

**From:** Mikey Weinstein

**Subject:** AFEHRI Constitutional and Factual Issues

Date: October 26, 2017 at 3:59:02 PM MDT

**To:** Lt. General Steven L. Kwast, USAF

**Cc:** Gen. David L. Goldfein, USAF Chief of Staff

Lt. General Steven L. Kwast, USAF  
Commander and President, Air University  
55 LeMay Plaza South  
Maxwell AFB, AL 36112-6335

RE: The Air Force Enlisted Heritage Research Institute (AFEHRI) Query

Dear Lt. General Kwast,

Sir, my name is Mikey Weinstein and I am the Founder and President of the Military Religious Freedom Foundation (MRFF). As you may recall from our prior dealings, MRFF is a large civil rights advocacy organization with the main mission objective of protecting the Constitutionally-mandated wall separating church and state in the United States armed forces. In this regard, MRFF currently represents well over 52,400 active duty, reserve, and national guard U.S. Soldiers, Sailors, Marines and Airmen, DoD Civilians, as well as veterans. About 96% of MRFF's aggrieved military clients are professed Christians. We currently represent 21 clients at and/or associated with Maxwell-Gunter AFB, including a number of USAF/DoD permanent party service members assigned to the various schools at Air University (AU) under your command, in the matter at hand.

I am contacting you in your capacity as Commander and President of AU on two matters of vital importance to MRFF. First, what appears to be a false and fictitious exhibit at the Air Force Enlisted Heritage Research Institute [AFEHRI] at the Gunter Annex, *i.e.*, the so-called "Enlisted Heritage Museum." MRFF's second reason is that, factual or not, the exhibit in question violates not only the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution's Establishment Clause, but also Air Force Instruction [AFI] 1-1, para. 2-12, which reads:

**Balance of Free Exercise of Religion and Establishment Clause.** Leaders at all levels must balance constitutional protections for their own free exercise of religion, including individual expressions of religious beliefs, and *the constitutional prohibition against governmental establishment of religion. They must ensure their words and actions cannot reasonably be construed to be officially endorsing or disapproving of, or extending preferential treatment for any faith, belief, or absence of belief.* [emphasis added]

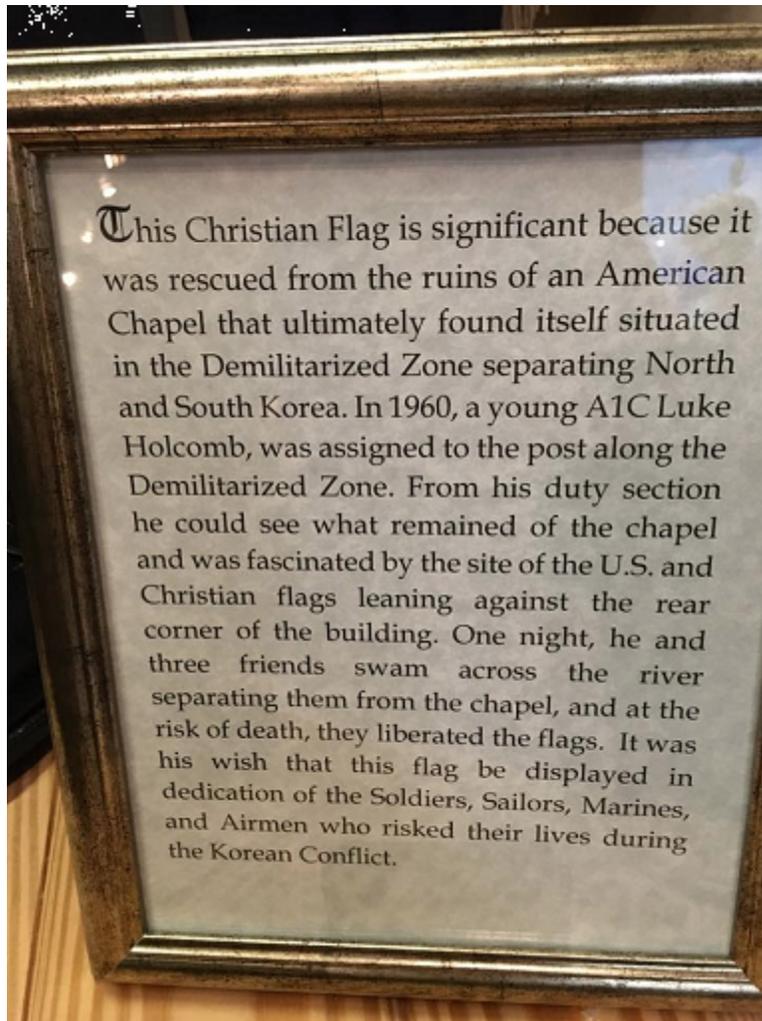
I do not know who is in charge of the AFEHRI, but they clearly fall under AU's umbrella for chain-of-command purposes. I will address both of these issues in more detail below.

