



AGAINST ALL ENEMIES, FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC

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Top 10 Ways to Convince the Muslims We're on a Crusade

10. Have Top US Military Officers, Defense Department Officials, and Politicians Say We're in a Religious War.

We couldn't have gotten off to a better start on winning hearts and minds back in 2003, when US Army Lt Gen William "Jerry" Boykin decided to go on a speaking tour of churches, publicly proclaiming in uniform that the global war on terrorism (GWOT) was really a battle between Satan and Christians, and making comments like, "We in the Army of God, in the House of God, the Kingdom of God have been raised for such a time as this." Of course, Boykin knew what he was talking about. After all, a decade earlier he had captured the dangerous Somali warlord Osman Atto and was very clear about the reason that happened—"I knew that my God was a real God, and his was an idol."

President Bush, in spite of the fact that Boykin believed he was "in the White House because God put him there," wasn't too pleased with these remarks, but still, the general's friends stood by him—friends like then-Cong. Robin Hayes (R-NC), who, speaking at a Rotary Club meeting in his hometown a few years later, pronounced that stability in Iraq ultimately depended on "spreading the message of Jesus Christ, the message of peace on earth, good will towards men," and "everything depends on everyone learning about the birth of the Savior."¹

While few such statements have been as overt or widely publicized as those of Boykin and Hayes, plenty of other military leaders and policy makers are on record espousing similar views. When asked what effect such statements have on the US military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, a retired Air Force officer appearing on MSNBC in a segment about the remarks of Congressman Hayes answered:

Well, it's not helpful if this stuff gets back to the Iraqis, and of course in the days of the internet and the blogosphere out there it's likely that it could. And you

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know our troops have enough problems over there just doing their jobs. Having to defend what a U.S. congressman might say, because you know, when you bring up the idea of proselytizing Christianity, to a lot of Muslims, that's very offensive, and if we can keep religion out of what we're trying to do over there, which is very difficult, it would be a lot easier for our troops. . . . If you're trying to be a unit trainer to, say, an Iraqi battalion and the battalion religious advisor, the imam, would come in and say look what a congressman said, it just takes away from what we're trying to do.²

Nevertheless, some representatives of our government continue to present the war on terror as a spiritual battle, promoting the specious notion that victory in Iraq and Afghanistan is somehow necessary to preserve our own religious freedom here in America. "Thomas Jefferson would understand the threat we face today—tyranny in the name of religion," asserted a top Army official at a West Point graduation ceremony. "Your sons and daughters are fighting to protect our citizens . . . from zealots who would restrain, molest, burden, and cause to suffer those who do not share their religious beliefs, deny us, whom they call infidels, our unalienable rights."³ And, finding it vitally important for Congress to recognize "the importance of Christmas and the Christian faith," another congressman made his case: "American men and women in uniform are fighting a battle across the world so that all Americans might continue to freely exercise their faith."⁴ As of yet, nobody making such statements has offered any explanation of *how* the outcome of this war could possibly affect the free exercise of religion by Americans.

9. Have Top US Military Officers Appear in a Video Showing Just How Christian the Pentagon Is.

In addition to providing propaganda material to our enemies, public endorsements of Christianity by US military leaders can also cause concern among our Muslim allies. It might have seemed like a good idea at the time, but the situation became very awkward for Air Force Maj Gen Pete Sutton shortly after he appeared in a promotional video for the Christian Embassy.⁵ Dressed in uniform and using their official titles, several high-ranking military officers and DOD civilians gave testimonials and made statements such as "we're the aroma of Jesus Christ," which were publicly available on the Christian Embassy's Web site. What Sutton didn't know when he appeared in this video was that he would soon be assigned as the US European Command's chief of defense cooperation to Turkey, a country in which religion and government are strictly separated. According to the DOD Inspector General's report on the investigation of allegations relating to the video:

Maj Gen Sutton testified that while in Turkey in his current duty position, his Turkish driver approached him with an article in the Turkish newspaper 'Sabah.' That article featured a photograph of Maj Gen Sutton in uniform and described him as a member of a radical fundamentalist sect. The article in the online edition of Sabah also included still photographs taken from the Christian Embassy video. Maj Gen Sutton's duties in Ankara included establishing good relations with his counterparts on the Turkish General Staff. Maj Gen Sutton testified

that Turkey is a predominantly Muslim nation, with religious matters being kept strictly separate from matters of state. He said that when the article was published in *Sabah*, it caused his Turkish counterparts concern, and a number of Turkish general officers asked him to explain his participation in the video.⁶

Unfortunately, there is no shortage of uniformed military personnel endorsing fundamentalist Christian organizations and military ministries, some of which have clearly publicized missions that include proselytizing Muslims. These videos are easily found on the Internet, providing plenty of potential propaganda material for recruiting by extremists.

8. Plant Crosses in Muslim Lands and Make Sure They're Big Enough to Be Visible from Really Far Away.

As Gen Norman Schwarzkopf recounted in his autobiography, *It Doesn't Take a Hero*, back in 1990, when US troops were deployed to Saudi Arabia for Operation Desert Shield, an attempt by a Christian missionary organization to use the military to proselytize Saudi Muslims led the Pentagon to issue strict guidelines on religious activities and displays of religion in the region. It was left to the discretion of individual company commanders to determine how visible religious services should be, depending on their particular location's proximity to Saudi populations. In some cases, decisions were made not to display crucifixes or other religious symbols, even at worship services. There were a few complaints about these decisions, but the majority of the troops willingly complied, understanding that these decisions were being made for their own security. According to General Schwarzkopf, even his request that chaplains refrain from wearing crosses on their uniforms received an unexpectedly positive reaction, with the chaplains not only agreeing with the policy, but also going a step further by calling themselves "morale officers" rather than chaplains.

But now, in Iraq and Afghanistan, General Schwarzkopf's commonsense policies and priority of keeping the troops safe have been replaced by a flaunting of Christianity by Christian troops and chaplains who feel that nothing comes before their right to exercise their religion, even if it means putting the safety of their fellow troops at risk. Numerous photos, some posted on official military Web sites, show conspicuously displayed Christian symbols, such as large crosses, being erected on and around our military bases in Iraq and Afghanistan.⁷

Large Christian murals have been painted on the outside of the T-barriers surrounding a chapel on Forward Operating Base (FOB) Warhorse in Iraq. In addition to being a highly visible display of Christianity to Iraqis on the base, photos of these murals were posted on an official military Web site.⁸ It is even more important that the regulation prohibiting displays of any particular religion on the grounds of an Army chapel—a regulation that protects the religious freedom of our Soldiers by keeping chapels neutral and welcoming Soldiers of all faiths—be strictly enforced on our bases in Iraq and Afghanistan. Yet there is clear and credible evidence that those in charge routinely overlook such regulations.

7. Paint Crosses and Christian Messages on Military Vehicles and Drive Them through Iraq.

For those Iraqis who may not see the overt stationary displays of Christianity on and near US military bases in their country, there have been plenty of mobile Christian messages painted on our tanks and other vehicles that patrol their streets.

The title of Jeff Sharlet's May 2009 *Harper's Magazine* cover story, "Jesus Killed Mohammed: The Crusade for a Christian Military," actually comes from one such vehicular message—the words "Jesus killed Mohammed" were painted in *large red Arabic lettering* on a Bradley fighting vehicle, drawing fire from nearly every doorway as it was driven through Samarra. Other vehicles have sported everything from the Islamic crescent overlaid with the internationally recognized red circle and slash "no" sign to large crucifixes hanging from gun barrels. A military public relations office even officially released a photo of the tank named "New Testament."⁹

6. Make Sure That Our Christian Soldiers and Chaplains See the War As a Way to Fulfill the Great Commission.

To many fundamentalist Christians, the "Great Commission" from Matthew 28:19—"Go and make disciples of all nations"—trumps all man-made laws, including military regulations. It's hard to find a military ministry whose mission statement doesn't, in one way or another, include fulfilling the Great Commission. Thus, it is not surprising that many service members who've been influenced by these military ministries are conflicted about their mission, a conflict often leading some of these service members to disregard the military's prohibition on proselytizing.

Campus Crusade for Christ's (CCC) Military Ministry,¹⁰ a parachurch ministry active at all of the largest US military training installations, the service academies, and on ROTC campuses, frequently states its goal of turning the US military into a force of "government-paid missionaries for Christ." The vision statement of another organization, Military Missions Network,¹¹ is "an expanding global network of kingdom-minded movements of evangelism and discipleship reaching the world through the military of the world."

Describing the duties of a CCC Military Ministry position at Lackland Air Force Base and Fort Sam Houston in Texas, for example, the organization's Web site stated, "Responsibilities include working with Chaplains and Military personnel to bring lost soldiers closer to Christ, build them in their faith and send them out into the world as government paid missionaries."¹²

CCC's Valor ministry,¹³ which primarily targets future officers on ROTC campuses, states, "The Valor ROTC cadet and midshipman ministry reaches our future military leaders at their initial entry points on college campuses, helps them grow in their faith, then sends them to their first duty assignments throughout the world as 'government-paid missionaries for Christ.'"¹⁴

In a promotional video filmed at the US Air Force Academy, a USAFA CCC program director pronounced that CCC's purpose is to "make Jesus Christ the issue at the Academy," and for the cadets to be "government paid missionaries" by the time they leave.¹⁵

According to a CCC Military Ministry instructional publication uncovered in 2007, CCC's mission is not simply to provide Bible studies to allow Christians in the military to exercise their religion, as its defenders claim. The instructions state, "We should never be satisfied with just having Bible studies of like-minded believers. We need to take seriously the Great Commission."¹⁶

Whatever one's position on the issue of evangelism, the undeniable fact is that all of the above quotes, as well as the video filmed at the Air Force Academy, were found on the Internet, which, of course, means that any extremist looking for recruiting tools could also find this easily accessible "evidence" that the US military is being groomed to be a force of crusaders.

