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MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA

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FOR GOD OR COUNTRY? RELIGIOUS TENSIONS
WITHIN THE UNITED STATES MILITARY

by

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December 2006

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**FOR GOD OR COUNTRY? RELIGIOUS TENSIONS WITHIN THE UNITED
STATES MILITARY**

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

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ABSTRACT

Today we live in a world of heightened religious awareness and sensitivity. The events of September 11, 2001 sent a shock wave throughout American society and in some cases ignited a religious spark in those shocked by the attacks. The result has been a distinct and clearly visible fragmentation of the United States along religious and ideological boundaries.

The United States Military is not immune to stress caused by these divides. There have been claims of anti-Muslim sentiment within select units of the U.S. Army; accusations that some leaders at the U.S. Air Force Academy were using their positions to promote their faith and discriminate against minority faiths, and allegations that the U.S. Navy is prohibiting chaplains from practicing their faith. In this thesis, I examine these and other cases along with the religious diversity trends since 2001 to demonstrate that the potential for continued and increased religious conflict in the military is high. I will further argue that the solution to avoiding these conflicts is through training and education provided at the initial stages of enlisted training and at the commissioning source for officers.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Be it enacted by the General Assembly, that no man shall be compelled to frequent or support any religious worship, place or ministry whatsoever, nor shall be enforced, restrained, molested, or burthened in his body or goods, nor shall otherwise suffer on account of his religious opinions or belief; but that all men shall be free to profess, and by argument to maintain, their opinion in matters of religion, and that the same shall in no wise diminish, enlarge or affect their civil capacities.¹

Virginia Statue for Religious Freedom
January 16, 1786

A. BACKGROUND

Religion has been the subject of intense discussion and debate within the United States ever since the founding of this country, precipitated by the fact that religion was one of the reasons many colonists moved to the new world. The colonists came seeking freedom from religious persecution in Europe. In his book, *American Gospel: God, the Founding Fathers, and the Making of a Nation*, Jon Meacham gives numerous examples of the Founding Fathers debating the role of religion in their new country. Some were in favor of declaring the United States a “Christian nation” or supported a national church. Others wanted a completely secular country or, at a minimum, a political system in which religion was not part of the government. Some, like Thomas Jefferson in the quote shown above, were striving to achieve some sort of balance between the opposing sides. Meacham argues that, as a result of the debates, the founding fathers established a system whereby the institutions of church and state were separated, but the individual and personal influence of religion in politics remained. As he puts it,

To hope, as some secularists do, that faith will one day withdraw from the public sphere, if only this presidential candidate or that

¹ Jon Meacham, *American Gospel: God the Founding Fathers and the Making of a Nation* (New York: Random House, 2006), 254.

Supreme Court nominee comes to power is futile. Humankind could not leave off being religious even if it tried.²

Today, we continue to analyze and ask whether religion has become more or less active in our lives. The rhetoric and actions of politicians, interest groups, and the media suggest that religion has become a more active component of our lives both internationally and domestically. Internationally the role and influence of religion comes to light when looking at the events of September 11, 2001. Whether religion was *the* motivation behind the attacks can be debated, but the fact the religion of the hijackers has to some degree altered our general views towards Muslims both within the United States and around the world seems beyond dispute. This is evident by the increasingly negative views toward Islam expressed in survey polls conducted since September 11. A March 2006 poll conducted by ABC News and *The Washington Post* revealed that 46 percent of Americans have an unfavorable view of Islam which is a seven percentage point increase from the initial months following the attacks.³ Actions of senior members of the military and the government have also affected the appearance of the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT) as a religious fight or a “clash of civilizations.”⁴ Several times between 2002 and 2003 Army Lieutenant General Jerry Boykin, an evangelical Christian currently serving as the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence, Intelligence and Warfighting Support, spoke publicly about the religious nature of our military operations. According to Lieutenant General Boykin, our “spiritual enemy . . . will only be defeated if we come against them in the name of Jesus.”⁵

² Jon Meacham, *American Gospel: God the Founding Fathers and the Making of a Nation* (New York: Random House, 2006), 233.

³ Claudia Deane and Darryl Fears, Negative “Perception of Islam Increasing,” *The Washington Post*, 9 March 2006 [article online]; available from <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/03/08/AR2006030802221.html>; Internet; accessed 11 October 2006.

⁴ Samuel Huntington, “The clash of civilizations?” *Foreign Affairs*, Summer 1993, 72, 3 [article online]; available from <http://proquest.com>; Internet; accessed 11 October 2006.

⁵ William M. Arkin, “The Pentagon Unleashes a Holy Warrior,” *The Los Angeles Times*, 16 October 2003 [article online]; available from http://www.truthout.org/docs_03/101703B.shtml; Internet accessed 11 October 2006.

Domestically, religion has been used to divide the country along political lines leading up to and following the reelection of President George W. Bush in 2004. Whether discussing the threat of Islamic extremists, the spread of evangelicals, the perceived influence of the religious right in politics, the perceived attack on religion by the secular left, religion or the lack (of it in some cases) is polarizing the nation, pitting groups against each other along real or perceived fronts. The fault lines run between those claiming to be moral and those labeled secular; the non-religious and the religious, Christians and non-Christians, Judeo-Christians opposing Muslims, and Evangelicals facing off against Mainline Protestants and Catholics.

Turn on any political talk show on Sunday mornings or peruse the religion or government sections of your local bookstore and you'll see the country is not at a loss for opinions on the topic of religion in the United States. Former U.S. Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich, in his latest book, would have Americans believe that the United States and, more specifically, God is under attack by a minority group of secular liberals using the courts to remove any references to religion in public life.⁶ Kevin Phillips, in his book *American Theocracy: the Peril and Politics of Radical Religion, Oil and Borrowed Money in the 21st Century*, argues that the country is being lead astray by our own form of religious extremism. According to Phillips,

The radical side of U.S. religion has embraced cultural antimodernism, war hawkishness, Armageddon prophecy, and in the case of conservative fundamentalists, a demand for governments by literal biblical interpretation.⁷

The question his thesis poses is: If religion is being used domestically to polarize and divide people, can that same tension be transferred from U.S. civilian society to the military?

⁶ Newt Gingrich, *Winning the Future: A 21st Century Contract with America* (Washington, D.C.: Regnery, 2006).

⁷ Kevin Phillips, *American Theocracy: The Peril and Politics of Radical Religion, Oil, and Borrowed Money in the 21st Century* (New York; Penguin Group, 2006), 100.

B. HYPOTHESIS

The subject of my thesis is religious conflict and/or tension in the United States Military. I will argue that the increased diversity of our military forces is creating conditions for increased religious tension and conflict amongst the various groups and individuals that make up the uniformed services. Given that religious pluralism and diversity have contributed to conflict/tension within the U.S. military in the past, we should expect more but also different tensions to affect the military in the future. Religious tension and/or conflict, defined for this study, is the strain experienced or caused by an individual or group, or a clash among individuals or groups, based on religious ideals and values. Conflicts such as this can occur between individual Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen or Marines or they can be fostered or felt by groups of service members belonging to a particular faith or belief system.

Diversity is the foundation of American society. The military, being representative of that society, must, at a minimum, keep pace with managing potential conflicts resulting from that diversity. With the military primarily focused on operations in Iraq, Afghanistan, and the much larger Global War on Terrorism, it is easy to lose the ability to identify potential threats from within that could serve to degrade the combat effectiveness of our military forces. This could lead diminish or erode confidence and trust citizens have in the uniformed services. The threat of religious conflict is a direct challenge to the foundation of the military's values and beliefs.

Today we live in a world of heightened religious awareness and sensitivity. The events of September 11 sent a shock wave throughout American society and, in some case ignited a religious spark in many people that up to that time was either dormant or, in some cases, nonexistent. The reality of war prompted many Americans to search for answers. Some sought emotional refuge in the company of family or friends while others looked to religion in an attempt to answer their questions, asking why? and what next?

The result has been a distinct and clearly visible fragmentation of the United States along religious and ideological boundaries that appear to be expanding with time. These lines can be seen in local and national politics, education, the legal system, medical research, and even in the entertainment industry. One section of American society that has historically served as the lead agent in societal change and diversity is the United States Military. Those in uniform are looked upon as the standard bearers of the values this country holds so dear. But now it appears that even the most powerful military in the world cannot shield itself from the conflict being waged among religious groups, between religious and secular groups, and within individual denominations within its ranks.

Since 2001 several examples of religious conflict, due the high profile media coverage, have begun to chip away at the military. In September 2003, an Army Muslim chaplain was detained on charges he mishandled classified material while providing religious support to detainees at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. This prompted the U.S. Senate to convene hearings on the selection of Muslim chaplains. The charges were ultimately dropped and the chaplain was given an honorable discharge, but not before he claimed there was an anti-Muslim environment at the detention center. In April 2005, a Muslim soldier, Sergeant Hasan Akbar, was convicted of murder and attempted-murder for attacking fellow soldiers prior to the start of the ground phase of Operation Iraqi Freedom in March 2003. Again, the soldier in question claimed there was an anti-Muslim climate in his unit and he also had objections to fighting against other Muslims on religious grounds.

More recently, controversy rose at the United States Air Force (USAF) Academy where cadets complained in 2004 and 2005 that evangelical Christian leaders were using their positions to promote their faith. Following an investigation, in August 2005, the Department of the Air Force issued guidelines across the service to minimize religious expression. This decision was recently overturned in February 2006 after numerous evangelical groups and politicians

placed pressure on the USAF to relax its guidelines to allow leaders to discuss their faith with subordinates. These examples, which will be analyzed in detail in later sections, along with others, demonstrate that there have been and will continue to be religious tension or conflict in the uniformed services.

C. METHODOLOGY

Supporting data for this thesis is primarily in the form of recent case studies along with several interviews conducted with fellow military members, military academy faculty, and local military chaplains. The case studies selected fall into two general categories. First, there are the perceived tensions that exist between military personnel who believe religion has taken an overly active role and those who believe that religion is being repressed. The second category is tensions that can occur between two or more religions, denominations, or sects. The cases studies, combined with an analysis of religious demographics and a review of the laws and policies that govern religious practices and accommodation within the Department of Defense (DoD) are designed to answer the following questions:

1. What is the religious diversity of the United States?
2. What is the religious diversity of the United States Military?
3. What religious conflicts have recently developed because of this diversity?
4. What is the ratio of military chaplains to members (by denomination)?
5. What percentage of military members claim no religious denomination or affiliation? And why?
6. What training/resources, if any, are provided to military leaders to deal with religious conflicts?
7. What are the sources of continued or future religious conflict in the military?

I will review current resources and training provided to military leaders in regard to religious conflict and use the case study analysis to identify and map potential flashpoints that exist at the individual unit level to assist current and future leaders in early identification and suppression of religious conflicts.

In Chapter II, I will paint a picture of religious attitudes in the United States. A comparison of recent religious survey data will be compared with religious demographics of the uniformed services to determine just how representative of the country is the military. The final section of Chapter 2 will review the laws, policies, and regulations that govern religious practices and accommodation within the military.

Chapter III begins the first chapter dedicated to case study analysis. In this chapter I focus on two recent cases. The first involves a US Navy chaplain who has accused the Navy of restricting his ability to practice his faith. The second case occurred at the US Air Force Academy in 2004 and 2005 when cadets, parents, and an academy chaplain accused the administration of discrimination against minority religious groups and non-religious cadets. This particular case is special because it has certain aspects that place it in two of the three categories, but for the purpose of this section I focus on the allegations of discrimination against non-religious cadets and proselytizing by senior leaders.

Chapter IV offers an analysis of recent cases of alleged discrimination against service members from a minority religious group. As I will show, diversity within the military can lead to many conflicts. Given U.S. military operations in the Muslim world I specifically chose two cases involving Muslims.

The final chapter is dedicated to identification of additional points of tension or conflict that the military can expect to see in the future. I also outline some recommendations for further study and analysis in the hope that this topic will not be ignored, but will be discussed to increase understanding and acceptance.

D. GOALS

The goal of this thesis is three-fold. First is to decrease the potential for religious conflict or tensions by encouraging dialogue and discussion, and to recommend positive changes in the training programs of all military personnel at the early stages of their careers. Second is to prompt readers to think about their own experiences with religion in the military. For most that reflection should be

positive but for some, mainly those in the minority religious groups or denominations, not all of their religious experiences will be so uplifting. A simple comment or an “innocent” joke regarding someone’s beliefs is sometimes all it takes to spark tension. The final goal is to encourage members of the majority groups to visualize the problem from the minority point of view and to sympathize with the challenges minority members face.

This work is not a critique or judgment of a specific religious or non-religious group, denomination or belief system. It may at times seem critical of those individuals or groups whose faith-based practices in a military environment create tension that disturbs unit cohesion. History has shown that religion can unify people, but it can also be used to divide. Therefore, it behooves readers to take steps to minimize the points of division, especially when there are more significant threats that exist in the world. Ignoring the issues and/or wishing problems away are not viable options given the power of today’s media. Accusations of religious intolerance or discrimination have the same shock value in the news media as cases involving race or gender and may degrade the public’s trust in men and women in uniform in even more profound ways precisely because religion itself is a matter of such strong moral convictions.

II. RECENT WORKS AND CURRENT DATA

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.⁸

First Amendment, United States Constitution
Ratified December 15, 1791

This is not the first thesis done at the Naval Postgraduate School (NPS) to review the subject of religious tension in the U.S. Military and will most likely not be the last. While I was conducting research, I was surprised to find that while writings on religion in the United States are plentiful, works discussing religion or religious conflict within the military are scarce. This could mean that there have been few, isolated incidents of religious disagreement in the past and therefore have not warranted detailed analysis or it could be the topic is one which people tend to avoid. Regardless of the reasons, religious tensions within the military have become a topic of interest as of late at NPS. Much of the interest has been fueled by the perceived line being drawn between Islam and the West; the increasing religious diversity within the military; and recent highly visible religious-based conflicts that have taken place within the U.S. Military ranks.

A. PREVIOUS WORK CONDUCTED AT NPS

As noted, heightened religious awareness in the United States has led to various surveys, books, and news articles, but little has been written regarding the effects of this phenomenon on the U.S. Military. Two recent studies that analyzed the impact of religion in the military, done at NPS, nevertheless helped fuel my desire to write a thesis on this topic.

In December 2005, USAF Lieutenant Colonel Jeffery Freeman completed a thesis, appropriately titled *The Potential for Religious Conflict in the United*

⁸ *Constitution of the United States*, [online]; available from http://www.archives.gov/national-archives-experience/charters/bill_of_rights_transcript.html; Internet; accessed 11 October 2006.

States Military, in which he outlined some of the tensions that may or may not appear in the future based on religious differences.⁹ Lieutenant Colonel Freeman provides a well-structured description of the practices and beliefs of several denominations and gives examples of potential flashpoints that may occur primarily between Christians and members of other religious groups.

United States Navy Lieutenant Matthew Krauz wrote a similar thesis, titled *The Impact of Religiosity on Midshipman Adjustment and Feelings of Acceptance*, focusing on “whether belief in and practice of religion affects the overall adjustment and experience of midshipmen at the United States Naval Academy.”¹⁰ While only focused on religion at the academy, Lieutenant Krauz was able to provide data from midshipmen focus groups showing that at least in one military organization a perception of religious intolerance does exist.¹¹

This thesis will expand upon the work previously been done by Lieutenant Colonel Freeman and Lieutenant Krauz. I will analyze the role and impact of religion by studying recent and well publicized cases of religious conflict within the Department of Defense. This is not to say that there will not be some overlap with the previous works, but I will instead take this topic from a more general discussion to a more specific analysis of current and potential points of contention. Much of my focus will be on the diversity of religious *and* non-religious groups within the armed forces and how that diversity and the lack of education about various religions and beliefs has led to and will continue to lead to religious tensions and conflicts in the future.

B. RELIGIOUS DEMOGRAPHICS

Accurate United States religious demographic data is not readily available since federal and local governments do not require citizens to report their religious preferences or affiliations. The best data available is found through

⁹ Lieutenant Colonel Jeffery Freeman, United States Air Force, *The Potential for Religious Conflict in the United States Military* (Monterey: Naval Postgraduate School, 2005).

¹⁰ Lieutenant Matthew Krauz, United States Navy, *The Impact of Religiosity on Midshipman Adjustment and Feelings of Acceptance* (Monterey: Naval Postgraduate School, 2006), v.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 54.

random surveys conducted by academic groups and the US Census Bureau. One such study was conducted by The Graduate Center of the City University of New York and was published in 2001. The results of the American Religious Identification Survey (ARIS) will be used in this study as a baseline comparison of the religious demographics of American civil society and the military in an attempt to identify to what degree the military is or is not religiously representative of American society. Data provided by the Office of the Secretary of Defense, Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC) will be the military source data. It will also be used to show the growing religious diversity of the military and an unequal representation within the chaplaincy.