### **The A1C Luke Holcomb Exhibit**

The museum features an exhibit ostensibly honoring one Airman First Class [A1C] Luke Holcomb.<sup>1</sup>

The exhibit claims that A1C Holcomb while posted at the Demilitarized Zone [DMZ] in the Republic of Korea, saw what is claimed to be the remains of the "ruins of an American chapel" allegedly on the North Korean side of the DMZ on their side of the river – presumably the Imjin River. MRFF's historical researchers could find no evidence that any "American chapel" was ever located in that vicinity in general and, more importantly, one that remained on the North Korean side of the river years after the Korean hostilities ended, especially with both an American and Christian religious flag allegedly quite visible. Here is a current photograph of the exhibit's

testimonial:

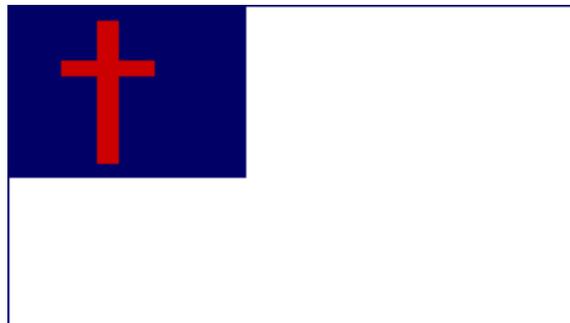


Aside from the fact that this testimonial description misuses the word “site” instead of the correct word “sight,” MRFF could find no evidence that *Air Force* enlisted members ever manned “post[s]” along the DMZ – this to our knowledge has always been done by members of the U.S. Army, their Korean Augmentation To the U.S. Army [KATUSA] counterparts, or South Korean Special Forces units – nor any other rationale for an AF A1C to be in that area of the DMZ in 1960 or any other time after the conflict ended in 1953. There have been AF enlisted members attached to the Army’s Camp Casey and Camp Red Cloud both of which however, are 20+ kilometers south of the DMZ and nowhere near the area at issue. Perhaps you have additional information which might prove otherwise?

Further, MRFF could find absolutely NO evidence concerning the alleged “Christian” flag, which is depicted on their (AFEHRI) Facebook page as follows:



However, the flag displayed is not the “Christian Flag,” rather it is the U.S. Army Chaplains Corps, *Christian Chapel* flag.<sup>2</sup> The “Christian Flag” looks like this:



We point this out to you because we believe that “attention to detail” is always a basic concern and in this case, the AFEHRI’s *official* web page states in relevant parts:

“The *AFEHRI’s mission is to educate and motivate visitors by researching, preserving, and showcasing to the world our Air Force enlisted history*, heritage, and their resulting contributions to air power.”

\* \* \* \* \*

“The institute is comprised of two elements. *The research and archives element consists of a research center*, archives storage, and a student computer lab. The heritage center element consists of the Enlisted Heritage Hall, with many student-teaching exhibits.” [emphasis added].<sup>3</sup>

If one of the two prongs of AFEHRI is professional research pertaining to Air Force history, if they cannot research this particular matter to ensure its historical existence and accuracy, it casts a serious doubt upon EVERYTHING which the AFEHRI is supposed to stand for. Plain and simple, it is a classic “mission failure” which must be rectified immediately.

