

NCMAF / ECVAC

Newsletter

*News and Resources for
Endorsers and Chaplains*

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and the Endorsers Conference for Veterans Affairs Chaplaincies (ECVAC)*

Issues of Interest

Letter from NCMAF Chairman Herman Keizer

Colleagues in Ministry –

Perhaps for the first time in history a military chaplain has been featured on the cover of Newsweek magazine. The May 07 issue of this major periodical devotes over 10 pages to chaplains and the service they provide during times of war with a related story on Presidents' and their pursuit of God's leading. We have included a portion of one of the articles below. I commend the rest of the issue to you.

I was not at all surprised to see chaplain ministry get this sort of attention from Newsweek. Given the terms of the national debate and the ever increasing toll our current wars are taking on our nation, it was inevitable that someone would pursue a major story from a religious angle. I believe that this story can be an opportunity to educate the members of our various religious communities on the essential service provided by our chaplains.

Later in this issue you will also see a portion of an article that recently appeared in the Christian Science Monitor detailing the shortage of chaplains serving in the Army today. There is no doubt that we need more chaplains to meet the needs of our young men and women who serve in our nation's military. We, the endorsers of NCMAF, are one of the primary means by which chaplains are recruited and prepared to serve our military forces. Your job is clear – seek the best for the demanding times that face us as a nation.

Let me add one other subject that is never easy but almost always essential.

NCMAF also needs you to stimulate a flow of funds in support of the ministry to our Armed Forces via our Conference. The donations received by our office have dried up precipitously in the last several years. We think that this is because of the lack of offerings from those deployed and the need for funds at the local level. We have reduced our expenses considerably by giving up an office location and having all our staff work from their homes. This has helped us steward your gifts, but funds are still needed. Please consider asking your chaplains to take a special offering for NCMAF.

After the ECVAC Chairman article you will see our report of the meeting we had with Dr. David Chu. This meeting and many more to follow are essential to the continued pursuit of chaplaincy. Chaplaincy does not just happen. We must be active advocates for it at all levels of the hierarchy. The pressures to cut funds in our defense budget are great. The decision makers must be reminded that spiritual care and support for their people is worth every dollar spent. The Newsweek articles are nice but another article on a different topic will be out next week and the chaplain story will be history. NCMAF must be able to keep going back to ensure the message is not forgotten.

Please take a moment now to determine how you can give, both personally and as an organization. A regular source of funds is critical to our work. Thank you.

Collegially,
Herm Keizer

Notable Quote

"In the White House, Abraham Lincoln said, he was often driven to his knees (in prayer) "by the overwhelming conviction that I have nowhere else to go."

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Letter from ECVAC Chairman Frank Clawson

Colleagues,

Many years ago I memorized a simple yet powerful statement by an unknown author that has had a profound impact in my life and has stuck with me for over 40 years. The saying goes as follows: "Until one is committed there is always hesitancy, chance to draw back, always ineffectiveness." We all can probably remember times when we were not totally committed to something and the resulting hesitancy and ineffectiveness had a paralyzing effect on the outcome. It leads us to ask what prevents us from being totally committed and what can we do to demonstrate greater commitment to this important work?

I attended a seminar recently that focused on how commitments function in our lives. The presenter first had us prepare a list of our declared commitments which included things like family, spouse, career, education, church, etc. Then he had us identify our hidden or undeclared commitments that often take precedence over our declared commitments. Finally, we looked at what actions we could take to live more completely within our declared commitments. One of the greatest problems many of us have in living fully within our declared commitments is we don't share them with anyone. Sharing our commitments and possibilities with others makes a big difference. It makes our commitments real and powerful. A great example of the power that comes to an individual who shares his commitments with others can be seen in the life of Joshua. He declared "...choose ye this day whom ye will serve...but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Joshua 24:15 KJV). He publicly enrolled others in his declared commitment to serve the Lord. It is our nature to hide and stay private, but when we share our commitments with others, it establishes a form of accountability that elevates our level of performance.

As endorsers of VA chaplains, it is important to have your chaplains share with you their commitments to this specialized ministry. As they do, it will elevate their performance and truly move their ministry forward from good to great.

Collegially,
Frank

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NCMAF Meetings with Dr. Chu, Mr. Carr and the Armed Forces Chaplains Board (AFCB)

Dr. David Chu, DoD's Undersecretary for Personnel and Readiness and Mr. William Carr, DoD's Acting Deputy Undersecretary for Military Personnel Policy, welcomed Herm Keizer, NCMAF Chair, and Jack Williamson, NCMAF Executive Director, 15 April at the Pentagon.