A comparison of the ARIS survey data and religious demographic data provided by the DMDC suggests that the military is fairly representative of the religious diversity of the US population. The ARIS survey asked respondents from over 50,000 American households a very simple question “what is your religion, if any?”¹² According to the ARIS findings, the United States is a nation with a majority Christian religious identification, with Christians comprising 76.5% of the total population (see Table 1). The Christian denominations that respondents said they belonged to with were Catholics (24.5%), Baptists (16.3%), Methodists/Wesleyans (6.8%), and Non-denominational Christians (6.8%) respectively. Other religious groups, such as Jews, Muslims, Buddhists, and Wiccans comprised 3.7% of the total responses, while non-religious groups, to include those with no religious identification, accounted for 14.1% (see Table 2). Those who refused to answer were 5.4%.

¹² Barry Kosmin and Ariela Keysar and Egon Mayer, *American Religious Identification Survey* (New York: The Graduate Center of the City University of New York, 2001), 6.

Table 1. Self Described Religious Identification of US Adult Population 1990-2001
(Christian Religious Groups)

Self Described Religious Identification of U.S. Adult Population, 1990-2001				
(Weighted Estimate)				
TOTAL U.S. ADULT POPULATION 18+		1990 = 175,440,000		2001=207,980,000
Christian Religious Groups	1990		2001	
	Number	%	Number	%
Catholic	46,004,000		50,873,000	24.5
Baptist	33,964,000		33,830,000	16.3
Protestant - no denomination supplied	17,214,000		4,647,000	2.2
Methodist/Wesleyan	14,174,000		14,150,000	6.8
Lutheran	9,110,000		9,580,000	4.6
Christian - no denomination supplied	8,073,000		14,190,000	6.8
Presbyterian	4,985,000		5,596,000	2.7
Pentecostal/Charismatic	3,191,000		4,407,000	2.1
Episcopalian/Anglican	3,042,000		3,451,000	1.7
Mormon/Latter-Day Saints	2,487,000		2,787,000	1.3
Churches of Christ	1,769,000		2,503,000	1.2
Jehovah's Witness	1,381,000		1,331,000	0.6
Seventh-Day Adventist	668,000		724,000	0.3
Assemblies of God	660,000		1,106,000	0.5
Holiness/Holy	610,000		569,000	0.3
Congregational/United Church of Christ	599,000		1,378,000	0.7
Church of the Nazarene	549,000		544,000	0.3
Church of God	531,000		944,000	0.5
Orthodox (Eastern)	502,000		645,000	
Evangelical	242,000		1,032,000	0.5
Mennonite	235,000		346,000	
Christian Science	214,000		194,000	
Church of the Brethren	206,000		358,000	
Born Again	204,000		56,000	
Nondenominational	195,000		2,489,000	1.2
Disciples of Christ	144,000		492,000	
Reformed/Dutch Reform	161,000		289,000	
Apostolic/New Apostolic	117,000		254,000	
Quaker	67,000		217,000	
Full Gospel	51,000		168,000	
Christian Reform	40,000		79,000	
Foursquare Gospel	28,000		70,000	
Fundamentalist	27,000		61,000	
Salvation Army	27,000		25,000	
Independent Christian Church	25,000		71,000	
TOTAL Christian	151,225,00	86.2	159,030,000	76.5

From: The Graduate Center of the City University of New York, American
Religious Identification Survey, 2001

Table 2. Self Described Religious Identification of US Adult Population 1990-2001
(Non-Christian Groups)

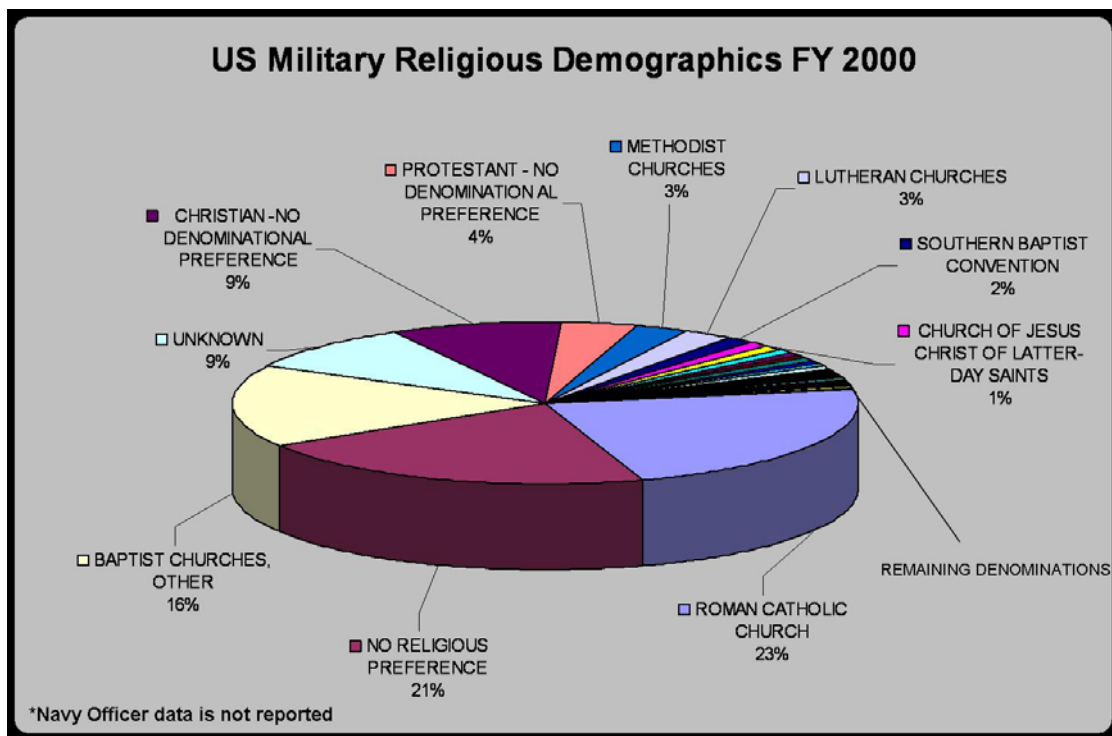
Self Described Religious Identification of U.S. Adult Population, 1990-2001 (Weighted Estimate)					
Other Religion Groups	1990			2001	
	Number	%		Number	%
Jewish	3,137,000			2,831,000	1.3
Muslim/Islamic	527,000			1,104,000	0.5
Buddhist	401,000			1,082,000	0.5
Unitarian/Universalist	502,000			629,000	0.3
Hindu	227,000			766,000	0.4
Native American	47,000			103,000	
Scientologist	45,000			55,000	
Baha'I	28,000			84,000	
Taoist	23,000			40,000	
New Age	20,000			68,000	
Eckankar	18,000			26,000	
Rastafarian	14,000			11,000	
Sikh	13,000			57,000	
Wiccan	8,000			134,000	
Deity	6,000			49,000	
Druid				33,000	
Santeria				22,000	
Pagan				140,000	
Spiritualist				116,000	
Ethical Culture				4,000	
Other unclassified	837,000			386,000	
Total Other Religions	5,853,000	3.3		7,740,000	3.7
No Religion Groups	1990			2001	
	Number	%		Number	%
Atheist				902,000	0.4
Agnostic	1186000			991,000	0.5
Humanist	29,000			49,000	0
Secular				53,000	0
No Religion	13,116,000			27,486,000	13.2
Total No Religion Specified	14,331,000	8.2		29,481,000	14.1
Refused	4,031,000	2.3		11,246,000	5.4

NOTE: All figures in Exhibit 1 are rounded to the nearest thousand.

From: The Graduate Center of the City University of New York, American Religious Identification Survey, 2001

The DMDC provided data for Fiscal Year (FY) 2000 to 2005 in an Active Faith Data report (see Figures 1 and 2).¹³ This report lists a breakout of each denomination within the active military according to branch of service and pay grade. According to the FY 2005 report, military members affiliated with Christian denominations were 70% of the total force.¹⁴ The largest Christian denominations were Catholics (21%), Christian – No Denominational Preference (15%), and Baptist Churches – Other (14%). Jews, Muslims, Buddhists, Wiccans, and others comprised approximately 2% of the military. Unlike the ARIS survey in which 13% of respondents claimed No Religious Preference, the DMDC report showed this category as the second largest group with 20%.

Figure 1. U.S. Military Religious Demographics FY 2000.

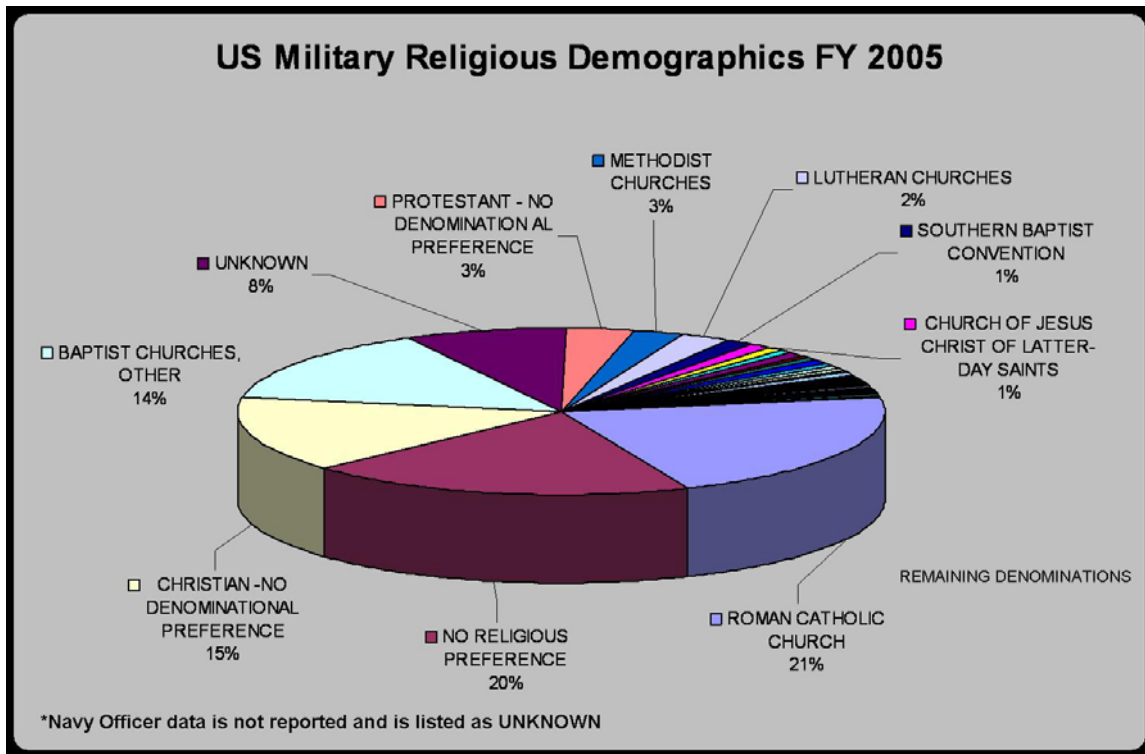


After: Defense Manpower Data Center

¹³ Deborah Williamson, "DRS #12965" Email to author, 9 June 2006.

¹⁴ The Defense Manpower Data Center does not receive religious denomination data for United States Naval Officers from the Department of the Navy.

Figure 2. U.S. Military Religious Demographics FY 2005.



After: Defense Manpower Data Center

Religious diversity has apparently increased since September 11, 2001. Those in uniform have most likely heard the saying “there are no atheists in foxholes” meaning that, in combat, soldiers tend to find God as the possibility of death increases. With the events of September 11 and US military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq it appears that the saying continues to ring true – at least to a point. In FY 2000, DMDC listed 88 religious denominations or groups on its active faith data report.¹⁵ To register a group or denomination there had to be at least one adherent. In FY 2005, that number had jumped to 100 affiliations or identifications.¹⁶ The reports also indicate that identification to the larger, more traditional groups has decreased while many of the minority groups have grown.

¹⁵ Deborah Williamson, “DRS #12965” Email to author, 9 June 2006.

¹⁶ Ibid.

A comparison of the top five denominations or groups from FY 2000 to FY 2005 shows that all but one group (Christian – No Denominational Preference) decreased in size (see Table 3). Notable minority groups that increased in size are Buddhists from 2,570 to 4,392 and Wiccans that went from zero proclaimed affiliations in 2000 to 1,866 in 2005. One religion that, unfortunately, but not surprisingly, dropped since 2000 were Muslims. Islamic identification dropped by more than 400 from 4,066 to 3,957 in the past five years. The decrease could be attributed to a lack of American Muslim interest in military service, an unwillingness for some Muslim service members to officially proclaim their religious preference for fear of discrimination, or the perception that the GWOT is really a war on Islam thereby alienating many qualified Muslim prospects. Regardless of the reason for the decrease, the drop in Muslim identification should be a cause for concern, especially when the ARIS shows an increase in Muslims within the United States.

Table 3. Active Faith Data Comparison.

Denomination/Group	Sep-00	Sep-05	00-05 Difference
ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH	312513	293009	-19504
NO RELIGIOUS PREFERENCE	287305	288675	-18830
CHRISTIAN - NO DENOMINATIONAL PREFERENCE	122229	201312	79083
BAPTIST CHURCHES, OTHER	225048	198193	-26853
UNKNOWN	129782	111684	-18098
PROTESTANT - NO DENOMINATION AL PREFERENCE	52709	44849	-7860
METHODIST CHURCHES	38749	35519	-3230
LUTHERAN CHURCHES	34519	32782	-1737
SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION	21125	17980	-3145
CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS	14063	17596	3533
CHURCH OF CHRIST	9390	9604	514
PROTESTANT- OTHER CHURCHES	13747	9663	-4084
PENTECOSTAL CHURCHES	11009	9480	-1529
EPISCOPAL CHURCH	0	9066	9066
CHRISTIAN CHURCHES AND CHURCHES OF CHRIST	2126	8738	6612
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCHES	7849	8513	665
UNCLASSIFIED RELIGIONS	0	7835	7835
FULL GOSPEL PENTECOSTAL ASSOCIATION, THE	6919	7313	394
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH, THE	8804	7143	-1661
CHRISTIAN CHURCH DISCIPLES OF CHRIST	0	5625	5625
AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES IN THE USA	6043	5769	-274
ASSEMBLIES OF GOD	4264	4815	551
ATHEIST	1437	4466	3029
SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS	4357	4447	90
BUDDHISM	2570	4392	1822
JUDAISM	3147	4004	857
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES	3969	3723	-145
ISLAM	4066	3597	-469
CHURCH OF GOD (CLEVELAND, TN)	7	2572	2565
CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE	1973	1914	-59
LUTHERAN CHURCH - MISSOURI SYNOD	1195	1912	717
PENTECOSTAL HOLINESS CHURCH	1966	1881	-85
WICCA (WITCHCRAFT)	0	1866	1866
CHURCH OF GOD IN CHRIST	1366	1819	433
CATHOLIC CHURCHES	0	1761	1761
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA	0	1639	1639
AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH	1275	1511	236
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN AMERICA	834	1099	265
EASTERN ORTHODOX CHURCHES	846	1095	249
CHRISTIAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH	497	769	272
HINDU	406	704	295
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST	743	700	-43
FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST SCIENTIST	0	691	691
FREE WILL BAPTIST CHURCHES	394	837	243
BRETHREN CHURCH	785	817	188
ADVENT CHRISTIAN CHURCH	457	573	116
UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST ASSOCIATION	408	533	125
JEHOVAH S WITNESSES	500	510	10
REFORMED EPISCOPAL CHURCH	477	495	18
CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH IN NORTH AMERICA	0	468	468
EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH OF AMERICA	228	450	222
UNITED PENTECOSTAL CHURCH, INTERNATIONAL	316	446	130
AMERICAN BAPTIST ASSOCIATION/CONFERENCE	499	437	-62
EVANGELICAL CHURCH ALLIANCE, THE	344	434	90
PENTECOSTAL CHURCH OF GOD OF AMERICA, INC.	368	433	65
AGNOSTIC	0	390	390

