

April 28, 2010

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Chaplain (BG),
James M. Hutchens,
U.S. Army, Retired

Dr. Robert M. Gates
Secretary of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301-1000

Chaplain (BG),
Douglas E. Lee,
U.S. Army, Retired

Dear Mr. President and Secretary Gates,

Chaplain (COL),
Paul L. Vicalvi,
U.S. Army, Retired

Mr. President, on January 27, 2010, you requested repeal of the longstanding policy prohibiting open homosexual behavior in the armed forces, popularly known as “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell.”¹ Bills are pending in both houses of Congress to repeal the policy and replace it with a law preventing discrimination on the basis of “sexual orientation.”² As chaplains whose cumulative service is measured in centuries, we are deeply concerned that these changes would threaten the religious liberty of chaplains and Service members.

Chaplain (COL),
Stephen W. Leonard,
U.S. Army, Retired

CAPT
Roy Bebee,
CHC, USN, (Ret.)

In our role as chaplains, we experienced daily the challenges of serving those within the armed forces. We preached, taught, counseled, consoled, and shared spiritual insights, both with those in our respective faith communities and with any Service member who sought our aid. We did so in times of peace and in times of war. And since we are now retired, we can speak freely to protect the right of chaplains and Service members to exercise their religious beliefs—unlike our active-duty brethren in the chaplaincy, who may risk accusations of insubordination or discrimination if they raise these concerns.³

Chaplain (COL),
Bernard L. Windmiller,
U.S. Army, Retired

Chaplain (COL),
John W. Schumacher,
U.S. Army, Retired

Put most simply, if the government normalizes homosexual behavior in the armed forces, many (if not most) chaplains will confront a profoundly difficult moral choice: whether they are to obey God or to obey men.⁴ This forced choice must be faced, since orthodox Christianity—which represents a significant percentage of religious belief in

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Chaplain (COL),
Frederick L. Hudson,
U.S. Army, Retired

1 *See, e.g.*, 10 U.S.C. § 654

2 *See* H.B. 1283, the “Military Readiness Enhancement Act of 2009” at <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/z?c111:H.R.1283;> and S. 3065, the “Military Readiness Enhancement Act of 2010” at <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/z?c111:S.3065>.

3 Indeed, the backlash against opposition to the policy change has already started. A prominent religious leader—who is also a veteran of the U.S. Marine Corps—was disinvented by Andrews Air Force Base officials from offering a brief devotional message at the National Prayer Luncheon based solely on his defense of current military policy on homosexual behavior. *See* <http://www.politico.com/news/stories/0210/33613.html> (last visited Mar. 4, 2010).

4 Acts 5:29

Chaplain (COL),
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Chaplain, Colonel,
Robert W. Gardner,
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Chaplain, Colonel,
Beryl T. Hubbard,
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Chaplain (COL),
Richard R. Young,
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Chaplain (COL),
David Upchurch,
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CAPT
Ron Swafford,
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Frank D. Somera, Jr.,
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Mark J. Schreiber,
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Thomas E. Troxell,
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Chaplain (COL),
Brandon Keith Travis,
U.S. Army, Retired

the armed forces—does not affirm homosexual behavior.⁵ Imposing this conflict by normalizing homosexual behavior within the armed forces seems to have two likely—and equally undesirable—results.

First, chaplains might be pressured by adverse discipline and collapsed careers into watering down their teachings and avoiding—if not abandoning—key elements of their sending denomination’s faith and practice. Such a result would be the very antithesis of religious freedom and inimical to the guarantees made by our First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

Second, chaplains might have their ability to freely share their religious beliefs challenged and torn away in a variety of everyday situations. For instance, chaplains who methodically preach book-by-book from the Bible would inevitably present religious teachings that identify homosexual behavior as immoral.⁶ Thus, while chaplains fulfill their duty to God to preach the doctrines of their faith, they would find themselves speaking words that are in unequivocal conflict with official policies.

In fact, the proposed “non-discrimination” law may effectively ban chaplains from expressing their religious beliefs on homosexual behavior.⁷ The affects of this ban would be felt keenly within a chaplain’s religious duties, but it would extend outside the pulpit, too. Since chaplains are tasked with teaching classes in moral leadership and ethics both on armed forces bases and at branch schools, such censorship would prevent them from providing the full moral instruction their faith background gives them.

An additional conflict will come in the context of the armed forces’ work to preserve their members’ marriages. For example, the Army’s Strong Bonds program, which receives millions of dollars in annual funding and has successfully supported many marriages facing the unique stresses of military life, is administered solely by the chaplaincy. If homosexual conduct is normalized in the armed forces, it will only be a matter of time before homosexual couples request to participate in the Strong Bonds program. The religious beliefs of many chaplains involved in the program would not allow them to support relationships that are both harmful and sinful. Such chaplains will either have to deny their religious beliefs to comply with the “non-discrimination” policy

5 *See, e.g.*, the Southern Baptist Convention: “Homosexuality is not a valid alternative lifestyle. The Bible condemns it as sin.” SBC.net, Position Statement on Sexuality, <http://www.sbc.net/aboutus/pssexuality.asp> (last visited Feb. 15, 2010). *See also* Catechism of the Catholic Church § 2357: “Basing itself on Sacred Scripture, which presents homosexual acts as acts of grave depravity, tradition has always declared that ‘homosexual acts are intrinsically disordered.’”