These leaders expressed appreciation and a commitment to work as partners with NCMAF in providing the best qualified chaplains for the Department of Defense. We discussed NCMAF's ongoing relationship with the Armed Forces Chaplains Board composed of all chaplain flag officers from each of the Service branches, NCMAF's critical role in recruiting and providing best qualified civilian clergy for the military chaplaincies and the ongoing concerns about the stresses on Reserve and Guard chaplains and the churches they represent.

Both Dr. Chu and Mr. Carr asked for our help in suggesting initiatives to help convey the Department's affirmation and appreciation for the sacrifices their churches have made supporting the chaplains and their families. They will welcome suggestions concerning how the Department might better address the issues of deployment, the extended absences of clergy from their civilian churches and support for returning clergy and all Reserve Component military members back into civilian communities.

We promised them that we would ask your assistance in conveying to your churches the deep appreciation of the Department of Defense for the sacrifices that these churches and Reserve Component chaplains have made in support of the war in Iraq and Afghanistan. Please let your faith group leadership know that they are appreciated and thanked.

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In our meeting with the AFCB they indicated interest and support for the efforts the endorsing community is making for the returning Reserve Component chaplains, they promised to provide NCMAF with current information, particularly related to recruiting matters and they promised to discuss how Service specific information related to chaplains could be provided.

We will continue to maintain contact with the Department of Defense and work to improve our contacts with the Service Chief's of Chaplains.

A n n u a l C o n f e r e n c e s

ANNUAL CONFERENCE MEETING DATES:

January 7, 2008 New Endorser Orientation Day

January 8-9, 2008 - NCMAF Plenary

January 10, 2008 ECVAC Plenary

Hilton Alexandria Mark Center Hotel, Alexandria, Virginia

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From the Military Chaplain's Association Report to the NCMAF Executive Committee

Announcements.

Chaplain Candidate Scholarship. The 2007 Chaplain Candidate Scholarship application period will begin on or about 1 April and continue until 31 May. We are adding a requirement that one of the four recommendation letters is from a military unit commander or chaplain that has observed the candidate closely in prior service or otherwise has knowledge about the candidate's adaptability to the military in general and religious accommodation needs in particular.

Arlington National Cemetery Commemorative Project, Inc. Superb efforts to support families lead by MG Carl McNair, USA (Ret) and LTC Mike Edrington, USA. Go to www.wherevalorrests.org.

New Major Concern. In the last six months or so, it seems that many people have finally discovered or re-discovered Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and other injuries from combat. Certainly the issues with Walter Reed have elevated the discussion. MCA is receiving frequent solicitations to review books and video scripts in these areas. Alongside this phenomenon is a longstanding conversation among various interested groups about developing an effective information system to identify the talents and services of chaplains who can provide assistance for returning Wounded Warriors. We look forward to more extensive collaboration with you on a strategy for resolving that issue.

Further information - Rev. Dr. Gary R. Pollitt, Ph.D., Executive Director, Military Chaplains Association, chaplains@mca-usa.org

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Personnel Updates

Chaplain Hugh Maddry - Hugh's condition following his stroke continues to improve with time as he undergoes rehabilitative therapy. Cartoid surgery was performed successfully and his overall physical condition is good. He is beginning to walk with a cane and assistance and is beginning to regain some speech now able to vocalize individual words. His wife Janet continues to undergo chemotherapy in her own struggle against cancer. They continue to appreciate all the prayers and messages of support on their behalf.

Chaplain Bob Burt has been able to resume his full schedule after a much quicker than anticipated recovery from cell transplant treatment. His cancer appears to be in remission and he and Evelyn express thanks and gratitude for all who have remembered them in prayer. Chaplain Burt remains under active medical care to ensure continued progress.

Chaplaincy News

Navy Chaplains respond to ministry request from Virginia Tech

Chaplains Art Brown and Bryan Waite and RPC Stephen Waltz provided ministry to the Corps of Cadets at Virginia Tech following the tragedy that killed 32 students there last month. One of those killed in the shootings was Air Force ROTC Cadet Matthew LaPorte. At the request of the Commander of the Naval ROTC unit, Art and Bryan supported by RPC Waltz reported for duty within 48 hours of the shootings and remained on station for over a week providing counseling and spiritual support to Cadets who had lost friends and fellow students. They performed as a Crisis Response Team and worked hand in hand with other counselors, local clergy, and retired chaplains in the area.

The Crisis Response Team enabled the Naval ROTC at Virginia Tech to meet four key goals: 1. Provide Corps of Cadets with compassionate pastoral support through difficult bereavement and recovery process. 2. Pay appropriate honor and respect to the deceased students and staff. 3. Assist all eligible senior cadets to "graduate and commission" on 11 May 2007. and 4. Assist all underclassmen to be "emotionally" ready for their summer cruises at the end of the academic year.

