army base was named for Captain Hugh M. Elmendorf who was killed in 1933 while flight testing an experimental fighter. The first Air Force Unit to be assigned to Alaska, the 18th Pursuit Squadron, arrived in February 1941. The 23rd Air Base Group was assigned shortly afterwards to provide base support. Elmendorf itself officially became an Air Force base on March 26, 1948. In 1962 a chapel was constructed on Fort Richardson and contained a pipe organ valued at \$585,000.

During and after World War II, the Pentagon fueled a building boon as thousands of soldiers, airmen and sailors poured into the Alaska territory to defend Alaskans from the Japanese and then the Soviets. By 1955, 22 percent of Alaska's population consisted of the service men and their families. Between 1955 and 1960, the number of servicemen and dependents in Alaska declined by almost a third. As of July 1, 1961 Alaska had 33,000 military personnel which the chaplains needed to work with, down from 50,000 in 1955.

The Elmendorf population grew as the main air logistics center and staging area during the Aleutian Campaign and later air operations against the Kurile Islands. The Cold War with the Soviet Union caused a major buildup of air defense forces in Alaska. Today the Elmendorf and Fort Richardson bases continue to be important because of their strategic location and training facilities.

On September 17, 1947 the new National Military Establishment, including the Office of Secretary of Defense and the Departments of the Army, Navy and Air Force, came into being.

President Harry S. Truman had approved the **National Security Act** of 1947 on July 26. He also issued Executive Order 9877 which by presidential directive outlined the duties of the three services. Each was responsible for the area in which it operated – ground, sea and air, although the Navy retained an air arm and the Marine Corps.

Following the National Security Act of 1947, the Army planned to move its operations to a new site named Fort Richardson, adjacent to the World War II installation. The Air Force assumed control of the original Fort Richardson and renamed it Elmendorf Air Force Base, gaining full ownership of Elmendorf and its facilities in 1951.

So with the Air Force becoming a separate department in 1947 there was thought that the Army would continue to provide the Air Force with chaplains. Both the Army and the Air Force opposed a separate Air Force chaplaincy on grounds that it would constitute the first violation of the Spaatz-Eisenhower Agreement, which states that parallel organizations in the Army and the Air Force would not be approved unless it was clear that such were organically necessary. The Army felt that a separate chaplaincy would give precedent for the separation of other services, such as medical, engineers, and legal.

Chaplain Charles Carpenter favored a separate Air Force Chaplaincy and negotiated with General Carl Spaatz to have the Army Chief of Chaplains make it so. And with the

Transfer Order dated May 10, 1949 it was possible for the Air Force to have its own chaplaincy. Less than 10 of the 458 Active Duty chaplains elected to remain in the Army!

Elmendorf's greatest contributions to the local area came during the catastrophic March 1964 Good Friday earthquake. Rendering invaluable service throughout the region, Elmendorf was continually cited for its tireless efforts in support of the many needy localities. Chaplains played a big role in this effort.

Community Relations

Alaskans were dependent upon the military and demonstrated their appreciation by hosting receptions and placing officers in the newspapers and making them celebrities. But dependence did not always beget happiness. Many Alaskans, especially sportsmen, were fed up with tales of GIs wasting game, not to mention road signs sporting high-caliber bullet holes, and military land withdrawals for training and maneuvers, which measured in the millions of acres.

In recent years, the services have adopted a good-neighbor policy and doesn't loom quite so large in Alaska economic and social life.

In a report by the Rev. Walter Hays, president of the Alaska Council of Churches, *Alaska: The Religious Situation*, in 1970 wrote: "There seems to be a good working relationship between the military chapels and the civilian congregations in Alaska. Military families are encouraged to participate in the life of local congregations in the communities near military installations. The Alaska Command has over fifty chaplains assigned to minister to military personnel in the state; they serve not only the chapels on the military installations but also carry on a ministry to remote installations through the regular visits of the "circuit riding" site chaplains. Through the courtesy of the Alaska Command the lone Jewish chaplain of the Command is also permitted to serve as the rabbi for congregation Beth Shalom in Anchorage."

February 23, 2007 witnessed the 30th Anniversary of the Salute to the Military, and event sponsored by the Armed Services YMCA of Alaska. William J. Tobin, editor of The Anchorage Times, calls this event "one of our town's most uplifting affairs, a truly don't miss evening."

The military chaplain was quite influential after World War II and the Korean Conflict in Alaska by helping local pastors as a relief mechanism/furlough and in giving the local congregations a fresh face and perspective.

In a publication put out by the Methodist World Service in May 1955, *Alaska – A Frontier of the Free World*, it was written that: "As an important defense of the free world, Alaska has thousands of young servicemen and women stationed there. Ministry to them ... is important. Wholesome recreational facilities and a vigorous spiritual program give stability in the rugged life in Alaska."

In Colonel Brinsfield's book, page 100, he mentions the involvement of the military during the mid-1970s as protectors of the Alyeska oil pipeline and how the various bases had increased needs to meet a growing population that resulted from the pipeline construction. Chaplain Irwin Loud was the Methodist supported at Fort Richardson by garrison chaplains and

chaplain assistants. Jimmy L. Young was the Methodist chaplain at Fort Wainwright during that time period. Chaplain William L. Hufham was the Protestant chaplain at Fort Greely (Army) and its post chapel seated 350 people and supported a Protestant congregation of approximately 250 active parishioners. Even in the late 1970s, in addition to the worship services, choir ministry, Sunday Schools, and Christian women's and men's groups, there was a Soldier Fellowship scheduled each Friday night to offset the temptation by many soldiers in the remote and lonely area to spend some time in the local bars.



Church -- Three services on Sunday, Bible study, and Saturday gospel singing in this place of worship.

The Alaska Missionary Conference Journal Reports

These journals were the result of the annual meeting for each year. There are copies in the Conference Archives for 1904, 1905, 1941, 1945 to the present. They contain the minutes, appointments, budgets, and various reports and are a wonderful resource for historical research.

Besides the military chaplains mentioned in the journals, some of which have mentions that follow, there were chaplains at the Seward Sanatorium, Mount Edgecumbe Boarding School in Sitka, Maynard McDougall Memorial Hospital in Nome, Wesleyan Hospital in Seward, Alaska Methodist University, Alaska Psychiatric Institute, American Legion Posts, and during the Alyeska Pipeline construction phase in the various camps. In the 1940s there were active armed forces chaplains at bases near Nome, Kodiak, Sitka, Homer, Ketchikan, Juneau, Anchorage, and Fairbanks. This is not all inclusive but a good stab at getting the big picture.

The 1945 report from Metlakatla "Relations with Military Personnel" was given by Chaplain Treaster.

"The biggest problem in relation with military personnel is the liquor problem. 'The army is getting drowned with liquor.' Particularly on the Aleutian Chain where loneliness is in evidence, the liquor problem is facing us. There is a very great need to help maintain the morale of the armed forces, and the churches can help do this." (page 36)

The 1946 report from Juneau (page 44) "G. E. Knight reported correspondence from the commanding general of Fort Richardson to the effect that a letter had been forwarded to the

office of Chief of Chaplains on the possibilities of our getting the army chapel at Fort Mears.” On page 49, “After nine months of correspondence the arrangement for the purchase of the Army Chapel at Fort Raymond was completed by the congregation at Seward.” Also on page 49 there is mention that Rev. Knight was able to arrange with an Army Chaplain to supply the work at Nome as soon as Rev. M. B. Fryga arrived from the east coast. Again on page 49 Rev. Knight, by direct invitation of the Commanding General of the Alaskan Department, U. S. Army, he and Dr. Lokey traveled via military transportation to Nome and Unalaska.

On page 50 Rev. Knight indicates that on December 6 he traveled to Unalaska and Fort Mears, where he had an invitation from the Commanding General to go to Fort Mears as an auxiliary (civilian) chaplain and to do whatever he could do to assist the people in the village of Unalaska. Since civilians were invited to attend chapel on the Post, or go to the Naval Station, and since he had no equipment left for services, he had no services in town. He did thirteen services for the Army and the same for the Navy and at each of these some civilians were present. Also, on Christmas Day, he did a radio message for the entire community over the local Army station.

Rev. Knight left Fort Mears on January 7, 1946 on the Army TP 126 bound for Unga and Kodiak. The tug waited one day for me at Unga while I visited with the people, held one service and had an informal visit with the Church Board. They then proceeded to Kodiak, where, while waiting transportation, he had the pleasure of preaching in the Community Baptist Church.

Two Sundays prior to Palm Sunday, and on Palm Sunday, Rev. Knight preached at the 183rd Station Hospital at Fort Richardson, Alaska. He also assisted at two Holy Communion services on the Post.

The only mention in the 1949 minutes from Anchorage indicates that Bishop Kennedy introduced Chaplain and Mrs. Roy C. Davis as a guest at the meeting.

In 1950 Seward pastor Paul I. Irwin made one two-week tour of duty with the Navy in his capacity as a Chaplain in the Naval Reserve.



It was suggested by Rev. J. P. Porter, from Douglas, that the chaplains have the right to participate in the regular conference sessions. This was approved by common consent. Carpenter was the Chief of Air Force Chaplains based in Washington, D.C.; Weise was based at Kodiak, Beade Seattle, and Davis and Armstrong were from Fort Richardson/Elmendorf.

