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

Weekly Newsgram - November 29th, 2017

The Spirit of Thanksgiving in Southwest Asia

[Air Force News Service - Staff Sgt William Banton](#)



"The very first amendment [in the Bill of Rights] is that every American has the right to freely exercise their faith," said Maj. Gen. Dondi Costin, Air Force Chief of Chaplains. "From the [beginning] our founding fathers understood that part of being American is allowing everybody to live in the way that their God would have them to live."

Chaplain Dondi Costin, Air Force Chief of Chaplains

Costin, who visited Southwest Asia over the Thanksgiving holiday, provided the Thanksgiving message during the service which represented multiple Christian denominations and highlighted the spiritual commonalities among multiple faiths, including Islamic thanksgiving traditions.

"The season from Thanksgiving to the end of the year is a highlight for many faiths and is a time to think about who we are and to think about whom God is and how we relate to him," Costin said. "But we begin certainly with this season of Thanksgiving knowing that what we have is not due to our own merit, not due to our own works but due to God's goodness in our lives."

Senior Airman Rashard Ibrahim, 386th Expeditionary Force Support Squadron fitness specialist, echoed Costin's sentiments in his statements about his Islamic faith and traditions.

"In Islam we are not only asked to thank Allah, but we are also told to thank our children, our spouse, our friends, our neighbors and all those who do good [should] be thanked," Ibrahim said. "Those who do not thank people, do not thank Allah. One attribute of Allah is gratitude."

and he said 'people who are faithful to me are grateful and I will give you more.'

The service included a multi-denominational choir and scripture readings by Capt. Stacy Gault, 386th AEW public affairs officer, and Capt. Tyler Hanrion, 386th AEW flight safety officer, emphasizing the importance of the type of gratitude spoken about in Ibrahim's speech.

"You may say to yourself, 'My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me,'" Gault read from Deuteronomy 8: 16 to 18. "But remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your ancestors, as it is today."

"The beauty of America is that we have freedom of religion, and specifically we have the free exercise of religion, for an interfaith service what we get to see is that mosaic that is America and part of that mosaic really involves faith and religion," said Costin. "The common theme among all persons of faith is a sense that there is someone or something bigger than ourselves - such as who we owe an allegiance or who we can learn from - to whom we can worship and to whom we can help other people learn their place in this world."

Our thanks to all our chaplains and the assistants who support as they help service members and their families during this holiday season.

Lyman Smith
Executive Director



In Memoriam

Samuel Everett Stocks
USAF, Retired

deceased November 23, 2017

husband of Chaplain Karen Stocks
COL, USAF, Retired
President, the Military Chaplains Association

**A service celebrating Sam's life will be held at 2:00 PM,
December 15, 2017 at New Braunfels Presbyterian Church,
New Braunfels, TX**

**The family requests donations in honor of Sam be made to
New Braunfels Presbyterian Church,
the Air Force Security Forces Association,
or a charity of your choice.**

**Cards in support of Karen may be sent to
9668 Kurre Way, San Antonio, TX 78266**

**Our thoughts and prayers are with Karen and the rest of
Sam's family as they mourn this sudden loss.**

The Military Coalition 2016 Legislative Gains

The Military Chaplains Association is a member of the Military Coalition, a group of 32 organizations representing more than 5.5 million members of the uniformed services - active, reserve, retired, survivors, veterans, and their families.



The philosophy of The Coalition is that, by working together on issues of mutual agreement, the participating organizations can harness the grassroots support of more than 5.5 million members plus their families and accomplish far more than by working on these initiatives separately. When one or more of the Coalition organizations is invited to testify before Congress, the organizations frequently coordinate the testimony with other Coalition members and present it on behalf of the entire Coalition. This lends greater weight and unanimity to the testimony than if it were presented by any individual association.

