

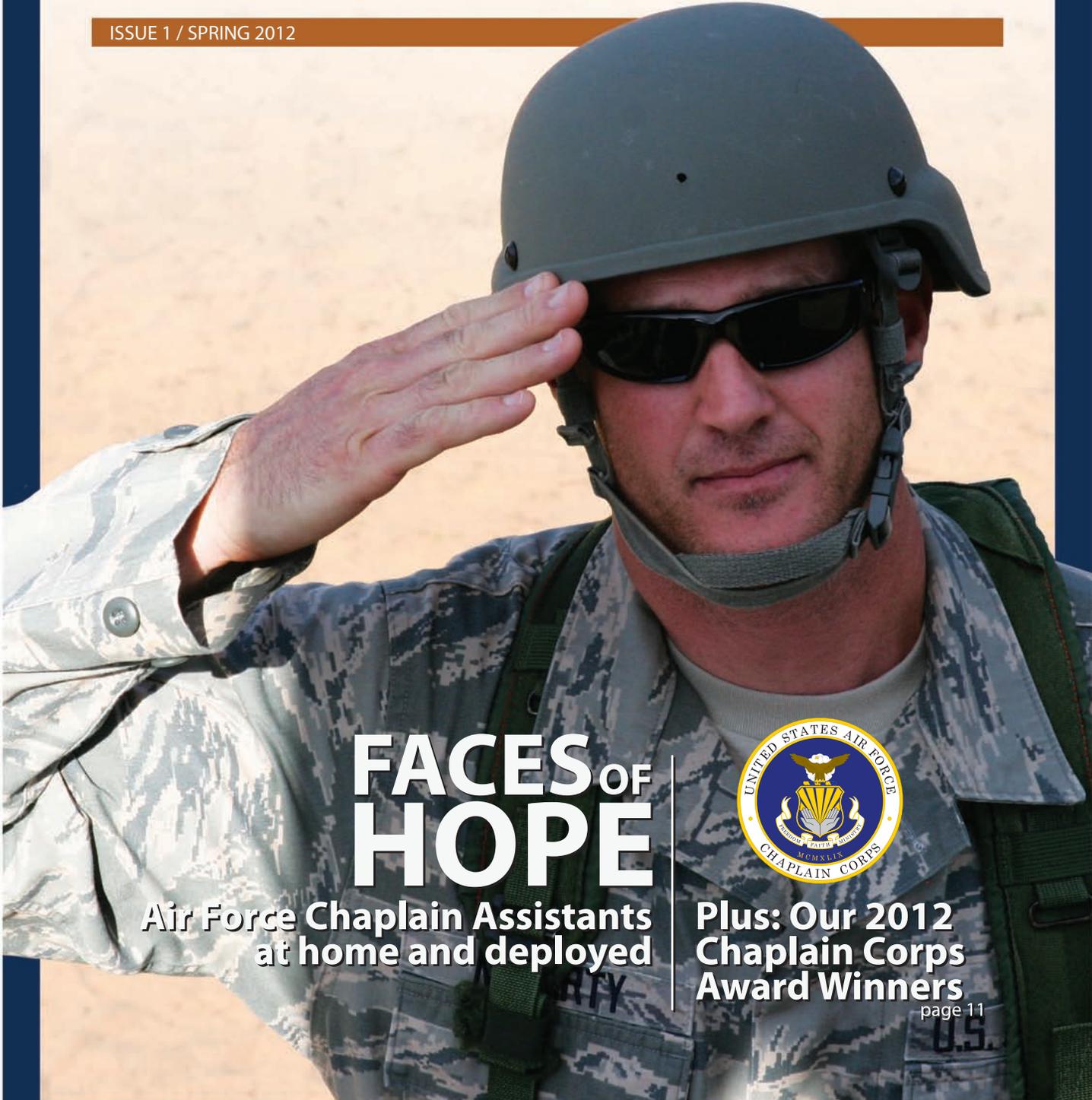


ChaplainAssistant

M A G A Z I N E

A Semiannual Review of the Chaplain Assistant Career Field

ISSUE 1 / SPRING 2012



FACES OF HOPE

Air Force Chaplain Assistants
at home and deployed



Plus: Our 2012
Chaplain Corps
Award Winners

page 11

FORWARD



George Iles, a 19th century author, said, “Hope is faith holding out its hand in the dark.” Every day our Airmen and their families see darkness in life’s challenges. In the darkest of days, hope is hard to find. While all of us would want to believe that hope is always there—and it is—we don’t always know how to find it or even what it looks like.