5. Post Photos on the Internet of US Soldiers with Their Rifles and Bibles.

CCC's indoctrination of basic trainees at Fort Jackson, South Carolina, the Army's largest basic training installation, is a program called "God's Basic Training," in which the recruits are taught that "The Military = 'God's Ministers'" and that one of their responsibilities is "to punish those who do evil" as "God's servant, an angel of wrath."¹⁷

Until being exposed (and taken down), the Fort Jackson CCC Military Ministry had a Web site containing not only its Bible study materials, but also numerous photos of smiling trainees posed with their rifles and Bibles.¹⁸ Obviously, no explanation is necessary to see the propaganda value of photos like these.

4. Invite Virulently Anti-Muslim Speakers to Lecture at Our Military Colleges and Service Academies.

In June 2007, anti-Muslim activist Brigitte Gabriel, author of *Because They Hate*, was allowed to deliver a lecture at the Joint Forces Staff College (JFSC).¹⁹ In February 2008, the 3 Ex-Terrorists,²⁰ a trio of self-proclaimed former Muslim terrorists turned fundamentalist Christians, appeared at the US Air Force Academy's 50th Annual Academy Assembly, in spite of the fact that their claims about their terrorist pasts have long been questioned by both academics and terrorism experts.²¹

Gabriel's JFSC lecture, which was broadcast to the world on C-SPAN, eventually ended up on YouTube,²² and articles about the ex-terrorists' Air Force Academy presentation, which included details such as Walid Shoebat's pronouncement that converting Muslims to Christianity was a good way to defeat terrorism, also ended up online,²³ providing yet more "evidence" to extremists that the US military's training includes teaching cadets, officers, and senior non-commissioned officers (NCO) that Islam is evil and must be stopped.

3. Have a Christian TV Network Broadcast to the World That the Military Is Helping Missionaries Convert Muslims.

Travel the Road, a popular Christian reality TV series that airs on the Trinity Broadcasting Network (TBN), follows the exploits of two “extreme” missionaries who travel to remote, and often dangerous, parts of the world to fulfill their two-part mission to “(1) Vigorously spread the gospel to people who are either cut off from active mission work, or have never heard the gospel,” and “(2) Produce dynamic media content to display the life of missions, and thus, through these episodic series electrify a new generation to accomplish the Great Commission.”

The second season of the series ended with three episodes filmed in Afghanistan. To film these episodes, the missionaries were embedded with US troops as “journalists,” staying on US military bases and accompanying and filming troops on patrols—all for the purposes of evangelizing Afghan Muslims and producing a television show promoting the Christian religion. As the first of the program’s three Afghanistan episodes clearly showed, these missionaries were able to waltz into Afghanistan without any of the advance approval and planning required for embedded journalists and, within two days, be embedded with an Army unit.

A question that many will ask is whether or not the Army knew what these missionaries were up to. According to ABC News *Nightline*, which did a segment on the embedded missionaries, the answer from one of the missionaries was yes: “They knew what we were doing. We told them that we were born again Christians, we’re here doing ministry, we shoot for this TV station and we want to embed and see what it was like.”²⁴

USCENTCOM’s General Order 1A (now GO-1B) prohibits any and all proselytizing in its area of responsibility (AOR) and applies to civilians accompanying US troops as well as military personnel. Yet despite this directive, the US Army facilitated the evangelizing of Afghans by these Christian missionaries, which included the distribution of New Testaments in the Dari language. Numerous Soldiers and NCOs, as well as several officers, including one general, appeared in the program.²⁵

While the Army’s participation in the *Travel the Road* program is certainly one of the most prominent examples of broadcasting to the world that the US military was aiding missionaries who were trying to convert Muslims, it is regrettably not the only example.

In September 2008, the Discovery Channel’s Military Channel aired a two-hour program titled *God’s Soldier*. Filmed at FOB McHenry in Hawijah, Iraq, the program’s credits identified that it had been “produced with the full co-operation of the 2-27 Infantry Battalion ‘Wolfhounds.’” The co-producer of the program was Jerusalem Productions, a British production company whose “primary aim is to increase understanding and knowledge of the Christian religion and to promote Christian values, via the broadcast media, to as wide an audience as possible.”

Bible verse text captions appearing between segments of the program included “I did not come to bring peace, but the sword” and “put on the full armor of God so that when the day of evil comes, you may stand your ground.”

This was one of the prayers uttered by the program’s star, CPT Charles Popov, an evangelical Christian Army chaplain, during a scene in which he was blessing a group of Soldiers about to go out on a patrol: “I pray that you would give them the ability to exterminate the enemy and to accomplish the task that they’ve been sent forth by God and country to do. In Christ’s name I pray. Amen.” That prayer was followed by a scene in which the chaplain, sounding an awful lot like the Campus Crusade Bible study described earlier, said to the Soldiers: “Every soldier should know Romans 13, that the government is set up by God, and the magistrate, or the one who wields the sword—you have not swords but 50 calcs and [unintelligible] like that—does not yield it in vain because the magistrate has been called, as you, to execute wrath upon those who do evil.”

The scene that tops them all, however, is one in which Popov is setting up a nativity pageant for Christmas—using the unit’s Iraqi interpreters to play some of the roles. The chaplain described this as some sort of cultural exchange, with US troops recognizing Ramadan, and Muslim interpreters, in turn, celebrating Christmas. The notion of this merely being a harmless cultural exchange is absurd. US Soldiers participating in a Muslim religious observance are not risking death by doing so, while Muslims, in a country where many consider converting to Christianity a death penalty offense, are. Broadcasting to the world via the Discovery Channel that US Army personnel were putting Muslims in a Christmas pageant not only provides more fodder for radical Islam extremists, but also exposes the Iraqis who are helping the US military to grave danger.²⁶

2. Make Sure Bibles and Evangelizing Materials Sent to Muslim Lands Have Official US Military Emblems on Them.

It’s not hard to imagine what message is being communicated to the Iraqis and Afghans when hundreds of thousands of Bibles with official US military emblems show up in their countries. Some of these military Bibles are produced by private organizations, and others are officially authorized by the military. One of the officially distributed editions has both the Multi-National Corps-Iraq and I Corps seals imprinted on a camouflage background cover. And it doesn’t stop with Bibles.²⁷

A chief warrant officer from the 101st Airborne Division, for example, referring to a special military edition of a Bible study daily devotional published and donated by Bible Pathways Ministries, told Mission Network News that “the soldiers who are patrolling and walking the streets are taking along this copy, and they’re using it to minister to the local residents,” and that his “division is also getting ready to head toward Afghanistan, so there will be copies heading out with the soldiers.” Just like the many civilian missionaries who see the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan as a window of opportunity to evangelize Muslims, the warrant officer continued, “The soldiers are being placed in strategic

places with a purpose. They're continuing to spread the Word." This daily devotional, admittedly being used by the 101st Airborne Division "to minister to the local residents," has the official military branch seals on its cover, giving the impression that it is an official US military publication. And while these logos are sometimes used without permission and may have been on this particular book, the Iraqis and Afghans don't know that.²⁸

The chiefs of chaplains even designed one of the Bibles sporting the official military logos. An organization called Revival Fires Ministries has, "at the request of the Chief Chaplains of the Pentagon," been promoting, collecting money for, and shipping these Bibles to Iraq since 2003. A formal arrangement between the Pentagon and Revival Fires has allowed these Bibles to be shipped via military airlift.

To promote these Bibles, a Navy chaplain, whose own anti-Muslim book was taken off the market when it was revealed that much of its content had been plagiarized and some of the endorsements on its cover fabricated, has improperly appeared in uniform at three of Revival Fires' rancorously anti-Muslim camp meetings²⁹ and also endorses the ministry on the Web sites of both its founder, Cecil Todd, and his son, evangelist Tim Todd. At one point, the chaplain's photo and endorsement appeared right next to the following statement on the younger Todd's Web site: "We must let the Muslims, the Hare Krishnas, the Hindus, the Buddhists and all other cults and false religions know, 'You are welcome to live in America . . . but this is a Christian nation . . . this is God's country! If you don't like our emphasis on Christ, prayer and the Holy Bible, you are free to leave anytime!'"³⁰

1. Send Lots of Arabic, Dari, and Pashtu Language Bibles to Convert the Muslims.

Arguably worse than any English language Bibles stamped with official US military emblems are the countless thousands of Arabic, Dari, and Pashtu Bibles making their way into Iraq and Afghanistan, often with the help of US military personnel.

In his autobiography, General Schwarzkopf recounted his 1990 run-in with one fundamentalist Christian organization—an incident that made it clear that the Saudis' fears and complaints of Christian proselytizing were not unfounded. While some of the Saudis' fears, as the general explained, had resulted from Iraqi propaganda about American troops disrespecting Islamic shrines, the attempt by this religious organization to get US troops to distribute tens of thousands of Arabic language New Testaments to Muslims was real.

