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The Proximity Principle: Army Chaplains on the Fighting Line in Doctrine and History

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Chaplain Emil Kapaun conducts a field Mass on the hood of his jeep in Korea, Aug. 11, 1950. US Army Photo.

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Abstract

The first official US Army chaplain doctrine appeared in 1926 and contained this guidance: "The duty of the chaplain lies with the men of his command who are on the fighting line." This guidance reflected a principle of proximity — that is, chaplains minister wherever their soldiers are found, up to and including during direct ground combat.

The primary argument of this thesis is that this proximity principle — both in chaplain history and chaplain doctrine — has been a dominant theme of the Army chaplain's ministry. The 1926 fighting line verbiage and concept codified what chaplains had habitually practiced up to that time. Indeed, a broad analysis of literature written by chaplains prior to 1926 and lessons learned by chaplains during the First World War demonstrates that the 1926 doctrine accurately codified a timeless and enduring principle. In addition, a survey of chaplain doctrine since 1926 shows that the proximity principle has consistently remained a part of official Army chaplain ministry. Furthermore, a historical survey of select chaplains in ground combat since 1926 demonstrates that the proximity principle remains a timeless and highly effective form of Army chaplain ministry, whose most ardent practitioners are held up as exemplars for current and future chaplains.

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Acronyms

ARVN	Army of the Republic of Vietnam
FM	Field Manual
MACV	Military Assistance Command, Vietnam
PIR	Parachute Infantry Regiment
TM	Technical Manual
UMT	Unit Ministry Team

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Chapter 1
Introduction

Throughout American history, chaplains have habitually accompanied soldiers to war. In fact, long before Lexington and Concord, colonial ministers traveled with militia units throughout the colonies and beyond. In 1637, Samuel Stone of Hartford established unofficial precedent as the first military chaplain from the colonies when he accompanied 90 soldiers into battle during the Pequot War (1634 to 1638).[1] Through repeated practice, the chaplain became an expected fixture throughout the colonial militias. No less a figure than George Washington, a senior officer in the Virginia militia, pointedly addressed the need for a chaplain at the unit level. During the French and Indian War, he persistently petitioned the Virginia governor to address a chaplain vacancy, writing:

> The want of a chaplain does . . . reflect dishonor upon the regiment, as all other officers are allowed. The gentlemen of the corps are sensible to this and did propose to support one at their private expense. But I think it would have a more graceful appearance were he appointed as others are.[2]

Washington, who throughout his career continually emphasized the need for chaplains at the unit level, highlighted a principle that became fundamental to chaplain service in the United States Army — namely, chaplains serving in close proximity to soldiers have the greatest opportunity to contribute to soldier well-being and mission success. Army chaplains practiced this principle extensively during the Civil War, in Cuba, the Philippines, China, and the First World War.

In 1926, the US Army Chief of Chaplains published the first doctrinal manual for Army chaplains, Technical Manual (TM) 2270-5, *The Chaplain: His Place and Duties*. Among other things, the manual contained some simple guidance for chaplains during wartime: "The duty of the chaplain lies with the men of his command who are on the fighting line."[3] In selecting this verbiage, the 1926 doctrine writers attempted to codify what chaplains had practiced for many years. As doctrine, the manual represented official endorsement of a principle already in common practice.

As we consider the history of chaplain wartime service at the unit level and the emergence of chaplain doctrine regarding a chaplain's place and role on the battlefield, we begin to see an important relationship

between the two. Both include a common theme of proximity — that is, both highlight the importance of chaplains serving in close proximity to the soldiers in their care. Indeed, both chaplain history and chaplain doctrine feature this fundamental theme. This consideration of chaplain historical practice and chaplain doctrine, then, raises an important question: Is there a timeless and enduring principle regarding a chaplain's role and place in combat service?

Thesis

The primary thesis of this project is that a study of chaplain doctrinal development and battlefield history reveals a timeless and enduring principle that we may call the proximity principle — namely, that Army chaplains can potentially contribute greatly to soldier well-being and mission success when they serve in close proximity to soldiers in combat.

Methodology and Delimitations

This study requires both an analysis of chaplain doctrine with respect to guidance for combat service as well as a historical study of chaplain service in combat. The analysis of chaplain doctrine begins with the 1926 doctrinal manual's guidance to chaplains serving during war. The origin of the specific verbiage and concept used by the 1926 doctrinal writers is key, not least because it demonstrates whether or not what they wrote was indeed in keeping with what chaplains were already habitually practicing in battle. In addition, the study requires a survey of chaplain doctrine following the 1926 manual. Such a survey will allow the reader to conclude whether or not the principle (if not the verbiage) that debuted in 1926 remained an enduring doctrinal theme for chaplain battlefield ministry. In short, we must demonstrate the continuity of the theme in chaplain doctrine in order to describe the proximity principle as timeless and enduring.

Likewise, we must consider chaplain battlefield history that followed the publication of the 1926 manual. The pertinent question for this historical survey is: Did chaplains after 1926 serve in close proximity to soldiers in combat and, if so, how did they add to soldier well-being and mission success? Answering this question, as with the doctrinal review, will confirm whether or not the proximity principle has, in fact, been timeless and enduring.

This study contains seven chapters. Following this introductory chapter, chapter 2 features an examination of the 1926 manual,

specifically its brief passage about chaplain wartime service. I will discuss the origins of the verbiage and concept along three lines: unofficial chaplain writings prior to 1926, chaplain wartime biographical writings prior to 1926, and lessons learned from combat service in the First World War. Chapter 3 features a survey of chaplain doctrine after 1926 with an emphasis upon guidance for chaplains in combat — that is, confirmation or denial that proximity principle in chaplain doctrine has endured the test of time. Chapters 4, 5, and 6 offer snapshots of chaplain combat history. Each chapter highlights the actions of select chaplains during different wars and combat actions. For each chapter, the chaplain's contributions to soldier well-being and mission success are considered. As with our survey of chaplain doctrine, these chapters seek especially to determine if the fundamentals of the proximity principle have endured throughout chaplain history. Chapter 7 concludes the study and discusses contemporary implications.

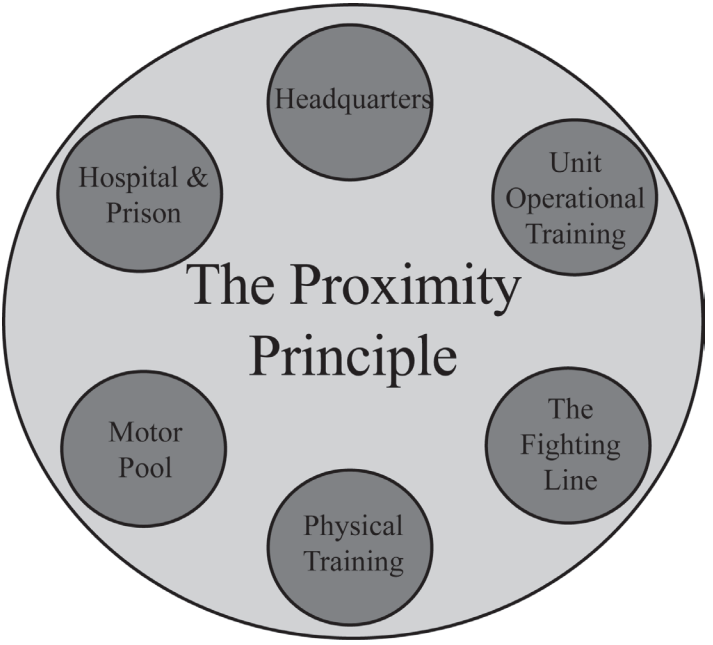

Figure 1: The Proximity Principle — Set and Subsets.

A limiting factor for this study is the definition of the proximity principle. In the broadest terms possible, the proximity principle involves chaplains of all ranks serving closely with soldiers in all types of locations in peacetime and in war — for example, hospital ministry, circulation in work and common areas, prison ministry, presence during unit

operational training, battlefield ministry, and physical training (to name just a few). In each of these contexts, the chaplain provides "personal delivery of religious support"with an emphasis upon the human dimension.[4] This personal dynamic ideally includes the chaplain's physical presence among soldiers, regardless of location. Primarily, chaplains deliver religious support to soldiers in their same assigned element (unit coverage); however, chaplains sometimes also deliver religious support to soldiers in their wider spheres (area coverage). Whatever the time and place, each specific ministry manifestation is essentially a subset of the broader proximity principle.

This study focuses only on one subset of the broader principle — namely, the chaplain's ministry on the fighting line. In most cases, this involves chaplains serving maneuver units at the battalion and company level. A broader examination of the proximity principle is beyond the scope of this study. My concern lies solely with chaplains serving in close proximity to soldiers involved in direct ground combat.

A key methodological consideration is the selection of specific chaplains for the historical chapters. Narrowing the field to a handful of noteworthy chaplains presents a challenge, given the hundreds of chaplains who since 1926 have distinguished themselves in combat. Thus, the selection process contains three carefully identified criteria. First, the profiled chaplains must have served in close combat proximity to soldiers engaged in direct ground combat. Second, selected chaplains must, to the furthest extent possible, be representative of their contemporaries. Third, chaplains selected must have received recognition from Army leadership as having had a significant impact on unit morale or effectiveness at a critical time. Receipt of awards for valor in combat or perhaps another officially recognized mark of distinction for combat service (for example, a combat parachutist badge) provides the most measurable symbol of this recognition. The Purple Heart, while not a criterion for this study, also clearly demonstrates that the chaplain served in close proximity to soldiers and the dangers they faced.

Official recognition signifies Army endorsement of actions taken on the battlefield and confirmation of a positive impact upon soldier well-being and mission success. This criteria takes its cue from the current chaplain doctrinal manual, Field Manual (FM) 1-05, *Religious Support*, which includes this introductory notation: "Six chaplains have been awarded the Medal of Honor for heroism above and beyond the call of duty. Many chaplains and chaplain assistants have received other medals for valor."[5] The field manual author's emphasis on valor

awards in no way diminishes the service and sacrifices of the thousands of chaplains who served in combat but were not decorated. Rather, it simply mentions that certain chaplains did receive valorous awards and rightly implies that they served in a noteworthy way that Army leadership recognized.

Endnotes

1. Over 100 militia chaplains followed this unofficial precedent during the colonial wars including King Philip's War (1689-1697), King William's War (1689-1691), Queen Anne's War (1702-1713), King George's War (1744-1748), and the French and Indian War (1754-1763). Parker C. Thompson, *From Its European Antecedents to 1791: The United States Army Chaplaincy* (Washington, DC: Office of the Chief of Chaplains, 1978), 12, 17, 224-226.

2. Worthington C. Ford, ed., *The Writings of George Washington*, Vol. 1 (New York: G. P. Putnam, 1889), 470. As leader of the Continental Army, Washington became an early advocate for appointing chaplains to regiments and compensating them accordingly. Roy J. Honeywell, *Chaplains of the United States Army* (Washington, DC: Office of the Chief of Chaplains, 1958), 37-39.

3. Department of the Army, Training Manual (TM) 2270-5, *The Chaplain: His Place and Duties* (Washington, DC: The War Department, 1926), 51.

4. Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 1-05, *Religious Support* (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, 2012), 2-12; Department of the Army, TRADOC Pam 525-3-7, *The Human Dimension Concept* (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, 2014), 1-1, 3-3.

5. This manual appeared before Emil J. Kapaun became the seventh chaplain recipient of the Medal of Honor in 2013. Department of the Army, FM 1-05, *Religious Support* (2012), iv.

Chapter 2
The 1926 Chaplain Manual

Although Army chaplains have been present and active in military affairs dating from 1775, the chaplaincy as a body had little organization and no official doctrine until the 1920s. Rather, each chaplain operated individually in accordance with this own ministry experience, his own instincts, and at the discretion of his commanding officer. The American Expeditionary Forces in 1918 made a modest attempt to organize centralized chaplain leadership and training, but this was not an Army-wide initiative. Following World War I, the National Defense Act of 1920 included the creation of an Office of Chief of Chaplains, responsible for its first official chaplain doctrine, TM 2270-5*, The Chaplain: His Place and Duties* (1926).

The Chaplain included a brief section entitled, "The Chaplain in War," the first subject of which was chaplains on the firing line. The doctrine provided guidance for chaplains to accompany their soldiers in combat for purposes of ministry and care. This was not a new principle; indeed, it merely affirmed what chaplains had unofficially practiced since the Revolutionary War. The significance of the 1926 manual lay in its power as precedent: for the first time, a chaplain's place in combat was codified based upon previous unofficial practices.

Background of the First Chaplain Manual

Beginning in 1775, the Continental Army made provision for chaplains to accompany and care for its soldiers, but it made no provision for an organized chaplaincy. Often elected from the ranks, appointed by local leaders, or selected from the nearby population, each chaplain ministered in his respective position at the discretion of his commanding officer.[1] Beyond that immediate accountability, however, chaplains had no supervisory leadership. Following the Civil War, the Adjutant General appointed chaplains, managed chaplain assignments, and received their monthly reports — that is, no senior chaplain positions existed between the individual chaplain and Washington. Moreover, no centralized chaplain branch existed; indeed, no provision for chaplain promotion to the grade of major existed until 1904.[2]

Numerous chaplains and non-chaplains sought a greater degree of organization, leadership, and doctrinal guidance. As early as 1863, for example, Chaplain William Y. Brown noted that the Army imperfectly defined the chaplain's duties and role.[3] Later, the 1892 *Report of*

the Secretary of War described the lack of organization and leadership among chaplains in this way: "The soul of an army is organization. Our chaplains have none."[4] And Paul D. Moody, appointed in 1918 by General John Pershing as one of two senior American Expeditionary Forces supervisory chaplains, recalled general conditions prior to World War I:

> The association of [chaplains] was the association of peas in a bag. Each was independent of everyone else and answerable only to his commanding officer who might, and again might not, be sympathetic with the idea of the chaplaincy. [Meanwhile], such things as chaplains' schools were undreamed of [and] appointments were made by . . . a clerk in the office of the Adjutant General.[5]

The situation began to change after World War I, particularly with the National Defense Act of 1920. Influenced largely by General Pershing's 1918 initiative seeking "a closer coordination"of chaplain efforts in the American Expeditionary Forces, the War Department appointed Chaplain John T. Axton as the first Army Chief of Chaplains.[6] He served in that role for eight years and oversaw the publication of the first chaplain doctrinal manual, TM 2270-5*, The Chaplain: His Place and Duties* (1926).

The Chaplain contributed greatly to the idea of the chaplaincy as a separate service. Along with centralized leadership and an official service school, the doctrinal manual gave the chaplaincy legitimacy as a professional body. In addition, it officially codified as doctrine much of what had been habitually practiced by chaplains at least as far back as the Civil War. As discussed below, many chaplains during and following the Civil War produced personal writings with guidance for other chaplains, but the Army did not recognize any of these disparate publications as officially normative or prescriptive. Moreover, the manual as doctrine signified both approval by the highest Army authority and a mandate for its use by Army chaplains everywhere.[7]

The Fighting Line — Verbiage and Concept

One brief, four-page section of the 73 total pages explicitly discussed "The Chaplain in War." The section featured passages regarding the chaplain's place on the firing line and in aid stations and hospitals. In addition, the section described various duties during war, to include identification and burial of the dead, graves registration,military funerals, pastoral correspondence, censorship, and ministry at military executions.[8]

For this study, the focus is upon the paragraph describing the chaplain's place on the firing line and his duties there:

> The opening sentence of the old Infantry Drill Regulations tersely sums up the purpose and the aims of the military life as follows: "To fit men mentally, morally, and physically that in time of war they can bring their flag to victory against every foe." It may, therefore, be confidently stated that the duty of the chaplain lies with the men of his command who are on the fighting line. This does not mean that the chaplain should take part in every assault and go over the top with the men and become a "fighting parson," but the chaplain should know of every impending engagement. . . . If the men are on the march to the front nothing should keep the chaplain from that column.[9]

The verbiage regarding the chaplain's position on the fighting line emphasized the chaplain's proximity to his soldiers with an implied reference to his freedom of movement — that is, the chaplain's presence and the soldiers' access to him was the most important issue. While the chaplain was not encouraged to take part in every assault, the language allowed for an engaged and aggressive ministry up to and including the most hazardous activities, all for the purpose of caring for soldiers. While discouraging a chaplain from participating in the offensive dynamics of any operation,the manual hardly discouraged a chaplain from accompanying his men as they carried out their duties.[10] Whether at the front or marching to it, the manual envisioned a chaplain in close proximity to his soldiers for the purpose of enhancing their mental and moral strength.

Origins of the Fighting Line — Verbiage and Concept

Since the fighting line concept in *The Chaplain* established a doctrinal precedent, we must investigate its origins to determine whether the doctrine writers accurately grounded the concept in previous historical practice. Data suggests that several elements influenced the concept. Certainly, World War I experiences and lessons learned played an important part. In addition, the habitual activities of chaplains stretching back through operations in Cuba and the Philippines to the Civil War plays a role, at least in establishing best practices of chaplains in combat. These activities were often described in chaplain autobiographies (mostly from Civil War veterans) as well as official prescriptive publications by chaplains covering techniques and procedures.

Un-Official Chaplain Publications Pre-1926

As discussed above, the chaplaincy prior to 1926 was practically an every-man-for-himself game with no doctrine or centralized leadership. Rather, chaplains entered the Army with whatever civilian experience they brought and tried their best to minister in the unique conditions they found.[11] This lack of doctrine prompted more than a few chaplains to self-publish prescriptive booklets and articles on chaplain techniques and procedures. Beginning in 1863 and stretching to 1918, chaplains wrote dozens of booklets, essays, and articles. Some of these publications mentioned the chaplain's place in combat; many did not. In order to identify influences on the 1926 manual among these publications, a review of the literature is necessary.

During the Civil War, Chaplain J. Pinkney Hammond, a hospital chaplain, produced his *Army Chaplain's Manual* in 1863. This thin booklet covered a wide range of duties and topics, to include a brief word about a chaplain's place in battle: "His place, if on the battlefield, is with the wounded and the dying; and though the swift messengers of death may whistle around him, even to endangering his life, he will heed them not."[12] That same year, Chaplain William Y. Brown, also a hospital chaplain, published *The Army Chaplain: His Office, Duties, and Responsibilities*. In this short work, Brown advised that the chaplain's place was with the unit surgeons, caring for the wounded.[13]

As the Army sank into the post-Civil War doldrums of a frontier constabulary force, no prescriptive publications included material about chaplains in combat (but see below regarding war memoirs). John B. Ketchum, the long-time Recording Secretary of the US Soldiers Christian Aid Association, wrote prolifically about military ministry, but said nothing about combat.[14] Meanwhile, Chaplain George Simpson wrote his *Manual For Army Chaplains* in 1893. This detailed volume featured extensive lists of Army Regulations pertinent to chaplains, chaplain uniforms, funding for religious programs, and a recommended revision to the chaplain's monthly reporting form — but nothing about combat service.[15] The lack of combat application in the writings of this period is not entirely surprising as there was only one known occasion when a chaplain experienced combat action of any kind between 1865 and 1898.[16]

At the turn of the twentieth century in the years following the Spanish-American War and the Philippine Insurrection, several chaplains contributed to the body of prescriptive, self-published

literature. For example, Chaplain Charles S. Walkley included a lengthy passage about the chaplain's role in time of war in his 1905 publication. He argued, based upon his own recent combat experience, "When the troops go into battle, the chaplain's place is defined by conditions,"and that the chaplain should remain with his unit near the firing line rather than lingering at the hospital.[17] Likewise, Orville J. Nave, retired chaplain and enlisted Civil War veteran of the 111th Illinois Volunteer Infantry, published the first book-length prescriptive manual for Army chaplains. Using his own extensive combat experience (albeit more than 50 years removed at the time of writing), Nave presented a lengthy section entitled "In Battle" where he listed five key areas for a chaplain's attention: personal courage, knowledge of first aid, stretcher duties, burial rites and practices, and spiritual ministrations to mortally wounded men. Nave boldly challenged chaplains to accompany combat soldiers into battle, adding that a chaplain "requires more courage and *if faithful* . . . will take more risks than other officers."[18] Meanwhile, Chaplain Alva J. Brasted, following his service with the American Expeditionary Forces in France, wrote *Suggestions for Newly Appointed Chaplains*, urging new chaplains to acquaint themselves with the many biographical works about chaplains in combat.[19] As one might expect, those chaplains without combat experience did not discuss the chaplain's place on the battlefield in their writings.[20]

We should note that the writers of the 1926 manual had access to several of these unofficial manuals as they completed their work. In 1918, the War Department requested that The Chaplain School (then located at Fort Monroe, Virginia) produce an official chaplain manual and sent copies of the works by Waring, Clemens, Nave, and Brasted as points of reference.[21] With the completion of the war the next year and subsequent closing of the school until 1920, the work did not commence as scheduled. Nevertheless, these earlier works clearly played a role in the writing process.

Biographical Works Pre-1926

Beginning in the 1860s, chaplains published their personal experiences in combat. These works mostly described the chaplain's experiences, cataloging where the chaplain went, what battles he saw, and the people he met. In some cases, the authors also offered prescriptive material by way of applying lessons learned to contemporary audiences.

As Alva Brasted understood, readers of these biographical works would discover a great deal about battlefield service as a chaplain.

Although we do not have evidence that any specific narrative directly and explicitly informed the writing of the 1926 manual, we can demonstrate that these biographies established a written record of practices common to wartime chaplains.

