



Celebrating 250 Years of

SACRED SERVICE

U.S. ARMY CHAPLAIN CORPS
1775 - 2025



CURRENT
CHAPLAIN CORPS
LEADERSHIP

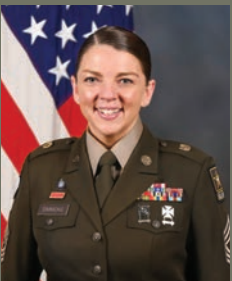
THE MEMBERS OF TODAY'S
ARMY CHAPLAIN CORPS ARE

**SUSTAINING
AND ENRICHING
A SACRED
LEGACY**

WHICH OUR PREDECESSORS
BEGAN BUILDING EVEN BEFORE
OUR NATION WAS FOUNDED IN 1776.

Chaplain (Major General)
William (Bill) Green, Jr.

26TH CHIEF
OF CHAPLAINS



Sergeant Major
Meaghan B. Simmons

11TH REGIMENTAL
SERGEANT MAJOR



Chaplain (Brigadier General)
Jack J. Stumme

28TH DEPUTY CHIEF
OF CHAPLAINS



Chaplain (Brigadier General)
Charles M. Causey

14TH ARMY RESERVE
DEPUTY CHIEF
OF CHAPLAINS



Chaplain (Colonel)
William B. Hanna

CHIEF, ARMY
NATIONAL GUARD
RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS

FROM THE
CHIEF OF
CHAPLAINS



Our United States Army Chaplain Corps will celebrate its 250th birthday on July 29, 2025. As we close in on that significant milestone, I celebrate the ways our Corps has adapted to changing times and requirements, while continuing to “Care for the Army Family,” just as the founding members of our Corps did from the very beginning. The members of today’s Army Chaplain Corps are sustaining and enriching a sacred legacy which our predecessors began building even before our Nation was founded in 1776.

Our Corps was established just six weeks after our Army was established on June 14, 1775. General George Washington requested that Chaplains be added to the Army to meet Soldiers’ religious and spiritual needs, and to support good morals and morale. The Continental Congress responded by authorizing one Chaplain for each regular regiment of the Continental Army. Many militia regiments serving alongside the regiments of the Continental Army also counted Chaplains among their ranks.

Our Corps has evolved along with our Army. Today our Corps is a team of Chaplains, Religious Affairs Specialists, Directors of Religious Education, and other Army Civilians serving around the world. We are also a Total Force Corps with one mission and one set of standards across the Regular Army, the Army National Guard, and the Army Reserve. We are fully aligned across all three Components, as our Corps “provides religious support and advises on matters of spirituality and religion to build strong, ready teams to deploy, fight, and win our Nation’s wars.” Our U.S. Army Chaplain Corps is the most multifaceted and capable chaplaincy in history, and we will remain so, to support our Army’s preparations to win during multidomain and large-scale combat operations in the years ahead.

Our Corps is a unique branch of the Total Army that remains a necessary, critical contributor to our Nation’s success on the battlefields of the future, just as it was on the battlefields during our Nation’s War for Independence. In order to enhance and sustain our capability and our capacity to “Care for the Army Family” within our complex and continuously changing environment in the years to come, we have been transforming our Corps in substantial ways over the course of the past several years. This careful and relentless work has built new infrastructure across our Corps which is further professionalizing the religious support, life-giving ministry, and spiritual readiness advisement we bring to every member of the Army Family.

I am extremely proud of our Army Chaplains Corps’ 250 years of sacred service; and I am honored to be a part of today’s team of extraordinary Chaplain Corps professionals. Our Corps’ People are committed to serving the needs of every one of our Army’s People at every level and around the world, in days of peace and days of war, as we live our call - for God and Country!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "William Green, Jr. 20th".

CHAPLAIN (MAJOR GENERAL) WILLIAM “BILL” GREEN, JR.
CHIEF OF CHAPLAINS

FROM THE
REGIMENTAL
SERGEANT MAJOR



As we approach the 250th birthday of our United States Army Chaplain Corps on July 29, 2025, I am honored to be a part of the incredible team carrying forward our Corps’ sacred legacy. From our humble beginnings in the regiments of the Continental Army and colonial militias during our Nation’s War for Independence, we have evolved into an integrated force of Chaplains, Religious Affairs Specialists, and Army Civilians, dedicated to “Caring for the Army Family” wherever our mission takes us.

Throughout our 250-year journey, we’ve witnessed significant milestones that have shaped our Corps into what it is today. Before 1909, Chaplains had the support of fellow Soldiers, but it wasn’t until December 28 of that year that Chaplain Assistants were officially authorized, marking a pivotal moment in our history. Fast forward to 1984, when the concept of the Unit Ministry Team (UMT) was established, revolutionizing our approach to providing spiritual support across all Army components. Another significant milestone was marked on March 20, 2015, when the Chief of Chaplains approved changing the naming convention of the 56M MOS from Chaplain Assistant to Religious Affairs Specialist. This change acknowledged the expanding capabilities of Religious Affairs Specialists in navigating a complex and religiously influenced global landscape. The official implementation of this name change occurred on October 1, 2017. The invaluable perspective our Religious Affairs Specialists bring to religious support operations enhances our Corps’ continuous transformation efforts today.

