

The Military Chaplain

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MCA 

THE MILITARY CHAPLAINS
ASSOCIATION OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

80th

ANNIVERSARY

1925-2005

EDITOR'S COLUMN

This issue of the magazine is the first of three issues leading up to the 80th National Institute to be held in the spring of 2005. To set the stage for the coming 80th Anniversary Celebration, there is an article on the early history of MCA, and in a Proceedings Section the Keynote Address from the 79th National Institute. To balance the historical articles, this issue also carries stories of ministry in the ongoing war against terrorism and the ever present challenges facing chaplains and their support personnel.



TO REMIND... The 2004 Combined Federal Campaign will be underway when you receive this mailing. The CFC is the workplace charity fund drive for members of the Armed Forces, for federal employees, and for postal service employees. Less than one in ten charities meet the standards to qualify for this fund drive, and we are proud to be included. If you work for "Uncle Sam," please make a contribution to us in this fall's CFC. (If you know someone in the Armed Forces or the federal government, please remind them that we are listed in their fund drive brochure.) Retired members can make a direct contribution via the internet at <http://www.bestcfc.org>. MCA is listed under the Military, Veterans and Patriotic Service Organizations. Your support through the CFC is necessary to sustain the work of the association.

THE INTERNET... With the continuing growth of spam, virus attacks etc, more software is available and necessary to protect home computers. As a result, we have noticed a greater than usual return of emails sent from the MCA Internet Info Program due to blocking software. If you use blocking software and still want to receive the MCA emails, please be sure that you list the MCA email address in your address book or take the appropriate steps to allow the email to be received. If email we send to you is blocked and therefore returned as undeliverable, your email address will be removed from our MCA Internet Info Program data file.

INTHE MAIL... This year as in previous years, a large mailing is in the works to all chaplain offices of the VA, Army, Navy, Air Force and to chaplains in the Civil Air Patrol to enlist new members. To help tell the story of MCA you can direct interested individuals to view our web page at www.mca-usa.org. A membership application can be printed from the website and mailed to MCA. As has been noted in this column before, chaplaincy remains a labor intensive profession and technology cannot replace the "one on one" work of chaplaincy which has been the hallmark of the profession. Membership growth for MCA is also a "one on one" matter which each member can do something about.

LOOKING AHEAD... Mark these dates on your calendar now! The 2005 National Institute will be held on 12 - 14 April 2005 at the Sheraton Crystal City Hotel in Arlington, Virginia. This will mark the 80th Anniversary of MCA. A long history of chaplaincy resides with MCA members and the 2005 National Institute will be a great celebration in recognition of the past, present and future of the profession of chaplaincy.

ANNUAL MAILING... Renewal notices for 2005 annual membership dues were mailed the end of October. Your early return helps to eliminate the need for a second notice and is greatly appreciated.

As always, thank you for supporting "the voice of chaplaincy."

David E. White
Executive Director

ABOUT THE COVER

The Logo represents and celebrates 80 years of service of the Military Chaplains Association. Founded in 1925 the Association was chartered by the United States Congress on 20 September 1952 for the purpose of supporting the profession of chaplaincy.

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

Call for Nominations - Chaplain Edward Kelley, Past President, has been appointed chairperson of the Nominating Committee for 2005 which will present nominations at our 80th Annual Meeting during the National Institute, 12-14 April 2005 in Washington, DC. Three nominees are sought to fill positions as members of the National Executive Council and an additional nominee is sought to serve as a Trustee. Nominations, with the consent of the individual nominated, should be forwarded to Chaplain Kelley at the MCA email, fax, or mail address at your earliest convenience.

THANK YOU!!!

We appreciate the generous contributions from:
Life Member Gift
Harry R. Miller, USN, Ret, PA

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PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Greetings Colleagues!

I trust all is well with your families and ministries!



Fall is a beautiful time of the year. As I look around, the trees are turning color and there is a chill in the air. Some of you may already have moved past the color and chill into the snow and cold. Those of us who live in the parts of the country that experience such changes are realizing that we too will soon be facing winter. Winter can be great for snow sports and photographs but it is all about cold, or escaping the cold! November, on the other hand, draws our attention to the warmth of friends, family, and thankfulness; and it brings us some significant milestones for which to give thanks.

On November 2nd, we have the privilege to go to the polls and vote for our national leadership--something Afghanistan has just done for the first time in her history and Iraq will be doing soon. Don't take that for granted. We of all people know the price of freedom! Let us exercise the freedoms won for us by the brave men and women to whom we minister.

November 11th will be a time when as a nation we remember the sacrifice of our veterans and publicly honor them. Be sure to take time to thank a veteran for serving! It will be my privilege to represent MCA in Washington at the Veterans Day National Ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery.

November 24th we as a nation will take time to be thankful: a national day of thanksgiving for the way God has blessed our beloved United States. I trust you will observe Thanksgiving this year with a genuine "Gratitude Attitude". We have so much for which to be thankful! We must not get so focused on the negative influences that impact us that we forget to balance ourselves with thanksgiving. If you are having trouble sleeping—count your blessings! That's what enabled the soldier psalmist to sleep in peace even on the battlefield (Ps 4:8).