The Pastoral Care Team also sought to contact student's pastors and other support personnel and sent word to chaplains who will receive the Cadets as they access to active duty.

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Have Easter, will travel: Spartan chaplains deliver special services to forward-deployed Soldiers

By Army Sgt. Amber Robinson -Task Force Spartan Public Affairs

JALALABAD AIRFIELD, Afghanistan—for the chaplains of Task Force Spartan, Easter Sunday was as frantic as it was holy. Their congregations are scattered throughout a large task force area of operations in Northeast Afghanistan. But thanks to the efforts of two chaplains, one Catholic and one Protestant, TF Spartan Soldiers who wished to have such things as Easter communion or a special blessing were not left wanting. All told, the pair conducted services at five task force facilities, three in remote Northeastern locales.

“I enjoy traveling to bring Easter services to the Soldiers,” said Army Capt. Hermes Losbanes, a Catholic priest and TF Spartan chaplain. “These Soldiers are trying to do the best they can to finish their deployment. Many of them have struggles aside from the rigors of combat. Many of them have personal struggles and if I can help to alleviate that for a moment by bringing services to them then that is my mission.”

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Throughout Easter Sunday, Losbanes and Army Capt. Doug Weaver, the chaplain for 3rd Squadron, 71st Cavalry Regiment, TF Spartan, traveled to several different firebases in the course of several hours. At each stop, chaplains and their assistants had little time to get the word out, set up and provide services. Turnout varied from stop to stop. "Sometimes when we travel to provide services there will be as few as one Soldier," said Losbanes. "That one Soldier still makes it worthwhile. It doesn't matter if it is one or one hundred. We would still come. A lot of the time, Soldiers at these smaller (forward operating bases) are out on patrols and can't make services – that's why we try to travel out to see the Soldiers as often as we can."

"Today served as a reminder to us of God's fidelity to us as his children," said Losbanes. "It was a reminder that God is always with us."

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Higher Calling

(The following excerpt is from the lead article in the Military Officer's Association of America Magazine of September 2006. <http://www.ncmaf.org/enews/2007/May/MOAAHigherCalling.pdf>)

When Hurricane Katrina unleashed its fury on the Gulf Coast in August 2005, Coast Guard and National Guard and Reserve forces moved into the areas of devastation for rescue, recovery, and relief. When Chaplain Lt. Cmdr. Endel Lee, USNR, got the call to head to New Orleans in support of the Coast Guard, his boss cautioned him he would have to wear a flak jacket because the city had become so violent. "I was just back from Iraq, where I wore one every day. So I told him it wouldn't be a problem," said Lee.

Despite having lost his own home to the floodwaters of New Orleans and relocating his family to Mobile, Ala., Lee answered the call. His job was to take care of the spiritual needs of the Coast Guard first responders, those in the boat and helicopter crews saving hundreds of lives in the flood waters. "We were very concerned about them. They were rescuing people all day long in dangerous and desperate conditions," says Lee. He offered devotions daily and nightly for the rescuers and made sure that they talked about their experiences. "They were exhausted. I encouraged them to sit and talk, to take a mental break, to have a conversation with their families. We wanted to offer them some normalcy in the midst of chaos," says Lee, who also accompanied many Coast Guard members to the sites of their own homes, which had been destroyed by the hurricane and flooding. "I listened to their hurt, and I stood with them as they called their families to say their homes were gone."

Lee says his role in New Orleans was to be a "hero helper." Capt. Bob Mueller, Coast Guard deputy sector commander, Sector New Orleans, would argue that Lee was one of the heroes. "If not for Chaplain Lee, we would have a lot of broken Coasties right now. He helped them through the stress," said Mueller.

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Chaplain in Afghanistan Invents Portable Chapel Kit

By 1st Lt. Ashley Dellavalle, USA, Special to American Forces Press Service

KER KHOT CASTLE, Afghanistan, April 10, 2007 – Army Chaplain (Capt.) Andrew Shriver dedicated the first "expeditionary portable chapel kit" on Good Friday, April 6, during a ceremony at a small forward operating base in the southeastern region of Afghanistan. Shriver, 864th Combat Engineer Battalion chaplain, developed the chapel kit as a means to provide religious service to this small FOB. The kit is the middle-ground solution between "containerised," or prefabricated, chapels, used at large forward operating bases, and a chaplains' kit, a small bag that chaplains hand carry.