Army Civilians also joined the Chaplain Corps team along the way, to provide mission-essential support in critical, non-combat positions. A significant development among Chaplain Corps Civilians occurred in 1948, when the Corps hired its first Director of Religious Education (DRE), launching the career field. DREs now provide educational expertise and leadership for RE programs in garrisons around the world.

Today, our Corps is comprised of teams of dedicated individuals who serve together in post chapels, family life centers, military hospitals, and UMTs at every echelon of the Army. We continuously adapt to meet tomorrow’s challenges while fulfilling today’s needs.

United by our commitment to one another and to our sacred mission, we are the most multifaceted and capable chaplaincy in history. Together, we strive to build strong and ready Army teams worldwide - Pro Deo et Patria!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Meaghan Simmons".

SERGEANT MAJOR MEAGHAN B. SIMMONS
REGIMENTAL SERGEANT MAJOR

From the very inception of our United States, the combination of the nonestablishment of religion with the free exercise of religion has been part of the bedrock of our democracy. These values are enshrined in the enormous body of documents penned by our founders, and delineated in the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which provides that “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.”

The U.S. Army Chaplain Corps enables that constitutionally mandated free exercise of religion by America’s Soldiers and facilitates and builds their spiritual readiness. The Corps does this by delivering direct spiritual and religious Soldier and Family care, and by providing moral leadership across the Army’s formations, at every echelon, everywhere and anywhere America’s Soldiers are required to perform their duties.

The Chaplain Corps preceded the Constitution and its amendments by several years, but the Corps is a product of our Nation’s fundamental commitment to religious freedom, and its recognition that religion plays an integral role in the lives of many of America’s Soldiers.

As the highly diverse Soldiers of today’s U.S. Army train and deploy, they face a perpetually evolving strategic environment with increasingly complex challenges. The Chaplain Corps is a key and unique part of sustaining the readiness of America’s Soldiers to manage and overcome those challenges, while they perform their duties.



THE U.S. ARMY CHAPLAIN CORPS WAS ESTABLISHED ON JULY 29, 1775

218 CHAPLAINS SERVED IN THE CONTINENTAL ARMY DURING THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR. TODAY’S TOTAL FORCE CHAPLAIN CORPS INCLUDES MORE THAN 3,000 CHAPLAINS, NEARLY 3,000 RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS SPECIALISTS, MORE THAN 500 CHAPLAIN CANDIDATES, MORE THAN 50 DIRECTORS OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION, AND NEARLY 100 OTHER DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY CIVILIANS.

1775

At Concord Bridge on April 19, William Emerson was the first American Chaplain to minister to Soldiers on a battlefield.

The Continental Congress established the Chaplain Corps on July 29.

1861

An act of Congress on August 3 required that Army Chaplains be regular ordained ministers of a Christian denomination. No prior legislation authorizing Chaplains had ever mandated that Chaplains be ordained or of a particular religion.

1862

An act of Congress on July 17 authorized Army Chaplains to represent any religious denomination and required the recommendation of an authorized ecclesiastical body.

On September 18, Jacob Frankel became the first rabbi to be commissioned as a U.S. military Chaplain.

1846

Fathers Anthony Rey and John McElroy became the first Catholic Chaplains in the U.S. military during the Mexican-American War.

1918

The Chaplain School was established at Fort Monroe, Virginia, on February 9. It was the first fully integrated Army school.

1920

The Office of the Chief of Chaplains was established by the National Defense Act of 1920 and the Chaplain Corps became an official branch of the Army. Chaplain (Colonel) John Axton became the first Chief of Chaplains on July 15.

1943

On February 3, the Four Chaplains gave their lives to save their shipmates when the troop ship Dorchester was sunk by a German U-boat.

On May 31, Masao Yamada, a Hawaiian of Japanese ancestry, became the first Asian-American to be commissioned as a U.S. military Chaplain.

1981

Bonnie Koppell became the first woman rabbi Chaplain in the U.S. military, while serving in the Army Reserve.

1984

The concept of the Unit Ministry Team (UMT) was established in Army doctrine to assign Chaplain and Chaplain Assistant teams to units throughout all components of the Army.

2001

On September 11, the Pentagon was attacked by terrorists. The Office of the Chief of Chaplains supported Operation Noble Eagle with operations center staff and grief services.

2011

On May 16, Pratima Dharm became the first Hindu U.S. military Chaplain.

2025

On July 29, the Chaplain Corps celebrates its 250th birthday.

THE CHAPLAIN CORPS CONTINUES ADAPTING, TO ADDRESS EMERGING FAITH REQUIREMENTS WHILE SUPPORTING MULTI-DOMAIN OPERATIONS.

2017

On October 1, Chaplain Assistants were redesignated Religious Affairs Specialists.

1783

The Army constructed its first chapel, the Temple at New Windsor Cantonment, on February 15.

1863

On September 10, Henry Turner became the first African American to be commissioned as a U.S. military Chaplain.

1864

On November 22, Ella Hobart became the first woman to serve as a U.S. military Chaplain, by election of the 1st Wisconsin Heavy Artillery. She was officially recognized for her service in 2002.

1880

The first distinctive insignia was authorized for Chaplains. It was described as “a shepherd’s crook of frosted silver on a shoulder strap of black velvet.”

1909

On December 28, Chaplain Assistants were authorized to serve as special duty personnel supporting Chaplains.