As I reflect over the ministry of MCA, I am thankful for our founders and early leaders. They had the burden to establish this organization in 1925 and then the foresight to take it a step further and have MCA chartered by the United States Congress. They laid a solid foundation upon which we can build.

I am also thankful for the executive committee you voted into office. They are doing a wonderful job of building on that foundation and moving our organization to the next level of professionalism. The Strategic Planning Committee is working hard on our plan and the executive committee is giving solid input. I am looking forward to presenting it to you at our 80th Anniversary Celebration in Washington. I hope you have marked the dates of 12-14 April 2005 on your calendar and are planning to be with us.

As the end of the year approaches, the pace of life tends to

kick up a level or two. An attitude of thanksgiving will help you, your family, and those to whom you minister stay focused as you navigate the rush of responsibilities and holiday events. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your willingness to be a part of MCA and for the work you are doing in support of our nation.

Since this is my last article for this year, I also want to extend from my home to yours, the warmest of holiday greetings. May the conclusion of 2004 be a time of blessing and may 2005 bring opportunities of service for which we will all be thankful.

John B. Murdoch
National President

MEMBERSHIP CHANGES

NEW MEMBERS

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Jim Asparro, VA, Act, OR | John A. Milewski, VA, Act, DC |
| Jeanne Beharry-Jones, VA, Act, OH | David Mundy, VA, Act, CA |
| Patricia A. Bell, VA, Act, MD | Michael J. Pollitt, VA, Act, PA |
| Jimmie L. Capers, VA, Act, TX | Pamula Royal, VA, Act, NY |
| Carolyn C. Clark, VA, Act, OH | David J. Saker, VA, Act, TX |
| Daniel W. Cottrell, VA, Act, RI | Barbara Speyer, VA, Act, CA |
| Sandra Gillan, VA, Act, TX | Wendi Steinberg, VA, Act, VA |
| Paula D. Gold, VA, Act, WV | Alice D. Tamrie, VA, Act, KY |
| Benita Granberry, VA, Act, AR | Lori D. Taylor, VA, Act, CA |
| Janis A. Grubbs, VA, Act, KS | Susan Turley, VA, Act, CA |
| Janet M. Harmon, VA, Act, DE | Valeria R. VanDress, USA, Act, LA |
| Toni Hatchett, VA, Act, TX | Ryan E. Wagers, VA, Act, WV |
| Janet d. Honek, VA, Act, VA | Maureen Wheeler, VA, Act, VA |
| Virginia Jackson, VA, Act, CA | Barry Wheeler, AF, Res, VA |
| Kay Jezek, VA, Act, CA | Mark W. Williams, AF, Res, NC |
| Delores Johnson, VA, Act, IL | Gloria Wilson, VA, Act, CA |
| Forrest L. Kirk, VA, Act, LA | |
| Lowell S. Kronick, VA, Act, VA | |
| James M. Labosky, VA, Act, NY | |
| David Lefavor, VA, Act, FL | |
| Linda D. Leibhart, VA, Act, NY | |

NEW LIFE MEMBERS

- Jack D. Epperly, CAP, Act, SC
Philip S. Spain, USN, Ret, MD
Vernon J. Summers, CAP, Act, MI

DECEASED MEMBERS

- H. Scudder Edwards, USN, Ret, GA
Kenneth G. Robertson, USA, Ret, AR

History of MCA

CELEBRATING 80 YEARS PART ONE - "IN THE BEGINNING"

The Military Chaplains Association began, as many associations have, from a gathering of a small, informal group. Our early history is sparsely documented, but some facts remain. The initial group, all chaplains from the US Army, convened on 25 April 1925 as an outgrowth of an informal council of chaplains gathered by the first Army Chief of Chaplains, John T. Axton (1920-1928). The group became known as The Army Chaplains Association. Chaplain Axton gathered the small group to obtain their counsel as fellow colleagues. The Association continued under the Army Chiefs, Edmund P. Esterbrook (1928-1929) and John J. Yates (1929-1933). No minutes or records from that era exist today.

The fifth "convention" of the Association was held in 1930 and *The Army Chaplain magazine*, the forerunner of *The Military Chaplain*, emerged in July of that year. All meetings to that date were held in Washington, DC. Bishop Brent was the first President of the Association and served from 1925-1929. He was succeeded by five others in the following nine years. There were no formal headquarters for the organization in those days. The home of the magazine's editor served as such.

In the 1930s conventions were held, with substantial attendance, in Washington, DC, Baltimore, New York, Cleveland, Louisville, St. Louis, Chicago, and Cincinnati. With World War II waging, there were no conventions held from 1940-1945.