Denomination/Group	Sep-00	Sep-05	00-05 Difference
CHRISTIAN AND MISSIONARY ALLIANCE	198	328	140
AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL ZION CHURCH	275	297	22
ORTHODOX CHURCHES	0	272	272
BIBLE PROTESTANT CHURCH	285	280	-5
THE WESLEYAN CHURCH	226	255	29
GENERAL ASSOCIATION OF GENERAL BAPTISTS	42	222	180
CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES	0	221	221
FRIENDS	182	219	37
FREE METHODIST CHURCH OF NORTH AMERICA	111	213	102
REORGANIZED CHURCH OF JESUS OF LATTER DAY S	287	213	-74
EPISCOPAL CHURCHES	0	193	193
NATIVE AMERICAN	0	182	182
EVANGELICAL CONVENANT CHURCH IN AMERICA	171	173	2
SALVATION ARMY, THE	209	185	-44
CHURCHES OF CHRIST IN CHRISTIAN UNION	45	150	105
GENERAL ASSOCIATION OF REGULAR BAPTIST CHUR	77	148	71
NATIONAL BAPTIST CONVENTION, USA, INC.	141	135	-6
INDEPENDENT FUNDAMENTAL BIBLE CHURCHES	71	120	49
NATIONAL BAPTIST CONVENTION OF AMERICA	147	110	-37
MORAVIAN CHURCH	131	107	-24
CHURCH OF GOD (ANDERSON, IN)	63	99	36
CHURCH OF GOD OF PROPHECY	73	94	21
INTERNATIONAL CHURCH OF THE FOURSQUARE GOSP	37	93	56
REFORMED CHURCH IN AMERICA	44	77	33
CHURCH OF GOD GENERAL CONFERENCE	90	62	-28
CUMBERLAND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH	42	58	16
INDEPENDENT FUNDAMENTAL CHURCHES OF AMERICA	20	50	30
INDEPENDENT CHURCHES AFFILIATED	41	46	5
OPEN BIBLE STANDARD CHURCHES, INC.	24	42	18
ANGLICAN CHURCHES	0	37	37
ASSOCIATED GOSPEL CHURCHES, THE	17	36	19
PROGRESSIVE NATIONAL BAPTIST CONVENTION, IN	13	25	12
EUROPEAN-FREE CHURCHES	0	17	17
HOLINESS CHURCHES	0	15	15
PLYMOUTH BRETHREN	27	14	-13
BAHA'I FAITH	0	8	8
FUNDAMENTALIST CHURCHES	0	8	8
ASBURY BIBLE CHURCHES	12	7	-5
IGLESIA NI CRISTO	0	7	7
MAGICK AND SPIRITUALIST	0	7	7
ADVENTIST CHURCHES	0	6	6
EASTERN RELIGIONS	0	5	5
SCHWENKELDER CHURCHES, THE GENERAL CONFERE	3	5	2
TIOGA RIVER CHRISTIAN CONFERENCE	3	2	-1
CHRISTIAN CHURCH	3361	0	-3361
CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH	303	0	-303
CHRISTIAN SCIENCE	863	0	-863
CHURCH OF GOD	2682	0	-2682
EVANGELICAL CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH	119	0	-119
LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA	683	0	-683
MILITANT FUNDAMENTAL BIBLE CHURCHES	4	0	-4
OTHER RELIGIONS	7466	0	-7466
PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CHURCH	8676	0	-8676
THE SWEDENBORGIAN CHURCH G, GENERAL CONFERE	12	0	-12
TOTAL	1343532	1369748	25216

Note: Totals do not include U.S. Naval Officer data.

After: Defense Manpower Data Center

As for the quote regarding no atheists in foxholes, the reason this statement is only partly accurate is the fact that there are atheists in foxholes. While clearly, the number of affiliations has increased since September 11, the DMDC reports that the number of Atheists has also grown since September 11. Atheist affiliation has increased by more than 3,000 from 1,437 to 4,466. In other words, over the last five years the military has seen both an increased religious association along with an increase in numbers of personnel who oppose religion.

The combination of factors alone suggests sources for potential conflict, as we'll see.

Another disconnect highlighted by the DMDC data is unequal representation in the chaplaincy given distributions across denominations in the military. The DMDC data in Figure 2 and Table 3 signify that Roman Catholicism is the largest religious group at over 290,000 or 21% of the total force.¹⁷ But within the chaplaincy, Roman Catholic priests comprise only 9% of the population (see Figure 3).¹⁸ This imbalance has led to a significant shortage of Catholic priests at military installations and during deployments, when religious support is needed most. Another example of the imbalance can be seen with the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC). Adherents of the SBC comprise 1% of the total force yet are the highest represented denomination within the chaplaincy at 16%.¹⁹ One reason this should be of potential concern is the perception that evangelical denominations are entering the leadership ranks and the chaplaincy in order to convert or proselytize non-believers and non-Christians to Christianity. Whether all SBC members actively proselytize or not is quite possibly beside the point if the perception among others is that they do or will without question. Many are open to and respect the beliefs of others, but as in most religions there are individuals who seek to actively promote their faith and convert others. There is a difference between those who believe in the evangelizing principles of their faith and those who are ardent and zealous proselytizers.²⁰ The latter are commonly referred to as evangelicals.

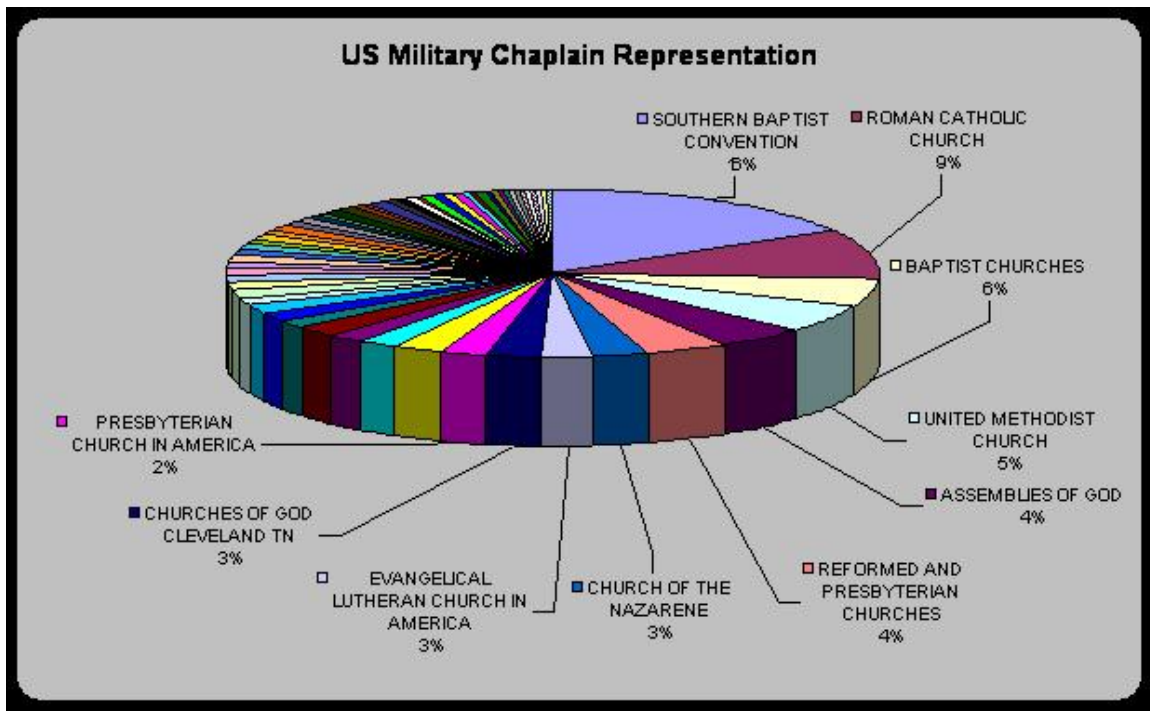
¹⁷ Deborah Williamson, "DRS #12965" Email to author, 9 June 2006.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Deborah Williamson, "DRS #13379" Email to author, 11 July 2006.

²⁰ Alan Dowd, "Faith Through Service," *The American Legion*, September 2006, 20-21.

Figure 3. U.S. Military Chaplain Representation.



After: Defense Manpower Data Center

The 2000 Southern Baptist Convention's Baptist Faith and Message highlights the duty to proselytize.

It is the duty and privilege of every follower of Christ and of every church of the Lord Jesus Christ to endeavor to make disciples of all nations. The new birth of man's spirit by God's Holy Spirit means the birth of love for others. Missionary effort on the part of all rests thus upon a spiritual necessity of the regenerate life, and is expressly and repeatedly commanded in the teachings of Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ has commanded the preaching of the gospel to all nations. It is the duty of every child of God to seek constantly to win the lost to Christ by verbal witness undergirded by a Christian lifestyle, and by other methods in harmony with the gospel of Christ.²¹

²¹ Southern Baptist Convention, *The Baptist Faith and Message*, 2000 [online]; available from <http://www.sbc.net/bfm/bfm2000.asp>; Internet; accessed 11 October 2006.

Additionally, the National Association of Evangelicals, “the largest endorsing body for chaplains in the United States armed forces” claims to have “over 700 active military chaplains” serving which equates to over one-third of all chaplains.²² The growth of the evangelical groups within the chaplaincy has become a cause for concern not only not among secularists but also members of traditional Christian denominations. Archbishop Edwin O'Brien, who heads the Catholic Church's Archdiocese for the Military Services, believes the evangelizing principles and tactics of some chaplains has gone too far. According to Archbishop O'Brien,

That [proselytizing] is not accommodating the needs of others. Some people don't believe that, and it's not my position as a chaplain to require that of them. I must respect who they are and what they are. Some evangelicals have stepped over that line.²³

Professor Kristen Leslie of the Yale Divinity School shares the same concerns.

I think a lot of evangelical conservative Christians see that as the basic work that they are to do is to bring people to Jesus. And that becomes a problem in a pluralistic environment where, because these are now employees of the government, you can't do that.²⁴

One group that is very active among the officer corps, for instance, is the Officers Christian Fellowship (OCF). The OCF is a religious group comprised of active and retired U.S. Military officers throughout the United States and the world. Local fellowships are located on military installations, military academies, and college and university campuses with Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) programs. A quick review of the OCF website clearly reveals the

²² National Association of Evangelicals, *Commission on Chaplains and Military Personnel*, [online]; available from <http://www.nae.net/index.cfm?fuseaction=chaplains.H>; Internet; accessed 11 October 2006.

²³ “Military Chaplains Controversy,” *Religion and Ethics Newsweekly*, 20 January 2006 [story online]; available from <http://www.pbs.org/wnet/religionandethics/week921/feature.html>; Internet; accessed 11 October 2006.

²⁴ Ibid.

group's commitment to evangelizing and proselytizing in the name of Jesus Christ. One of the OCF's Strategic Goals is to

Expand the corps of Christian officers who are prepared for a lifetime of integrated professional service and spiritual leadership within the military society by more effectively evangelizing, discipling, and mentoring officers, officer candidates, cadets, and midshipmen."²⁵

The intent to convert military members is also evident in articles submitted by senior members of the OCF.

For example, United States Air Force (USAF) Major General Donald C. Wurster, Vice Commander of Air Force Special Operations Command writes,

The battle is won, not with donuts and socials, but with the proclamation of the Word of God and the application of His power to change lost souls into new recruits.²⁶

Lieutenant General Bruce L. Fister, USAF (Retired), Executive Director of OCF, has provided suggestions to members on how to recruit "unbelievers."

We are able to connect with unbelievers through the profession of arms. This can lead to other common interests with unbelievers that are centered around a hobby, social activities or family. And through these relationships, people will see the Gospel in us and want to learn more and be included in a fellowship so that they can develop a real relationship with Jesus Christ. . . . Begin by intentionally seeking non-Christian friends. This does not mean leaving your OCF fellowship base of support or compromising biblical principles, but it does mean making an effort to develop a caring and meaningful relationship with someone in your department, battalion, squadron, or neighborhood. It may mean a back yard barbeque just to build a relationship. It may mean holding meetings on neutral ground like Starbucks, the mess tent or the ship's galley before inviting a sojourner into your fellowship at its normal location. And once a sojourner or new Christian comes to your normal fellowship meeting, it may mean altering the way you study, explain Scripture, or pray so you meet that new person at a

²⁵ Officer's Christian Fellowship, *Strategy for 2002 to 2006*, [online]; available from <http://ocf.gospelcom.net/pubs/strategy.php>; Internet; accessed 11 October 2006.

²⁶ Major General Donald C. Wurster, United States Air Force, *Centurions in the Conflict*, [online]; available from <http://ocf.gospelcom.net/pubs/centurio.php>; Internet; accessed 11 October 2006.

level where he or she feels comfortable and welcome. It does not mean watering down the Gospel.²⁷

Lieutenant Colonel Greg E. Metzgar, United States Army, continues the message to evangelize.

As military leaders, we have an awesome responsibility to fulfill the charter we have with the American people, to fight and win our nation's wars. Each of us is committed to seeing this task through, and "we will prevail." As Christian leaders however, we have an even higher calling, one to "...go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I will be with you always, to the very end of the age" (Matthew 28:19-20). For us, our mission field is the military, and our battleground is against the spiritual terrorism that threatens our eternal souls!²⁸

A final area of concern when considering individuals who believe it is their duty to evangelize within the military is how the message is passed to others in uniform. A quick glance back at the previous quotes reveals that the message is not coming from a typical OCF member but from a senior active or retired officer. How can the message from the individual be separated from the rank of the person presenting it? Is a subordinate receiving an order from God or from a senior officer? Given that the authors didn't take any steps to hide their rank (ranks were listed next to their names) this suggests that they want their readers to know the message comes from a senior person. Possibly their rank reinforces the message or they want to demonstrate that to attain similar success it helps to adhere to the author's beliefs and practices. OCF directs much of its efforts to mentoring officer candidates, cadets, and midshipmen it appears the inclusion of rank on the articles could be considered a tool of influence and coercion.

²⁷ Lieutenant General Bruce L. Fister, United States Air Force (Retired), *Taking Stock of OCF – Part 7: Reaching Out*, [article online]; available from http://ocf.gospelcom.net/pubs/ed_taking_stock7.php; Internet, accessed 11 October 2006.

²⁸ Lieutenant Colonel Greg Metzgar, United States Army, *Fighting the War on Spiritual Terrorism – Part 2*, [article online]; available from http://ocf.gospelcom.net/pubs/fighting_war.php; Internet, accessed 11 October 2006.

C. RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY POLICIES, TRAINING, AND EDUCATION

The idea of religious freedom in the military can be traced back to the founding of this country. The First Amendment of the United States Constitution states, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof..."²⁹ More recently, Department of Defense Directives have further defined religious freedom to include the idea of religious accommodation as more and more religious minority groups have asked to be recognized within the armed services. According to the latest Department of Defense Directive,

A basic principle of our nation is the free exercise of religion. The Department of Defense places a high value on the rights of members of the Armed Forces to observe the tenets of their respective religions. It is DoD policy that requests for accommodation of religious practices should be approved by commanders when accommodation will not have an adverse impact on military readiness, unit cohesion, standards, or discipline.³⁰

While each of the military services has its own regulations and policies regarding religious freedom or accommodation they are all repetitive of the DoD directive.

With all of the repeated emphasis on religious accommodation combined with a disciplined military force one would think tensions or conflicts within the military would be on the decline. In reality, the opposite is happening. Specific examples will be given in the following chapters, but an example of one service that has seen a rise in formal religious complaints is the US Army. Since 2001, the number of complaints has more than doubled to around five complaints per year, with a high percentage of substantiated cases in fiscal year 2002 (see

²⁹ *Constitution of the United States*, [online]; available from http://www.archives.gov/national-archives-experience/charters/bill_of_rights_transcript.html; Internet; accessed 11 October 2006.