What does hope look like? For many of our American Airmen, it looks like a Chaplain Assistant. Saving lives is something we do nearly every day. Saving lives also saves families, units and communities.

This inaugural edition of the Air Force Chaplain Assistant Magazine celebrates Chaplain Assistants as “Faces of Hope”. In the Magazine, you will find stories—our stories—of how we have changed lives for the better. Sometimes we have done that at home station or deployed. In other times, we have been the faces of hope in special duty assignments, community events or even just driving home from work.

Our Airmen want to hope; our duty to them, as fellow American Airmen, is to help them find reasons to hope. The Latin proverb—*dum spiro, spero*—means “While I breath, I hope.” Our fellow Airmen have never needed us more than they do today. I encourage you to breathe hope into the lives of those around you—and remember to find and embrace hope in your own lives. It is the hope we bring that holds its hand out even in the darkness.

Ever Hopeful,

CMSgt Al Clemmons
Chaplain Assistant AF Career Field Manager
Pentagon DC



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Above: TSgt Eclavea, NCOIC, Chapel Operations, Craig Joint Theater Hospital, assists the Nutritional Medicine section as they prepare the next meal for the day.



Photo courtesy of the USAF Chaplain Corps College

IN DEFENSE OF HOPE

By: MSgt Kenneth Dixon
Fort Jackson, SC

Our fellow warriors are suffering, but not at the hands of an enemy we can touch. This enemy has penetrated our defenses, resulting in many wounded and several casualties. The enemy is hopelessness. It seems that we have been on the defensive far too long; it is time to go on the offensive.

Our Chaplain Assistants are magnificent men and women; we have an extraordinary passion to serve. I thoroughly enjoy my job and consider it an honor to ensure my brothers and sisters in the profession of arms find hope in their spiritual journeys. I believe that by ensuring the free exercise of religion for our military members, we bring hope to their lives; that is why our specialty matters. Hope and faith give us solid ground, a foundation of courage with spiritual fitness at its core.

On the battlefield of war and life, hope and faith are necessities to press forward despite any circumstance. Martin Luther said, "Everything that is done in the world is done by hope." Providing the opportunity to worship allows individuals to invest in their faith, to make deposits in their hope bank. In the military, we may have to make quite a few withdrawals from this bank, but to do that we must first make deposits. Alongside our leaders we seek solutions. As champions of hope and faith, we would be remiss if we did not promote hope and faith as solutions.

Henry W. Longfellow said, "The setting of a great hope is like the setting of the sun. The brightness of our life is gone." Chaplain Assistants must continue to serve Airmen at the point of need through advice to leaders, especially those in first-line supervisory roles; crisis intervention counseling to meet Airmen at the point of need; and proactive engagement in units.

To hope is to anticipate with confidence or expectation. Hope is belief in that which lies beyond your circumstance. How then do we infuse hope? We must remind them of their source of hope, their faith. We infuse hope by being a light/wingman to those who feel alone, surrounded by darkness. We infuse hope by providing a cup of water to those who are going through a desert experience in their lives. By helping those in need, we are purveyors of hope.