1937

On December 23, Chaplain (Colonel) William Arnold became the fifth Army Chief of Chaplains and the first who was Catholic. He became the first Chaplain general officer when he was promoted to brigadier general on November 21, 1941. He was later promoted to the rank of major general on November 17, 1944. Subsequent Chiefs of Chaplains have all been major generals.

1948

Fort Liberty hired Emma Bryan Johnson to be the first Army Director of Religious Education (DRE), launching not only her individual 30-year career, but an entire career field. Today, Army DREs provide educational expertise and leadership to Religious Education programs across the Army.

1965

In August, a major revision of Army Regulation 611-201 gave Chaplain Assistants a formal job description and specific required skills.

1967

On September 11, a formal course of instruction for Chaplain Assistants was established at the Chaplain School.

1990

On August 27, Chaplain (Major General) Matthew Zimmerman became the 18th Army Chief of Chaplains and the first who was African-American.

1993

On December 3, Abdul Rasheed Muhammad became the first Muslim to be commissioned as a U.S. military Chaplain.

1995

The U.S. Army Chaplain Center and School moved to its location at Fort Jackson, South Carolina - the Chaplain School’s 19th location since 1918.

2008

On May 14, Thomas Dyer became the first Buddhist Army Chaplain.

2009

On December 28, the Army celebrated the 100th anniversary of the formal establishment of the Chaplain Assistant.

2010

On July 13, Chaplain Assistant Staff Sergeant Christopher Stout died in Afghanistan of wounds sustained when insurgents attacked his unit.

2023

On June 1, the U.S. Army Chaplain Center and School was redesignated the U.S. Army Institute for Religious Leadership.

2024

On June 5, Khady Ndiaye became the Army’s first woman Muslim Chaplain Candidate.

U.S. ARMY CHAPLAIN CORPS

A HERITAGE OF SACRED SERVICE

WE CARE FOR THE ARMY FAMILY

THE CHAPLAIN CORPS TEAM DELIVERS RELIGIOUS SUPPORT, LIFE-GIVING MINISTRY, AND SPIRITUAL READINESS ADVISEMENT TO EVERY MEMBER OF THE ARMY FAMILY.



Since its beginnings during the American War for Independence, the Chaplain Corps has evolved and diversified along with the rest of the Army. Roman Catholic Chaplains were added to the Corps during the Mexican-American War (1846-1848); and Jewish and African-American Chaplains were added to the Corps during the American Civil War (1861-1865). The Army commissioned its first woman Chaplain in 1974, its first Muslim Chaplain in 1993, its first Buddhist Chaplain in 2008, and its first Hindu Chaplain in 2011. Today's Chaplain Corps includes Chaplains representing a multitude of faith groups, and the Chaplain Corps recruiting team is actively working to increase the Corps' diversity, with a special focus on increasing the number of women Chaplains in the Corps and the number of Chaplains representing low-density faith groups.

Army Chaplains currently represent approximately 110 religious faith groups; but the Chaplain Corps cares for all members of the Army Family, regardless of their religious preferences, and even when they have no religious preference at all.

Chaplains are at the center of the Chaplain Corps, but Chaplains don't do it alone. The Army established an official position for enlisted assistants to Chaplains in 1909. Known as Chaplain Assistants until October 1, 2017, and now known as Religious Affairs Specialists, these Soldiers assist Chaplains with essential administrative and logistical support, while providing expertise in religious support and religious support operations.

The Chaplain Corps also includes Department of the Army Civilians, chief among them the Corps' Directors of Religious Education, who have been serving with the Army since 1948. Directors of Religious Education provide expertise in religious education theory and practice, teaching and learning theory, educational program design and implementation, human and faith development theory, curriculum design and evaluation, and spiritual formation.

PEOPLE ARE THE ARMY'S GREATEST STRENGTH AND MOST VALUABLE ASSET.



THE
CHAPLAIN
CORPS
BUILDS ARMY
SPIRITUAL
READINESS
SO THAT
AMERICA'S
SOLDIERS
WILL WIN IN
COMBAT AND
IN LIFE.



WHY WE SERVE

As the members of the U.S. Army Chaplain Corps – the Army's team of Chaplains, Religious Affairs Specialists, and Department of the Army Civilians – we understand the powerful forces that test and threaten the soul of the Army, the individual souls of America's Soldiers. We know these forces can feel unyielding and unrelenting, and that they can affect the readiness of our fellow Soldiers to fight and win our Nation's wars.

But there's a clear path forward – a path to shared meaning and purpose at the deepest level. That path starts with the recognition that each of us has immeasurable, inherent value, and incredible potential.

We serve to join America's Soldiers on that path; to guide them in understanding the forces arrayed against them, and the forces aligned with them; and to care for and shepherd them on their personal journeys of discovery, growth, and service.

Our mission has never been more important. Our skills have never been more relevant. Our time to serve is now. We care for the Army Family. It is our sacred duty.



THE SOLDIER'S HEART, THE SOLDIER'S SPIRIT, THE SOLDIER'S SOUL, ARE EVERYTHING.

UNLESS THE SOLDIER'S SOUL SUSTAINS HIM, HE CANNOT BE RELIED ON, AND WILL FAIL HIMSELF AND HIS COMMANDER AND HIS COUNTRY IN THE END.