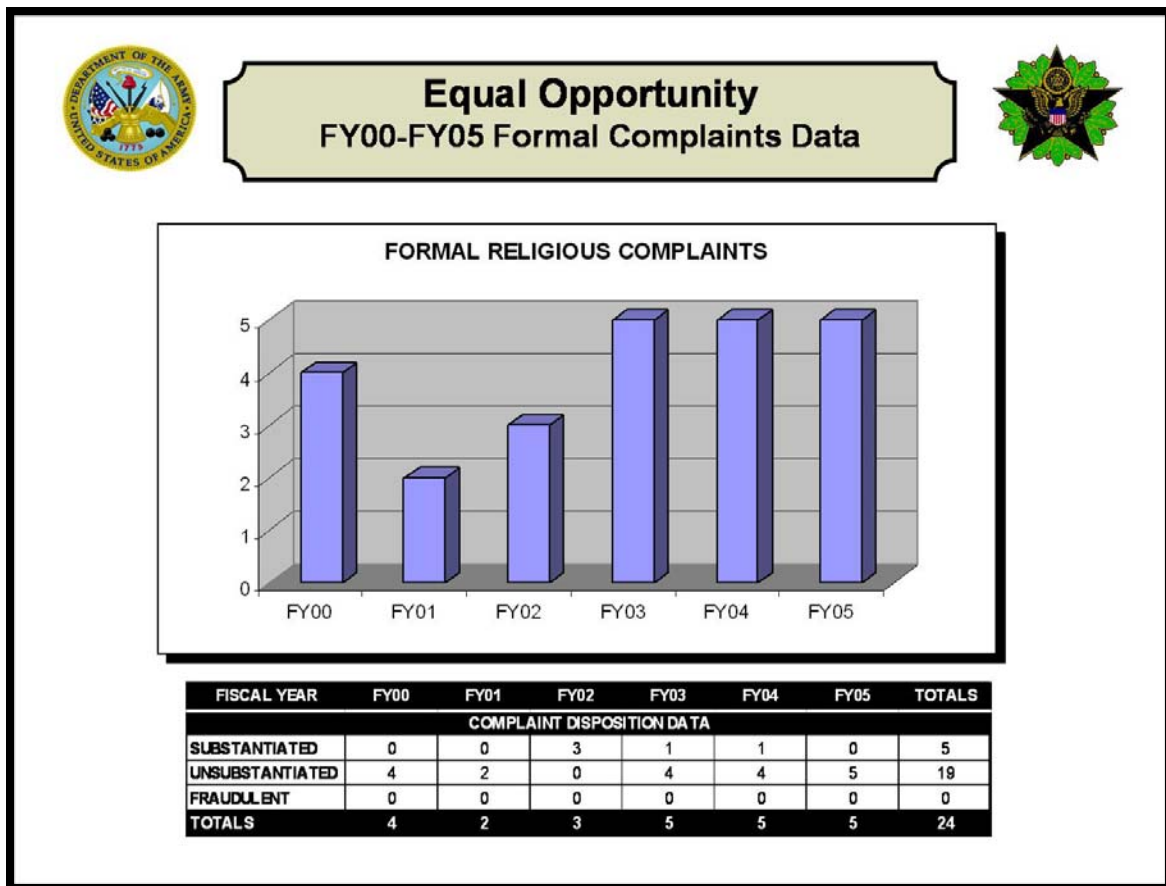
³⁰ Department of Defense, "Accommodation of Religious Practices Within the Military Services," Department of Defense Directive 1300.17, 3 February 1988; [online] available from http://www.dtic.mil/whs/directives/corres/pdf/130017_020388/130017p.pdf; Internet; accessed 12 October 2006.

Figure 4).³¹ While the total of 24 cases since 2000 may not be high there are three points to consider when looking at this data.

First, these cases whether, substantiated or not, have the potential to create a media frenzy, thereby portraying the military in a negative light. Second, the number of potential incidents may be substantially higher than the number of complaints reported. Complaints to the Army's Equal Opportunity (EO) Office are strictly voluntary and therefore rely on the individual to make the accusation of religious discrimination or intolerance. In most cases the person reporting the incident is subordinate and is typically reluctant to make any formal complaint for fear of reprisal. Third, this is not the only avenue military personnel have for registering discomfort and incidents. In addition to the EO Office, they can bring the situation to the attention of the chain of command or to the local chaplain. In total, the number of offenses may be much higher than what is reported to the EO Office, but what is reported can nevertheless be very damaging to the service's image and reputation.

³¹ Tracy Parker, "Formal EO Complaints Data (UNCLASSIFIED)" Email to author, 8 September 2006.

Figure 4. US Army Formal Religious Complaints.



From: Department of the Army, Equal Opportunity Branch

Also, we might wonder why have there been so many problems if the directives are clear? Arguably, as in any military mission it all comes down to training and education. Drawing on the combined experience and knowledge of two local military chaplains as well as several officers with command experience, separate from my own, I was unable to identify any service that has a formal service-wide religious education training program (excluding the chaplain and chaplain assistant training programs). One Army chaplain pointed out that the only training to discuss diversity was the Army's Consideration of Others (CO2)

training, which does not focus on religion specifically.³² Religious education programs are also common within units, but such programs are designed primarily to provide religious education on a particular faith to those personnel who belong to that faith – similar to a bible study class in many churches. In short, there is religious education but not a standardized religion diversity training program within the services. One consequence is that those current and future commanders, charged with the responsibility to ensure free exercise of religion generally have no training regarding the specific beliefs and practices of those within their commands. This only compounds the difficulties when issues relating to religion arise and tensions among service members mount.

³² Lieutenant Colonel (Chaplain) Daniel Minjares, "RE: Thesis Research Assistance" Email to author 6 July 2006.

III. SECULAR AND RELIGIOUS

Believing with you that religion is a matter which lies solely between Man & his God, that he owes account to none other for his faith or worship, that the legitimate powers of government reach actions only & not opinions, I contemplate with sovereign reverence that act of the whole American people which declared that their legislature should “make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof,” thus building a wall of separation between Church & State.³³

Thomas Jefferson
Reply to the Banbury Baptist Association
January 1, 1802

A. INTRODUCTION

This chapter analyzes two high profile cases involving recent conflicts between two opposing groups. On one side are military leaders and chaplains who believe the military is discriminating against them by restricting or mandating the degree which they can practice and discuss their faith. On the other side are those that believe the military should have limits on the ability of military personnel to promote their beliefs in mandatory settings such as an academy classroom or at unit events. In each case the conflict expands beyond those in uniform to include members of Congress and religious groups, effectively polarizing people into two camps, creating an *Us* versus *Them* situation.

B. LIEUTENANT (CHAPLAIN) GORDON J. KLINGENSCHMITT (2006)

1. Background

The case of U.S. Navy (USN) Chaplain Gordon J. Klingenschmitt is the most recent case I will analyze in this thesis. According to his website, Chaplain Klingenschmitt has served in the military for approximately 14 years since graduating from the USAF Academy in 1991.³⁴ After several years in the Air Force as both a missile launch officer and intelligence officer, Chaplain

³³ Jon Meacham, *American Gospel: God the Founding Fathers and the Making of a Nation* (New York: Random House, 2006), 264.

³⁴ “Who is Gordon James Klingenschmitt?” [online]; available from <http://www.persuade.tv/index.php?id=21>; Internet; accessed 11 October 2006.

Klingenschmitt transferred to the Navy to become a Chaplain. This move included a reduction in rank and pay grade from Major (O-4) to Lieutenant (O-3).

Klingenschmitt has been a priest in the Evangelical Episcopal Church since 2001. The Evangelical Episcopal Church is one of many evangelical denominations within the military. The total number of proclaimed evangelical denominational members in uniform is approximately 3,000.³⁵ As previously mentioned, the term evangelical and its definition are subjects of considerable debate. To get a clearer understanding of the views of the Evangelical Episcopal Church one need look no further than the church's website. According to the church's website, members of the church, including priests, have the duty to evangelize or convert nonbelievers using several techniques.

Sharing the Gospel. Our primary mission is to reach the world with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Each local church must develop a personal strategy to accomplish this task in their social and cultural envelopment. Jesus challenges the Church to become missions' minded and focus on evangelism. Before there can be any reformation in society there must be regeneration in the people.

Making Disciples. When a person is saved, then this person must be taught and mentored. A foundation needs to be laid upon repentance and faith in God. They [sic] need to be released into the power of the Holy Spirit. This is why the local Christian community needs to help the new believers to grow in Christ. Our aim is to build Christ-centre congregation that emphasize one-on-one and small group ministry.

Training leaders. Discipleship is the first step toward leadership. Leaders are those who disciple and leads others. Saint Paul called them 'faithful men who will be able to teach others' (2 Tim. 2:2). Leadership development is key to build the Church to transform the world. Leaders must be trained intentionally. In training leaders, our emphasis is on developing character, knowledge and wisdom among the leaders as well as impact a flesh anointing and gifting on the next generation.

Building relationships. In Acts 13:2, the Holy Spirit said, 'Set apart to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them'. God joined people together for a greater purpose and

³⁵ Deborah Williamson, "DRS #12965" Email to author, 9 June 2006.

ministry of God's kingdom. In Ephesians 4:16 it says, 'From Him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and build itself up in love'. God joins you together rather than you joining something. This is the reason why the Alliance is built in a relational base and much effort, time and energy is spent building the bonds of friendship between the leaders of the movement.

Planting churches. Church planting has been called the most effective form of evangelism. Local churches also provide the spiritual family for new believers to be nurtured and disciple [sic]. They are the Lord's strategy to reveal His wisdom to a community or nation and are given the promise by Christ Himself that the gates of hell will not prevail against them. Our calling is not just to further evangelism, but also to establish churches through which the God's kingdom is made visible.

Establishing world missions. There is a world around us that it is seeking real answers to their [sic] questions, to overcome hard situations and face big challenges in their daily life. This is why we believe it is important to establish world missions that speak about Jesus Christ in word and deeds. This is accomplished through Compassion, resources and empower [sic] the Christians throughout the world.³⁶

As we will see, the duty to convert or evangelize as part of a person's faith becomes a point of tension when it is confronted by the Department of Defense Directives previously discussed. Should there be limits to religious freedom and accommodation?

2. Events

Klingenschmitt's case points to the questions of religious freedom. His case does not involve just one incident or event. Rather, it embodies, a series of events that took place from the time he entered the chaplaincy. On several occasions Klingenschmitt was accused of promoting his faith by ending public prayers "in Jesus' name" which many argue runs counter to the tradition of military chaplains providing non-denominational presentations or comments at public (non-voluntary) or unit services. One of those services happened to be a memorial service for a deceased Sailor. Klingenschmitt supported his remarks

³⁶ Evangelical Episcopal Church, "What We Do," [online]; available from <http://www.renewalepiscopal.org/what.htm>; Internet; accessed 11 October 2006.

by saying the service was entirely voluntary and therefore he could practice his faith. Others claim that since the memorial service was set up by the unit, Klingenschmitt should have used a non-sectarian reference. As a result of his reference to Jesus, Klingenschmitt was both censured by superiors and received less than exemplary evaluation reports. In one of his recent evaluation reports his commander stated that Chaplain Klingenschmitt has "demonstrated recurring confusion concerning a chaplain's role within a military organization."³⁷

The situation escalated in December 2005, when Klingenschmitt staged an 18-day hunger strike outside the White House protesting what he felt were discrimination practices by the Navy and demanding that President Bush sign an executive order "to stop those individuals under his authority from interfering with the right of military chaplains to pray in the name of Jesus".³⁸ Following the hunger strike, the Secretary of the Navy issued SECNAVINST 1730.7C, Religious Ministry within the Department of the Navy. In this document, the Navy defined the role of chaplains. The instruction states,

As a condition of appointment, every RMP [Religious Ministry Professional] must be willing to function in a pluralistic environment in the military, where diverse religious traditions exist side-by-side with tolerance and respect. Every RMP must be willing to support directly and indirectly the free exercise of religion by all military members of the DON [Department of the Navy], their family members, and other persons authorized to be served, in cooperation with other chaplains and RMPs. Chaplains are trained to minister within the specialized demands of the military environment without compromising the tenets of their own religious tradition. In providing religious ministry, chaplains shall strive to avoid the establishment of religion to ensure that free exercise rights are protected for all authorized personnel. Chaplains will provide ministry to those of their own faith, facilitate ministry to those of other faiths, and care for all servicemembers, including

³⁷ Alan Cooperman, "Military Wrestles with Disharmony Among Chaplains," *The Washington Post*, 30 August 2005 [article online]; available from http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/08/29/AR2005082902036_3.html; Internet; accessed 11 October 2006.

³⁸ "News Conference: Christian Leaders Oppose New Navy Prayer Policy," *Christian Wire Service*, 27 March 2006 [online]; available from <http://www.persuade.tv/frenzy2/MooreKlingenschmittRelease.pdf>; Internet; accessed 11 October 2006.

those who claim no religious faith. Chaplains shall respect the rights of others to their own religious beliefs, including the right to hold no beliefs.³⁹

The instruction further outlined when functions could be considered sectarian or non-sectarian. The instruction states that, "Other than Divine/Religious Services, religious elements for a command function, absent extraordinary circumstances, should be non-sectarian in nature."⁴⁰ The justification for non-sectarian references during command functions is simple. Command functions are mandatory events. If a chaplain insists on preaching in accordance with his or her own faith at mandatory events they run the risk of offending those in attendance who don't adhere to the chaplain's faith. The fact that the chaplain is also in uniform gives the appearance of government promotion of religion.

In March 2006, Klingenschmitt escalated the tension when, against orders and in uniform, he participated in a second protest outside the White House in front of the national media. In addition to wearing his uniform, Klingenschmitt conducted a sectarian prayer. Again, this gave the appearance of not only state-sponsored religion, but Klingenschmitt also made the situation worse when he blatantly challenged his command and the Navy by disobeying his commander's order and by participating in a political protest in uniform. According to Klingenschmitt the issue was not about his role as a military chaplain but is instead about his First Amendment right to freedom of religion.

When the government says to me that, well, you can practice your faith in private but don't say the J word in public, because the Jesus word is insensitive, well, they're characterizing Jesus Christ as an offensive word. And they're turning my Lord into a slur. Well, that is inherently offensive to me, and that is inherently discriminatory to people of my faith tradition.⁴¹

³⁹ Secretary of the Navy, "Religious Ministry within the Department of the Navy," *SECNAV Instruction 1730.7C*, 21 February 2006.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ "Military Chaplains Controversy," *Religion and Ethics Newsweekly*, 20 January 2006 [story online]; available from <http://www.pbs.org/wnet/religionandethics/week921/feature.html>; Internet; accessed 11 October 2006.

Others, including some fellow evangelicals, do not agree. United States Air Force Colonel Richard Hum is an evangelical minister and member of the Armed Forces Chaplains Board. He believes cases like that of Klingenschmitt only hurt the service. According to Hum,

There is a polarization that is beginning to set up that I don't think is helpful. Us versus them,. . . I don't know whether it's an overflow of what's happening in society. But this sort of thing is so detrimental to what we are trying to do in the chaplaincy.⁴²

According to Reverend Barry Lynn, the Executive Director of Americans United for Separation of Church and State,

When you're hired as a chaplain, when you become an officer in the United States military, as every person in the military does, you give up certain First Amendment rights. But this is not fundamentally an issue of free speech. This is an idea of how the taxpayers are supporting religion in the military and legitimate constraints on what those chaplains can do.⁴³

Klingenschmitt does have his supporters. The most influential are House of Representatives members Walter B. Jones of North Carolina and Duncan Hunter of California. Jones rallied support from over 70 congressional representatives and sent a joint letter to President Bush demanding that he take action to support the religious freedom of military chaplains.⁴⁴ Jones asserts that,

What is happening is a move toward more political correctness, towards more secularism in the military. . . I cannot believe that the majority of Americans would be offended that a person prayed to his God.⁴⁵

⁴² Alan Cooperman, "Military Wrestles with Disharmony Among Chaplains," *The Washington Post*, 30 August 2005 [article online]; available from http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/08/29/AR2005082902036_3.html; Internet; accessed 11 October 2006.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ "Jones Calls for President to Protect Military Chaplains' First Amendment Rights," 5 January 2006 [online]; available from <http://jones.house.gov/html/release.cfm?id=366>; Internet; accessed 11 October 2006.

⁴⁵ Neela Banerjee, "Proposal on Military Chaplains and Prayer Holds Up Bill," *New York Times*, 19 September 2006, late edition (East Coast), sec. A.

Hunter recently pushed for a provision to the National Defense Authorization Act that, if it had been approved, would ensure that "chaplains in each of the military services would have the prerogative to pray according to the dictates of their own conscience."⁴⁶ Klingenschmitt has also received support from influential conservative Christian groups such as Focus on the Family. Citing not only Klingenschmitt's constitutional rights, supporters also reference 10 USC 6031 that reads "An officer in the Chaplain Corps may conduct public worship according to the manner and forms of the church of which he is a member."⁴⁷

In September 2006 Klingenschmitt was court martialed and found guilty of disobeying an order during the March 2006 protest when he voluntarily wore his Navy uniform. He was not discharged from the service, but he could be separated administratively within the next few months. From the Navy's point of view, the court martial was not about prayer but was about an officer refusing an order. Klingenschmitt clearly stepped outside the chain of command to air his grievance, both publicly and in uniform. Although his challenge was personally unsuccessful, Klingenschmitt's case has brought to light the ferocity of religious tensions that exist within the chaplaincy.

3. Analysis

Klingenschmitt's case is not the only example of a chaplain claiming that the military is restricting his or her religious freedom. Earlier this year, Army Captain (Chaplain) Jonathan Stertzbach, claimed that the military is forcing chaplains to use nonsectarian prayers when he was prevented by his supervisor from inserting the phrase "in Jesus name we pray" into a memorial service for a fallen Soldier.⁴⁸ Reports have also surfaced that active and retired evangelical Navy chaplains have filed a lawsuit that alleges,

⁴⁶ Neela Banerjee, "Proposal on Military Chaplains and Prayer Holds Up Bill," *New York Times*, 19 September 2006, late edition (East Coast), sec. A.