As caregivers, how do we strengthen our hope and faith? We must take care of ourselves. We cannot meet the needs of the people if we are bankrupt in the area of hope and faith. As caregivers we can't afford to be devoid of hope. Martin Luther King Jr. said, "We must accept finite disappointment, but we must never lose infinite hope." We must be intentional in our encouragement of one another and realize we need each other to have a successful mission. My fellow Chaplain Assistants, take the time to care, to listen, and if necessary, to act and be a "Good Samaritan" to each other. As the guardians of hope and faith, we are critical to the success of AF resiliency efforts. It is time to stand and go on the offensive in the defense of hope. ■



Photos courtesy of the Author

HOPE IS A SMILE

By: TSgt Brian Schaaf
Sheppard AFB, TX

During one trip to the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad, Iraq, I visited the Security Forces (SF) airmen assigned to protect the Green Zone. One of the SF sergeants took me to a neighborhood to visit with several local families and to help with passing out food and water.

When I arrived, I noticed how rundown the neighborhood seemed. Most of the homes were missing glass windows and solid doors, they only had blankets to cover the doorways. I also noticed how the courtyard in front of the homes had scrap metal scattered about the “playground” and a trailer was used as the neighborhood shower.

At one point we were invited into the home of a mother with two young daughters. Once inside I noticed how small it was and how the floor was laid perfectly even with the exterior sidewalk. I couldn't help but think of the bitterly cold winters and how the cold air must blow through the doorway. I also thought about how

rain and water must pour into the home. After our polite introduction, the mother pulled out the family's only two chairs and invited us to sit. I was about to politely decline when the SF airman reminded me that it was their custom and that she was trying to honor us as guests. I can't tell you how awkward I felt sitting in the chair while this kind woman made us tea and then sat on the cold bare floor.

As we drank our tea, the woman talked to us about her family's time under Saddam's rule and the following liberation. She explained how her husband was working as a contractor at the Embassy and how he was trying to get a fulltime government job. She also talked about how her family appreciated the outpouring of love the Americans had shown them. While talking, the woman's youngest child, an 11-year old that adores Americans, kept climbing on me. The woman explained that most of her family's food came from the gifts that the SF teams brought every few days. She further explained how the free juices and sport drinks provided by the Americans were the most nutritious items they had. In addition to her 11 year old, I met her oldest daughter, a 13 year old with several crippling disabilities

Being in this family's home for just an hour made me think about all I take for granted. Even a Bare Base has far more comforts than most families living here.

All of the families we visited were all so kind. Everywhere we went, we were offered food, tea, and chairs. Everyone wanted to share their stories about their lives. Even with the communication barriers a lot was said through their smiles. ■





Photo courtesy of the USAF

PROVIDING HOPE FOR FAMILIES

By: TSgt Abner Borrero
Fort Jackson, SC

I am honored to be in an AFSC that serves our Airmen and their families. As a Chaplain Assistant, I bring hope to my fellow Airmen. Hope is defined as a “feeling of desire for something and confidence in the possibility of its fulfillment.” Some people see hope as a wish for something in their lives. As a Chaplain Assistant, I believe that bringing hope to those who have either lost it or don’t have any is critical. I have personally seen the impact our presence has in the lives of Airmen and their loved ones.

Let me share one such example. A young spouse was managing the separation that resulted from her husband’s six-month deployment to Afghanistan. During his deployment, he was notified of an impending remote assignment. Essentially, her husband would have one month following his deployment to out-process and report to his new duty station. Already stressed and not knowing how to tell his wife, he talked to a friend. His friend suggested he call his wife and tell her immediately and that’s what he did. She was devastated. Her friend suggested she go and talk with someone at the chapel.

She walked into the chapel and broke down crying. A Chaplain Assistant immediately walked over to her and asked how he could help. She explained her situation and what she was going through. The Chaplain Assistant,

a trained professional in crisis intervention counseling and knowledgeable about programs the installation had to offer, guided her to an appropriate referral agency that was most helpful for her and her family. She turned to the Chaplain Assistant and said “Thank you. You don’t know how much it means to me that you took the time to hear what I had to say. It’s nice to know that people care about me and my family and can bring hope when you are feeling down.” This is what we bring to the fight, a sense of compassion and hope for our colleagues and their families.



Photo courtesy of the Author

“I believe that bringing hope to those who have either lost it or don’t have any is critical.”