6 *See, e.g.*, Leviticus 18:22; Romans 1:24-32; I Corinthians 6:9.

7 The executive branch has a history of trying to censor chaplain’s religious speech. In *Rigdon v. Perry*, 962 F.Supp. 150 (D.D.C. 1997), the court rejected the Clinton administration’s attempt to censor chaplains from encouraging their congregants to write Congress about pending legislation to change abortion laws as unconstitutional. Unfortunately, chaplains may have less freedom if what they seek to change is established military policy.

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Robert G. Leroe,
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Eric Erkkinen,
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Chaplain (LTC)
Martin L. Dawson, Sr.,
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Chaplain (LTC)
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Chaplain (LTC)
Scott R. Huber,
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or face the potentially career-ending consequences of a discrimination complaint when they deny the request.

Normalizing homosexual behavior will also harm chaplains' ability to counsel. Service members seeking guidance regarding homosexual relationships will place chaplains in an untenable position. If chaplains answer such questions according to the tenets of their faith, stating that homosexual relationships are sinful and harmful, then they run the risk of career-ending accusations of insubordination and discrimination. And if chaplains simply decline to provide counseling at all on that issue, they may still face discipline for discrimination.⁸ Either way, chaplains are punished simply for counseling (or not counseling) in light of their faith.

Another practical issue concerns the conduct of religious services. Chaplains are commonly called on to share the pulpit with other chaplains of theologically compatible denominations for religious services. Also, Service members often fill a variety of lay leadership roles at religious services, from receiving the offering and assisting with communion to helping lead worship and reading Scripture. A chaplain, then, who is requested to co-lead a service with an openly homosexual chaplain or to allow an openly homosexual Service member act as lay leadership may be concerned about the confusing moral message it would send to his congregants if he agrees to do so. The chaplain's religious concern about condoning homosexual behavior may lead him to deny such requests—and thereby jeopardize his ability to continue ministering in the armed forces.

Similarly, chaplains hire civilian workers to assist ministry activities like youth work. At least one of the undersigned chaplains was faced with a choice between two qualified candidates for a ministry role, but chose not to hire one of them since she was involved in a heterosexual relationship he believed to be immoral. That ministry-based choice was permissible because the armed forces have not normalized heterosexual immorality, like adultery or fornication. But if homosexual behavior is normalized, chaplains may be forced to hire openly homosexual individuals to fill ministry positions.

Even if a chaplain never receives a formal complaint for exercising his religious beliefs, his career and ministry will be threatened simply by the existence of the “non-discrimination” law. By raising homosexual behavior to the same protected status as innate, innocuous characteristics like race and gender, the armed forces will cast the sincerely held religious beliefs of many chaplains and Service members as rank bigotry comparable to racism. Further, all officers, including chaplains, are evaluated by their superiors in a report like the Army Officer Efficiency Report or the Navy Officer Fitness Report. A question on the report specifically asks if the officer supports the armed forces'

⁸ In *Walden v. Center for Disease Control*, Case No. 1:08-CV-02278-JEC (N.D. Ga. 2008), a Christian counselor was fired by her private employer, based in part on pressure from a federal government entity, because she declined to provide counseling that would have facilitated a same-sex sexual relationship, even though she promptly and professionally referred the client to another counselor who addressed the client's concerns.

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Colonel, Joseph
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LCDR
David E. Mullis,
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LCDR
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LCDR
David A. Crum,
CHC, USNR

LCDR
Stephen L. Parker,
CHC, USN, (Ret.)

equal opportunity policy, of which the “non-discrimination” policy would be a part. A bad or lukewarm report would destroy a chaplain’s career. And thus a law protecting homosexual behavior could be used to attack chaplains who share our religious beliefs.

These concerns are not mere speculation. Civilians are already experiencing widespread conflict between religious liberty and “non-discrimination” policies protecting homosexual behavior. Christian counselors have been punished for declining to counsel same-sex couples,⁹ Christian prison chaplains have been disciplined for refusing to turn their worship service over to individuals who openly engage in homosexual behavior,¹⁰ Christian voluntary organizations have been discriminated against by governmental entities for requiring organizational leadership to share their religious beliefs on homosexual behavior,¹¹ Christian businesses have been fined for declining to promote homosexual behavior,¹² and Christian ministries have been penalized for choosing not to allow their facilities to be used for same-sex commitment ceremonies.¹³ These are just a few examples of the ongoing conflict, and nothing will insulate armed forces chaplains from these issues already rampant in civilian life.

If anything, the uniquely close relationship between armed forces chaplains and the government will only intensify this divisive phenomenon, creating sharp and widespread conflict. Ominously, a high-ranking administration official has stated that government should always resolve such conflict by diminishing religious liberty.¹⁴

9 *Ward v. Wilbanks*, 2009 WL 4730457 (E.D. Mich. 2009) (where a Christian counseling student declined to provide counseling for a same-sex sexual relationship and, when she refused to take “remediation training” from her government school to change her religious “belief system” on homosexual behavior, was dismissed from the school’s counseling program); *see also Walden v. Center for Disease Control*, *supra*, at note 8.