⁴⁷ "USC 10 6031," *U.S. code collection*, [online]; available from http://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/10/usc_sec_10_00006031----000-.html; Internet; accessed 11 October 2006.

⁴⁸ Julia Duin, "Army silences chaplain after prayer criticism," *The Washington Times*, 14 February 2006 [article online]; available from <http://www.washtimes.com/national/20060214-011717-4019r.htm>; Internet; accessed 11 October 2006.

The Navy hierarchy allows only those Christian ministers who advocate only non-sectarian blandishments to be promoted. Those with evangelical beliefs, they say, are routinely drummed from the Navy.⁴⁹

Much of the confusion appears to be over what is acceptable from the perspective of the Department of Defense which must respect the individual practices and beliefs of its members while at the same time preventing those beliefs from undermining unit cohesion. As the Chaplain Corps continues to receive evangelicals in greater numbers the potential for cases like Klingenschmitt's continues to grow. Some fear that these types of conflicts will only minimize the role of chaplains in the future as the Department of Defense attempts to limit the tension. In a recent letter sent to Catholic Chaplains, Archbishop Edwin O'Brien echoed the same fears,

To avoid the obvious adverse effect on unit cohesion that such activity would cause, it is entirely possible that commanders, who are ultimately responsible to protect the free exercise of religion for all their people, would decide to dispense with public prayer entirely. Our military would not be well served by this turn of events.⁵⁰

Limiting or eliminating public prayer may diffuse the tension, but it could also escalate the problem as chaplains, military leaders, politicians, and their supporters would argue, like Klingenschmitt, that the government is dictating religious beliefs, thereby promoting a public religion. Either way, this conflict is far from over.

C. USAF ACADEMY (2005)

Another recent and high profile case of religious tension within the military took place at the USAF Academy. Unlike the Klingenschmitt case which dealt primarily with freedom of religion, the USAF Academy case tackles the establishment or promotion of religion within military organizations. At issue is

⁴⁹ "Congress tackles chaplain's right to pray," *WorldNetDaily*, 16 September 2006 [article online]; available from http://www.wnd.com/news/article.asp?ARTICLE_ID=52009; Internet; accessed 11 October 2006.

⁵⁰ Archbishop Edwin O'Brien, Letter to Lieutenant Commander (Chaplain) Mike Zuffoletto, 21 September 2006.

whether or not high-ranking members of the Academy's administration, faculty, and support staff actively or tacitly supported the promotion of evangelical Christian views to cadets and if that support took the form of coercion and/or discrimination against non-Christians.

1. Background

In May 2005, Michael Dominguez, the Acting Secretary of the Air Force, directed the USAF Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel to assemble a team to,

Assess policy and guidance on the subject, appropriateness of relevant training for all personnel at USAFA [United States Air Force Academy], practices in the Academy community that would either enhance or detract from a climate that respects both the "free exercise of religion" and the "establishment" clauses of the First Amendment, effectiveness of USAFA mechanisms in addressing complaints on this subject, and relevance of the religious climate to the entire Air Force.⁵¹

Dominguez directed the assessment following a bombardment of complaints, primarily from external groups such as Americans United for Separation of Church and State, charging the academy leadership with fostering a command climate in which leaders could proselytize and discriminate against non-Christians. Similar complaints also surfaced from other sources. Michael Weinstein, USAF Academy graduate and parent of two former and one current Air Force Academy cadet, has filed a legal case against the USAF claiming the USAF Academy is violating the Establishment Clause of the United States Constitution. Weinstein filed the suit after his son Curtis told him about anti-Semitic comments and slurs used by fellow cadets.⁵² In addition to the law suit, Weinstein also went on to establish The Military Religious Freedom Foundation which is "dedicated to ensuring that all members of the United States Armed Forces fully receive the Constitutional guarantees of religious freedom to which

⁵¹ Headquarters United States Air Force, *The Report of the Headquarters Review Group Concerning the Religious Climate at the U.S. Air Force Academy*, 22 June 2005 [report online]; available from http://www.af.mil/pdf/HQ_Review_Group_Report.pdf#search=%22%22Religious%20Climate%20at%20the%20U.S.%20Air%20Force%20Academy%22%22; Internet; cited 11 October 2006.

⁵² "Air Force Academy Rocked by Charges of Religious Intolerance," *Church & State*, May 2005 [article online]; available from <http://proquest.com>; Internet; accessed 6 October 2006.

they and all Americans are entitled by virtue of the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment” and to write a book about his struggle against evangelical Christianity at the USAF Academy.⁵³ Air Force Academy Chaplain Melinda Morton was one of the first to raise her concerns about the religious climate at the institution. Shortly after Morton brought her concerns to the attention of the administration she was placed on reassignment orders to Japan. Morton claims the reassignment was in response to her complaints. The Air Force argues the transfer was part of a typical transition cycle. Morton has since resigned her commission and has left military service. Each of the accusations signals a much larger problem regarding religious tolerance at an institution designed to mold and develop the future leaders of the USAF.

2. Events

As in the Klingenschmitt case, there is not a single isolated event that occurred at the Air Force Academy. Instead, there is a series of events that began in the spring of 2003, when the Commandant, Brigadier General John Weida, distributed an email message to the entire academy regarding the National Day of Prayer. Some academy personnel, to include cadets, viewed the Commandant's message as an inappropriate use of position to promote or endorse religion.⁵⁴ In September 2003, the Commandant was once again at the center of attention when, at a mandatory event, which included cadets from various religious backgrounds, he used the “J is for Jesus” hand signal in a call-and-response system. When he issued the hand signal, Christian cadets familiar with the signal gave the “Rocks!” response. Some cadets of other religious faiths or those of no religious preference were not amused at what they felt was a promotion of religion by the Number Two officer at the academy.

⁵³ “Mission Statement,” *Military Religious Freedom Foundation* [website]; available from <http://militaryreligiousfreedom.org/about.html>; Internet; accessed 11 October 2006.

⁵⁴ Headquarters United States Air Force, *The Report of the Headquarters Review Group Concerning the Religious Climate at the U.S. Air Force Academy*, 22 June 2005 [report online]; available from http://www.af.mil/pdf/HQ_Review_Group_Report.pdf#search=%22%22Religious%20Climate%20at%20the%20U.S.%20Air%20Force%20Academy%22%22; Internet; cited 11 October 2006.

In December of the same year, an advertisement printed in the school newspaper, *Academy Spirit*, was the subject of additional tension. The ad was purchased by Christian Leadership Ministries, a nationwide organization of Christian faculty members, to include members from the USAF Academy faculty. Two of the messages in the ad were “We believe that Jesus Christ is the only real hope for the world” and “there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among mortals by which we must be saved. – *Acts 4:12*”.⁵⁵ The ad was co-signed by over 250 senior members of the academy staff and faculty. To some students, placing the ad in the school’s newspaper and the fact that it was endorsed by senior school officials equaled an official endorsement of Christianity by the USAF Academy and the U.S. government.

These weren’t the only examples of tension that emerged. In February 2004, flyers were placed at all the table settings (over 4,000) in the cadet dining facility advertising the movie “The Passion of the Christ”. To some students this implied pressure to see the movie. In May of the same year, a cadet voiced concerns that all students, regardless of their religious identification, were forced to adhere to the Catholic diet during Lent which requires no meat on Fridays. The same cadet also complained that his request to form a group of Freethinkers (Atheists) to meet alongside other religious groups on campus was denied because the USAF Academy chaplain felt the group was not religiously based. Complaints also surfaced regarding use of the term “Heathen Flight”, a nickname given to the cadets who chose not to participate in the voluntary evening worship services. These cadets were marched back to their tents as a group during Basic Cadet Training (BCT). Although this name was developed by cadets themselves, reports from several graduates indicate the name had been used for

⁵⁵ Headquarters United States Air Force, *The Report of the Headquarters Review Group Concerning the Religious Climate at the U.S. Air Force Academy*, 22 June 2005 [report online]; available from http://www.af.mil/pdf/HQ_Review_Group_Report.pdf#search=%22%22Religious%20Climate%20at%20the%20U.S.%20Air%20Force%20Academy%22%22; Internet; cited 11 October 2006.

several years making it difficult for the administration to deny knowledge of the term's existence.

In the summer of 2004, a team from the Yale Divinity School, lead by Professor Kristin Leslie, visited the academy at the request of a USAF Academy Chaplain to observe BCT. During that visit, Professor Leslie's team observed a Protestant Worship service during which the chaplain was instructing cadets to proselytize. In her testimony at a Congressional Hearing Leslie said the chaplain was,

exhorting basics (cadets in basic training) to return to their tents to tell other basics that in fact if they didn't profess the same kind of religious tradition then in fact they would go to hell.⁵⁶

She said the chaplain also stated that those not "born again will burn in the fires of hell."⁵⁷ It must be noted that the service the Yale team observed was entirely voluntary which is one reason why the Air Force took no action against the chaplain, but the message that was disseminated should still be of great concern. It is hard to develop unit cohesion if your roommates are constantly telling you that you will burn in hell and are receiving those instructions from not only a chaplain, but also an officer in the USAF.

Accusations of proselytizing also reached beyond the classroom or the chapel, suggesting a systemic problem that runs throughout the academy. In November 2004, the head football coach posted a "Team Jesus" Banner in the locker room even though the team was comprised of players of all faiths. During the assessment team's focus group interviews at least one coach admitted to leading his team in prayer and referencing Jesus Christ on a regular basis.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Gustov Spohn, "Professor Kristin Leslie Testifies at Congressional Hearing on Air Force Academy," *Yale Divinity School News Release*, 6 July 2005 [online]; available from http://www.yale.edu/divinity/news/news_Kristen_testimony.pdf#search=%22Military%20Chaplain%22; Internet; accessed 11 October 2006.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Headquarters United States Air Force, *The Report of the Headquarters Review Group Concerning the Religious Climate at the U.S. Air Force Academy*, 22 June 2005 [report online]; available from http://www.af.mil/pdf/HQ_Review_Group_Report.pdf#search=%22%22Religious%20Climate%20at%20the%20U.S.%20Air%20Force%20Academy%22%22; Internet; cited 11 October 2006.

Another coach highlighted the perception that minority religious views are rarely considered or respected when he said “that if someone is offended they need to learn to deal with it on their own.”⁵⁹

Free exercise of religion has also been an issue when it comes to the cadets’ weekly schedule. The Christian holy day is Sunday and as such has historically been left free of any training requirements so cadets could attend services. The Muslim holy day on the other hand is Friday, but unlike Sunday there are training events scheduled.

The training schedule listed ‘optional chapel service’ for Muslims from 7 to 8 p.m. Friday. However, that slot is also listed as ‘basic cadet time’ to “prepare room for inspection, work on uniforms, boots, etc.”⁶⁰

This error by the scheduling office and the academy’s leadership forced Muslim cadets to choose between their religious practices and necessary training time. The assessment team found that points of conflict like this and the others previously discussed posed difficult choices for cadets. According to the team’s report,

The full burden of initiating the accommodation process falls upon the cadets, heightening their sense that individuals not of the Christian faith are not being treated fairly.”⁶¹

In the summer of 2005, the religious accommodation policies of the DoD and the USAF in general received a boost in favor of evangelicals. The National Conference on Ministry to the Armed Forces (NCMAF), comprised of several

⁵⁹ Headquarters United States Air Force, *The Report of the Headquarters Review Group Concerning the Religious Climate at the U.S. Air Force Academy*, 22 June 2005 [report online]; available from http://www.af.mil/pdf/HQ_Review_Group_Report.pdf#search=%22%22Religious%20Climate%20at%20the%20U.S.%20Air%20Force%20Academy%22%22; Internet; cited 11 October 2006.

⁶⁰ The Associated Press, “AFA Muslims face worship-time conflict,” *The Denver Post*, 2 July 2005 [article online]; available from http://www.denverpost.com/news/ci_2837668; Internet; accessed 15 October 2006.

⁶¹ Headquarters United States Air Force, *The Report of the Headquarters Review Group Concerning the Religious Climate at the U.S. Air Force Academy*, 22 June 2005 [report online]; available from http://www.af.mil/pdf/HQ_Review_Group_Report.pdf#search=%22%22Religious%20Climate%20at%20the%20U.S.%20Air%20Force%20Academy%22%22; Internet; cited 11 October 2006.

chaplain endorsing bodies from several denominations, issued an updated code of ethics for military chaplains. One of the codes states that, "I will not proselytize from other religious bodies, but I retain the right to evangelize those who are not affiliated."⁶² This document is not "official" military policy but given a chaplain's duty to his faith first and the military second to some it appeared to be policy. The NCMAF code was further reinforced to chaplains when in a *New York Times* interview, the USAF Deputy Chief of Chaplains, Brigadier General (Chaplain) Cecil Richardson paraphrased the code.⁶³ The NCMAF code of ethics and the support it received from a high ranking officer like Richardson to many observers gave a "green light" to military chaplains to evangelize anyone not associated with a denomination, whether that individual wanted to be evangelized or not.

3. Analysis

The USAF Academy case is a perfect example of the religious tensions that can be stirred up in any military organization. Examples of conflict existed between cadets; between cadets and faculty; between staff and faculty members; and between cadets and the administration. To correct the problem, solutions had to then be designed to target each of these conflicts through religious diversity training and through clearly defined policy. All personnel in the organization had to be made aware of what are considered acceptable actions and/or statements regarding religion, with the aim that those that can't follow those policies, regardless of rank or position should be held accountable as in any other policy violation case.

In March 2005, the academy instituted Respecting the Values of Other People (RSVP) Training. This 50-minute block of instruction was developed by the USAF Academy Chaplains office along with other staff members. RSVP

⁶² The National Conference on Ministry to the Armed Forces, "The Covenant and The Code of Ethics for Chaplains of the Armed Forces, [online]; available from <http://www.ncmaf.org/policies/PDFs/CodeofEthics-NCMAF.pdf>; Internet; accessed 18 October 2006.

⁶³ "Air Force Backs Down on Policy Allowing Chaplains to Evangelize," *Church & State*, November 2005 [article online]; available from available from <http://proquest.com>; Internet; accessed 6 October 2006.

training focuses on scenarios depicting religious intolerance and is designed to be taught to small groups in order to encourage discussion. According to the assessment team's report, reviews on the quality and effectiveness of the training have been mixed.

Cadets stated it was a good reminder about basic lessons. Many applauded the Chaplain Staff for their dedicated efforts. However, many cadets did not seem to understand the reason for RSVP training and did not think it was necessary or effective. They believe that it "talked down" to them and did not give them any tools to deal with the problem.

Faculty, staff, and cadets voiced several recommendations to make the RSVP training more effective. For example, "night classes were ineffective; move the class to daytime hours." Many stated the training would be taken more seriously if senior leadership, in particular the Superintendent, opened the course both to demonstrate leadership's commitment and to put the issue in context. A staff member noted that the cadets need concrete guidance. The RSVP program coordinators indicated training could only go so far without Air Force-wide guidance with regard to religion in the workplace. Cadets thought highlighting situations that really happened would be helpful. It was also noted that they learned about the religious intolerance concern from the press not the leadership. Cadets also indicated more discussion would be valuable and they would like to see examples of practical situations they would encounter as cadets. They recommended a "check list" and a "tool kit" for how to respond to religious intolerance, similar to that which cadets were given for sexual assault. It was recommended that the training needed to provide the appropriate tools to deal with the problem and there was mention that an outside briefer would be beneficial; they said they are bombarded with briefings by the staff and outside briefers were a "breath of fresh air." They brought up training from sexual assault as a positive example. Others requested more cadet involvement in the training. Interviewers also heard that a required class on world religions and other cultures would be beneficial. Instructors lost the interest of the audience when they "read the script."⁶⁴

⁶⁴ Headquarters United States Air Force, *The Report of the Headquarters Review Group Concerning the Religious Climate at the U.S. Air Force Academy*, 22 June 2005 [report online]; available from http://www.af.mil/pdf/HQ_Review_Group_Report.pdf#search=%22%22Religious%20Climate%20at%20the%20U.S.%20Air%20Force%20Academy%22%22; Internet; cited 11 October 2006.

The report also notes that the RSVP training currently being taught is only the first in a three-part series. Phases II and III are under consideration, but if approved will provide religion and culture classes and involve more in-depth scenarios.

The three phases of RSVP, if approved, suggest a step in the right direction but alone it can't solve all of the conflicts at the USAF Academy. The training unfortunately appears to be tailored for the cadets and staff members, but does not appear to address the overarching problems of religious intolerance and proselytizing by senior leaders. For the training to work properly, it must be applied to all levels of the command or institution equally.