Among legislative gains of the Coalition in 2016 are the following:

- * Won a full 2.1% pay raise, commensurate with private sector wage growth, as measured by the Employment Cost Index
- * Increased force structure levels for all services significantly above the Pentagon proposals
- * Defeated proposal to test privatization of commissaries
- * Won law stating any commissary changes must sustain current patron savings/satisfaction
- * Blocked Senate proposal to cut BAH for housing sharers, including dual military couples
- * Won \$30 million in impact aid for schools with significant numbers of military children
- * Won requirement for standardized appointment system for all military medical facilities
- * Won requirement for adoption of core access and quality performance metrics in military health care system
- * Won restoration of increased autism care reimbursement rates
- * Won requirements to improve access via telehealth and other means
- * Defeated proposal for higher TRICARE Standard deductible for non-network providers
- * Defeated proposed TRICARE enrollment fee on active duty family members
- * Won authorization for a pilot program of offering commercial health insurance coverage to reserve component members and families on the same basis as federal civilians
- * Won provision requiring DoD to provide hearing aids at cost for retired family members
- * Won recognition of all retired members of the reserve components as Veterans

- * Won full-year FY17 funding and 2018 advance funding for VA health/benefits programs
- * Won elimination of 2-year eligibility limitation (after PCS) for noncompetitive appointment of military spouses to federal civilian positions.
- * Won authorization of up to 12 weeks of paid leave (including 6 weeks medical recuperation leave) for primary caregiver after childbirth; 21 days authorized for servicemember who is the secondary caregiver

Your support of the MCA permits our participation in this important coalition. For more of the gains from 2016 and the concerns for current issues and legislation go to themilitarycoalition.org/

A World War 1 Remembrance Paying Tribute to Muslim Soldiers who fought for Canada in the War to End All Wars

[From an article written by Chelby Daigle](#)

On November 5, 2017, Padre Ryan Carter, a chaplain with the Royal Military College (RMC), organized a pre-Remembrance Day service at the RMC in Kingston, honouring the first Muslim to die serving in the Canadian Armed Forces in World War 1.

This service was organized by Padre Carter and Imam Abdurrahid Michael Taylor, regional chaplain with Correctional Services of Ontario and the Muslim representative to the interfaith committee on chaplaincy in the Canadian military. The service pays respect to Muslims who have fought in the Canadian military by including all of the regular traditions of Remembrance Day, such as playing of the Last Post and reading of In Flanders Fields, but also including recitation from the Quran.

Other Canadian Armed Forces Muslim Chaplains Jalal Khaldoune and Barbara Helms were also in attendance. Padre Helms made history on October 11, 2017 when she became the first female Muslim chaplain for the Canadian Armed Forces. Padre Khaldoune is the first and currently only French-Speaking Muslim Chaplain with the Canadian military. There are currently three active Muslim chaplains with the military and one reservist.

22 Muslims fought with the Canadian military in World War 1. Padre Carter only learned about Private Amat recently while reading the book "Filling the Ranks" by Richard Holt, who researched Canadian military efforts during WW1. Private Amat was originally from Singapore and died at the age of 23 in the Battle of Hill 70 in France fighting for the 1st Battalion of the Canadian Expeditionary Force. His body was never recovered. His name is on the Vimy Memorial.



**Canadian Armed Forces Muslim
Chaplains Jalal Khaldoune, Barbara
Helms, Ryan Carter, along with Imam
Abdurrahid Taylor**

THE 50TH ANNUAL FOUR CHAPLAINS DAY BANQUET Honoring THE FOUR CHAPLAINS & THE CREW OF THE USAT Dorchester



KEYNOTE SPEAKER: Steven A. Schaick, Ch, Brig Gen, USAF Deputy Chief of Chaplains

On Thursday, February 8, 2018 At the Sheraton Philadelphia Society Hill Hotel 1 Dock Street (2nd & Walnut Streets) Philadelphia, PA 19106

Email: Christine@fourchaplains.org Or Michelle@FourChaplains.org

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If you missed the November 22nd edition of the Newsgram [click here](#)

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AND THOSE THEY SERVE: military members, veterans, and their families at home and around the world

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