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Shriver said he designed the kit to address the problem of bringing religious support to small operating bases where a chaplain is not present all the time.” “The soldiers themselves can utilize the kit each week for worship services and bible studies,”

The expeditionary portable chapel kit consists of a large folding table for an altar, 24 folding chairs, an altar cross, candlesticks, chalice and paten (a small plate to hold Communion hosts), alter linens, silk flower arrangements in vases, votive candles, a chaplain resupply kit, and religious candles, among other items. Shriver handcrafted the vases for the silk flower arrangements out of mailing tube, spray paint, and sand. All of the items, except the chairs and table fit in a wooden crate that easily can be transported on a helicopter.



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Chaplains: Church must support returning soldiers

From http://www.umc.org/site/c.lwL4KnN1LtH/b.2667541/apps/nl/content2.asp?content_id=%7B3BA6F5A3-C4C2-42CA-8FB5-0B0662CFBBD9%7D¬oc=1

The Feb. 12-13 gathering of active and retired military chaplains marked the formation of a United Methodist task force working to teach the church to support and welcome service members returning from Iraq and Afghanistan. They were invited by the endorsing agency and the United Methodist Board of Church and Society. Twenty-one people participated.



(at left - The Revs. Laura Bender and David McLean take part in a discussion by military chaplains serving on a new United Methodist task force. A UMNS photo by Kathy L. Gilber)

In Nashville, the chaplains called it a privilege to bring the word of Jesus Christ to young men and women serving the military during wartime. They said The United Methodist Church needs to honor the sacrifice of those serving. "We all long for the day of peace and none more than the person who has to pull the trigger," said the Rev. Dale White, who was chaplain for a Marine unit in Fallujah, Iraq, for 14 months. The Rev.

Laura Bender, chaplain and a training manager at the Naval Chaplains School in Newport, R.I., said no soldier should have to go to war alone. "Who cares for those who (fight) on behalf of all of us?"

"How will the church respond to troops returning from war?" asked the Rev. Neal Christie, assistant general secretary of the Board of Church and Society, the denomination's social advocacy agency. "Troops and their leadership inevitably are expected to return to extended families — and especially children, congregations, places of work, neighbors and other significant relationships — bearing the trauma of war in Iraq and Afghanistan," said Christie. "What will be the church's pragmatic, pastoral response to their homecoming when a return to life as normal is impossible? "The task force discussed how the church can welcome, support and use the experiences of chaplains to educate congregations. It will develop an action plan to be implemented under the oversight of the Board of Church and Society and Endorsing Agency.

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One Flag, Many Faiths

Jewish and Muslim chaplains have dual roles: tending to their flocks and educating everyone about different traditions. By Dan Ephon **Newsweek**

May 7, 2007 issue - Army Chaplain Carlos C. Huerta had been a rabbi for 20 years, but when it came time to comfort a dying Iraqi boy in a field hospital in Mosul, he did what he thought an imam might do. Huerta, who was on his second tour in Iraq in 2005, clutched the boy's hand—and recited passages from the Qur'an. "To do this job right, I learned suras [chapters]

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from the Qur'an, I learned to say the Lord's Prayer, I learned to say Hail Marys," he tells NEWSWEEK. "Soldiers who are dying deserve to get their last comfort."

Most chaplains in the military are Christian, from nearly all denominations. But a few dozen are from other faiths, including about 30 Jews and 10 Muslims. They spend some of their time tending to the special needs of their own flock, leading holiday services, for example, and seeing that dietary restrictions are accommodated (about 4,000 of the 1.4 million active-duty troops identify themselves as Jews, while Muslims number about 3,400, according to the Pentagon).



Often, they are called on to explain the tenets of their faith to the military. "Commanders want to know about the theology and the mind-set," says Lcdr. Abuhena Saifulislam, a Muslim chaplain deployed to the Marine Corps. Saifulislam briefs Iraq-bound troops across the country on the sensitivities of Muslims. "I talk about how to understand their needs and not to offend them," he says. "I talk about the fasting during the month of Ramadan, how troops shouldn't eat or smoke in front of them. I explain the gender sensitivity, how you don't want a female service member to search a Muslim male, and vice versa."



Workplace Religious Freedom Act

Congresswoman Carolyn McCarthy introduced the Workplace Religious Freedom Act Background of the Workplace Religious Freedom Act in the 110th Congress on March 9, 2007 as HR 1431. Below is a synopsis of the Bill's history from The United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism website. The Bill has received support in the past from a wide variety of both conservative and liberal organizations. It is also opposed by many groups of differing persuasion. This bill, if passed, could have major implications on the place of religion in the workplace and have impact on chaplaincy ministry.