D. SUMMARY

The cases of Chaplain Klingenschmitt and the USAF Academy are two recent and relevant examples of low religious tensions playing out in the military. In both we see the issue of religious tolerance and with all sides, ironically enough, using the First Amendment to support its position. Much of this parallels what occurs among civilians, but while it appears the First Amendment debate will continue to rage on within civil society the military has an opportunity to do what it has always done – set the example. Clearly defined policies and a religious diversity training program targeted at the early stages of a servicemember's career can potentially decrease tensions. Proper training and strict policies could have prevented Klingenschmitt from pursuing a military career if he fully understood the line between public and private statements regarding his faith. Religious diversity training at the USAF Academy could have ensured current and future leaders were sensitive to the beliefs, practices, and desires of others. Should those wishing to serve in the military be forced to "leave their faith at the door?" I don't believe so, but presenting policies, guidelines, and training up front can prompt potential members to decline service or new members to terminate service if their beliefs are incompatible with DoD policies.

IV. CLASH OF RELIGIONS

We say that the war on terror is not a war against Islam, but that's not how it felt most days at Guantanamo. Religion is at the heart of everything inside Camp Delta – particularly the tension.⁶⁵

Former Army Chaplain James Yee

A. INTRODUCTION

The next two cases exemplify the potential for religious conflict within a military organization when there is either perceived or actual discrimination of minority groups. As in the previous Chapter, these kinds of cases tend to attract a significant amount of media attention and can alter perceptions of the military regardless of the outcome. In light of the ongoing Global War on Terrorism, the cases I present involve Islam and how perceptions of religious intolerance against a specific minority religious group, like Islam, can lead to conflict. The fact that these examples involve Islam can potentially alter views of the U.S. Military not only from U.S. citizens but from the larger world community as well. Conflicts involving perceived or actual discrimination against Muslims gives the appearance that the U.S. Military is a force on a crusade against Islam. This perception also has the potential, in the long term, to decrease the religious diversity of the military by discouraging minority groups, especially Muslims, from enlisting, thereby also decreasing linguistic and/or cultural expertise that is needed for continued or future military operations in the Muslim world.

B. GUANTANAMO (2003)

1. Background

U.S. Army Captain (Chaplain) James Yee arrived at U.S. Naval Station Guantanamo Bay Cuba in November 2002 for what was supposed to be a six-month temporary assignment at Camp Delta, the maximum-security detention facility located there. He was one of several chaplains assigned to the

⁶⁵ James Yee, *For God and Country: Faith and Patriotism Under Fire* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2005), 11.

installation to provide religious support and perform religious services, but since Yee was the only Muslim Chaplain he had the additional responsibility of providing religious support to over 600 detainees housed at the station's detention center. The detainees are not identified as prisoners of war but are considered enemy combatants in the Global War on Terror. While most were captured in Afghanistan and Iraq a large number are originally from other Muslim countries such as Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Egypt, and Pakistan.

During his tour at Camp Delta, Yee claimed to have seen and heard about repeated acts by guards using religion as a tool to incite and degrade the detainees. Yee also believed there was a growing feeling of mistrust by certain members of the community towards Muslim Americans at Guantanamo, specifically those who worked in and around Camp Delta. His fears proved true in September 2003, after his assignment had been extended by four months; Yee was arrested on suspicion of "taking classified material to his home, and wrongfully transporting classified material without the proper security containers or covers."⁶⁶ To Yee, the issue wasn't about a security breach. To him the accusations were about his religion.

I was targeted in large part because of my religion. Because my form of prayer, in which I bow prostrate to the ground, and reciting of the Qur'an in the Arabic language, was the same form of prayer as the prisoners in Guantanamo. That led many to believe that if these are alleged suspects, then I must be an alleged suspect.⁶⁷

2. Events

In contrast to the incidents described in the previous chapter, the events surrounding Yee occurred within a relatively short timeframe. As previously stated, Yee arrived at Guantanamo in November 2002 for what he expected

⁶⁶ United States Southern Command, "Charges Preferred on Army Captain James Yee," *USSOUTHCOM Media Release*, 10 October 2003 [online]; available from <http://www.southcom.mil/PA/Media/Releases/PR031010.pdf>; Internet; accessed 25 October 2006.

⁶⁷ "Profile: James Yee," *Religion and Ethics Newsweekly*, 7 October 2005, [article online]; available from <http://www.pbs.org/wnet/religionandethics/week906/profile.html>; Internet; accessed 25 October 2006.

would be a six-month rotation. Prior to and during his first days at Camp Delta he had received warnings from two of the three previous Muslim Chaplains. One former Muslim Chaplain, Dan O’Keefe warned him that Camp Delta was “the most hostile environment he’d ever experienced.”⁶⁸ Yee’s immediate predecessor, USAF Captain (Chaplain) Hamza al-Mubarak, had a similar warning. Chaplain al-Mubarak told Yee, “I don’t want to discourage you on your first night, but you need to be prepared. This is not a friendly environment for Muslims, and I don’t just mean for the prisoners.”⁶⁹

Unbeknownst to Yee, he became a person of suspicion during his first month at Camp Delta in large part due to concerns raised by Army Captain Jason Orlich, an intelligence officer in the Joint Detention Operations Group. Orlich witnessed a cultural awareness briefing Yee presented to all new personnel and became concerned that Yee’s message was very close to a positive portrayal of the detainees. He also was concerned that Yee had received his religious training in Syria, a state listed as a state sponsor of terrorist groups, most notably Hezbollah in Lebanon.⁷⁰ Orlich was also troubled by the tightness of Yee’s prayer group or what became referred to as the “Muslim Clique.”⁷¹

Yee spent most of his duty days on the cell blocks providing religious support to the detainees. When he wasn’t at Camp Delta his time was typically spent providing religious support to other Muslims stationed at Guantanamo and serving in his staff role as advisor on Islamic matters and culture to the command. While on the cell blocks, Yee immediately identified treatment of detainees that, while acceptable to the predominantly Christian chain of

⁶⁸ James Yee, *For God and Country: Faith and Patriotism Under Fire* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2005), 43.

⁶⁹ Ibid, 51.

⁷⁰ Ray Rivera, “Suspicion in the Ranks,” *The Seattle Times*, 9-16 January 2005 [article online]; available from http://seattletimes.nwsource.com/html/nationworld/2002146253_yeechapter3.html; Internet; accessed 25 October 2006.

⁷¹ Ibid.

command, were excessive to Muslims. The most grievous violations involved body searches, abuse of the Koran, and disturbing detainees during prayer. Yee describes one of the searches he witnessed known as the “credit card swipe” that resulted in cell extraction by the Initial Response Force of eight guards.

To search for contraband or weapons hidden on the prisoners’ bodies, the guards felt under the detainees’ genitals and pressed their fingers inside the buttock crack. This type of physical contact is not acceptable under Islamic law, and the detainee had pushed the guard away from him. But prisoners were not allowed to touch an MP, and immediately eight guards were summoned.⁷²

Abuse of the Koran at Camp Delta included touching of the sacred book by guards, kicking and dropping it, or damaging it in some way. There was even one allegation that guards tried to flush the Koran down a toilet. Yee claims guards at times tried to prevent the detainees from praying by either talking to them during prayers or waiting until a few minutes before prayer to take the detainee to interrogation instead of allowing the detainee to finish. “They would also mock the call to prayer and play loud rock and roll music over the PA system.”⁷³

Yee raised his concerns with superiors arguing that blatant attacks on Islam were counterproductive and instead of “breaking-down” detainees individually it gave them a point to rally behind which resulted in riots and mass suicide attempts.⁷⁴ It is difficult to discount Yee’s assessment. Symbols of a person’s identity are strong motivators. Consider the tension that results when the U.S. Flag is mistreated or burned. To some this is just a form of expression, but to others it is an attack on America and who we are as a people. To the Muslim detainees and Muslim workers at Camp Delta, the abuses Yee observed were attacks on Islam and if anything fueled tensions and caused people to become suspicious of each other. These suspicions, especially of the Muslim

⁷² James Yee, *For God and Country: Faith and Patriotism Under Fire* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2005), 70-71.

⁷³ Ibid, 110.

⁷⁴ Ibid, 114-115.

personnel at Guantanamo, including Yee, only grew. A divide formed between the chain of command and the Muslims working at Camp Delta. Muslim detainees and Muslim members of the unit were grouped together. Eventually a formal investigation was opened on Yee and a handful of other Muslims at Camp Delta.

In September 2003, while on his way home to visit his wife and daughter, Yee was detained and then arrested by Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and Navy Criminal Investigation Service (NCIS) agents and held for 76 days at the Navy brig. During his time in custody Yee claims he was not permitted to exercise the very religious freedoms he fought to preserve for the Guantanamo detainees. He was not permitted to adhere to his halal diet, nor was he given a rug or towel to pray on. He also states “The brig chaplain refused to tell me when the Islamic prayer times were and wouldn’t confirm the direction of Mecca.”⁷⁵ Since his Koran was seized during his arrest the only religious book available at the brig library was the Bible.

Following Yee’s release from pre-trial confinement and after six-months of intense media attention, the criminal case against him was dropped by Army Major General Geoffrey Miller, Commander of Joint Task Force Guantanamo. According to the United States Southern Command (USSOUTHCOM) News Release dated March 19, 2004, “Citing national security concerns that would arise from the release of evidence, Miller decided to drop the charges.”⁷⁶ So, in essence, the evidence was so damaging the government decided not to pursue the criminal case – odd. Instead, Miller pursued two additional charges, one of adultery and the other of possessing pornography, under a nonjudicial system covered under Article 15 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ). Although initially found guilty by Miller, Yee was successful in his appeal to the

⁷⁵ James Yee, *For God and Country: Faith and Patriotism Under Fire* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2005), 158.

⁷⁶ United States Southern Command, “Charges Dismissed in Yee Case,” *USSOUTHCOM Media Release*, 19 March 2004 [online]; available from <http://www.southcom.mil/PA/Media/Releases/PR040319Yee.pdf>; Internet; accessed 25 October 2006.

Commander of USSOUTHCOM. In the end, at least officially, it was as if nothing had ever happened. Nevertheless, unable to overcome perceptions and the administrative obstacles ahead of him James Yee decided to leave the military. He received an honorable discharge in January 2005.

3. Analysis

This case serves to highlight the intensity of religious tensions that exist between a Christian dominated society and Islam following September 11. While Chaplain Yee did not witness all of the alleged abuses at Guantanamo first hand there were clearly enough examples to demonstrate that the guards' actions were intended to attack Islamic/Muslim symbols and practices. These attacks appeared to have not been limited to the cell blocks. To some there wasn't a clearly recognized distinction between the detainees, terrorists, and anyone who practiced Islam. Religion became the target instead of the individual. During a PBS interview in October 2005, Yee pointed out that the focus was religion following September 11 instead of on the terrorists themselves. He said,

Timothy McVeigh, for example, was not a Muslim, but his religion wasn't blamed for his act. What has happened is the religion of Islam has become blamed for criminal acts instead of individuals being blamed for their acts.⁷⁷

Back at Camp Delta, it all made sense in the eyes of those suspicious of Yee. He was Muslim and the detainees are Muslim, therefore he must be on their side. Because Yee stood up against what he believed were religiously oriented attacks his loyalty to the military and the United States came into question. He was in a difficult situation. If he kept his mouth shut he was not defending his faith or doing his job as a religious advisor, but if he spoke out he was accused of siding with enemy combatants. It appeared to be a "no win" situation.

Yee's religion also affected the way he was treated following his arrest. Fear of ties to terrorists resulted in Yee's incarceration for 76 days in a maximum

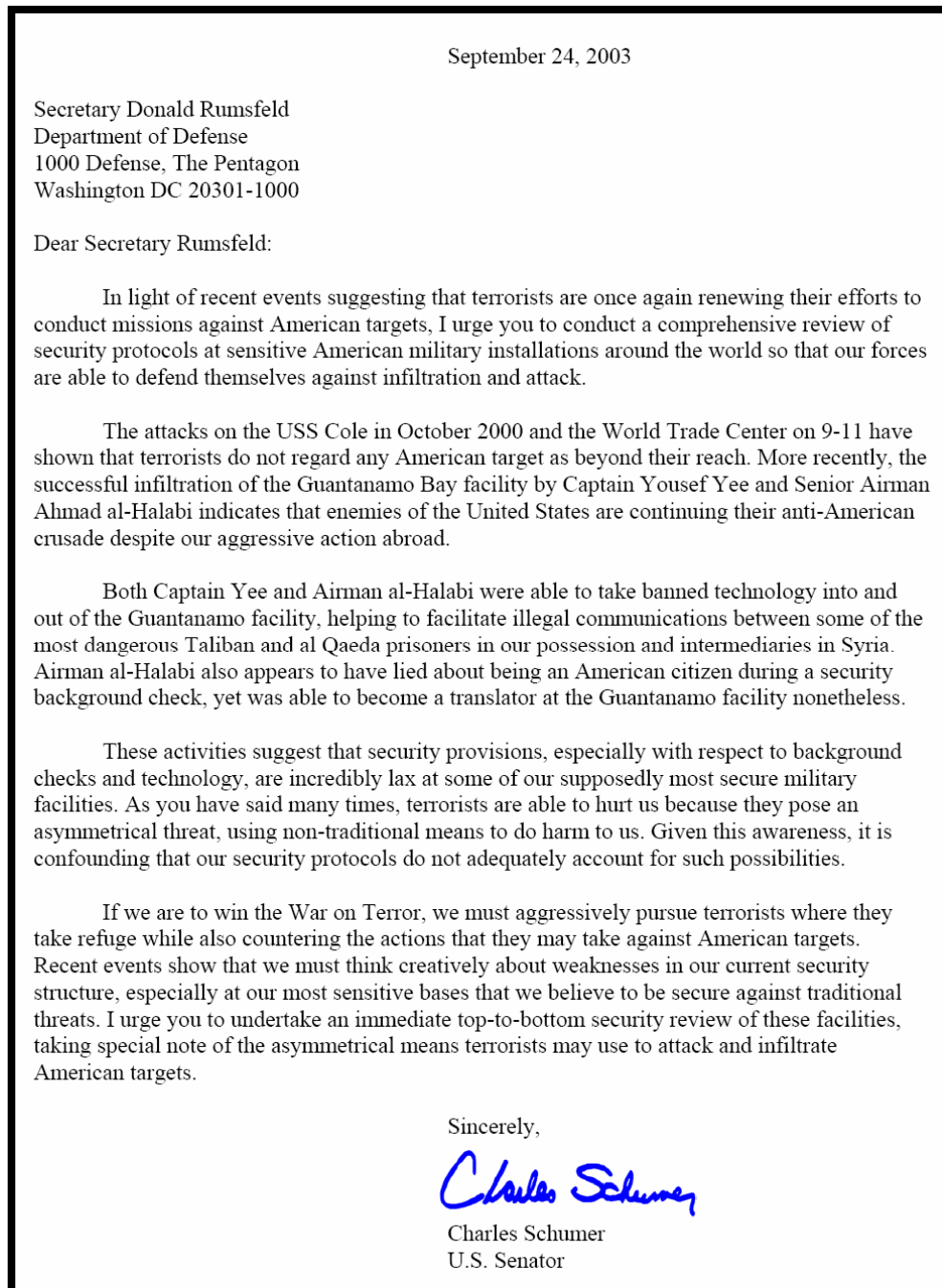
⁷⁷ "Interview: James Yee," *Religion and Ethics Newsweekly*, 7 October 2005, [article online]; available from <http://www.pbs.org/wnet/religionandethics/week906/interview.html>; Internet; accessed 25 October 2006.

security detention facility. Army Colonel Jackie Farr, a fellow officer working at Camp Delta, was also not only charged but found guilty of mishandling classified documents under Article 15 proceedings, yet Farr wasn't arrested nor did he spend time in pretrial confinement. Unlike Yee, Farr's case also received far less media attention.

Negative attitudes towards Muslims were also seen outside the military following Yee's arrest. The media and some senior members of the government quickly jumped on the bandwagon proclaiming that radical Islam was gaining ground within the military and there were calls for review of the endorsement process for Muslim chaplains. Only two weeks after Yee's arrest New York Senator Charles Schumer in a letter to Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, had already convicted Yee and was demanding action (see Figure 5).⁷⁸

⁷⁸ Senator Charles Schumer, Letter to Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, 24 September 2003 [online]; available from http://schumer.senate.gov/SchumerWebsite/pressroom/special_reports/Guantanamo%20and%20Rumsfeld%209.24.03.pdf; Internet; accessed 25 October 2006.