In 1940 a representative group of chaplains from the US Navy accepted the invitation from the Association to join. The Association then became known as the Army and Navy Chaplains Association. In 1946 a convention of the new Association was held in Washington, DC. Since 1948, an annual meeting has been held every year at various locations across the nation. With the cessation of the hostilities of World War II, the Association's headquarters were located in various sites including the offices of the General Commission for Chaplains and Armed Forces Personnel. To the present time, as best that can be determined, the headquarters have been located in twelve different sites since 1946.

After a decade as the Army and Navy Chaplains

Association, with the creation of the US Air Force, the Association expanded to include the new military service. At the annual convention held in New York in May 1948, the name of the Association was formally changed to The Military Chaplains Association, embracing all chaplains from the Armed Forces. Chaplains from the Veterans Administration were invited to join the Association since many chaplains appointed in the VA were former military chaplains.

Beginning with the summer issue 1948, the Association's magazine, *Army and Navy Chaplain*, was renamed *The Military Chaplain*. Chaplain A.J. Brasted served as editor of the forerunner magazine and resigned in 1945. Navy Chaplain Clifford M. Drury, a historian who wrote the two volume set of the Navy Chaplain Corps History, was named as the next editor. Chaplain Drury wrote: "*The Military Chaplain* is unique in the history of journalism for it is the only publication which is supported by chaplains from three branches of the Armed Services and the Veterans Administration, Reserves and Regulars, and of all faiths. Indeed, The Military Chaplains Association of the United States brings together in one voluntary paid-membership association more clergymen of the three major faiths than may be found in any other similar organization."

The 1948 New York convention raised the annual dues from \$2 to \$3 that included a year's subscription to the magazine. As of January 1, 1949, according to the scanty records existing today, the paid membership of the Association reached 2,443.

The Association was re-chartered on September 20, 1950 by the 81st Congress of the United States as The Military Chaplains Association of the United States of America (Public Law 792) to include all chaplains of the military services and Veterans Administration, including former chaplains.

U.S. Air Force

SERVING ALL

It is no use saying, 'We are doing our best.' You have got to succeed in doing what is necessary." These words spoken years ago by Sir Winston Churchill, simple yet powerful, still have meaning today. They can be applied to any number of our country's fine young men and women; however one in particular comes to mind, SSgt Tansa Ayazgok currently assigned to the Chaplain Service Institute at Maxwell AFB, AL. SSgt Ayazgok does what is necessary.

From the mundane halls of academia to the hostile world of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM, Tansa does what is necessary. Her sense of necessity often transcends the notion of duty or the concept of service. For Tansa, 'necessary' means giving of herself, sacrificing to meet the basic needs of people or providing lifesaving personal protection by leading unarmed chaplains to safety during rocket and mortar fire attacks at Kirkuk Air Base, Iraq.

That is why it was necessary for Tansa to invest herself in projects that met the fundamental needs of the Iraqi people. SSgt Ayazgok was instrumental in securing funds to restore the Kirkuk Mosque and acting as project coordinator. She was the on site POC for Lakenheath RAF, UK, 'Bags of Blessings' benefiting over 150 Iraqi children. Her tireless efforts were



contributing factors in restoring two Iraqi cemeteries, provide locals the opportunity to visit their loved ones graves.

In addition to her humanitarian efforts, SSgt Ayazgok gave a great deal of herself in her line of duty. She worked with both Air Force and Army personnel in her daily chapel duties. She impacted joint operations and significantly improved the mutual understanding and inter-operability with coalition forces. She directed a quiet zone – an AOR principal ministry to forces – lauded by the 506th AEG/CC as "key to mission accomplishment".

SSgt Tansa Ayazgok demonstrates concern in performing what is necessary to meet the mission and ensure that people, from airman to local nationals, are cared for. SSgt Ayazgok is unassuming in her position and reveals a work ethic that comes through pride in service and doing a job and doing it well. Her approach is definitely one grounded in scripture. "As I have done, so you must do". (Jn 13:15b NAB)

Ch, Maj, Richard P. Novotny
HQ USAF/HCP
Staff Chaplain



U.S. Army

GUARD CHAPLAINS MINISTER TO WOUNDED TROOPS

Air National Guard chaplains and chaplain assistants are performing for National Guardsmen and their families at the largest U.S. military hospital outside the United States. The two Air Guard chaplains and an assistant serving there now are among eight chaplains and five assistants at the hospital. Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Robert Hicks, a Baptist minister from Alabama, Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Richard Sirianni, a Roman Catholic priest and Airman 1st Class Karly Vogel, a chaplain assistant from Minnesota, are on the Air Guard team here.

These Air Guard chaplains serve Army Guard patients at Landstuhl because so many Army Guard chaplains are serving in other places, explained Air Guard Chaplain (Col.) John Ellington Jr., chief of the National Guard Chaplain Service. There are 75 to 100 Guard Soldiers at the medical center most days. A dozen more Air Guard chaplains have asked to serve for three months at Landstuhl, he said. "These kids give so much to their country and to the Guard," Chaplain Ellington said. "There's absolutely no reason not to give them first-class service. The Guard takes care of its own."