10 *Akridge v. Wilkinson*, 178 Fed. Appx. 474 (6th Cir. 2006) (upholding a prison’s punishment of a prison chaplain for refusing to allow an openly homosexual prisoner to lead a worship service); *Phelps v. Dunn*, 965 F.2d 93 (6th Cir. 1992) (allowing a volunteer prison chaplain to be sued for refusing to permit an openly homosexual prison inmate to take a leadership role in chapel services).

11 *See, e.g., Christian Legal Society v. Martinez*, 130 S.Ct. 795 (2009) (where a Christian society at a public law school was discriminated against by the school because the society required its leadership to abide by certain religious beliefs, including a prohibition on extra-marital sexual conduct like homosexual behavior. The school based its discriminatory action on its “non-discrimination” policy that protected homosexual behavior).

12 *Elane Photography v. Willock*, HRD No. 06-12-20-0685 (N.M. Human Rights Comm’n 2008) (where a small photography business owned and operated by a young Christian couple was fined over \$6,000 for refusing to photograph a same-sex commitment ceremony, even though same-sex “marriage” and civil unions are illegal in New Mexico); *see, e.g.*, <http://www.alliancedefensefund.org/news/story.aspx?cid=4593>.

13 *Bernstein v. Ocean Grove Camp Meeting Assoc.*, N.J. Div. on Civ. Rights, No. PN34XB-03008 (2008) (where a United Methodist church campground had its tax exempt status revoked for failing to allow its facilities to be used for same-sex commitment ceremonies).

14 *See* <http://www.alliancealert.org/2009/09/14/obama-picks-chai-r-feldblum-for-eeoc-commission/>, recounting the Commissioner of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commissions’ statement that, when religious liberty and homosexual conduct conflict, “I’m having a hard time coming up with any case in which religious liberty should win.” She made similar arguments in her law review

Service members' religious liberty will also suffer if chaplains' religious liberty is diminished. The chaplaincy exists to support the constitutionally-guaranteed free exercise of religion to Service members.¹⁵ If chaplains are limited in teaching and counseling on their beliefs, then the men and women in uniform who share their faith and rely on their instruction will face a reduction in the free exercise of their faith. Likewise, if chaplains with beliefs that contradict the proposed policy are kept from roles that are prone to generate conflict—such as administering the Army's Strong Bonds program—then they, the faith groups they represent, and the Service members whose religious beliefs they serve will all be marginalized. The armed forces would effectively establish preferred religions or religious beliefs.¹⁶

The harm to religious liberty will not occur in a vacuum: both readiness and troop levels could be collateral damage as well. Chaplains' services are integral to maintaining high morale, which is in turn a necessary ingredient of armed forces readiness. Marginalizing a large group of chaplains, then, will unavoidably harm readiness by diminishing morale. Similarly, making orthodox Christians—both chaplains and servicemen—into second-class Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, or Marines whose sincerely-held religious beliefs are comparable to racism cannot help recruitment or retention.

Opposition to normalizing sinful behavior is deeply rooted in our theology, and that opposition will come to a sharp head if the armed forces compel affirmation of homosexual conduct. Recently, hundreds of religious leaders in civil life—including those from faith communities that supply many armed forces chaplains—signed the Manhattan Declaration, which stated their reasoned and conscientious opposition to normalizing homosexual behavior, particularly through the artifice of same-sex “marriage:”

Because we honor justice and the common good, we will not...bend to any rule purporting to force us to bless immoral sexual partnerships, treat them as marriages or the equivalent, or refrain from proclaiming the truth, as we know it, about morality and immorality and marriage and the family. We will fully and ungrudgingly render to Caesar what is Caesar's. But under no circumstances will we render to Caesar what is God's.¹⁷

Far from an academic exercise, the Declaration articulates principles that

article on that topic, stating that the conflict was a “zero-sum game” where “society should come down on the side of protecting” homosexual conduct. Chai R. Feldblum, *Moral Conflict and Liberty: Gay Rights and Religion*, 72 BROOK. L. REV. 61, 119 (2006).

15 Department of Defense Directive 1304.19.4.1.

16 *Rigdon*, 962 F.Supp. at 164 (finding that application of military policy to allow Catholics of one belief to speak out while Catholics of another belief must remain silent “sanctioned one view of Catholicism...over another.”)

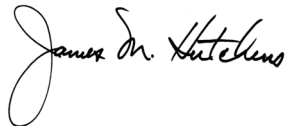
17 See *Manhattan Declaration*, <http://www.manhattandeclaration.org/the-declaration> (last visited March 19, 2010).

guide the choices of many influential religious groups. The ink was hardly dry on the Declaration when the Catholic Charities of Washington, DC, was ordered by city government to affirm homosexual behavior or stop providing adoption services. As he regretfully closed the Catholic Charities' adoption services, Archbishop Wuerl—a signatory to the Declaration—relied in part on the Declaration's principles as a basis for his decision.¹⁸

To clarify, we are not saying that active-duty chaplains who share our beliefs would be unwilling to minister to those who engage in homosexual behavior. To the contrary, we believe that God loves everyone, that He desires that everyone should hear and receive the Truth, and that He calls us to speak that Truth. But condoning conduct that God says is harmful and sinful would both violate chaplains' religious calling and betray Service members relying on them for Godly counsel.