Chaplain Carpenter stated he believed that the Conference would find the chaplains who come to Alaska would be an excellent source of promotion work for the Alaska Conference upon their return to the States after the army or navy service here was finished. (page 36)

A suggestion was made that some of the chaplains be placed on some of the committees by Chaplain Carpenter discouraged this in view of the fact that the chaplains are on assignments and may be transferred at any time. Chaplain Carpenter stated that any and all of the chaplains would be glad to assist in every way possible at all times.

In 1952 Fairbanks pastor A. E. Purviance welcomed Chaplain Carl Stanley of the 4th Infantry, Eielson Air Force Base to do the churches first communion service on Wednesday, April 9. At this same service the first baptism was performed by the chaplain.

Chaplains attending the annual meeting in Anchorage in 1953 were Benjamin F. Meacham from Fairbanks (Seattle), Aln R. Reed from Kodiak, and Joseph Pridgen from Ladd Air Force Base (Fairbanks). Each of these gentlemen gave a brief report (not published).

The annual meeting was in Fairbanks in 1956 and chaplains attending were: Roger Burtner, Calvin Roetzel and James R. Styles, all from Ladd Air Force Base; and Harmon Moore and Joe W. Walker from Eielson Field. Frank Wiser of Elmendorf Air Force Base who attends Anchorage First Church was a candidate for Local Preacher's license. At Anchorage First a youth choir sang every Sunday evening under the direction of John O'Neal Cully of Elmendorf Air Force Base, another candidate for Local Preacher's license. Chaplain Joe Walker spoke briefly to the conference regarding the participation of Methodist women at military bases in the Women's Society of Christian Service. Chaplain Walker dismissed the session with the Benediction.

The meeting in 1957 was back in Anchorage and chaplain guests attending were: Herbert W. Buckingham (Navy), Martin Poch, John R. Dibble, and Kenneth V. Willard (all of the Air Force); and Lyle Bartholomew, Harmon D. Moore, Joe W. Walker, and Seth Wood (all of the Army). Each made short remarks about their involvement which was not published.



Rev. C. Keith Whittern (center) of Unalaska and Chaplain Seth Wood of Fort Richardson visit with Superintendent Fred McGinnis at the 1957 Alaska Mission Conference.

In 1958 the meeting was held in Juneau and the following chaplains attended: Harmon D. Moore and Seth A. Wood from Fort Richardson, Robert N. Arinder from Eielson, and Melvin J. Addington, Kenneth V. Willard, Robert E. Hendricks, and Martin Poch all from Elmendorf.

Only two chaplains were on the roll call at Anchorage in 1959: Melvin John Addington and Robert N. Arinder from Eielson Air Force Base.

At the 1960 meeting in Fairbanks the following chaplains attended: Robert L. Benson, Ashley D. Jameson and Homer E. Gardiner from Ladd A.F.B.; and Elmer I. Carriker from Elmendorf. Colonel Carriker expressed appreciation for the relationship between the churches and the chaplains and spoke of the size of the military congregation in Alaska. In the Alaska Command there is a chapel population of 66,000 of whom 48,000 are Protestants, 17,000 Roman Catholics and 650 Jews, plus 1,000 others. He described the make-up of the Chaplains' Board of ALCOM. There were two senior chaplains, 59 chaplains (Army, Navy and Air Force), 60 chaplains' assistants, and 19 established places of worship. There were nine major bases and 34 remote sites being served by the Board. Of the chaplains serving in Alaska at the time 11 were Methodists. Chaplain Carriker announced that James McGiffin would hold religious education clinics throughout ALCOM immediately after the Annual Meeting of the Mission. A marriage counseling course and summer camps for boys and girls of military

families were described. Bishop Gerald Kennedy and Cardinal Spellman were to be Christmas visitors to Alaska's military personnel.



Attendees at the 1961 annual meeting in Anchorage were Wilkinson B. Alsworth, Robert M. Homiston and Gerald C. Dean from Fort Richardson and Elmer I. Carriker from Elmendorf.

In the 1961 Journal of the Alaska Mission, starting on page 76, Chaplain (Colonel) Robert M. Homiston of the U. S. Army, Alaska reported on the Chaplaincy in Alaska.

“As Methodist clergymen we were ordained to preach, to teach, to evangelize, and to carry to the ends of the earth the message of salvation to the hearts of men. In battle, on the high seas, and in garrison duty, this has been our mission and this has been our central theme. Alaska covers a vast territory...

Across this great expanse of terrain there are at the present time 54 chaplains....and 46 chaplains' assistants. There are 26 places of worship—15 of which are chapels, the others are chapel facilities.

Religious services are conducted on eight major posts, bases, or stations and 34 sites. Those of us with staff responsibilities desire to spread denominations as much as possible and the denominational breakdown for those 54 chaplains were as follows:

20 Roman Catholic
11 Methodist
7 Lutheran
4 Baptist
3 Presbyterian
3 Disciples
2 Church of Christ
1 Episcopalian
1 Nazarene
1 Church of the Open Bible
1 Jewish

You might be interested to know that the senior staff chaplains are all Methodist.

- Chaplain (Colonel) Elmer I. Carriker, the Alaskan Command Chaplain, Air Force, is a member of the Indiana Conference;
- Chaplain (Commander) Robert Vaughn, Navy, is a member of the Alabama Conference;
- Chaplain (Colonel) Robert M. Homiston, Staff Chaplain for the U. S. Army, Alaska, is a member of the Southern California-Arizona Conference.

Throughout the Alaskan Command...we have a personnel responsibility for approximately 65,000 to 70,000 persons. This congregation is made up of approximately 45,000 Protestants, 13,000 Roman Catholics, 530 Jewish, and approximately 4,000 who classify themselves in the category of 'other religions'.

During the past 12 month period there were 66,707 services conducted, with a total attendance for the year of 719,733." There were additional religious educational classes and instruction for all ages. People were encouraged to join local churches of their choice. "Others who have no distinctive church home are received into the membership of the Mount Vernon Place Methodist Church, Washington, D.C., to be held in the status of non-resident members until at such time they may desire to affiliate with some local church in their home community."

One of the military outreach efforts was to provide a full scholarship to one outstanding Protestant to attend Alaska Methodist University.

The chaplains of ALCOM (Alaskan Command) also maintain a library of books and periodicals.

Homiston ends his 1961 report with: "One final word – the character guidance and moral training which is compulsory on the part of all military personnel, is given by the chaplain. One thousand and eighty three such lectures were given with an attendance of 121,499. Seventeen thousand four hundred twenty persons were interviewed or came to the chaplain for spiritual guidance and assistance this past year."

Homer Pastor Revelle E. Roach reported that the Ohlson Mountain UAF AC& W Site had been one of his assignments since July 1, 1960. A service of divine worship was held each Sunday evening. On Tuesday evenings a religious counsel-study "Chaplain's Hour" was maintained. Approximately 22 percent of the personnel attended sometime during the month, as duty schedules permitted. Being a Remote Assignment, no families or dependents were permitted on site. The related problems arising from this situation were described as innumerable, often discouraging, sometimes resulting in divorce and broken homes. Roach indicated it was a privilege to work with those fine young men who were there not by choice but for the country's protection and welfare.

The chaplain roll call at the 1962 meeting in Anchorage included: Robert M. Homiston from Fort Richardson and William H. Jacobs and Roger E. Makepeace from Elmendorf. Chaplain Jacobs arrived from Shemya and served remote sites for the Air Force. Chaplain Homiston displayed the devotional which he had composed and sent with men on maneuvers. He reported that there were 52 chaplains serving 76,782 persons; and that there were 652,648 persons who attended worship during the year. He also announced that a new chapel with pipe organ valued at \$585,000 (in 1962 dollars!) was built at Fort Richardson.

Homer pastor William Jack Martin reported on the Ohlson Mountain program. Attendance had been up and down, but interest had been very encouraging. At the Sunday service, Miss Jackie Thompson, of the Homer church, went to the remote site to play the little pedal organ for services. On Thursday, Bible Study, Discussion Groups, and Films were used. Martin indicated that even though there had been a great turnover, the spirit had been fine.

Colonel Homiston reported that the general program of the chaplains' in Alaska was established by members of the Alaskan Command Chaplains' Board, composed of the senior chaplains of the Army, Navy, and Air Force, and also of these chaplain's deputies. They met quarterly for program development. The programs consisted of worship services, religious education, Sunday School and Catechetical instruction, pastor and religious activities, character guidance, retreats, preaching missions, youth activities, together with all of the other parish experiences. A new 350-seat chapel was completed at Fort Greely and at Wildwood Station near Kenai a large building was given to the chaplains and was completely renovated. Chaplains participated in the Great Bear maneuver. A brochure was written entitled **Daily Devotions** and was distributed to all of the troops in the field. Retreats were to be held at Harding Lake, Kings Lake and Mount McKinley Park.

Chaplains at the 1963 meeting were William R. Jacobs, Roger E. Makepeace, Clifford Stephens, and George Wilson, all from Elmendorf. A report was given by the chief of chaplains, George Wilson of the Genesee Conference, and announced that the chaplains would hold a retreat at Alaska Methodist University in August, led by Bishop Paul V. Galloway.

