



MILITARY RELIGIOUS FREEDOM
f o u n d a t i o n

**Compliance Report on the Pervasive Violations of the
United States Constitutional Religious Freedoms of Military Personnel**

December 11, 2006

Table of Contents

Overview.....	3
Crusaders – 523 rd Air Force Squadron.....	6
Air and Space Basic Course Classroom.....	8
Illegal use of official military e-mail accounts.....	10
Force Ministries.....	13
Christian Embassy/Officers’ Christian Fellowship.....	17
Personal Testimonials.....	20

OVERVIEW

Each year countless breaches of military regulations and the Constitutional guarantee religious freedom occur within the United States armed forces. Military and civilian personnel are subjected to blatant and unlawful displays of religiosity at mandatory formations, religious bias, and illegal proselytizing by their peers and superiors alike.

Fear of isolation and the inability to directly confront one's superior when placed in comprising situations, prevents many servicemen and women from coming forward and filing formal complaints.

The military's command structure of accountability means that all contacts between a superior and subordinate officer are by definition coercive.

Since its inception in March 2006, the Military Religious Freedom Foundation (MRFF), dedicated to safeguarding the rights of all U.S. military personnel, has become a clearinghouse for violations reported by military and civilian personnel. The Foundation has received thousands of e-mails from military installations through the world, detailing specific Constitutional infractions and examples of blatant religious bias (against those of all religious denominations, including non-evangelical Christians) occurring within the armed forces. Many of these communications have resulted in the Foundation taking direct action against military leadership.

Each individual who seeks the Foundation's assistance to deal with these troubling situations is guaranteed not only the full respect and attention of the organization, but complete anonymity.

The Military Religious Freedom Foundation supports individuals' right to religious expression, but not when this expression comes in the form of coercion. Military leadership is required to uphold and abide by military regulations and Constitutional guarantees and should serve as exemplars to their subordinates.

This compliance report on the pervasive violations of United States Constitutional religious freedoms of military personnel outlines five major issues MRFF has confronted over the past six months.

They include:

- Blatant displays of religious symbolism on military garb by the 523rd Fighter Squadron
- Placement of a biblical quotation above the door of the Air and Space Basic Course classroom at Maxwell Air Force Base
- Illegal use of official military e-mail accounts to send e-mails containing religious rhetoric

- Attempts by missionary organizations such as Force Ministries and the Officers' Christian Fellowship to create "Christian soldiers" by training active-duty military personnel to evangelize their subordinates and peers
- Military leadership appearing in uniform in promotional videos for these missionary organizations and openly discussing their commitment to bring religion into the military

MRFF works actively to call attention to these issues through outreach to the public and the media. Foundation leadership reaches out to military officials in an attempt to prevent further, similar violations from occurring.

Despite continued correspondence and direct meetings with military leadership, the Foundation has seen little if any significant change in military policy with regard to religion.

Constitutional Clauses on Religion

- **The First Amendment:** "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof."
- **Article VI:** "...no religious Test shall ever be required as a Qualification to any Office or public Trust under the United States."

Air Force Policy on Religion

(From the "Little Blue Book" of Air Force core values established in 1947, and to which guiding principles on religion were specifically added in 1997 to stop "ethical corrosion")

- "Military professionals must remember that religious choice is a matter of individual conscience. Professionals, and especially commanders, must not take it upon themselves to change or coercively influence the religious views of subordinates."

THE CRUSADERS

**523rd Fighter Squadron
(Cannon AFB, New Mexico)**



“The 523rd Fighter Squadron is known as the ‘Crusaders.’ Their primary mission is to maintain a continuous ability to rapidly deploy and support unified commanders worldwide with day or night F-16C combat operations. They are committed to decisively employing the F-16C throughout the entire spectrum of offensive and defensive missions, including interdiction, close air support, forward air control, strategic attack and counter-air, through employing a wide variety of conventional, precision guided and nuclear weapons.” - <http://www.cannon.af.mil/library/factsheets/factsheet.asp?id=3380>

The mission of the 523rd Fighter Squadron is essential. However, the unit blatantly disregards the United States Constitution, which they are sworn to uphold. Members of the Squadron wear patches which prominently feature a large cross – an unmistakable emblem of the Christian faith – as well as other accoutrements of the historically dressed crusaders: broadsword and armored helmet. This unabashed display of religiosity creates a divisive atmosphere among Air Force personnel.