The Saudi concern about religious pollution seemed overblown to me but understandable, and on a few occasions I agreed they really did have a gripe. There was a fundamentalist Christian group in North Carolina called Samaritan's Purse that had the bright idea of sending unsolicited copies of the New Testament in Arabic to our troops. A little note with each book read: "Enclosed is a copy of the New Testament in the Arab language. You may want to get a Saudi friend to help you to read it." One

day Khalid³¹ handed me a copy. “What is this all about?” he asked mildly. This time he didn’t need to protest—he knew how dismayed I’d be.

This was the incident that, as mentioned earlier, led to the implementation of strict guidelines on religious activities of military personnel in Muslim countries.

A recent al-Jazeera English news report showed US troops at Bagram Airfield in Afghanistan discussing the distribution of Dari and Pashtu language Bibles to the local Afghans.³² While the US military claimed that these Bibles were destroyed and that this was an isolated incident, countless other examples seem to indicate that these incidents are anything but isolated.

In the newsletter of the International Ministerial Fellowship (IMF), an Army chaplain described the evangelizing he was doing while passing out food in the predominantly Sunni village of Ad Dawr: “I am able to give them tracts on how to be saved, printed in Arabic. I wish I had enough Arabic Bibles to give them as well. The issue of mailing Arabic Bibles into Iraq from the U.S. is difficult (given the current postal regulations prohibiting all religious materials contrary to Islam except for personal use of the soldiers). But the hunger for the Word of God in Iraq is very great, as I have witnessed first-hand.”³³

Another Army chaplain, in an article titled “Kingdom Building in Combat Boots,” wrote: “But the most amazing thing is that I was constantly led to stop and talk with Iraqis working at the Coalition Provisional Authority. I learned their names, became a part of their lives, and shared Jesus Christ by distributing DVDs and Arabic Bibles.”³⁴

And here’s one from a private organization, boasting of the help it gets from military personnel to distribute its Bibles: “OnlyOneCross.com recently sent a case of Arabic Bibles to a Brother who is working in a detention center in Iraq.”³⁵

Another organization, the Salvation Evangelistic Association, now has the Soldiers they converted at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, distributing the Arabic Bibles for them: “Many young men in training at Fort Leonard Wood were converted to Christ. The Lord led us on to preaching in Army camps in the US, Korea, and the Philippines. We are now supplying Arabic Bibles for distribution by our troops in Iraq.”³⁶

Then there was a lieutenant colonel, whose religious zeal was so extreme that a missionary had to explain to him that he was putting his troops at risk. The missionary’s organization had already shipped 20,000 Arabic-language “Soul-Winning Booklets” into theater with more on the way. The lieutenant colonel, who knew the missionary from the states, had gone to his hotel with 15–20 armed troops and literally blocked off an entire city block with tanks and Humvees to secure the area. He offered to use his troops to protect the missionaries who were there on an evangelical mission to convert the Muslims. The missionary later remarked, “I had to tell [the lieutenant colonel] that it would probably be best if he and his unit left as soon as possible. . . . The Iraqi people in the hotel and those on the street were to say the least, very concerned. I did not want to bring that much attention to the hotel for fear that the terrorists would target the area as well.”³⁷

In a video from Soldiers Bible Ministry, an Army chaplain boasts about managing to get Swahili Bibles into Iraq to evangelize Muslim workers from Uganda employed by the US military, in spite of the regulations prohibiting this. Referring to this shipment of Bibles, the chaplain said, “Actually, they’re in Baghdad right now. Somehow the enemy tried to get ‘em hung up there. There was a threat they were gonna get shipped back to the States and all that. We prayed, and they’re gonna be picked up in a couple of days. God raised someone up right there in Baghdad that’s gonna go—a Christian colonel that’s stationed there in Baghdad, and he’s gonna go and get the Bibles.”³⁸ Despite its disregard of military regulations, Soldiers Bible Ministry is officially endorsed by the Army’s chief of chaplains, with the following statement on his Web site: “Thanks so much for your invaluable ministry of the Word to our Soldiers.”³⁹

In addition to Bibles, other Arabic language Christian books are being shipped into Iraq for distribution by our troops. The January 2009 newsletter of Worldwide Military Baptist Missions, for example, included photos of its English-Arabic proselytizing materials, an English-Arabic New Testament, and an English-Arabic Gospel of John. This is from the caption for these photos: “In 2008, we shipped over 226,000 gospel tracts, 21,000 Bibles, New Testaments and gospels of John (to include English-Arabic ones!) and 404 ‘discipleship kits’ to service members & churches for use in war zones, on ships and near military bases around the world.”⁴⁰

Clearly, converting the Iraqis and Afghans is a pet project of numerous private organizations, some with the help of the military, as well as military personnel and military ministries. In one case, a DOD-authorized chaplain endorsing agency actually set up a well-organized network of 40 of its chaplains in Iraq to receive and distribute Arabic Bibles and an Arabic gospel tract titled “Who Is Jesus” for a private missionary organization.⁴¹ All of these groups and individuals have found ways to circumvent the prohibition on sending religious materials contrary to Islam into the region. There are literally thousands of people involved, and hundreds of thousands of Arabic and other native language Bibles, tracts, videos, and audio cassettes have made their way into Iraq and Afghanistan, along with Christian comic books, coloring books, and other materials to evangelize Muslim children. The line between joining the military and joining the ministry has seemingly become increasingly blurred for many.

Joining the Military = Joining the Ministry

To Campus Crusade for Christ, basic training installations and the military service academies are “gateways”—the places that young and vulnerable military personnel pass through early in their careers. This was the explanation of its gateway strategy that appeared on CCC’s Military Ministry Web site: “Young recruits are under great pressure as they enter the military at their initial training gateways. The demands of drill instructors push recruits and new cadets to the edge. This is why they are most open to the ‘good news.’ We target specific locations, like Lackland AFB and Fort Jackson, where large numbers

of military members transition early in their career. These sites are excellent locations to pursue our strategic goals.”⁴²

According to CCC’s executive director, “We must pursue our particular means for transforming the nation—through the military. And the military may well be the most influential way to affect that spiritual superstructure. Militaries exercise, generally speaking, the most intensive and purposeful indoctrination program of citizens.”⁴³

At Fort Jackson, the largest Army basic training installation, trainees attending CCC’s “God’s Basic Training” Bible studies are taught that by joining the military, they’ve become ministers of God. This is also taught by CCC’s Valor ministry, which targets future officers on ROTC campuses.

A Valor ministry video titled “God and the Military” is a presentation given at Texas A&M by a Texas pastor to an audience of cadets and an assortment of officers from the various branches of the military. The pastor’s presentation opens:

I, a number of years ago, was speaking at the University of North Texas—it happens to be my alma mater, up in Denton, Texas—and I was speaking to an ROTC group up there and when I stepped in I said, “It’s good to be speaking to all you men and women who are in the ministry,” and they all kind of looked at me, and I think they wondered if maybe I had found the wrong room, or if they were in the wrong room, and I assured them that I was speaking to men and women in the ministry, these that were going to be future officers.”⁴⁴

The stated mission of CCC’s ministry for enlisted personnel is “Evangelize and Disciple All Enlisted Members of the US Military. Utilize Ministry at each basic training center and beyond. Transform our culture through the US Military.”⁴⁵

Cadence International⁴⁶ is another large military ministry that targets young service members, seeing those who are likely to be deployed to war zones as low-hanging fruit. One of the reasons given by Cadence for the success of its “strategic ministry” “Deployment and possibly deadly combat are ever-present possibilities. They are shaken. Shaken people are usually more ready to hear about God than those who are at ease, making them more responsive to the gospel.”⁴⁷

Organizations like CCC’s Military Ministry and Cadence could not succeed in their goals without the sanction and aid of the military commanders who allow them to conduct their missionary recruiting activities on their installations. And there is no shortage of military officers who not only condone but also participate in and promote these activities. The Officers’ Christian Fellowship, an organization consisting of over 15,000 officers and operating on virtually every US military installation worldwide, which has frequently stated its goal to “create a spiritually transformed US military with Ambassadors for Christ in uniform, empowered by the Holy Spirit,”⁴⁸ has actually partnered with CCC’s Military Ministry.

In addition to the military-wide organizations like Campus Crusade, there are also a number of coercive religious programs on individual bases. A basic training schedule from Fort Leonard Wood described “Free Day Away,” a

program attended by all trainees during their fifth week of training, as follows: “Soldiers spend the day away from Fort Leonard Wood and training in the town of Lebanon. Free Day Away is designed as a stress relief that helps soldiers return to training re-motivated and rejuvenated.”

Omitted from this event description was that this day was actually spent at the Tabernacle Baptist Church and included a fundamentalist religious service. All facilities that the trainees were permitted to go to during this free time (a bowling alley, a convenience store, etc.) are owned by the church. Numerous Soldiers have reported that they were unaware that this part of their “training” was run by a church until they were being loaded onto the church’s buses that came to pick them up, and those who wanted to opt out of the church service once they were there were not permitted to do so.

While claims are made that Free Day Away and other religious programs and events conducted at basic training installations are not mandatory, these words make little or no difference to the trainees. As anyone who has gone through basic training is well aware, no trainee wants to stand out, and almost none would risk being singled out as different or difficult by speaking up and telling their drill sergeant that they don’t want to attend a program or event because it goes against their religious beliefs.

Spiritual Fitness

“Spiritual fitness” is the military’s new code phrase for promoting religion, and the religion being promoted is Christianity. There are spiritual fitness centers, spiritual fitness programs, spiritual fitness concerts, spiritual fitness runs and walks, and so forth.