GENERAL OF THE ARMY
GEORGE C. MARSHALL



OUR CORE COMPETENCIES

The three core competencies of the Chaplain Corps provide the team of Chaplains, Religious Affairs Specialists, and Army Civilians with focus and direction, as the Chaplain Corps executes its mission:

NURTURE THE LIVING

Chaplain Corps members develop and execute a religious support plan that seeks to strengthen and sustain Soldiers and Family members.

CARE FOR THE WOUNDED

Chaplain Corps members assist in the healing process, by bringing help and hope to those who have been wounded and traumatized in body, mind, and spirit. Chaplains also provide pastoral care and comfort to the dying.

HONOR THE FALLEN

Chaplains conduct memorial ceremonies, services, and funerals, fulfilling a vital role in rendering tribute to America's sons and daughters who pay the ultimate price, while serving our Nation in the defense of freedom.

CHAPLAIN ROLES

Army Chaplains are professional military religious leaders who are individually endorsed and authorized to serve in the Army by distinctive civilian religious organizations. In this role, Chaplains deliver religious ministry to Soldiers and Families in their own faith groups, while providing access to ministry to those in other faith groups, and encouraging spiritual readiness in those of all faith groups and of no religious faith at all.

Army Chaplains also serve as professional military religious staff advisors. In this role, Chaplains advise their commanders and their staffs on matters of religion, morals, and morale. These duties include assisting commanders with Soldiers' requests for

religious accommodation, i.e. adjustments to work conditions that will allow a Soldier to practice his or her religion in accordance with his or her sincerely held beliefs. The Army's religious program is the commander's program; but throughout the Army's history, Chaplains have advised commanders on the impact of religion both within their own ranks and within the larger operational environment.

RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS SPECIALISTS

RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS SPECIALISTS PROVIDE MUCH-NEEDED SUPPORT TO CHAPLAINS DURING MISSIONS AND EVERYDAY ACTIVITIES.

Soldiers of fine character and exceptional capability have enthusiastically served alongside our Army's Chaplains since the Revolutionary War, but we recognize December 28, 1909, as the official birthday of the Religious Affairs Specialist Military Occupational Specialty (MOS). On that day, the War Department issued General Order 253 formally establishing an enlisted Soldier position specifically designated to assist Chaplains in the performance of their religious support duties.

The names for that enlisted Soldier position changed from a General Clerk-Typist in 1909, to a Clerk-Typist with a skill identifier in 1953, to a Chapel Activities Specialist in 1965, and then to a Chaplain Assistant in 1984. Each name change reflected changes in duties, responsibilities, and capabilities. It was on October 1, 2017, when the Department of the Army officially revised the name of the MOS to what it is today, Religious Affairs Specialist. That was an important step in the progressive effort to enhance the contributions of 56Ms and to deepen their identity, as they support Chaplains in the performance of their unique duties and responsibilities.

Our Corps has grown exponentially over the years, in size, scope, diversity, and professionalism. Throughout all that change, our Chaplains' servant-hearted Soldier teammates have been the foundation of our connection with Soldiers and their Families.





DIRECTORS OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION



The Army's first Director of Religious Education (DRE) was hired at Fort Bragg in 1948, bringing technical expertise and professional leadership to Army Religious Education programs. Since 1948, the career field has expanded across the Army, with more than 50 DREs serving 40 installations around the world, supporting the free exercise of religion, and building Army spiritual readiness.

Our DREs are an integral part of our Chaplain Corps team. They provide leadership to Religious Education and Spiritual Formation programs grounded in their years of education and professional experience in the field. DREs complement the work that Chaplains do in preaching, counseling, and worship leadership, by building programs to meet the diverse and unique needs of the Army community. They are creative and adept at intentionally fostering community for Soldiers and Family members in a multi-faith environment. One of the specialized ways that DREs support the Chaplain Corps mission is by curating,

adapting, and writing curriculum resources for both home station and mobilized contexts. From the beginning, DREs have also cared for and managed an invaluable Chaplain Corps asset, the army of Chapel volunteers who provide essential support to Garrison Chapel efforts.

DREs creatively "Care for the Army Family" in partnership with our Chaplains and our Religious Affairs Specialists, and our Corps' other Army Civilians. What DREs bring to the fight makes our Corps stronger and more capable, as we integrate our efforts to provide religious support and build Army spiritual readiness.



CHAPLAIN CORPS MEDAL OF HONOR RECIPIENTS

VALOR IN COMBAT

The Medal of Honor was established by Congress in 1862, to serve as the highest military honor presented to military personnel of the United States of America. It is awarded by the President of the United States in the name of Congress, for personal acts of valor above and beyond the call of duty, in action against an enemy force. Secretary of War Edwin Stanton presented the first Medals of Honor on March 25, 1863, and more than 3,500 have been awarded to date.

The U.S. Army Chaplain Corps has eight Medal of Honor recipients, including Chaplain Emil Kapaun who is on the pathway to Catholic sainthood.