Conference Superintendent David H. Blackburn mentioned in his report that "we have not approached even moderately the potential possibilities for service to these military

families” which at the time composed about one-fourth the population of the state of Alaska (60,000/241,000). He wrote “At Fairbanks in particular the unmarried young servicemen, together with the Methodist students now numbering over 130 at the nearby University of Alaska, present a challenge for young adult leadership which has been impossible to meet with just one minister in a civilian community of over 15,000. An enlargement of our program there definitely demands both a second congregation and leadership aimed at the collegiate and military young adults.”

Homer pastor William Jack Martin again reported on the program at Ohlson Mountain site saying that the men that serve in a remote site many miles from home have a great need for the Church and its ministry. It serves to strengthen, and to encourage, and to fill the void in the lives of men far from their families. The association with the chaplains of the Air Force has been a privilege.

Guests attending the 1964 annual meeting were William Jacobs, Roger E. Makepeace, and George Wilson, all of Elmendorf. Chaplain Wilson presented a check for \$1000 to Alaska Methodist University for a half tuition scholarship; and \$676.88, which represented a designated offering from the chapels at Elmendorf for AMU. It was this year that the Ohlson Mountain site was closed down.

Colonel Wilson reported that a youth camp was held at Woody Island near Kodiak and Family Life Institutes were conducted. Our three main bases in Alaska still boast the three largest Sunday School classes in the state. A series of workshops on alcoholism was conducted. The Protestant Women of the Chapel organized a chapter and held workshops. There were also Chapel Music Workshops and an effort to organize a Council of Protestant Youth of the Chapel. The chief of chaplains authorized the designation of offering throughout the Air Force for Alaskan Disaster Relief, and over \$51,000 had been received to date. Concluding his report on page 85 he states “Representing a major portion of Alaska’s population, the Protestant Community of the military service wants you to know that we want to share in the venture of building a strong, active and relevant church in this great state. We will do our share.”

In the 1965 Journal of the Alaska Mission (page 83), Chaplain (Colonel) George S. Wilson of the U. S. Air Force, reported

“This year...has been marked by the development of increased cooperation between the military chaplains and state and local church organizations...such as with the State Council of Churches and the Greater Anchorage Council of Churches. We shared the resources of leadership and sponsored the Laboratory School in Homer, Chapel Music Workshops, a Youth Camp Training Conference and our Protestant Chaplain’s Retreat at Ft. Greely” (attended by AMC retired pastor Walter Hays).

Chaplain Wilson indicated the year began with the recovery from the Earthquake. The Alaskan Air Command Chaplain received from world-wide chapel offerings the sum of \$60,295 for disaster relief. Some of this money was used to rebuild the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, establish the Alaskan Air Command Scholarship Fund, a new recreation building was built at King’s Lake Camp, St. Theresa’s Catholic Camp at Soldotna was also given a large sum of money so they could do an extensive camping program for the first time.

Another contribution was given to provide for the continuation of the hospital chaplain program at Alaska Psychiatric Institute and the Presbyterian Hospital.

During 1965 the Alaskan Council of the Protestant Women of the Chapel was organized and held rallies and training conferences. The first annual Protestant Youth of the Chapel leadership conference was held at Alaska Methodist University. Civilian Clergy were invited to participate in the Quarterly Professional Development Seminars for chaplains. Topics this time included Catholic Biblical Studies, The Ministry, and Mental Health and Adolescent Suicide.

Chaplain Homiston recognized the 187th anniversary of the United States Army Chaplaincy in July 1962 with these words, printed on page 81 of the Journal of the Alaska Mission:

Each year I become increasingly proud of the rich tradition which is ours as Americans. As I read the current publications and sense the world tensions and conflicts which underlie so much of the philosophical thinking of our day, I become ever more aware of the importance of the stabilized faith which we, as Americans, maintain.

This sense of religious concern fortunately is not compartmentalized or regimented into narrow avenues of our national life. Rather, it permeates the thinking and planning of all of us.

Since our auspicious beginnings, clergymen ... have distinguished themselves in unselfish service, not only to the God of their lives but to the nation of which they are a part. No distance was ever considered too great nor any task too demanding for these soldiers of God. Their vision, their courage, their perseverance relates a most enviable account of the fidelity of the men who have been known through the years as chaplains.

The uniforms have changed. The customs and courtesies of the service have altered. Battle concepts have gone through many evolutionary processes, but the chaplain still stands tall upon the face of the earth, encouraging and directing men and women to God and to His way of life.

We salute all of these men who through the years have marched alongside the soldiers at our nation, holding high the banner of truth. As we salute them, we pray that these soldiers of God shall continue to march, steadfastly and sure, for the causes of right, justice, and peace.

The 1966 Journal mentions the introduction of Chaplain Robert M. Rutan, Assistant Command Chaplain of the Alaskan Air Command as he gave a talk on the chaplaincy in Alaska. Also present were Chaplain John Reed of Fort Richardson and Roy Lewis of Elmendorf.

Pastor John J. Shaffer of the Chugiak Methodist Church mentioned that Chaplain William Jacobs of Elmendorf had been a guest preacher.

The 1969 meeting was in Anchorage. Thomas Dahl asked the privilege of introducing Chaplain and Mrs. Marvest Averdeen Lawson of Kodiak, Chief of Naval Chaplains, Alaska. After announcements, Bishop Palmer asked Chaplain Lawson to lead in the benediction prayer.

Anchorage again hosted the meeting in 1970. Marvest Lawson was the only Chaplain attending.

Alaska Methodist University in Anchorage hosted the 1971 annual meeting. Fred L. Maddox from the South Georgia Annual Conference was visiting from Fort Wainwright Army Base. He closed the first days meeting with a prayer. A mission team from First Church Fairbanks engaged in mid-week leadership and sharing events, and conducted workshops on small group ministries. They led study and sharing groups at Fort Wainwright, Eielson, and Elmendorf for the military chapel programs and assisted with study groups, evangelism work area meetings and calling with the pastors of East Anchorage, Turnagain, and Seward churches.

At the first meeting of the Alaska Missionary Conference (which had been the Alaska Mission of The United Methodist Church) in 1972 in Anchorage Chaplain Joseph Aloyusus from Fort Richardson and Chaplain Norsworthy of Elmendorf were the military representatives.

The 1980s

In response to the Army's ever-changing needs, the chaplaincy continues to expand and grow. In 1987, the Department of Defense registered the Buddhist Churches of America as an ecclesiastical endorsing agency opening the door for Buddhist chaplains. Unit Ministry Teams are trained to minister to Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) patients and help set up support networks for them and their family and friends. Added emphasis has been placed on ministry to Army families through Family Life Centers. UMTs deal with issues such as crisis intervention, suicide prevention, family abuse, grief counseling and marriage enrichment. These and added emphasis in soldierization, survival skills necessary in combat, prepare chaplains and chaplain assistants for ministry to U.S. Army soldiers and their families both in the combat arena and in times of peace.

A July 27, 2005 broadcast on National Public Radio's program All Things Considered focused on military chaplains and discussed a number of issues relevant to this topic. They suggested that the idea of a chaplain along the lines of the ecumenical Father Mulcahy of television's M*A*S*H is fading away in the military. Statistics show that only 14 percent of the U.S. population is evangelical Christian, but more than 60 percent of military chaplains are evangelicals. The military directs them not to proselytize. The next highest percentage of military chaplains is Mainline Protestants, followed by Roman Catholics.

Military Chaplains' Convocation

United Methodist Military Chaplains representing the Army, Navy, and Air Force including the Reserve Component and National Guards gathered at Scarritt-Bennett Center, Nashville, Tenn., August 23-26, 2001, for a historical convocation sponsored by the Section of Chaplains and Related Ministries.

The goal of the event was to explore the implications of ministry in the new millennium and to address issues such as recruitment, retention, transition, relationship to the connectional system and development of effective methods of communicating the chaplains' stories to the church.

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Coalition Chaplains

From the Left: Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Fred Hoadley (United Methodist), 10th Mountain Division (LI), US Forces; Chaplain Michel Rossignol (Roman Catholic), 21st Marine Infantry Battalion, French Forces; Imam (Second Lt.) Yussef Al Khateeb (Muslim), Jordianan Hospital, Jordianian Forces. The meeting of coalition chaplains took place in Mazar-e-Sharif, Afghanistan on January 11, 2002.

Have you heard about the Four Chaplains?

Which four chaplains is that, you may ask? The Four Chaplains of the U.S.A.T. *Dorchester*.

In all the war news during World War II, the now legendary sacrifice of the *Dorchester* Chaplains became widely known. There is a chapel dedicated to their ministry and memory. Their story became a benchmark for the outlook about cooperation between chaplains from different faith groups. Their act captured the public's admiration and the chaplaincy's spirit. The following photograph reflects the honor they received with a window in the Pentagon chapel.



Four Chaplains postage stamp (1948)



Methodist Chaplain Fox

THE SAGA OF THE FOUR CHAPLAINS

It was known as Torpedo Junction, the U-Boat infested, icy water of the North Atlantic during World War II. On January 23, 1943, the U.S.A.T. DORCHESTER, an old coastal steamer quickly pressed into military service as a troopship, left New York Harbor bound for Greenland carrying 904 men. The U.S.A.T. DORCHESTER was escorted by three Coast Guard cutters. Two patrolled the flanks; the third, the TAMPA, was 3000 yards out front.