This year, for example, Fort Eustis, Virginia, and Fort Lee, Virginia, have been holding a spiritual fitness concert series. At Fort Eustis, it’s actually called the “Commanding General’s Spiritual Fitness Concert Series.” This is a Christian concert series. All of the performers are Christian recording artists. Photos from one of the Fort Lee concerts show crosses everywhere, and one photo’s caption even says that the performer “took a moment to read a Bible passage” during her set.⁴⁹ In some cases, attendance at Christian concerts held at basic training installations has been mandatory for the Soldiers in training.⁵⁰

In March 2008, a program was presented at a commander’s call at RAF Lakenheath, England. This commander’s call was mandatory for an estimated 1,000 service members, and the PowerPoint version of the presentation was e-mailed to an additional 4,000–5,000 members. The “spiritual fitness” segment of this presentation was titled “A New Approach to Suicide Prevention: Developing Purpose-Driven Airmen,” a takeoff on Rick Warren’s *The Purpose Driven Life*. The presentation also incorporated creationism into suicide prevention. One slide, titled “Contrasting Theories of Hope, 2 Ultimate Theories Explaining Our Existence,” has two columns, the first titled “Chance,” and the second “Design,” comparing Charles Darwin and “Random/Chaos” to God and “Purpose/Design.” Darwin, creationism, and religion are also part of a

chart comparing the former Soviet Union to the United States, which concludes that “Naturalism/Evolution/Atheism” lead to people being “in bondage” and having “no hope,” while theism leads to “People of Freedom” and “People of Hope/Destiny.”⁵¹

Strong Bonds

Strong Bonds is an Army-wide evangelistic Christian program operating under the guise of a predeployment and postdeployment family wellness and marriage-training program. Strong Bonds events are typically held at ski lodges, beach resorts, and other attractive vacation spots, luring Soldiers who would never attend a religious retreat to sign up for the free vacation.

The materials officially authorized by the Army for Strong Bonds are not religious, but there’s a loophole. These authorized materials are only required to be used for a minimal number of the mandatory training hours, leaving the remaining mandatory training hours open for other materials selected by the chaplain running the retreat. In some cases, the chaplains do stick to the authorized materials and keep the program nonreligious, but this is not the norm.

At one Strong Bonds weekend, the attendees, upon arrival, were handed a camouflage box called “Every Soldier’s Battle Kit.” This kit was imprinted with the name New Life Ministries and the ministry’s phone number and Web site, and contained *The Life Recovery Bible* and four volumes by a Christian author. They were also given several Christian devotional books and *The Five Love Languages* by pastor Gary Chapman, who is described on his Web site as “the leading author in biblical marriage counseling.” Pastor Chapman’s book was used as the core of the Saturday portion of the training, at which a video of Chapman, full of Bible verses and a call to “love your partner like Jesus loved the church,” was also shown.⁵²

DOD contracts also show the frequent hiring of Christian entertainers and speakers for Strong Bonds events. One base, for example, contracted, at a cost of \$38,269, an organization called Unlimited Potential, Inc.⁵³ to provide “social services” for a Strong Bonds event. Unlimited Potential, Inc. is an evangelical baseball ministry that has a military ministry whose mission is “to assist commanders and chaplains in providing religious support to military service members and their families by sharing the life-changing Gospel of Jesus Christ through the medium of baseball” and “to use our God-given abilities in baseball to reach those who do not have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.” This same ministry has been “serving Christ through baseball” at a number of other Army bases in the United States, as well as many bases overseas.

Godspam

The use of official military e-mail to send religious messages is another ongoing problem. These e-mails range in content from Bible verses and

evangelistic Christian messages to “invitations” from superiors to worship services and Bible studies.

One recent e-mail, widely distributed to an Air Force installation’s e-mail list, contained an essay by the executive director of the Officers’ Christian Fellowship. The essay began by posing the question, “Why do you serve in our military?” The answer was:

We serve our Lord by serving our nation, our family or prospective future family, and so that we have something that we can share with God’s people in need. But what is the greatest need? Why do we serve our God as Joshua exhorted? We serve our God because of what Jesus did for us on the Cross. We are blessed to be able, through our lives in the military, to demonstrate the message of salvation to those who have not heard or received it. It was by God’s grace through faith that we were brought fully into His family and presence. Our love for Him motivates us to serve Him in our military, to serve and work for our families, and to serve and work to enable the message of salvation to reach those who have yet to accept Him as Lord and Savior.

In another recent case, an Air Force colonel sent out an e-mail to a large number of subordinates containing a link to an “inspirational” video. Not only was the video an overt promotion of Christianity, but the Web site linked to was a far right Catholic Web site containing material attacking the president and vice president of the United States, including an image of the president depicted as Adolf Hitler.⁵⁴

Often, command staff and NCOs forward religious e-mails to a base or a unit on behalf of a chaplain. A recent example of this was a flyer for a Bible study titled “Moses the Leader: How Would You Like to Lead 1,000,000 Whiners?” Numerous recipients of this e-mail complained about its negative stereotype of Jews, as well as the fact that it was e-mailed to the base e-mail list by command staff.

Occasionally, officers and NCOs send out e-mails inviting their subordinates to religious events that they themselves are hosting, putting the recipients in the position of wondering if not attending their superior’s religious event will negatively affect their career, and if those who do attend will be shown favoritism.

For example, the Soldiers of a platoon in Iraq recently received an e-mail that had a flyer⁵⁵ attached to it for a Christian men’s conference being hosted by their platoon sergeant. The flyer had the unit and division emblems on it, and the sender of the e-mail, an E-7, listed himself as a minister and the host of the event.

This platoon sergeant had been sending out religious e-mails almost daily, including one with an attachment titled “Psalm 23 (For the Work Place),” which began, “The Lord is my real boss, and I shall not want,” and ended with, “When it’s all said and done, I’ll be working for Him a whole lot longer and for that, I BLESS HIS NAME!!!!!!”⁵⁶ Another contained several Bible verses, preceded by the following statement: “There are many things that work to keep us from completing our life-missions. Over the years, I’ve debated whether the worst enemy is procrastination or discouragement. If Satan can’t get us to put off our life missions, then he’ll try to get us to quit altogether.”

Overt Promotions of Christianity in Military Publications

Numerous chaplains, as well as a few commanders and other officers and NCOs, are taking advantage of their military base newspapers and unit newsletters as another forum for promoting Christianity. While some would argue that protection of free speech applies and that anyone can publish virtually anything anywhere, when the publication is an officially sponsored base newspaper and the authors are members of the military, the perception is an official endorsement of these religious messages.

In an article titled “Living in Victory,” a publication of the Louisiana National Guard, one chaplain explained how having Jesus as “your reference point to victory is crucial,” how “victory is not something that is ahead of us, but has already been accomplished by Jesus’ completed victory on the cross,” and why “when you experience defeat, it just shows you that you need to quickly get your branch re-connected to the Vine, who is the Victorious Life of Christ in you.” He summed up his piece by telling the troops that they “are Champions ‘in Jesus Christ.’”⁵⁷

In a column about Independence Day in a Marine unit newsletter, the chaplain got off to a good start, explaining in his opening paragraph how our independence from England led to “people having the right to worship in accordance with their own faith tradition,” and that the First Amendment is “the reason the military has chaplains to uphold every service member’s . . . right to worship in accordance to their particular faith group tradition.” The rest of his article, however, was all about promoting one “particular faith group tradition”—his.

I always remind people that we live in a fallen world, darkened by sin and evil because mankind wanted their independence from God. I also remind people of the incredible cost our Heavenly Father paid with the sacrifice of his one and only Son who died in our place in order that whomever [*sic*] would believe in Him would not perish but have everlasting life (John 3:16). In other words, our Heavenly Father through his Son paid the ultimate price, even death on a cross in order that whomever [*sic*] would believe could live a life independent from sin. Therefore, because of this great sacrifice paid by the Son of God any and every person can walk in victory beyond the struggles, skeletons in one’s closet, and temptations that can keep us from being men and women of honor, courage and commitment.⁵⁸

Writing about the upcoming move of the headquarters of an Air National Guard fighter wing, a chaplain assistant compared the move to Moses, the tabernacle, and the Christian Holy Spirit. She wrote:

I have been studying about the life of Moses and recently studied how the Israelites set up the tabernacle. I won’t go into all of the details about the tabernacle, but I do want to tell you about the “cloud” since I found the cloud to be very interesting and perfect for our upcoming Wing HQ move. . . .

The cloud was a gift to the Israelites that the Lord had given to them for protection from the hot and cold. This cloud is like the Christian Holy Spirit that we have available to us today. The cloud was a gift and the Holy Spirit is a gift that all human beings can receive. The Holy Spirit helps us to make decisions and enables us to know when we need to move just like the cloud did for the Israelites.⁵⁹

Sometimes, in addition to promoting Christianity, the articles get political, as in this example from one Army base newspaper. In an article titled “Virtue of Truth,” the chaplain condemns all the “sins” of our “progressive” culture—freedom of choice, gay marriage, and so forth. He then injects the word “progressive” into a quote from the apostle John, a word that appears nowhere in the Bible verse he quotes, and adds the word “progressive” again before a quote from Pope John Paul II, although that word was not used by the late pontiff.

At the heart of all sin is pride. This is the kind of pride that makes itself the arbiter of right and wrong. This is good to remember in an age when euthanasia is called mercy, suicide termed “creative medicine” and abortion described as “freedom of choice.” All three are really murder.