The duty is as rewarding as it is demanding, said Chaplain Hicks after busloads of patients who had been flown into nearby Ramstein Air Base arrived at Landstuhl recently. "Welcome to Germany. I'm Chaplain Hicks. You're safe here. We're going to take care of you," he told Soldiers and Marines who walked off or were carried off the buses. "It's a great privilege to do this, but it is also the greatest responsibility I've ever had," Chaplain Hicks said later. "I've never worked harder in my life. "A chaplain brings a unique perspective to this situation," he said. "How are their spirits? How are their souls doing after what they have been through? Those are the questions we ask.

"A lot of my experience has helped me get ready to do this, but nothing really prepares you for what you face here," Chaplain Hicks said. He is the director of chaplain services for the Civil Air Patrol and has a doctorate in family development. He also has written books about coping with emotional and spiritual crises. "Every minister deals with people who are in intensive care and who have cancer and with families who have had their children killed in car crashes, but there's always an end in sight," he said. "There's no end in sight here. You're just thrown into this for the 90 days that you are here. The buses don't wait."

"This is the most engaging deployment in terms of pastoral care I've ever experienced" said Chaplain Sirianni, who has been a priest for 26 years and an Air Guard chaplain for 17 years. "Given the number of patients, it is a daunting task to maintain that care. But we do everything that we can because this ministry is important for helping these people lean into their futures."

The ministry is also important for Guard people who encounter problems while they are at Landstuhl. Oregon Army Guard Spc. Robert Wojtecki, who was being examined because of abdominal pains, asked to talk about his situation with one of the Guard chaplains because they understand how the Guard does business, he said. "This chaplain has been pulled out of his life just like I've been pulled out of mine," Specialist Wojtecki said. "He understands what I'm going through and how lonely it can get."

Checking on the Guard chaplains is one reason Chaplain Ellington flies to Germany as often as he can. "The stress can get to them," he said. "They're like Pony Express ponies. They keep going as hard and as fast as they can. I tell them what they're doing is important, but they need to take care of themselves. Every pastor needs a pastor; every chaplain needs a chaplain."

One of the things that sustain them, Chaplain Hicks said, is the indomitable spirit of the American Soldiers. They are more concerned about their buddies than they are about themselves. They are anxious to go home, but they also want to be with their units. "Physically, they're here in Germany, but, mentally, they're still very much back in Iraq," he said. And they joke. Chaplain Hicks told of one Soldier whose jaw was wired shut because an enemy bullet had gone in one cheek and out the other. "You know what he told me?" Chaplain Hicks said. "He said, 'You know, chaplain, they're not very good shots.'

by Army Master Sgt. Bob Haskell
National Guard Bureau



Alabama Air National Guard Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Robert Hicks prays with two U.S. servicemembers at the Landstuhl Regional Medical Center, Germany. U.S. Army photo by Master Sgt. Bob Haskell

Civil Air Patrol

CIVIL AIR PATROL WELCOMES NEW CHIEF OF CAP CHAPLAIN SERVICE



Chaplain (Col) Charles E. Sharp Chief of Chaplains CAP

Born in Roswell, NM 7 January 1937. Graduated from Texarkana, Texas High School in 1954. Married to the former Peggie Anne Brewer of Pine Bluff, AR. They have four children and six grandchildren.

Education Bachelor of Music Education Degree, Henderson State University, Arkadelphia, AR, 1959
Master of Education Degree, East Texas State University, Commerce, TX, 1962
Awarded the Ph.D. from East Texas State University, 1969
Additional graduate study, Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary, Mill Valley, CA summer 1989

Experience Taught in Public schools in Arkansas, Texas, and Oklahoma. Taught at Decatur Baptist College, East Texas Baptist College, and Mobile College. While teaching, served churches as minister of music and/or education. Served as Pastor in Arkansas and New York.

Taught pastor training institutes in South Africa, Zimbabwe, Kenya, Russia and Romania. Was Adjunct Professor at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Ft Worth, TX, 1992.

Civil Air Patrol Joined Civil Air Patrol in 1993. Served as Garden City, KS Chaplain, Deputy Wing Chaplain, and Wing Chaplain, Kansas Wing. Became Wing Chaplain, Arkansas Wing in August 1998. Selected as South West Region Chaplain 1 April 2002. Selected

Chief of Chaplains, CAP 19 August 2004.

Earned Senior Member Training, Level V, and the Master Track rating for Chaplains and Aerospace Education Officers. Served as Aerospace Education Officer in the Garden City Squadron, and Director of Aerospace Education for the Arkansas Wing.

Taught SLS and CLC courses, and was on staff for the National Staff College in 2001, 2002, 2003, and selected as Chief of Staff 2004. Served as deputy director for two North Central Region Chaplain Service Staff Colleges and Registrar of the Southwest Region Chaplain Service Staff College in 2000.