CHAPLAIN (CAPTAIN) EMIL KAPAUN

CONFLICT/ERA: KOREAN WAR

UNIT: 3rd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment,
1st Cavalry Division

LOCATION: Unsan, Korea

DATE: November 1-2, 1950

Chaplain Kapaun of the 8th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division, was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor on April 11, 2013, for his heroic actions in the battle of Unsan during the Korean War on November 1-2, 1950. During the battle, Kapaun was attached to the 3rd Battalion of the 8th Cavalry Regiment, which was assigned to provide a rear guard for the regiment's withdrawal. As Chinese Communist forces encircled the battalion, Kapaun moved fearlessly from foxhole to foxhole in order to provide comfort and reassurance to the outnumbered Soldiers. Despite continuing enemy fire, he repeatedly crawled to wounded men and either dragged them back to the safety of the American lines or dug shallow trenches to shield them from danger. Shortly after Kapaun's capture, he continued to put himself at risk by intervening to save the life of Staff Sergeant Herbert Miller, who was lying in a nearby ditch with a broken ankle and other injuries.

Kapaun was placed in the Pyoktong Prison Camp where he provided daily encouragement and comfort to the other prisoners. He would give up his food rations and clothes for others. He would also lead his fellow prisoners in prayer meetings. Kapaun passed away at the camp on May 23, 1951.

Kapaun is being considered for sainthood by the Roman Catholic Church.



CHAPLAIN JOHN WHITEHEAD

CONFLICT/ERA: Civil War
UNIT: 15th Indiana Infantry
LOCATION: Stones River, Tennessee
DATE: December 31, 1862

Whitehead joined the U.S. Army as a Chaplain in early 1862. During a battle near Stones River, Tennessee, on December 31, 1862, Whitehead went to the front of the lines multiple times by himself to carry injured Soldiers to safety. For his brave actions, he was awarded the Medal of Honor on April 4, 1898.



CHAPLAIN FRANCIS HALL

CONFLICT/ERA: Civil War
UNIT: 16th New York Infantry
LOCATION: Salem Heights, Virginia
DATE: May 3, 1863

Hall served as a Chaplain for the 16th New York Infantry during the Civil War. He was extremely devoted to his country’s cause and refused any pay during his time in the Union Army. On May 3, 1863, Hall exposed himself to heavy Confederate fire while transporting injured Soldiers to safety. On February 16, 1897, he was awarded the Medal of Honor for his actions.



FIRST LIEUTENANT JAMES HILL

CONFLICT/ERA: Civil War
UNIT: 21st Iowa Infantry
LOCATION: Champion Hill, Mississippi
DATE: May 16, 1863

Hill was an infantry officer in the 21st Iowa Infantry at the Battle of Champion Hill on May 16, 1863. While acting as his unit’s quartermaster in command of a party of foragers, he captured three of the enemy’s pickets. Hill later became his regiment’s Chaplain. He was awarded the Medal of Honor for his heroism on March 15, 1893.



CHAPLAIN MILTON HANEY

CONFLICT/ERA: Civil War
UNIT: 55th Illinois Infantry
LOCATION: Atlanta, Georgia
DATE: July 22, 1864

Haney was the 55th Illinois Infantry’s Chaplain when he earned the Medal of Honor at the Battle of Atlanta on July 22, 1864, but he was awarded the medal on November 3, 1896, for acts outside the scope of a Chaplain’s duties. Haney had volunteered to serve as a rifleman in ranks and rendered heroic service in retaking a position which had been captured by the enemy.

Haney was not the only “fighting Chaplain” during the Civil War. In addition to providing religious support, many Civil War Chaplains filled other roles - from surgeon’s assistants to line officers; and it is reported that nearly 100 Union clergymen carried a weapon during the conflict.



MUSICIAN CALVIN TITUS

CONFLICT/ERA: China Relief Expedition (Boxer Rebellion)
UNIT: 14th U.S. Infantry
LOCATION: Peking, China
DATE: August 14, 1900

Titus received the Medal of Honor for his actions at the Battle of Peking during the Boxer Rebellion. Risking his life to lead the way for others, Titus scaled the 30-foot Peking city wall in China under direct enemy fire on August 14, 1900. When Colonel Daggett had asked his men if scaling the wall was possible, Titus replied, “I’ll try, sir” – a phrase that later became the motto of the Regiment. He was awarded the Medal of Honor on March 11, 1902.

Titus was one of many Soldiers who fulfilled the duties of a Chaplain Assistant before the position was officially authorized on December 28, 1909.



CHAPLAIN (MAJOR) CHARLES WATTERS

CONFLICT/ERA: Vietnam War
UNIT: 173rd Support Battalion, 173rd Airborne Brigade
LOCATION: Near Dak To Province, Republic of Vietnam
DATE: November 19, 1967

During the Vietnam War, Chaplain Watters was deployed to Vietnam and assigned to the 173rd Battalion. After his 1-year tour, he chose to remain in country another six months. Watters’ battalion engaged in an assault on Hill 875 on November 19, 1967. He rushed to the front lines unarmed, to help the wounded and administer last rites to the dying. He even rescued a wounded paratrooper who was standing in shock in front of the enemy. Later when his troops were pulling back, Watters noticed more exposed wounded Soldiers and he ran out to help them despite attempts to hold him back. He continued to help those wounded by providing medical care, food, water, and spiritual comfort. Watters himself had been mortally wounded but chose to help his fellow Soldiers over himself. He was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor on November 4, 1969.