--TSgt Abner Borrero

Many people don’t like dealing with other people’s problems. As a Chaplain Assistant, that is my battleground. Our goal is to provide hope, and we do it well. ■



Photos courtesy of the Author

HOPE IS TEAMWORK

By: TSgt Sonia Balatgek
Vandenberg AFB, CA

The Vandenberg Fire Muster, held annually during Fire Prevention Week, demonstrates the physical and mental experiences of firefighters. The Vandenberg Chaplain Corps Team (Ch, Capt Martin Adamson; Ch, Capt Sean Ballard; Ch, Capt Daniel Walker; Ch, Capt Shin Soh; TSgt Sonia Balatgek; and SrA Jennifer Theurer) posted their own team, The Hell Fighters, to capitalize on this great opportunity to better understand the spiritual needs of base firefighters. Competing against 20 other teams of 5, we had to complete 3 events.



“Teamwork is vital to success.”

--TSgt Sonia Balatgek

The first challenge was to pull the 33,000 pound fire truck. The toughest part of this obstacle was to get the truck moving; once it started rolling the goal was to get it across the line in the fastest time. Teamwork was vital to success. The Hell Fighters finished in a grueling 24.19 seconds. The next challenge, the dreaded obstacle course, consisted of using the fire hose to knock over a cone, rolling the fire hose, rescuing a victim from a smoke-filled house and then pulling more hose. During this segment, we had to maintain effective communication. We watched the other teams closely; their observations revealed how ineffective communication cripples teamwork. Learning from others' mistakes, we pulled together and came through the course with an overall time of 2 minutes and 39 seconds...the last 9 seconds came from taking the time to give the smoke house victim last rites and offer a prayer for him.

The final challenge consisted of getting full buckets of water over to “burning” house. The Hell Fighters had 3 buckets and 5 individuals for this challenge, so we rotated out the buckets as we went through; we finished with a time of 1 minute and 17 seconds. While we didn't place in the top ten, we gave it our best and finished each challenge. This experience gave us a better understanding of firefighters' responsibilities. The physical demands are incredible and a sense of urgency is vital to their safety and the safety of those they are helping. By being able to experience these things, The Hell Fighters were able to better serve those who serve us. Not only did we get an awesome opportunity to build team cohesion and develop relationships with the fire department; we were also able to interact with numerous other units that participated. We were able to let them see that we are just like everybody else; we like to have fun and enjoy some light hearted competition! ■



Photo courtesy of the Author

HOPE CAN BE AN ALS INSTRUCTOR

By: TSgt Lisa Tomlinson
JB Andrews-Washington NAS, MD

Many airmen struggle in the military and need someone to turn to; as chaplain assistants, we need to be there when the time comes. That mentality doesn't go away no matter what position we hold. I was lucky to have served the Air Force in a special duty as an Airman Leadership School Instructor (ALS). As an instructor, I brought a lot of the Chaplain Corps spirit with me.

One of my students had a personality very similar to my own. From day one she was so full of hope and energy, but after the first test she seemed broken. She was in my office crying her eyes out when I had to tell her she did not pass. Of course it was a formative test and did not count towards graduation, so I sat down with her and tried to find out where she went wrong. We left that counseling session feeling she would do better when it came to her next test which did count for graduation. Again, she did not pass and was devastated.

We all know there are many choices we can make when dealing with situations. I would tell my students, "there is a good way, a better way, and the best way." Unfortunately for her, she would usually pick the better way instead of the best when reading the scenarios on paper. However, when I got her talking about different situations she always seemed to be able to articulate the best way to handle them. She continued to struggle up until the very end but was able to make the cut and graduate with her classmates. I spoke to her recently and

asked her if there was anything in particular that stood out to her from our many counseling sessions. This is what she said, "It's not about the material; it's what you do with it that counts." Those are truly words of wisdom that can be spoken about several different situations.

Now I am back in the career field and I feel like I have been able to bring a lot back with me. Sometimes we all forget what we learned in basic training, tech school, ALS or any other professional military education, but how we handle situations shows how much we paid attention. We need to know our jobs and we need to always make a conscious effort to choose the best answers.