In 1863, Chaplain J. B. Rogers, 14th Wisconsin Volunteer Infantry, set the autobiographical precedent with his *War Pictures: Experiences and Observations of a Chaplain in the U. S. Army*. Rogers' narrative included descriptions of battlefield horrors at Shiloh (to include amputations at the surgeon's tent), commentary on Southern regions and culture, as well as his observations of camp life and the vices found there. In 1864, Chaplain J. J. Marks, 63rd Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry, wrote his account of the Peninsular Campaign and the Seven Days Battles in *The Peninsular Campaign in Virginia*. Although he placed himself on the fighting line in several battles, his commanding officer reprimanded his choice of location at Savage's Station and sent him to the rear with the wounded. Joel T. Headley's 1864 volume *Chaplains and Clergy of the Revolution*, a compilation of Revolutionary War chaplain biographies, offered readers a glimpse of chaplains from a previous war and was not without a few portraits of chaplains on the fighting line. Chaplain W. W. Lyle, 11th Ohio Volunteer Infantry, wrote in 1865 about his experiences on the battlefield, camp, and hospital. Lyle accompanied his unit through the battles of Second Bull Run, South Mountain, Antietam, Chickamauga, Chattanooga, Atlanta, and Sherman's march to the sea. As chaplain, he typically moved between the fighting line and the ambulances during all battles.[22]

The 1890s and early years of the twentieth century saw a resurgence of Civil War chaplain autobiographies and biographies. As wistful veterans erected monuments and commemorative statues across the country, so, too, did chaplains recall their wartime service. William Corby's 1893 *Memoirs of Chaplain Life* told of his service as a Roman Catholic chaplain in the "Irish Brigade" (63rd, 68th, 69th New York Volunteer Infantry). Corby participated in battles throughout the war, including Antietam, Fredericksburg, Gettysburg, and numerous others. His actions at the Antietam cornfield typified his battlefield conduct:

> I gave my poor men a hasty absolution, and rode on with General Meagher into the battle. . . . I shall never forget how wicked the whiz of the enemy's bullets seemed as we advanced into that battle. As soon as my men began to fall, I dismounted and began to hear their confessions on the spot. It was then I felt the danger even more than when dashing into battle. Every instant

> bullets whizzed past my head, any of which, if it had struck me, would have been sufficient to leave me dead on the spot.[23]

Frederic Denison, chaplain for the 1st Rhode Island Volunteer Cavalry (Virginia and Maryland) and then the 3rd Rhode Island Volunteer Artillery (Georgia, Florida, South Carolina), also published a memoir in 1893, *A Chaplain's Experience in the Union Army*. Although a chaplain, Denison found himself in the role of aid de camp to his commander in the 1st Rhode Island, which frequently kept him from the fighting line, and then later in a garrison-style role at Hilton Head, South Carolina and Fort Pulaski, Georgia.[24] H. Clay Trumball, former chaplain for the 10th Connecticut Volunteer Infantry, published his *War Memories of an Army Chaplain* in 1898. While his personal reminiscences modestly dealt with camp ministry and other activities not on the firing line, others remembered his zealous courage while under fire: "Chaplain H. C. Trumball was always at his post in time of danger . . . on at least two occasions [he] displayed marked and conspicuous gallantry, dashing into the thickest of the fight to rally and encourage the wavering line."[25] Milton L. Haney, former chaplain for the 55th Illinois Volunteer Infantry, published his autobiography in 1906. This work, entitled *Pentecostal Possibilities: The Story of My Life*, featured a significant section on his Civil War experience as well as a valuable prescriptive on chaplain ministry. Haney, a traveling evangelist and popular pastor prior to the war, was elected to company command when his regiment formed. But just prior to the Battle of Shiloh in April 1862, he voluntarily relinquished command and assumed the role of regimental chaplain. During that epic battle, he scoured the battlefield to recover dead and wounded comrades. In early 1864, the regiment elected the wildly-popular Haney to be the regimental commander, but he refused the honor and chose to remain as chaplain. Then, in July 1864 at the Battle of Atlanta, Haney rallied his faltering regiment to repulse a Confederate assault — an action for which he eventually received the Medal of Honor.[26] In 1908, Frank Milton Bristol wrote *The Life of Chaplain McCabe*, a hagiographic biography of Charles C. McCabe, former chaplain of the 122nd Ohio Volunteer Infantry and later a key leader in the Methodist church. McCabe accompanied his men on campaign and was captured in June 1862 while ministering to the wounded at Winchester. McCabe spent five months at Libby Prison in Richmond, where he endeared himself to his fellow prisoners through ministry and morale building.[27]

At least one noteworthy First World War chaplain memoir appeared prior to 1926. *Father Duffy's Story*, written by Francis P. Duffy in 1919,

told of the Roman Catholic chaplain with the 69th Infantry Regiment of the New York National Guard. Duffy habitually exposed himself to heavy fighting as he ministered to his men in the trenches and beyond. For his actions, he received the Distinguished Service Cross.[28]

Lessons Learned from World War I

Broadly speaking, World War I heavily influenced the Army chaplaincy: "The chaplaincy of the 1920s was directly influenced by lessons learned in 'the Great War,' [and] the events of the 1920s were acted out within the shadow of that war."[29] The 1926 manual certainly reflected this influence, most explicitly with idiomatic phrases like the firing line and over the top.[30] Beyond the specific verbiage, the doctrinal concept of chaplains serving on the fighting line naturally sprang from chaplain experiences in Europe. These veterans, many of who remained in the Regular Army in the 1920s and beyond, maintained the combat ministry principle established by those chaplains who had served in previous conflicts. After the war, chaplains in positions of influence ensured that their lessons learned found a place in the new doctrine.[31]

Chaplain Julius Babst and his noteworthy wartime service likely influenced the doctrine writers. Born in Naperville, Illinois in 1881, Babst was ordained a Roman Catholic priest in 1905. During the next decade, he served parishes in Illinois and was also as chaplain at a Catholic home for boys in Denver, Colorado.[32] In January 1917, he entered the Regular Army as chaplain and served with the 30th Infantry Regiment. In September of that year, he went to Europe with the 23rd Infantry Regiment, which eventually became part of the 2nd Division, American Expeditionary Forces. Along with his soldiers, Babst conducted training in trench and open warfare throughout late 1917 and early 1918. His first taste of sustained ground combat came on 6 June 1918, when the Second Division checked the German advance on Paris along the Chateau-Thierry highway. During that action, the 23rd Infantry Regiment supported the 5th and 6th Marine Regiments at Belleau Wood, where the lack of American combined arms experience resulted in heavy casualties. Babst busily traversed the battlefield caring for the wounded and dying and encouraging those still fighting. For his actions, he received the Distinguished Service Cross.[33] In July, Babst saw more action at the assault on Vaux (1 July 1918) and the Aisne-Marne offensive (18-19 July 1918). After refitting and recovering in August, Babst and the 23rd Infantry Regiment participated in the St. Mihiel salient attack from 12-16 September 1918, where Allied leaders hoped to break the German line and capture the city of Metz. In

October, for actions throughout the assault on Blanc Mont Ridge, Babst received a second Distinguished Service Cross and was wounded.[34] He was evacuated after the battle then rejoined his unit in December 1918.

Babst returned to the United States in August 1919 as the most decorated chaplain in the First World War. The Army featured his story as a means to inspire future generations of chaplains and soldiers alike.[35] Given his notoriety, Babst's experiences most likely informed the context from which the 1926 doctrine emerged.

Analysis

Several dynamics influenced the production of the 1926 manual. The writers of that manual had access at least to several prescriptive essays, articles, and books unofficially published by chaplains. Some of these works — but not all — included references to the chaplain's place in combat. Most likely, they also knew of numerous war memoirs featuring chaplain combat actions. In addition, the lessons brought home by First World War chaplains such as Julius Babst certainly influenced the chaplaincy in the years after the war and most certainly left a mark on the 1926 manual.

Chaplain ministry on the front line of battle was a significant historical theme that the 1926 manual writers captured succinctly. The motif began in earnest when many Civil War chaplains, with no formal guidance or training, instinctively placed themselves near their men in battle. Chaplains like William Corby, Milton Haney, and H. C. Trumball understood the spiritual and emotional value their ministry brought when they went wherever their soldiers went. Such chaplains endeared themselves to their men, and those men remembered them decades later.

Thirty years after the war, a new generation of chaplains accompanied American soldiers into battle in places like Santiago, Puerto Rico, the Philippines, and China. Many of these men carried on the practice of accompanying their soldiers into combat, often with significant results. Although very few wrote of their experiences, records remain of their contributions and impact.[36]

Prior to 1926, World War I represented the zenith of chaplain ministry in combat. Chaplains like Julius Babst who went "over there" and ministered to soldiers on the firing line did so in ways very similar to those who had gone before. Babst, the most decorated chaplain of the war, continued as a role model for chaplains and soldiers in the years after the war, and his story undoubtedly influence the chaplaincy's

vision for where a chaplain should minister when supporting combat units.

Summary

In 1926, the Army chaplaincy entered a new era with its first published doctrinal manual. Among other things, the manual discussed the chaplain's ministry on the fighting line. Although the manual itself was the first of its kind, the concepts it contained — especially regarding the chaplain's fighting line ministry — were common practices since the chaplaincy's inception. Both World War I lessons learned and many pre-1926 publications contained these principles. Indeed, the fighting line verbiage in the 1926 manual affirmed that which chaplains had habitually practiced for quite some time.

Endnotes

1. During the Revolutionary War, for example, chaplains came from numerous sources — some accompanied their local militias, others gained appointment from governors, legislatures, or commanders, and some traveled back and forth to their units from their parish pulpits. William E. Dickens, "Answering the Call: The Story of the U. S. Military Chaplaincy from the Revolution through the Civil War" (Ph.D. diss., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1999), 8.

2. Earl F. Stover, Jr., *Up From Handymen: The United States Army Chaplaincy, 1865-1920* (Washington, DC: Office of Chief of Chaplains, 1977), 133.

3. William Y. Brown, *The Army Chaplain: His Office, Duties, and Responsibilities* (Philadelphia: Alfred Martine, 1863), 3.

4. United States War Department, *Report of the Secretary of War; Being Part of the Message and Documents to the Two Houses of Congress* (1892), 5:18.

5. Paul D. Moody, "The Precedent of the First World War," in *Religion of Soldier and Sailor*, ed. Willard L. Sperry (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1945), 11. Moody was the son of famed nineteenth-century evangelist Dwight L. Moody. See also Worth M. Tippy, "The Regulations for Chaplains in France," *The Homiletic Review* 76 (July-December 1918): 96-98; Richard M. Budd, *Serving Two Masters* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 2002), 121-131.

6. Moody, "The Precedent of the First World War," 11.

7. Walter E. Kretchik, *U.S. Army Doctrine: From the American Revolution to th*e *War on Terror* (Lawrence: University of Kansas, 2011), 5.

8. Chaplain Charles C. Pierce, known as "the father of Army mortuary affairs," served as chaplain on the frontier in the 1880s and 1890s and then went to Manila during the Spanish-American War and Philippine Insurrection (1899-1903). While in the Philippines, he took an interest in the proper identification and burial of soldiers and soon became the head of the Office of Identification and U. S. Army Morgue in Manila. Although he retired in 1908, he was recalled in 1917 and named Chief of the newly-formed Quartermaster Graves Registration Service, a role for which he received the Distinguished Service Medal and the praise of General Pershing. He also became the first chaplain promoted to Colonel. See Karl Irving Faust, *Campaigning in the Philippines* (San Francisco: Hicks-Judd Publishers, 1899), 312; Stover, *Up*

From Handymen, 126. For an account of his record ride of 275 miles in five days with the 7th Cavalry in vicinity of Fort Grant, Arizona, see Charles C. Pierce, "Roughing It," in *Active Service: Religious Work Among U.S. Soldiers*, ed. T. G. Steward (New York: U.S. Army Aid Association, 1897), 71-77.

9. Department of the Army, TM 2270-5*, The Chaplain: His Place and Duties*, 51.

10. The "fighting parson" motif went back at least to the Revolutionary War but did not always imply participation in offensive operations or engaging the enemy with weapons (although some chaplains did both). Rather, the "fighting parsons" of that war were mostly men who accompanied their soldiers into battle — men like James Caldwell and Ebenezer Cleaveland. See James C. Hefley, "The Fighting Parsons of '76," *The Chaplain* 19, no. 2 (Spring 1962), 18-22; Kitty Parsons, "The Fighting Parson," *The Chaplain* 25, no. 4 (Summer 1968), 25-28; Joel T. Headley, *Chaplains and Clergy of the Revolution* (New York: Scribner, 1864). The Civil War saw several "fighting parsons" on both sides, to include Isaac T. Tichenor (17th Alabama Volunteer Infantry), Lorenzo Barber (2nd U.S. Sharpshooters), and Milton L. Haney (55th Illinois Volunteer Infantry) — all of whom *did* engage the enemy with small arms. See Kenneth W. Noe, "The Fighting Chaplain of Shiloh: Isaac Tichenor's Civil War and the Role of Confederate Ministers," in *Politics and Culture of the Civil War Era*, eds. Daniel McDonough and Kenneth W. Noe (Selinsgrove: Susquehanna University Press, 2006), 240-64; Steven E. Woodworth, *While God is Marching On: The Religious World of Civil War Soldiers* (Lawrence: University of Kansas, 2001), 158; John W. Brinsfield, Jr., "A Song of Courage: Chaplain M. L. Haney and the Congressional Medal of Honor," *Military Chaplain Review* (February 1992): 49-60.

11. Chaplain George J. Waring described conditions in this way: "Each [chaplain] must do the best he knows how, taking into consideration the peculiar circumstances of his regiment or post. No two chaplains are alike and no two will work alike." Waring, who enjoyed this autonomous ministry context, represented a minority of chaplains who opposed centralized leadership for chaplains. He argued that a centralized supervisor might coerce chaplains to act outside of their own faith tenets. George, J. Waring, *The Chaplain's Duties and How Best to Accomplish His Work* (Washington, DC: The War Department, 1912), 14.

12. J. Pinkney Hammond, *Army Chaplain's Manual* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1863), 26.

13. Brown, *The Army Chaplain: His Office, Duties, and Responsibilities*, 108.

14. Selected works include: "Report of the Military Post Library Association" (New York: Military Post Library Association, 1870); *The Forgotten Cause* (New York: Soldier's Christian Aid Association, 1893); "Introduction," *Active Service: Religious Work Among U.S. Soldiers*, ed. T. G. Steward (New York: U.S. Army Aid Association, 1897), 5-11.

15. George Simpson, *Manual For Army Chaplains* (Fort Yates, SD, 1893).

16. Chaplain David White, while traveling to Fort Phil Kearney on July 20, 1866, was involved in an Indian ambush at Crazy Woman Creek on the Bozeman Trail. Along with 36 others (to include nine women and children), White fought the attackers and volunteered to ride through the Indian lines for help. Stover, *Up From Handymen*, 36-7; Dorothy M. Johnson, *The Bloody Bozeman: The Perilous Trail to Montana Gold* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1971), 206-209.

17. Charles S. Walkley, "The Work of a Chaplain in the Military Service of the United States, and the Methods by Which it May Best be Accomplished," *Journal of the Military Service Institution* 36 (Spring 1905): 402-403.

18. Nave was an outspoken proponent for reforming the chaplaincy while he served on active duty, often writing on the matter and even testifying before Congress. Orville J. Nave, *Nave's Handbook on the Army Chaplaincy* (Los Angeles, 1917); Orville J. Nave, "The Status of Army Chaplains," in *Active Service: Religious Work Among U.S. Soldiers*, ed. T. G. Steward (New York: U.S. Army Aid Association, 1897), 41-9; *Report of the Commission Appointed by the President to Investigate the Conduct of the War Department in the War with Spain*, Vol. 3 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1900), 525-534. Nave's most lasting and famous work, however, was *Nave's Topical Bible*, which is still widely published in the twenty-first century.

19. Brasted's work was first published in 1918 and then later republished as "Suggestions to Service Chaplains" in *Service to Servicemen* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1941), 34.

20. Waring, *The Chaplain's Duties and How Best to Accomplish His Work*, 1-17; Joseph Clemens, *Duties and Privileges of Chaplains* (manuscript submitted to the War Department, 1914), 2-6. Several other chaplains published short works on military ministry that did not address chaplains in combat, most of which can be found in T. G. Steward, ed., *Active Service: Religious Work Among U.S. Soldiers* (New York: U.S. Army Aid Association, 1897).

21. Robert Nay, "The Operational, Social, and Religious Influences Upon the Army Chaplain Field Manual, 1926-1952" (Master's thesis, Command and General Staff College, 2008), 30.

22. J. B. Rogers, *War Pictures: Experiences and Observations of a Chaplain in the U. S. Army* (Chicago: Church and Goodman, 1863); J. J. Marks, *The Peninsular Campaign in Virginia* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1864), 179; Headley, *Chaplains and Clergy of the Revolution*, 13-20, 56-73, 217-232; W. W. Lyle, *Lights and Shadows of Army Life: Pen Pictures from the Battlefield, the Camp, and the Hospital* (Cincinnati: R. W. Carroll, 1865). One could also mention Chaplain G. S. Bradley's *Star Corps: Notes of an Army Chaplain During Sherman's Famous March to the Sea* (Milwaukee: Jermain and Brightman, 1865). Bradley personally served as chaplain for the 22nd Wisconsin Volunteer Infantry, but this volume is largely a third-person description of all regiments in the corps and does not offer a picture of chaplains specifically.

23. William Corby, *Memoirs of Chaplain Life* (Chicago: La Monte, O'Donnell, and Company, 1893), 125-126.

24. Frederick Denison, *A Chaplain's Experience in the Union Army* (Providence: Rhode Island Soldiers and Sailors Historical Society, 1893).

25. H. Clay Trumbull, *War Memories of an Army Chaplain* (New York: Scribners, 1898), 8-15; William F. Fox, *Regimental Losses in the American Civil War* (Albany: Albany Publishing Company, 1889), 34, 44. Fox also wrote more generally about the superlative dangers that many chaplains endured: "These gallant members of the Church Militant were wont to take a more active part in the fighting than has been generally credited to them. They were frequently seen [in extremely hazardous conditions] moving about among their men encouraging them to do their best."

26. Milton L. Haney, *Pentecostal Possibilities: The Story of My Life* (Chicago: The Christian Witness Company, 1906); Milton L. Haney, "Personal Reminiscences of Chaplain Haney," *The Story of the Fifty-Fifth Regiment Illinois Volunteer Infantry in the Civil War*, eds. Lucian B. Crooker et al. (Clinton: W. J. Coulter, 1887), 441-462; *Report on the Proceedings of the Association of the 55th Illinois Veteran Volunteer Infantry at Their Fourth Reunion* (Davenport: H. L. Wagner, 1891), 40-48; Brinsfield, "A Song of Courage: Chaplain M. L. Haney and the Congressional Medal of Honor," 49-60.

27. Frank Milton Bristol, *The Life of Chaplain McCabe* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1908). McCabe was release from Libby Prison

through a general exchange of chaplains in October 1863. During his captivity and afterward, he was known for singing Julia Ward Howe's "Battle Hymn of the Republic," and even attended a White House reception at Abraham Lincoln's invitation because of it. See also John W. Brinsfield, Jr., and Benedict R. Marina, eds., *The Spirit Divided: Memoirs of Civil War Chaplains* (Macon: Mercer University, 2007), 185-203.

28. Francis P. Duffy, *Father Duffy's Story* (New York: George H. Doran, 1919). See also, e.g., George H. Benz, "Four Months in France with the 165th Infantry (The Old 'Sixty-Ninth')," *New York Evening World Magazine* (June 3, 1918). Duffy's fame grew over the years, due largely to the 1937 New York dedication of his statue and square and also the 1940 motion picture *The Fighting 69th*, where Pat O'Brien played Duffy's character.

29. See Robert L. Gushwa, *The Best and Worst of Times: The United States Army Chaplaincy, 1920-1945* (Washington, DC: Office of Chief of Chaplains, 1977), 40.

30. The "firing line" verbiage was commonly associated with the recent war — e.g., the 1915 newsreel "On the Firing Line with the Germans" and *Army Boys on the Firing Line* (1923), a book in the popular "Army Boys" series. The British initially coined the phrase "over the top," and the Americans soon adopted it — e.g., Arthur Guy Empey's popular *Over the Top* (New York: G. P. Putnam, 1918) and the motion picture that followed the next year with the same title.

31. Moody, "The Precedent of the First World War," 18.

32. Julius Babst, Babst family collection, Naperville, Illinois Historical Society Archive.

33. The citation reads, "For extraordinary heroism in action at Chateau-Thierry, France: Chaplain Babst displayed exceptional bravery and devotion to duty by repeatedly going out from the first aid station of his battalion to care for the wounded and voluntarily exposed himself to terrific artillery and machine gun fire to administer the last sacraments to the dying." First Distinguished Service Cross citation, Julius J. Babst files, Naperville Archives. He also received a Croix de Guerre for actions on June 7: "Chaplain Julius Babst worked voluntarily for 36 hours at the battalion aid station without stopping his treatment of the wounded, directing evacuations, and given last rites." In late June, Babst received the Silver Star Citation for actions at Chateau-Thierry "under heavy shell fire." This award later became the Silver Star Medal in 1933 and Babst received one accordingly. Babst First Croix de Guerre and Silver Star Citation, Naperville Archive; George B. Clark, *The*

Second Infantry Division in World War I (London: McFarland and Company, 2007), 248.

34. Clark, *The Second Infantry Division in World War I*, 246. Babst also received a second Croix de Guerre for actions in this battle. Babst Second Croix de Guerre, Naperville Archive.

35. Babst's story appeared in Army recruiting magazines, he was interviewed for radio programs, and also spoke at key events. Julius Babst Army recruiting graphic, National Archives Record Group 247, Records of the Office of Chief of Chaplains, 1902-1964; also Babst radio program transcript, NA RG 247, Julius Babst folder.

36. Two examples were Chaplains Henry A. Brown and Leslie R. Groves. Brown, chaplain for the 1st U. S. Volunteer Cavalry — the "Rough Riders" — landed with his men in Cuba and accompanied their assault on Kettle and San Juan Hills. Theodore Roosevelt commended him publically at the end of the short war, saying, "We all know our chaplain, and there isn't a braver man in the regiment. He was right there on the fighting line tending to the wounded." Roosevelt also provided an endorsement for Brown's Regular Army application: "The chaplain has shown great courage and humanity in succouring [sic] my wounded men under heavy fire." The Rough Rider Memorial Collection, City of Las Vegas, New Mexico Museum; Henry A. Brown, Records Group 94, National Archives. Groves, a Regular Army chaplain, not only participated in the 8th Infantry Regiment's assault on El Caney near Santiago but also went to the Philippines and ultimately to China with the 14th Infantry Regiment. On the long, hot, 80-mile march to Peking, Groves assisted with the wounded and the many soldiers suffering from heat and exhaustion. Robert S. Norris, *Racing for the Bomb* (South Royalton, VT: Steerforth Press, 2002), 25-43.

Chapter 3
Chaplain Manuals Since 1926

The publication of the 1926 chaplain manual marked the beginning a new era for Army chaplains. Prior to 1926, the chaplaincy had no official doctrine; rather, every chaplain largely did whatever he thought best for his particular unit and situation. Although some ministry efforts were fairly universal — for example, field chapel services, ministry to wounded Soldiers, and burial of those killed in action — how individual chaplains performed those efforts could be described as "informal practices."[1] Some chaplains saw the need for unity in procedures and they published works accordingly, but the War Department never endorsed such works. When the National Defense Act of 1920 established the Office of Chief of Chaplains and chaplains established the Army Chaplain School shortly thereafter, conditions were set for the publication of the first doctrinal manual in 1926.

The 1926 manual included a section about "The Chaplain in War" and addressed the chaplain's position on the fighting line. This doctrinal guidance contained official approval of what chaplains had habitually practiced since the early days of the Army itself — namely, chaplains placing themselves at or near the front battle lines for purposes of ministry, encouragement, and morale building. Indeed, the 1926 manual codified already-established norms of frontline combat support.

As time passed, just as the Army replaced its Field Service Regulations and later FMs with updated editions, the chaplaincy replaced its manual with newer versions, too. The Army's revision tempo delivered a new manual roughly every five to seven years, and the chaplaincy followed suit. Every new manual addressed the chaplain's place in combat; some discussed it at length, others merely mentioned it.