CHAPLAIN (CAPTAIN) ANGELO LITEKY

CONFLICT/ERA: Vietnam War
UNIT: 199th Infantry Brigade
LOCATION: Near Phuoc-Lac, Bien Hoa Province, Republic of Vietnam
DATE: December 6, 1967

During the Vietnam War, Chaplain Liteky served with Company A, 199th Infantry Brigade, in Phuoc-Lac, Vietnam. On December 6, 1967, while he was participating in a search-and-destroy operation with his company, battalion-sized enemy forces attacked. Completely disregarding his own safety, Liteky rushed up to place himself between enemy machine gun fire and two wounded Soldiers. He was able to drag the Soldiers to safety during a break in the fighting. The company was inspired by Liteky’s bravery to keep fighting the enemy, as he continued to navigate the battlefield to rescue wounded Soldiers who were trapped. One Soldier was too heavy to carry, so Liteky crawled to safety with the Soldier on his back. He had to disentangle another Soldier from a thorny underbrush. After the firefight ended, it was determined that Liteky carried over 20 men to safety while sustaining his own wounds. His incredible heroism earned him the Medal of Honor on November 19, 1968.



THE FOUR CHAPLAINS

In the early morning hours of February 3, 1943, Methodist minister George Fox, Rabbi Alexander Goode, Roman Catholic priest John Washington, and Reformed Church in America minister Clark Poling helped others board lifeboats as the troop ship *Dorchester* sank, and then gave up their own life jackets when the supply ran out. The Chaplains then joined arms, prayed, and sang hymns on the deck of the ship as it went down.

The Four Chaplains were all first lieutenants who were new to the Army. Each was posthumously awarded the Distinguished Service Cross and the Purple Heart. In 1960, Congress authorized a special medal for heroism, The Four Chaplains' Medal, which was posthumously awarded to the Chaplains' next of kin by the Secretary of the Army on January 18, 1961.



CHAPLAIN (1ST LIEUTENANT) GEORGE FOX

George Lansing Fox was just 17 when he left school to join the Army Ambulance Corps. Fox was awarded the Silver Star, Purple Heart, and the French Croix de Guerre for his heroism. After WWI, Fox studied theology and served his community as a Methodist minister. In 1942, Fox decided to join the Army Chaplain Service and was appointed on July 24, 1942.



CHAPLAIN (1ST LIEUTENANT) ALEXANDER GOODE

Alexander David Goode decided to follow in his father's footsteps by becoming a rabbi, and received rabbinical ordination from Hebrew Union College in 1937. In January 1941, he applied for a chaplaincy in the Navy but was turned down. Following the attack on Pearl Harbor, he joined the Army Air Forces as a Chaplain.



CHAPLAIN (1ST LIEUTENANT) CLARK POLING

Clark Vandersall Poling's vocation seemed inevitable; with six previous generations of clergymen in his family, Clark felt the call to ministry. Poling was ordained as a minister in the Reformed Church in America. After the attack on Pearl Harbor, Poling volunteered as a Chaplain—following in his father's footsteps. Clark enlisted in the Army Chaplain Corps.



CHAPLAIN (1ST LIEUTENANT) JOHN WASHINGTON

John Patrick Washington was ordained a priest on June 15, 1935. Shortly after the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941, Father Washington received an appointment as an Army Chaplain, beginning active duty on May 9, 1942.

CHAPLAIN CORPS NOTABLES

CHAPLAIN (CAPTAIN) FRANCIS P. DUFFY

CONFLICT/ERA: WWI

Chaplain Francis Duffy was a major figure in the First World War. As the Chaplain for the 165th U.S. Infantry Regiment, he tirelessly rescued wounded and dying soldiers under intense bombardment on the Western Front in France, and he was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for his extraordinary heroism.

Duffy was also awarded the Army Distinguished Service Medal, New York State's Conspicuous Service Cross, and France's Légion d'Honneur and Croix de Guerre. He is the most decorated Chaplain in U.S. Army history.



CHAPLAIN JAMES NAISMITH

CONFLICT/ERA:
Pancho Villa Expedition, WWI

James Naismith invented basketball in 1891. He also served as a Chaplain in the Army National Guard and as a volunteer Chaplain in France during World War I.

Naismith hailed from Canada. After attending college there and earning degrees in both physical education and theology, Naismith took a job in Massachusetts teaching physical education at the Young Mens Christian Association (YMCA) International Training School - now Springfield College. It was there that he devised basketball as an alternative indoor sport for the winter months. He later became the first basketball coach at the University of Kansas.

In 1916, when the Mexican revolutionary, Francisco "Pancho" Villa, led his guerrilla army in a cross-border raid on Columbus, New Mexico, the Kansas National Guard was tapped to send troops to the border. This motivated Naismith to be endorsed as a Presbyterian minister, and to join the 1st Kansas Infantry Regiment as a Chaplain. He also supported Soldiers during World War I while serving as a YMCA Chaplain in the States and in France.



CHAPLAIN (MAJOR GENERAL) FRANCIS L. SAMPSON

12TH CHIEF OF CHAPLAINS

INSTALLED: August 1, 1967

CONFLICT/ERA: WWII, Korean War

Known as the "Paratrooper Padre," Chaplain Francis Sampson was a remarkable figure whose courage and compassion left an indelible mark on the heritage of the U.S. Army Chaplain Corps. While serving as a Catholic Chaplain during World War II with the 501st Parachute Infantry Regiment of the 101st Airborne Division, Sampson was renowned for his unwavering dedication to his fellow Soldiers and for risking his life while providing spiritual guidance and comfort on the front lines to those who were injured, including enemy Soldiers. His selfless acts of bravery, including parachuting into Normandy on D-Day, exemplify the essence of service and sacrifice.