Figure 5. Letter from Senator Schumer to Secretary Rumsfeld



From: Press Release from the Office of Senator Charles Schumer

The Pentagon eventually ordered a review of the process for appointment of military chaplains as well as an investigation into the endorsement agencies. The investigation into the two Islamic endorsing agencies drew much attention when the offices of one agency were raided by government agents and the other, it was learned, had a board member suspected in the 1993 World Trade Center bombings.⁷⁹ According to Arizona Senator Jon Kyl, "There is a real lack of understanding in this country of who the enemy is. It is remarkable that people who have known connections to terrorism are the only people to approve these chaplains."⁸⁰

In Yee's case the only connection the government was able to prove was a connection with Islam. Branding or suspecting Muslim personnel as "linked" to terrorism is a stretch and has the potential to degrade trust Muslim Americans have in their government and their willingness to serve in the military. Yee believes this is what is happening.

I know from people that I have interacted with in the Muslim community, they're reluctant to want to have anything to do with serving the military or the government. It hurt recruiting in the military at a time when perhaps Muslims in the military can make great contributions based on our military activity today.⁸¹

The DMDC data presented in Chapter II showed that Muslim recruitment in the military has decreased since 2001, or that, at the very least, Muslims are unwilling to list their religious identification in their official records. Either way the drop should be a cause for concern and only supports the argument that from many Muslim's perspective the United States is engaged in a war against Islam.

⁷⁹ Rowan Scarborough and Steve Miller, "Military Probes Hiring of Clerics," *The Washington Times*, [article online]; available from <http://www.washingtontimes.com/national/20030925-115141-6122r.htm>; Internet; accessed 25 October 2006.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ "Profile: James Yee," *Religion and Ethics Newsweekly*, 7 October 2005, [article online]; available from <http://www.pbs.org/wnet/religionandethics/week906/profile.html>; Internet; accessed 25 October 2006.

The data likewise coupled with the attention accorded to Chaplain Yee, suggest the tensions will only increase, not decrease.

B. HASAN AKBAR (2003)

1. Background

My final example of religious conflict that recently occurred in the military is the case of former U.S. Army Sergeant Hasan Akbar. This is undoubtedly a more extreme example because the tension eventually erupted into violence, resulting in the death of two servicemembers and the wounding of 14 others. This case is also significant because, of the four examples, this was the first example of religiously motivated violence within the military after September 11. If anything the case most likely added to negative public opinion and suspicion of Muslims in the United States and in the military. To many, the attack illustrated not only the determination of our enemy, but the security weaknesses that still existed in our institutions. If we could be attacked from within the military, we are vulnerable anywhere.

2. Events

Akbar was originally born Mark Fidel Cools. At an early age, following his father's lead, his entire family converted to Islam. According to reports, as a child Akbar was bright but tended to keep to himself. He devoted much of his time to helping around the house, doing schoolwork, and attending Mosque. In 1997, after nine years of college, Akbar graduated from the University of California at Davis with dual degrees in both Aeronautical Science Engineering and Mechanical Engineering. Akbar had difficulty finding work following graduation and, with student loans needing to be repaid, enlisted in the Army in 1998 under his birth name.

By February 2001, Akbar had been promoted to the rank of Sergeant (E-5) and was assigned to an engineer battalion in the 101st Airborne Division at Fort Campbell, Kentucky. During this time Akbar also chose to go by his Muslim name. Testimony from leaders within his unit revealed that Akbar had difficulty

adjusting to life in the military and was constantly getting into trouble.⁸² As his unit was preparing to deploy to Kuwait, Akbar's comments and actions continued to raise suspicions among those around him. It appeared that Akbar was suffering from the conflict of serving in the U.S. Army and the prospect that his service would require him to fight fellow Muslims. This prompted one of his senior noncommissioned officers to test Akbar's loyalty by asking Akbar "What would you do if you came over a ridge and saw a raghead? Would you kill him?"⁸³ Akbar responded by saying, "it would depend on what kind of jihad I was on."⁸⁴ This did not instill any confidence in the unit leadership that Akbar was prepared mentally or spiritually for the upcoming ground war. Some like Sergeant Wesley Lafortune thought Akbar "might drop his weapon and walk over to the other side" upon coming face to face with the Iraqi defenders.⁸⁵

Religious tensions were also elevated due to derogatory remarks made by members of Akbar's unit regarding Muslims. There is a natural tendency to demonize an opponent. This is especially true in war as it is difficult to ask anyone to kill another human being, but if the enemy is considered something less than human there is less hesitation in killing. An example is anti-Japanese sentiment during World War II. The Japanese were commonly depicted as little monkey like creatures in an effort to dehumanize them. According to testimony from Akbar's unit leaders, including the equal opportunity advisor, negative comments about Muslims and Iraqis were sometimes made. Names like "ragheads" or "camel jockeys" were commonly used by Soldiers stationed with Akbar.

The morning of March 23, 2003 Akbar cut power to the sleeping tents of the leadership of the 1st Brigade of the 101st Airborne Division at their staging

⁸² Richard Serrano, "Hasan Akbar's Peculiar Military Career," *Los Angeles Times Magazine*, 3 August 2003 [article online]; available from <https://www.hsdl.org/homesec/ebird/s20030804/s20030804206090.html>; Interent; accessed 31 October 2006.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

base in Kuwait. Armed with multiple grenades and his M-4 rifle, Akbar threw grenades into the officer sleeping quarters and shot at those trying to escape. Two officers died as a result of the attacks. U.S. Air Force Major Gregory Stone was killed by one or more grenades and U.S. Army Captain Christopher Seifert was fatally shot in the back. Fourteen others were wounded in the attack, including the Brigade Commander and Executive Officer. Akbar was quickly arrested and transported back to the United States for trial. In April 2005, Akbar was convicted by a military jury at Fort Bragg, North Carolina of murder and attempted-murder and sentenced to death. He is currently on death row at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

3. Analysis

This case review is not intended to be a defense of Akbar's actions – he was clearly wrong, but the fact that religion was a contributing factor should be of concern, especially to those of us in uniform. Although never sufficient to justify murder, the anti-Iraqi/Muslim climate in Akbar's unit created an environment that would have been difficult for most Muslims to operate in. Demonizing and degrading comments about Iraqis and Muslims should not have been tolerated or ignored by the chain of command, but in most cases they were.⁸⁶

The same can be said for repeated comments by fellow Soldiers regarding the raping and killing of Iraqi women.⁸⁷ The thought of his comrades attacking women and children, according to testimony, appeared to weigh heavily on Akbar's mind leading up to deployment. These types of comments, while typically just macho talk by Soldiers, have the potential to breakdown unit cohesion. Some Soldiers may have been able to dismiss the comments as barracks chatter, but Akbar apparently took the comments quite seriously.

⁸⁶ Richard Serrano, "Hasan Akbar's Peculiar Military Career," *Los Angeles Times Magazine*, 3 August 2003 [article online]; available from <https://www.hsdl.org/homesec/ebird/s20030804/s20030804206090.html>; Internet; accessed 31 October 2006.

⁸⁷ Justin Willett, "Akbar Isolated, Soldier Says," *The Fayetteville Observer*, 19 April 2005 [article online]; available from <https://www.hsdl.org/homesec/ebird/e20050419/e20050419364257.html>; Internet; accessed 31 October 2006.

Akbar's spiritual and moral questions regarding the impending war were most likely intensified the more he felt he was not part of the team and that his religion was under attack. Instead, he apparently associated himself more closely with the Iraqis to whom he felt he had a religious connection. One can understand – though certainly without condoning – how Akbar might have decided to take action against what he perceived to be an overly aggressive American force at war with Islam.

C. SUMMARY

Both of these cases highlight the destructive potential of religious tensions to both unit cohesion and effectiveness when there is either perceived or actual religious discrimination. The destructiveness is further intensified in the context of the Global War on Terrorism since it has been extremely difficult to present the conflict as a struggle against individuals and not against an ethnic or religious group. There is no denying that the insurgents in Iraq, members of Al Qaeda, and the Taliban are Muslim, and though that certainly does not mean that all Muslims are enemies of the United States, the United States' enemies at the moment are Muslim. The questions before those of us in uniform today are what steps should the U.S. Military take to cope with this and minimize these types of tensions in the future? How can we ensure that regardless of an individual's religious preference she/he feels like a valued member of the U.S. armed forces? These are tough questions, but given these two examples there is no way they can – or should be – avoided.

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V. RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Religion is central to identity and gives meaning to people's lives. It also is central to much of the strife taking place in the world today. Almost anywhere one turns...one finds a religious dimension to hostilities.⁸⁸

Douglas M. Johnston

"We Neglect Religion at our Peril", *Proceedings*, US Naval Institute
January 2002

A. FUTURE CONFLICTS AND AREAS FOR CONTINUED STUDY

The cases discussed in Chapters III and IV study religious tension among unit members and how these tensions affect unit cohesion. There are also several examples of potential points of contention that are likely to become "flash points" in the future. These will most likely involve particular religious rituals or practices, the continued debate over sexual orientation and homosexual service in the military, bio-ethical challenges given the constantly evolving fields of medicine and science, continued tension with the Muslim world, and death. The examples in the following sections are in no way meant to represent a complete list, but each can be used as a starting point for further study and analysis.

1. Rituals or Practices

Rituals and practices of minority religious groups in the military were debated heavily in the 1990s. One example was the fight over the use of peyote by members of the Native American Church (NAC). Peyote is a hallucinogenic drawn from the button or crown of a plant in the cactus family.⁸⁹ According to the *Handbook of Denominations in the United States*,

Worshipers hold all-night ceremonies filled with chanting to the rhythms of a water drum while peyote is consumed. The reason for

⁸⁸ Joint Publication 1-05, *Religious Support in Joint Operations* (9 June 2004), II-1.

⁸⁹ Craig Atwood and Samuel Hill and Frank Mead, *Handbook of Denominations; 12th Edition* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2005), 303.

its use is not individual ecstasy but to serve as a communal ritual to foster bonded relationships.⁹⁰

Supporters of the NAC argue that peyote is used as a sacrament and is equal to the use of wine in Christian communion and that the limited quantity used in ceremonies is not harmful.⁹¹ The opposition argues that the use of peyote is dangerous, especially if used by military personnel with access to sensitive systems such as nuclear weapons. Agreements were made between the Department of Defense and the NAC placing limitations on the use of peyote to periods authorized by the unit commander that would not interfere with unit operations. This agreement made sense in the late 90s when military deployments were low.

Today, the operational tempo of the military is high with servicemembers deployed more frequently and for periods from 6 to fifteen months. I doubt any commander, including myself, would authorize a Soldier to use peyote in Iraq or Afghanistan, for fear of the hallucinogenic effects. Currently, commanders can't authorize peyote even if they want to since all controlled substances, including peyote, are prohibited from entering the Central Command (CENTCOM) Area of Responsibility (AOR).⁹² However, if members of the NAC believe the use of peyote is an essential part of their religion aren't the restrictions then preventing them from practicing their religion?

Another group that received its fair share of attention in the mid-80s and 90s was Wicca. According to the *Spiritual Philosophy and Practice of Wicca in the U.S. Military*,

Wicca is a Neo-Pagan, earth based, mystery religion. . . The Latin roots of the word "Wicca" mean "wise ones", or wisdom. The

⁹⁰ Craig Atwood and Samuel Hill and Frank Mead, *Handbook of Denominations*; 12th Edition (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2005), 304.

⁹¹ William Claiborne, "Military, Indian Church Agree on Peyote Policy," *The Washington Post*, 30 June 1999 [article online]; available from <http://www.proquest.com/>; Internet; accessed 2 November 2006.

⁹² Coalition Forces Land Component, *Customs Handout for Redeployment Briefings* (1 September 2005).

Germanic and Saxon roots mean to bend, change or alter. The infinitive verb form of the root means “to wicker.” So the name of the religion implies creating change in our lives, and in the universe by wise people. Neo-Pagan means a new form of an ancient religion. Wicca is (often) an eclectic religion based on Celtic Shamanism and borrowing occasionally from many pagan faiths.⁹³

One misperception about Wicca is that adherents worship the devil or Satan, which has prompted several groups and politicians to challenge their right to practice within the military. Former Georgia Congressman Bob Barr wrote letters to senior army leaders asking “Will armored divisions be forced to travel with sacrificial animals for satanic rituals?”⁹⁴ Other fears are derived from the fact that many Wiccans refer to themselves as Witches. Fears of magical spells drive many to question the goodness of Wiccans, believing that their ceremonies are used to put evil hexes on others. While none of my research suggests that Wicca as a religion promotes evil, this has not stopped the military from reserving the right to “pull the plug” on groups that do. The Army’s training circular for Unit Ministry Teams (UMT) states that,

If a religion violates the Army value of respect by advocating harming or putting a curse on a person—such religious acts are wrong, and soldiers are not free to practice them.⁹⁵

Although there have been no reported cases of Wiccans using their “magic” to harm or injure fellow servicemembers, the debate regarding Wicca’s validity as a religion will most surely continue, especially given the fact that the number of servicemembers proclaiming to be Wiccans has increased since 2001.

⁹³ David Oringderff and Lieutenant Colonel Ronald Schaefer, USAF, *Spiritual Philosophy and Practice of Wicca in the U.S. Military* [online] (Converse, Texas: The Sacred Well Congregation, 2001); available from <http://www.us.army.mil>; Internet; accessed 2 November 2006.

⁹⁴ Mark Silk, “Something Wiccan This Way Comes,” *Religion in the News*, Summer 1999 [article online]; available from <http://www.trincoll.edu/depts/csrpl/RINVOL2No2/wicca.htm>; Internet; accessed 2 November 2006.

⁹⁵ Headquarters, Department of the Army, Training Circular 1-05, *Religious Support Handbook for the Unit Ministry Team* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 10 May 2005); available from <http://www.us.army.mil>; Internet; accessed 2 November 2006.

2. Sexual Orientation

As the debate continues throughout the country regarding sexual orientation and homosexual marriage, it is inevitable that groups challenging DoD's "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy will face stiff opposition from conservative religious groups. The most recent conflict has involved a series of protests at the funerals of military personnel killed in Afghanistan and Iraq.⁹⁶ Members of the Westboro Baptist Church from Topeka, KS have been staging demonstrations at military funerals to highlight their claim that the Soldiers and the military are being punished by God for America's tolerance of homosexuals.

Groups like the Servicemembers Legal Defense Network argue that the policy needs to be changed to allow homosexuals to openly serve because their service increases the country's national security. According to the Network's sources the military has separated several thousand servicemembers, many with needed skills, such as linguists and intelligence specialists, at a time when the military has been struggling to make enlistment goals (see Figure 6).⁹⁷ It is easy to see why this is a divisive topic, especially for religious groups. Opponents argue that if homosexuals are permitted to serve openly, then permitting homosexuals to marry would likely follow. To some it would become a case of the government redefining marriage. Religious groups like the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), which make up the largest denomination in the military chaplaincy, are clearly opposed to any moves by the government to change marriage laws. According to the SBC, "Marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime."⁹⁸

But what does the military do when a state legalizes homosexual marriage? The state of Massachusetts already permits same sex marriage and,

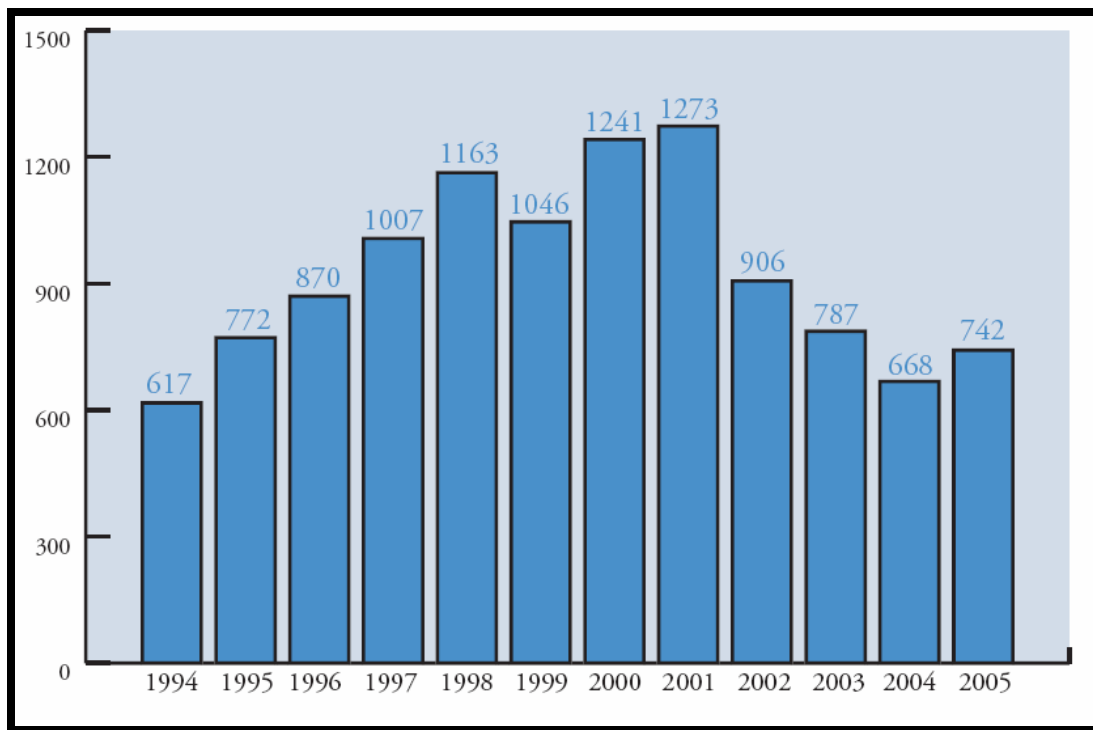
⁹⁶ Westboro Baptist Church, "Westboro Baptist Church Responds," [online]; available from <http://www.godhatesamerica.com/>; Internet; accessed 6 November 2006.