According to the United States Air Force handbook (see www.af.mil), “the mission of the U.S. Air Force is to deliver sovereign options for the defense of the United States and its global interests – to fly and fight in the Air, Space and Cyberspace.”

The idea of military servicemen and women as Crusaders fighting a religious war, is directly counter not only to the mission of the United States Air Force, but also to the United States Constitution.

The Squadron’s patch and promulgation of the idea that the United States military is fighting a religious war, jeopardizes the safety and success of the men and women battling religious fundamentalism overseas.

AIR AND SPACE BASIC COURSE CLASS ROOM



Air and Space Basic Course (ASBC) is a mandatory six-week training course for all Air Force officers. Every officer is required to undertake this training course in residence at Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama. For most Air Force officers, this course is their first active duty experience, and is meant to lay a foundation for the rest of their careers.

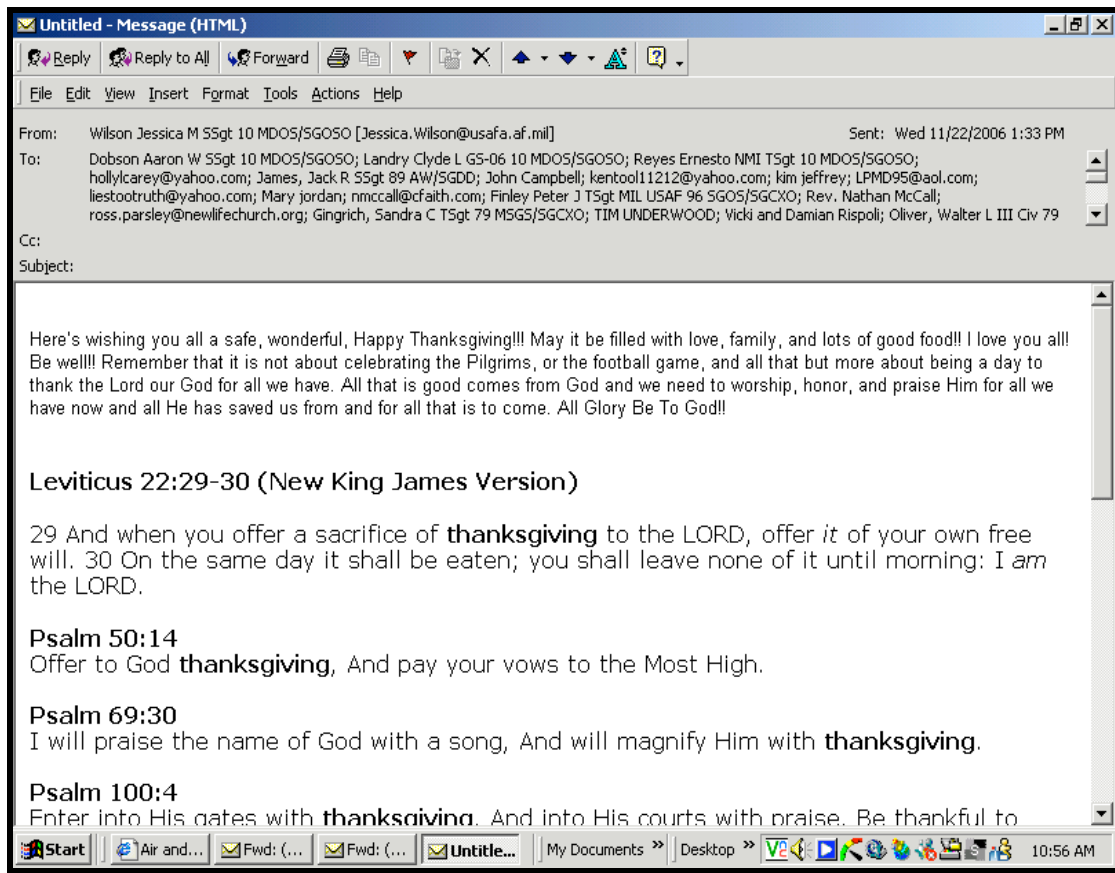
The mission of the course is “to inspire new USAF officers to comprehend their roles as Airmen who understand and live by USAF core values, can articulate and advocate what Air, Space, and Cyberspace power brings to the fight, and are dedicated as warriors in the world’s most respected Air, Space, and Cyberspace Force.”