From http://www.uscj.org/Workplace_Religious_6787.html

The Civil Rights Act passed in 1964 included a section under Title VII that addressed conflicts between religion and work. Within Title VII of the Civil Rights Act employers would be required to accommodate the religious needs of their employees, so long as it did not inflict major expenses or other unwarranted problems. In 1977, however, the Supreme Court created a new interpretation to Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, which excused employers for granting accommodations for religious observance if there would be a de minimis expense upon the employer (TWA v. Hardison, 432 U.S. 63).

Since the 1977 Supreme Court decision, many workers have been forced to choose between employer expectations and religious convictions. Devout Catholics were fired from a Massachusetts racetrack for declining to work on Christmas. Sears refused to hire Shabbat-observant Jews for appliance repair jobs. Alamo Rent-A-Car discharged a Muslim woman who wore a headscarf in accordance with her religious beliefs. It was not until 1997 that the issue of religious freedom in the workplace was readdressed in Congress. The Workplace Religious Freedom Act (WRFA) was originally introduced in 1997; throughout the years, as new information has been gathered, WRFA legislation has been modified. Today's bill seeks to amend Title VII of the Civil Rights Act to reinstate protections for religiously observant

Over the past ten years, employees have had to choose between work and religion. According to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), charges relating to religious intolerance have risen to 85 percent over the last ten years. Besides facing religious discrimination, Americans who are denied the ability to observe their religious practices freely may experience serious hardships, such as loss of employment, loss of health insurance, an inability to take care of their families financially, and other tragic situations. WRFA is designed to ensure that no American is forced to choose between work and religion.



Justice Department Launches Initiative to Protect Religious Freedom:

The First Freedom Project

Religious liberty is often referred to as the "First Freedom" because the Framers placed it first in the Bill of Rights. Yet it is not merely first in order: it is a fundamental freedom on which so many of our other freedoms rest.

On February 20, 2007 the Justice Department announced a new initiative to protect religious liberty: *The First Freedom Project*. As detailed in a report issued at the same time as the announcement, Report on Enforcement of Laws Protecting Religious Freedom: Fiscal Years 2001-2006, the Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice enforces a wide range of laws protecting religious liberty: laws barring discrimination based on religion in employment, public education, housing, credit, and access to public facilities and public accommodations; laws barring zoning authorities from discriminating against houses of worship and religious schools; laws protecting the religious rights of institutionalized persons; and criminal statutes such as the Church Arson Prevention Act making it a federal crime to attack persons or institutions based on their religion, or otherwise interfere with religious exercise. As detailed in the report, from 2001 to 2006 the Department of Justice dramatically increased enforcement of these laws. But there is more work to be done. The First Freedom Project includes a number of facets to ensure that this precious right, guaranteed by our laws and Constitution, is recognized and protected:

- A commitment to continued expansion of enforcement of civil rights statutes protecting religious liberty.
- Creation of a Department-wide Task Force on Religious Liberty, chaired by the Assistant Attorney General of the Civil Rights Division, to review DOJ policies impacting religious liberty, coordinate religious liberty cases, and improve outreach to stakeholder communities.
- Initiation of a series of regional seminars to be held around the country to educate religious, civil rights, and community leaders, attorneys, government officials, and other interested citizens about the laws protecting religious freedom enforced by the Department of Justice and how to file complaints.
- Increased outreach to religious organizations, civil rights organizations, and other groups and individuals concerned with religious liberty issues through meetings, speaking engagements, and distribution of informational literature.

For more information about the First Freedom Project, you may contact the Special Counsel for Religious Discrimination, Eric W. Treene, at (202) 353-8622 or send an email to FirstFreedom@usdoj.gov.

<http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/religdisc/firstfreedom.html>

Court Upholds Navy Chaplain Selection Policy

From Religion Clause - <http://religionclause.blogspot.com/2007/05/court-upholds-navy-chaplain-selection.html>

In a doctrinally important decision yesterday (April 30, 2007), the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia rejected claims by three non-liturgical Protestant ministers that the composition of the Navy's chaplain corps violates the First Amendment. Plaintiffs, who had been rejected for the corps, argued that liturgical Protestant chaplains were unconstitutionally over-represented in relation to the religious preference of Navy personnel served. In [Larsen v. United States Navy](#), (DDC, April 30, 2007), the court upheld the Navy's current policy of taking the best-qualified candidates regardless of denomination, and found that plaintiff's challenge to the Navy's former policy of proportional representation of denominations is moot since the policy is no longer in effect.