Developed cooperative agreements with CAP and the Kansas Army National Guard and CAP and the Arkansas National Guard.

Awards

Kansas Wing Chaplain of the year, Frank G. Brewer Aerospace Education Award, Kansas Aerospace Education Officer of the Year, Medal of Merit from the Air Force Association, Military Chaplain Association Distinguished Chaplain of the Year, Commander Commendation with silver star and Meritorious Service Award with two bronze clasps. Exceptional Service Award. CAP National Senior Chaplain 2003. Emergency Services qualified as Mission Chaplain and Mission Radio Operator.

Photo: Chaplain Sharp being congratulated by MGEN Charles Baldwin, Chief of the Air Force Chaplain Service. Chaplain Melancon, former Chief of CAP Chaplain Service at left.



U.S. Navy

USS MOMSEN LAYS RETIRED SAILORS TO REST WITH BURIALS AT SEA

The crew of USS Momsen (DDG 92) helped lay to rest the remains of four retired Sailors while under way in the Strait of Juan de Fuca in October.

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, said Chaplain Lt. Cmdr. John Hakanson. "Mariners have always done them to say goodbye to their shipmates," said Hakanson, who came aboard Momsen to lead the ceremony. "But a burial at sea is not a funeral, it's a committal. That's important to separate. Committal is the equivalent of a gravesite service. The grave is the sea."

The Navy's newest guided-missile destroyer paused briefly en route to her new homeport of Naval Station Everett to perform the ceremony for the Sailors who each served in the Navy for two decades or more. All of the former Sailors were from the Puget Sound area. Each of the deceased were given a burial at sea with full military honors for their service to the country. Those honors included a 21-gun salute and the playing of taps at the conclusion of the ceremony.

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've received an honorable discharge, said Hakanson. "They merit those honors," said Hakanson. "It's a way of sending your shipmate to sea for the final time. You'll always see the crew formed up to say goodbye to a shipmate who's served. We give them the highest honor we can."

The ceremony had an especially poignant feel for Momsen's Chief Hospital Corpsman (SW/AW) James Hopper, who participated in the ceremony to help commit a fellow

corpsman to the sea.

"It was a very solemn and incredible experience," said Hopper. "I was glad to be a part and do such a wonderful thing for someone's family."

The families of the deceased all received 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, said Hakanson.

"It doesn't matter how many of these you do," he said. "They don't become commonplace; there's something special about them. I think it's because we hope someday our [personal] service will be honorable enough that other shipmates will do for us the same as we have been able to do for someone else. I hope someone will take as good of care for me as I have done for others."

By Journalist 3rd Class Travis Lee Clark,
Naval Station Everett Public Affairs



Chief Hospital Corpsman James Hopper and fellow chiefs assigned to USS Momsen (DDG 92), pay their final respects to four shipmates during a burial at sea aboard the guided missile destroyer in the Strait of Juan de Fuca. U.S. Navy photo by Photographer's Mate 2nd Class Eli J. Medellin.



Staff & Leadership Class 05010 at the Naval Chaplains School.

LCDR M. W. GORE, CHC, USN
ADVANCED TRAINING INSTRUCTOR
LCDR C. DORN, CHC, USN
LT D. DUNHAM, CHC, USNR
LT P. HAAGEN, CHC, USNR
LCDR J. GAYTON, CHC, USNR
CDR K. CIENIK, CHC, USNR

RP1(FMFISW) M. A. HAWTHORNE, USN
ADVANCE COURSE RP
LT C. KANE, CHC, USNR
LT J. TISDALE, CHC, USNR
LT T. WILLIAMS, CHC, USNR
LT J. MCKINNEY, CHC, USNR
CDR D. ROSANDER, CHC, USN

CDR M. W. LANGSTON, CHC, USN
ADVANCED TRAINING OFFICER
LT J. KOCH, CHC, USNR
LCDR L. DOLAN, CHC, USNR
CAPT(SEL) P. WANG, CHC, USNR
LCDR P. DAWSON, CHC, USN
LT. A. SMITH, CHC, USNR

Dept. of Veterans Affairs

2004 VA WOMEN CHAPLAINS' CONFERENCE: INSPIRING VISION, HOPE AND POSSIBILITY

On the evening of Monday, September 20, 2004, MCA's Executive Director, David E. White, CHC, USN (Ret) addressed a gathering of 44 Department of Veterans Affairs women chaplains who met at the Holy Family Retreat Center in Hampton, Virginia. The Military Chaplains Association sponsored a reception on the first night of the four-day conference, marking the first time a women chaplains' conference has been planned and hosted exclusively by the National VA Chaplain Center. Chaplain White presented the value of membership in the Military Chaplains Association and described the many ways MCA supports VA chaplains.