Based upon content, we may categorize the post-1926 manuals into three groups: manuals that discussed basic chaplain activities (1937 to 1977), manuals nested with broader Army doctrine (1984 to 2003), and manuals based on Doctrine 2015 with less content and more emphasis upon timeless, enduring principles (2012 and later).[2] The following paragraphs will summarize these manuals and assess how each one addressed the chaplain's place in combat, specifically whether each manual sustained an emphasis on the chaplain ministering on the fighting line, and, if so, why?

Manuals Discussing Basic Chaplain Activities (1937 to 1977)

The first 50 years of chaplain doctrine reflected a focus on chaplain duties in and of themselves. Broad topics such as religious functions, clerical duties, morale efforts, equipment, and educational services received the preponderance of attention. The manuals also addressed the general military context (for example, nuclear war in the 1950s), but these manuals were not nested in broader operational concepts current for the time.

The first two manuals that followed the 1926 edition, TM 2270-5, *The Chaplain* (1937) and TM 2270-5, *The Chaplain* (1941), retained the fighting line passage with no changes. The reason for lack of revision in 1937 is not precisely known; however, the broader Army's example hardly encouraged any significant revision. In fact, the Army did not revise the 1923 Field Service Regulations until it published FM 100-5 in 1939.[3] The lack of revision in 1941 is more curious, given the 1939 publication of FM 100-5 as well as the war clouds clearly forming. However, records indicate that the chaplaincy and its Chief, Brigadier General William R. Arnold, saw wartime preparation and personnel issues of greater concern than the manner in which the war would actually be fought.[4]

At the height of wartime activity, the chaplaincy published its next doctrinal manual in 1944, TM 2270-5, *The Chaplain*. The manual was the first considerable revision in nearly 20 years and significantly changed the verbiage about a chaplain's ministry in support of ground forces while retaining the concepts found in the 1926 edition:

> When the ground forces go into action, their chaplain should be with them. This may mean that he will move from one platoon to another or will minister to the wounded in exposed positions but never that he will place himself in unnecessary danger. He must be careful that his movements do not disclose hidden positions to the enemy nor draw his fire. . . . The chaplain who shares the peril of battle with his men, showing kindness that never fails and a sincere concern for their welfare, will gain a place in their confidence which will reinforce powerfully all his efforts to give moral and religious instruction and inspiration.[5]

This guidance moved beyond the antiquated language of the World War I battlefield and reflected a more contemporary context while also emphasizing the impact that chaplains could have upon Soldiers in ground combat.

In 1952, while the Army was engaged on the Korean peninsula, the chaplaincy published FM 16-5, *The Chaplain*, the first chaplain manual designated as a field manual. Reflecting a wider indifference to the war in Korea, only two of 45 pages discussed "The Chaplain in Combat." Guidance regarding the chaplain's place on the battlefield was minimal:

> The unit chaplain works out of either the battalion aid station or the regimental collection point, depending on the number and denominations of the available chaplains and the nature of the situation. The chaplain secures the commanding officer's advice and permission before visiting the troops on the front line. Visits, when permitted, are short and are made at such times as necessary for the proper performance of duties.[6]

In contrast, this manual included a four-page section discussing a chaplain's role in ministering to enemy prisoners in an American-run POW camp.

If the 1952 edition minimized the chaplain's front-line ministry, the 1958 edition nearly omitted it altogether. Instead of a section dealing with chaplains on the firing line or even the chaplain in combat, this manual contained a chapter entitled, "The Chaplain in Combat Units and Organizations," with greater emphasis upon upper echelons of chaplain management. The manual did include a short discussion on chaplains in combat, declaring that "this nation has . . . expected that chaplains accompany their combat troops into battle, rendering them those spiritual and more ministrations so basic to the 'American Way of Life.'"[7] However, anticipating an operation environment characterized by geographic dispersion caused by the threat of nuclear contamination, this manual predicted that "units will tend to be widely dispersed in future wars . . . [and] chaplains will be hard pressed to provide adequate services to all personnel of the unit."[8] While not a prohibition to ministry among front-line soldiers, this manual focused on the battlefield constraints rather than opportunities for service.

The 1964 edition of FM 16-5 made few revisions to its 1958 predecessor, retaining a forecast for future nuclear realities (along, this time, with chemical and biological threats) as well as the chaplain's role in supporting the American Way of Life. However, this manual returned to some of the battlefield-specific concepts found in earlier chaplain doctrine when it described "The Chaplain in the Combat Zone" in chapter eight:

> To the soldier in the front line, religion is extremely important. . . . [The chaplain] is a symbol of the concern of both God and the nation for the soldier under the stress of combat. . . . Generally, in combat and combat support battalions, the chaplain is located in the vicinity of the battalion aid station. . . . However, he must continue to serve the needs of the men who are carrying the battle who are not casualties.[9]

This manual reemphasized the chaplain's front-line ministry in ways that had not occurred in twenty years. Its author, however, took no account of contemporary Army doctrine and the need to nest prescriptive functional guidance for discrete branches within that doctrine.[10]

As the war in Vietnam escalated, the 1967 edition repeated this same mistake. This manual offered no revisions to the 1964 manual regarding chaplains in the combat zone. Moreover, the 1967 manual was published prior to the Army's revision of its doctrine — the Army did not revise the 1962 FM 100-5 until 1968. Among other things, this chronological aberration suggests that the chaplaincy was out of step with broader Army doctrine.

Ten years later, the chaplaincy published its first post-Vietnam doctrinal manual, FM 16-5, *The Chaplain*. Unlike the 1967 edition of FM 100-5 which reflected an emphasis upon firepower, technology, and winning the land battle, the new chaplain manual resembled a garrison chaplain's handbook; there was little reference to combat.[11] With minimal focus on ground combat support, the manual contained just two short sentences implying that the fighting line was a place for chaplain ministry: "The chaplain is the spiritual advisor to the fighting man and is expected to accompany troops into combat. . . . Because the troops cannot come to a chapel, the chaplain must go to them, wherever they are."[12] This manual represented a missed opportunity to employ the wealth of lessons learned by chaplains in Vietnam.

One theme predominates when describing chaplain manuals published from 1937 to 1977: none were nested in contemporary doctrine. The Army's 1923 Field Service Regulations mandated that all other service manuals align with it,but the chaplain manuals published from 1937 to 1977 did not necessarily follow that guidance.[13] By and large, these manuals merely catalogued the chaplain's duties and responsibilities in terms of basic ministry to soldiers, overwhelmingly in a garrison setting. Whatever they mentioned about chaplains supporting ground combat soldiers was a small subset of the broader manual. Ironically,

those manuals published during or immediately following war often failed adequately to address the chaplain's ministry on the fighting line. By the end of the 1970s, the chaplaincy desperately needed to modify its doctrinal philosophy and how it was delivered to its targeted population.

Manuals Nested with Broader Army Doctrine (1984 to 2003)

As the Army leadership slowly rebuilt the Army and update its doctrine after the Vietnam War, the chaplaincy undertook a similar process, beginning with a deliberate effort to nest its own doctrine in the Army's. Once appropriate staffing and coordination took place, the chaplaincy successfully altered its culture similar to the watershed year of 1926. Manuals beginning in 1984 reflected an operational emphasis not seen previously, and chaplains were consequently instructed to move forward and minister on the front line of troops as often as possible.

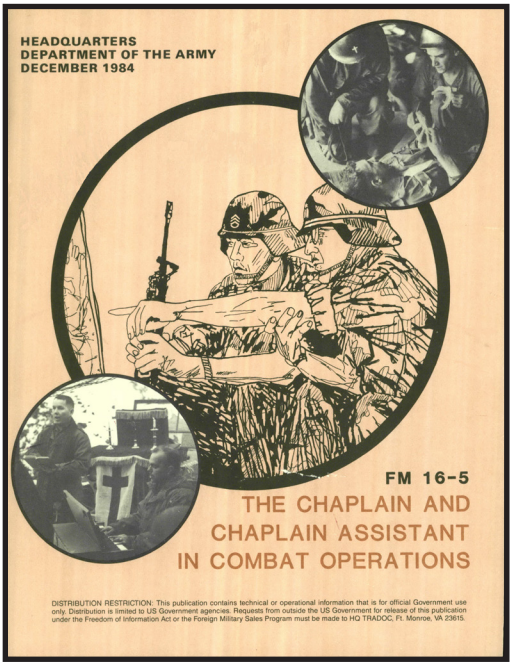

Figure 2: US Army. *The Chaplain and Chaplain Assistant in Combat Operations.* Department of the Army. FM 16-5. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1984.

The 1984 manual, FM 16-5, *The Chaplain and Chaplain Assistant in Combat Operations*, represented a sea change in chaplain doctrine. First, the title itself indicated a change in both the primary focus of the manual and the collaborative nature of the ministry provided by the chaplain *and* assistant. The manual's cover bolstered the title's emphasis with a drawing of a chaplain and assistant postured for war. Inside, the manual introduced a new concept: the Unit Ministry Team (UMT) comprised of one chaplain and one assistant assigned directly at the battalion level. Prior to 1984, each regiment had one senior chaplain and several assistant regimental chaplains, all of whom supported the battalions on a rotational basis. Among the many lessons learned from Vietnam, one was the need to assign chaplains to a particular battalion for continuity, relationship building, and deeper ministry.[14] In addition, the 1984 manual described the scope of ministry in new, triune terms: nurture the living, care for the casualties, honor the dead.

The heart of the 1984 manual, however, was its alignment with the Army's AirLand Battle concept. The chaplaincy's posture was described as forward thrust — that is, "religious support is pushed forward to the smallest, most advanced elements of the battlefield. . . . Each unit ministry team moves continuously among the forward elements, ministering to soldiers before, during, and after contact with the enemy."[15] This bold new doctrine hearkened back to the initial on the fighting line concept, but also took the idea much further. With forward thrust, UMTs would aggressively support soldiers in combat. Ministry would be highly mobile, and chaplains would need a keen awareness of mission planning, battlefield positioning, staff coordination, and, above all things, flexible agility. The risks would exceed those inherent to remaining static at the aid station, but the ministry benefits outweighed the risks. For chaplains seeking a more active, hands-on ministry, the 1984 manual was a breath of fresh air.[16]

In 1989, FM 16-1*, Religious Support Doctrine: The Chaplain and Chaplain Assistant* refined the chaplaincy's alignment with AirLand Battle. At 143 pages, it was the most comprehensive doctrinal manual to date, as it included significant material for both combat and garrison ministry. This manual retained the forward thrust doctrine and provided additional techniques and procedures for battlefield survivability. In addition, the manual guided chaplains in synchronizing their efforts with the phases of the broader mission, both in the offense and the defense. When chaplains participated in Operation Desert Storm, the

war doctrine imagined, they largely demonstrated that the chaplaincy's doctrinal alignment with AirLand Battle was effective and productive.[17]

At 157 pages, the 1995 update to FM 16-1 continued the trend toward longer manuals with more details and prescriptive tactics, techniques, and procedures. Reflecting the changed operational environment of the post-Cold War era, this manual also featured a broader scope and addressed the full range of military operations, to include operations other than war, peacekeeping roles, and support for special operations units. For combat operations, the chaplain's place was still with soldiers in forward positions. However, the manual discarded the forward thrust label. As the scope and length increased, this manual contained broad and implied concepts about the chaplain's place on the battlefield rather than succinct phrases and statements.

The largest and most comprehensive chaplain manual ever written was FM 1-05, *Religious Support*. Published in 2003, this manual exceeded 200 pages. In addition to the basic chaplain functions and responsibilities, the manual also contained extensive (and somewhat overwhelming) planning guidance to include a full Military Decision Making Process matrix, position descriptions for chaplains and chaplain assistants from battalion to corps (as well as different types of maneuver, support, and special operations units), along with a host of appendices and charts. The manual did include some verbiage about chaplains supporting forward positions — for example, "UMTs move forward to provide religious support to all elements" and "as far forward as possible, the UMT visits soldiers in fighting positions" — but these statements were largely buried beneath the volume of information contained in the FM. Much like the Army's 2001 FM 3-0, *Operations*, FM 1-05 "attempted to address every possible situation [in which] Army forces might find themselves."[18] What began as a good idea for comprehensive doctrine mutated into an encyclopedic monstrosity.

Manuals Nested in Army Doctrine 2015 (2012)

In 2009 to 2011 the Army initiated "Doctrine 2015." Convinced that most Soldiers and leaders were not reading doctrine due to its cumbersome volume and presentation, senior leaders sought a more accessible and relevant product. Instead of maintaining some 550 doctrinal manuals on a multi-year cycle, senior leaders proposed streamlined echelons of doctrine beginning with 15 Army Doctrine Publications of 10-30 pages each. These Army Doctrine Publications would focus on "time-proven, fundamental principles — the big ideas that make up

the core of our knowledge base."[19] Next would be the Army Doctrine Reference Publications somewhat longer at 100 to 150 pages each, but still more concise than traditional field manuals and also limited to 15 volumes. The third echelon would be the FMs, limited to 50 and constrained in length. Among other goals, senior leaders envisioned a streamlined doctrinal base that would allow for creative, flexible, and innovative approaches at the unit level.

The first chaplain manual to align with Doctrine 2015 was FM 1-05, *Religious Support*, published in 2012. At 40 pages, the manual clearly demonstrated a departure from its 2003 predecessor. Nested with Army Doctrine Publications 3-0, *Unified Land Operations*, this manual attempted to capture the timeless and enduring principles of chaplain ministry (called "religious support functions") and, through mission analysis, equip chaplains to aggressively and flexibly adapt them to current operations.

This manual included a few brief but general statements regarding chaplains in combat:

> Chaplains and chaplain assistants must be able to deliver religious support during close combat . . . [and] the Army requires trained chaplains and chaplain assistants capable of critically assessing the operational situation and quickly adapting religious support operations to sustain Soldiers in close combat.[22]

Enunciating only enduring themes of religious support, doctrine writers expected chaplains and chaplain assistants to take the broad principles found in FM 1-05 and aggressively adapt them to their specific contexts. Conversely, the writers were concerned that excessive guidance in the doctrine would inhibit individual creativity, flexibility, and innovation.

Analysis

Any study of the proximity principle requires measuring post-1926 chaplain manuals against three criteria. First, has the proximity principle, which first appeared doctrinally in 1926, stood the test of time within the evolution of chaplain doctrine? Second, does the principle meet current doctrinal requirements as a timeless and enduring fundamental of chaplain ministry that allows for creative, flexible, and innovative application? Third, have doctrine writers had an enduring expectation of the principle's potential impact?

While the 1937 and 1941 manuals duplicated the 1926 verbiage about chaplains on the fighting line, every manual after those contained

different language. In some cases, the language was just as explicit as the first three manuals: "When the ground forces go into action, their chaplain should be with them," "This nation has . . . expected that chaplains accompany their combat troops into battle," and "Religious support is pushed forward to the smallest, most advanced elements of the battlefield."[20] Other manuals, the 1952 and 1977 editions in particular, hardly contained anything about it. But even those were certainly written from a posture of silent assumption rather than deliberate omission. In other words, every manual has at least included forward ministry as an implied task, if not written in the explicit language first found in the 1926 manual. In its best manifestation, the principle is direct, concise, and easily identified, not unlike its first appearance in 1926. But even if a manual lacked those qualities, the general concept was been present. Indeed, all chaplain doctrine presumes that chaplains will accompany ground combat forces into battle. Thus, it is reasonable to suggest that the proximity principle is a timeless and enduring doctrinal concept that has survived each and every generational revision of chaplain manuals.

Doctrinal language that chaplains can reasonably follow must contain explicit verbiage about position and proximity without stifling the chaplain's creative execution. Temporally, the language must allow for broad application. For example, references to going over the top and the trenches or scenarios too contextualized upon a particular type of warfare (total nuclear war, for example) are neither universal nor timeless. Moreover, language couched in terms of specific types of units is not helpful. For example, an infantry chaplain's fighting line will be very different than a support battalion's area of ministry. As we have seen, some manuals attempted to address each unit situation. By being overly prescriptive, however, those manuals only succeeded in setting the record for the largest and most cumbersome. On the other hand, the principle must be manifested in such a way that chaplains understand the clear intent and grasp the resolve that ministry requires. Such language will not minimize the risks that the proximity principle involves; rather, it will emphasize that the chaplain voluntarily assumes great risks in common with the soldiers he or she serves. An evolutionary review of chaplain doctrine reveals that much of the language since 1926 concerning a chaplain's place on the battlefield does not meet this criterion. Inferences, implications, and offhand references to frontline ministry occur in some of the manuals, but very little is concise, straightforward, timeless, and readily applicable without some deliberate interpretation

and explanation. Thus, future doctrine writers must address this for the next doctrinal update.

We should also consider the expectations that chaplain doctrine writers have had regarding the proximity principle's impact — or, better still, its potential impact. Did doctrine writers disclose their expectations as they wrote the doctrine? If so, what did they anticipate? An accurate answer to these questions requires searching for specific language about the projected effects of chaplain ministry in close proximity to combat troops. In the 1926 manual (and thus, also the 1937 and 1941 editions), the implied expectation is clear: chaplains minister to men on the fighting line in order to fit them "mentally, morally, and physically." The early doctrine writers anticipated (based, as we have seen, upon both early chaplain history as well as World War I lessons learned) that chaplains could impact the men in these key areas. The 1944 manual predicted that a chaplain's presence with forward elements would "reinforce powerfully all his efforts to give moral and religious instruction and inspiration."[21] The 1958 manual stressed the chaplain's role in assuring "the combatant . . . that he is at peace with God" and providing "spiritual stamina . . . [which] is the only dependable support for training, *esprit*, and morale."[22] The 1964 manual emphasized the chaplain's reinforcement of the Code of Conduct "by his spiritual and moral leadership and his personal presence in combat."[23] The 1984 manual, with its focus on "forward thrust" doctrine, dedicated most of its content on the "how" of providing close support to forward elements, but it also included the "why" of that support: "The chaplain . . . points soldiers to a reality beyond themselves . . . that enable soldiers to strengthen their faith and achieve inner stability, calm, and peace."[24] The 1989 manual anticipated the chaplain offering "spiritual comfort, moral support, forgiveness, grace, encouragement . . . and strength of spirit" to soldiers experiencing the horrors and lethality of the modern battlefield.[25] More recent manuals have generally mentioned the benefits of chaplain ministry in combat, but the comprehensive nature of these manuals (or the generalized content of the most recent manual) lack the concise statements of expectation found in earlier manuals.

Clearly, the proximity principle is found throughout chaplain doctrine since 1926. Although the language varied and would not necessarily meet the current criteria for chaplain doctrine, the concept has stood the test of time. Likewise, chaplain doctrine writers have habitually expected a positive and lasting impact upon those Soldiers whom the chaplain serves in forward elements. One could argue that

these expectations are an indispensible part of the proximity principle itself.

Summary

Chaplain doctrine since 1926 has evolved in three phases, each of which represented a greater alignment between chaplain doctrine and broader Army doctrine. Each phase has resulted in chaplain manuals with different emphases and philosophies, but all phases and all manuals have included an emphasis upon the chaplain's ministry in close proximity to forward combat troops. Some retained the 1926 verbiage, but most revised and contextualized the concept. Our analysis has shown that that proximity principle has stood the test of time and continues to play a significant role in chaplain doctrine. Moreover, we have observed that most doctrine writers likewise expected that principle to impact Soldiers in significant ways. In fact, specific expectations of the principle's potential have typically been an integral part of the principle itself in chaplain doctrine. As future doctrine writers begin their work, they would do well to consider the proximity principle as a timeless and enduring theme of the chaplain's ministry.

Endnotes

1. Walter E. Kretchik helpfully distinguishes between "informal practices" and "doctrine," in that doctrine "seeks to impose a system of equipment, training organization, and procedure upon the Army, to create a common understanding of individual and unit actions to be undertaken when necessary." Informal practices, on the other hand, are those that are habitually observed but not part of official doctrine — i.e., doctrine cannot include *everything*. Kretchik, *U. S. Army Doctrine*, 2-5.

2. Although these divisions are my own and not officially recognized, they represent established milestones in doctrinal development, particularly the 1984 manual's alignment with AirLand Battle and the 2012 manual's alignment with Doctrine 2015. These two manuals, in particular, marked significant changes in doctrinal philosophy.

3. Robert L. Gushwa depicts the chaplaincy of the 1920s and 1930s addressing the growing pacifism in the United States (which was not friendly toward the chaplaincy). *The Best and Worst of Times: The United States Army Chaplaincy, 1920-1945*, 49-69. Moreover, like the rest of the Army, the chaplaincy was merely trying to survive these days of limbo. Edward M. Coffman recalls a time when budgetary constraints prevented even the Chief of Staff and his aide from the luxury of a Pullman compartment when they traveled. Edward M. Coffman, *The Regulars: The American Army, 1898-1941* (Cambridge: Harvard University, 2004), 233.

4. Gushwa, *The Best and Worst of Times: The United States Army Chaplaincy, 1920-1945*, 99-101.

5. Department of the Army, TM 2270-5, *The Chaplain* (Washington, DC: The War Department, 1944), 64. While the manual prohibited chaplains from bearing arms as part of their ministry on the front line, Chief of Chaplains William R. Arnold candidly said, "We are at war with pagans, atheists, and Satan himself. . . . if there is a need for [a chaplain] to defend his cause or himself in battle, let him take it as his duty. A dead chaplain is no good to his men." Patricia Grady, "The Chief of Chaplains, USA," *The Army and Navy Chaplain* 13, no. 4: 13.

6. Department of the Army, FM 16-5*, The Chaplain* (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, 1952), 31.

7. Department of the Army, FM 16-5*, The Chaplain* (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, 1958), 52.

8. Department of the Army, FM 16-5, *The Chaplain* (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, 1958), 52.

9. Department of the Army, FM 16-5, *The Chaplain* (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, 1964), 40, 42.

10. The 1962 edition of FM 100-5 included an emphasis upon unconventional warfare and insurgency, but FM 16-5 said nothing about these key themes. Perhaps the chaplaincy was reluctant to wade into this new emphasis, given that even President Kennedy and senior Army leaders were at odds over the matter. While the President thought it took "a guerrilla to fight a guerrilla," senior Army leaders had faith in conventional forces and their ability to deal with irregulars. Kretchik, *U. S. Army Doctrine*, 185.

11. The 1976 FM 100-5 featured a three-ring plastic cover, a black and green camouflage theme, and the new AirLand Battle concept. The key theme was clearly the destruction of the enemy by "massive and violent firepower" — i.e., the Army was still in the business of fighting and winning the nation's wars. See Eric R. Keller, "Religious Support in the Division XXI Heavy Brigade" (Master's thesis,, Command and General Staff College, 2001), 22-23; Kretchik, *U. S. Army Doctrine*, 197-198.

12. Department of the Army, FM 16-5, *The Chaplain* (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, 1977), 1-4, 4-3.