We believe that normalizing homosexual conduct in the armed forces will pose a significant threat to chaplains' and Service members' religious liberty. The best way to protect religious liberty—and avoid lowering widely-respected religious belief to the level of racism—is simply retaining the current policy to prevent open homosexual behavior in the armed forces. At the very least, though, Congress should include comprehensive and robust religious liberty protections in any sort of policy change. Either way, we urge you to protect religious liberty, the first and foremost of America's fundamental freedoms. You have our prayers.

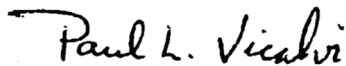
Very respectfully submitted,



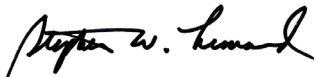
Chaplain (BG), James M. Hutchens, U.S. Army, Retired



Chaplain (BG), Douglas E. Lee, U.S. Army, Retired



Chaplain (COL), Paul L. Vicalvi, U.S. Army, Retired



Chaplain (COL), Stephen W. Leonard, U.S. Army, Retired

¹⁸ See

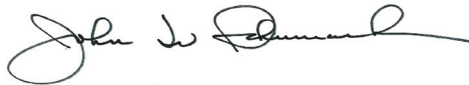
http://www.ncregister.com/blog/the_manhattan_declaration_and_the_archdiocese_of_washington/
and <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/02/16/AR2010021604899.html>.



CAPT Roy Bebee, CHC, USN, (Ret.)



Chaplain (COL), Bernard L. Windmiller, U.S. Army, Retired



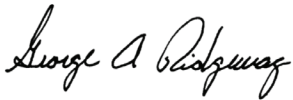
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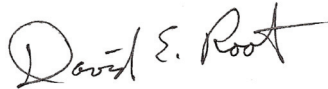
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CAPT George A. Ridgeway, CHC, USN, (Ret.)



Chaplain (COL), David E. Root, U.S. Army, Retired



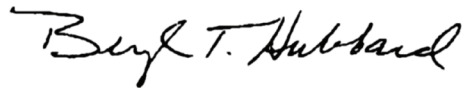
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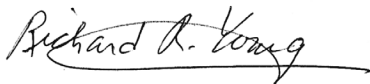
CAPT John C. Wohlrabe, Jr., CHC, USN, (Ret.)



Chaplain, Colonel, Robert W. Gardner, U.S. Air Force, Retired



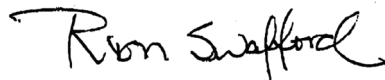
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Chaplain (COL), David Upchurch, U.S. Army, Retired



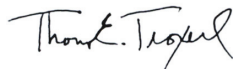
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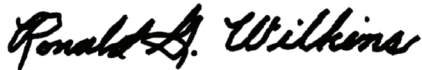
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CDR Mark A. Jumper, CHC, USN, (Ret.)



CDR Ronald G. Wilkins, CHC, USN, (Ret.)



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Chaplain (LTC), Robert W. Collins, U.S. Army, Retired



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Chaplain (LTC) Robert G. Leroe, U.S. Army, Retired



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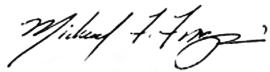
Chaplain (LTC) Martin L. Dawson, Sr., U.S. Army, Retired



Chaplain (LTC) Robert C. Marsh, U.S. Army, Retired



Chaplain (LTC) Scott R. Huber, U.S. Army, Retired



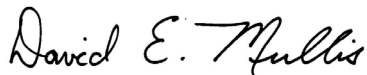
Chaplain (LTC) Michael Frazier, U.S. Army, Retired



Chaplain (LTC) John S. Parker, U.S. Army, Retired



Chaplain, Lieutenant Colonel, Joseph Henriques, U.S. Air Force (ANG), Retired



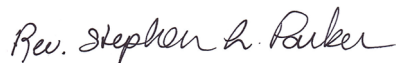
LCDR David E. Mullis, CHC, USN, (Ret.)



LCDR Kenneth V. Botton, CHC, USN, (Ret.)



LCDR David A. Crum, CHC, USNR



LCDR Stephen L. Parker, CHC, USN, (Ret.)

cc:

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ADDENDUM - Signatories' Biographical Information

Chaplain (BG), James M. Hutchens, U.S. Army, Retired

Brigadier General Hutchens served for 37 years in the U.S. Army. He served as a combat chaplain in Vietnam and was decorated for personal bravery, receiving two Bronze Stars and the Purple Heart as the first chaplain wounded in Vietnam. He served with the 173rd Airborne Brigade and with the Green Berets. Concurrent to his military chaplaincy, he acted as a church planter and senior pastor for 24 years. He currently leads The Jerusalem Connection, International, a ministry supporting Israel and Israelis who have been harmed by terrorism.