Most of the men were seasick and green with nausea. The weather was bitterly cold with gale-force winds. Ice began building up on the decks, slowing the U.S.A.T. DORCHESTER to ten knots.

Moving among them were four Army Chaplains: George Fox, Alexander Goode, Clark Poling, and John Washington. The Chaplains talked with and listened to the men -- soothing apprehensions, offering encouragement, sharing jokes. By their concern and their camaraderie with the men and one another, they brought solace.

On February 2, 1943, the TAMPA's sonar detected the presence of a submarine; she dropped back and swept the periphery of the convoy, but failed to find the submarine's position. That evening, the TAMPA returned to the patrol area up front, and the other ships followed.

The captain ordered the men to sleep in their clothing, with lifejackets close at hand. They were only 150 miles from Greenland. With daylight, there would be air cover from the American base.

It was just after midnight on February 3, 1943. A German submarine U456 fired a torpedo toward the U.S.A.T. DORCHESTER's aging flank. The missile exploded in the boiler room, destroying the electric supply and releasing suffocating clouds of steam and ammonia gas. Many on board died instantly; some were trapped below deck. Others, jolted from their bunks, groped and stumbled their way to the decks of the stricken vessel. Taking on water rapidly, the ship began listing to starboard.

Overcrowded lifeboats capsized; rafts drifted away before anyone could reach them. Men clung to the rails, frozen with fear, unable to let go and plunge into the dark, churning water far below. Only 230 survived. Many of those survivors owe their lives to the courage and leadership exhibited by the heroic Four Chaplains, who, in sacrificing their lives, created a unique legacy of brotherhood.

The testimony of survivors tells us that the sole order and the only fragment of hope in this chaos came from the Four Chaplains, who calmly guided men to their boat stations. They opened a storage locker and distributed lifejackets. Then they coaxed men, frozen with fear, over the side. Soon the supply of lifejackets was exhausted. Several survivors report watching in awe as the Four Chaplains either gave away or forced upon other young men their own lifejackets.

These four men of God had given away their only means of saving themselves in order to save others. The chaplains gathered together, and led the men around them in a prayer and a hymn. They linked their arms together as the slant of the deck became severe. And just that

way, with their arms linked in brotherhood and their heads bowed in prayer, they sank beneath the waves.

It was an heroic act. It was not the only heroic act aboard the U.S.A.T. DORCHESTER, but it was especially significant because of the identity of these four young men: two Protestants, a Catholic, and a Jew.

Today, as it has these many years, the Chapel of Four Chaplains serves the memory of these brave men, and carries their message of interfaith cooperation and selfless service to every part of the nation.

The Chapel of the Four Chaplains
1201 Constitution Avenue
The Navy Yard, Bldg. 649
Philadelphia, PA 19112-1307
Tel. 215-218-1943
www.fourchaplains.org
e-mail: chapel@fourchaplains.org

We are grateful to all those organizations and communities who through the years have honored the memory of the Four Chaplains. Since 1951, The Chapel of Four Chaplains has spread the message of interfaith cooperation and selfless service, touching the lives of thousands of people across this great country.

Thousands of Four Chaplains Interfaith Memorial Services will be held across the nation on or near February 3rd. This service is a tribute to those courageous Chaplains and the 672 brave young men who lost their lives on that fateful night. Further, this service honors all those who have served, and whose courage and faith have sustained our country.

It is imperative that we teach our children and youth about these great events and great sacrifices, for young people are our future. It is vital for them to understand what selfless service on behalf of others can accomplish.

Because of the interfaith nature of the sacrificial act of the Four Chaplains, this is an excellent way to bring together people of all races, faiths, and creeds in an observance of a common unity among Americans. We urge your organization to hold a Four Chaplains Observance with this purpose in mind. It is appropriate that this is also the time of National Brotherhood Week.

CHAPLAIN GEORGE L. FOX

(Not to be confused with the namesake of George Fox University, who was a leader in a 17th-century Christian awakening from which came the Quaker movement/Society of Friends)

George L. Fox, the oldest of the four, knew all about war. Lying about his age in 1917, he enlisted in the Army as a medical corps assistant. He won a Silver Star for rescuing a wounded soldier from a battlefield filled with poison gas, the Croix de Guerre for outstanding bravery in an artillery barrage, and the Purple Heart for

wounds. He was born on March 15, 1900 in Altoona, Pennsylvania. A resident of Gilman, Vermont, he was a successful accountant and family man when he heard God's call to the ministry. Fox went back to school at Illinois Wesleyan University, 1932, B.A. and later was ordained into the Methodist denomination after graduating from Boston University School of Theology in 1934. The parishes he served were Downs, Illinois; Rye, New Hampshire; Waits River, Vermont; Union Village, Vermont; and Gilman, Vermont. When war came, he once again enlisted, telling his wife, "I've got to go. I know from experience what our boys are about to face. They need me." Fox began active duty on August 8, 1942, and served until that fateful morning of February 3, 1943.

The Military Chaplains Association

The Military Chaplains Association was Incorporated with Public Law 782 – 81st Congress of the United States, September 20, 1950. The Constitution in Article I: Purpose of the Association reads as follows:

Humbly invoking the assistance of Almighty God, we associate ourselves together for the following purposes:

- (a) to safeguard and strengthen the forces of faith and morality of our Nation;
- (b) to perpetuate and deepen the bonds of understanding and friendship of our military service;
- (c) to preserve our spiritual influence and interest in all members and veterans of the Armed Forces;
- (d) to uphold the Constitution of the United States; and
- (e) to promote justice, peace and good will.

Military chaplains offer a broadly based ministry aimed at meeting the diverse pastoral needs of the pluralistic military community. All chaplains are responsible for supporting both directly and indirectly the Constitutionally mandated free exercise of religion for all members of the Military Services, their family members, and other authorized persons. (Referenced from Department of Defense Directive 1304.19) Every Active Duty, Guard, Reserve or Civil Air Patrol Chaplain is required to receive an ecclesiastical endorsement from his or her own religious organization, no matter which branch of military service is desired. Each chaplain is expected to remain faithful to the tenets of the religious group granting one's ecclesiastical endorsement. Selection to become a chaplain is competitive and based on the needs of the particular Service Branch to which a person applies. The basic requirements to become an Active Duty, Reserve, Guard or Civil Air Patrol Chaplain include:

- Ecclesiastical endorsement (certifies experience and degree requirements meet the standards of the respective ecclesiastical group)
- Two years religious leadership consistent with clergy in applicant's tradition (strongly recommended)
- United States citizenship (No dual citizenship)
- Bachelor's degree (120 semester hours or 180 quarter hours)
- A graduate degree to include a minimum of 72 semester hours (or equivalent) from a qualifying (accredited) institution. Not less than 36 hours must be in theological/ministry and related studies, consistent with the respective religious tradition of the applicant. Endorsers are free to exceed the DoD standard per ecclesiastical requirements, but cannot go below the minimal DoD requirements, e.g. many endorsers specifically require the Master of Divinity degree
- Active Duty Chaplains:
 - Army: Commissioned prior to age 40 (Age waiver availability may vary from year to year)
 - Air Force and Navy: Commissioned and on active duty by age 42 (Some consideration may be made for prior service)
- Pass a military commissioning physical
- Pass a security background investigation
- Ability to work in the DoD directed religious accommodation environment.

For further questions, contact the Service Branch Chaplaincy you are interested in serving with (Army, Air Force, Navy). Contact information for the chaplain recruiting website of each service is:

- **Army:** <http://chaplain.goarmy.com>
- **Navy:** <http://www.chaplain.navy.mil/>
- **Air Force:** <http://www.usafhc.af.mil>

The Covenant and The Code of Ethics for Chaplains of the Armed Forces

The Covenant

Having accepted God's Call to minister to people who serve in the armed forces of our country, I covenant to serve God and these people with God's help; to deepen my obedience to the commandments, to love the Lord our God with all my heart, soul, mind and strength, and to love my neighbor as myself. In affirmation of this commitment, I will abide by the Code of Ethics for chaplains of the United States Armed Forces, and I will faithfully support its purposes and ideals. As further affirmation of my commitment, I covenant with my colleagues in ministry that we will hold one another accountable for fulfillment of all public actions set forth in our Code of Ethics.

The Code of Ethics

I will hold in trust the traditions and practices of my religious body.

I will carefully adhere to whatever direction may be conveyed to me by my endorsing body for maintenance of my endorsement.

I understand as a chaplain in the United States Armed Forces that I will function in a pluralistic environment with chaplains of other religious bodies to provide for ministry to all military personnel and their families entrusted to my care.

I will seek to provide for pastoral care and ministry to persons of religious bodies other than my own within my area of responsibility with the same investment of myself as I give to members of my own religious body. I will work collegially with chaplains of religious bodies other than my own as together we seek to provide as full a ministry as possible to our people. I will respect the beliefs and traditions of my colleagues and those to whom I minister. When conducting services of worship that include persons of other than my religious body, I will draw upon those beliefs, principles, and practices that we have in common.

I will, if in a supervisory position, respect the practices and beliefs of each chaplain I supervise and exercise care not to require of them any service or practice that would be in violation of the faith practices of their particular religious body.