13. Kretchik, *U. S. Army Doctrine*, 138.

14. Keller, "Religious Support in the Division XXI Heavy Brigade," 22-24.

15. Department of the Army, FM 16-5, *The Chaplain and Chaplain Assistant in Combat Operations* (Washington, Department of the Army, 1984), 4-5.

16. "Forward thrust" was not without its potential problems. Eric Keller outlined three issues that arose at the National Training Center as unit ministry teams attempted to implement "forward thrust." First, unit ministry teams became lost — i.e., "battlefield wandering" — as they attempted to find their forward elements. While the 1984 manual advised chaplains to travel with the combat trains to forward positions and to avoid reckless movements, the fog of war sometimes clouded even the best-laid plans. Second, chaplains wandering the battlefield wasted valuable time and missed key ministry opportunities. Third and most serious, those chaplains who became lost often were notionally "killed" by observer/controllers, thus implying that "unit ministry teams would become casualties in mid-to-high intensity conflict." For many

chaplains, "forward thrust" was an unrealistic ideal. Keller, "Religious Support in the Division XXI Heavy Brigade," 25-27.

17. Kretchik, *U. S. Army Doctrine*, 216-7; Timothy K. Bedsole, "Forward Thrust," *Military Chaplain Review* (Summer 1991): 43-7; John W. Brinsfield, Jr., *Encouraging Faith, Supporting Soldiers: The United States Army Chaplaincy, 1975-1995*, Part Two (Washington, DC: Office of Chief of Chaplains, 1997), 175-176.

18. Department of the Army, FM 1-05, *Religious Support* (2012), 1-9; Kretchik, *U. S. Army Doctrine*, 256.

19. Nathan K. Finney and David G. Perkins, "Doctrine at the Speed of War: A 21st Century Paradigm for Army Knowledge," *Army Magazine* (March 2012): 35-38; Clinton J. Ancker, III, "Army Doctrine Publication 3-0: An Opportunity to Meet the Challenges of the Future," *Military Review* (January/February 2013): 38-42.

20. Department of the Army, FM 1-05, *Religious Support* (2012), 1-6, 1-7.

21. Department of the Army, TM 2270-5, *The Chaplain* (1944), 64; Department of the Army, FM 16-5*, The Chaplain* (1964), 40, 42; Department of the Army, FM 16-5, *The Chaplain and Chaplain Assistant in Combat Operations* (1984), 4-5.

22. Department of the Army, TM 2270-5, *The Chaplain* (1944), 64.

23. Department of the Army, TM 2270-5, *The Chaplain* (1944), 64; Department of the Army, FM 16-5*, The Chaplain* (1958), 52.

24. Department of the Army, FM 16-5*, The Chaplain* (1964), 40, 42.

25. Department of the Army, FM 16-5, *The Chaplain and Chaplain Assistant in Combat Operations* (1984), 4-5.

26. Department of the Army, FM 16-5, *The Chaplain and Chaplain Assistant in Combat Operations* (1984), 4-5; Department of the Army, FM 16-1, *Religious Support Doctrine: The Chaplain and Chaplain Assistant* (Washington, Department of the Army, 1989), 17.

Chapter 4
Delbert Kuehl

For the Army chaplaincy, World War II was the first opportunity to apply its doctrine to broad combat service. Operating initially from the 1941 chaplain manual and then from the 1944 edition,over 8,000 Army chaplains served across all theatres.[1] Chaplains found wartime ministry rewarding, challenging, fulfilling, and, in some cases, extremely hazardous. Soldiers and leaders alike appreciated a chaplain's presence on the battlefield and did not soon forget his compassion in times of need.

In accordance with doctrine, numerous chaplains took their ministry to the fighting line and contributed greatly to mission success and soldier well-being. Chaplain Albert J. Hoffman, a Roman Catholic priest serving with the 133rd Infantry Regiment, 34th Infantry Division, was a noteworthy example. Among other things, he excelled at retrieving wounded soldiers under fire — his men called him the "bird dog." He lost his left leg to a German mine near Santa Maria Olivetti, Italy, but not before earning the Distinguished Service Cross, Silver Star, and Purple Heart for previous battlefield service.[2] Similarly, Chaplain Elmer Heindl served in the Pacific Theatre from Bougainville to Manila with the 148th Infantry Regiment, 37th Infantry Division. Like Hoffman, Handel's compassion led him to recover numerous wounded Soldiers whom he personally evacuated under enemy fire. In addition to a Silver Star and Bronze Star for previous service, he received the Distinguished Service Cross for his part in the February 1945 liberation of Bilibid Prison in Manila.[3] Meanwhile, Francis Sampson jumped into Normandy (June 1944) and Holland (September 1944) with the 501st Parachute Infantry Regiment (PIR), 101st Airborne Division, was captured by the Germans during the Battle of the Bulge, and spent six months as a prisoner of war before Russian forces liberated his camp. For courageous care of wounded paratroopers and also wounds received in Normandy, Sampson received the Distinguished Service Cross and Purple Heart.[4]

Of the many World War II chaplains who served in forward positions, Delbert Kuehl was an especially noteworthy example of a chaplain placing himself in close proximity to combat Soldiers for ministry and support. Kuehl, chaplain with the 504th PIR, 82nd Airborne Division, participated in three combat parachute jumps as well as the daring Waal River crossing during Operation *Market Garden*. His deep concern for his paratroopers' spiritual well-being as well as his desire to support them with his physical presence brought him to the fighting line

time and again. Kuehl's devotion resulted in mutual respect and loyalty between him and the men of the regiment, resulting in strongly positive memories in the minds of surviving veterans for the rest of their lives.

Background

Delbert Kuehl was born on 16 January 1917 in Alexandria, Minnesota. A true child of the Great Depression, Kuehl spent his early years on a farm experiencing the economic hardships of the day: "We were so desperately poor. When I graduated from high school in 1934, I went down to the Red Cross to get a sweater so I would have something to wear to the ceremony. I was the only kid without a suit."[5]

Kuehl grew up without any religious upbringing; in fact, he was critical of religion. However, Kuehl, influence by a few Christian friends as well as his Boy Scout activities, underwent a life-changing conversion experience in his teenage years. Subsequently, he sensed God's call to Christian service as a minister. Not long after graduation, in addition to working several jobs in Minnesota, California, and Alaska, he studied at Northwestern Bible School, Bethel College, University of Minnesota, and Northwestern Seminary.[6]

On 7 December 1941, Kuehl heard of Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor and immediately volunteered for military service. With his ministerial and academic experience, he sought and received a chaplain's commission with the rank of first lieutenant, and he began his 30-day chaplain training in July 1942 at Fort Benjamin Harrison, Indiana. He had a clear motivation for chaplain ministry:

> I had such a tremendous change in my own life . . . [when] I came to know the Lord Jesus as my Savior. So I had a burden to give that same marvelous message to military men. I knew many of them would lose their lives, so that was also one of the reasons that I wanted to become a chaplain.[7]

During that training, the Army asked for chaplains willing to volunteer for airborne school. Kuehl volunteered without hesitation and soon found himself enroute to Fort Benning, Georgia for basic parachute training.

Airborne soldiers were a military novelty at that time. Throughout the 1930s, numerous armies — particularly the Soviets — experimented with delivering troops to combat using parachutes. In 1940 and 1941, German *Fallschirmjäger* (paratroopers) captured the world's attention when they successfully assaulted Belgium, Norway, Denmark,

and Crete. Due partly to these successes, the United States sought its own airborne force and created a parachute test platoon in June 1940. By 1942, with Fort Benning at its center, an American airborne culture emerged as thousands of young men earned their silver wings and jump boots.[8]

The idea of chaplains jumping with soldiers into combat was not at first an obvious concept. Puzzled looks greeted Raymond S. Hall, the first chaplain to report for parachute training. Although some Army leaders objected to chaplains jumping with troops, most had an "Okay, if you want to" attitude. Hall and those chaplains who followed him quickly discovered that airborne chaplains developed strong credibility with troops — "the men can talk to me now."[9] In fact, airborne chaplains proved themselves time and again throughout the war and, in the process, silenced virtually all criticism of their value: "The objections once voiced against chaplains jumping with their organizations have been abundantly refuted by the evidence that chaplains can perform their function and maintain their influence only when they are with their men in battle."[10]

After five week at Fort Benning, Kuehl successfully completed the rigorous airborne training and received his qualification, thanks largely to his youth and good physical condition (he had previously worked in construction in Alaska). But an experience conducting a chapel service for the other trainees provided an even greater benefit — namely, a sharpened focus on his calling and philosophy of chaplain ministry. He scheduled a Sunday chapel service for the 1,800 trainees with hopes of connecting with many of the men. To his dismay, however, only two men attended the service, and one of them was drunk. Kuehl's motivation remained strong; in fact, he received a clearer ministry understanding: "Since they wouldn't come to me on my terms or turf, I would go to them and be with them where they were. I wanted to earn their respect so the men could hear what they needed to hear before it was too late."[11]

Kuehl's commitment to "go to them and be with them"became a reality when he joined his unit, the 504th PIR, 82nd Airborne Division.[12] First at Fort Benning following airborne school and then at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, Kuehl demonstrated an ardent desire to go to his men. For example, the regiment's 3rd battalion was conducting field exercises in North Carolina in late 1942, and Kuehl naturally felt that his place was with that unit. Since he had chapel responsibilities for other battalions on Sunday, the commander recommended that he jump into the battalion's location with a resupply drop the following day. On Monday

morning, as Kuehl donned his parachute and equipment, a crewman came and said, "Absolutely no jumping today — too windy! No jumping."[13] But Kuehl's concern for his men outweighed his concern about high winds, so he boarded the C-47 and prayed for the best. Once the plane was over the relatively small drop zone, the pilot determined that he could not maintain the slower airspeed required for jumping and had to fly faster. Undaunted, Kuehl made a literal leap of faith. Unfortunately, he experienced a partial parachute malfunction due to winds and airspeed and landed dramatically in the trees — with most of the battalion looking on in amazement. The commander ran to Kuehl's location and said, "I thought we lost our chaplain!"[14] Fortunately, Kuehl was unhurt. Most important, Kuehl soon realized the benefits of his efforts: "Being with them like that, I began to gain their respect, and they appreciated it so much."[15]

With training nearly complete and overseas service soon to come, Kuehl took stock of his airborne chaplain qualifications: a strong spiritual conviction, a keen understanding about building credibility and meaningful relationships with paratroopers, and youthful physical stamina. All would be tested in the days to come in places like Sicily, Italy, and Holland.

Sicily: Operation *Husky*

In April 1943, the 504th PIR traveled to New York and embarked upon the troopship *George Washington*, bound for Casablanca. In the preceding months, Allied troops had landed in North Africa and, after several setbacks, swept the Axis forces from the continent. Once in Casablanca, the 504th PIR moved to Oujda, Morocco for additional training and then relocated to Kairouan, Tunisia to prepare for its role in Operation Husky, the invasion of Sicily.

Sicily was not America's first choice. In fact, American senior leaders at Casablanca argued instead for a cross-Channel invasion at the first possible opportunity. However, the British persuasively demonstrated that an invasion of Sicily best met Allied war interests. First and foremost, taking Sicily would secure Mediterranean shipping lanes, which, according to naval projections, would save almost 2 million tons of Allied shipping in the first five months alone. Next, a Sicily invasion would hasten Italy's withdrawal from the war. Furthermore, invading Sicily would divert German pressure from the Soviets, who were, at the time, fighting a life-or-death struggle at Stalingrad. American leaders agreed, and planners turned their eyes toward Sicily.[16]

Operation *Husky* featured a fairly straightforward plan: the British Eighth Army would land at the southeastern corner of the island and fight toward Messina while the American Seventh Army would land to the west and sweep the island's flank. In advance of the amphibious landings, airborne forces would drop further inland in order to block enemy troops from counterattacking the beaches. Due to a shortage of airlift assets, planners included only the 505th PIR and the 3rd battalion, 504th PIR for the initial invasion drop. The rest of the 504th PIR, to include its command team (and chaplain), would remain in Tunisia with a possible jump on D+1 or soon thereafter.[17]

Operation *Husky* began in the early hours of 10 July 1943 with airborne drops followed by ground forces landing on the beaches at dawn. In spite of stiff German resistance, Allied forces were well established at the end of the first day. In order to bolster the 1st Division's beachhead, senior leaders ordered the remaining 504th PIR, still in Tunisia, to jump that night. Accordingly, Colonel Reuben H. Tucker, regimental commander, prepared his men. The 144-aircraft armada departed the African coast with some 2,000 paratroopers that evening, bound for Sicily. Kuehl flew with Company F, 2nd battalion.

As the aircraft approached Sicily in the darkness, in spite of extensive pre-coordination, tragedy struck as Allied anti-aircraft guns mistakenly fired on the C-47s. Nearly 60 planes were hit, with 23 shot down, six of which went down with all jumpers inside. In addition, another eight planes returned to Tunisia without releasing any jumpers. Kuehl's plane sustained hundreds of hits.[18]

While evading the fire, many aircraft strayed off course and released their jumpers into the mountains. Kuehl was the second jumper on his C-47:

> All of a sudden we were losing altitude. . . . Sergeant Lee went out and I was right behind him. Just as I went out the door the fellow behind me screamed, "No! No! No!" He saw the ridge coming up in the half-moon there. I couldn't get back in [and] I landed right on top of the ridge. I don't think I jumped from over two hundred feet. I was knocked out. [19]

In fact, Kuehl sustained kidney and other internal damage.[20]

Once he awoke, he assembled with small groups of paratroopers, most of whom were scattered across a wide area. He tireless tended to the wounded and buried the dead. For the next two weeks, the 504th PIR fought its way up the western coast toward Castelvetrano, where

it assumed occupation duty. Throughout the battle for Sicily, regardless of numerous hazards, Kuehl made his way to the men throughout the regiment, providing ministry, encouragement, and his unmistakable presence.

Salerno: Operation *Avalanche*

After completing operations in Sicily, Allied planners began preparing for a campaign up the Italian peninsula. Many Italians wanted out of the war, and Allied leaders hoped for some kind of armistice with the Italian government in conjunction with the invasion. The main Allied (British and American) landings would take place at Salerno on the western Italian coast while British forces landed at Reggio and Taranto on the southern edge of the peninsula. Building upon the successful parachute drops on Sicily — notwithstanding the catastrophic fratricide incidents — there were several airborne options for supporting the landings. One plan even had the 504th PIR executing a daring jump on Rome itself. But in the end, the airborne force served as a quick-reaction reserve when the American Fifth Army found itself in dire straits near Salerno.[21]

The Salerno landings took place on 9 September 1943. Although the Germans defended with force, the Allies fought their way three miles inland after two days. But a serious gap of some seven miles developed between the British (left) and Americans (right), and five powerful German divisions thundered toward the gap. Two divisions on the right of the American line were particularly vulnerable. Mark Clark, the Fifth Army commander, saw the critical need of the hour — in fact; he worried that he might have another Dunkirk on his hands. He sent word to MG Matthew Ridgeway at Sicily for an expedited airborne insertion near Paestum to support his beleaguered divisions: "I realize the time normally needed to prepare for a drop, but I want you . . . to make a drop tonight. This is a must."[22]

Delbert Kuehl and the rest of his 504th PIR paratroopers (minus 3rd battalion, which accompanied the landing force elsewhere) flew from Sicily toward Salerno on the night of 13 September 1943. The 504th pathfinders — the first American use of these specialized functionaries in the war — landed ahead of the main body and emplaced their homing devices. Shortly thereafter, the main body of jumpers exited over the drop zones about midnight. Unlike over Sicily, this time Kuehl's proved uneventful. With the help of the 504th PIR, the Allies stabilized their positions. The Germans made one more attempt on 16 September 1943

to dislodge the Allies. When that attempt failed, they withdrew into the mountains to fortify their positions.

The 504th PIR remained in the Salerno-Anzio-Naples vicinity and participated in the Allied push to expand the beachhead and pursue the Germans into the mountains. In November 1943, as the rest of the 82nd Airborne Division departed for England, the 504th remained with the Fifth Army to assist with additional combat operations. Kuehl maintained his battlefield circulation, which the paratroopers always appreciated. James L. Ward, a newly-arrived H company replacement, recalled that ministry:

> I first met Chaplain Delbert Kuehl when Ray Walker and I were dug in on the Mussolini Canal, manning a .30-caliber light machine gun. On this particular day, shortly before dusk we observed a soldier moving in our direction. When he arrived at our position he said, "We're going to have a prayer meeting." No one will ever know how much it meant to have our chaplain there with us. You'd never know where or when Chaplain Kuehl would show up. It seemed like he was always around when you needed him most.[23]

Fighting continued into December. On the morning of 16 December 1943, Kuehl heard that several American wounded remained on a ridge near the German position, left behind by their fellow soldiers:

> I said, "We can't let them die. We can't let our troopers die." So I talked to some of the medics and we got a couple folding litters and found an old tattered Red Cross flag . . . and said, "We're going after them." We all knew that if they were the more fanatical type Germans we wouldn't come back.[24]

As the men moved along the ridge, German machine guns fired, kicking up dirt and dust just feet from Kuehl. "We thought, 'This is it.' All they had to do was traverse that gun slightly and we would be wiped out. Then the firing stopped."[25] Unharmed, they continued on. "We found a number of our wounded men. We put some on litters and dragged others across our shoulders, and struggled back over the rugged slope — back to our side of the mountain."[26] For these actions, Kuehl received the Bronze Star Medal for valor and the increasing esteem of his men.[27]

Holland: Operation *Market Garden*

The 504th PIR endured sustained combat operations in Italy until March 1944. Throughout the campaign, the regiment lost 120 killed

in action, 410 wounded, and 60 missing — the men were ready for rest. The following month, the regiment arrived in England and began preparing for future operations. Although Colonel Reuben Tucker, the 504th commander, and BG James Gavin, the 82nd Airborne Division commander, both wanted the regiment to participate in the upcoming Normandy invasion, MG Matthew Ridgeway, commanding the XVIII Airborne Corps, felt that the unit needed more time to recover from the Italian campaign. Thus, while the 505th PIR prepared for Operation Overlord and the invasion of France, the 504th recovered and refitted.[28] For Kuehl, "Coming to England seemed like heaven after the bombardment at Anzio and the winter in the mountains of Italy."[29]

Allied forces landed in Normandy on 6 June 1944 and drove toward Cherbourg, St. Lo, and Falaise. The Allies liberated Paris on 25 August 1944, and hopes of ending the war by Christmas circulated among the ranks. The American broad-front strategy was a necessary part of closing with the German border and its extensive Siegfried line, but British leaders entertained other options for penetrating into Germany. One such alternative involved a British-led airborne invasion of Holland that would facilitate a thrust over the Rhine and into the Ruhr Valley, Germany's industrial heartland. If successful — and the odds were long — such a blow could well end the war, as hoped, by Christmas.

The operation, named *Market Garden*, would involve primarily three airborne divisions (the British 1st and the American 82nd and 101st) as well as the British XXX Corps. The airborne elements would execute a daylight drop near key bridges across Holland and secure a route on which the XXX Corps would drive to and across the Rhine and into Germany. As envisioned, it would be the largest airborne operation in history.

The stakes were high and the opportunity was significant, but the plan was not without its problems — both seen and unseen. Senior British planners forced the 1st Airborne Division to choose drop zones six miles west of its objective, the massive bridge at Arnhem. The British division commander was hardly in a place to argue — he had no airborne experience whatsoever.[30] The American airborne divisions, on the other hand, had extensive experience and seasoned leaders. But there was an additional and unknown variable: the enemy status near the objectives. While planners knew that the 9th and 10th SS Panzer Divisions would not be far from the drop zones, they discounted their potential impact on the operation. In addition, the corridor along which XXX Corps would travel to reach Arnhem and beyond was far from

secure. In short, planning oversights hardly allowed the best chance possible for success.

One week before Operation *Market Garden* began, the 504th PIR received its mission: land near the Maas River Bridge at Grave and capture the bridge intact, then capture key bridges over the Maas-Waal Canal. Colonel Tucker and his staff planned for the operation and prepared the men. After missing the Normandy invasion, most paratroopers wanted back in the action. They were rested. They were equipped. One officer remarked, "The regiment at this time was probably at the peak of its fighting efficiency. . . . Morale, always high, was of the best. All units were slightly over-strength."[31]

As the paratroopers prepared for the operation ahead, Kuehl received a special invitation from Moffatt Burriss, I Company Commander. "During our training time in England . . . Burriss said to me, 'Chaplain, why don't you jump with I company once in combat?' 'You haven't asked me.' 'Now you're asked!'"[32] Kuehl later recalled, "It was an honor for me to be asked by this officer, because there was no braver man in the regiment."[33]

Operation *Market Garden* commenced on a beautiful and clear Sunday, 17 September 1944. At 1025 hours, an armada of 2,500 transport planes and gliders containing over 34,000 Allied paratroopers lifted off from 24 airfields across southeastern England. In addition, over 1,000 bombers and fighters accompanied the transports to provide security and to attack German positions along the flight route.[34]

As their aircraft flew across the English Channel and entered Dutch airspace, Kuehl and Burriss stood near the door and observed hundreds of other aircraft in all directions. When their plane approached the town of Grave, Burriss recalled, "all hell broke loose" as anti-aircraft batteries fired at the armada. Kuehl added, "A volley [of tracers] raked the back of the fuselage to the tail.[35] Then Moffatt and I looked at each other and began to laugh."[36] Immediately afterward, the green jump light appeared and the men leapt toward the drop zone 600 feet below.[37]

The 504th PIR quickly captured the massive Grave Bridge, the 82nd Airborne Division's first and most important objective. As the paratroopers expanded the bridgehead toward smaller bridges on the Mass-Waal Canal, Kuehl began to circulate among the men. By midnight on 17 September 1944, leaders were optimistic that the last of the major division objectives, the big Nijmegen bridges (a rail bridge and a highway bridge), would fall to the 505th PIR the next day.

But German resistance in Nijmegen proved more difficult than anticipated, and the 505th PIR was unable to capture the bridges as planned. As Kuehl ministered to his men on the night of 19 September 1944, senior leaders devised a plan for the following day in which two 504th PIR companies would cross the Waal River one mile downstream from the bridges and seize them from the opposite bank. Kuehl recalled:

> I was in the woods that evening and heard the officers talking [about the plan]. The Germans were dug in. There were all kinds of machine guns and mortars and tanks and artillery on the other side of the river. I thought, "Boy, if they ever need me, they're going to need me now." So I decided I'd cross with the assault wave. Somebody said, "You're crazy," because I was regimental chaplain and I didn't have to go.[38]

The crossing involved significant dangers. A strong current swept the river's entire 400-yard width at the crossing point. The opposite landing site featured flat terrain stretching 900 yards beyond the opposite bank. German gunners occupied positions of advantage. And the boats to be used for the crossing were made of mere canvas with wooden frames. The paratroopers saw the entire operation as a suicide mission.