Chaplain (BG), Douglas E. Lee, U.S. Army, Retired

Brigadier General Lee served for over 31 years as both a Reserve Components (RC) and Active Duty chaplain. For several years he was "Twice the Citizen," leading three different parishes while also serving in the military. In the latter part of his career he served in several senior Army chaplain positions, culminating in his service as the U.S. Army Chaplain Corps Assistant Chief of Chaplains for Mobilization and Readiness. He currently serves as the Executive Director of the Presbyterian and Reformed Joint Commission on Chaplains and Military Personnel ("PRJC"), a group representing and endorsing chaplains from six denominations.

Chaplain (COL), Paul L. Vicalvi, U.S. Army, Retired

Colonel Vicalvi served as a U.S. Army chaplain for 30 years, including an assignment as Commandant of the U.S. Army Chaplain Center and School in Fort Jackson. He is a graduate of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary and Princeton Theological Seminary. He currently serves on the Executive Board of the National Conference for Ministry to the Armed Forces and as the Executive Director of the National Association of Evangelical's Chaplaincy Commission, which represents over 1,000 active duty, Reserve, National Guard, and civilian institutional chaplains.

Chaplain (COL), Stephen W. Leonard, U.S. Army, Retired

Colonel Leonard served 34 years in the U.S. Army. His first 7 years were as an Infantry Officer, including time as a Rifle and Weapons Platoon Leader with combat service in Vietnam, where he earned the Bronze Star, the Combat Infantry Badge, and the Air Medal. As a chaplain, he served for 6 years as the Command Chaplain for the U.S. Army Reserve Command, Ft. McPherson, Georgia. After retirement from Active Duty, he served 5 years as the Executive Director of the National Association of Evangelicals Chaplains' Commission and the Executive Director of the International Association of Evangelical Chaplains. He currently serves on the PRJC.

CAPT Roy Bebee, CHC, USN, (Ret.)

Captain Bebee served as a chaplain for 33 years in the U.S. Navy. His chaplaincy assignments have included service on two aircraft carriers and with the U.S. Marine Corps. He was deployed in Operation Desert Shield, for which he was awarded the Combat Action Ribbon and the Navy Meritorious Service Medal. He is a graduate of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary and currently serves as the Director of Chaplain Ministries and Endorsing Agent for the Evangelical Free Church, where he is responsible for almost 240 chaplains and candidates.

Chaplain (COL), Bernard L. Windmiller, U.S. Army, Retired

Colonel Windmiller served in the U.S. Army for 30 years. He served in the Vietnam War and received the Bronze Star and Air Medal for his heroic conduct in combat. He was also awarded the Legion of Merit with 2 oak leaf clusters three times. He served as the Commandant of the U.S. Army Chaplain Center and School and as the Chaplain for both Fort Hood and 3rd Corps. He currently serves as the Executive Director of the International Association of Evangelical Chaplains.

Chaplain (COL), John W. Schumacher, U.S. Army, Retired

Colonel Schumacher served as a chaplain for 30 years in the U.S. Army. He served two combat tours in Vietnam, where he earned two Bronze Stars. His chaplaincy assignments included serving at the U.S. Army Chaplain School, as Command Chaplain for the U.S. Army in Alaska, and as Director of Ethical Development Programs at the U.S. Army War College. He presently serves as Assistant Director for the National Association of Evangelical's Chaplains Commission and as Chaplain Endorsing Agent for the National Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches.

Chaplain (COL), David P. Peterson, U.S. Army, Retired

Colonel Peterson served as a chaplain for over 30 years in the U.S. Army. He had two combat tours in Vietnam and was awarded the Bronze Star for courageous service. His chaplaincy assignments included serving as Command Staff Chaplain for U.S. Central Command, where he served as the Senior Military Chaplain during Operation Desert Shield and Desert Storm. After retiring, he served for a time as the Executive Director for the PRJC and Coordinator for Chaplain Ministries for Mission to North America (PCA).

Chaplain (COL), Frederick L. Hudson, U.S. Army, Retired

Colonel Hudson served in the military for 30 years, with 25 years as a U.S. Army chaplain. During his service, he had three combat tours in Vietnam and Desert Storm. His chaplaincy assignments included: Fort Bliss Installation Chaplain, Forces Command Chaplains' Personnel Assignments Officer, Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe/NATO, and United States Army Sergeants Major Academy, Ethics Instructor.

CAPT George A. Ridgeway, CHC, USN, (Ret.)

Captain Ridgeway served in the U.S. Navy for 35 years, including 5 years as a nuclear submarine officer and 26 years as a chaplain. His chaplaincy assignments included serving the 3rd Marine Division in Okinawa, teaching ethics at the U.S. Marine Corps boot camp in Parris Island, and serving as Senior Chaplain for the 5th Fleet. In this last capacity, he provided initial pastoral care to the crew of the USS Cole after the terrorist attack they suffered.

