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

Weekly Newsgram - June 13th 2018

Benelux Chaplain reflects on Memorial Day

Editor's Note - As we hear so much in the headlines of tensions between nations, this article provides a perspective often not heard - that true friendship and mutual support from individual citizens remains enduring.

Article by Ms. Kristin Ellis, US Army News Service

CHIÈVRES, Belgium -- In the solemn moments during his trip to the Netherlands American Cemetery this Memorial Day, what struck Army Lt. Col. Kelly Porter, USAG Benelux chaplain, most was the size and formality of the ceremony. "I knew the attendance was large but the big formal elements I was not expecting," said Porter, whose great uncle's brother, Emmett Brown, is buried there. "Everyone there seemed to be there because they thought it was important to remember what these service members had done. They wanted to make it special and significant, and yet personalize it."



That gratitude is evident in the adoption of the U.S. military gravesites by Dutch families who care for and visit them. This practice began at Margraten - the only American military cemetery in the Netherlands - soon after the end of World War II where all 8,301 graves were adopted. Each year about 3,500 visitors attend the Memorial Day ceremony bearing bouquets for men and women they never knew but accept as their own.

The grave of Technician Fifth Grade Emmett Brown was adopted by a Dutch family in 1946 who sent photos and letters to Porter's family in Cocks Creek, Kentucky. In 2005, Jo and Annie Lecroix took on the responsibility of caregivers and have since adopted a second gravesite and are on a waiting list for a third. Porter met the Lecroixs at Brown's grave for the first time after months of email correspondence.

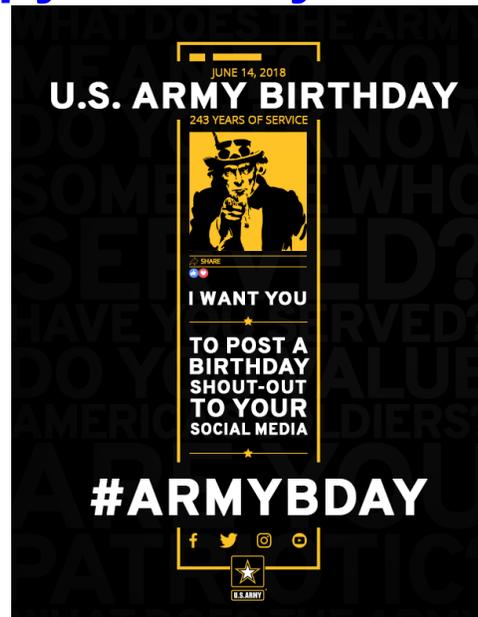
"I saw those [1946] photos growing up. It always struck me: here is this family that doesn't know my family and they are here caring for Emmett," Porter said.

Despite having an exemption from serving because he was a farmer, Brown enlisted in the Army when he was 20 years old. Brown was injured and later died after receiving fire during a reconnaissance mission near Minden, Germany. His mother wanted him to be buried overseas, because she didn't think she could deal with the grief of a funeral in Kentucky.

"It was a great service for her to have him buried here and have his grave maintained," Porter explained. "These caregivers, they're ambassadors. They tell the story...Emmett wouldn't be known to anyone outside of his family but here is a family halfway around the world retelling his story, what he did. I think that is phenomenal.

"These cemeteries draw beauty out of tragedy, this horrible event. The landscape was devastated but here now are beautiful grounds. It causes you to reflect and appreciate what these service members did. That's the beauty."

Happy Birthday U.S. Army



*243 years of service to our nation
and
the cause of freedom
June 14, 2018*

Executive Director Notes



Last week's Newsgram had an excellent article by our Communications Director, Lyman Smith, which gave an overview of the Women in Military Chaplaincy Conference that recently took place. There are a few observations to make about the conference and they follow below.

First, lest anyone ask if MCA has made a positive difference for military and VA chaplaincy recently, MCA was a major sponsor for this conference along with the National Conference on Ministry to the Armed Forces (NCMAF). Chaplain Kristy Moeller, (COL, USA, Retired) and

the staff of NCMAF, Chaplain Jack Lea (CAPT, USN, Retired) and Chaplain Ken Bush (COL, USA, Retired), worked tirelessly as Lyman supported behind the scenes to ensure the women chaplains gathering were supported and enabled to gain the most they could. Apparently that worked very well.

I say that as the second observation is that the initial planning was for an attendance of about 30 people. The actual attendance 105, which as a product of Memphis public education, I believe was over triple the number anticipated.

Another observation is the keynote speaker, Chaplain (Major General) Lorraine Patter, US Air Force (Retired), a former Air Force Chief of Chaplains and first woman Chief of Chaplains of any of the services, is a Life Member of MCA and one of our past presidents. Her support and insights have been crucial to MCA over the years. As noted in last week's article, the panel discussion was very well received and sparked a number of additional conversations as well.

This was clearly an excellent opportunity for us as MCA to support chaplaincy in a very direct way. Should any of you have additional suggestions on how we can continue to support similar programs, please feel free to email me at RazzW@aol.com. I will be happy to take those suggestions to the National Executive Committee (NEC),

On a personal note, I will be traveling in Malaysia and Singapore the next couple of weeks to visit our daughter who is currently a Fulbright Scholar near Melaka, Malaysia and will be on a two week break. That said, through the connectivity of the internet and WiFi I will still be available and supporting as I can. If any of you have any favorite sites you have visited in Malaysia and/or Singapore, shoot me an email and we might be able to do sort of a "Where's Waldo" photo op by some of those sites.