Leaders planned for launching at 1500 hours, with aircraft and artillery providing pre-assault fires at 1445 hours and a smoke screen 10 minutes later. The 26 boats finally arrived by truck at the crossing site at 1450 hours, and the men quickly unloaded and assembled them. At 1500 hours the whistle blew and the men carried their boats to the water and embarked as best they could on the muddy bank. Each boat would carry about a dozen paratroopers, yet only a handful of paddles were found in each craft. The men improvised by paddling with their rifle buttstocks.

The German gunners saw the paratroopers make their move and unleashed a barrage of rifle, machine-gun, mortar, 20mm, and artillery fire. Leaders in the boats had only one command: "Everybody paddle like hell!"[39] German gunners engaged the paratroopers both from the opposite bank as well as the railroad bridge — a perfect enfilading fire that wreaked havoc among the boats. The Germans also enjoyed an elevation advantage, allowing them to place devastating plunging fire across the river. As a result, the water appeared as it would in a heavy rainstorm. Amid the roar and chaos, platoon leader James Megellas recalled hearing Major Julian Cook and Kuehl both feverishly paddling and praying:

> I could distinctly hear Major Cook, a devout Catholic, in a loud, quivering voice trying to recite the rosary, but "Hail Mary, full of grace," continuously repeated, was all he could utter. Then the "Hail Mary, full of grace" became just "Hail Mary," which he kept repeating as a sort of cadence for the rowers. Chaplain Kuehl kept repeating, "Lord, Thy will be done."[40]

Enemy fire tore holes in many of the canvas boats and several began to sink. Men were hit. Men were drowning. The paratrooper next to Kuehl was hit in the head with a shell "so that his skull dropped on what was left of his lower face."[41] Absolute bedlam prevailed, yet the paratroopers continued to paddle.

Only 12 of the 26 boats reached the opposite bank, but the paratroopers who were physically able immediately assaulted the German positions. Meanwhile, Kuehl and the medics began the task of treating the wounded and dying on the bank:

> I carried an aid kit and hurriedly began to tend to the wounded. I found dead and wounded men in every boat and many more lying on the riverbank. While I was on my knees helping a man with three bullet holes in his abdomen, a mortar shell exploded behind me and a piece of shrapnel hit me in the back, knocking me prostrate over the man I was treating. Even in his serious condition, he cried out, "Chaplain, did they get you, too?" I bled a lot, but was able to continue to treat the other wounded and help them down to the boats so they could be taken back across the river.[42]

Paratroopers fanned out and made their way eventually to the far side of the big bridges. Kuehl continued his ministry as the remaining boats returned for another group. The second wave brought more paratroopers to the fight, to include the 504th PIR commander, Colonel Reuben Tucker. Tucker, surprised to see that Kuehl had crossed the river in the initial assault, furiously asked, "What in the hell are you doing here, Chaplain?!"[43] Kuehl responded simply, "Sir, the men are here," and then went back to his ministry.[44] For his actions on that day, Kuehl received the Silver Star:

> Captain Kuehl, Unit Chaplain, acting upon his own initiative and without orders of any kind accompanied the 3d Battalion, 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment in the initial assault wave of the daring daylight crossing of the Waal River. . . . Upon reaching the opposite river bank, Captain Kuehl voluntarily remained

> on the flat, open shore for approximately four hours, rendering first aid to the many injured, supervising the evacuation of the wounded by boats, and aiding in the beaching of subsequent assault waves of troops. Captain Kuehl remained at his post despite the fact that he himself was wounded in the back by a shrapnel fragment and under constant automatic weapons and sniper fire. He was instrumental in returning approximately 35 wounded soldiers to the south bank of the river. Captain Kuehl's presence and courageous actions served as marked sources of inspiration for all the assault troops reaching the precarious shore.[45]

Although the 82nd Airborne Division captured all of its objectives during *Market Garden*, the operation was neither tactically nor operationally an overall success. German Waffen SS trooper at Arnhem prevented the British from securing the Arnhem bridge — in fact, the 1st Airborne Division suffered a staggering 8,000 casualties. Thus, when XXX Corps finally lumbered into the Arnhem area, its only option was to recover the handful of survivors not already killed or captured. As Cornelius Ryan later said, Market Garden truly was "a bridge too far."

Through the rest of September and into Fall 1944, Kuehl and the 504th PIR continued to fight toward an end to the war in Europe. After fighting west of Nijmegen, the Allied war effort settled into a static war of attrition across its broad front.

Summary

Delbert Kuehl was one of 8,000 Army chaplains who served during World War II. Like many chaplains, he placed himself in close proximity to his men on the fighting line. Kuehl brought a deep spiritual conviction and motivation to his ministry which flowed from his own dramatic conversion experience. At Fort Benning, he clarified his vision for service: a chaplain must go to his men rather than wait for his men to come to him. Equipped with that vision, he determined to minister to his men wherever he might find them — regardless of what it might cost him personally. Armed with that plan, he boldly jumped into Sicily and Italy. After jumping into Holland, he courageously accompanied his men across the Waal River, inspired his men, and met their needs in the most difficult of situations. In so doing, Kuehl demonstrated the potential impact of the proximity principle.

Endnotes

1. Nearly all chaplains in the European Theatre of Operations (ETO) had copies of the 1944 manual once it appeared, and some 90 percent of those agreed that the revisions made the new edition superior to its predecessor. Arthur C. Piepkor, *Report on the Army Chaplain in the European Theatre* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1946), 23.

2. Unit medics coined the "bird dog" nickname, largely because Hoffman often arrived before they did to treat wounded Soldiers. In 1944, *Time* described Hoffman as "the most decorated U. S. chaplain of World War II." See "Helper of the Helpless," *Time Magazine* (June 19, 1944), 39. Also, Jack Alexander, "He's Our Guy," *Saturday Evening Post* (April 28, 1945): 9-11, 53-8; Homer R. Ankrum, *Dogfaces Who Smiled Through Tears* (Graphic Publishing, 1987), 340-6; Christopher Cross and William R. Arnold, *Soldiers of God* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1945), 138-41; Dorothy Fremont Grant, *War is My Parish* (Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing Company, 1944), 63-66.

3. Heindl, along with a medic, climbed a two-story prison watchtower to rescue two seriously-wounded Soldiers. In spite of intense machine gun fire directed at the tower, Heindl insisted on the rescue. Similar actions followed four days later. United States Army Forces in the Far East, General Order Number 123, May 21, 1945; "World War Two Decorated Chaplain Elmer Heindl Dead at 96," *Rochester Democrat and Chronicle* (July 17, 2006), 8; Ike Thomas, "The Last Days of Bilibid," United States Military Academy, accessed June 12, 2014, http://www.west-point.org/family/japanese-pow/Hudson%20Files/LastDaysBilibid.htm.

4. Sampson would later participate in the 187th Regimental Combat Team's airborne operation near Sunchon, Korea in October 1950. Eventually, he became Army Chief of Chaplains (1967-1971). Francis L. Sampson, *Look Out Below!* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America, 1958); Francis L. Sampson, *Paratrooper Padre* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America, 1948); Rosemarian V. Staudacher, *Chaplains in Action* (New York: Farrar, Strauss, and Cudahy, 1962), 21-37.

5. Minnesota American Legion, "A Silver Star Chaplain," accessed October 5, 2011, http://www.mnlegion. org/paper/html/kuehl.html.

6. Minnesota Historical Society, "Delbert Kuehl Interview by Thomas Saylor, April 5, 2003," accessed October 5, 2011, http://collections.mnhs.org/cms/web5/media.php?pdf=1&irn=10171154; Alan Taylor, *Chaplain, You Didn't Have to Be on the Front Line* (Minneapolis: self published, 2000); 20-25; Northwestern College, "Northwestern College Distinguished Alumnus of

the Year," accessed October 5, 2011, http://www.nwc.edu/web/ alumni-parent-relations/past-honorees.

7. Minnesota Historical Society, "Delbert Kuehl Interview by Thomas Saylor, April 5, 2003," 4.

8. Franz Kurowski, *Jump Into Hell: German Paratroopers in World War II* (Mechanicsburg: Stackpole, 2010), 1-3, 19-24; Ed Ruggero, *Combat Jump: The Young Men Who Led the Assault into Fortress Europe* (New York: Harper Collins, 2003), 12-24. Kuehl was a student pilot before joining the Army and he had closely followed developments overseas, to include German airborne operations. Minnesota Historical Society, "Delbert Kuehl Interview by Thomas Saylor, April 5, 2003," 8.

9. Alfred A. Cromwell, "Parachute Parson," *Flying Magazine* (December 1943): 43, 144. Hall would later learn the potential cost for jumping with his men. As a chaplain with the 101st Airborne Division, he was one of three chaplains captured by the Germans during Operation Market Garden. Robert L. Schock, "History of the Chaplain Section, XVIII Corps (Airborne)," NA RG 247, Box 214.

10. Piepkorn, Report on the Army Chaplain in the European Theatre, 72.

11. Taylor, *Chaplain, You Didn't Have to Be on the Front Line*, 26.

12. Taylor, *Chaplain, You Didn't Have to Be on the Front Line*, 26.

13. Minnesota Historical Society, "Delbert Kuehl Interview by Thomas Saylor, April 5, 2003," 15.

14. Minnesota Historical Society, "Delbert Kuehl Interview by Thomas Saylor, April 5, 2003," 15.

15. Minnesota Historical Society, "Delbert Kuehl Interview by Thomas Saylor, April 5, 2003," 15.

16. In addition to arguments in favor of Sicily, American leaders could not avoid the arguments against a 1943 cross-Channel invasion — namely, lack of logistical infrastructure, an ongoing battle for the Atlantic, and the still-present Luftwaffe menace. Such an invasion, all agreed, would have to wait until 1944. Albert N. Garland and Howard McGaw Smyth, *Sicily and the Surrender of Italy* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, 1965), 8-11; Williamson Murray and Allan R. Millett, *A War to Be Won: Fighting the Second World War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), 298-303.

17. Garland and Smyth, *Sicily and the Surrender of Italy*, 101-102; Phil Nordyke, *More Than Courage: The Combat History of the 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment in World War II* (Minneapolis: Zenith Press, 2008), 31-32.

18. All told, 81 paratroopers were killed, 16 were missing, and 132 wounded — in addition to the 90 pilots and aircrew killed or wounded. According to C. A. Drew, Company F Commander, conditions on the drop zone were not much better: "The AA [assembly area] we jumped into was near the 180th Infantry Regiment, 45th Infantry Division. They were not told we were coming." Dwight D. Eisenhower Library, U.S. Army: Unit Records, 1917-1950, 82nd Airborne Division, 1943-1946, 82nd Airborne Division in Sicily and Italy; Minnesota Historical Society, "Delbert Kuehl Interview by Thomas Saylor," 24; see also Nordyke, *More Than Courage*, 58.

19. Minnesota Historical Society, "Delbert Kuehl Interview by Thomas Saylor," 24.

20. Kuehl would spend 15 months in a military hospital following the war for injuries sustained on the jump, but he received little medical attention for the injury before that time. Minnesota Historical Society, "Delbert Kuehl Interview by Thomas Saylor," 24.

21. Murray and Millett, *A War to Be Won*, 374-81.

22. Mark W. Clark, *Calculated Risk* (New York: Harper, 1950), 199; see also Martin Blumenson, *Salerno to Cassino* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, 1993), 123-124.

23. Nordyke, *More Than Courage*, 164.

24. Minnesota Historical Society, "Delbert Kuehl Interview by Thomas Saylor," 33.

25. Minnesota Historical Society, "Delbert Kuehl Interview by Thomas Saylor," 33; Nordyke, *More Than Courage*, 123.

26. Minnesota Historical Society, "Delbert Kuehl Interview by Thomas Saylor," 33; Nordyke, *More Than Courage*, 123.

27. Kuehl also spent time with company H near Anzio. He recalled an encounter with a German fighter plane (T. Moffatt, Burriss, *Strike and Hold: A Memoir of the 82nd Airborne in World War II* (Washington: Brassey's 2000), 80): I was sitting behind a small house by a haystack with my feet in a foxhole, reading my Bible. All at once, we heard the roar of enemy fighters with all their guns firing. I foolishly put down my Bible, grabbed a near-

by M-1 rifle, and fired three rounds at the nearest fighter. The fire from the fighter clipped the haystack beside me and then ran holes up the side of the house. The plane was so low, I could see the pilot and the goggles over his eyes. Later someone said the plane had been hit and was smoking badly after it passed our lines.

28. Nordyke, *More Than Courage*, 169.

29. Burriss, *Strike and Hold*, 105.

30. James Gavin, upon hearing the British plan, turned to the Division G-3 and said, "My God, he can't mean it." Gavin added in his memoir, "We had learned, from the very beginning in Sicily, that it is better to land near an objective and take heavy landing losses rather than to have to fight on the ground to get it." James M. Gavin, *On to Berlin* (New York: Bantam, 1985), 147, 150.

31. Carl Kappel, commander, H company in Nordyke, *More Than Courage*, 185.

32. Burriss, *Strike and Hold*, 115.

33. Kuehl's ministry and example encouraged Burris, who wrote years later: "Chaplain Kuehl . . . was a true man of God and absolutely fearless. He faced enemy fire along with the rest of us, all the while carrying no weapon to defend himself. No officer in the regiment commanded greater respect than he did, and he went places where no other chaplain would go." In fact, Burriss dedicted his own memoir in part to Kuehl: "To me, one man stood out above all others — Capt. Delbert Kuehl, the Protestant Chaplain of our regiment, a true man of God and a brave soldier. He was everywhere, in the thick of battle or at the aid station. Through him, I dedicate this book to the officers and men of the 3rd Battalion of the 504th." Burriss, *Strike and Hold*, x, 105, 115.

34. James Megellas, *All the Way to Berlin* (New York: Ballentine Books, 2003), 92-93; T. Moffatt Burris, *Strike and Hold* (Washington, DC: Brassey's, 2000), 104-105; Nordyke, *More Than Courage*, 188; Gavin, *On to Berlin*, 152-153.

35. Burriss, *Strike and Hold*, 104-106.

36. Taylor, *Chaplain, You Didn't Have to Be on the Front Line*, 38-39.

37. Drop Zone "O" was located only a few hundred yards from the 504th PIR objective, the massive Grave Bridge. Most veterans recalled that

this jump was flawless and, indeed, even more accurate than most training jumps at Fort Bragg. Burriss, *Strike and Hold*, 104-106; see also Taylor, *Chaplain, You Didn't Have to Be on the Front Line*, 38-39.

38. Minnesota Historical Society, "Delbert Kuehl Interview by Thomas Saylor," 26, 31-2.

39. Megellas, *All the Way to Berlin*, 122.

40. Megellas, *All the Way to Berlin*, 122.

41. Taylor, *Chaplain, You Didn't Have to Be on the Front Line*, 40.

42. Burriss, *Strike and Hold*, 117.

43. Minnesota Historical Society, "Delbert Kuehl Interview by Thomas Saylor," 26.

44. Minnesota Historical Society, "Delbert Kuehl Interview by Thomas Saylor," 26.

45. General Orders No. 64 (December 13, 1944), Headquarters, 82nd Airborne Division.

Chapter 5
Emil Kapaun

Following World War II, allies with whom the United States joined to defeat Germany and Japan soon became adversaries. In both Asia and Western Europe, the Soviets sought to expand beyond the limits of their April 1945 military advance. In so doing they hoped to tip the balance of power in conquered or newly-liberated territories toward Communist interests. The United States, Great Britain, and France directed significant time and energy to containing the Soviet threat in Europe. As a result, Chinese Communists supported by Josef Stalin and led by Mao Zedong prevailed in their revolution in 1949 and replaced the Chinese Nationalists previously allied with the United States.

With the very real threat of Soviet expansion looming in Europe, American planners paid less attention to developments in Asia, especially on the Korean peninsula. Yet proximity to the Soviet Union, China, and Japan made Korea a significant center of gravity. At the close of hostilities in 1945 and as part of the Yalta concessions, the Soviets occupied the northern half of the peninsula while the Americans held the south. Broad efforts to politically unify Korea failed, and the two zones of occupation evolved into the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in the north and the Republic of Korea in the south — the 38th parallel divided the two. In spite of persistent tensions along the boundary, America withdrew its last occupation forces entirely from the Korean peninsula in 1949 under the assumption that the Republic of Korea army could successfully repel any North Korean People's Army aggression. Indeed, Republic of Korea forces defeated several small North Korean People's Army cross-border raids in 1949 and early 1950, as well as a much more significant insurgent threat in the southern provinces. Some intelligence analysts saw these actions as harbingers of a larger attack, but American policy makers, satisfied with Korean defenses in the south and preoccupied with Soviet and Communist activities elsewhere in the world, discounted notions that full-scale hostilities would follow. Nevertheless, the North Koreans — encouraged by their Soviet and Chinese allies — invaded South Korea on 25 June 1950. In response, the United States initially sent the 24th and 25th Infantry Divisions as well as the 1st Cavalry Division to bolster the Republic of Korea defenses in what quickly became the Korean War.[1]

As they had in World War II, Army chaplains accompanied their units to Korea. The ministry model of proximity that had proven so

effective for many chaplains in Europe and the Pacific was again practiced in this new war. Throughout the conflict, chaplains accompanied their soldiers into direct ground combat in order to serve and minister to those most in need. In many cases, these chaplains contributed significantly to mission accomplishment and soldier well-being.

Some chaplains sacrificed themselves completely for the sake of their soldiers. Herman G. Felhoelter, a Roman Catholic chaplain serving with the 19th Infantry Regiment, 24th Infantry Division, exemplified this kind of sacrifice. On 16 July 1950, during the battle for Taejon, the 19th Infantry Regiment retreated through the mountains as the North Koreans pressed their attack. Attempts to evacuate numerous casualties along the way slowed the retreat, and commanders eventually made the difficult decision to leave behind some 30 seriously wounded soldiers. In spite of certain capture, Felhoelter volunteered to remain behind to care for the men. As he prayed with the men and administered last rites to the dying, a North Korean patrol approached. An observer with the retreating unit witnessed with binoculars what happened next: the North Koreans gunned down the priest and the wounded soldiers — there were no survivors. Felhoelter received the Distinguished Service Cross posthumously.[2]

Twelve other chaplains also made the ultimate sacrifice during the Korean War. One of these, Emil Kapaun, was the most highly-decorated chaplain of the war and a shining example of courage and selfless service on the fighting line. Not unlike Felhoelter, Kapaun allowed himself to be captured at the disastrous battle of Unsan in North Korea in November 1950 in order to care for his wounded men. For the next seven months until he died in captivity, Kapaun selflessly ministered to fellow prisoners of war. As veterans recalled years later, his compassion and courageous service left an indelible and inspirational impression on the hearts and minds of those he served and encouraged others to endure unspeakable hardships. Through his actions, Kapaun strongly demonstrated the tangible impact a chaplain could have on the fighting line and beyond.

Background

Emil Kapaun was born 20 April 1916 in Pilsen, Kansas, a small farming community located 40 miles south of Abilene. He was a child of the heartland who acquired a natural work ethic as a boy — there were few idle days in his formative years. His family's attendance at the Saint John Nepomucene Catholic Church shaped his early spiritual

development. As a child, Kapaun demonstrated a noteworthy devotion to God, to the Catholic Church, and to a calling to serve.[3]

As a young teenager, Kapaun expressed a desire to become a priest to his family and to Father John Sklenar, pastor at St. John's. After completing the two-year high school program in Pilsen, 14-year-old Kapaun began a high school completion program and college studies at Conception Abby in Conception, Missouri. Following this, Kapaun pursued theological studies at Kendrick Seminary in Saint Louis beginning in 1936. He graduated and was ordained in June 1940. Kapaun celebrated his first Mass on Thursday, 20 June 1940.[4]

Kapaun's first assignment was assistant pastor to Father John Sklenar in the Pilsen parish. He delighted in ministering among his hometown family, friends, and acquaintances, and the congregation received him warmly. With 135 families and five buildings belonging to parish, his days were busy yet rewarding.[5]

The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor and America's entry into World War II added an additional dynamic to Kapaun's Pilsen ministry. As many young men left for service in Europe and the Pacific, he wondered if there was also a place for him in the war effort. Writing to a friend, he noted, "They called recently for 4,000 chaplains. Looks like we young priests will get a chance for some army action."[6] An opportunity to contribute came when the government opened Herrington Army Airfield about 25 miles from Pilsen. Kapaun volunteered to provide Catholic services for the hundreds of soldiers passing through Herrington. Thus, in addition to his parish duties in Pilsen, Kapaun drove to Herrington three times each week to minister and lead services. Father Sklenar retired in November 1943 after 39 years with the St. John parish and Kapaun became temporary administrator of the church, yet he continued his ministry at Herrington. By June 1944, Kapaun felt moved to ask his bishop's permission to pursue active-duty military chaplaincy. The bishop agreed, and Kapaun bade farewell to the Pilsen parish. Father Sklenar recalled, "I had always figured that he would take my place, but after he had been to Herrington, his ambition was with the soldiers."[7]

Kapaun began his chaplain training at Fort Devens, Massachusetts in August 1944, one of almost 40 Catholic chaplains among the 145 chaplain students. Accustomed to hard work on the farm, Kapaun enjoyed the physical demands of Army life: "I am a person who is used to hard work. I grew up on a farm and I lived a very active life in regard to such work. I much prefer a life where I can make use of my energy

rather than a life which is sedentary and inactive."[8] Commissioned in September 1944, he reported for duty at Camp Wheeler in Georgia for ministry to the thousands of soldiers training for overseas duty.

In March 1945, the Army assigned Kapaun to the China-India-Burma Theater. His duties included ministry to soldiers spread across a wide area of operation. Not long after arriving, he wrote his bishop:

> Our work with the soldiers is sometimes strenuous, sometimes dangerous, but always worth the effort. My outfits are scattered over a long distance of jungles and mountains. I traveled mostly by aeroplane, making a round trip of 500 miles every week. . . . The work of a Catholic priest out there with the American men is very gratifying.[9]

Senior officers noted Kapaun's tireless efforts to reach as many men as possible: "Makes a constant effort to reach all personnel for services in places difficult to reach by normal transportation. . . . has worked day and night to serve troops from Ledo to Myitkyina."[10] When he failed to fully document his ministry efforts in monthly reports, his supervisor gently chided him: "Your modesty should not prevent you from listing . . . various contacts with officers, enlisted men, hospital visits, etc. Have noted you traveled 2,000 miles to visit units last month. This is grand work."[11]

After the war ended in August 1945, more and more soldiers returned to the United States. Kapaun remained in the China-India-Burma Theater to minister to remaining personnel, even those in isolated stations 170 miles away. He wrote, "The few are as precious as the many, and I believe that a priest who would refuse to go out just for a few would be neglecting his duty."[12] He returned to the United States and left the Army in 1946.

Kapaun displayed tenacity in ministry during his relatively short time of overseas service in the Second World War. He clearly impressed his superiors with his ardent desire to serve wherever and whenever he found soldiers. Although he saw no active combat, his motivation to take ministry to soldiers (rather than waiting for soldiers to come to him) coupled with his high energy and physical stamina demonstrated a great potential for ministry on the fighting line.