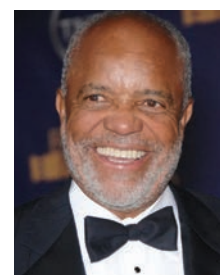
Sampson made significant contributions to the development and improvement of the Army-issued Chaplain kit during his service in World War II. Recognizing the unique needs of Chaplains serving in combat zones, Sampson played a key role in advocating for a more portable and durable kit for Chaplains operating in the field, noting his experience in losing and destroying Chaplain kits assigned to him while engaged in parachuting activities. He also emphasized the importance of essential items to be included in the kit to support Chaplains in their ministry and to aid in their missions.



CHAPLAIN ELLA GIBSON

CONFLICT/ERA: Civil War

Elvira "Ella" Gibson became the first woman to serve as a U.S. military Chaplain, when the 1st Wisconsin Heavy Artillery Regiment elected her to serve them in that capacity. Sadly, her ministry went unrecognized at the time and it was not until 2002 that Congress granted Gibson the rank of captain.



CHAPLAIN ASSISTANT BERRY GORDY

CONFLICT/ERA: Korean War

Berry Gordy was the founder of Motown Records. He was also a U.S. Army Chaplain Assistant.

Gordy was drafted to serve in the Army during the Korean War, arriving in Korea in May 1952. Assigned to the 58th Field Artillery Battalion, 3rd Infantry Division, near Panmunjom, he served as a Chaplain Assistant, and his duties included playing a portable organ for religious services.

After returning home in April 1953, Gordy joined the music industry as a songwriter. He later invested the profits from his songwriting success into producing. Establishing the Motown Record Corporation in 1960, he went on to shape the careers of numerous legendary musical artists. He was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1988.



A LEGACY OF INSPIRING FAITH

THROUGH THEIR DEDICATION AND COMPASSION, WOMEN ARMY CHAPLAINS AND RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS SPECIALISTS HELP ENSURE THAT EVERY SOLDIER HAS ACCESS TO THE SPIRITUAL RESOURCES THEY NEED.

Since 1974, women Army Chaplains have been endorsed by a variety of faith groups, including the Christian, Jewish, Hindu, and Muslim traditions. These Chaplains have achieved many firsts, not only in the Army but across the U.S. Armed Forces.

Alice M. Henderson became the first woman to serve officially as a Chaplain in the U.S. Army Chaplain Corps when she was commissioned during a ceremony at Fort McPherson, Georgia, on 8 July 1974. Henderson was also the first woman of color to serve as a Chaplain in any branch of the U.S. Armed Forces. In 2019, she was inducted into the U.S. Army Women's Foundation Hall of Fame.

Bonnie Koppell became the first woman rabbi Chaplain in the U.S. military in 1981, while serving in

the U.S. Army Reserve. Pratima Dharm became the first Hindu Chaplain in the U.S. military in 2011. And Khady Ndiaye just became the Army's first woman Muslim Chaplain Candidate in June 2024, not long after the Air Force commissioned the U.S. military's first woman Muslim Chaplain in 2021.

These women trailblazers and others like them have led the way for other women into positions of influence in the Army Chaplain Corps. This includes women trailblazers who have served in the Chaplain Corps alongside Chaplains as Chaplain Assistants and now as Religious Affairs Specialists. It was 1972 when Specialist Lorraine Doleshal became the first woman to be school trained as a Chaplain Assistant. Thirty-three years later, Bridgette Smith became the first woman to serve as a command sergeant major in the Chaplain Corps, at the U.S. Army Chaplain Center and School. Today, Meaghan Bicklein Simmons is serving with tremendous positive impact as the Corps' 11th regimental sergeant major, since becoming the first woman to fill that role in 2023.





CHAPLAIN CORPS FAMILIES AND VOLUNTEERS

SUPPORTING THOSE WHO SERVE



Our Chaplain Corps could not care for the Army Family without the support and assistance of Chaplain Corps Family members and volunteers.

Chaplain Corps spouses and children help to sustain the work of the Corps by standing alongside our Chaplains, Religious Affairs Specialists, Directors of Religious Education (DREs), and other Chaplain Corps Army Civilians, supporting their morale and readiness, and partnering in their ministry. Caring for the Army Family is a Family business!

Our Chaplain Corps also relies on the support and assistance of volunteers, especially when it comes to sustaining our Army communities of faith and their worship and religious education activities. DREs coordinate the efforts of thousands of Garrison Chapel volunteers, who are our Army's largest internal volunteer force. They include Chaplain Corps spouses and children, other members of the Army community currently serving, and retiree Families.



WHAT THE CHAPLAIN CORPS BRINGS TO THE FIGHT



CHAPLAINS

Maturity

Chaplains are generally older than most Soldiers and Company Grade leaders.

Unique Perspective

Chaplains experienced life and various professions outside of the Army prior to volunteering to serve. This makes their advisement noteworthy.

Life Experiences

Many Chaplains have served as Senior Pastors, Business Owners, Entrepreneurs, and Law Enforcement. Their work in leading non-profits and working with volunteers is notable.

Education

Chaplains are among the Army's most educated officers. Every Chaplain is a seminary graduate; most possess 90 hour Master of Divinity Degrees. Many possess PhDs and Doctorates of Ministry too.