Today, marriage is too often considered outdated as an institution and divorce is considered the better option. Even more disturbing, opposition to same-sex marriage is thought to be bigoted and intolerant. This makes adultery and sodomy very uncomfortable terms in some people’s lexicon.

In contrast with today’s attitudes, the apostle John reminds us: “Anyone who is so ‘progressive’ as not to remain in the teaching of the Christ does not have God; whoever remains in the teaching has the Father and the Son” (2 John 9).⁶⁰

The last example comes from an article titled “The Opportunity to Follow Is Afforded to Us All,” written by an Air Force master sergeant:

There’s a tremendous biblical illustration of the ever-present duplicitous nature of followership between leading and accepting and executing orders.

This passage tells of a military leader in command of 100 followers. One day this leader, who is not a religious man, compassionately sends messengers to ask Jesus to pray for a dying subordinate. Jesus, so motivated by this compassionate appeal, deviates from his intended course to visit this kindhearted leader. However, just prior to Jesus’ arrival to the installation, the leader sends his followers to stop Jesus from coming to his installation, deeming himself not worthy of hosting such an esteemed visitor. This is where the leader communicates through his followers the most convicting principle of true followership. His principled statement is, “I know authority because I am under the authority of my superior officers, and I have authority over my soldiers. I only need to say, ‘Go,’ and they go, or ‘Come,’ and they come.” This very powerful confession prompts Jesus to clearly identify the next principle of responsible followership. The scripture reads, “when Jesus heard this, he was amazed and said to the crowd following him, ‘I tell you, I have not seen faith, or confidence, like this in all the land . . .’” The leader’s statement truly reflects the heart of followership. Followership is firmly rooted in confident obedience. And followership and leadership are transitional meaning to pass back and forth between positions. This compassionate military leader knew that even though he was not a religious man, demonstrating his willingness to follow Jesus’ command without question would save his follower’s life.⁶¹

The master sergeant who wrote the above is from the wing’s Equal Opportunity Office—the very office where an Airman would go for help if he or she had a complaint about an inappropriate promotion of religion, like this article written by this master sergeant.

Religious Programs for Military Children

Nobody would disagree that military personnel and their families should have the opportunity to worship as they choose. This is the justification for the military providing chaplains and chapels, and it is a reasonable one. But just how much support of religion is necessary to ensure this access to worship opportunities?

Countless DOD contracts show that what the government is providing for religion on military bases goes far beyond chaplains and chapels and, in many cases, far beyond what would be available to most civilians in their communities or towns. If a civilian church doesn't happen to have any talented musicians in its congregation, for example, the congregation might have to deal with having less than professional quality music at their services. Not so in military chapels. If chapels want better music, they hire professional musicians and music directors, contracted by the DOD. If a civilian church wants to start a youth program or provide religious education classes, it might have to find volunteers to run them. Military chapels hire base religious education directors, also paid for with DOD contracts.

And, while the contracting of these religious "service providers" is in itself highly questionable, the larger problem is that these contracts are almost exclusively open only to Christians. Contract descriptions, in complete disregard of the Constitution's "no religious test" clause, make this abundantly clear by including requirements such as "contractor shall ensure all programs and activities are inclusive of all Christian traditions," and the contractor will "use a variety of communications medium that shall appeal to a diverse group of youth, such as music, skits, games, humor, and a clear, concise, relevant presentation of the Gospel."⁶²

The most egregious practices are found in the programs for the children of military personnel. These youth programs, many funded by DOD contracts, are designed to target and evangelize the "unchurched" among our military youth. The tactics employed by these government-contracted Christian ministries to achieve this goal range from luring teenagers with irresistible events and activities to infiltrating the off-post public middle and high schools attended by military children. One of these organizations, Youth for Christ Military Youth Ministry, actually goes as far as stalking military children, following their school buses to find out where they live and what schools they go to.

Incredibly, even the job descriptions in some DOD contracts make it clear that stalking kids is expected. One recently posted Army base position required that the contractor target "locations and activities where youth live and spend time, such as neighborhood community centers, school and sports and recreational activities, etc." to draw in "youth that are not regularly affiliated with established chapel congregational youth programs."⁶³

According to a video interview⁶⁴ of Fort Riley's religious education director about one of the base's exclusively Christian youth programs, the mission of the program, called Spiritual Rangers, is "to train young men to be Godly leaders by instilling in them biblical character, values and principles and thus giving them a sense of what it truly means to be a man." This video, which was aired

on the base's local cable access channel, described a program where teenage boys get to do things like using the base's close combat tactical trainer, engagement skills trainer, and helicopter flight simulator—in other words, the coolest video games *ever!* And all a kid on Fort Riley has to do to play them is hang out with the “godly” men and memorize some scripture.

Military Community Youth Ministries (MCYM),⁶⁵ whose Club Beyond program “seeks to celebrate life with military kids and introduce them to the Life-giver, Jesus Christ,” has received millions of dollars in DOD contracts and operates on dozens of US military bases, both overseas and in the United States.

MCYM's Contracting Officer's Performance Evaluation, a form to be filled out each year by a “person duly appointed with the authority to enter into and to administer contracts on behalf of the government” at the installations where the organization is contracted, not only shows that MCYM's mission is to target non-Christian children, but also that the contracting officer actually rates MCYM on its success in this constitutional violation. These are two of the questions on the evaluation form:

1. MCYM staff are expected to conduct outreach ministry to teens who have no relationship with the chapel or established churches. What is your assessment of this ministry objective?
2. MCYM staff are expected to present the Gospel to teens with due respect to their spiritual traditions, i.e. to engage in evangelism but not proselytization. This means that they are not to endorse a particular theology or denomination or creed excepting that which is generally accepted as representing the principle tenets [*sic*] of the Christian faith with a focus on introducing teens to Jesus Christ and to help teens develop in their faith in God. What is your assessment of this ministry objective?⁶⁶

Saying that they “engage in evangelism but not proselytization” is questionable at best. MCYM narrowly defines refraining from proselytization as not trying to convert someone from one Christian denomination to another and places no restrictions on evangelizing those teenagers who need some “introducing” to Jesus Christ.

One of MCYM's “partner” organizations is Youth for Christ's Military Youth Ministry. Actually, Youth for Christ (YFC) and MCYM are one and the same. Both have the same address and phone number, and the YFC Military Youth Ministry mission statement states only one mission—to partner with MCYM: “The Mission of Youth For Christ Military Youth Ministry is to partner with Military Community Youth Ministries (MCYM) in assisting and equipping Commanders, Chaplains, Parents, Volunteers and local Youth for Christ (YFC) chapters on behalf of reaching military teens with the Good News of Jesus Christ.”⁶⁷

YFC Military Youth Ministry is just the arm of MCYM that goes after military children who attend off-post public schools, and its first step in obtaining a contract from the military is to convince a chaplain that his or her base needs its services. To do this convincing, YFC provides a fill-in-the-blank

template for a YFC “steering committee” to write up an assessment to present to the installation chaplain. The first part of completing this assessment is for the YFC steering committee to attempt to get a meeting with the local high school principal. This is done with a cold call to the principal in which committee members say, according to the script provided by YFC, that they are assisting the base chaplains, even though this phone call appears to be made prior to approaching the chaplains:

Example when you call the principle [*sic*] of the local high school: Hello my name is and I am assisting the chaplains of Fort _____ by putting together several facts concerning adolescent culture and youth serving organizations in our community. Could I drop by and ask a few questions?

Here are a few more sections of YFC’s assessment template, including the instruction to essentially stalk the children by following their public school buses:

3. a. _____ High School. The principle [*sic*] is _____. I spoke with _____ and he indicated that he would be willing/unwilling to allow me campus access. He did indicate that he would be glad to allow me to support students by attending practices, games, rehearsals and school activities on an “as invited” basis. My general impression is that _____ and will continue to develop my relationships at the High School.

b. _____ Middle School. The principle [*sic*] is _____.

ASSESSMENT [*sic*]:

6. Demographics

a. High School: This is a completely unscientific measurement but I followed the buses around for three days. Each morning four buses leave the installation in [*sic*] route to the high school. There are approximately _____ students on these buses. Students are primarily picked up in the _____, _____ and _____ neighborhoods. Students appeared to be equally spread over the four different grade levels with slightly more/less 9th and 10th graders.

b. Middle School: See a above.⁶⁸

Like MCYM, Malachi Youth Ministries,⁶⁹ the youth division of Cadence International, is funded by DOD contracts. In addition to teenagers, Cadence International also targets the younger children of military personnel, partnering with Child Evangelism Fellowship (CEF) “to anchor children in the hope of Jesus and lead them to living fully devoted to Him” by getting the elementary school children into Good News Clubs on their bases and in their schools.⁷⁰

Cadence and CEF have the “mutual goal of reaching every child of the US military around the world,” and clearly they will have the support and aid of the military itself to achieve this goal, based on statements like this one from the deputy installation chaplain at one large Army base, who, in a video promoting CEF, proclaimed, “The harvest is ready, and I mean it’s out there in more abundance than we have ability to harvest.”⁷¹

Religious Tests

In addition to the unconstitutional “religious tests” found in job requirements for DOD contracts, there are a number of service members who have expressed concerns about the requirement to disclose their religion on forms whose purposes would include no legitimate reason to contain any information about their religion. Two examples are the Army Officer Record Brief (ORB) and the Air Force Single Unit Retrieval Format (SURF). The ORB and the SURF are forms whose purpose is to provide information on the career history, education, and special skills of officers. The information contained in these forms is used for job placement, award nominations, applications to military training programs and colleges, and so forth. The religion of an officer should never be a factor in career decisions or recommendations, yet the Army’s ORB now contains a block for the officer’s religion, and the Air Force’s SURF, a recently implemented electronic form, also lists the officer’s religion.