The training conference opened with registration, worship and the MCA reception on Monday, followed by a welcome on Tuesday morning by Chaplain Hugh A. Maddy, Director of VA Chaplain Service, and a presentation by Dr. Frances M. Murphy, Deputy Under Secretary for Health, for Health Policy Coordination. Dr. Murphy highlighted a task force report submitted to the Secretary last year entitled, the Employment and Advancement of Women in the Department of Veterans Affairs. She also presented research related to differences in leadership styles of men and women. Following a tour of the National VA Chaplain Center and an overview of available educational opportunities, the group boarded The Spirit of Norfolk for a cruise of the Norfolk Harbor and the Elizabeth River.

During the morning of Wednesday, September 22, 2004, the program featured two of VA Chaplain Service's leaders, Chaplain Linda Leibhart, Lead Chaplain in Bath, New York and Melba Banks, Chief Chaplain in Asheville, North Carolina. Chaplain Leibhart provided a moving account of her experiences as an active duty chaplain in Kuwait from April 2003 until she was injured in February 2004. Chaplain Banks, who also serves as the President of the National Association of Veterans Affairs Chaplains, presented training on the Department's High Performance Development Model.

On Wednesday afternoon, Dr. Irene Trowell-Harris, Director of VA's Center for Women Veterans, addressed the topic of "Caring for Women Veterans," and Chaplain (MAJGEN) Lorraine Potter (Retired) preached memorably about "Doing Ministry – Our Response and Our Responsibility."

On Thursday, September 23, Chaplains Janis Grubbs and Alice Thornberry facilitated the group discussion to identify needs of VA women chaplains, both as individuals and as a group. Those assembled agreed that a new organization of VA Women Chaplains should be organized. Chaplains Janis Grubbs, Bonnie Grantham, Barbara Speyer and Delores Johnson were identified to "give birth" to the new organization.

Throughout the conference, VA women chaplains demonstrated their abilities to care for and minister to others, to lead in worship activities (opening worship, daily devotionals, closing worship), to think creatively and to identify methods of addressing and meeting needs, both for their own group and for VA Chaplain Service, in general. This was a gathering of high potential chaplains who surely will continue to shape the future of VA's Chaplain Service and the Veterans Health Administration.



*VA Chaplain Class 1st Row Front: Chaplain Forrest Kirk, New Orleans, LA;
2nd Row: Chaplain Ryan Wagers, Clarksburg, WV;
Chaplain Daniel W. Cottrell, Providence, RI; and
Chaplain Joseph Rodak, Brecksville, OH
3rd Row: Chaplain Ron Phelps (MCA Board
Member Presented Brief on MCA), Chaplain James
Labosky, Northport, NY, and A. Keith Ethridge,
Associate Director, National Chaplain Center.*

Proceedings

PROCEEDINGS I

"TAKE CARE OF THE COW!"

Keynote Address given by Rear Admiral Ross H. Trower, CHC, USN Retired, at the National Institute of the Military Chaplains Association in St. Louis, Missouri, on 20 April 2004.

There's a story told – I no longer recall its source – of a Benedictine abbot who lay dying. The monks waited around his bedside, expecting that their revered leader might say something of counsel to them before he breathed his last breath. They watched and prayed. He raised himself a bit from his pillow and began to speak, but the words did not come. The monks were eager to listen for there was challenge from the world outside the abbey, hard times, and war with a powerful enemy who threatened the land. The monks were sure that their abbot would leave them with sound advice so that the abbey would not be harmed and its purpose among the people not abandoned.

A second time the old man opened his eyes, looked around, tried again to speak, but no words came. He lay down again. The room was tense with anticipation and the prayers of the monks became feverish whispers.

A third time the abbot attempted to say what he struggled to tell his monks. A few words came from his lips, but they were not clear. The monks listened even more intently. With gathered effort from somewhere deep within his frail body the abbot said in something of a shout, "Take care of the cow!" He fell backwards and died.

To those who did not quite hear the abbot the monks nearest his bed passed along the last words of their beloved abbot. "Take care of the cow!" For a while the monks did not know what to make of these enigmatic words, but finally the monk who was to be elected the next abbot of the community spoke with the authority of a proven leader. "Our abbot meant that we should continue to pay attention to the tasks we have to do, the things that brought us to this community in the very beginning! In the midst of change we must do what is essential for life and our mission."

It is of interest, I believe, to learn that the abbey not

only survived the challenges to the institution; it flourished.

We have been invited to this Professional Institute of the Military Chaplains Association of the United States of America to consider what the challenge of "transformation" means to us. I want to begin this important conference by saying that we must never give up what is primary and perduring to the mission of the military chaplain. We do need, however, to shape as well as sharpen that mission in the context of new realities. That's what we are about here. That's what we'll attempt to do in the next few days.

"Transformation" is a slippery word. It means, first of all, a change in shape or form or appearance. But it means, as well, a change in character or, perhaps, in substance. It is of course a valued word within the realm of religion. Folks use it often to describe an outcome that may have to do with one of the objectives of the religious enterprise. One must ask, however, some questions about its meaning and perhaps its anticipated goals.