<http://asbc.maxwell.af.mil/mission.htm#mission>

Every day of ASBC, Air Force officers walk into the classroom pictured above. Prominently displayed over the doorway is a quote from the Old Testament. Though at first glance the quote may appear to be benign, it comes from a passage, Isaiah 40:31, that promises restored vigor to those who worship - “But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk and not faint.”

This quote, along with other blatant and unconstitutional displays seen throughout the armed forces, has caused numerous officers to complain of feeling both uncomfortable and isolated. Officers who have contacted MRFF have expressed concern over whom exactly this sign refers to. Only those Christian officers who “wait upon the Lord,” apparently, will “mount up with wings as Eagles.” Despite repeated requests for the sign’s removal, it remains affixed above the classroom’s door.

ILLEGAL USE OF OFFICIAL MILITARY E-MAIL ACCOUNTS



The above e-mail was widely distributed on November 22, 2006, through an official Air Force email account, which, according to regulations, should be used solely for military business. This e-mail clearly violates the separation of church and state and also violates military regulations. Sent to those in the staff sergeant's chain of command, subordinates said they felt pressure to adopt religion.

This e-mail is one of many with controversial content that have been sent through military channels. In May 2006, Major General Jack Catton was investigated for sending a fundraising e-mail, encouraging military and civilian peers and subordinates to contribute to a Republican congressional campaign fund, through his official USAF account. "We are certainly in need of Christian men with integrity and military experience in Congress," the e-mail read.

Despite the investigation of Maj. Gen. Catton and the national attention called to his violation, illegal e-mails are still distributed through official military accounts.

FULL TEXT OF E-MAIL

From: Wilson Jessica M SSgt 10 MDOS/SGOSO [mailto:Jessica.Wilson@usafa.af.mil]

Sent: Wednesday, November 22, 2006 1:33 PM

Here's wishing you all a safe, wonderful, Happy Thanksgiving!!! May it be filled with love, family, and lots of good food!! I love you all! Be well!! Remember that it is not about celebrating the Pilgrims, or the football game, and all that but more about being a day to thank the Lord our God for all we have. All that is good comes from God and we need to worship, honor, and praise Him for all we have now and all He has saved us from and for all that is to come. All Glory Be To God!!

Leviticus 22:29-30 (New King James Version)

29 And when you offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving to the LORD, offer *it* of your own free will. 30 On the same day it shall be eaten; you shall leave none of it until morning: I *am* the LORD.

Psalm 50:14

Offer to God **thanksgiving**, And pay your vows to the Most High.

Psalm 69:30

I will praise the name of God with a song, And will magnify Him with **thanksgiving**.

Continued...

Psalm 100:4

Enter into His gates with **thanksgiving**, And into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him, and bless His name.

Jeremiah 30:19

Then out of them shall proceed **thanksgiving** And the voice of those who make merry; I will multiply them, and they shall not diminish; I will also glorify them, and they shall not be small.

Philippians 4:6

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with **thanksgiving**, let your requests be made known to God;

Colossians 2:7

rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with **thanksgiving**.

Revelation 7:12

saying: "Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom, **Thanksgiving** and honor and power and might, Be to our God forever and ever. Amen."