Chaplain (COL), David E. Root, U.S. Army, Retired

Colonel Root served in the U.S. Army for 32 years, including 22 years as a chaplain. He has completed a wide variety of chaplaincy ministry training, including the Chaplain Officer Basic Course Command and General Staff College, the Joint Forces Staff College, the Chaplain Officer Advanced Course, and the Chaplain Colonel Course.

Chaplain (COL), Allen R. Nabors, U.S. Army, Retired

Colonel Nabors served as a chaplain for over 30 years, including service in the Army National Guard and Army Reserves. He was mobilized and deployed for two wars, Operation Desert Storm and Operation Iraqi Freedom. He was also mobilized to serve in Operation Enduring Freedom. He currently serves as the senior pastor for his church.

CAPT John C. Wohlrahe, Jr., CHC, USN, (Ret.)

Captain Wohlrahe served in the United States Navy for 35 years, 27 years as a chaplain. He served as the 7th Fleet Chaplain aboard the USS Blue Ridge, Force Chaplain for the Naval Construction Force (Navy Seabees), and Regional Chaplain, Naval District Washington. He earned Master of Divinity, Master of Sacred Theology, and Doctor of Theology degrees from Concordia Seminary. He currently serves as pastor of Concordia Lutheran Church and Third Vice President of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

Chaplain, Colonel, Robert W. Gardner, U.S. Air Force, Retired

Colonel Gardner served in the military for 36 years, including 8 years in the U.S. Army Reserves and National Guard, and 28 years as a chaplain in the U.S. Air Force.

Chaplain, Colonel, Beryl T. Hubbard, U.S. Air Force, Retired

Colonel Hubbard served as a chaplain for over 25 years in the U.S. Air Force. His chaplaincy assignments included Director of the Ministry to Chaplains Program at the Air Force Chaplain School and Command Chaplain at the Air Force Academy. Since retiring, he has served on the Executive Committee of the National Council on Ministry to the Armed Forces and as the Associate Coordinator for Chaplain Ministries for the PRJC. He currently serves as Director of Discipleship, Equipping, and Outreach at Westminster Presbyterian Church.

Chaplain (COL), Richard R. Young, U.S. Army, Retired

Colonel Young served as a chaplain for 25 years with the U.S. Army, including an assignment as the Fort Monmouth Installation Chaplain. He was deployed in Operations Desert Storm and Desert Shield, which included service with combat units. His decorations include the Legion of Merit, Meritorious Service Medal with four Oak Leaf Clusters, National Defense Service Ribbon with bronze star, the Kuwait Liberation Medal (Saudi Arabia), and the Kuwaiti Liberation Medal (Emirate of Kuwait). He currently serves as the Assistant Director of the International Association of Evangelical Chaplains.

Chaplain (COL), David Upchurch, U.S. Army, Retired

Colonel Upchurch served in the military for 22 years, 4 years as a U.S. Navy supply officer during the Vietnam War and 18 years as a chaplain in the Army Reserve. Chaplain Upchurch was mobilized for Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom in 2003 and 2004. He also served as staff chaplain of the 89th Regional Readiness Command. His decorations include the Legion of Merit, three awards of the National Defense Medal, and the Navy Unit Commendation. He is a graduate of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. Currently, he is the Director of Care and Compassion Ministries at Grace Evangelical Presbyterian Church.

CAPT Ron Swafford, CHC, USN, (Ret.)

Captain Swafford served as a chaplain for 24 years in the U.S. Navy. His chaplaincy assignments included the U.S. Marine Corps' 3rd Marine Division in Okinawa, Deputy Chaplain of the Coast Guard, and Pacific Area Chaplain. He currently serves as Associate Director (Endorsing Agent) for the PPRJC and as Associate Coordinator for Chaplains Ministries in the Presbyterian Church of America.

Chaplain (COL), Frank D. Somera, Jr., U.S. Army, Retired

Colonel Somera served in the U.S. Army for 24 years, first as a Field Artillery Officer and then as a chaplain. His chaplaincy assignments included Command Chaplain for both the U.S. Army Aviation Center and Fort Rucker. His decorations include the Legion of Merit, Meritorious Service Medal with six Oak Leaf Clusters, Army Commendation Medal, Army Achievement Medal with two Oak Leaf Clusters, National Defense Medal, Korean Defense Medal, Parachutist Badge, and Air Assault Badge. He now serves as a pastor and a city council member.

CAPT Mark J. Schreiber, CHC, USN, (Ret.)

Captain Schreiber served as a chaplain in the armed forces for 25 years. His assignments included Battalion Chaplain for Marine Corps bases in Albany, Ga., and Twenty-Nine Palms, Calif., as well as District Chaplain for the 8th Marine Corps Recruiting District. He earned a Doctor of Ministry degree from Faith Evangelical Lutheran Seminary and is currently working on a doctorate in systematic theology from Concordia Seminary. He serves as the endorsing agent of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod and is its Director of Ministry to the Armed Forces.