After leaving active duty, Kapaun maintained a busy life during the next two years. He served briefly as temporary administrator of St. John Church in Spearville, Kansas and then in Hutchinson, Kansas. In October 1946, he began a graduate program at Catholic University in

Washington, DC. In addition to his academic studies, he also participated in a reserve officer's training program at Carlisle, Pennsylvania in 1947 — an activity that reminded Kapaun how much he missed Army ministry. Following graduation in 1948, he returned to parish life in Timken, Kansas. But Kapaun still thought about the Army, so he eventually requested that his bishop allow him to resume active-duty service. His bishop agreed, and Kapaun reported to the 35th Anti-Aircraft Artillery Brigade at Fort Bliss, Texas, in November 1948.[13]

Kapaun arrived at Fort Bliss just as a large numbers of soldiers — some 35,000 altogether — reported in January 1949. Approximately 50 percent of the inbound men were Catholic, but Kapaun was only one of two Catholic chaplains on the entire base. Throughout 1949, Kapaun drove his jeep across the Fort Bliss training areas visiting troops and offering services — in August, for example, he made 15 trips into the desert to visit units in training.[14]

In December, orders arrived requiring Kapaun to report to Seattle, Washington for transition to duty in Japan. After Christmas leave with family and friends in Pilsen, Kapaun traveled to Seattle and embarked upon the troopship *M.M. Patrick* for his journey to Japan. When he arrived in February 1950, Kapaun reported to the 8th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division.[15]

The next five months found Kapaun training wherever his soldiers went, sometimes even to the snowline on Mount Fuji. He wrote to his parents, "I am assigned to the Cavalry Regiment, but we do not have any horses. We are just plain infantry — you know — walking and marching."[16] He was determined in his priestly duties:

> In the whole Regiment I have nearly 400 Catholics. I was amazed at how many soldiers had not been to the Sacraments in years. They are just as neglectful about attending Mass. . . This situation, on the surface, looks discouraging, yet it is a great joy for me to be instrumental in bringing at least a few of them back into the fold.[17]

Kapaun continued his ministry as tensions escalated in the region. Although many planners did not expect an all-out war in Korea, the 80,000-plus soldiers of the United States Eighth Army continued preparation for whatever might come.

The Korean War

The situation in Korea changed dramatically when the North Koreans attacked across the 38th parallel on 25 June 1950 along a broad, coast-to-coast front. Although the United Nations passed multiple resolutions calling for cessation of hostilities, the North Koreans continued their onslaught and, on 28 June 1950, captured Seoul. The FEC had four divisions and a regimental combat team on hand in Japan, and on 30 June 1950 commanders ordered the 24th Infantry Division to depart Kyushu for Korea. By 5 July 1950, elements of the 1st Battalion, 21st Infantry Regiment along with an artillery battery — named "Task Force Smith" after the battalion commander, Lieutenant Colonel Charles B. Smith — established a defensive position north of Osan in order to delay the North Koreans. These 402 soldiers, ordered to keep the North Koreans as far from Pusan as possible, struggled to hold the line against Communist armor and approximately 5,000 infantrymen. They soon withdrew after seven hours of fighting. Clearly, more combat power was needed if the peninsula was to be saved.[18]

Lieutenant General Walton H. Walker, commander of the Eighth US Army in Japan, immediately ordered the 25th Infantry and 1st Cavalry Divisions to join the 24th Infantry Division in Korea, which, on 20 July 1950, had abandoned Taejon and retreated toward Pusan. In letters to family and friends from Japan prior to departing for Korea, Kapaun expressed typical overconfidence in American preparedness and combat superiority (in addition to misattribution of all things to the Soviets): "We feel very proud of being prepared for anything. This time Russia is going to get it in the neck. . . The soldiers in our outfit are well trained and they are anxious to give the Russians a good licking."[19] But neither Kapaun nor anyone else in the Eighth Army knew just how desperate things would become on the Korean peninsula.

By the first week of August 1950, American and South Korean forces established a defensive perimeter from Masan to Taegu to Pohang-Dong. This Pusan perimeter marked the last line of hope for building additional combat power for further operations and even the ability to retain any portion of the peninsula whatsoever. In anticipation of future assaults against the perimeter, Lieutenant General Walton Walker, Eighth Army Commander, issued his famous stand or die order.[20]

Kapaun and the 8th Cavalry Regiment occupied defensive positions outside Taegu along the Naktong River. As part of coordinated attacks all along the Pusan perimeter in early August, North Korean

forces crossed the Naktong and struck the 8th Cavalry Regiment repeatedly. Kapaun busied himself with ministry to the men throughout his unit: "As the soldiers have been in their positions in active combat . . . we chaplains have been going to the men in each squad and platoon on the line to hold religious services with them."[21] His multiple letters to family and friends give insight to the hazards of his work:

> The Reds were too strong for us [initially]. We have some help now, maybe we can beat them. I have been on the front lines for eight days. . . There are many horrors in war. A fellow can only stand so much. . . We are right in the front lines of fighting. Three times now we were overpowered and had to run. They out-numbered us about 15-1, coming at us from all sides. . . . Three times I escaped with my life and that was all. I went through machinegun fire, bullets whistling all around; an 80mm tank shell missed my head [by] about four feet, it blew off my steel helmet.[22]

In addition to religious services and ministry along the front line, Kapaun contributed in other significant ways. On 2 August 1950, he rescued a seriously wounded soldier, for which his commander decorated him heroism with a Bronze Star for valor:

> Chaplain Kapaun received information that there was a wounded man in an exposed position . . . who could not be removed as there were no litter bearers available. Chaplain Kapaun, together with another officer, immediately proceeded to the front lines. . . With total disregard for personal safety, Chaplain Kapaun and his companion went after the wounded man. There entire route to the wounded soldier was under intense enemy machine gun and small arms fire, however Chaplain Kapaun successfully evacuated the soldier thereby saving his life.[23]

By mid-September, American and South Korean forces had effectively checked the North Koreans at the Pusan perimeter by maximizing "interior lines of communication, superior artillery firepower, and a strong air force."[24] The price in lives, however, was significant. US forces lost 4,599 killed in action, 12,058 wounded in action, 401 confirmed captured, and another 2,107 missing.[25]

Kapaun's first two months of significant combat experience revealed the impact of his ministry potential on the fighting line. After North Korean bullets and shells tempered his initial optimism, he displayed a courageous pluck and resilient spirit in spite of numerous

hardships. He willingly suffered with his soldiers and demonstrated his predisposition to nurture the living and care for the wounded. Greater challenges were yet to come in the next two months, and Kapaun would be ready.

As the situation in the Pusan area stabilized in mid-September, American leaders assessed the enemy's vulnerable disposition of forces stretching down the peninsula. On 15 September 1950, in order to capitalize on this opportunity, the 1st Marine Division and the 7th Infantry Division launched an amphibious assault on the western coast of Korea with some 70,000 troops. The goal was to recapture Seoul and cut North Korean lines of communication, thus facilitating a breakout at Pusan. Seoul was a major intersection of roads and rails as well as a psychological center of gravity for Koreans everywhere.

Meanwhile, United Nations forces near Pusan began their breakout one day after the Inchon landings. After initially fighting its way across the Naktong River and on to Kumchon, the 8th Cavalry Regiment quickly moved north toward Seoul. The North Koreans were in full retreat, and optimistic Americans hoped for a quick end to hostilities. Indeed, Kapaun wrote to his bishop in early October, "We have broken over the Red lines and have advanced over a hundred miles. We just wonder if the war is nearly over."[26]

As the fortunes of war now favored the Americans, policy makers and military leaders asked the strategic question: Should our forces cross the 38th parallel and invade North Korea? The National Security Council cautioned against an invasion that might provoke the Chinese and Soviets. On the other hand, senior military leaders, largely motivated by a false assumption that the Chinese would not actually enter the war, argued that preventing further aggression required total destruction of the North Korean army. President Truman sided with his military leaders and ordered them to invade North Korea — with the caveat that they must not provoke the Chinese and Soviets.

In preparation for the offensive, US forces occupied assembly areas near Kaesong on the 38th parallel. On 9 October 1950, the 1st Cavalry Division along with other forces invaded North Korea and fought its way to Samchon, which it captured within a week. By 19 October 1950, American forces reached Pyongyang, the North Korean capital. The offensive went well for most of October. However, late in the month reports came in through the 1st Republic of Korea Division operating north of Pyongyang that some captured enemy troops were Chinese.

Many American leaders, to include some in the 8th Cavalry Regiment, initially doubted the accuracy of the reports. But soon enough, the Americans realized that the most dangerous enemy course of action had come true — the Communist Chinese had entered the war.[27]

Senior leaders ordered the 1st Cavalry Division to leave Pyongyang and attack toward the Yalu River on 28 October 1950. Kapaun's 8th Cavalry Regiment led the way and established a defensive position on 31 October 1950 near Unsan. Chinese forces heavily attacked the 8th Cavalry Regiment on the evening of 1 November 1950. Late in the night, senior leaders ordered the regiment to withdraw, but Chinese forces blocked the roads south of Unsan and prepared for continued attacks.

The Chinese did not initially attack the 3rd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment (where Kapaun was located), but the men of that unit were well aware of heavy attacks on units adjacent to their position. At approximately 0300 hours on 2 November 1950, a company of Chinese soldiers managed to infiltrate the 3rd Battalion area and initiate a broader assault that nearly overran the American position. Hand-to-hand fighting ensued, especially near the battalion command post. Kapaun determined to minister even in such chaos. As one soldier recalled, he moved among his men offering encouragement and religious ministrations:

> All hell broke loose on this night, mortars were falling in on us, machinegun fire broke out from all sides, men were running and screaming at us from all directions. It was a massacre too difficult to describe in detail. . . . Someone came flying into my fox hole. This was my first meeting with Father Kapaun. He asked my name and how I felt. I asked him if he was a Catholic Chaplain and he said, "Yes." He said an Act of Contrition with me and blessed me.[28]

Not long after, someone else saw Kapaun running across the battlefield and said, "There goes the chaplain!"[29] Two Chinese soldiers pursued him, and American troops shot them down. Kapaun kept going throughout the night "administering last rites and taking care of the wounded throughout the area."[30]

In the early hours of 2 November 1950, Kapaun placed himself at the 3rd Battalion command post where those who could still fight had consolidated dozens of wounded men in a bunker. Ministering to those

fighting and also to the wounded in a truly desperate situation, Kapaun brought a sense of peace and hope:

> Chaplain Kapaun was perfectly at ease, and imbued all who were near him with a feeling of security that everything would be all right and that there was nothing to fear. His personality was dynamic and those who might have feared to the point of rout were quieted by his presence alone.[31]

As the soldiers fought for their lives in hand-to-hand combat with the Korean assaulters, fires from multiple burning vehicles illuminated the area. After approximately 45 minutes of close battle — the Chinese even managed to throw a few grenades into the bunker, killing some of the wounded — the enemy withdrew but continued firing small arms, automatic weapons, and mortars at those inside the command post perimeter.

US Army Photo.

Figure 3: Capt. Emil Kapaun (right), former chaplain with Headquarters Company, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division, helps another soldier carry an exhausted troop off the battlefield early in the Korean War.

As the sun rose, about 400 American soldiers still survived, although approximately 150 of them were wounded and gathered inside and near the bunker. The perimeter around the command post could not hold much longer; the Chinese made numerous attempts to over-run the line. Kapaun courageously moved frequently between the soldiers on the perimeter and those gathered in the bunker:

> Chaplain Kapaun constantly made the rounds of the entire perimeter under direct enemy observation and automatic weapons fire from distances no further than fifty yards. All the while, white phosphorous mortar rounds landed in heavy volume over the entire perimeter. He assisted in rendering medical aid to the wounded and talking to each individual soldier. On one occasion, having heard of the existence of two badly wounded men outside the perimeter . . . Chaplain Kapaun advanced outside our lines in quest of the wounded drawing intense fire on himself. He gave last rites of the Church to one of the men who had died and carried the other man back to the safety of the command post dugout. . . . Although he might have sought protection in the dugout, he continued his voluntary mission of mercy. From the early morning hours until dusk, Chaplain Kapaun allowed himself no rest; he was constantly on the move. But for these continuous acts of bravery . . . many of these men would otherwise have died, and the will to fight might have quickly collapsed.[32]

At dusk, the remaining American soldiers consolidated a new perimeter. Unfortunately, the bunker in which the wounded gathered was approximately 150 yards outside of the new perimeter. Kapaun, Captain Clarence R. Anderson, the battalion surgeon, and a medic elected to stay with the wounded in the bunker — there were, at that time, anywhere between 60 and 100 men gathered there. According to one soldier, Kapaun assumed that the wounded men would have a better chance of survival if they surrendered rather than fighting to the last man.[33] As the Chinese ferociously attacked the new perimeter throughout the night, the men wondered if Kapaun, Anderson, and the wounded were still alive — they had no way to communicate with them. At dawn on 3 November 1950, a small patrol departed the perimeter to check on those in the bunker. They discovered that during the night the Chinese has taken out some of the walking wounded. Those taken included Kapaun and Captain Filmore W. McAbee, the Battalion S-3.[34]

Captivity

Officially, the Army reported that Kapaun was missing in action. The Communists initially took Kapaun and the others to a location about 20 miles north of Unsan. A few days later, the prisoners began a long and grueling march toward the Chinese border. Numerous wounded could not walk, and Kapaun spearheaded efforts to carry the most serious cases on makeshift litters. After almost two weeks of walking in

the frigid cold, Kapaun and nearly 600 other prisoners arrived at Pyoktong on the Yalu River — they had covered nearly 300 miles of winding mountain trails and semi-improved roads; over 50 died along the way. Shortly after they arrived, the Chinese relocated the prisoners several miles southwest of Pyoktong to a camp near the small town of Sambakol. Kapaun and his comrades referred to the camp simply as the Valley.

As a prisoner, Kapaun made himself useful to his fellow prisoners in numerous ways above and beyond expectations. He quickly identified the greatest need: food. The Chinese provided the prisoners with meager rations of 450 grams of millet or cracked corn per man, per day — a starvation diet, indeed.[35] Kapaun made frequent clandestine trips to gather nourishment for his fellow prisoners:

> We were pretty hard up for food and we were starving, so Father would go on ration runs to get our cracked corn, millet, and soy beans. . . . Father would steal, or get away with, sometimes two one-hundred-pound sacks of grain plus pockets full of salt, which was very scarce.[36]

Another prisoner recalled, "He was the best food thief we had in the camp. Once he came back with a sack of potatoes. How he got it I'll never know. It must have weighed 100 pounds."[37] In addition to his uncanny ability to procure food, Kapaun also provided medical care to the best of his ability. Whenever the most gravely ill died, most prisoners avoided burial duty; Kapaun, however, always volunteered and made a decent burial his personal priority.

Kapaun also capitalized upon the interplay between religion, a positive attitude, and collective morale. In spite of his own physical and emotional deterioration, he consistently offered services, prayers, and spiritual teachings in both the officer and enlisted sections of the camp. The guards would often harass Kapaun by saying, "Where is your God now? Ask him to get you out of this camp!" and "You should thank Mao Zedong and Stalin for your daily bread. You cannot see or hear or feel your God, therefore, he does not exist!"[38] Nevertheless, Kapaun faithfully persisted with his message of Christian love and hope. Consequently, building upon his own faith, he maintained an amazingly positive attitude. Captain Robert E. Burke remembered Kapaun's inspiring example:

> By February and March [1951], the majority of us had turned into animals, were fighting for food, irritable, selfish, miserly, etc. The good priest continued to keep a cool head, conduct

himself as a human being, and maintain all his virtues and ideal characteristics. When the chips were down, Father proved himself to be the greatest example of manhood I've ever seen in my life.[39]

His impact clearly enhanced the other prisoners' emotional morale. Perhaps Kapaun's contributions also delayed and prevented prisoner mortality. After the war, former prisoners compared death-rate statistics between various prison camps. The camp near Sambakol experienced a significantly lower death rate, and numerous veterans did not doubt that those numbers resulted, in large part, from Kapaun's ministry, influence, and presence.[40]

May 1951 brought warmer temperatures, but Kapaun was physically fading. Among other infirmities, he had developed a sizeable blood clot in his leg in February. The leg was swollen from the knee to the toes, and his toes had turned black and yellow. The American doctors advised him to rest, but he continued his ministry and rounds among the men. Within a few weeks, he contracted pneumonia and dysentery and became bedridden. Immobilized for more than a month, he lost strength and vitality. The guards, who considered him a dangerous agitator for his influence among the men sought any excuse to relocate him to the "hospital" — that is, the death house from which men seldom returned. Seeing their opportunity, they ordered several other prisoners to carry Kapaun to the hospital. The date was 21 May 1951. As his comrades lifted him on a litter, Kapaun knew the end was near. Two days later, he died among his fellow prisoners.[41]

Recognition and Awards

The Army soon recognized Kapaun's contributions in the Unsan battle. Even before leaders confirmed his death — he was, at that time, still designated as missing in action — his fellow soldiers from the 8th Cavalry Regiment recommended Kapaun for the Distinguished Service Cross. The August 1951 award citation noted the effect the chaplain's ministry and presence had on the other soldiers: "His courageous manner inspired all those present and many men who might otherwise have fled in panic were encouraged by his presence and remained to fight the enemy."[42]

By the end of the war, Army leaders learned more about Kapaun's inspiring ministry and death in captivity. Upon repatriation, his fellow prisoners testified to his compassionate sacrifice and selfless dedication. First Lieutenant Ray M. Dowe told his story in a January 1954 *Saturday*

Evening Post article. Major David MacGhee recounted his experience the same month in *Collier's Magazine*. These men and others told of a courageous chaplain who was "the greatest man I ever met."[43] These stories gave impetus to another recommendation for Kapaun in 1954 — the Legion of Merit. The Secretary of the Army, Robert Stevens, took a personal interest in the posthumous presentation of this award to Kapaun's family. In fact, guidance from Army Headquarters directed the Fifth Army Commanding General to present the award: "While the decoration being presented is not a Medal of Honor, it is desired that exceptional attention be accorded it."[44]

Soon after the end of hostilities in Korea, there was some talk about Kapaun and the Medal of Honor. In October 1953, Kansas Senator Frank Carlson inquired about Kapaun's eligibility for the award. The Army Adjutant General replied that the maximum time between action and recommendation had passes and that "it is regretted that action towards award of the Medal of Honor to [Kapaun] at this time is precluded."[45] Not long after, in connection with his book *The Story of Chaplain Kapaun*, Reverend Arthur Tonne of the St. John Parish in Pilsen, Kansas sent directly to President Eisenhower a copy of the Dowe *Saturday Evening* Post article and a request asking that he consider Kapaun for the Medal of Honor. As with Senator Carlson's inquiry, Tonne's request was denied.[46] Nonetheless, Kapaun's partisans never lost faith that one day a Medal of Honor would become reality.

In the decades that followed, those who best knew of Kapaun's battlefield exploits — the 8th Cavalry Regiment veterans — did not cease seeking the Medal of Honor for their patriot priest. Ultimately, Kapaun did receive the Medal for his actions at Unsan in November 1950 — but not from Dwight Eisenhower. On 11 April 2013, President Barack Obama presented a posthumous Medal of Honor to Ray Kapaun, Emil Kapaun's nephew.

Although he died in 1951, veterans inspired by Kapaun's ministry carried his memory into the Twenty-first Century. This noteworthy longevity shows the depth of Kapaun's impact on the fighting line. Throughout his career of service to soldiers — from the early days at Herrington Army Air Field to the jungles in Burma, from the Pusan perimeter to the squalid Chinese prison camp — Kapaun consistently demonstrated a dogged desire to go wherever his soldiers were. He simply had to be with them. And when he was there, he brought a profound sense of God's presence and peace to all he encountered. His

courageous and deliberate proximity to them was the means by which that impact occurred.

Summary

As the 60th anniversary of the end to the Forgotten War approached in 2013, the story of the humble but energetic man from Pilsen, Kansas became a symbol around which veterans could rally. He went to Korea as they went to Korea, he suffered as they suffered, and he died as many of their comrades died. Survivors remembering the horrors of the war looked for something positive and something good among the images of terror — and they found it in the life and ministry of Emil J. Kapaun. The lasting impact of Kapaun's influence and contribution is yet to be fully measured. But ask any veteran who knew him in battle and captivity, and they will likely say, "He was the greatest man I ever knew."

Endnotes

1. William J. Webb, *The Korean War: The Outbreak* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, 2000), 3-5; also Roy K. Flint, "Task Force Smith and the 24th Division: Delay and Withdrawal," in *America's First Battles*, eds. Charles E. Heller and William A. Soft (Lawrence: University of Kansas, 1986), 266-267.

2. Headquarters, Eighth U.S. Army, Korea: General Orders No. 8 (July 24, 1950); "Catholic Chaplain Brutally Murdered by Reds in Korea," *The Guardian* (August 4, 1950), 1; Chaplains Courageous," *Time* (December 1, 1952), 52. See also Rodger R. Venzke, *Confidence in Battle, Inspiration in Peace: The United States Army Chaplaincy, 1945-1975* (Washington, DC: Office of Chief of Chaplains, 1977), 68-69.

3. Arthur Tonne, *The Story of Chaplain Kapaun* (Emporia: Didde Publishers, 1954), 11-20; William L. Maher, *A Shepherd in Combat Boots: Chaplain Emil Kapaun of the 1st Cavalry Division* (Shippensburg: Burd Street Press, 1997), 21-31.

4. National Archives Record Group 247, Records of the Office of Chief of Chaplains, 1902-1964, Emil Kapaun Folders 1-3; also Tonne, *The Story of Chaplain Kapaun*, 30-59.

5. Maher, *A Shepherd in Combat Boots*, 49.

6. Kapaun to Gerald Franta, November 30, 1942, in Maher, *A Shepherd in Combat Boots*, 47 (also Sklenar).

7. Kapaun to Gerald Franta, November 30, 1942, in Maher, *A Shepherd in Combat Boots*, 49 (also Sklenar).

8. Emil J. Kapaun Personnel Qualifications Questionnaire (5 July 1944), National Archives Emil J. Kapaun OMPF (V500 685).

9. Tonne, *The Story of Chaplain Kapaun*, 87-89.

10. June 1945 report, November 1945 commendation; NA RG 247, Kapaun files.

11. June 1945, NA Kapaun OMPF.

12. Maher, *A Shepherd in Combat Boots*, 58.

13. Tonne, *The Story of Chaplain Kapaun*, 114-116.

14. Kapaun monthly report, NA RG 247, Kapaun files.

15. Maher, *A Shepherd in Combat Boots*, 73-75.

16. Tonne, *The Story of Chaplain Kapaun*, 121.

17. Tonne, *The Story of Chaplain Kapaun*, 122.

18. Roy E. Appleman, *South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu (June — November 1950)* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, 1961), 60; Webb, *The Korean War: The Outbreak*, 9-17; Flint, "Task Force Smith and the 24th Division: Delay and Withdrawal, 5-19 June 1950," 267-269.