I will seek to support all colleagues in ministry by building constructive relationships wherever I serve, both with the staff where I work and with colleagues throughout the military environment.

I will maintain a disciplined ministry in such ways as keeping hours of prayer and devotion, endeavoring to maintain wholesome family relationships and regularly engaging in educational and recreational activities for professional and personal development. I will seek to maintain good health habits.

I will recognize that my obligation is to provide for the free exercise of religion for ministry to all members of the military services, their families and other authorized personnel. When on active duty, I will only accept added responsibility in civilian ministry if it does not interfere with the overall effectiveness of my primary military ministry.

I will defend my colleagues against unfair discrimination on the basis of gender, race, religion or national origin.

I will hold in confidence any privileged communication received by me during the conduct of my ministry. I will not disclose confidential communications in private or in public.

I will not proselytize from other religious bodies, but I retain the right to evangelize those who are not affiliated.

I will show personal love for God in my life and ministry, as I strive together with my colleagues to preserve the dignity, maintain the discipline and promote the integrity of the profession to which we have been called.

I recognize the special power afforded me by my ministerial office. I will never use that power in ways that violate the personhood of another human being, religiously, emotionally or sexually. I will use my pastoral office only for that which is best for the persons under my ministry.

The National Conference on Ministry to the Armed Forces, a collection of faith group endorsers, has published a Code of Ethics to guide their behavior with the eclectic masses.

P.W.O.C.
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Protestant Women of the Chapel

PWOC started off in the 1950s in Europe. The mission was for the women of the chapel to help the chaplains carry out their religious programs, fellowship and spiritual growth to US military communities around the globe. The theme for the first PWOC conference was “We Are Workers Together For Christ.” Since PWOC was helpful and beneficial, they decided to start PWOC in the USA years later.

For fifty years, women across the world in many big and small duty stations, in every branch of the military, have been gathering once a week for Bible study at the chapel. There are many benefits for this time together: to study the Bible; meet with women who are married – with children or without – single or active duty members themselves; learn how to be godly women; help each other out in times when help is needed in the home or in the community; be there for projects that the chaplain or units may need help; pray for one another; share helpful hints on raising children; singing praises; playing games; sharing recipes; spending time together at retreats to be refreshed; making lifetime friendships; and most of all to be encouraged to follow the Truth.

All ladies in the community are welcome to come and join us, as well as their children. We have a nursery available that is free and a program for 3-5 year-olds who can come and learn during the time Mom is being refreshed. Also, we have rooms for those who are being homeschooled.

They meet every Thursday at 9:30 at the Northern Lights Chapel located on the street beside the Welcoming Center or ACS Building, corner of Luzon Ave. and Rhineland (across from the Battle Command Training Center). There is also offered an evening Bible study on Monday nights at 7:00 p.m.

Some qualifications to become a military chaplain

To qualify, applicants must obtain an ecclesiastical endorsement from a Department of Defense recognized endorser, which are listed in the National Conference on Ministry to the Armed Forces Directory.. Most chaplains enter active duty with a rank of First Lieutenant and are therefore commissioned officers. As part of the team there are non-officer Chaplain Assistants who are combatants and must be qualified to carry and use firearms. A Master of Divinity degree or its equivalent may be a requirement for some situations. Some services also require two years of ministerial experience in a church, synagogue, or mosque before they are considered for active duty.

Interpreter Magazine touts itself as “for the people of The United Methodist Church.” In the May-June 2006 issue there appeared an advertisement (inside cover) from the United States Army recruiting chaplains. In part the text read: “Finding the Kingdom of God is a journey that can last a lifetime. To get there, a Soldier needs the daily positive presence of spiritual leadership...Consider the call of a truly unique ministry.” One could learn more at www.info.goarmy.com/chaplain4

In the July-August 2006 issue, page 11, there was an advertisement from the U.S. Air Force recruiting chaplains. It read in part: Chaplains Needed...discern a three-year active-duty commitment...the position requires a baccalaureate degree and ecclesiastical endorsement from your bishop/religious superior....you must be a U.S. Citizen under 40 years of age and medically qualified. Their website is www.usafhc.af.mil

Our nation's sons and daughters need qualified, committed, and called men and women to serve as spiritual leaders to them in the fulfillment of their duty. Will you consider the call? The need has never been greater, the experience never so rich.

Some historical duties provided by a chaplain to armed service's people:

- Read the divine services
- Comfort the wounded and dying
- Offer spiritual guidance
- Offer moral guidance
- Deliver religious tracts
- Conduct Sunday services
- Hold evening prayer services
- Be an advocate
- Write home to families of ill soldiers, those who had died of wounds or disease or fallen in battle.
- Bury the dead
- Evangelize

- Baptize
- Marry
- Hold Bible Study
- Counsel
- Provide funeral services
- Welcome new recruits
- Be in contact with the civilian community near the base
- Organize and lead volunteer choirs and Sunday Schools
- Help build chapels
- Pass out religious publications to the wounded
- Speak words of encouragement at every deployment
- Collect Christmas presents for local children
- Advise and host Scout troops
- Visit the sick and wounded
- Model ethical leadership
- Advise leadership
- Tackle drunkenness and disorder
- Provide religious supplies
- Teach combat stress training
- Promote programs like Toys for Tots and Operation Santa Clause
- Participate in Parades and Ceremonies
- Provide Drug Intervention
- Provide Disaster Coordination and Assistance
- Give Invocations at Events
- Assist with employment options for discharged personnel
- Recommend chaplain schools for career personnel

One of the duties of a Navy Chaplain is to lay sailors to rest with burials at sea. The tradition of a burial at sea dates back long before the Navy to the first seafarers. The custom is intended to be a committal and not take the place of a funeral. A committal is the equivalent of a gravesite service. The grave is the sea.

Anyone can be buried at sea, but the privilege of a burial at sea service with honors aboard a Navy ship is reserved for war veterans, 20-year active duty retirees, those who died on active-duty, and disabled veterans who have received an honorable discharge. The honors

include a 21-gun salute and the playing of taps at the conclusion of the ceremony. The families of the deceased all receive a folded American flag, three casings from bullets used during the 21-gun salute, a video of the ceremony and also a chart locating exactly where their family member was committed.

Military Chaplains serve both God and country by bringing their unique gifts with which they are endowed by God, to the Soldiers of our nation in the broad, challenging, diverse, and ever changing environment of the military. While the benefits and pay of an Army Chaplain are often much better than what a minister normally receives, the requirements and stakes are much higher. Chaplains are our nation's Soldiers who minister to our nation's sons and daughters, and their families. Like any Soldier, they must endure the hardships, separations, and deprivations of those whom they serve. Like any Minister, they must provide dynamic and genuine ministry with a shepherd's heart.

Qualified and sent by their religious bodies, trained by the military, and led by the God that they serve, Chaplains are expected to exercise dynamic and influential spiritual leadership, without violating their faith or conscience. Chaplains are the “soul and conscience” of our nation's military.

Whether leading worship, patrolling the motor pool, or visiting the hospital, Chaplains are always at the frontline of the Soldiers' life. Additionally, Chaplains serve on a Commander's special staff in order to ensure that their spiritual gifts and leadership are integrated in the daily exercise of command decisions.

Chaplains provide confidential counseling to military members and their families, flightline and unit visitation, and comprehensive pastoral care. They play an integral part in the Air Expeditionary Force. And as the ministry extends to deployed locations, the chaplain team is dedicated to serving everyone.

Today the controversy of choice is more focused on the chaplain as denominational agent versus institutional agent and the role of free exercise in the military institution.

Another tension is that the commissioned officer chaplain must be careful not to abuse or use for personal gain the authority that comes with increasingly higher positions in the hierarchal structure.



Chief of Navy Chaplains Official Statement on Public Prayer in the Navy

Title 10 of the United States Code, Section 6031, requires commanders to cause Divine Services to be performed and protects chaplains' rights to conduct those Services "according to the manner and forms" of their religious organization. Navy policy on prayer recognizes the distinction between Divine Services and other command functions that customarily or traditionally may contain elements commonly held to be religious, such as invocations or benedictions.

Navy chaplains who serve in Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard commands are trained to distinguish between Divine Services and other command functions at which they may be invited to offer prayer. Our nation encompasses a diversity of faiths and beliefs as do our Navy communities. DoD policy requires commanders to accommodate individual religious practices consonant with the best interests of the unit (DoDD 1300.17). Tolerance and mutual respect guide Navy policy, doctrine and practice in order to recognize and balance both the rights of chaplains and the rights of those who attend command functions, such as changes of command, retirement ceremonies and other functions that commonly incorporate religious elements.

Recognition that religious ministry in the military takes place in a pluralistic setting is a prerequisite for service as a Navy chaplain. To be considered for appointment to military chaplaincy, religious ministry professionals must be "willing to function in a pluralistic environment..." and follow the orders given by those appointed over them (DODI 1304.28: 6.1.3 and 6.4.2). In settings other than Divine Services, chaplains are encouraged to respect the diversity of the community as they facilitate the free exercise of religion guaranteed by the Constitution and military policy (DoDD 1304.19).

