



Fall 2016 - Issue 6

PURSUING a nation where all chaplains, and those whom they serve, freely exercise their God-given and constitutionally protected religious liberties without fear of reprisal.

On CALL

My Hope For The New Administration

In October I was asked to attend a meeting of military veterans with then candidate Donald Trump. Chaplain Alliance member Bob Steinke also attended. Prior to the meeting we were asked to submit questions for Mr. Trump. I submitted a question concerning the erosion of religious liberty in our military over the past eight years. My question was selected to be one of seven to ask Mr. Trump. Mr. Trump did not directly answer the question. However, his campaign sent the following response to me:

Answer: “Religious freedom in the military is under attack, just as it is across our society. We ask our men and women in uniform to risk their lives for us, and the least we can do is fight every day for their right to worship freely and express their faith while in uniform.

My Secretary of Defense will be a

person who understands and respects our military’s tradition of religious tolerance and freedom, and who honors the service of our Chaplain Corps as I do. My Defense Secretary and I will never treat religious expression, whether by a Christian, Jew, Muslim, Sikh or any other faith, as a threat; rather, we will honor religious tolerance and expression as something our soldiers risk their lives for and deserve as much as any other citizen.

This is not a question of forcing anyone to believe something they don’t want, or punishing our service personnel for their lack of religiosity or for worshipping differently. This is about making sure our soldiers, sailors, airmen, and Marines are never punished for their faith. And when I’m Commander-in-Chief, they never

will be.”

So, regardless of whom you voted for in November I am hopeful for a new Secretary of Defense who “gets it”! I encourage you to pray for Mr. Trump as he makes key appointments for Secretary of Defense and Secretaries for the Air Force, Army and Navy.

While we are grateful for a new administration I do not believe our work is over. We will need to continue to be a voice for religious liberty as old policies are examined and to push for new policies that will strengthen the rights of every member of the military to live out their faith while they serve to protect our liberties.

CH (COL) Ron Crews, USA (Ret.)

Editor’s Note: This article was written prior to the announcement of Marine General James Mattis as Secretary of Defense.

Did you know?

Chaplain Alliance (CALL) speaks on behalf of over half of the nation’s uniformed chaplains. CALL exists to ensure that chaplains can defend and provide for the freedom of religion and conscience that the Constitution guarantees all chaplains and those whom they serve.



In The News:

- November 2016: CALL's Executive Director, CH (COL) Ron Crews, USA (Ret.), had an OpEd featured on FoxNews.com's Opinion page explaining how the NDAA fails to protect faith-based service.

- November 2016: Military.com reported that Pentagon investigators are weighing another review of the Air Force Chief of Chaplains after a Military Religious Freedom Foundation criticized the service for failing to discipline the officer for giving a blessing during a CALL event. .

- October 2016: CALL signed a letter to House and Senate leadership on the National Defense Authorization Act.

The letter explains how a Department of Defense Instruction (DODI) on the service of persons who identify as transgender undermines readiness, recruitment, and retention in the military. It also explains that these changes create privacy and safety concerns with regards to intimate spaces. The DODI failed to ensure people of faith would be able to exercise their conscience by diagnosing, counseling, or otherwise affirming a member's gender identity dysphoria, as well.

- September 2016: CALL helped Operation Constellation send a packed box of resources to our military service men and women in Korea.

The box included CALL Palm Cards promoting and protecting the free exercise of religion for all service members.

- September 2016: CALL commended the Department of Veterans Affairs on its revised religious liberty policy.

The updated policy guidance allows outside groups and individuals to sing religious songs during holidays on VA property. It also allows Veteran Service Organizations to set up displays with religious items on VA property.

- September 2016: Executive Director Ron Crews spoke at a congressional staff briefing on transgender issues.



Chaplains Team Up To Baptize 115!

By CHAPLAIN BRIAN HARGIS, US ARMY

FORT JACKSON, S.C. — I was afforded the opportunity to cover down (military term for “fill in”) for Chaplain (Captain) Sarah Tarpley Vesselee, battalion chaplain for the 3-13 Infantry Battalion (BCT) at Fort Jackson, South Carolina. The 3-13 IN is a basic combat training battalion (BCT).

This was my first opportunity to minister in a Basic Training Battalion – something I always wanted to do. For the first service, it was WEEK 1 for the Soldiers and over 200 attended the chapel service. No doubt that numerous Soldiers received the Gospel for the first time in their lives. So many came to Jesus that it was more than I could count.

For the last week, the services had grown by word of mouth. We needed more chairs in the battalion conference room to seat 250 Soldiers. And by this time, numerous Soldiers joined me in music, signing, and testimony of what God was doing! Watch the video, see and hear the good reports of God working among the Soldiers! They were very eager and enthusiastic to worship the Lord and testify of His goodness.

Knowing that so many had trusted Christ, I prepared a sign-up for baptism. Over 100 Soldiers signed up, and many indicating that they wanted to speak with Chaplain Sarah for counseling. Each Soldier was also given a Bible and some had already started small group Bible studies!

A graduation Baptism was scheduled for Sunday in the common area of the battalion. Drill Sergeants marched platoons of Soldiers to the mini-service with towels and shower shoes in hand! Chaplain Sarah's assistant filled a round baptismal pool and staged audio equipment. We played and sang a few hymns and I preached a short sermon about the importance of biblical baptism.

One by one, we baptized 115 Soldiers in the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and presented baptismal certificates. There were so many Soldiers, that I didn't even bother to count, but Chaplain Sarah said that they had printed 115 individual baptismal certificates for those that had signed up; and when we were finished, there were no certificates left. It was an amazing experience of receiving and celebrating new life in Christ

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Contact the On CALL Editor for fact checking all stories in this newsletter:
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