19. Tonne, *The Story of Chaplain Kapaun*, 134-5. Kapaun's rosy optimism stands in stark contrast to the many historians who have largely discounted American preparedness for the Korean War. The truth is somewhere between the two perspectives — for example, Kapaun's 8th Cavalry Regiment, in spite of occupation duty demands in Tokyo, still managed to execute collective combat training and leader professional development. See Thomas E. Hanson, *Combat Ready? The Eighth U.S. Army on the Eve of the Korean War* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2010), 91-108.

20. Webb, *The Korean War: The Outbreak*, 16.

21. Kapaun monthly report, August 1950, NA RG 247, Kapaun files.

22. Tonne, *The Story of Chaplain Kapaun*, 137-8. Earlier on July 24, Kapaun's assistant was wounded, his jeep destroyed, and field equipment lost. He delayed sending his monthly report for July until August 14 due to "the urgencies of active combat." Kapaun monthly report, NA RG 247, Kapaun files.

23. 1st Cavalry Division, General Order 82, awarded September 2, 1950, NA Kapaun OMPF.

24. Webb, *The Korean War: The Outbreak*, 22, 26.

25. Webb, *The Korean War: The Outbreak*, 22, 26.

26. Tonne, *The Story of Chaplain Kapaun*, 143-4; Maher, *A Shepherd in Combat Boots*, 100.

27. Appleman, *South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu*, 690.

28. Peter V. Bushtit testimony in Tonne, *The Story of Father Kapaun*, 157.

29. Peter V. Bushtit testimony in Tonne, *The Story of Father Kapaun*, 158.

30. Peter V. Bushtit testimony in Tonne, *The Story of Father Kapaun*, 158.

31. Sworn statement by Captain James H. Carroll, Distinguished Service Cross Recommendation, NA Kapaun OMPF.

32. Sworn statements from Sergeant Andrew S. Natajek and Corporal Winston W. Wilson, Distinguished Service Cross Recommendation, NA Kapaun OMPF.

33. Sworn statement from Corporal Richard P. Oliver, Distinguished Service Cross Recommendation, NA Kapaun OMPF.

34. Appleman, *South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu*, 706.

35. First Lieutenant Ray M. Dowe, *Saturday Evening Post*, January 16, 1954, 21.

36. First Lieutenant Walter May letter in Tonne, *The Story of Chaplain Kapaun*, 169.

37. Captain Joseph L. O'Conner testimony in Maher, *A Shepherd in Combat Boots*, 120.

38. First Lieutenant Walter Mayo letter in Tonne, *The Story of Chaplain Kapaun*, 171.

39. Tonne, *The Story of Chaplain Kapaun*, 188.

40. "[Kapaun] raised the morale so much in his valley that in conjunction with the work of Drs. Anderson and Eisenstein the death rate in his valley was less than 5%. This can be contrasted with a death rate of 50% in Death-Valley under the same conditions for a shorter period." First Lieutenant Ray Dowe sworn statement, Legion of Merit Recommendation, NA Kapaun OMPF; also *Saturday Evening Post*, January 16, 1954, 60.

41. Captain Ralph A. Marcella statement, NA, Kapaun OMPF; First Lieutenant Walter Mayo letter in Tonne, *The Story of Chaplain Kapaun*, 175-6.

42. Headquarters, Eighth United States Army Korea, General Orders 652, Emil J. Kapaun Distinguished Service Cross, NA, Kapaun OMPF.

43. *Saturday Evening Post*, January 16, 1954, 21, 60-2; *Collier's Magazine*, January 22, 1954.

44. Memorandum from Adjutant General to Commanding General, Fifth Army, March 12, 1954; NA Kapaun OMPF.

45. Memorandum from Adjutant General to Senator Frank Carlson, October 9, 1953; NA, Kapaun OMPF.

46. Arthur Tonne to President Eisenhower, 5 January 1954; NA Kapaun OMPF.

Chapter 6
The Principle Continues

Midway through the Twentieth Century, the American total war experience and definitive victories of 1918 and 1945 gave way to limited warfare in Korea that ended with a fragile armistice and unfulfilled hopes for a final peace settlement. Subsequently, the Vietnam War marked a significant departure from earlier conflicts with its irregular warfare, asymmetric battlefield, uncertain enemy, and ill-defined end state. The last quarter of the twentieth century saw small but significant contingency operations in places like Grenada and Panama followed by a brief reappearance of combined-arms operational warfare in Kuwait and Iraq. In short, nearly every American war and combat action since Korea differed significantly from the last — change has been constant; long-held assumptions have remained tenuous, at best.

In spite of broader change at the strategic, operational, and tactical levels, Army chaplains maintained a battlefield presence and continuity of purpose. Indeed, while the very nature of American warfare fluctuated over the years, the chaplain's role changed very little. For those assigned to ground combat units, the mission remained one of going wherever the soldiers might be found in order to bring religious ministry, encouragement, and compassionate service to them. In times of war during these decades of change, regardless of time and place, the proximity principle manifested itself when chaplains placed themselves on the fighting line to fulfill their ministry mission.

Having highlighted selected chaplain combat actions in World War II and Korea, we must investigate the proximity principle's continuity beyond those wars. In order to demonstrate that continuity and potential impact in the midst of changes in American warfare, we must ask ourselves: Have chaplains continued their service on the fighting line and, if so, what contributions did they make? The answers to these questions are important for three reasons. First, they may indeed reinforce the fundamental and unchanging nature of chaplain combat ministry — that is, the importance of a chaplain being physically present with soldiers in battle. Second, they may emphasize the potential impact that chaplain ministry in combat can have, regardless of the broader battle context. Lastly, they may reemphasize that the proximity principle is, indeed, a timeless and enduring part of the Army chaplain's ministry.

This chapter features the battlefield ministry of chaplains from two divergent combat actions: Aloysius McGonigal in Vietnam and Don Brown in Grenada. While not in depth at any given point, this analysis is meant to demonstrate the continuity of the proximity principle across a broad spectrum of combat. Moreover, based upon the impact that these chaplains, in fact, had on their men, this survey will highlight the enduring opportunity that all chaplains have to impact their soldiers in combat.

Aloysius McGonigal in Vietnam

The Vietnam War officially started in 1955 — only one year after the fall of Dien Bien Phu — when the State Department established Military Assistance Advisory Group, Vietnam. The handful of officers assigned to Military Assistance Advisory Group had no idea that the last American troops would not leave the embattled country and conflict would not officially end until 1975. Clearly, this would be a different kind of war.

American involvement in Vietnam grew slowly in the late 1950s and early 1960s then escalated significantly beginning in 1965. The Kennedy Administration, like its predecessors, focused the preponderance of its energies on containing the Soviet agenda in Europe, yet developments in Vietnam attracted increasing attention. When Lyndon Johnson replaced Kennedy, he committed additional forces to Vietnam. Consequently, troop numbers ballooned to 200,000 in 1965 and topped out at 530,000 in 1968.[1]

Tactically, thanks in large part to airpower and fire superiority, American forces retained a position of relative advantage over the Viet Cong (the South Vietnamese guerilla insurgents) and the North Vietnamese Army between 1965 and 1967. The communist forces suffered heavy casualties and leaders expressed optimism. Even General William Westmoreland confidently predicted that victory would come by the end of 1967.

However, during the January 1968 Vietnamese New Year known as Tet, over 85,000 Viet Cong and North Vietnamese Army fighters flooded across South Vietnam attacking military bases and cities in the largest communist advance of the war. The "Tet Offensive" was a complete surprise. From Quang Tri to Saigon, enemy fighters attacked American troops and their South Vietnamese partners, the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN).[2]

The communists during Tet desired one objective in particular, the ancient city of Hue. The former imperial capital of Vietnam was a psychological center of gravity for the Vietnamese people, both North and South. It represented a cultural crossroads where ancient Vietnamese custom, history, and Buddhist religion mixed with significant remnants of the French colonization and Catholicism. The imposing Citadel fortress was the centerpiece of Hue and represented the rich military history of the city. But Hue, with a population over 140,000, was also a contemporary center of gravity for those fighting in Vietnam: Highway 1 passed through the city, Navy supply boats frequently utilized the city's Perfume River for passage and basing, and the 1st ARVN Division and American Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV) had headquarters there. Moreover, whoever held Hue possessed a key bargaining chip at the diplomatic table. Although Hue was relatively untouched by the war thus far, the communists now wanted it. The attack on Hue commenced with heavy rocket and artillery fire sometime after 0300 on 31 January 1968.[3]

Hue was also the appointed place of duty for Chaplain Aloysius McGonigal, an Army major serving at the MACV Advisory Team 3 compound. McGonigal, a 46-year-old Jesuit priest from Philadelphia, had been in Vietnam since December 1966 and had recently extended his one-year tour in order to continue his battlefield ministry.[4] The MACV Advisory Team 3 was headquartered at Hue. From its compound on the south side of the Perfume River, a handful of Army officers and enlisted personnel advised the 1st ARVN Division, the headquarters of which was located just across the river in the ancient Citadel but whose subordinate units were scattered across the I Corps tactical zone. McGonigal's responsibility involved ministry and support to the American servicemen on Team 3, thus the requirement to circulate across I Corps with Hue as a home base.

Military life suited the energetic priest. Although he was only five feet, six inches tall, associates remembered him as "muscular and powerfully built . . . very much an athlete. He was always ready for a game of football, even when wearing his collar."[5] He also had a knack for connecting with military personnel across the spectrum. One soldier recalled McGonigal in colorful detail: "He was all soldier and all priest. He would talk to Generals with his hands in his pockets, a kind of character you would see in a tough guy movie of the 1930s."[6]

Throughout late 1967 and January 1968, the outgoing priest rarely spent much time in the Hue compound: "He became a fixture

throughout I Corps. . . . and roamed at will throughout the northern part of South Vietnam."[7] He developed a reputation for traveling across the countryside by any means necessary to provide ministry — "a real circuit rider . . . rumpled, but always on the go."[8] In fact, he was providing ministry near Quang Tri when the attack on Hue began. Determined to minister to those under fire, he made his way back to the city with an element of the 1st ARVN Airborne Task Force one week later.

When McGonigal returned to the Hue compound the first week in February, he saw the North Vietnamese flag flying over the Citadel across the river — the communists had taken the city! All told, some 10 North Vietnamese Army and Viet Cong battalions now laid claim to Hue. McGonigal received an update: the ARVN forces in Hue desperately held to their position across the river and the MACV compound was still intact, but not for lack of communist efforts to reduce it.

McGonigal also learned one other piece of news: Marines had arrived from Phu Bai and were aggressively fighting to retake the portion of Hue on the south side of the Perfume River. Phu Bai, the largest military base in the region, was eight miles southeast of Hue and a forward headquarters for the 1st Marine Division. Colonel Stanley S. Hughes, Commander of the 1st Marine Regiment, had established his command post at the MACV compound and had nearly all of 2nd Battalion, 5th Marines (2/5), elements from 1st Battalion, 1st Marines (1/1), and a few M-48 tanks busily fighting block-to-block to expel communist forces from areas across Highway 1. By 10 February 1968, most of the southern portion of Hue was in American hands, but the cost was high: 38 Marines killed and 320 wounded. Plus, the communists still held the lion's share of Hue, the portion of the city north of the Perfume River.[9]

McGonigal initially provided ministry to the wounded and dying at the MACV compound, a sensible course of action since the 1st Marine Regiment aid station was located there. But he also knew that Marines were dying in the streets before they ever reached the aid station and he wanted to minister to them, too. For three days he paced the compound trying to convince his supervisor, Army Lieutenant Colonel Bruce Petree, to release him for ministry in the city. Then, on 10 February 1968, the 1st Battalion, 5th Marines (1/5) were ordered to cross the Perfume River and assault the Citadel — and they did not have a chaplain. McGonigal saw his chance and requested once again. This time, Petree acquiesced. Although some tried to talk the chaplain out of his plan, Marine Major Robert H. Thompson, 1/5 Commander, supported the idea

and welcomed his offer with the understanding that the priest would assist only until a new Navy chaplain arrived.[10]

Although significant ARVN forces were already in the Citadel — four airborne battalions, two armored cavalry squadrons, and several companies from the 1st, 3rd, and 4th ARVN regiments — they had gained little ground against the North Vietnamese Army and Viet Cong invaders. ARVN leaders finally requested assistance from the III Marine Amphibious Force. 1st Division Headquarters ordered a Marine battalion to the Citadel. The Marines were to advance and dislodged the enemy by any means necessary; only the Imperial Palace was to be spared.

McGonigal embedded himself immediately with the Marine effort. On 12 February 1968, he rode with the Marines in their LCUs up the Perfume River to the 1st ARVN headquarters. On 13 February 1968, he accompanied the Marines in their assault into the heart of the Citadel. The determined North Vietnamese and the unfamiliar urban environment made for tough fighting. McGonigal rushed forward to aid the wounded and dying, often working back and forth between the platoons and the battalion command post establish just blocks away. That night, McGonigal checked in with Major Thompson at the evening command briefing.[11] On 14 February 1968, after artillery, air strikes, and naval gunfire reduced some of the objective buildings, the Marines renewed their attack. More casualties fell, and McGonigal was quickly on top of them. After a few days, the Marines began to understand who he was and greatly appreciated his efforts. After again checking in at the evening command briefing, McGonigal wrote a letter to the Maryland Jesuits Provincial House stating that he felt "pretty safe"[12] because the Marines had the enemy surrounded.

On 15 February 1968, a concentrated assault on a tower near the Dong Ba gate and fighting along the Citadel wall itself — at some places up to 75 meters thick and honeycombed with tunnels and bunkers — proved especially difficult. Six more Marines died and 33 fell wounded.[13] After assisting with the wounded and killed throughout the day, McGonigal chatted with Major Thompson at the command briefing. Fighting on 16 February 1968 was especially difficult, due largely to accumulation of rubble and debris from ongoing artillery and airstrikes. The wrecked buildings made for a defender's paradise, as North Vietnamese fighters dug in and waited for the advancing Marines. Although they did have Marine M-48 tanks, not all of the narrow streets in the Citadel supported clear passage. But the infantry and tanks coordinated and

operated together as best they could, doubtless preventing even more Marine casualties. Nevertheless, 12 Marines were killed and 60 were wounded that day.[14] That night, McGonigal again appeared at the battalion command briefing.

On 17 February 1968, the Marines advanced at 0700 and slowly overcame several fortified communist strongpoints. In addition, North Vietnamese Army mortar and artillery fire blanketed the area. The toll for the day was no better than the one before — another 12 Marines were killed and 55 wounded. At the command briefing that evening, Major Thompson did not see McGonigal and grew concerned. The following morning, he ordered a search through the rubble of the previous day's fighting. Not long after, a squad of Marines discovered the chaplain's body with a large shrapnel wound to the back of his head. Upon hearing of his death, a chaplain serving in Dong Ha who knew McGonigal wrote in his diary:

> McGonigal is dead. I'm shocked and in disbelief. I just saw him within the last two weeks. He was an excellent chaplain who was absolutely fearless. He always wanted to be where the troops were and the fighting was the thickest. He had been ordered to report to Da Nang and was fighting that order for all he was worth. He wanted to be near the ground forces. These were the men he loved the most. I can't be critical of him. Any good chaplain wants to serve and minster to troops. God Bless you, Aloysius P. McGonigal. May you truly rest in peace.[15]

For his courage and sacrifice in ministry at Hue, the Army awarded McGonigal a posthumous Silver Star Medal.

McGonigal's voluntary service at Hue certainly falls in line with the broader proximity principle. He determined to serve the men within his geographic sphere of combat ministry, even though he was not officially their chaplain. He understood, though perhaps underestimated, the dangers of ministry on the fighting line. In the end, his resolute conviction that the men in the forward-most positions needed spiritual care and a tangible reminder of God's presence drove him to serve in close proximity to the men. His impact was significant, certainly for those men who knew firsthand the terrors of urban combat at Hue.

A Critical Question

McGonigal's death raises a critical question for this study. One could plausibly argue that had he remained in the MACV compound and not gone forward with the Marines in the Citadel he would have

survived the battle for Hue and continued his ministry as an Army Chaplain and Catholic priest. Thus, hundreds if not thousands of Soldiers would have received additional ministry and support had he lived. In other words, so the argument goes, his choice that led to his death actually deprived Soldiers of ministry.

This is the primary and traditional criticism of the proximity principle in combat: the special fear of chaplains being killed in action or otherwise incapacitated. We have noted in previous chapters that doctrine has never prohibited chaplains from going forward with their Soldiers. However, at unofficial levels, numerous supervising chaplains over the years have voiced concerns about the risks. (Some have even prohibited unit chaplains from going to the forward elements altogether.) The *Report on the Army Chaplain in the European Theatre*, for example, highlighted the issue:

> Some commanding officers have expressed the opinion that chaplains should be with the most forward elements, and many unit chaplains would have preferred such assignments. While not denying the moral value of such a procedure, [the chaplain] exposing himself to unnecessary hazards is also potentially robbing his unit of all chaplain ministrations until such time as he can be replaced, in the event that he becomes a casualty.[16]

In response to this criticism, one might ask: At what point does risk outweigh the purpose for going forward? Additionally, one might ask: Why should a chaplain receive a special reprieve from the dangers of combat when the soldiers to whom he is assigned do not? Clearly, common sense must factor into any chaplain's religious support plan, just as every chaplain should heed the adage of avoiding unnecessary risks (although the term "unnecessary" at this point almost defies definition). But for chaplains on the fighting line, we might even reasonably argue for the impossibility of quantifying the value gained against the risk incurred. For chaplains, credibility with soldiers is at stake. But vastly more important is the spiritual well-being of Soldiers in combat — yes, even peace of mind about life beyond death.

Is there any doubt that Aloysius McGonigal framed the issue in those terms? What price did he attach to the spiritual well-being and comfort of a dying Marine in Hue? He answered that question with his own life. Courageous? Yes. Reckless? Possibly. Congruent with his deep convictions about God, death, and life itself? Absolutely.

A secondary question also arises from McGonigal's sacrifice in Hue: Does the potential death of a chaplain on the fighting line in any way nullify the value of the proximity principle? As stated above, it would be impossible to weigh the death of a chaplain against the benefits collectively gained through ministry on the fighting line. But given the relatively low death rate among Army chaplains since 1918 — less than 0.01 percent killed in action — we could argue that the risks are typically greater in theory than in fact.[17] Indeed, the highly isolated occurrences of chaplains killed in action can hardly overshadow the immense quantity of ministry provided by those who lived to serve another day.

Don Brown in Grenada

As the final curtain fell on the Vietnam War in 1975, the Army found itself in a most unenviable position. Budgetary constraints, transition to an all-volunteer force, poor recruiting quality, rampant drug abuse and disciplinary problems, a lackluster program for developing leaders, and persistently low morale weighed heavily against Army reform and forward momentum. The Carter administration's failure to adequately address the nation's economic woes as well as the Iranian hostage crisis — the failed rescue attempt in 1980 was especially painful for the Army — only made things worse. When the American people elected Ronald Reagan, many believed that it truly was "morning again in America," but the Army ultimately measured renewal in only one way: decisive action. But when? And where?

That decisive action took place on Grenada, an obscure Caribbean island which few Americans could readily identify on a map. Yet in 1983, Grenada became the focus of strategic attention as communist powers sought to establish a military presence on the island. As political events on Grenada escalated in October of that year, the Reagan administration responded with overwhelming military intervention.

Grenada gained independence from Great Britain in 1974 under Prime Minister Eric Gairy, a repressive autocrat. Because Gairy was pro-Western and anti-communist, the United States largely overlooked his human rights record. In 1979, Maurice Bishop and his leftist "New Jewel Movement" replaced Gairy in a bloodless coup. Bishop soon established diplomatic and economic ties with Cuba, the Soviet Union, and other communist countries. When the United States voiced concern, Bishop thumbed his nose at any assumptions based on the Monroe Doctrine: "We are not in anyone's backyard!"[18] Tensions increased

when Cuban military advisors arrived on the island and construction began on a military-length runway at Salines International Airport. In 1982, while visiting the nearby island of Barbados, President Reagan explicitly accused Grenada of cooperating with communist nations to spread the virus among the Caribbean islands. Bishop clearly annoyed the United States, but nothing he did prompted decisive action.[19]

On 19 October 1983, however, Bishop and several of his key followers died in a hail of machinegun fire as Bernard Coard, one of Bishop's deputies, staged a coup and declared martial law across the island. Coard, a hard-line communist, felt that Bishop had not taken Grenada far enough into the Cuban and Soviet spheres. This turn of events naturally concerned American policy makers, not only for the long-term strategic implications but also for the safety of some 1,000 American medical school students attending St. George's University on Grenada. In order to prevent further communist incursion and to safeguard the Americans living there, President Reagan immediately diverted the 22nd Marine Amphibious Unit toward Grenada and instructed Department of Defense planners to consider options for military intervention.[20]

Policy makers and military planners acted rapidly. They envisioned an invasion that would capture the Point Salines and Pearls airports, neutralize Grenadian and Cuban resistance, safeguard American citizens living on the island, and restore democracy. In addition to Marines landing in the north, Army Rangers and other special operations soldiers would take and control the southern end of the island. President Reagan authorized the invasion on Saturday, 22 October 1983. Then, in the early hours of Sunday, 23 October 1983, the President received unrelated news: suicide bombers in Beirut had just killed 220 Marines and 21 other servicemen. Now the Grenada invasion took on the additional purpose of demonstrating American resolve in the face of catastrophe.

On Saturday night and early Sunday morning, telephones across the Savannah, Georgia area rang as the 1st Battalion, 75th Infantry (Ranger) recalled its men. Among those recalled was Don Brown, the battalion chaplain. The 41-year-old Baptist minister from North Carolina joined the unit in June 1982 and had participated in several unit recalls followed by secretive training missions since arriving — the men would usually fly away to an unknown destination, execute a parachute drop, and be home within 36 hours. But when he arrived at the battalion headquarters on 23 October 1983, the atmosphere was seriously different: "When I attended the briefing with the commanders and staff, I knew it was real. There was intensity in the words. What we were hearing was

serious."[21] Throughout Sunday and into Monday, Brown learned that his battalion would assault the Point Salines airport on Grenada, secure the medical campus adjacent to the airfield, and conduct follow-on operations as required.[22]

No one knew whether the Rangers would parachute onto the airfield or airland, deplane, and fight — that decision could only be made at the last minute once reconnaissance confirmed the condition of the airfield. Most likely, the decision to jump would not be made until well after the Rangers were flying enroute to the objective. Thus, they had to be flexibly prepared to rig or de-rig parachutes inside the cramped aircraft. One thing was certain in Brown's mind, however: if the Rangers jumped then he would also jump. He and his commander both agreed that the chaplain's presence on such a mission was vital.[23]

On Monday, 24 October 1983, the 1st Battalion Rangers occupied Hangar 850 at Hunter Army Airfield, prepared equipment, and waited for their seven C-130 aircraft to arrive. For many Rangers, the staggering amount of ammunition, grenades, mortar rounds, rocket launchers, and demolition equipment prepositioned inside the hangar confirmed that this was no training exercise. Brown recalled, "There was a grave reality that settled in when they realized that it wasn't blank ammunition."[24]

Prior to loading the aircraft, the Rangers occupied the hangar for most of Monday morning, afternoon, and evening. Brown circulated among the Rangers throughout the day:

> The inside of the aircraft hangar was a special place for me because it was the beginning of my ministry to the soldiers. As I moved around that day, the mood was varied. There was laughing and jokes as they loaded magazines and checked weapons, but for every laugh there were 20 who could not laugh. The anxiety and tension was heavy. Some of the young soldiers I talked with, prayed with, and listen to would be wounded, even dead, the next day.[25]

Shortly before boarding the aircraft, the 1st Battalion commander, Lieutenant Colonel Wesley Taylor, also led the Rangers in prayer.

