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**The Voice for Chaplaincy - Chartered by Congress - Serving Since 1925**

## **Weekly Newsgram - November 21st 2018**

### **Happy Thanksgiving**

#### **Veterans, chaplains partner to provide meals for paratroopers**

Retired Command Sgt. Maj. Bill Bauer knows all too well the plight of a young enlisted soldier.



"We used to sell our plasma or work side jobs," he said, thinking back to harder days as a fresh soldier in the Army. "It was all we could do for money to do anything extra."

Bauer, now the executive director of the 82nd Airborne Division Association, remembers those tough times.

So, for the past three years, the 82nd Association has pulled donations from its members and local businesses to provide a little extra to paratroopers ahead of the holidays. On Wednesday, Bauer and 82nd Airborne Division unit ministry teams distributed 500 meals to lower enlisted soldiers.

Outside the All American Chapel, soldiers or their families pulled up to one of two tents, where volunteers were waiting to hand over a bag with a frozen chicken, stuffing, vegetables, bread and dessert.

Lt. Col. Tim Wilson, the deputy division chaplain, said the donations were an opportunity to help soldiers who might need an extra boost this holiday. It also was an opportunity for chaplains to spend time with those soldiers. "That's what this is about," he said. "They're making that connection."

Unit chaplains and commanders identified soldiers for the meals. Bauer said the Army pays young soldiers "just enough to get by."

This year, soldiers will gather together on and off post. Leaders will invite their

soldiers to their homes, or teammates will gather for their own Thanksgiving feast. Bauer said he hopes the donated meals allow every soldier who wants such a feast to be able to partake.

Now in its third year of providing Thanksgiving meals, Bauer said the association has found more partners, but hopes to continue to grow the program. This year, Perdue, McCall Farms and USAA contributed to the meals, along with donations from 82nd Airborne Division Association members.



## In Memoriam

### **Chaplain Ronald C. Lawson**

Captain, United States Army  
Department of Veterans Affairs  
Born December 21, 1934  
Deceased August 22, 2018  
Roman Catholic Church  
Montpelier, Vermont

## Executive Director Notes

### ***SOUTH CAROLINA CHAPTER***



I continuing to receive a number of phone calls and emails about the very successful National Institute we had two weeks ago. We also see very positive responses about "opening our aperture" for membership to others who are in federal chaplaincy, such as the Federal Bureau of Prisons and the FBI, as well as the newly constituted Chaplaincy program for the Coast Guard and State Guard/State Defense Force chaplains who meet Title 10 endorsement requirements.

Additionally, in an effort to be more "recognizable" to foundations that have a process for allocating grants, renaming our National Executive Committee (NEC) to Board of Directors is seen as a positive way to clearly delineate the work done by NEC members, with committees then working under the direction of the Board. These were some excellent motions that were presented for a first hearing at our Annual Meeting in Arlington, and will be posted in writing in our 2019 Summer Journal before a final vote to approve these changes at the 2019 National Institute (NI).

And speaking of the 2019 NI, it will be in Columbia, SC and the dates will be Monday evening thru Wednesday noon, 28-30 October 2019, which should be just as energizing as our recent gathering in Arlington. We will be pleased to be hosted by our South Carolina chapter.

While I do wish all who read this column a Happy Thanksgiving this week, I

would reinforce the note to travel safely.

Recent news about travel this weekend indicates it we will see the highest number of people traveling for Thanksgiving in a number of years. Please do travel safely. For those of you in the Army, consider this your holiday/weekend safety briefing.

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## **Thanksgiving at the Front**

**by Daryl Densford**

Few Thanksgiving Days have passed without there being Service Members from the United States stationed somewhere around the world, away from family and usually far from home. Missing holidays and special family occasions is a fact of military life. Here are a few pictures from our archives of some of those Thanksgivings from our history. For many more images see the collection on [The Chaplain Kit](#).



**"The hood of a jeep serves as a makeshift altar for Cdr Martin J. Doermann, 12th Marines regimental chaplain, at Gio Linh, south of the Demilitarized Zone, on Thanksgiving Day 1968. Cdr Doermann was among 20 chaplains visiting forward units that holiday." (DoD photo)**

## **From bicycle to social movements, the changing role of chaplains in the US**

More and more institutions across the United States are hiring chaplains and other spiritual care providers. Some are places that have long employed chaplains, but others may come as a surprise.



The Massachusetts Institute of Technology, for example, recently installed a new chaplain. Various police departments are adding additional chaplains, as are horse racing tracks. At the same time, chaplaincy positions continue to exist in the U.S. House and Senate. Given the growing numbers of Americans who describe themselves as atheistic, agnostic or "nothing in particular," this can appear puzzling.

Why is chaplaincy growing when institutional religious affiliation is on the decline?