Chaplain (COL), Thomas E. Troxell, U.S. Army, Retired

Colonel Troxell served as a chaplain for 22 years in the Arizona Army National Guard. His chaplaincy assignments included serving as the Joint Force HQ (AZ) Chaplain, and tours of duty in Korea, Germany, and Italy. His decorations include the Meritorious Service Medal, the Army Commendation Medal with Oak Leaf clusters, and the Army Achievement Medal with Oak Leaf clusters. He currently serves as the pastor of Covenant Presbyterian Church (PCA).

Chaplain (COL), Brandon Keith Travis, U.S. Army, Retired

Colonel Travis served in the U.S. Army and U.S. Army Reserves for over 28 years. He received many awards and decorations and attended or graduated from many military schools, including the U.S. Army War College. He is a doctoral graduate from Erskine Theological Seminary and received his Masters of Divinity from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary. Since 2006, he has served as the Team Leader for Chaplaincy at the North American Mission Board.

CAPT James F. Poe, CHC, USN, (Ret.)

Captain Poe served in the U.S. Navy for 30 years, 27 of which were as a chaplain. His chaplaincy assignments included Director of Religious Affairs/Community Relations Liaison, Combined Joint Task Force, Horn of Africa; Command Chaplain, Naval Weapons Station, Charleston, South Carolina; Religious Ministries Program Director/Regional Chaplain for Commander Navy Region Europe; Chaplain of the 8th Marines; and Chaplain of the 26th Marine Expeditionary Unit. He currently serves as the Vice President and Deputy Endorser for the Associated Gospel Churches.

CDR Christopher P. Bennett, CHC, USN, (Ret.)

Commander Bennett served in the U.S. Navy for nearly 27 years of active duty and 3 years in the active Naval Reserve, of which 27 years was as a chaplain. His service included four tours with the U.S. Marine Corps and one with the U.S. Merchant Marine. He also served in support of the White House Military Office and White House Communications Agency. He is a graduate of Covenant Theological Seminary and Presbyterian School of Christian Education. He currently serves as the executive pastor of a church.

CDR Mark A. Jumper, CHC, USN, (Ret.)

Commander Jumper served almost 25 years as a U.S. Navy chaplain, including Marine Corps and Coast Guard assignments. His final assignments were with the U.S. Coast Guard Academy and the Naval Chaplains School. He received the Distinguished Service Award as Coast Guard Chaplain of the Year in 1998. He is a veteran of Operations Desert Storm and Iraqi Freedom, and Hurricane Katrina relief operations. He testified to Congress regarding the Warrior Transition Program that he designed and implemented for Headquarters Marine Corps. He served as National Secretary of the Military Chaplains Association. His Ph.D. dissertation is entitled, "Jus Post Bellum (Justice After War): Contours of Construction."

CDR Ronald G. Wilkins, CHC, USN, (Ret.)

Commander Wilkins served in the U.S. Navy for 36 years. He began service at age 17 as an active-duty enlisted sailor. Upon graduating from college, he was commissioned as a regular line officer. He served in Vietnam on intense combat duty and received two Presidential Unit Citations with the River Patrol Boats of Task Force 116. He later entered the Navy reserves, went into full-time Christian service with the Military Ministry of Campus Crusade, and received the Master of Theology degree from Dallas Theological. He completed his service with 18 years as an active-duty chaplain. In retirement he has pastored a Baptist church.

CDR James K. Ellis, CHC, USN, (Ret.)

Commander Ellis served in the U.S. Navy and Coast Guard for 26 years, including 21 years as a chaplain. He earned a doctorate in Organizational Leadership from Regent University. He currently serves as the Director of Continuing Studies and Assistant Professor of Organizational Leadership at Union University, where he also teaches Ethics.

Chaplain (LTC), Robert W. Collins, U.S. Army, Retired

Lieutenant Colonel Collins served as a chaplain for 26 years in the U.S. Army. He also has served as a corrections chaplain for 5 years. He currently is the chaplaincy endorser for his Church.

Chaplain (LTC), Robert A. Wildeman, U.S. Army, Retired

Lieutenant Colonel Wildeman served 27 years as a chaplain, 3 in the Wisconsin Army National Guard and 24 as an active duty chaplain for the U.S. Army. His service assignments included the Regimental Chaplain for the Military Police School and the training brigade chaplain at both Fort Leonard Wood and Fort Benning. His awards include the Legion of Merit, Meritorious Medal with 4 oak leaf clusters, and the Army Commendation Medal and the Army Achievement Medal, both with 2 oak leaf clusters.

Chaplain (LTC) Robert G. Leroe, U.S. Army, Retired

Lieutenant Colonel Leroe served 25 years as a U.S. Army chaplain. He served in Operation Desert Storm and Operation Joint Endeavor. His decorations include the Meritorious Service Medal, Kuwait Liberation Medal, Humanitarian Service Medal, and the Legion of Merit. He is the senior pastor of his church and serves as the endorsing agent for his denomination, the Conservative Congregational Christian Conference.

Chaplain (LTC) Eric Erkinen, U.S. Army, Retired

Lieutenant Colonel Erkinen served 20 years as a U.S. Army chaplain. His highly-decorated chaplaincy service included Task Force Chaplain for the 1st Cavalry in Bosnia, Deputy U.S. Army Europe Chaplain in Heidelberg, Germany, and being deployed for Operations Desert Storm and Iraqi Freedom. He also provided critical chaplain support at the Pentagon during search and recovery operations after the terrorist attack on September 11, 2001. He currently serves as Assistant Director, Ministry to the Armed Forces, for the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.

