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## **Weekly Newsgram - November 1st, 2017**

### **Putting the *Team* in UMT PA National Guard Moves Ahead**



A long-time 28th Infantry Division soldier has become the first Pennsylvania Army National Guard member to be promoted to the rank of sergeant major in what had been known as the Army's chaplain assistant military occupational specialty (MOS).

Sgt. Maj. Anthony Reitz of Erie, Pa. serves as chief religious affairs specialist NCOIC at Joint Force Headquarters, Fort Indiantown Gap. He was promoted to his current rank June 2015 and graduated the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy March 2016.

Reitz's promotion fills the state's E-9 religious affairs NCOIC slot with a military occupational specialty (MOS) qualified soldier and enables the Pa. Guard to have a representative in the Army process that decides future changes to the MOS. The move also gives enlisted religious affairs NCOs a new top career step.

"The position has always been there, but we had never filled it from the ranks of religious affairs NCOs," Reitz said. "The Pa. Guard has never had a sergeant major in the chaplain's assistant MOS. So, I'm the first one and hopefully the first of many NCOs who will hold this position." Reitz says it's important for the Guard to be involved in discussions about MOS-specific training because citizen-soldiers have to balance training time requirements against civilian employment and benefit greatly from on-line training opportunities. He noted that something on the horizon for religious affairs NCOs is a schooling opportunity that provides a path for religious affairs NCOs to earn a bachelor's degree in religious studies.

"It's going to become curriculum that is needed for the MOS," Reitz said. "And the board is working on that process right now. "

Reitz's advice to religious affairs NCOs is to remember the chaplain corps three lines of

effort: Nurture the living, care for the sick and honor the dead. "By being immersed in our units we have the opportunity to do," Reitz said. "We have to meet our mission at all levels."

Lyman Smith  
Executive Director

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## In Memoriam

### **Chaplain David A. Sems**

Colonel, United States Air Force, Retired  
deceased October 14, 2017  
Greenville, South Carolina



## Life Member

### **Chaplain Aroon Seeda**

LT, CHC, USN  
2017 MCA Distinguished Service Award Recipient  
Buddhist Church of America  
Victorville, CA

**Army Chaplain Assistants**  
**now**

## Religious Affairs Specialists

Regimental Sergeant Major (RSGM) Alvin J. Chaplin passed the torch of being the Senior Enlisted Advisor to the Army Chief of Chaplains on to SGM Ralph Martinez on July 1 2017.

During his time as the RSGM, Chaplin charted a new course for what it is to be, and serve, as a Chaplain Assistant (56M). To be entirely accurate, he redefined the Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) from the ground-up, including the MOS title.

On October 1 2017, Chaplain Assistants officially became "Religious Affairs Specialists." This term better defines where Chaplin wanted the MOS to go in terms of increased job capabilities and a deeper professional identity. Chaplin wanted to ensure there was more than a change in what the enlisted religious support members called themselves, and he took great strides to ensure that happened.

He led the MOS to create sweeping changes in structure, educational courses, and capabilities. Arguably the biggest change under RSGM Chaplin's leadership was the Religion and Cultural Affairs Course (RCAC). Online pilot classes were scheduled to begin in October. The RCAC is a groundbreaking initiative that will take the 56M from the historically defined role of a Chaplain Assistant, to truly becoming a Religious Affairs Specialist. More than a perennial aide to a chaplain,

Religious Affairs Specialists are professional, skilled members of the Unit Ministry Team that bring expert credentials to bear. This shift, spearheaded by Chaplin, also created the first civilian educational partnership with a collegiate institution for 56Ms in the history of the Army. In the months and years to come, 56Ms will begin climbing the steps that Chaplin built. They will don their new role as experts in Religious Affairs and they will grasp the dream, made reality by RSGM Chaplin.

RSGM Chaplin certainly made historic changes to the Chaplain Corps and the Army, but most importantly to the future and identity of the Religious Affairs Specialist.

extracted from *The Pulse*, Volume 1, Issue 1 available [here](#)

### ***Pastor Opportunity***

#### [Oakland Christian United Church of Christ Suffolk, VA](#)



Oakland Christian Church, a medium sized UCC congregation in Suffolk, VA, just southwest of the Norfolk/Portsmouth area seeks their next pastor. The Search Committee has completed the Church Profile ([attached](#)). They believe the ideal candidate will bring a sense of stability as the congregation continues to mourn the passing of their former Pastor earlier this year.

Being familiar with the ministry of military chaplains, the leadership of the congregation welcomes inquiries by Chaplains who are either retired or soon will be.

Oakland's point of contact is Mr. C. F. Jordan who can be reached at email [74hokie@charter.net](mailto:74hokie@charter.net) or (757) 532-1467.

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