Commanders retain the responsibility to provide guidance for all command functions. In planning command functions other than Divine Services that incorporate religious elements, commanders, with the advice of their chaplains, should assess the setting and context of the function. The diversity of faith that may be represented among the participants and whether the function is mandatory for all hands should be taken into consideration in the planning process. The chaplain, once informed of the commander's guidance, may choose to participate based on his or her faith constraints. If the chaplain chooses not to participate, he or she may do so with no adverse consequences.

By emphasizing mutual respect, cooperation, and inclusiveness in delivering prayers at command functions, chaplains encourage recognition of values and virtues which are crucial to military life. When chaplains are invited to pray in command functions other than Divine Services, and do so in a context-sensitive manner, they provide participants of different faiths the opportunity to give assent to what is said. They also model positive behavior and provide a concrete example that mirrors the rich heritage of strength through diversity that is a hallmark of our nation.

Corporate Chaplains of America

A large percentage of people today do not have any relationship with a church or other organized religious group. Often rushed for time, their beliefs and personal needs take a back seat to the meetings, deadlines, and agendas of the workplace. Yet, the problems at home don't go away...they are simply brought, as emotional baggage, to work each day. Corporate Chaplains of America was founded in 1996 to provide genuine "Caring in the Workplace", while following a structured business plan built upon process management principles.

The organization employs full time, long term, career chaplains who combine workplace experience with professional chaplaincy training. In addition to holding seminary level or higher degrees, all chaplains will pursue certification through 154 hours of continuing education within the first year of tenure.

Desiring to be America's leading full time corporate chaplain agency, Corporate Chaplains of America was the first to provide:

A process managed system to provide seamless integration of its chaplaincy system into companies large and small, public and private, serving businesses in practically every SIC industry classification. Some clients employ as few as 10 associates, while others have in excess of 10,000.

- An exclusively full time workforce of highly trained professional chaplains with an exceptionally high retention rate in excess of 93% over the history of the organization.
- Significant investment (more than one half million dollars) in integrated continuing education systems designed to keep chaplain skills current.
- Long term career pathways for chaplains and support staff.
- Full time headquarters staff dedicated exclusively to chaplain recruitment.
- Branded uniform clothing consistent with workplace environment.
- Universal continuing education training and emotional decompression events. Three times per year all chaplains retreat from the field as a group for three days to recharge emotionally and enhance skills.
- Strong financial controls, leading to the top financial ranking of any agency in the industry according to Guidestar.com, a non-profit watchdog group.

The organizational vision of Corporate Chaplains of America is to employ over 1,000 full time chaplains, serving over one million employees by 2012.

Corporate Chaplains of America incorporates a variety of means for caring in the workplace. These include any or all of the following: confidential care giving, crisis intervention, management consultation, programs for worship or prayer, referral to other professionals and agencies, training and education for employees and supervisors, employee/community/church relations and programs, and special events scheduled in response to needs which arise in the workplace. Whatever the scope of each family's problems or concerns, Corporate Chaplains of America has a network of qualified and caring outsource providers that can help.

With nearly 100,000 associates under chaplain care, Corporate Chaplains of America has never encountered a complaint regarding overstepping the faith boundaries of a client. At Corporate Chaplains of America, a decade of "Caring in the Workplace" is not merely a slogan, it is a way of life.

Chaplains are certified to enter jail facilities, emergency rooms, and accident scenes. Chaplains will assist your employees in hospital care, family and marriage care, substance abuse, stress management, and interpersonal conflicts. Your chaplain can also perform wedding ceremonies and funeral services.

Sources for continued research:

Besides those sources noted throughout this document, there are many other sources searchable via the Internet.

The United Methodist Church Section on Chaplains of the Board of Higher Education and Ministries, Nashville www.gbhem.org

This is the United Methodist agency that endorses clergy for the chaplaincy.

PO Box 340007 Nashville, TN 37203-0007

615-340-7400

The United Methodist Church Book of Discipline References (2000 version)

Paragraph 222 under the Admission into the Church section describes a chaplains duties regarding the General Church Membership Roll:

When a person is received and/or baptized into the Church by a chaplain endorsed by the Section of Chaplains and Related Ministries and has no local church to which the membership and records may be sent, the chaplain shall send the name, address, and related facts to the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry for recording on the General Church Membership Roll.

Paragraph 352.3 under the Section XIII. Changes of Conference Relationship, Leave of Absence:

Probationary, associate, or full members on voluntary leave of absence may, with the permission of the charge conference in which membership is held, and with the approval of the Section of Chaplains and Related Ministries, continue to hold an existing reserve commission as an armed forces chaplain, but may not voluntarily serve on extended active duty.

Paragraph 1422 under the Section of Chaplains and Related Ministries has about 3 pages describing Duties and General Oversight in 10 bullets.

Web site for Fort Wainwright: www.wainwright.army.mil

Bear Necessities, a bi-monthly publication of the Fort Wainwright MWR Marketing Program, is published for members of the U.S. Army. Web site is <http://mwr.polarnet.com/bears.htm>

Web site for Elmendorf: www.elmendorf.af.mil/

Publications on Elmendorf:

Alaska Military Weekly, 561-4772; journal@alaska.net

– owned by Morris Communications Corp. in Augusta, Georgia (706) 722-6050

Managed by Alaska Publications, 4220 B Street, Suite 210, Anchorage 99503-5911

Elmendorf Newcomers Guide 2006, AQP Publishing, Inc.

Airman – Heritage to Horizons; The Book 2007, Volume VI, Special Issue

The Sourdough Sentinel, 561-7737 (Anchorage Publishing, Inc.) PO Box 241841
Anchorage and located at 702 West 32nd Avenue Suite 203 and also at the Elmendorf Library
Building and BX/PX Main Entrance. 552-2493 sourdough@elmendorf.af.mil

Military Officers Association of America
201 North Washington Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314
(800) 234-6622
Cook Inlet (Alaska) Chapter c/o Captain
Bob Pawlowski (907) 301-2464; PO Box
241842 Anchorage; oceans@alaska.net

Office of the Chief of Chaplains
Chaplain, Major General Charles Baldwin
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112 Luke Blvd
Bolling AFB DC 20332-9050
202-767-4577

Army Chief of Chaplains' Office
Chief of Chaplains DACH-ZA
Department of the Army
2700 Army Pentagon
Washington, DC 20310-2700
703-695-1133

Navy Chief of Chaplain's Office
Chief of Chaplains
Department of the Navy
2 Navy Annex
Washington DC 20370-0400
703-614-4043

Department of Veterans Affairs
Hampton, Virginia 23667
757-728-3180

Civil Air Patrol
105 South Hansell St
Maxwell AFB, Alabama 36112-6332
334-953-6002

National Conference on Ministry to the
Armed Forces
4141 North Henderson Road, Suite 13
Arlington, Virginia 22203
703-276-7905
www.ncmaf.org

Clifford M. Drury, *The History of the Chaplain Corps United States Navy*
(NAVPERS 15807), 3-5, 8-9.

Methodist Commission on Chaplains, *Chaplains of the Methodist Church in
World War II* (Washington, D. C., 1948).

*Chaplains of the Methodist Church in World War II: A Pictorial Record of their
Work* (Methodist Commission on Chaplains, 1948)

Military Religious Freedom Foundation – A watchdog group dedicated to
protecting the religious freedoms of all United States military personnel.
www.militaryreligiousfreedom.org

Miscellaneous

The Chaplain Doctrine: Nurture the Living, Care for the Wounded, and Honor the Dead.

The Air Force Chaplain Service Motto: Offering God's Love – Anytime, Anyplace

The Air Force Chaplain Service vision: Glorifying God, Honoring Airmen

The Air Force Core Values: Integrity First, Service Before Self, and Excellence in All We Do

The Veterans Administration (now the Department of Veterans Affairs) opened a National VA Chaplain School in 1986.

Military chaplains held their first Wiccan service in 1997 at Fort Hood, Texas. The VA National Cemetery Administration has been relaxing the regulations that allow certain religious symbols on tombstones, one of which is the pentagram in a circle for the Wiccan followers. Atheists have an atom symbol with an A in the center.

The Army has a Chaplains Center and School at Fort Jackson, South Carolina.

Occupational Badges for the Air Force:



The Challenge of Being a Chaplain in the Military

Two things are necessary to prepare soldiers to apprehend or kill," says Navy chaplain Eric Verhulst. "They must believe [the enemy combatant] is indeed a threat to the United States -- to peace -- and that killing him is therefore necessary in order to protect other lives; and that they are not personally connected with [the enemy combatant], but are acting solely as disinterested agents of the state. One person killing another over personal issues is murder. A soldier, in uniform, as the designated representative of his government, acting on behalf of a nation to remove a threat to that nation's peace and security -- that is war."

Military chaplains, however, understand that in a fallen and imperfect world, war (to quote Gen. Colin Powell) should be a last resort, but it should be a resort. And, most important, on the battlefield they serve as a sign of the presence of the just and good God in the midst of hell on earth. The more dangerous the mission, the more vital chaplains are to its success.

The nearly 1,400 chaplains in the U.S. armed forces -- nearly all Christian, except for about 30 Jewish and 15 Muslim clergy -- must be on-the-spot counselors to men and women living through a kind of trauma that few civilians will ever experience. They prepare soldiers to kill and to die without losing their souls. They help soldiers re-integrate into the lives of their families. Chaplains ministering stateside help military families left behind get through months of emotional and sometimes financial hardship.