Fear of Making Complaints through Military Channels

The almost universal problem faced by military personnel who encounter any of the problems listed above is the fear of what might happen if they report a violation of regulations or bring a complaint to their superiors or the Equal Opportunity Office. Service members who fear harassment from both peers and superiors, negative effects on their careers, and occasionally even physical harm often refrain from reporting violations of regulations regarding religion, even when those violations are personally impacting their or their family’s lives. Few ever decide to file official complaints, allowing military spokespersons, when an issue is reported or uncovered, to say that it was an isolated incident and to quickly point out how few official complaints have been filed. Clearly, the number of official complaints filed, usually said to be less than 100, is unrealistically small given that over 15,000 service members have contacted the Military Religious Freedom Foundation for assistance from 2005 to 2009. The disparity in these numbers is something that cannot be ignored.

Recommendations

After dealing with thousands of service members and carefully examining virtually every military regulation that would apply to their concerns and complaints, the Military Religious Freedom Foundation has concluded that there are very few situations in which the existing regulations are the problem. The problem is that these existing regulations are not being followed or enforced.

One important exception, however, relating to the proselytizing of Muslims in Iraq and Afghanistan, must be noted here. Because CENTCOM’s General Order 1B, in its list of prohibited activities in the CENTCOM AOR, lists only “*proselytizing of any religion*” as being prohibited, Christian military personnel

intent on converting Muslims are getting around this crucial prohibition. How? By saying that the order only prohibits proselytizing, but not evangelizing, and claiming that activities such as distributing Arabic and other native-language Bibles are merely evangelizing and thus do not violate the order. Simply changing the wording of GO-1B to “*evangelizing or proselytizing of any religion*” would leave no loophole for those who rely on semantics to continue their attempts to convert the Iraqis and Afghans to Christianity.

Setting the Record Straight Regarding the Military Chaplaincy

Ever since chaplains praying in Jesus’ name at nonreligious military functions and ceremonies became a hot-button issue, a distorted version of the history of the chaplaincy has emerged. This altered history of the chaplaincy has one purpose—to make it appear that the military chaplaincy has existed continuously since the Revolutionary War, with no problems or objections until recent years. This is accomplished by simply leaving a few minor gaps in the history, such as most of the nineteenth century.

***MYTH:** The chaplaincy has been an essential part of the military since the Revolutionary War.*

***FACT:** The military chaplaincy was almost nonexistent between the end of the Revolutionary War and the Civil War.*

There really wasn’t much of a military chaplaincy at all during the War of 1812 or up through and including the Mexican-American War. Naval commanders were authorized to appoint chaplains, but many of these were not ordained ministers, and their purpose was as much to be instructors in everything from reading and writing to navigational skills as it was to be preachers. Some officers even saw their authority to appoint chaplains as a way to get a personal secretary and chose them for their ability to perform that job, with little regard for their religious qualifications.

During the War of 1812, there was only one Army chaplain for as many as 8,000 men, and, with the exception of the 1818 appointment of a chaplain at West Point who doubled as a professor of history, geography, and ethics, there were no new Army chaplains until 1838, when a small number of post chaplains were authorized. But these post chaplains were not members of the military. They were civilian employees hired by the post’s administrators, and like their counterparts in the Navy, they were hired mainly as teachers and also served as everything from librarians to mess officers to defense counsel during courts-martial. Post chaplains, since they were not in the military, were not assigned to a military unit, but to their post, so when the Mexican-American War began, they did not accompany the troops.

In 1847, Congress passed a law transferring control over post chaplains from the post administrators to the secretary of war, giving the secretary of war

the authority to require a chaplain to accompany his post's troops into the field whenever a majority of the troops were deployed. Those chaplains who refused to go were fired. This 1847 law caused a bit of a problem, however, because it neglected to actually give anyone the authority to appoint chaplains. In fact, when President Polk appointed two Catholic priests as "chaplains" in an effort to stop the propaganda that the war was an attack upon the Mexicans' religion, he made them as political appointments rather than chaplain appointments, saying that there was no law authorizing Army chaplains.

The total number of Army chaplains during the Mexican-American War was 15, including the two Catholic priests who weren't actually chaplains. The chaplaincy grew much larger during the Civil War, of course, with the appointment of a chaplain for each regiment. But when the war ended, the chaplaincy was reduced to the 30 post chaplains authorized in 1838, even though the regular Army was twice the size it had been in 1838. Six additional chaplains were authorized for the six black regiments of the regular Army, but this was reduced to four in 1869. The number of chaplains authorized for the Army would remain 34 until 1898.

***MYTH:** There were no problems with or objections to chaplains until recent years.*

***FACT:** There was a widespread campaign to completely abolish the chaplaincy in the mid-1800s.*

By the late 1840s, opposition to government-paid chaplains was growing, and a vigorous campaign to abolish both the military and congressional chaplaincies would go on for well over a decade, supported by both members of the military and civilians, including churches and religious leaders. Hundreds of petitions, signed by thousands of Americans, were sent to Congress during the 1840s and 1850s calling for an end to all government-paid chaplains. A large part of the American public of the mid-1800s objected to chaplaincy establishments on constitutional grounds; religious organizations objected to them on both religious and constitutional grounds; and military personnel, including chaplains, had complaints of religious coercion and discrimination uncannily similar to those heard today.

Take, for example, the following statement, which was written in 1858: "Mr. Hamlin presented the memorial of Joseph Stockbridge, a chaplain in the navy, praying the enactment of a law to protect chaplains in the performance of divine service on shipboard, according to the practices and customs of the churches of which they may be members."⁷² Given the current disputes over chaplains' prayers, this statement could just as easily be from 2010.

A common complaint in the military during the nineteenth century was the takeover of the chaplaincy by Episcopalians. Once the Episcopalians gained control, all members of the military, regardless of their religion or denomination, began to be forced or coerced to attend Episcopalian worship services, and non-Episcopalian chaplains were being forced to perform these services.

While the particular "bully" denomination may have changed since the petition of the naval officers in 1858, the issue has not. In the mid-1800s it was the

Episcopalians; in 2010 it's fundamentalist Protestants. And, as in the mid-1880s, this is also not an issue of Christians versus non-Christians. The overwhelming majority of the petitions received by the Congresses of the 1840s and 1850s were written and signed by Christians and Christian religious organizations, just as the majority of complaints received by the Military Religious Freedom Foundation—96 percent of them—are from self-identified Christians, both Protestant and Catholic.

Beginning in 1848, hundreds of petitions poured into both houses of Congress. The first of these petitions to be presented in the Senate was from a Baptist association in North Carolina:

Mr. Badger presented the memorial, petition, and remonstrance of the ministers and delegates representing the churches which compose the Kehukee Primitive Baptist Association, assembled in Conference with the Baptist Church at Great Swamp, Pitt County, North Carolina praying that Congress will abolish all laws or resolutions now in force respecting the establishment of religion, whereby Chaplains to Congress, the army, and navy, are employed and paid to exercise their religious functions.

Mr. Badger said he wished it to be understood that he did not concur in the object of this memorial. He thought the petitioners were entirely wrong. But as the petition was couched in respectful language, he would ask for its reading and would then move that it be laid on the table and printed.⁷³

Five years later, as a member of the Senate Judiciary Committee, Senator Badger, a devout Episcopalian, would write a very pro-Christian report dismissing the countless petitions received by that time to abolish the chaplaincy—a report that is frequently quoted by today's Christian nationalists to show just how very religious and pro-Christian Congress was in the nineteenth century. These historical revisionists simply neglect to mention that Badger's report, and a similar report written a year later by an equally religious member of a House committee,⁷⁴ had anything to do with a campaign to abolish the chaplaincy. Acknowledging the historical context of these reports would, of course, contradict their claims that there were no complaints or questions about the constitutionality of government religious establishments until modern-day secularists decided to wage a war on Christianity.

Obviously, Senator Badger, who had already stated in 1848 that he “did not concur in the object” of the Baptists' petition to abolish the chaplaincy, was not someone who was going to be objective in considering the many similar petitions he was asked to report on in 1853. So it was no big surprise that Badger's report dismissed the petitions, stating that “the whole view of the petitioners seems founded upon mistaken conceptions of the meaning of the Constitution,” and that the Founding Fathers “did not intend to spread over all the public authorities and the whole public action of the nation the dead and revolting spectacle of atheistical apathy.”⁷⁵

In 1860, Congress addressed the issue of commanders forcing chaplains to conduct worship services of a faith tradition other than their own with a provision stating, “Every chaplain shall be permitted to conduct public worship according to

the manner and forms of the church of which he may be a member.”⁷⁶ They did not, however, address the issue of the hijacking of the chaplaincy of one denomination, even though an investigation had shown the complaints to be valid.