Jessica M. Wilson, SSgt, USAF

10th Medical Group/SGOSO

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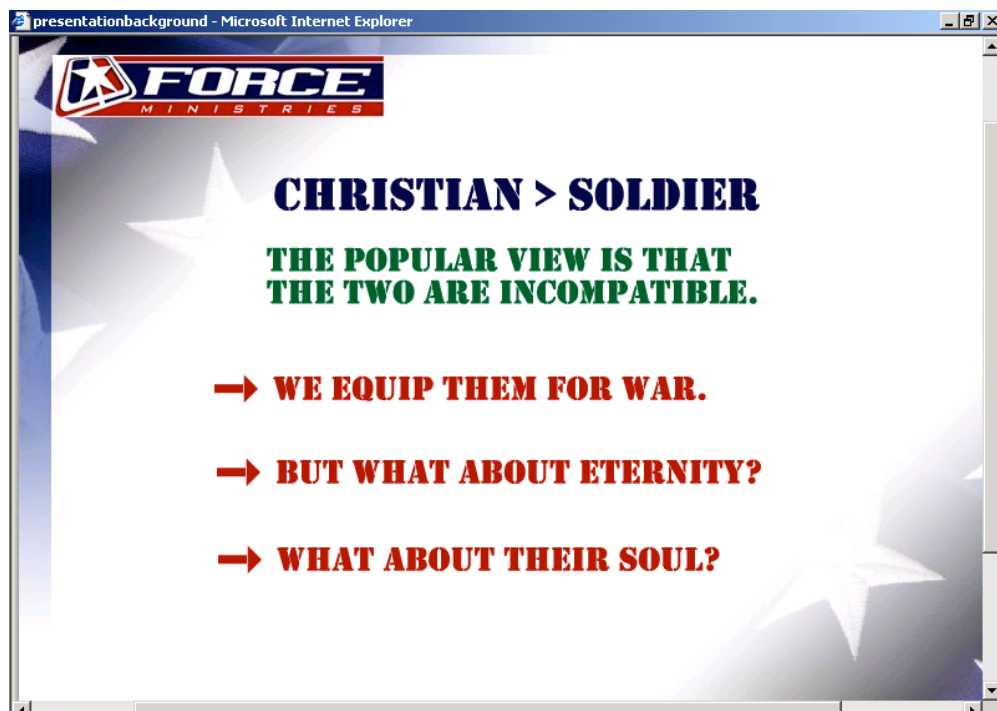
When you are ready to stop bargaining, He will lead you to a place of peace and blessings.

Author Unknown

**FORCE MINISTRIES
&
OFFICERS' CHRISTIAN
FELLOWSHIP**

Illegal and coercive proselytizing

The duty of the various branches of the U.S. armed forces is to train strong soldiers, airmen, sailors and marines. It is also the duty of military leadership to provide an egalitarian environment for all who choose to serve. Organizations such as the Force Ministries and the Officers' Christian Fellowship (OFC) make this nearly impossible to accomplish.



Force Ministries cites its mission as promoting “Christ-centered duty” and its purpose as imparting “Christian faith,” instilling “patterns and principles for victorious Christian duty,” and to igniting “individual calling and destiny.”

Force Ministries places their staff - retired and currently enlisted military personnel - on and near military bases and campuses throughout the world. At these “strategic locations” Force Ministries' missionaries work actively to train the men and women of our nation's armed forces to evangelize their military peers and subordinates.

In essence, Force Ministries trains military personnel to violate the United States Constitution by encouraging them to proselytize to their peers at mandatory military events.

The organization has plans under way to further its mission of actively and forcefully evangelizing to the military.

The Force Ministries' website states:

"The Kingdom of God is advancing and Force Ministries is at the tip of the spear, where we love to be. We have been developing our next phase of ministry to the military and are proud to introduce 'More Than Conquerors' (MTC). MTC is going to be the loudest voice Force Ministries has had so far. March 9th & 10th, 2007 will mark the first of many arena and stadium events that we will be hosting here in the USA and around the world. These events will boast incredible music from some of the most talented bands, and extraordinary speakers, bringing a clear message of salvation and leading thousands of our military men and women to Jesus Christ.

After years of research and development in the area of ministry to our military, the one thing we have come back is the simple statement of Matthew 11:12 ('From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven has been forcefully advancing, and forceful men lay hold of it'). We need to be aggressive in our efforts to reach our military."

Obviously, Force Ministries is willing to side-step military regulations and Constitutional guarantees to fulfill its missions of promoting "Christ-centered" duty. Its work creates tension, conflict and discord among servicemen and women.