Some years ago, I sat down in an officers' dining room, across the table from a Chinese military officer. There were just the two of us present there. We nodded to each other in greeting and it soon became apparent that he was not very fluent in the English language, nor I in Chinese! After a while, he asked me in very halting speech if I were an infantry officer. He did not recognize my corps device. I replied that I was a chaplain. His look told me that he did not understand what I was saying. I tried in every way I knew how to make some gesture and use some words that might convey to him that I was a chaplain. In desperation I said, "I make people feel better!" With delight he jumped up from his chair, saying excitedly, "You, me, same, same! I, Political Action Officer!" "No, no!" I protested vigorously, but my denial was lost as he assumed one meaning and I intended another.

Proceedings (continued)

Since that experience with a person who seemed to hold no concept of religion mutual to mine I have learned to move cautiously with words and phrases that at first appear as conveying common meanings and outcomes.

For many years it was common among Navy chaplains to speak of their mission as "bringing God to men and men to God." The slogan was often claimed by adding "in the Navy way." To many the addition was vague and hinted of some reality that subsumed the varieties of religious experience under a kind of Navy issue umbrella, which was most certainly not true. "Bringing God to men and men to God" hung around for a long time as a good way of stating what it was that chaplains did. It was dropped as mission statements were increasingly honed by advocates of Organizational Development. It may be that it has some worth for us in renewing a common understanding.

If we can agree enough on the "what" of our mission as "bringing God to men and women" – in a more inclusive fashion! – "and men and women to God," then we can look more carefully at the "how" of our mission, constructing our responses on the bases of the essential elements in religious life, the foundations of a profession given to appointed leaders.

What, then, is the essential to the operation or the person or the interaction in religious life?

Let me make a working assumption in order to move the topic of our Institute along. Let me suggest that we want together to think through two challenges current in our environment. The one is whether we can perform our mission with maximal use of technology. The other is whether we can do so among smaller groups of people available in less accessible places and scattered by an enemy's threats, yet somehow still "present" in new ways by the powers of technology's networking over great distances.

Let me express these assumptions by asking the questions:

- 1) Can we accomplish our mission to bring God to men and women and them to God with smaller corps' of uniformed – or, dare I

say it? – contracted? – religious professionals?

- 2) Can we bring people into religious gatherings with the assistance of highly effective networking technologies and be satisfied that their religious and spiritual needs are cared for?

To offer some first responses to the questions we are being asked in these days I can do little more just now than put down two "markers."

First, I have no doubt that technology can advance what we do in ways about which we have not even begun to dream. We can make connections with families and friends of our men and women as they may desire us to do. We can connect to each other, as many of us often wished, but were unable to do, drawing understanding and support or caution on professional matters from one another. We can tell the "story" in exciting ways.

But we must not lose the human voice. It is the human voice that receives the Divine Word, the human countenance that reflects the face of Divinity. It is the human voice that can utter the pain as well as the joy of the human heart. It is the human voice that lifts up the prayers of people to the Creator. No technology has transmitted as yet the laughter, the sighs of the human being. Chaplains help to keep alive such human communication.

In the early '70's I was more than once asked to participate in discussions that so often generated from the questions that faced religious people and institutions after the Vietnam conflict. In one of these discussions, several of the members began to comment about the anomaly of chaplains serving in uniform. Other members of the group piled on with topics relating to chaplains as civilians and chaplains with combat units. The conversation grew in heat and little light until a young man said, "I do not understand you people! I've just come back from 'Nam. Let me tell you that the chaplain was one person around who could talk to you with a sense of our humanity! He helped us to be men!" There was little more to say when this soldier sat down. He knew the power of the human voice touched by the majesty and mercy of God.

Proceedings (continued)

My first "marker" is that technology cannot do away with the human voice, its attraction, its responsive character. It is a tool, but only a tool of human manipulation.

My second "marker" is that with the exception of only a few individuals – the hermit, the monk in solitude, the isolated prisoner – the religious life generally takes place in human community. It is not an isolated aspect of life even though meditation is a worthy discipline. The human being needs affirmation from fellow human beings, correction lest the human being follow a path known to lead to destruction. The human being needs to be able to share resources and the privilege of service to others. Human community, as many of us hold, is where God reveals himself in deed and in the disclosure of both his power and his humility.

Technology is increasingly transforming the connections among participants in war fighting. There is no doubt that the transformations achieved are more effective and more cohesive in their applications. The religious enterprise as well can be thus transformed, but the human characteristics of submission and petition cannot be carried by mere connection. The human voice, again, must be in the midst of real human

community as we seek to communicate with the Lord of us all.

I ask you whether more and more images of human beings expressing their praise of God can supplant the experience of your being in the great congregation? Would you be likely to sing your praise of God if you only saw and heard the hallelujah's of many? The individual belongs to the community and the human community empowers the individual. Let no technology deprive any of family or friends or the whole people of God!

My message this evening is that we engage the wonders of technology. But, that we press on with insistent and renewing attention to the men and women within our care with God's Word and with a rich human voice; and, that we increase our zeal in helping them find the transformation of their lives in the Lord, in whom we all live and move and have our being.