Instead of moving forward, Congress soon took a giant step backwards, mandating in August 1861, in the act that authorized the appointment of regimental chaplains for the Union Army, that all chaplains be Christians.⁷⁷ A similar provision was in the act for the regular Army—the act passed in July 1861 authorizing the president to raise a volunteer force stated that a chaplain “must be a regular ordained minister of a Christian denomination.”⁷⁸ No prior legislation authorizing chaplains had ever mandated that chaplains had to be of a particular religion or even that they had to be ordained ministers. Apparently, the earlier Congresses were familiar with that pesky “no religious test” clause in the Constitution, applying it even to the office of chaplain. The criteria for a chaplain in the 1838 law authorizing post chaplains, for example, was simply that “such person as they may think proper to officiate as chaplain.”⁷⁹

But the 1861 law requiring chaplains to be Christians was quickly and successfully challenged. The usual practice at the time for appointing Army chaplains was for each regiment to elect its own chaplain, and a regiment from Pennsylvania had elected a Jewish cantor. When the Young Men’s Christian Association exposed this grievous violation of the 1861 chaplain law, the Jewish chaplain resigned rather than face the humiliation of losing his commission. But the regiment decided to test the constitutionality of the law. This time they chose a rabbi, knowing full well that his application for a commission would be denied. After a public outcry over the denial of the rabbi’s commission, which included numerous petitions from Jewish organizations, groups of citizens, and even the members of one state legislature, the provision requiring chaplains to be Christians was repealed.⁸⁰ A few months later, in September 1862, President Lincoln legally commissioned the first Jewish chaplain.

Another issue during the mid-nineteenth-century chaplain battle was over a naval regulation from 1800 giving commanders the authority to force their subordinates to attend religious services.⁸¹ It had been enacted during the very religious Adams administration and remained in force in 1858. This example is often used by historical revisionists to show that “it is simply inconceivable that the members of the First Congress, who drafted the Establishment Clause, thought it to prohibit chaplain-led prayer at military ceremonies, having passed legislation not only approving that practice, but indeed requiring service members to attend divine services.” However, what these revisionists fail to mention is that, in 1858, this act was protested by a group of naval officers⁸² who successfully petitioned Congress to amend it to make religious services optional.

As already mentioned, most of the protests against government-paid chaplains came from Christians, and it’s absolutely remarkable how similar the opinions of these nineteenth century Christians were to those of the modern-day “secularists” who are currently trying to destroy Christianity. The following was written by Rev. William Anderson Scott, one of the most prominent Presbyterian ministers of his day, in his 1859 book *The Bible and Politics*. Reverend

Scott's book was written in large part to refute the arguments being used by those who wanted the Bible in public schools, another issue that is far from new, but it also addressed the issue of government-paid chaplains, including the following from a section on military chaplains:

Is it constitutional to take the public money to pay a chaplain for religious services that are not acceptable to a majority of the rank and file of the army? I do not think so. If the majority of a regiment, or of the men on board a man-of-war, should elect a chaplain, then, possibly, the Government might make an appropriation to pay him, though I doubt whether this is constitutional, and I do not believe it the best way. I believe that the supplying of religious consolations to the members of our Legislature, and to the officers and men of our army and navy, according to our organic laws, should be left to themselves, just as it is to our merchant ships and to our frontier settlements—that is, to their own voluntary support. Our blacksmiths, police officers, Front-street merchants, lawyers and physicians all need the blessings of religion; but they must provide for their own individual wants. And, in the same way, I would leave the army and the navy and the legislatures, and I would do so the more readily, because the different churches and voluntary religious societies would then all stand truly on an equality, and hold themselves ready to help in furnishing such supplies. Suppose a regiment is ordered to the wilderness, let the men elect a chaplain and pay him themselves. Then they will be more likely to profit by his services. Or let a missionary society, by the vote of the citizen soldiers, be asked to send them a minister of religion. If the government appoints a Protestant chaplain, is it a disobedience of orders for a Catholic to refuse to accept of his services? I see nothing but difficulty and the engendering of constant sectarian feuds and bad feeling, if the Federal Government touches anything that is religious.⁸³

Clearly, this nineteenth century Presbyterian minister must have been trying to destroy Christianity and turn the military into a bunch of atheists.

What Would the Founding Father of the US Military Think?

The version of history in which the inconvenient events of the 1800s are simply ignored typically begins with the many instances of George Washington issuing orders regarding chaplains and religious services and usually includes his 1776 directive for each regiment to procure a chaplain. What's omitted is that a year later, when Congress wanted to cut the number of chaplains from one per regiment to one per brigade, an act that would put many regiments under chaplains who were not of similar beliefs to the Soldiers, Washington and his generals strongly objected.

This is what Washington wrote to the Continental Congress in 1777 on behalf of his generals:

It has been suggested, that **it has a tendency to introduce religious disputes into the Army, which above all things should be avoided, and in many instances would compel men to a mode of Worship which they do not profess.** The old Establishment gives every Regiment an Opportunity of having a Chaplain of their own religious Sentiments, it is founded on a plan of a more generous

toleration, and the choice of the Chaplains to officiate, has been generally in the Regiments. Supposing one Chaplain could do the duties of a Brigade, (which supposition However is inadmissible, when we view things in practice) that being composed of four or five, perhaps in some instances, Six Regiments, there might be so many different modes of Worship. I have mentioned the Opinion of the Officers and these hints to Congress upon this Subject; from a principle of duty and because I am well assured, *it is most foreign to their wishes or intention to excite by any act, the smallest uneasiness and jealousy among the Troops.*⁸⁴ (emphasis added)

Washington and his generals worried about the “smallest uneasiness” over religion and objected to anything that would “compel men to a mode of worship that they didn’t profess.” What would they have to say about what’s going on in today’s military? Regardless of the side one happens to be on, few would disagree that the current issues are causing far more than the “smallest uneasiness.”

Notes

1. “Hayes: Most Troops Will Be Home by 2008,” *Concord Standard and Mount Pleasant Times*, 21 December 2006.

2. Lt Col Rick Francona, retired US Air Force intelligence officer, appearing on MSNBC, 28 December 2006.

3. Pete Geren, then secretary of the Army (commencement remarks, United States Military Academy, West Point, NY, 31 May 2008), <http://www.army.mil/-news/2008/06/02/9573-west-point-commencement-remarks-by-secretary-of-the-army-pete-geren/>. Secretary Geren was also among the civilian DOD officials who appeared in the Christian Embassy video.

4. Rep. Trent Franks (R-AZ), remarks on “Religious Freedom,” 11 December 2007, Congressional Record, H15291.

5. Christian Embassy is the arm of Campus Crusade for Christ operating at the Pentagon. The Christian Embassy promotional video can be viewed at http://www.militaryreligiousfreedom.org/Media_video/christian-embassy/index.html.

6. DOD Inspector General, “Alleged Misconduct by DoD Officials Concerning Christian Embassy,” Report No. H06L102270308, 20 July 2007, http://www.militaryreligiousfreedom.org/press-releases/christian_embassy_report.pdf.

7. Photos archived at <http://www.militaryreligiousfreedom.org/dodspp>.

8. “Mural Painter,” <http://www.riley.army.mil/NewsViewer.aspx?id=579>. Photos also archived at <http://www.militaryreligiousfreedom.org/dodspp>.

9. Photos archived at <http://www.militaryreligiousfreedom.org/dodspp>.

10. <http://www.militaryministry.org/>.

11. <http://www.militarymissionsnetwork.com>.

12. Web page archived at <http://www.militaryreligiousfreedom.org/dodspp>.

13. <http://www.valormovement.com>.

14. Web page archived at <http://www.militaryreligiousfreedom.org/dodspp>.

15. Video at <http://www.militaryreligiousfreedom.org/video/USAF.mov>.

16. Military Ministry of Campus Crusade for Christ, *Movement Model of Ministry Volume 2*.

17. “God’s Basic Training” Bible study. Page images archived at <http://www.militaryreligiousfreedom.org/dodspp>.

18. Photos archived at <http://www.militaryreligiousfreedom.org/dodspp>.

19. From Brigitte Gabriel’s lecture at the Joint Forces Staff College on 13 June 2007: Questioning a statement in Gabriel’s book, a student asked, “Should we resist Muslims who want to seek political office in this nation?” Gabriel replied:

Absolutely. If a Muslim who has—who is—a practicing Muslim who believes the word of the Koran to be the word of Allah, who abides by Islam, who goes to mosque and prays every Friday, who prays five times a day—this practicing Muslim, who believes in the teachings of the Koran, cannot be a loyal citizen to the United States of America. . . . A Muslim is allowed to lie under any situation to make Islam, or for the benefit of Islam in the long run. A Muslim sworn to office can lay his hand on the Koran and say “I swear that I’m telling the truth and nothing but the truth,” fully knowing that he is lying because the same Koran that he is swearing on justifies his lying in order to advance the cause of Islam. What is worrisome about that is when we are faced with war and a Muslim political official in office has to make a decision either in the interest of the United States, which is considered infidel according to the teachings of Islam, and our Constitution is incompatible [*sic*] with Islam—not compatible—that Muslim in office will always have his loyalty to Islam.

Among her many other derogatory statements, Gabriel referred to Dearborn, Michigan, as “Dearbornistan” because of its large Muslim community, and, in a comment about racial profiling, said that American Muslims “are good at nothing but complaining about every single thing.”

20. <http://www.3xterrorists.com>.