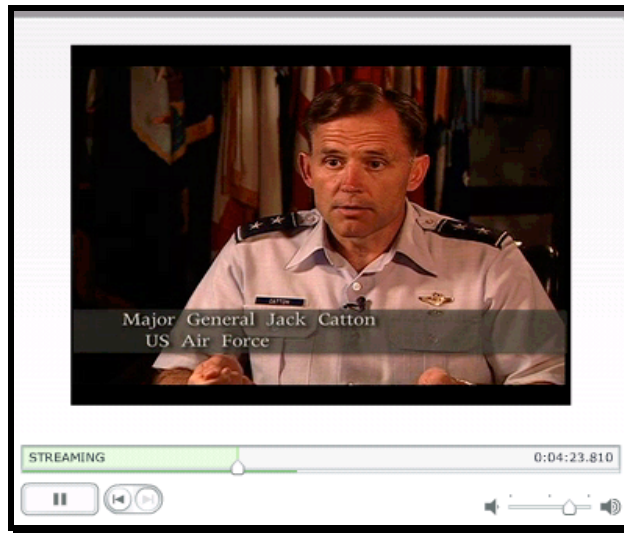
The OFC has a similar mission to Force Ministries. The organization desires to train “Christian officers exercising biblical leadership to raise up a godly military.” Their tripartite goal is to see a spiritually transformed U.S. military, with ambassadors for Christ in uniform, empowered by the Holy Spirit.

The Fellowship defines a “Christian officer” as “one that walks with and has faith in Christ as Lord and Savior; a professional serving our Lord in our military and who is tireless in the quest for the fulfillment of God’s purpose in his or her life; one who trusts in the Lord for strength and purpose and serves as an ambassador for Christ in the military.”

As in the mind of Force Ministries, the OFC believes that the only good soldier is one with a deep faith in a Christian god. The organization’s website states that it expects “that the military's core values could be found in God’s Word and have biblical values.”

The military’s core values, as a government organization, and as one sworn to defend the freedoms of the American people, should be based on the Constitution.

CHRISTIAN EMBASSY



<http://www.christianembassy.com/files/CEVideo.html>

The Christian Embassy's website states that they are "a non-political, multi-denominational ministry that has been caring for, encouraging and equipping our country's leaders and decision-makers for nearly 30 years...founded by Washington officials, concerned business leaders and Dr. Bill Bright, founder of Campus Crusade for Christ International." However, even a quick review of the organization reveals serious constitutional issues that must be brought to light.

While there is nothing illegal in this claim in and of itself, serious violations were committed by prominent figures featured on the organization's ten-minute promotional video. Among the various government leaders (including congressmen and presidential appointees) who appear on the video are several members of military leadership.

Major General Jack Catton, Brigadier General Bob Caslen, Colonel Cynthia Islin, Brigadier General Vince Brooks, Major General Pete Sutton, and Lieutenant Colonel Lucious Morton all appear in the video, dressed in full uniform openly discussing their personal connection to Jesus and how they make this connection part of the work they do in their professional capacity each day. These officials state that, among other things, with the help of Christian Embassy, they hold bible studies while on duty in the workplace, many times in their offices. They use prayer and invoke their faith in Christ in their official decision-making, and refer to their Christian Embassy duties as more important than their jobs. Assuming that he is above reproach, one official states, "the job will always be there."

Americans are free to believe in whatever way they see fit. However, when government officials use their position as a means of spreading their gospel, the line must be drawn. Similarly, any organization facilitating this illegal action must be held accountable.

MRFF is seeking disciplinary action against those officials in the video and delivered a detailed letter to the Defense Department Inspector General requesting an immediate investigation.

This video contains blatant and egregious violations of both the Constitution and military regulations. It is rare that a military official would be permitted to appear on camera in uniform, for a cause with no relation to official military business. Mikey Weinstein's own son and daughter-in-law, currently active duty Air Force officers and U.S. Air Force Academy graduates, were not permitted to appear in uniform when they were filmed for the upcoming documentary, "Constantine's Sword."

