

## INTRODUCTION

Those functioning as chaplains have accompanied troops into battle since ancient times. In the armies of Egypt, for example, priests traveled in front of troops into battle to invoke divine favor. Through the years, ministry to combat soldiers has come to be the primary reason for clergy in uniform. Ministry to troops in combat continues as a fundamental reason for military chaplains.

The roots of the modern chaplaincy can be traced to Christian sources in early medieval Europe. In 742, a council of bishops meeting in Ratisbon, a town in what is now southern Germany, officially authorized chaplains for service in the military. At the same meeting, the bishops prohibited "these servants of God" from bearing arms. The word *chaplain* dates from before this period and is associated with St. Martin of Tours. The use of military chaplains became common in later medieval and renaissance Europe. The 16th Century Spanish "Tercio," a 3000-man infantry unit, had thirteen chaplains attached to it. In 17th Century England, the role of the chaplain in Cromwell's "New Model Army" expanded into areas of political influence.

The concept of a military chaplain came from Europe to North America in the 17th Century as a part of the European colonization. During the Pequot War of 1637, the Reverend Samuel Stone of the Church of Christ, Hartford, Connecticut, became the first military chaplain to begin active field service in English America. Influence and prestige marked the position of the chaplain in the militia of colonial America.

In 1690, during King William's War (1689-1697), five chaplains served with the 2500-man militia force under Sir William Phips in an unsuccessful attack on Quebec, the first large-scale American colonial expedition. On 29 July 1775, when the Second Continental Congress first authorized the employment of chaplains for its new army, fifteen were already on duty with General George Washington's militia forces surrounding the town of Boston. After the American Revolution the chaplaincy was dissolved and not reestablished until 1791 when a chaplain was appointed to serve the small United States Army, newly created under the Constitution.

Since the Revolution, the size and composition of the chaplaincy have reflected the history and the changing sociological composition of the country. By the time of the Civil War, the Army chaplaincy mirrored the religious, ethnic, and racial changes in the country itself. An estimated 3,000 chaplains served in the Union Army in the War Between the States; another 1,000 chaplains served in the Confederate Army. Their ranks contained Roman Catholic priests, Jewish rabbis, and a wide range of Protestant ministers.

The War Department General Orders No. 253, published on 28 December 1909, recognized the functions of a "chaplain assistant." The first paragraph ordered the authorization of one enlisted soldier to serve with each chaplain. In the National Defense Act of 1920 the chaplaincy was

organized into a true branch of the Army under the Office of the Chief of Chaplains. The branch attained its greatest strength during World War II when almost 9,000 chaplains served in the Army. In World War II and in the armed conflicts that have followed, both chaplains and chaplain assistants have selflessly served the soldier in combat and at home station. As witness to this presence in combat, twenty-one chaplains and chaplain assistants died during the Vietnam War. Two Army chaplains were awarded the Medal of Honor.

Reform and modernization characterized the Army after Vietnam. The chaplaincy designed ministries to meet the leadership needs of the period. The years between 1973 and 1993 saw the development of Forward Thrust Doctrine which positioned the chaplain and chaplain assistant in maneuver battalions. Army 86 expanded the role of the chaplain assistant. The Chaplain Development Plan and Clinical Pastoral Education linked the chaplaincy with current developments in sociology and psychology for providing comprehensive pastoral care to soldiers.

The chaplaincy met operational demands of deployments and service in Grenada (1983), Panama (1989) and in Operations DESERT STORM/DESERT SHIELD (1990-91). The One Army concept put 164 Reserve and National Guard chaplains among the approximately 570 chaplains and 535 chaplain assistants who served in Southwest Asia. Most recently Unit Ministry Teams have provided religious support in Operations Other Than War (OOTW) at home following Hurricane Andrew, and abroad in Somalia, Macedonia, Rwanda, Haiti and Guantanamo Bay.

Recent changes in international politics, reduction in the size of the force, and technological advances have produced doctrinal and organizational changes within the Chaplain Corps. Today the chaplaincy continues to mirror the social and cultural diversity of the nation and continues to provide religious support - encouragement, forgiveness, and compassion - to America's Army.