And for those of you are starting to do Summer travel, please travel safely.

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Last week's newsgram with Women Conference article [here](#)

Police Chaplaincy in the Philippines

Two Articles

[Philippine National Police chaplains tapped for reformation drive](#)

PHILIPPINE National Police chief Director General Oscar D. Albayalde yesterday said that as part of their ongoing massive internal cleansing program, he has also tapped the help of policemen-priests in the PNP's morale and spiritual reformation drive.

"We have been arresting and presenting rogues in police uniform over the past few weeks, an indication that we're really dead serious in our campaign versus rogues," he said.

It's the reason why we have created the PNP Counter-Intelligence Task Force and hopefully, we can change the attitude of our policemen through a mandatory Special Action Force training," he added.

Gen. Albayalde also said that he now wants the publication of the names of all police applicants so that it would be the general public who will give them information on the background of the applicants. He said that information given by the public regarding the PNP applicants will be thoroughly checked and counter-checked by intelligence agents.

Gen. Albayalde added that he has also tapped all pastors and priests from the PNP Chaplain Service to share in the internal cleansing program.

"I have given special instruction to all pastors and priests from the PNP Chaplain Service to take the lead in our internal cleansing program specifically in the moral and spiritual reformation of police personnel," he said.

The PNP chief also encouraged members of the PNP Chaplain Service to seek partnership with all Churches and other religious organizations nationwide in helping reform the police force. He likewise clarified that the ongoing PNP internal cleansing program is not only in the form of punishment but also is an instrument in restoring the values and morale of erring cops.

Gen. Albayalde said that regardless of religion and beliefs, "we have only one God."

[Former PNP chaplain shot by men riding in tandem in Calamba](#)

A priest who was a former director of the the Philippine National Police Chaplain Service was shot on Wednesday morning by men riding in tandem in Calamba City, Laguna.

Calamba Police chief Superintendent Rossel Cejas said that Rey Urmeneta, 64, was with his personal secretary when he was shot around 9:40 a.m. at the back of Laguna College of Business and Arts in Barangay 3 in Calamba City.

The two male suspects immediately fled to an unknown direction and remain unidentified, police said.

Urmeneta sustained gunshot wounds on his left upper back and left arm. He was brought to the Calamba Medical Center and was said to be in stable condition.

[Aussie sport teams "screaming out" for pastoral care](#)

Sports chaplaincy is the most exciting ministry in Australia, says Paul "Morro" Morrison, chaplain for the West Coast Eagles.

"If you were in a business that had that level of demand, you would think 'I'm about to become the richest man on the planet' because every sporting association we meet with - West Australian, over east, football, amateur football - all want chaplains in their clubs," Morro told Eternity during a break in his busy schedule.



"The churches are slow - they're missing an opportunity. There are over 76,000 sporting clubs in Australia; there's currently about 750 sports chaplains and I reckon, of the 76,000, I could easily say 8000 of those would have a chaplain tomorrow - if we could supply one."

Also a musician and breakfast radio host in Perth, Morro has served as chaplain for the West Coast Eagles AFL Club for ten years. He gives about 14 hours a week of his time on a voluntary basis. Morro says he operates on the principle of being pastorally proactive but spiritually reactive.

"Being pastorally proactive means you're looking for people that are going through difficult times that need care, that need support, they need love, they need someone to talk to - maybe you can connect them with someone," he said. "So I'm on the front foot all the time pastorally, but spiritually reactive means if you intend anything spiritual it's in response to where people lead you - not the other way round - because everyone's worried that you're going to proselytise [attempt to convert someone to a religion]. "The undergirding belief is that people are made in the image of God and they matter, regardless of their beliefs," continues Morro.

"Scripture says God loved us and while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us - Romans 5 - so it's not about going in and [Bible] bashing people; it's about saying 'how can we love and

serve you?"

Morro says he is trying to get the message out to those attending a local church who love sport and love God, that the opportunity to serve is right on their doorstep.

"Local clubs are crying out for sports chaplains," the West Coast Eagles chaplain explains. "Over in Victoria they reckon they are losing football coaches and volunteers because they want to coach football but they can't handle the fact that little Johnny's mum and dad have split up, or big brother has just got out of jail on drugs charges.

"There's all these pastoral issues that a volunteer football coach didn't sign up for - it's too much pressure. 'Give us a chaplain, give us someone who has the time and the love to walk through [this]' - and I go 'man, they're screaming out for the churches to come and love people.'"

Morro says churches need to recognise that we are living in a "post-church community" and shift their attention from the current model of seeking volunteers for church on the weekend.

"There is opportunity out there for people to serve in this capacity. It's so exciting because it puts the word of God in that space," he says.

The Military Chaplains Magazine 2018 Themes and Submission Deadlines

Summer Issue - *Chaplains and World War 1*

Articles to be submitted by June 30

Publication July 23

Fall Issue - *Religious Accommodation in 2018*

Articles to be submitted by September 30

Publication September 24

Winter Issue - *Chaplaincy and Religion in a Post-Truth World*

Articles to be submitted by November 30

Publication December 21

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If you missed the June 6th edition of the Newsgram [click here](#)

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