THE MILITARY CHAPLAINS ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

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Chapter News Plus

SUSQUEHANNA - TED BOWERS

At the September meeting Chaplain John W Betlyon, provided a briefing on his ministry with the 213th Support Group of the Pennsylvania National Guard during their seven month deployment to Afghanistan.

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA - WHIT WOODARD

Chaplain Tim Thompson, activated to work out of the state Headquarters of the National Guard shared insights on his work assisting chaplains and chaplain assistants who are mobilized, during and after the mobilization process.

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The National Executive Committee (NEC) met on 30 August to 1 September in Baltimore, MD. In addition to conducting the usual business of the Association, the Strategic Planning Committee presented their recommendation for the MCA Strategic Plan to the NEC. Specific goals were established and the objectives and tasks are being developed. The entire plan will be presented at the 80th National Institute, 12-14 April in Washington, DC.



National Executive Committee at work on the MCA Strategic Plan



MILITARY CHAPLAINS FELLOWSHIP

Under the leadership of MCA National Executive Committee member, H. Lamar Hunt, a Military Chaplain Fellowship has been formed in the central Florida area. This group, with the support of the Florida Council of the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA), conducts quarterly memorial ceremonies for deceased military veterans who lived in Marion County at the time of their death. Families and friends of the deceased member gather for a ceremony of full military honors where the name of each deceased veteran is read. After five ceremonies, 1,145 individuals have been recognized and remembered.



Military Chaplain Fellowship organizational meeting 5 October. L-R: Mike Harrison, Navy; John Meyer, AF; Ed Shoupe, AF; Merle Dech, Army; and Lamar Hunt, Army. (Not present for the photo, Elden Luffman, Navy; and Stan O'Loughlin Army.

Chaplain (LCDR) Elden Luffman giving benediction at the 2 Oct Memorial Ceremony for Deceased Military Veterans. On Luffman's right is CAPT Dave Olson, bell ringer. On Luffman's left is Chaplain Lamar Hunt.



Memorial Ceremony

News You Can Use



It has been three years since the attack on the Pentagon took the lives of 184 of our family members, our friends and our colleagues. I want to express my deep gratitude for the outpourings of kindness, support, and love from people from around the country. Many people continue to offer encouragement and to ask me what they can do to help. Here is my answer: Help us build this memorial.

From the outset, the family members wanted the memorial to help visitors remember not just the attack and the terrorists, but the individuals our nation lost. We hope and expect that this memorial will provide a place for all to remember and reflect on September 11 and its significance for us and our nation. We believe this memorial will be a place of solace where visitors can renew their faith in and commitment to the values that we share. We have already raised \$3 million of the \$17.5 million needed to construct the memorial. We

need your help to earn the rest. I urge you to take action. Make a personal donation. Tell your friends and colleagues to do the same. Everyone can help. Everyone can make a difference.

You can bring us one step closer to our goal by Becoming Part of the Pentagon Memorial Team. We hope that you will support this effort by spreading the word about the Pentagon Memorial and our Website. Please use **Tell A Friend** to send an email to your relatives, neighbors and colleagues about this worthy cause.

When this journey began a family member noted, "We have one chance to do this right, one chance to build a lasting tribute to our loved ones for future generations." Together we can turn this inspiring vision into a reality. I hope you will join us. Once again, thank you very much for your interest and support.

Sincerely yours,
James J. Laychak, President
Pentagon Memorial Fund, Inc.

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Recent Events

CHAPLAIN FOR LIFE

Chaplain, LtCol, Robert G. Balnicky C.A.P. came to Florida a number of years ago to retire. But full retirement was not to be. Living near the McDill Air Force Base he soon found there was a need for chaplains to assist with weddings at the base chapel. Chaplain Balnicky soon began what has become an extended ministry to the service men and women in the greater Tampa area.

Chaplain Balnicky is the Assistant Florida Wing Chaplain for Pastoral Care and recently conducted his 207th wedding touching the lives of hundreds of couples with whom he shares his story of faith. Many of the couples have maintained contact with Chaplain Balnicky over the years and some even return years later to have him baptize their children. Of his retirement he said, "Oh, I am having a great time."

Chaplain Balnicky stated, "I always tell them I tie nothing but square knots. Then I ask especially the Bride to be if she knows the difference between a square knot and a slip knot. I just happen to have some nylon cord and proceed to show them the difference. Then I give her the finished Square knot."

Recently at the Civil Air Patrol National Board meeting, MGEN Charles Baldwin, Air Force Chief of the Chaplain Service, surprised Chaplain Balnicky presenting his Challenge coin to him for the 207 weddings he has performed.



Wedding of Kimberly and Roderick McLeod. One of 207 couples married by Chaplain Balnicky at and around McDill AFB in Tampa, FL

MGEN Charles Baldwin, Air Force Chief of the Chaplain Service presents his challenge coin to Chaplain Balnicky.



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