Then, at about 2100 hours, the men heard the roar of C-130 engines as their aircraft taxied to the hangar. The men loaded the aircraft — Brown was on the fifth C-130 — and the aircraft took off shortly thereafter. They anticipated a six-and-one-half hour flight to Grenada from Hunter Army Airfield.

At about 2300 hours, Lieutenant Colonel Taylor received word that the Grenadians and Cubans had placed obstacles on the runway, thus requiring a parachute assault. The men aboard the seven planes began to rig parachutes in the cramped compartment. But at approximately 0400 hours — only 60 minutes from jumping — the men on planes five, six, and seven erroneously received orders through the aircrew to de-rig and prepare for the airland option. The Rangers quickly complied and stowed their parachutes in the forward portion of the compartment. Further confusion ensued when the first two aircraft had to abort their first pass due to navigational equipment failure. The third aircraft, which included Lieutenant Colonel Taylor, executed its drop at 0530 while receiving moderate antiaircraft fire.[26]

Meanwhile, word came back to aircraft five through seven: "Re-rig! Jump in twenty minutes!"[27] Brown, along with the rest of the Rangers, was completely astounded: "Had a doctor taken my blood pressure right then, I would have been a good candidate for medical care!"[28] With no time to spare whatsoever, the Rangers feverishly complied and rigged for the jump. Brown recalled,

> Jumpmasters did not have time to check everyone. We checked the soldier near us and hooked the cable to jump. Many were still rigging when we crossed the lead edge of the drop zone. The aircraft doors were thrown open, air rushed in, and still Rangers were rigging. We came in low off the sea at 100 feet or so. The pilot said he would climb to 500 feet — it was a steep climb — and out we went.[29]

At approximately 0630, and in broad daylight, Brown exited the C-130. He descended along with the other Rangers:

> The sound of machinegun fire, anti-aircraft fire, and small arms was all around, and the ground was coming up fast — from 500 feet you don't have much time to view things. I hit an asphalt exit off the main runway. The wind caught my chute and dragged me a few feet into a mud hole before I could pull the D rings. I quickly pulled my chute away from the runway, making a small target, crawled under a barbed wire fence, did a triple time run to the south side of the runway and a ditch. I quickly looked around to get my bearings and headed to the location where TOC2 was to join up.[30]

As other key leaders assembled, Brown sought a covered position: "I was hidden behind a tree that wasn't nearly big enough. Rounds were

coming through the branches of the tree about seven or eight feet above me."[31] Brown's group eventually moved toward the St. George's University "True Blue" medical campus at the eastern end of the airfield where they established a command post and battalion aid station. Brown remained at the aid station most of the day ministering to wounded Rangers. Altogether, five Rangers from 1st Battalion died that day and eight were wounded.

Once the 1st Battalion Rangers established their security positions to the east of the True Blue campus and stretching to the north and west, Brown began to circulate and visit the Rangers:

> I had freedom to move about using good judgment. I checked out where any fighting was going on, enemy sighting, that sort of information. I worked between the medical area, civilian students, and areas I could reach where soldiers were located. I never moved more than half a mile from the runway.[32]

As Brown circulated, he acquired a mascot that accompanied him, a small dog that he introduced to the Rangers as "Fidel." The Rangers enjoyed feeding the scrawny dog bits from their C-rations. One Ranger, Paul Bell, recalls Brown's visits:

> It was hot and we had been in contact with the enemy all day. From our right side walks up Chaplain 'Yoda' Brown making the rounds to all the fighting positions. (I referred to him as Yoda because of his infectious smile, bald head, and his ability to share God's faith and belief in all of us.) He greeted us and introduced the dog as his new friend 'Fidel.' We burst out laughing. The chaplain prayed for us and moved on.[33]

Brown continued his battlefield ministry throughout the next three days. On 29 October 1983, the Rangers redeployed to Hunter Army Airfield via Puerto Rico. Upon returning, Brown continued ministry to wounded Rangers and the families of the fallen.[34]

Summary

After two world wars and a fairly set-piece experience in Korea, the United States entered an era of non-standard conflict and small actions. Previous assumptions and tactics did not necessarily apply to the war in Vietnam, and the twenty years that followed saw an Army engaged in pinpoint combat actions that ended soon after they began. Indeed, traditional battles featuring combined arms maneuver were the exception to the rule in the last quarter of the Twentieth Century.

In spite of changes to where, when, and how America fought its wars, Army chaplains ministered essentially as they always had through placing themselves in near proximity to ground combat forces. Such proximity allowed them to directly meet the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of the soldiers to whom they were assigned or whose mission placed them in the chaplain's sphere of influence. For Aloysius McGonigal, savage urban fighting in the streets of Hue provided the backdrop for his basic ministry of caring for the wounded and dying. He voluntarily placed himself at the point of greatest need regardless of the dangers involved. For Don Brown, proximity meant embedding himself into a combat airborne operation, to include parachuting from 500 feet into hostile fire and uncertain combat below. In that unique environment, the proximity principle allowed Brown to provide ministry as no other chaplain could.

In their respective contexts, McGonigal and Brown demonstrated the continuity of the proximity principle. One could argue that the ministry they provided in close proximity to ground combat soldiers was fundamentally similar and only superficially different to the ministry provided by chaplains in earlier wars. As such, these two chaplains joined a long line of clergy in uniform who met the needs of soldiers in combat.

Endnotes

1. Richard W. Stewart, *Deepening Involvement, 1945-1965* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, 2012), 15-20; 38-43.

2. James H. Willbanks, *The Tet Offensive: A Concise History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 1-23.

3. In February 1966, President Lyndon Johnson consulted General William Westmoreland regarding the North Vietnamese most likely course of action. Westmoreland responded with two words: "Capture Hue," emphasizing the ancient city's strategic value. George W. Smith, *The Siege at Hue* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Reiner Publishers, 1999), xvii; also Eric Hammel, *Fire in the Streets: The Battle for Hue, Tet 1968* (Chicago: Contemporary Books, 1991), 1-5; Keith William Nolan, *Battle For Hue, Tet, 1968* (Novato: Presidio Press, 1983), 3-4; 7-10; Willard Pearson, *The War in the Northern Provinces, 1966-1968* (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, 1975), 39-40; James Willbanks, "What Really Happened at Hue," *Vietnam* (February 2011): 25-26.

4. "Philadelphia Born Priest Killed with Troops at Hue Front," *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin* (February 20, 1968), 2; "Chaplain Fights to Die with Men," *Stars and Stripes* (February 22, 1968), 4.

5. Bill Way, "Jesuit Grunt," The American Catholic, accessed September 6, 2014, http://amcatholic.wordpress.com/2009/05/24/jesuit-grunt; "Body of Philadelphia Priest Found in Hue Rubble," *Philadelphia Inquirer* (February 21, 1968), 8.

6. Way, "Jesuit Grunt."

7. "Philadelphia Born Priest Killed with Troops at Hue Front," 2.

8. "Chaplain Fights to Die with Men," 1.

9. James Willbanks, "The Tet Offensive: Battle for Hue, January-February 1968," Weapons and Warfare, accessed September 12, 2014, http://weaponsandwarfare.com/?p=2072; also Hammel, *Fire in the Streets*, 251-252.

10. Hammel, *Fire in the Streets*, 258; Nolan, *Battle for Hue*, 121; also "Philadelphia Born Priest Killed with Troops at Hue Front," 2.

11. Willbanks, "The Tet Offensive: Battle for Hue, January-February 1968."

12. "Philadelphia Born Priest Killed with Troops at Hue Front," 2.

13. Hammel, *Fire in the Streets*, 278, 283.

14. Willbanks, "The Tet Offensive: Battle for Hue, January-February 1968"; Raymond A. Stewart, "Tanks in the Battle for Hue City: Tet 1968," *Leatherneck* (February 2008): 12.

15. Don Neely served as chaplain with the 108th Artillery Group at Dong Ha (October 1967 to June 1968). "Chaplain Neely's Diary," The 108th Artillery Group, accessed September 18, 2014, http://www.108thartillerygroup.com/id19.html.

16. Piepkorn, *Report on the Army Chaplain in the European Theatre*, 23. Eric R. Keller also considered the dangers of chaplains in forward positions — in fact, he cited Aloysius McGonigal as a key example. Keller also reviewed the chaplaincy's "Forward Thrust" doctrine and concluded that it has merits but also dangers for chaplains. Keller, "Religious Support in the Division XXI Heavy Brigade," 21, 45.

17. A total of 114 Army chaplains died in combat action during twentieth-century wars (not to include those who died of disease or other non-combat injuries): 11 in the First World War, 77 in the Second World War, 13 in the Korean War, and 13 in the Vietnam War. Although beyond the scope of this study, one could divide those figures into combat arms units and combat support units, since the bulk of chaplain combat deaths occurred in combat arms units. Yet even that categorization would not produce a significant percentage of actual combat-related chaplain deaths in relation to combat death percentages across the Army for the same period. Stover, *Up From Handymen: The United States Army Chaplaincy, 1865-1920*, 252; Gushwa, *The Best and Worst of Times: The United States Army Chaplaincy, 1920-1945*, 215-217; Rodger R. Venzke, *Confidence in Battle, Inspiration in Peace: The United States Army Chaplaincy, 1945-1975* (Washington, DC: Office of Chief of Chaplains, 1977), 170.

18. Mark Adkins, *Urgent Fury: The Battle for Grenada* (Lexington: Lexington Books, 1989), 1-81; Russell Crandall, *Gunboat Democracy: U.S. Interventions in the Dominican Republic, Grenada, and Panama* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2005), 139-140; David W. Dent, *The Legacy of the Monroe Doctrine* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1999), 184-186; Peter Huchthausen, *America's Splendid Little Wars: A Short History of U.S. Military Engagements, 1975-2000* (New York: Viking Press, 2003), 65-73.

19. Mark Adkins, *Urgent Fury: The Battle for Grenada* (Lexington: Lexington Books, 1989), 1-81; Russell Crandall, *Gunboat Democracy: U.S. Interventions in the Dominican Republic, Grenada, and Panama* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2005), 139-40; David W. Dent, *The Legacy of the Monroe Doctrine* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1999), 184-186; Peter Huchthausen, *America's Splendid Little Wars: A Short History of U.S. Military Engagements, 1975-2000* (New York: Viking Press, 2003), 65-73.

20. Concerns about increased military presence were not unfounded. In 1980 and again in 1982, Bishop had signed military aid agreements with Cuba and the Soviets which brought, among other things, eight Soviet-made BTR-60s armored personnel carriers. Following the invasion, captured Cuban documents revealed that Cuba had intended to send an additional 341 officers, 4,000 reservists, and numerous Soviet ZSU-23 anti-aircraft guns to Grenada. Russell Crandall, *Gunboat Democracy: U.S. Interventions in the Dominican Republic, Grenada, and Panama* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2001), 49; Peter Huchthausen, *America's Splendid Little Wars: A Short History of U.S. Military Engagements, 1975-2000* (New York: Viking Press, 2003), 69.

21. Don Brown Service Record, National Archives Don Brown OMPF; "Don Brown Urgent Fury Testimony," Don Brown papers.

22. Don Brown Service Record, National Archives Don Brown OMPF; "Don Brown Urgent Fury Testimony," Don Brown papers.

23. "Don Brown Urgent Fury Testimony," Don Brown papers, 1.

24. Edgar F. Raines, *The Rucksack War* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, 2010), 179; "Don Brown Urgent Fury Testimony," Don Brown papers.

25. "Don Brown Urgent Fury Testimony," Don Brown papers, 2.

26. Major John Maher, the battalion S-3, recalled the descent into ground fire, saying, "When I checked my canopy . . . tracers [were] above my canopy and . . . through my suspension lines." Raines, *The Rucksack War*, 245; also J. D. Lock, *To Fight With Intrepidity: The Complete History of the U.S. Army Rangers 1622 to the Present* (New York: Pocket Books, 1998), 401.

27. "Don Brown Urgent Fury Testimony," Don Brown papers.

28. "Don Brown Urgent Fury Testimony," Don Brown papers.

29. "Don Brown Urgent Fury Testimony," Don Brown papers. Brown noted, "I used my time to assist Rangers to repack ammo and radios. I did not have time to re-rig my ruck and left it on the plane. My ruck caught up with me two weeks after I returned to Hunter."

30. "Don Brown Urgent Fury Testimony," Don Brown papers, 3.

31. "Don Brown Urgent Fury Testimony," Don Brown papers, 3.

32. "Don Brown Urgent Fury Testimony," Don Brown papers, 3.

33. "Paul Bell Urgent Fury Testimony," Paul Bell papers. Brown's ability to connect with Rangers earned other nicknames. After returning from a unit wives meeting at Hunter Army Airfield one evening, his wife asked him, "What do the Rangers call you?" Brown replied, "Chaplain." She said, "No, they don't. They call you 'Poppa Smurf.'" Brown acknowledged that his five-foot-four-inch stature did resemble a smurf, so he embraced the term of endearment. "Don Brown Urgent Fury Testimony," Don Brown papers.

34. Major Jack P. Nix, the battalion executive officer who also jumped from aircraft number five, summarized Brown's Grenada contributions in these terms: "During the Grenada rescue, Chaplain Brown insisted on being with the initial assault element. He remained steadfast and completely committed to those of us around him even when we learned — just prior to parachuting — that fighting was occurring on the drop zone. Once on the ground, Chaplain Brown positioned himself in a forward company sector to provide comfort and encouragement to wounded personnel." Brown Officer Evaluation Report, National Archive Don Brown OMPF.

Chapter 7
Conclusion

Army chaplains have historically served alongside Soldiers in direct ground combat. Since at least the Civil War, chaplains have been an expected fixture on America's battlefield. While the character, scope, and means of waging war have changed over the years, the fundamental and timeless ministry that chaplains provide in combat remains consistent. Formal chaplain doctrine, which first appeared in 1926, has regularly mirrored and codified this historical practice of battlefield ministry. In short, one might say that both custom and doctrinal guidance illustrate a basic principle of chaplain ministry. Indeed, I have argued that a study of chaplain doctrinal development and battlefield history reveals a timeless and enduring principle that we may call the proximity principle — namely, that Army chaplains contribute most effectively to soldier well-being and mission success when they serve in close proximity to soldiers in combat. Such an argument requires an analysis of chaplain doctrine as well as an investigation of chaplain combat actions.

The first half of this study considered chaplain doctrine with particular emphasis upon its guidance to chaplains serving in war. The precedent-setting 1926 manual with its specific verbiage — "the duty of the chaplain lies with the men of his command who are on the fighting line"[1] — illustrated a deeper concept of chaplains serving soldiers engaged in direct ground combat. The manual placed such service in the broader context of fitting Soldiers "mentally, morally, and physically"[2] for combat — that is, by ministering to those members of the Army most directly charged with achieving its tactical goals, chaplains became what are now termed combat multipliers. Identifying the origin of that verbiage and concept provided confirmation that the 1926 doctrine writers accurately captured what chaplains had habitually practiced and advocated. A review of unofficial chaplain publications, autobiographical and biographical materials, and lessons learned from World War I chaplain combat service confirmed that the 1926 doctrine writers accurately codified and connected with previous chaplain combat philosophy. Chaplain doctrine that followed the 1926 edition evolved in three stages: manuals focused on basic chaplain activities (1937 to 1977), manuals nested with broader Army doctrine (1984 to 2003), and manuals based on "Doctrine 2015" with less content and more emphasis upon timeless, enduring principles (2012). The review of these manuals showed a varied emphasis upon the chaplain's proximity to Soldiers

engaged in direct ground combat: some manuals placed a significant emphasis upon it; others touched lightly upon it. But all manuals mentioned explicitly the chaplain's ministry role in combat. Thus, I have demonstrated that chaplain doctrine has consistently included the concept (if not the verbiage) first codified in the 1926 manual. In other words, doctrinally speaking, the proximity principle has stood the test of time.

The second half of this study considered the combat ministry of selected chaplains during World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, and the 1983 invasion of Grenada. With an emphasis upon actions, motivation, and impact, we examined chaplain combat ministry over the broad scope of modern warfare — total war, limited war, and contingency operation. Each chaplain ministered in accordance with his own faith tradition and in the context of a given strategic, operational, and tactical setting. Delbert Kuehl served soldiers across two European fronts and participated in three combat parachute jumps with his men. Emil Kapaun traveled to the other side of the globe to minister in the midst of limited but brutal warfare in Korea and died serving his men as a fellow prisoner. Aloysisus McGongial aggressively ministered to soldiers and Marines within his sphere of influence during the violent urban fighting in Hue City. Don Brown jumped with his Rangers onto the Caribbean island of Grenada and met their needs in unique ways. But every chaplain ministered to and affected soldiers in fundamentally the same manner: each voluntarily placed himself in close proximity to soldiers who were most threatened and most vulnerable, each personally delivered religious support to those soldiers, and each indelibly impacted those soldiers through compassionately active ministry.

This historical survey confirmed three key points. First, the survey demonstrated that chaplains since 1926 have maintained a focus of service on the fighting line that predated the first doctrinal manual. Second, the survey demonstrated that chaplains indeed ministered in keeping with the doctrinal concepts contained in chaplain manuals. Thus, chaplain history and chaplain doctrine regarding service in combat have largely paralleled one another. Third, as a sounding board for doctrine, history — that is, the impact that chaplains have historically had on soldier well-being and mission success — has confirmed that the doctrine has rightly mandates the chaplain's role in combat.

Implications

This thesis posits three significant implications for consideration. First, as a timeless and enduring theme, the proximity principle regarding chaplains ministering in combat deserves explicit mention in contemporary chaplain doctrine. FM 1-05 (2012) features the chaplain's three core competencies (nurture the living, care for the wounded, honor the dead) and several religious support functions. These specific functions are advising the command, leading worship, administering religious rites and sacraments, providing pastoral care and counseling, teaching religious education, conducting family-life ministry, providing support to the command and staff, managing religious support resources, meeting with local or host-nation religious leaders, and planning and training for religious support. The doctrine writers describe this list of religious support functions as partial, thus implying that other tasks might fall into the religious support function category.[3] Given that the 2012 manual elsewhere notes that "Chaplains . . . must be able to deliver religious support during close combat,"[4] one might assume that ministry on the fighting line is an implied religious support function. However, this study has demonstrated that the proximity principle in combat is deeply anchored in both previous chaplain doctrine and chaplain history. Moreover, this study has highlighted the potential impact that chaplains have upon soldier well-being and mission success when serving on the fighting line. Thus, one would expect that the proximity principle — at least in concept, if not in name — would explicitly appear in any doctrinal list of religious support functions.

Second, the focus on personally delivering religious support to ground troops in combat nests well with the current emphasis upon the human dimension, which the Army defines as a soldier's cognitive, physical, and social components. As part of the social component of the human dimension, the Army acknowledges that soldiers who demonstrate strong moral, ethical and spiritual beliefs have great potential to serve as leaders of character. Likewise, emotional readiness and spiritual fitness allow soldiers to cultivate a high degree of resilience and resistance to stress.[5] This study has repeatedly demonstrated that chaplain ministry on the fighting line in doctrine and history has emphasized and produced these same values. The earliest chaplain doctrine, for example, associated ministry on the fighting line with fitting soldiers mentally, morally, and physically. Subsequent editions of chaplain doctrine voiced similar expectations. Moreover, our survey of chaplain combat history shows the potential impact on soldiers' emotional and spiritual

well-being that chaplains bring to the fighting line. Thus, it is important to note the chaplain's role in shaping and caring for the soldier's human dimension on the battlefields of today — and tomorrow.

Third, the proximity principle will doubtless play a key role in future conflict, wherever and whenever it happens, and chaplains must not jettison lessons learned from recent combat experience at the tactical level. The Army Operating Concept, "Win in a Complex World," expects future Army operations to occur in environments of extreme confusion, ambiguity, and barbarity. Army planners anticipate operations "among populations in cities and in complex terrain" with diverse enemies employing "traditional, unconventional, and hybrid strategies" possibly operating beyond physical battlegrounds.[6] Chaplains serving in this emerging context will need to provide agile and adaptive ministry to soldiers in combat. But the continuity of the proximity principle over the years demonstrates that chaplains will serve alongside combat soldiers at the tactical level as they always have. In other words, chaplains must preserve the lessons learned on the fighting line from the past decade of combat experience rather than focusing solely on reestablishing their garrison presence (as the 1977 manual did, for example). The inclusion of combat service on the fighting line as a religious support function may help prevent this, but an explicit reference to it as a critical aspect of military ministry would ensure it. Beyond that, those chaplains who experienced significant combat service as company grade officers from 2001 to 2014 must coach, teach, and mentor new chaplains on fighting line ministry as they rise to supervisory positions. The deliberate retention and dissemination of those lessons will allow the next generation of chaplains to personally deliver religious support in a complex operating environment and take their place in the long line of chaplains who have been faithful to the proximity principle.

Endnotes

1. Department of the Army, Training Manual (TM) 2270-5, *The Chaplain: His Place and Duties* (Washington, DC: The War Department, 1926), 51.

2. Department of the Army, Training Manual (TM) 2270-5, *The Chaplain: His Place and Duties* (Washington, DC: The War Department, 1926), 51.

3. Department of the Army, FM 1-05, *Religious Support* (2012), 1-16, 1-17.

4. Department of the Army, FM 1-05, *Religious Support* (2012), 1-6.

5. Department of the Army, TRADOC Pam 525-3-7, 1-1, 3-7, 3-9. For an examination of the spiritual dimension in soldier well-being, see P. J. Sweeney, "Character Development Through Spiritual Leadership," *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research* (June 2012), 89-107; John W. Brinsfield, "Reality Check: The Human and Spiritual Needs of Soldiers and How to Prepare them for Combat," *The Future of the Army Profession*, eds. D. M. Snider and G. L. Watkins (Boston: McGraw-Hill, 2005).

6. Department of the Army, TRADOC Pam 525-3-1, *Win in a Complex World* (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, 2014), 1-1, 2-3.

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