In evaluating the Navy's current policy, the court held that under the Supreme Court's decision in [Goldman v. Weinberger](#), the court should not apply the normal strict scrutiny standard

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used in free exercise cases. Instead, where military policy is involved, the court must use a more deferential analysis. The court said: If the Navy were constitutionally required to organize and constitute a chaplaincy, so as to ensure the free exercise rights of its service members, then the chaplaincy program would have to not only be narrowly tailored to the free exercise needs of the Navy's service members, it would have to be in relative synergy with it.... If, as is the case here, the Navy is permitted, but not constitutionally required, to accommodate religious needs of its members via a chaplaincy program, the Navy's program need not satisfy every single service members' free exercise need, but need only promote free exercise through its chaplaincy program. The program is constitutionally sound if it simply works toward accommodating those religious needs. The court found that the Navy's current program seeks legitimate military ends and is designed to accommodate the rights of Navy personnel to an appropriate degree. It found that plaintiffs' proposal that the chaplain corps reflect the actual religious demographics of the Navy confuses number of adherents with the religious needs of personnel, which may not be proportional to their numbers. A more tailored program would require the Navy to become excessively entangled in studying the religious habits and interests of its members.

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Lawsuit against the VA Chaplaincy –

The Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF) has filed a formal appeal regarding the ruling in favor of the Veteran's Administration regarding their lawsuit. The Court of Appeals for the 7th Circuit has ordered further briefing held in abeyance pending the Supreme Court's disposition of Hein v. Freedom from Religion Foundation. Further updates will be provided as the events unfold.

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**2007 Prayer for Our Nation
(National Day of Prayer Committee)**

Written by Dr. Charles R. Swindoll

Almighty God, we pause to reflect on Your character as we seek wisdom for such a time as this.

In these unsafe days, You remain all-powerful and able to protect;

In these uncertain times, you remain all-knowing, leading us aright;

In the unprecedented events we're facing, You remain absolutely sovereign. Our times are in Your hands.

Therefore, our dependence on You, is total, not partial . . . our need for Your forgiveness is constant

. . . our gratitude for Your grace is profound

. . . our love for You is deep.

We ask that You guard and guide our President and all who serve the people of these United States. May uncompromising integrity mark their lives.

We also ask that You unite us as truly "one nation, under God." May genuine humility return to our ranks.

And may that blend of integrity and humility heal our land.

In our Lord's name we pray,

Amen.

Recruiting News

[US Army looking for a few good chaplains](#)

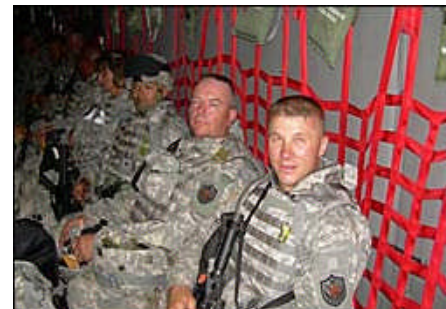
Wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have strained the 3,000-member Chaplain Corps, which now has 450 vacancies.

By Jane Lampman | Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

<http://www.csmonitor.com/2007/0412/p13s01-lire.html?page=1>

American troops in Iraq haven't always had the equipment they've needed. Might many have to go to war now without the spiritual support they've traditionally had? The US Army is working hard to keep that from happening, but it confronts a severe shortage in its Chaplain Corps, particularly among the Army Reserve and Army National Guard. As the Pentagon announced last Friday that Guard brigades would soon be recalled early for another tour of duty, the chaplain shortfall in the National Guard stood at 40 percent. A five-year plan to boost chaplain recruitment in the Army is making headway. "It's getting better, but it's definitely bad," says Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Ran Dolinger, spokesman for the Army Chief of Chaplains Office. "Not long ago we were 581 chaplains short, and now we're 452." Currently, the Army has some 2,600 chaplains. The Army says it's committed to not deploying any unit without a chaplain, and so far they've managed to send one with each battalion of 600 to 700 soldiers. "But we've had to put senior chaplains into junior slots and to count on the goodwill of many who have volunteered to go back more rapidly than would normally be expected," Chaplain Dolinger says. "Most people I have contact with, if they had any background at all that is religious, they seem to be reconnecting with it over here," says Army Reserve Chaplain (Col.) Joel Jenkins, who serves in the Baghdad-based Multi-National Security Transition Command-Iraq. The command is responsible for training all branches of the Iraqi military and the civilian police. Stationed at Phoenix base in Baghdad, he travels the country from the Kurdish north, to Anbar Province in the west, and to the Persian Gulf in the south to visit troops that don't have regular contact with a chaplain. He recently received an email "thank you" from a young marine he helped. "He was having a recurring dream that he was going to die," Chaplain Jenkins recalls in a phone interview from Baghdad. "We talked about his fears, and, after some sessions, he reconnected with the faith he had had as a child. One day he came in and said he no longer had the fear and could do his job, which was a dangerous, personal-security detail for high-ranking officials. That makes it worthwhile being here."