⁹⁷ "Annual 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' Dismissals 1994-2005," [chart online]; available from <http://www.sldn.org/templates/index.html>; Internet; accessed 2 November 2006.

⁹⁸ Southern Baptist Convention, *The Baptist Faith and Message*, 2000 [online]; available from <http://www.sbc.net/bfm/bfm2000.asp>; Internet; accessed 11 October 2006.

in October 2006, the New Jersey State Supreme Court ruled the state's constitution guaranteed homosexual couples "the same rights and benefits of marriage."⁹⁹ Currently, DoD policy identifies same sex marriage as a homosexual act and therefore sufficient evidence to separate the servicemember from the service. It does not regard itself as bound to follow the laws of any particular state, but that may change if more states, especially those with military installations, follow the path of New Jersey.

Figure 6. Annual "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" Dismissals 1994-2005



From: Servicemembers Legal Defense Network

⁹⁹ Ellen Barry, "N.J. Justices Clear the Way for Gay Unions," *The Los Angeles Times*, 26 October 2006 [article online]; available from <http://www.proquest.com/>; Internet; accessed 2 November 2006.

3. Medicine and Science

Another area where conflict may arise in the military is in medicine and scientific research. The most glaring examples are questions regarding abortions conducted at military hospitals or paid for by the military healthcare system, stem cell research, genetic manipulation, and human cloning. At the heart of each issue for most conservative religious groups is whether or not man is playing God.¹⁰⁰ Are we minimizing the value of human life when we terminate pregnancies or when embryos are used for research? Do we further devalue life when science is used to improve the strength, speed, sensory perception, and natural resistance to biological or chemical agents in our military personnel or when we reach a point when we can clone battalions of our most capable warriors? Conservative religious groups are increasingly concerned that the government is inappropriately using taxpayers dollars and is crossing over the line into God's domain.

Permission to conduct abortions at military health facilities has gone back and forth within the last 15 years depending on the presidential administration.¹⁰¹ The current United States Code places the following restrictions on abortions within the Department of Defense:

(a) Restriction on Use of Funds.— Funds available to the Department of Defense may not be used to perform abortions except where the life of the mother would be endangered if the fetus were carried to term.

(b) Restriction on Use of Facilities.— No medical treatment facility or other facility of the Department of Defense may be used to perform an abortion except where the life of the mother would be

¹⁰⁰ National Association of Evangelicals, "Stem Cell Research," [online]; available from <http://www.nae.net/index.cfm?FUSEACTION=editor.page&pageID=319&IDCategory=8>; Internet; accessed 3 November 2006.

¹⁰¹ National Committee for a Human Life Amendment, "Military Policy Toward Abortion," *NCHLA Fact Sheets* [online]; available from <http://www.nchla.org/factdisplay.asp?ID=26>; Internet; accessed 3 November 2006.

endangered if the fetus were carried to term or in a case in which the pregnancy is the result of an act of rape or incest.¹⁰²

Defenders of the restriction rest their defense on their belief that abortion is the taking of human life. Right to Choose advocates believe the procedure is a woman's right to choose and that should take priority. This issue becomes even more problematic when servicemembers overseas wish to terminate a pregnancy. Since the DoD medical facility is not authorized to perform the procedure, there is the possibility that some servicemembers would seek an abortion from a local clinic. There is no guarantee the local clinic personnel are properly trained or qualified for the procedure. This option could potentially place a servicemembers life at risk.

Stem cell research is another area that has drawn a lot of criticism from conservative religious groups. Again, their argument is against the harvesting of embryos for research instead of allowing them to develop. Advocates of stem cell research point to the numerous possibilities that stem cells present, including relieving the heavy strain on the organ and tissue donation supply, and the possibility to successfully treat and defeat serious ailments such as heart disease, Parkinson's, and Alzheimer's.¹⁰³ Applications that could be used by the military include replacing damaged or destroyed tissue due to Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) or gunshot wounds, burns associated with explosions, or spinal cord injuries.

Genetic manipulation and cloning are the most radical of all the issues within this area and while the possibility of either of these actually happening are still many years away each has the possibility to become a point of tension, with religion helping to fuel the ethical fight. Imagine having the ability to improve the physical and mental capabilities of our military personnel or to create Soldiers

¹⁰² "USC 10 1093," *U.S. code collection*, [online]; available from http://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/html/uscode10/usc_sec_10_00001093----000-.html; Internet; accessed 03 November 2006.

¹⁰³ The National Institutes of Health, "Stem Cell Basics," [webpage]; available at <http://stemcells.nih.gov/info/basics/basics6.asp>; Internet; accessed 03 November 2006.

with the attributes needed for a specific military occupational specialty (MOS). It sounds like something out of *Star Wars* or Nazis' call for a "master race," which is also why many conservative religious groups are concerned. To them, these practices are immoral and unnatural and therefore not part of God's plan.¹⁰⁴ But what about countries that don't concern themselves with religious, secular, or moral limitations? Would we shun that technology if it maximized the abilities of, say North Korean Soldiers? We have historically sought and achieved military superiority over our allies and any potential adversary. It seems likely that if the technology existed it would be difficult for the military to resist it, which could lead to fierce debate and considerable divisiveness.

4. Death

The subject of death and the afterlife are sure to cause degrees of tension in the future, much as they have in the past. One aspect of death that has received some media attention as of late is the placement of a servicemember's religious identification emblem on his/her grave marker or headstone. According to the U.S. Department of Veteran's Affairs (VA), members of the U.S. armed forces are eligible for a government headstone or grave marker if they meet the following criteria:

(1) Any member of the Armed Forces of the United States who dies on active duty.

(2) Any veteran who was discharged under conditions other than dishonorable. With certain exceptions, service beginning after September 7, 1980, as an enlisted person, and service after October 16, 1981, as an officer, must be for a minimum of 24 months or the full period for which the person was called to active duty. (Examples include those serving less than 24 months in the Gulf War or Reservists that were federalized by Presidential Act.) Undesirable, bad conduct, and any other type of discharge other than honorable may or may not qualify the individual for veterans benefits, depending upon a determination made by a VA Regional

¹⁰⁴ Heather Brant, "Human Cloning," *The Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention* [online]; available at <http://erlc.com/index.php/erlc/article/human-cloning>; Internet; accessed 3 November 2006.

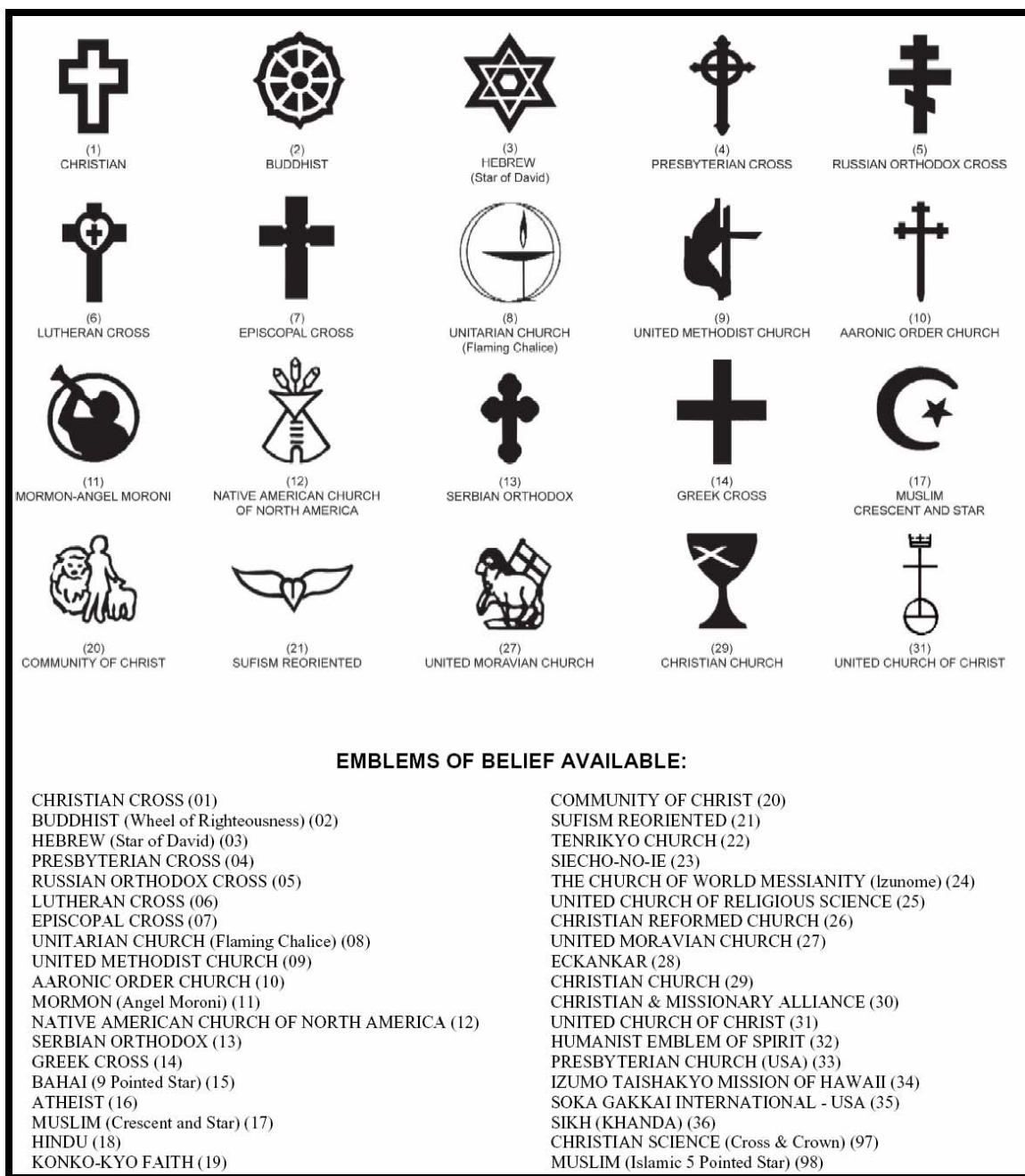
Office. Cases presenting multiple discharges of varying character are also referred for adjudication to a VA Regional Office.¹⁰⁵

The emblem of a servicemember's religious belief can be added to the inscription. Unfortunately, while there are currently 100 denominations or groups represented in the military, there are only 38 emblems available to choose from (see Figure 7).¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁵ United States Department of Veteran's Affairs, "Eligibility for a Headstone or Marker," [online]; available from <http://www.cem.va.gov/cem/hm/hmelig.asp>; Internet; accessed 5 November 2006.

¹⁰⁶ United States Department of Veteran's Affairs, "Headstones and Markers," [online]; available from http://www.cem.va.gov/cem/hm_hm.asp; Internet; accessed 5 November 2006.

Figure 7. Authorized Government Headstone and Marker Emblems of Belief



From: United States Department of Veterans Affairs

One emblem that is notably missing, and one at the heart of several complaints and law suits over the last nine years, is the emblem representing Wicca.

Several family members of Wicca servicemembers have been challenging the VA for its refusal to add the pentacle (a five-pointed star placed within a circle), but so far haven't had much success. Retired Army Chaplain William Chrystal, a supporter of the requests, believes the delays are due to the political influence of religious conservatives. In a *Washington Post* interview Chrystal said,

It's such a clear First Amendment issue, I can't even conceive of why they are not granting it, except for political reasons. I think the powers that be are afraid they'll alienate conservative Christians if they approve a symbol that connotes witches and warlocks casting spells and brewing potions.¹⁰⁷

If or as minority religious groups gain in number, the potential for additional cases like this will increase. Religion is a part of who many of us are in life and also in death and to many it is critical that the headstones or grave markers describe who we were in life, to include our beliefs. If the government recognizes a servicemember's beliefs in life, why can't those same beliefs be recognized in death?

B. CONCLUSIONS

Douglas Johnston's quote at the beginning of this Chapter sums up the present and the near future. There is a religious dimension to conflict or tension because the tensions exist between people. Religion or spirituality, whatever you want to call it, is just too integral to who we are as human beings. The Founding Fathers understood that. They knew it wouldn't be possible or proper to remove religion from our society. Instead, they drafted a Constitution that defended the rights of all people to practice their faith without fear of persecution or discrimination. Although the ideals drafted in the Constitution were intended to be a shield, they have, since its signing, also been used to attack minority views and beliefs. At the heart of many of these conflicts or tensions has been one word – fear. There is fear of change, and a fear of loss. Some argue that we are a Christian nation and they would prefer that Christianity remain dominant.

¹⁰⁷ Alan Cooperman, "Fallen Soldier Gets a Bronze Star but not a Pagan Star," *Washington Post*, 4 July 2006 [article online]; available from http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/07/03/AR2006070300968_2.html?nav=hcmodule; Internet; accessed 5 November 2006.

Others believe the nation is falling into moral decay due to the influence of secular or minority religious groups. If the country continues its religious diversification the most likely outcome is increased tensions and conflicts that will impact and affect the armed forces, war or no war.

The Department of Defense can deny the potential for conflict or it can take action to minimize or prevent the tensions from erupting. Given the growing diversity of the military and the examples of conflict that have occurred in the last few years, the DoD needs to draft and implement policies regarding religious freedom in the services as well as mandatory religious diversity training. As shown with the USAF Academy case, the military tends to be reactive in making these types of changes and so far no steps have been made to address the potential problems posed by having such a diverse religious population. After an incident there is typically a memorandum signed by the commander, or a briefing highlighting the problem, but there isn't a comprehensive training plan to confront the issues. The comments tend to be along the lines of "that's an Air Force problem" or "that wouldn't happen in my command." This attitude is shocking considering the amount of training that is conducted everyday to prepare the men and women of the armed forces to go to war. The military can't seem to comprehend the importance of preparing its personnel to deal with the religious terrain they will encounter within their units, on the future battlefield, and the world at large.

The need for religious diversity training is especially necessary at the early stages of servicemembers' careers. This is the point at which they can be pointed down the correct path, empowering them with the knowledge of other belief systems and obligating them to enforce the established policies regarding religious tolerance and acceptance. Servicemembers that can't adhere to the policies, because of their faith or religious practices, need not apply. Those who believe religious diversity training is not necessary or would create more conflict are running away from the problem. Even The National Association of Evangelicals in its *Statement on Religious Freedom for Soldiers and Military*

Chaplains emphasizes the importance of religious diversity training and awareness when it states,

It would be unwise, therefore, to try to cleanse the military, including the classrooms of military academies, of religious content. Soldiers, even those who practice no faith, will encounter religious people and their practices. It is clear that the conflicts in the Middle East have a religious component. Soldiers need to encounter deeply held religious beliefs, including those they neither accept nor practice.¹⁰⁸

The United States Military is an extension of this country's power and, therefore, should be representative of the nation itself. But as the defender of the Constitution the military should also be an example for the rest of the country to follow. Those who put on the uniform should rise above the internal tensions that occupy the civilian sector. The military has made great strides in promoting and defending racial and gender equality, yet the challenge posed by religious diversity appears to have put the military at a loss for a viable solution. This may be due to its preoccupation with the War on Terrorism or the influence of certain religious groups, but regardless of the reason the problem needs to be addressed quickly. The number and size of the minority religious groups doesn't appear to be on the decline. Servicemembers will find themselves in units with more personnel from other religious backgrounds and they must be able to understand and respect those beliefs. If not, morale and unit cohesion will degrade and the effectiveness of our military forces will soon follow.

¹⁰⁸ National Association of Evangelicals, *Statement on Religious Freedom for Soldiers and Military Chaplains*, 7 February 2006 [article online]; available from "<http://www.nae.net/militarypdf/NAE%20Statement%20on%20Military%20Religious%20Freedom%202-7-06.pdf>"; Internet; accessed 6 November 2006.

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