21. Bethany Duemler, “Alleged Ex-PLO Raises Eyebrows,” *Chimes* (newspaper of Calvin College, where the 3 Ex-Terrorists appeared), 9 November 2007, <http://www-stu.calvin.edu/chimes/article.php?id=3125>; “Doubt Cast on Anani’s Terrorist Claims,” *The Windsor Star*, 20 January 2007, <http://www.canada.com/windsorstar/news/story.html?id=4a479502-4490-408e-bdb5-f2638619a62c>; and Neil MacFarquhar, “Speakers at Academy Said to Make False Claims,” *New York Times*, 7 February 2008, <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/02/07/us/07muslim.html?scp=1&sq=Shoeb&st=nyt>.

22. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2WN5rqKkhUU>; http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ipqO_ke-NH4; http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3l_Mc-0MaZM; <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=thfYB-VejSQ>; and <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XIokAQa1Xs4>.

23. Maria Luisa Tucker, “Reformed Muslim Terrorists’ Preach Christ to College Kids,” *Village Voice*, 19 February 2008, <http://www.villagevoice.com/2008-02-19/news/reformed-muslim-terrorists-preach-christ-to-college-kids/1>.

24. Video at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2MibbDnH8BM>.

25. Video at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CFqIPjj3ciU>.

26. Video at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UVPejVvvMQU>.

27. Photos of military Bibles archived at <http://www.militaryreligiousfreedom.org/dodsp>.

28. “Ministry Provides Hope in Second Run of Bible Devotional,” *Mission Network News*, 26 November 2007, <http://www.mnnonline.org/article/10592>.

29. In November 2008, the Military Religious Freedom Foundation wrote to the secretary of defense, calling for the DOD inspector general to promptly initiate an investigation into the background and activities of Navy chaplain LCDR Brian K. Waite and requesting that any existing association between the US military and Revival Fires Ministries be immediately terminated. That letter can be found at http://www.militaryreligiousfreedom.org/Gates_Letter.pdf. Video of Lieutenant Commander Waite at a Revival Fires camp meeting and links to additional information regarding this situation can be found at <http://www.militaryreligiousfreedom.org/newsletters/2008-11/video.html>. The Web page is also archived at <http://www.militaryreligiousfreedom.org/dodsp>.

30. Video at http://www.militaryreligiousfreedom.org/Media_video/al_jazeera/index.html.

31. Lt Gen Khalid Bin Sultan al-Saud, commander of Saudi Arabia’s air defense forces, appointed by King Fahd as General Schwarzkopf’s counterpart.

32. “IMF Chaplains Serving in Iraq,” *Gathering*, Spring 2004, <http://www.i-m-f.org/pdfs/Gatherings/Spring2004.pdf>.

33. *Ibid.*

34. LTC Lyn Brown, “Kingdom Building in Combat Boots,” *Heart & Mind*, Bethel Seminary, Summer 2005, <http://www.bethel.edu/publications/heartmind/2005-summer/bethel-army-boots/>.

35. <http://www.onlyonecross.com>.

36. http://www.larryclayton.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=27&Itemid=2.

37. <http://www.lightsofliberty.us/iraq.html>.

38. Video at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0B7pBbkZpq0>.
39. <http://soldiersbibleministry.org/Default.aspx?tabid=1783>.
40. Worldwide Military Baptist Missions "Prayer Letter," archived at <http://www.militaryreligiousfreedom.org/dodssp>.
41. For numerous reasons in addition to the distribution of Arabic Bibles, the Military Religious Freedom Foundation has demanded that the DOD revoke the ecclesiastical endorsing authority of this endorsing agency. The letter to the secretary of defense and enclosures detailing the reason for this demand can be found at http://www.militaryreligiousfreedom.org/press-releases/gates_letter.html.
42. Web page archived at <http://www.militaryreligiousfreedom.org/dodssp>.
43. Campus Crusade for Christ Military Ministry Life and Leadership newsletter, October 2005, archived at <http://www.militaryreligiousfreedom.org/dodssp>.
44. *God and the Military*, video, filmed in 1997, re-released on DVD in 2005 for distribution by Campus Crusade for Christ Military Ministry.
45. <http://www.militaryministry.org/about/strategic-objectives/>.
46. <http://www.cadence.org>.
47. <http://www.cadence.org/home/who-we-are/a-strategic-ministry>.
48. Until January 2009, the Officers' Christian Fellowship's official vision statement was "a spiritually transformed military with ambassadors for Christ in uniform, empowered by the Holy Spirit, living with a passion for God and a compassion for the entire military society." Its mission statement was "Christian officers exercising biblical leadership to raise up a godly military." Examples of the use of these statements are archived at <http://www.militaryreligiousfreedom.org/dodssp>.
49. Photos archived at <http://www.militaryreligiousfreedom.org/dodssp>.
50. Several sources confirm that, in some cases, concerts by Eric Horner, a Christian artist who regularly performs at military bases, have been mandatory for basic trainees.
51. <http://www.militaryreligiousfreedom.org/powerpoint/Lakenheath.ppt.htm>.
52. Report of a US Army major in the National Guard who attended this Strong Bonds event.
53. <http://www.fedspending.org>.
54. <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/03/15/washington/15video.html>.
55. Archived at <http://www.militaryreligiousfreedom.org/dodssp>.
56. Archived at <http://www.militaryreligiousfreedom.org/dodssp>.
57. Chaplain Maj. Jeff Mitchell, "Living in Victory," *The Engineer Express*, 225th Engineer Brigade, Louisiana National Guard, 15 July 2009.
58. Chaplain Bailey, 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit newsletter, July 2009.
59. MSgt Diane Watters, *In Formation*, newsletter of the 187th Fighter Wing of the Alabama Air National Guard, February/March 2009.
60. Chaplain Capt Paul-Anthony Halladay, "Virtue of Truth," *The Guidon*, base newspaper of Fort Leonard Wood, 15 April 2009.
61. MSgt Stephen Love, "The Opportunity to Follow Is Afforded to Us All," 460th Space Wing at Buckley Air Force Base, 18 March 2009, <http://www.buckley.af.mil/news/story.asp?id=123138478>.
62. Community-wide Outreach Youth Ministry Program for High School Students, Fort Bragg, North Carolina, Solicitation Number: W9124709T0004, 17 October 2008.
63. Ibid.
64. http://www.militaryreligiousfreedom.org/media_video/spiritual_rangers/index.html.
65. <http://www.mcy.m.org>.
66. Archived at <http://www.militaryreligiousfreedom.org/dodssp>.
67. <http://www.yfcmym.org>.
68. Archived at <http://www.militaryreligiousfreedom.org/dodssp>.
69. <http://www.malachi.org>.
70. <http://www.cefonline.com/content/category/4/102/343/>.
71. Video archived at <http://www.militaryreligiousfreedom.org/dodssp>.
72. *Journal of the Senate of the United States of America*, vol. 50, 35th Cong., 2nd Sess. (Washington, DC: William A. Harris, 1858-59), 53.

73. *The Congressional Globe*, 30th Cong., 2nd Sess., 13 December 1848, 21.
74. *Reports of Committees of the House of Representatives Made During the First Session of the Thirty-Third Congress*, vol. 2, H. Rep. 124 (Washington, DC: A. O. P. Nicholson, 1854).
75. *Reports of Committees of the Senate of the United States for the Second Session of the Thirty-Second Congress, 1852-53*, S. Rep. 376 (Washington, DC: Robert Armstrong, 1853), 4.
76. George P. Sanger, ed., *The Statutes at Large, Treaties, and Proclamations of the United States of America*, vol. 12, 36th Cong., 2nd Sess. (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1863), 24.
77. *Ibid.*, 37th Cong., 1st Sess., 288.
78. *Ibid.*, 270.
79. Richard Peters, ed., *The Public Statutes at Large of the United States of America*, vol. 5, 25th Cong., 2nd Sess. (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1856), 259.
80. Sanger, ed., *Statutes at Large*, vol. 12, 37th Cong., 2nd Sess., 595.
81. Peters, ed., *Public Statutes at Large*, vol. 2, 45.
82. *Journal of the House of Representatives of the United States*, vol. 54, 35th Cong., 1st Sess. (Washington, DC: James B. Steedman, 1857 [sic]), 792.
83. Rev. W. A. Scott, DD, *The Bible and Politics: Or, An Humble Plea for Equal, Perfect, Absolute Religious Freedom, and Against All Sectarianism in Our Public Schools* (San Francisco: H.H. Bancroft & Co., 1859), 78.
84. George Washington to the president of Congress, 8 June 1777, in John C. Fitzpatrick, ed., *The Writings of George Washington from the Original Manuscript Sources 1745-1799*, vol. 8 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1933), 203.

About the Author

Chris Rodda is the senior research director for the Military Religious Freedom Foundation and a writer on issues related to religion and politics. Focusing for many years on the issue of the politically motivated revisionism and distortion of American history by the Religious Right, she authored the book *Liars For Jesus: The Religious Right's Alternate Version of American History*, vol. 1, the first of a projected three-volume series debunking the historical myths and lies found everywhere from homeschooling textbooks to congressional debates and legislation to Supreme Court opinions. She is a regular contributor at Talk2Action.org and a blogger on the *Huffington Post*.

The Military Religious Freedom Foundation is a 501(c)(3) founded by Mikey Weinstein in 2005. Weinstein is a 1977 graduate of the US Air Force Academy. MRFF does not seek to rid the military of all religion, as its critics would have people believe. In fact, 96 percent of the service members who seek the assistance of MRFF are Christians, and the work of the foundation is endorsed by a number of religious organizations representing a variety of faiths. For more information, visit <http://www.militaryreligiousfreedom.org>.