Officers, Soldiers, and God

[James M. Arlandson](#)

According to the New Testament, is it possible to be honored by God and be a weapon-carrying soldier or law enforcement officer, at the same time? Does God approve of soldiers and officers of the State? Does he condemn the military? If not, may individual Christians serve, Scripturally speaking, in law enforcement and the military?

This article, Part 3 in the series on pacifism and the sword in the New Testament, discusses lawful military and civil officers of the State. Some were soldiers who seek repentance from John the Baptist (Luke 3:7-14). Jesus meets a highly respected centurion who needed help (Matthew 8:5-13). Another centurion named Cornelius, serving in the Italian Regiment, receives a strange, divine visit (Acts 10). Finally, a sword-carrying jailer who worked for the civil government of the Roman colony of Philippi carried out his duty to imprison the Apostle Paul (Acts 16:16-40).

Here are their stories in the Greek East of the Roman Empire. The lesson for police officers and military personnel today will become obvious as we go.

[John the Baptist and soldiers](#)

According to the New Testament, John the Baptist, coming in the spirit of Elijah, was the forerunner of Christ. John preached a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. One day, during the short life of John the Baptist—short because Herod the tetrarch beheaded him (Matthew 14:1-12 and Mark 6:14-29)—some soldiers, likely Jews serving the government in Jerusalem, traveled out to the Jordan River to see him. While they were listening, he told a large crowd that they must bring forth fruit (character and actions) worthy of repentance, not just get wet at their baptism (Luke 3:8). After different classes of people ask what fruit they must produce, the soldiers ask a pertinent question about their own careers.

Then some soldiers asked him, "And what should we do?" He replied, "Don't extort money and don't accuse people falsely—be content with your pay." (Luke 3:14)

It seems, then, that the soldiers were deeper than curiosity seekers. They asked about repentance. It is important to note what John says and does not say. He tells them to follow after justice. Apparently, it was common knowledge that soldiers generally used their power and authority to intimidate people. He also tells them to be content with their wages; logically, this implies that they may remain in the military as soldiers. That is what he said. But what he does not say is that they should quit the army.

The silence is significant. John never denounced them as soldiers, exactly at the moment when the fiery preacher could have done so. One of the requirements of their repentance did not involve walking away from their career. They could repent of their sins and belong to the military. They did not have to repent for carrying weapons or belonging to the military. This also implies, historically, that they could use their weapons, if necessary.

Jesus and a centurion

The following story in the ministry of Jesus is moving (to me, at least). Centurions in Israel were mostly recruited from outside Galilee, not necessarily from Rome or Italy, but they came from such regions as Lebanon and Syria. Centurions were the backbone of the army, keeping the peace and issuing executive orders. They commanded a lot of power. What happens when a centurion and Jesus meet?

Matthew 8:5-13 is long, but I encourage the readers to take the time to read it.

5 When Jesus had entered Capernaum, a centurion came to him, asking for help. 6 "Lord," he said, "my servant lies at home paralyzed and in terrible suffering." 7 Jesus said to him, "I will go and heal him." 8 The centurion replied, "Lord, I do not deserve to have you come under my roof. But just say the word, and my servant will be healed. 9 For I myself am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. I tell this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and that one, 'Come,' and he comes. I say to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it." 10 When Jesus heard this, he was astonished and said to those following him, "I tell you the truth, I have not found anyone in Israel with such great faith. 11 I say to you that many will come from the east and the west, and will take their places at the feast with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. 12 But the subjects of the kingdom will be thrown outside, into the darkness, where there will be

weeping and gnashing of teeth." 13 Then Jesus said to the centurion, "Go! It will be done just as you believed it would." And his servant was healed at that very hour. (Matthew 8:5-13; see Luke 7:1-10)

We can learn at least five truths from this inspiring episode.

First, the centurion was kindhearted, for he cared for one of his servants. The centurion asking help for a servant indicates desperation as if he were a moral father, perhaps. He certainly was a caring head of household and commander. Also, the parallel passage in Luke says that some elders of the Jews encouraged Jesus to help the soldier, pleading, "This man deserves to have you do this, because he loves our nation and has built our synagogue" (Luke 7:4-5).

What is the timeless truth drawn from this first point? It is fitting for a soldier to be helpful to a nation that he enters. The (local) elders of the Jews praise this gentile who built their synagogue. It is possible to be godly and to serve in the military, wielding a sword.

Second, the centurion shows some humility. He tells the Lord that he is not worthy of Jesus coming under his roof. This wins the heart of Jesus, catching his attention. Such humility is doubly important for persons in command. Sometimes power corrupts good character, causing us to become arrogant (which is different from confidence, a virtue).

Third, the centurion understands the chain of command. If he tells a soldier to do something, then the soldier does it. In a similar, but spiritual way, if Jesus tells the disease to depart, it will obey. The centurion recognizes that Jesus has spiritual authority that transcends time and place. Jesus does not have to be on location to heal, so the centurion wisely discerns. This is truly a remarkable insight.

Fourth, it is now important to note what Jesus says and does, and what he does not say or do. He honors the centurion's request and heals his servant. Next, he praises the centurion to high heaven for his insight, using superlative language: "I tell you the truth, I have not found anyone in Israel with such great faith" (verse 10), not as great as the gentile commander's faith. What does Jesus not say or do? He does not denounce the centurion as a military servant of Rome. He never says, "Leave the army, for it is corrupt and intrinsically evil! If you don't, I'll never heal your servant!" As a moral example and teacher, if he wanted to point out behavior and practices that harm the people doing them, then he would have done so. But he didn't.

Fifth and finally, we civilians must honor soldiers and other military personnel. If they need help in practical ways, then let's pitch in and help. Let's bring healing not only to a soldier himself or herself, but to his or her household, as well. If Jesus did this, then why should we ignore his example?

Peter and Cornelius, a centurion

Doesn't a Roman centurion deserve divine censure on the face of it? After all, we're reading the New Testament that teaches nothing but "peace and love," right? Note God's assessment of the commander:

1 At Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion in what was known as the Italian Regiment. 2 He and all his family were devout and God-fearing; he gave generously to those in need and prayed to God regularly. 3 One day at about three in the afternoon he had a vision. He distinctly saw an angel of God, who came to him and said, "Cornelius!" 4 Cornelius stared at him in fear. "What is it, Lord?" he asked. The angel answered, "Your prayers and gifts to the poor have come up as a memorial offering before God. (Acts 10:1-4)

Apparently, Cornelius' godliness positively influenced his family—not an easy task since often the family can see the hypocrisy in the head of household more clearly than outsiders see it. The end of the story, one of divine coincidences, is happy. Cornelius and his family convert, are filled with the Spirit, and are baptized (verses 44-48). He is a military man and the first gentile convert to the Church.

The same analysis that was applied to John's counsel to soldiers and Jesus' praise of a centurion in the previous two sections fits here as well. Neither God himself nor the lead Apostle Peter tells the centurion to leave the army or give up his weapons. Further, no one knows if Cornelius ever killed an enemy, but if he rose to the rank of centurion, then he probably served for a long time, as a career. And if he served for a long time, then he probably saw some action. If he saw some action, then he probably killed an enemy, or ordered his men to kill. Yet, it is possible to be blessed of God while serving in the military and possibly killing an enemy in battle or in law enforcement. Most important, Cornelius shows that soldiers should develop good and godly characters as they serve the State.

Paul and a jailer

Paul was constantly persecuted just for preaching the gospel, not for committing acts of "righteous" violence. In this case he expelled a demon from a hapless girl, so he waged spiritual warfare, just as we saw Jesus do, in the first article. In the Roman colony of Philippi he and his traveling companion Silas were "severely flogged" and jailed in the inner cell of prison, which was probably stinky, damp, insect- and rat-infested. Their feet fastened in stocks, they were singing hymns to God, but then an earthquake in the middle of the night loosed their bonds and opened the prison doors.

27 The jailer woke up, and when he saw the prison doors open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself because he thought the prisoners had escaped. 28 But Paul shouted, "Don't harm yourself! We are all here!" 29 The jailer called for lights, rushed in and fell trembling before Paul and Silas. 30 He then brought them out and asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" 31 They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household." 32 Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house. 33 At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately he and all his family were baptized. 34 The jailer brought them into his house and set a meal before them; he was filled with joy because he had come to believe in God—he and his whole family. (Acts 16:27-34)

Being filled with joy, the jailer and his family convert to Christ. However, Paul never tells the jailer to abandon his career. In fact, the jailer is seen fulfilling his duties

in an official capacity the next day (vv. 35-36). The jailer carried his sword after his conversion.

Conclusion

As we have seen in the first two parts in the series, Jesus teaches that the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Caesar are different and distinct. Also, he did not set out to reestablish the theocratic kingdom of Israel (Acts 1:6-7). This present study confirms the distinctions. That is, all of these passages show individual converts in the military and law enforcement in the kingdom of Caesar (the Jerusalem government submitted to Rome). The texts do not suggest that the Church as an institution should become militant. The stories are about individuals serving as lawful agents of the State, not in a Christian institution. They were qualified agents of Caesar, not amateurs, so these examples do not demonstrate that the Church is permitted to assign weapons to anyone at all.