Chaplain (LTC) Martin L. Dawson, Sr., U.S. Army, Retired

Lieutenant Colonel Dawson served on active duty in the U.S. Navy, enlisting when he was 17 years old. Later, he joined the Army National Guard and served as a chaplain for 20 years in the 50th Armored Division and the 42nd Infantry Division. He served as Battalion Chaplain for Infantry, Field Artillery, and Armored units; as Brigade Chaplain for the 50th Armored Brigade; and as Assistant Division Chaplain for the 50th Armored Division. He holds numerous awards, including the Meritorious Service Medal. He currently serves as the pastor of a church.

Chaplain (LTC) Robert C. Marsh, U.S. Army, Retired

Lieutenant Colonel Marsh served in the U.S. Army for 21 years, including 16 years as a chaplain. He earned numerous decorations, including the Bronze Star for courageous service in the Vietnam War. His chaplaincy service included a tour in Operation Desert Storm and an assignment with the 99th Regional Readiness Command preparing chaplains for duty in Iraq and Afghanistan. He is a graduate of Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia, Pa.

Chaplain (LTC) Scott R. Huber, U.S. Army, Retired

Lieutenant Colonel Huber served in the military for 26 years, 6 years as a commissioned officer in the U.S. Marine Corps and 20 years as a U.S. Army chaplain. His chaplaincy assignments included unit chaplain for combat and combat service support units, Chaplain Recruiter for the southeastern United States, and Staff Chaplain of the 63rd Regional Readiness Command.

Chaplain (LTC) Michael Frazier, U.S. Army, Retired

Lieutenant Colonel Frazier served 22 years as a U.S. Army chaplain, both as an active duty Army Reservist, and as an Active Guard/Reserve Officer. He served in the First Gulf War and in the War on Terror, for which he earned numerous decorations. His chaplaincy assignments included service as a U.S. Army Chaplain Recruiter, where he earned the Army Recruiter Gold Badge for recruiting excellence, and training mobilized chaplains for combat roles in Iraq and Afghanistan. He holds a doctorate in theology and is a minister in the Presbyterian Church of America.

Chaplain (LTC) John S. Parker, U.S. Army, Retired

Lieutenant Colonel Parker served 21 years as a U.S. Army chaplain. He received numerous decorations during his service, including the Legion of Merit and four Meritorious Service Medals. His last assignment was as the Community Chaplain in Schweinfurt, Germany.

Chaplain, Lieutenant Colonel, Joseph Henriques, U.S. Air Force (ANG), Retired

Lieutenant Colonel Henriques served in the Air National Guard as Wing Chaplain of the 128th Air Refueling Wing in Milwaukee, WI, for 20 years. He provided spiritual guidance and support for 900 unit military members and their families. He presented a spectrum of workshops, including, Personality Diversity, Quality Leadership, Cultural Diversity, Battle Stress and Suicide Awareness and Prevention. He was also lead facilitator for off-site commanders for strategic planning and developing values, mission, and vision statements.

LCDR David E. Mullis, CHC, USN, (Ret.)

Lieutenant Commander Mullis served on active duty for 23 years with the U.S. Navy. He served 4 years as an enlisted Communication Technician, 4.5 years as a Naval Flight Officer, and the remainder as a chaplain. He is a doctoral graduate of Regent University and received his Masters of Divinity from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. Since 1998, he has served military chaplains through the endorsement process, pastoral care, and pastoral support.

LCDR Kenneth V. Botton, CHC, USN, (Ret.)

Lieutenant Commander Botton served in the Navy for almost 23 years; ten years as a line officer and thirteen years as a chaplain. His chaplaincy tours included an assignment as Regimental Chaplain for 9th Marines in Okinawa, as well as postings in Australia, New York City, and as chaplain for the Explosive Ordnance Disposal School near Washington, DC. He is currently the Military Chaplain Endorsing Agent for the Plymouth Brethren.

LCDR David A. Crum, CHC, USNR

Lieutenant Commander Crum served in the military for 12 years, 3 years as an enlisted Marine and 9 years as a chaplain for the U.S. Navy. He completed his active duty service in 1990. During his service in the Marines, he fought in the Battle of Hue during the 1968 Tet Offensive and earned 3 Purple Hearts. He also received the Navy Commendation Medal for his service as a chaplain aboard the USS Carl Vinson. He holds a doctorate from Covenant Theological Seminary and serves as the pastor of Bishop Cummins Reformed Episcopal Church.

LCDR Stephen L. Parker, CHC, USN, (Ret.)

Lieutenant Commander Parker served in the military for 23 years. His first 4 years were as a Navy Corpsman, the next 16 were as a chaplain in both the Navy Reserves and Marines, and the final 3 were in the Coast Guard. His time in the Marines included three operations in Desert Storm. He is a graduate of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary and currently serves as a pastor at an Orthodox Presbyterian Church.