**History of chaplaincy** - The presence of chaplains in American institutions goes back to the Revolutionary War, when they served the American military.

Chaplains helped perform many rituals and were present for patriotic ceremonies and events. Military chaplains have long been uniformed, noncombatant, commissioned officers with rank.

Later, prisons and hospitals came to employ them to provide spiritual care. In federal prisons, chaplains provide a ministry to prisoners, along with support for behavior modification. In earlier eras, chaplains, like the American population in general, were overwhelmingly Protestant, Catholic or Jewish. They mostly cared for people from their own faith traditions.

**Changing role** - These traditional roles are changing. In our research we have come across some unique examples of organizations and people providing support to individuals and communities in a variety of situations.

Allay Care Services, a newly launched venture, for example, provides chaplains who, for a fee, help individuals and families clarify their wishes at the end of life and prepare the necessary legal documents. While religious leaders have long worked around these issues, Allay links chaplains to people they do not know. The work takes place by phone.

Chaplains provide care for weary travelers. Donna Mote at Atlanta's Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport is just one chaplain among those working in over 170 countries who provide support to people they see mostly once as they pass through that busy space. At the New England Seafarers' Mission in Boston, chaplain Steve Cushing, greets the foreign-born staff of container and cruise ships every week.

**Chaplaincy without religion?** - What is most interesting is the presence of chaplains in places not typically thought to be "religious."

For example, chaplains are increasingly present in social movements including Occupy, Black Lives Matter and Standing Rock. They provide a steady presence to protesters grappling with existential questions amid deep tensions that characterize such situations.

An interesting example is that of Laura Everett, executive director of the Massachusetts Council of Churches. Everett serves as a bicycle chaplain. When cyclists are killed in traffic in the greater Boston area, she places white bicycles on the sites and leads services of remembrance for community members.

The point being, even when people are skeptical or distant from religious organizations, many remain personally spiritual. Millennials, especially, are gathering in athletic groups and activist organizations - not congregations - to build community and support personal growth. And they too are being joined by chaplains who accompany them through life in ways traditional clergy have done in the past.

In view of this trend, a quarter of theological schools are focusing attention directly on chaplaincy as their overall enrollment numbers continue to decline. Might this reflect a long-term shift in American religious life?

full article [here](#)



**Please Consider Giving to the MCA this Giving Tuesday**

In the midst of all the other demands for time and treasure, as you consider your generosity this Tuesday, please remember your professional organization, the Military Chaplains Association.



You may give on our website - [mca-usa.org](http://mca-usa.org).

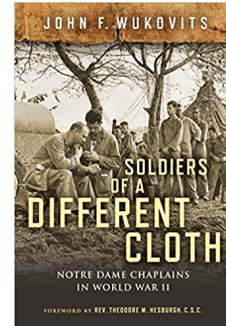
Thank you.

## Books for Review

*If you would like to review either of these books for an upcoming issue of the Military Chaplain, please respond to [chaplains@mca-usa.org](mailto:chaplains@mca-usa.org) and we will supply you a copy and guidelines for the review. Limited to first response.*

### ***Soldiers of a Different Cloth: Notre Dame Chaplains in World War II***

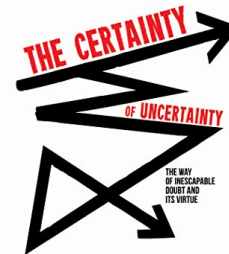
- In *Soldiers of a Different Cloth*, New York Times best-selling author and military historian John Wukovits tells the inspiring story of thirty-five chaplains and missionaries who, while garnering little acclaim, performed extraordinary feats of courage and persistence during World War II. Ranging in age from twenty-two to fifty-three, these University of Notre Dame priests and nuns were counselor, friend, parent, and older sibling to the young soldiers they served. These chaplains experienced the horrors of the Death March in the Philippines and the filthy holds of the infamous Hell Ships. They dangled from a parachute while descending toward German fire at Normandy and shivered in Belgium's frigid snows during the Battle of the Bulge. They languished in German and Japanese prison camps, and stood speechless at Dachau.



### ***The Certainty of Uncertainty: The Way of Inescapable Doubt and Its Virtue***

- The world is full of people who are very certain--in politics, in religion, in all manner of things. In addition, political, religious, and social organizations are marketing certainty as a cure all to all life's problems. But is such certainty possible? Or even good?

*The Certainty of Uncertainty* explores the question of certainty by looking at the reasons human beings crave certainty and the religious responses we frequently fashion to help meet that need. The book takes an in-depth view of religion, language, our senses, our science, and our world to explore the inescapable uncertainties they reveal. We find that the certainty we crave does not exist.



MARK SCHAEFFER

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If you missed the November 14th edition of the Newsgram [click here](#)

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