MEN OF PEACE AT WAR: US Army Reserve Chaplain (Col.) Joel Jenkins (second from right) en route to Mosul, Iraq. He's stationed at Phoenix Base in Baghdad.



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Army Recruiting

An Unbeatable Partnership

The long-standing relationship between the Department of the Army - Chaplains (DACH) and NCMAF's members has proved to be a successful venue for producing quality chaplains for our nation's Army. One program which DACH oversees and our NCMAF members have helped us build is the Chaplain Candidate Program (CCP). The CCP has become an efficient and productive way for us to maintain a working pool of pre-qualified candidates for our Future Army. We'd like to highlight the key features of this program that may be of help to you in talking to your respective members. Eight Benefits of the Chaplain Candidate Program:

1. Student receives officer's pay to train as a chaplain.
2. Some seminaries grant graduate credit for this training.
3. Tuition assistance is available for Selected Reserves (up to \$4,500 per year).
4. Great opportunity to explore the military vocation as a chaplain before becoming commissioned as one.
5. Should a candidate stay in the military, their time in service counts toward retirement and increased wages.
6. Chaplain candidates possess shopping, lodging and recreational privileges at military installations throughout the U.S.
7. Low cost life insurance and annual health care is available.
8. Professional development in the art of spiritual leadership at the finest military facilities in the world.

For more information on qualifications for US Army chaplaincy, visit the website at <http://chaplain.goarmy.com> or call 866/684-1571 and follow the prompts to reach your local Chaplain Recruiting Team (CRT) who can answer your questions.

A \$10,000 bonus for newly accessioned officers, payable upon successful completion of the Chaplain Basic Officer Leadership Course (CBOLC) and assignment to a United States Army Reserve (USAR) Troop Program Unit (TPU), is currently available.

The USAR provides Tuition Assistance for Chaplain Candidates up to \$4,500 per year (call 608/388-5072).

-- CH (LTC) Kenneth L. Beale, Jr.

Chief, Chaplain Recruiting Branch, USAREC

Phone: (502) 626-0722 Website: <http://chaplain.goarmy.com>

E-Mail: kenneth.beale@usarec.army.mil

“Providing Spiritual Strength to the Army Strong”



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Navy Recruiting

<http://www.navy.com/careers/officer/clergy/>

New Navy Chaplain Programs Manager

On May 04, 2007, CAPT Henry Nixon Jr., was relieved by CAPT Diana Meehan as the Navy Chaplain Programs Manager, located in Millington, TN. Chaplain Meehan comes to Headquarters, Commander, Navy Recruiting Command, after two successful years in the field as a Chaplain Recruiter.

She recently announced that a 10K lump sum officer affiliation bonus is available to

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chaplains 0-4 and below who have no current contractual obligation to serve in the selected reserve. It is available to chaplains who have satisfactorily completed required active duty obligated service and have never previously served in the selected reserve, or chaplains who have previously served in the selected reserve, but who have not served in the selected reserve at any time in the previous 12 months. Officers must affiliate in the drilling reserve in an inactive duty training (IDT) pay status for a minimum of three years and serve satisfactorily for each year of the obligation. By law, if a member "voluntarily" recalls to active duty prior to the conclusion of this 3 year period, a portion of the bonus must be recouped. The amount to be recouped is prorated, and the member will receive credit for time served. ("Mobilization", both voluntary and involuntary, is legislatively excluded).

Navy Chaplain Candidate Program Officers who after fulfilling both their educational and ecclesiastical requirements, supersede as designator 4105 (Reserves) and affiliate for three years with a Selected Reserve are also eligible for the 10K affiliation bonus.



Air Force Recruiting

Greetings from the Air Force Chaplain Recruiting Team –

We are actively seeking men and women to serve both in active, reserve, and Air Guard (see below) chaplain billets to meet the spiritual needs of the men and women of the Air Force. For more information please call, write, or e-mail Chaplain John Kurzak at John.Kurzak@rs.af.mil or 1-800.803.2452

Air National Guard Chaplain Openings

The Air National Guard has Chaplain vacancies in the following units. If an Endorsing Agent has anyone who might be interested please contact the ANG Accessions Officer - Ch, Lt Col Robert Marciano at Robert.Marciano@ngb.ang.af.mil, or by calling 301-645-2310.

- 161st Arizona
- 163rd California
- 254th Guam
- 181st Indiana
- 111th Pennsylvania
- 143rd Rhode Island
- 158th Vermont
- 115th Wisconsin

.....
Veteran's Administration

Open Continuous Announcement for Protestant positions discontinued this month.