Parts of the lessons drawn from these passages are based on an argument from silence (what a text or history does not say). However, this is not a problem. Biblical narrative is compressed; that is, it does not go into intricate detail as Greco-Roman texts do, such as the histories of Thucydides and Livy. Silence in the Bible can often (but not always) be significant. Thus, the main characters, followers of God, are teachers or preachers. They are never short of words. If they had something to say about disassociating from the military or from law enforcement, they would have said it. But they didn't.

In addition, the logic of history requires us to assume that in the Roman Empire at that time soldiers and law enforcement officers may have to kill an enemy. It is completely certain that Jesus and the New Testament authors assumed this. They lived in the Roman Empire, and Jesus predicted his own death by the authorities. In any case, surely there were other kindhearted and generous men—but not part of the military—whom God could have honored with his blessings recorded in the New Testament. Instead, God chose to help and call military men and a law enforcement officer.

Further, each of the passages speaks loudly enough. By means of positive actions, God honors each soldier or law officer with conversion or healing or wise counsel. Apparently, God did not condemn them as soldiers or as a law enforcement officer, demanding them to repent of their involvement in the (alleged) anti-God institutions (what he did not say or do). Instead, he blessed them just as they were (what he did), leaving the issue of weapons at that. Evidently remaining in the military and law enforcement, each one carried his weapons after receiving a divine blessing or conversion.

In a future article, we will see Peter (1 Peter 2:13-14, 20; 4:15) and Paul (Romans 13:1-7) say that God ordains governing authorities to keep the peace. In the Roman Empire, this entailed wielding the sword, if necessary. So why would Peter or Paul tell the centurion or the jailer to give up their careers or weapons in the Book of Acts? The Apostles were acting consistently with their theology in their epistles. So here we have more positive evidence.

Also, not every one in the military or law enforcement is blessed automatically; sometimes individuals may become corrupt. They must be prosecuted. On the other side, these soldiers and officers (studied above) showed godliness, repentance, and humility. This caught God's attention.

All of these passages, especially the last two, demonstrate that devout Christians may certainly and gladly join the military and law enforcement, without thinking twice about it, if they feel called to those two honorable institutions. If they have to use the sword on evildoers, then so be it, provided the officers and soldiers follow the law. Officially and publicly, they are servants of the State and act in that capacity, so they should have no angst about using force, if necessary and lawful.

However, as noted in the previous articles, the Church as an institution (also distinct from the kingdom of God, which creates the Church) is "pacifist" in its own actions and internal policies because it follows the commands of the kingdom and its heavenly King; his kingdom is his active rule and dynamic reign today. That is, church leaders in the name of the Church or of God should never convene a council or general assembly in order to raise an army to fight battles and to coerce heretics and sinners to conform.

Rather, the mission of the Church, waging only spiritual warfare, is to save souls, teach believers, and help the needy in practical ways, not to bloody opponents with swords.

The New International Version has been used throughout this article.

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Why I am a Chaplain

Air Force Chaplain

By Karen T. Chrisley

God's call is always compelling, exciting, fulfilling, and purposeful. Imagine my surprise when God called me to ordained ministry—specifically to parish ministry. Then just as I was getting used to the idea, I experienced the added call of focusing that parish ministry within the military. It didn't take long to find that the United States Air Force was the perfect setting for me.

Air Force Reserve Chaplain

By Barry Ball

I am an Air Force Reserve chaplain. To me, the job is a new opportunity for ministry in a dynamic setting, usually part-time. To my family it means that I could, with a few hours notice, be gone to some unknown part of the world for a year or more.

Air National Guard Chaplain

When I was teaching at Westmar University in LeMars, Iowa, I felt called to express my ministry beyond the classroom. I felt then and I still feel that teaching—especially teaching religion and philosophy in a church-related school—is a great expression of my ordination. However, I was feeling nudged to interact with people in a different way.

Army Chaplain

Karen Meeker responds: "Why I am an Army Chaplain? For me it is an irresistible calling." Matthew 28:19 says, "Go into all the world..." Karen speaks to her calling and invites others who give their story.

Army National Guard Chaplain

By James C. Clardy, Jr.

God called me to this ministry over 25 years ago. And while I am happy serving as pastor of a wonderful church, I am blessed to have an extension of this calling

which reaches out to the military personnel of this state and country as well as their families.

Children's Home Chaplain

By Karen Wolcott

As a chaplain in a Children's Home Setting, I daily witness the power of God in the lives of at-risk youth. Children, ages 6-18, arrive needing treatment for emotional, physical, and sexual abuse issues. Because they are wounded, they need behavioral, therapeutic, and spiritual care.

Civil Air Patrol Chaplain

By Gary W. Rae

The call from the mission coordinator came soon after I had gone to sleep for the night. A plane had encountered heavy fog and was late arriving at the local airport. As a member of the Civil Air Patrol (CAP) emergency response team, I was needed.

Hospice Chaplain

By Alan Barone

After I finished my clinical pastoral education residency at Kettering Medical Center in Dayton, Ohio, I didn't even consider hospice chaplaincy because it was a depressing thought. How could I work with dying patients and grieving families on a daily basis?

Hospital Chaplain

By Dorothy Caldwell

Pastoral ministry in a hospital setting is holy work on sacred ground, although it often feels like a desert wilderness. Health care is about tending to people who are vulnerable, fragile, and in pain. Their suffering takes many forms: physical pain, frustrated hopes, anxiety, depression, loneliness, isolation, grief, and.

Hospital Chaplain

By Melinda Cree-Anthony

Everyone has a sacred story to tell. And that is why I am a chaplain. To be there in the sacred holy moments in which people need a companion to enter into the journey with them. Completely in the flow of the moment, giving my full attention, listening to discover this person's sorrow, suffering, joy, strength, unique experiences, and connectedness to the divine.

Mental Health Chaplain

By Ray Council

My ministry is among persons who have special needs, distorted judgments, and peculiar perceptions about themselves and their environment. These things make my work distinct. In other ways, however, my work is quite similar to parish ministry. For instance, we have regular Sunday worship with an organist, bulletins, good and bad sermons, and a monthly observance of Holy Communion.

Mental Retardation Chaplain

By Roger K. Peters

Larry* was terminally ill. On his final night on earth, he was brought to the hospital emergency room in great physical distress. I watched and prayed as the nurses and doctors worked diligently and skillfully with him. I thought of Larry and the meaning of his life. Larry and many other Harrys, Marys, Johns, and Janes have indelibly marked my life and ministry.

Navy Chaplain

By Robert Phillips

I am a Navy chaplain because of God's call to missionary service to young adults. The average age of a sailor on an aircraft carrier is 19. These sailors, like most young adults in the Navy and Marine Corps and Coast Guard, have no current involvement in any church or organized Christian faith.

Navy Reserve Chaplain

By Stephen B. Wall-Smith

In my experience of over 20 years as a reservist, a pastor who has shared at least some of the joys, sorrows, challenges, and inconveniences of the military has greater understanding of and greater access to veteran parishioners and parishioners with members currently on active duty.

Pastoral Counselor

By Ellen Comstock

As a pastoral counselor I am a square in the quilt who has been called for a special purpose. I serve as a connecting link between the grace of God through Christ and the world community. I am also a seamstress, working to repair the rips and tears within individual children of God.

Pastoral Counselor

By Donald C. Houts

While parish pastors were always the preferred role models of my mentors in ministry, I was particularly attracted to the chaplaincy. At seminary, in preparation for parish counseling, I participated in clinical training in prison, mental hospital, and general hospital settings.

Police Chaplain

Jim Powell

I love cops! I always have. My love and appreciation for people in law enforcement was confirmed in 1980 when I became a rookie volunteer chaplain for a precinct in Kentucky,

Prison Chaplain

By Heidi Kugler

God's love, forgiveness, and transformation is larger, broader, and higher than anything we ourselves could put together. Now when people ask why I am a prison chaplain, I simply respond that God calls all of us into the prisons.

Prison Chaplain

By Richmond Stoglin

Why have chaplains in prison settings? What is their role in a place where bars, handcuffs, rough language, and sometimes rough treatment are the order of the day? What is the purpose of a chaplain amid all this anyway?

Retirement Community Chaplain

By James M. Weisz

I love holding hands. I do it often. I am the chaplain for a nursing home complex where the average resident's age is 90. My official title is director of pastoral care, but hardly anyone is aware of that. To the 350 residents, their families, and the staff, I am the chaplain.

State Defense Force Chaplain

By George F. Rosemier

I am a military chaplain, doing what chaplains do: being available to soldiers, being aware of the moral and ethical climate of the unit, and monitoring the morale of the command. My status is somewhat different than most military chaplains. I am a state defense force chaplain; that means I am a volunteer.

Why I'm a Chaplain

By Steven L. Woodford

People often ask me why I serve as a chaplain in the United States Air Force. My normal reply is usually something like, "God called me to that ministry." Every year one day of Annual Conference is designated for chaplains to wear their uniform, and we are recognized for the ministry that we perform.

Workplace Chaplain

The World is the Parish of Workplace Chaplain

By Carl G. Plischke

"We want you to be God's representative on behalf of Parker Drilling Co., to our employees, their families, our customers, and everyone else you contact wherever you travel. That will be wherever we have offices and rigs.