What is being “showcased” here appears to be a fictional “war story” and respectfully beneath the dignity of AU and its mission. But, this disturbing lack of cognizable historical evidence is only part of the problem.

There are numerous issues with this exhibit, starting with the basic problem noted above, *viz.*, is it even true? If not, it should be removed forthwith. But, where did this “Christian flag” actually come from? And, where is the other flag – the U.S. flag mentioned – at? Why is it not part of this exhibit? Finally, it defies credibility to think that the North Koreans would leave a chapel with a U.S. flag and a Christian religious flag just sitting there for seven years, or that the so-called “three friends” who allegedly accompanied A1C Luke Holcomb have never been identified.

### **The Holcomb Exhibit Violates the Establishment Clause and AFI 1-1**

MRFF believes that this “exhibit” is nothing more than a pretextual attempt to proselytize the Christian faith to the exclusion of any and all other faiths or no faith traditions and requests that you order an immediate formal investigation into this bizarre and most troubling matter. That particular “Christian” flag – an indoor flag at that – did not sit out fully exposed to the severe North Korean weather elements for seven years, while remaining in the pristine condition reflected in the photograph, above, which AFEHRI so proudly splashed all over social media via Facebook merely a few days ago. With its “Christian” cross, if this story cannot be verified, the AFEHRI can “*reasonably be construed to be officially endorsing*” the Christian religion, in flagrant violation of both the Establishment Clause and AFI 1-1.

The evil here is not only does this travesty appear to be a fake exhibit, but one which is used to illegally promote the dominance, exceptionalism and superiority of Christianity, the very thing that the Establishment Clause and AFI 1-1 incontrovertibly prohibit. MRFF can only ask, what type of “education” is being given to young Airmen and NCO’s where, in their own Air Force museum, they are subject to a fake exhibit, and one which overtly flaunts the dominance of Christianity (to the exclusion of all other religions or no religion) in total defiance of the U.S. Constitution its construing federal and state caselaw as well as DoD/USAF Directives, Instructions and Regulations, especially AFI 1-1?

Respectfully, Lt. General Kwast, these are NOT the core values of the Air Force, e.g., “Integrity First”, ”Service Before Self” and “Excellence in All We Do.”

### **CONCLUSION**

MRFF is reminded of a quotation from one of your predecessors at AU, then Lt. Gen. Stephen R. Lorenz, USAF:

We must adhere to the standards we learned from our first days in uniform. When Airmen cut corners by failing to follow tech order guidance or by violating a flying directive, we must hold them accountable. We must police each other because if we don’t, small lapses will lead to bigger ones, and the entire Air Force family will eventually suffer. Overlooking a lapse is the same as condoning it.<sup>4</sup>

Whoever is responsible for this overt violation of both research and educational standards as well as a clear desecration of the Establishment Clause’s principles to include those of AFI 1-1, needs to be immediately held accountable and punished accordingly. As General Lorenz says, if you overlook this egregious lapse, you are condoning it. MRFF respectfully requests that you address this matter immediately.

Please advise me ASAP as to what timely remedial actions you will take to correct these serious issues.

Respectfully,  
Michael L. “Mikey” Weinstein, Esq., 505-250-7727  
Founder and President, Military Religious Freedom Foundation

1. *See*, <https://www.facebook.com/247447788604070/photos/pcb.1908904609125038/1908904595791706/?type=3&theater>
2. *See*, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:US\\_Army\\_Military\\_Christian\\_Chapel\\_Flag.png](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:US_Army_Military_Christian_Chapel_Flag.png)
3. *See*, <http://www.airuniversity.af.mil/Barnes/AFEHRI>
4. General Stephen R. Lorenz, USAF (ret), *Lorenz on Leadership: Lessons on Effectively Leading People, Teams, and Organizations*, 21 (AU Press, 2012); available at: [http://indianstrategicknowledgeonline.com/web/Lorenz\\_on\\_Leadership.pdf](http://indianstrategicknowledgeonline.com/web/Lorenz_on_Leadership.pdf)