Currently the Veteran's Administration has approximately 300 qualified Protestant applicants registered in their data base. About half are veterans, and sixty-two of these are highly qualified 10 point, service connected veterans. Due to the war in Iraq and Afghanistan, the VA has had many applicants. In May, the NCC will be discontinuing the Open Continuous Announcement for non-service connected veterans for Protestant Staff Chaplain positions. The Open Continuous

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Announcement for Roman Catholic Priests and for CPE Supervisors will continue. The NCC will also announce any positions that might have special rating factors as the field stations request them. The VA will reopen the announcement for Protestant Staff Chaplains periodically on an as needed basis, perhaps twice annually. The VA Chaplain's Office will prepare a letter to bring all Endorser's up to date that we hope to publish in our next newsletter.

Links You Can Use

Department of Veterans Affairs National Center for PTSD - <http://www.ncptsd.va.gov/>

The Military Chaplain's Association <http://www.mca-usa.org/>

The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life <http://pewforum.org/>

Religious News Service <http://www.religionnews.com/>

Coalition of Spirit Filled Churches Member Groups <http://www.spirit-filled.org/memberlinks.htm>

Christian Reformed Church Resources for Soldiers

http://www.crcna.org/pages/resources_soldier.cfm

Executive Director's Note

Dear Colleagues,

Editorials appearing in our major newspapers over the last few weeks have been extremely heartening. Despite the discussions occurring at the highest levels of our government over supplemental appropriations bills, there is no thought on the part of any to not support our troops. This is a stark contrast from the last prolonged war fought by our nation in an overseas setting – the war in Vietnam. As the anti-war sentiment concerning Vietnam grew, the protestors selected service members as the villains and took out some of their hostilities on them. Thankfully, this has not been the case with Iraq and Afghanistan. Our service people continue to be recognized as the true heroes they are – called by our nation to sacrificial service and performing with valor and courage under extremely difficult circumstances.

The prominence given to military chaplaincy in the 7 May '07 issue of Newsweek is reflective of this attitude of our citizenry. Recognizing the extreme sacrifices being made by our military forces, this major news outlet has helped to focus the issue in a new venue for mainstream media, the spiritual dimension. To do this, the editors selected the chaplaincy both to highlight the contributions of our chaplains and also to paint a picture for the nation of how difficult service is for even the most spiritually mature. In this regard, I think the editors have done a great service to our country.

I believe now is the time for us as endorsers and chaplains to redouble our efforts to ensure that those who have sacrificed so much are being provided the care they need and deserve. The only way we can do this is through a seamless net of spiritual care. There is no jealousy in terms of who takes care of these people; active, reserve, or guard military chaplains; VA or hospital chaplains – either full time, part time, or volunteers; or pastors and teachers in our various bodies of faith across our land. We all have a stake in this ministry and we all are essential to the continuity of care which is ours by our own acceptance of a higher calling. We must seek to act in concert with one another in ways that we have never before achieved.

One of the other themes that emerges from the editorials is that a few are paying the price for the many. The real sacrifices of this war are being born almost exclusively by the volunteers of our military forces and their families – a truly small percentage of our total population. We must be conscious of this as spiritual care providers and seek to focus more effort on the needs of the few who may otherwise become invisible. For some, the need is so great they seem to disappear from our midst and become

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invisible to the so called “normal” providers as they are either institutionalized and beyond our reach or seek to blend in so as to not call attention to themselves.

As NCMAF/ECVAC, we are dedicated to all our personnel regardless of their spiritual condition as we know all are worthy of spiritual support. As your leaders plan the upcoming Annual Conferences, we will be seeking to include as much as we can on the integration of ministry at all levels to ensure we are keeping covenant with those who have accepted the challenge to serve. Please provide me any ideas you may have on this and I will include them in our planning and create a space in this newsletter to share some of them.

I also ask each of you to consider how you can support our ministry with direct contributions. These contributions can take two forms – First – a monetary contribution to NCMAF/ECVAC to support our work. Second – a personnel contribution by finding the right men and women to serve our military men and women as chaplains. The opportunity has never been greater.

Collegially,
Jack

Thank you to our contributors

To assist in our ministry you may send your contributions to:

NCMAF
7708 Griffin Pond Court
Springfield, VA 22153

Do you have an article or comment for the newsletter? Would you like to receive future newsletters sent directly to your address? Do you have a question about the newsletter?

Please contact Jack at Jack@ncmaf.org or Lyman at Lyman@ncmaf.org for any of the above.