The following e-mail was sent from the Pentagon to Mikey's son and daughter-in-law along with the film's producer. This correspondence clearly demonstrates not only that permission must be granted for active duty military personnel to appear on camera, but also that because they are speaking for themselves, and not for the Air Force, they must not appear in uniform.

From: Lebling Keith CIV SAF/PAN [mailto:Keith.Lebbling@pentagon.af.mil]
Sent: Friday, July 28, 2006 4:01 PM
To: michael@storyville.org
Cc: Weinstein, Casey M 1Lt USAF 88 CS/SCMM; Weinstein, Amanda 1Lt AFRL/VACA; Michele, Adrienne A Capt USAF 88 ABW/PA; Bentley Jennifer Civ SAF/PAM
Subject: Documentary Film Production

Dear Mr. Solomon,

I have spoken with 1st Lt. Casey Weinstein and with our media desk here in the Pentagon. The Weinstains are willing to participate in your documentary. **They may appear on camera for this documentary, but as they will be speaking for themselves, as private citizens, not for the Air Force, they cannot appear in uniform.** Because they'll be on their own time and not on orders, they will not require an Air Force public affairs escort or other authorization. Please feel free to give me a call/email if you have any questions or concerns.

Best regards,
Keith V. Lebling, GS-13, DAF
Marketing & Branding Branch
Outreach Division, USAF Public Affairs
1690 Air Force Pentagon
Washington, DC 20330-1690
703-693-9096; DSN 223-9096

PERSONAL TESTIMONIALS

The following are texts of actual e-mails sent to MRFF, many by active-duty and former military personnel. The authors of the e-mails all attest to the systemic problem of religious intolerance within the United States armed forces.

The names of the individuals who sent the e-mails have been removed.

Date: 12/2/06

In March 2006 I arrived at Fort Leonard Wood, MO for Basic Combat Training (BCT) with the U.S. Army. One of the first things that I learned is that you don't do anything without the permission of a Drill Sergeant, ever. At the age of 21, Basic Training was one of the most exciting and gratifying things I have ever done in my life and I know that the things that I have learned there will help me through out life. There is only one time when I was disappointed during my time at Fort Leonard Wood; that was 'Free Day Away.' Free Day Away is pitched as a getaway for soldiers in BCT were they could go out for one day away from the Drill Sergeants, from stress, and from Physical Training.

What was underplayed was that it was sponsored and held at a nearby Christian Church. I was told that the event was actually sponsored by the Army, and it was just held at the church, but I knew that that was not true when we marched up to church buses to depart. I was never given an option by my chain of command to not go to the event, ever. No one, not Drill Sergeants, Company Commander, or First Sergeant told us that we didn't have to attend. I had no idea that it was voluntary at all. A volunteer on the bus let us know that there would be a church service and that if we had objections we should voice them now, but I knew better than to get off that bus without having permission from a Drill Sergeant. True enough, that day we ate pizza and drank soda. At the end of the night though we were gathered in the chapel for what turned out to be the strongest hellfire sermon I have ever been subjected to. It ran the gamut from everyone being evil to burning forever in hell. It concluded with an invitation to become 'saved' and become a Christian.

U.S. Army Private

Date: 5/12/06

A fundamental evangelical presence is, in fact, "systemic" in my Air Force and is treading dangerously on my constitutional guarantees regarding the separation of Church and State.

At Air Force bases worldwide, I've attended mandatory official functions (awards ceremonies, promotion ceremonies, formal "Dining In/Dining Out" events, Professional Military Education Graduations where prayer, an invocation or benediction (often both),

is a standard part of the program. I often wonder why I've never seen a Rabbi, Buddhist, Shinto, Hindu, Muslim or Pagan ritual performed at one of these official functions, and more importantly, I wonder what non-Christian *believers* think about it. Incredibly, my Air Force wants me to believe that, despite clear and compelling evidence to the contrary, there is no "systemic" leadership bias toward Christianity as the "official" Air Force religion.

Respectfully,

CMSgt

Date: 7/16/06

I was a Professor of Ethics at the Air Force Academy and believe that the religious fervor of proselytizing by military commanders in uniform to their subordinates that I witnessed there was way over the line. It is bad for our Academy, bad for our Air Force, and bad for our country.