Courage

Chaplains embody courage as their ministries are not always recognized or appreciated.

Call

All Chaplains testify to the call of God in their lives making their service unique. This call to ministry and to serve you, our Commands, and your Soldiers and Families undergirds all that Chaplains bring to the fight.

100% Confidentiality

Chaplains make great listeners, and all discussions are 100% confidential.

Constitutional Care

Chaplains exist to strike a balance between Establishment and Free Exercise. They will perform or provide religious support for all Soldiers, Family members, and authorized Civilians from all religious traditions. They cooperate without compromise.



RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS SPECIALISTS

Unique Perspective

Religious Affairs Specialists provide an Enlisted perspective to all religious support operations and are often among the most trusted Enlisted Soldiers in any formation. This makes their advisement noteworthy.

Distinct Advisement

The role of Religious Affairs Specialists as advisors to their Chaplains and unit Senior Enlisted NCOs provides distinct insight into the lives, morale, and overall readiness of Soldiers and Families across the organization.

Combatants

Chaplains are non-combatants. Religious Affairs Specialists perform security, ensuring the safety of their Chaplains and the successful completion of the religious support mission.

100% Confidentiality

Religious Affairs Specialists make great listeners, and all discussions are 100% confidential.

Constitutional Care

Religious Affairs Specialists exist to assist their Chaplains and Commands in striking a balance between Establishment and Free Exercise. They support their Chaplains in performing or providing religious support for all Soldiers, Family members, and authorized Civilians from all religious traditions. They too cooperate without compromise.

DIRECTORS OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Leadership

Directors of Religious Education (DREs) have extensive experience recruiting, training, and leading complex teams of volunteers from diverse backgrounds. They lead the Army’s largest volunteer force, Chapel volunteers!

Education and Expertise

DREs bring with them a Master’s or Doctorate Degree in the field, along with years of experience supporting civilian places of worship and schools.

Creativity

DREs complement the work that Chaplains do in preaching, counseling, and worship leadership, by building programs to meet the unique needs of the Army community.

Connectivity

DREs are experts at intentionally cultivating connection in the Army’s multi-faith environment. Religious Education programs provide unique opportunities for people to connect with their faith traditions, their Chaplains, and the communities around them.

Resources

DREs evaluate, curate, adapt, write, and implement a variety of curriculum resources designed for deepening spiritual formation and strengthening the spiritual core. They are also well connected with other Army community resources.

Respect and Energy

DREs respect and support the religious and spiritual formation needs of all Soldiers and their Families, while leading lifespan faith formation programs that build the spiritual readiness of the force.



ARMY CIVILIANS

Mission-Essential Support

Army Civilians provide mission-essential support to the Army by serving as a workforce of talented, qualified people filling critical non-combat positions.

Professional Expertise

Army Civilians bring significant educational and professional credentials to their work and are united by the vision of helping to ensure the Army wins in a complex world.

Unity of Effort

Army Civilians and Soldiers together form a single force working together to accomplish a common mission and common goals.

Stability

Because Army Civilians are not required to move every two to three years, they serve as an important stabilizing force, especially during times of transition.

Cultural Competence

Many Army Civilians have a prior connection with the military, as Veterans, Spouses, Dependents, or Family Members, creating a deep passion for supporting the Army and its People.

DREs ARE CREATING, BUILDING, AND ADAPTING PROGRAMS THAT BUILD SPIRITUAL RESILIENCE FOR THE SPECIFIC DEMANDS OF ARMY LIFE, INCLUDING DEPLOYMENT, FAMILY SEPARATION, AND REINTEGRATION.





IN CLOSING

The United States Army Chaplain Corps will celebrate its 250th birthday on July 29, 2025. The Chaplain Corps was established in 1775, just six weeks after our Nation's Army was established. Two hundred and eighteen Chaplains served in the Continental Army during the Revolutionary War, to bring care and support to the Soldiers fighting for America's independence.

Two hundred and fifty years later, today's Army Chaplain Corps spans the Regular Army, the Army National Guard, and the Army Reserve, with a unified team of religious support professionals dedicated to caring for all the members of the Army Family. That team includes more than 3,000 Chaplains, nearly 3,000 Religious Affairs Specialists, more than 500 Chaplain Candidates, more than 50 Directors of Religious Education, and nearly 100 other Army Civilians. Those teammates make today's U.S. Army Chaplain Corps the most multifaceted and capable chaplaincy in history.

July 2025 will mark 250 years of sacred service by the Army Chaplain Corps. The members of today's Chaplain Corps are committed to sustaining and enriching that legacy in compassionate and creative ways with each passing day in the years to come.



THE MEMBERS OF TODAY'S ARMY
CHAPLAIN CORPS CELEBRATE 250 YEARS OF

SACRED SERVICE

WITH GRATITUDE IN OUR HEARTS FOR

THE LEGACY WE INHERITED.

WE WILL SUSTAIN THAT LEGACY BY SERVING
THE NEEDS OF EVERY ONE OF OUR ARMY'S
PEOPLE AT EVERY LEVEL AND AROUND THE
WORLD, IN DAYS OF PEACE AND DAYS OF WAR,

AS WE LIVE OUR CALL - FOR GOD AND COUNTRY!

Chaplain (Major General)
William (Bill) Green, Jr.

26TH CHIEF OF CHAPLAINS