Sincerely

Maj., USAF

Date: 7/16/06

I am Jewish and currently serving in Iraq. Since immigrating to the U.S., the men in my family have all served in uniform, both to repay the debt we owe to this great nation and to develop ourselves into better citizens with greater opportunities. Over the course of my military career, I too have been disturbed by the proliferation of extreme religious practices, and I have done what I can to halt such practices in my units. But more must be done. I support your efforts wholeheartedly, and wish you the best of luck during your upcoming legal and political engagements.

Date: 5/6/06

Way back when, when warships were all manned only by males, when the Academy produced many officers at a time when they were all considered "gentlemen", the discussion of religion in the wardroom was specifically forbidden as having the power to be divisive, and disadvantageous to unit cohesion. As a Navy Chaplain who sat in a Navy wardroom on deployment, I can attest to the possibilities that religious disagreements can cause strains in the leadership of a command, and thus causes the unit

to function with less distinction than it might otherwise. Unfortunately, the Navy regulations, in their explicit forms date back before the founding of the USAFA...it's too bad, because this is the case that the old ways really were "best."

USN Chaplain
CDR USN, Ret
ELCA Pastor

DATE: 7/06/06

I worked at Wright Patterson Air Force Base for just over a year as a civilian contractor.

This is what I experienced:

Staff meetings were prefaced and closed by Christian prayer sessions and the senior NCOs [non-commissioned officers] who led the prayers sessions made it clear to the military trainees that they were being judged on whether or not they enthusiastically participated.

The trainee airpersons were given the choice of attending fundamentalist Christian religious ceremonies on Sunday or being assigned to particularly onerous substitute duties.

It was made very clear to them that decent evaluations and a successful training period leading to a tolerable term of enlistment or a career in the Air Force included completely embracing Christianity. And airperson who did not fall into line was going to have a very difficult time of it.

I began to realize that the work environment was one of fear for many junior officers, particularly ones who owed large amount of service time in return for having education money. If they did not fall into line with the Christian agenda, they were going to be given lousy assignments and have a file full of bad evaluations to deal with when they finally entered the civilian job market. These evaluations did not reflect their actual performance, but their lack of Christian belief.

Noon services and Christian prayer circles were pervasive, I was appalled to find groups of officers praying as a decision making aid.

Once I got to know people and heard more conversations, I realized that for many officers, the war in Iraq is not politically motivated, but religiously motivated: it is a Christian jihad that will bring on the apocalypse and rapture. Hearing this from people who control destructive weapons systems is terrifying.

DATE: 12/1/06

During my initial Expeditionary Communications Officer Training (ECOT), part of the mandatory curriculum was a lecture by Lt. Gen. Harry D. Raduege, then the Commander of the Defense Information Systems Agency. During his presentation, he talked to slides that had an icon of an eye in the top corner of each slide. Throughout the presentation, Lt. Gen Raduege made several religiously charged statements and suggestions. For example, he told us to bring a bible with us as we deploy to the Middle East. He suggested we attend church regularly. Finally, at the end of the presentation, he explained what the eye in his slides represented. The eye was, in fact, the eye of God, which looked down upon all that we do as Communication Officers, and who we would have to ultimately answer to. Following several minutes of further religious discussion, the general closed his speech by stating that the day anyone told him he couldn't speak about God while on duty would be the day he resigned. When I complained about the speech to his executive officer, I was brushed off and told that I was the only person who had ever complained about the religious nature of his talk. Further, when I, along with other members of my class, lodged an official complaint, we were simply told that the General had already left and that we wouldn't hear him speak again at the course.

Several months later, I talked to an Air Force Academy classmate who attended ECOT the session after I did. My classmate told me that Lt Gen Raduege disparaged me during his lecture to the members of the next class, stating something along the lines of "some Lieutenant had the audacity to complain about my speech."

The General's statements were absolutely illegal. He used his rank and position to advocate his fundamentalist Christian worldview. As an introduction to the Air Force, this position confuses young officers as to what level of religious expression is legal while on duty.

1st Lt, USAF