"It's not about the material; it's what you do with it that counts." --Unnamed ALS Student

As chaplain assistants, we have the opportunity to impact several lives and sometimes those lives are impacted when they are most fragile. I would hope that when anyone thinks about what the chapel has done for them, they have nothing but good memories of how we have helped them with whatever situation they were experiencing. We can know the material (AFIs, OIs, forms, etc.) inside out, but it's what we do with it that counts. ■



Photos courtesy of the Author

HOPE IS WHAT WE DO

By: TSgt Jon Carpenter
Vance AFB, OK

In July 2010, I deployed to Eskan Village in the Royal Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. With one deployment under my belt, I was keeping an open mind about this experience. I was worried, however, that I wouldn't have much to do. I figured it would be me flying a desk for nine hours a day; wow, was I wrong!

Since Christianity is not allowed in the Kingdom, this presented quite a problem for the estimated one million Christians working there. Although attended by the military personnel in the area, the vast majority of attendees were Philippino workers and their families. Once Chaplain Monagle and I plugged into the worship services, we saw hundreds of people blessed tremendously, and we were constantly blessed in return. In addition to the Catholic ministry, we were able to fully support an Army Protestant chaplain (without his chaplain assistant), and see his impact in particular on the Army side of the base. We partnered with him on countless morale programs, ecumenical events, and the Protestant-specific needs of the base.

“I figured it would be me flying a desk for nine hours a day; wow, was I wrong!”

--TSgt Jon Carpenter

Chaplain Monagle and I did all we could to encourage/support others and to assist those in need. In addition to our work on Eskan Village, we organized a clothing drive for a local woman's shelter, a food/blanket drive for the Pakistani flood relief program, and also collected comfortable clothing to ship to the Wounded Warrior program in Bagram, Afghanistan. We also assisted in multi-national religious programs/observances throughout the Riyadh area, supporting the ambassadors for the U.S., U.K., France, Philippines, and Argentina. There was never a day during my six-month tour where we didn't get out and help somebody in some way. That is what I consider MY ministry. ■

Ch, Maj Robert Monagle, my RST partner, is a motivated and experienced Catholic Priest; he didn't like being behind a desk, and he believed in the effectiveness of the RST concept. We hit the ground and canvassed the troops. We started early with our visitation/needs assessments, and put it all to practice. We created several programs as a result of the needs, and we continued the powerful ministries that were already in place.





Photo courtesy of the Author

HOPE HAS POWER

By: Ch, Maj Steven Richardson
Fort Jackson, SC

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A noted counselor and graduate school professor once said that 50% of counseling sessions are almost complete before the counselee ever sits down to talk. The reason is hope, one of the most powerful forces for change in any counselor's toolbox. Hope is the confidence that things can get better, that the future can be better than the past. Hope can initiate healing well before a counseling session ever begins.

I remember the first time an Airman was brought to me for a suicide intervention. I had been told he was coming, and I was a little nervous about what I would say and how the session would go. My nervousness vanished when I met him, looked into his eyes and saw hope. He didn't look suicidal; he didn't even look sad. Something within him said, "I think things are going to be better."

I asked what was going well in his life. To my surprise, the only thing he could point to was the NCO who brought him in for counseling. He was thrown off guard by the fact that someone cared enough to ask how he was doing and bring him to a chaplain. That simple act of caring planted hope within the young Airman, and it proved to be the launching point for his eventual healing.

Through the years, I have repeatedly witnessed chaplain assistants serving as agents of hope and spiritual healing. They're often the first ones an Airman meets upon entering a chapel. They're the first ones to speak an encouraging word or extend an offer of assistance. A smile, a warm greeting, an expression of care and genuine concern can establish a foundation for hope for hurting Airmen. God only knows how many have been turned from a destructive act because of a heart-to-heart talk and a professional referral by a chaplain assistant.

"I have repeatedly witnessed Chaplain Assistants serving as agents of hope and spiritual healing." --Ch, Maj Steven Richardson

I will be forever grateful for what that awesome NCO did 12 years ago when he brought a hurting Airman to my office. His professionalism and kind demeanor showed the Airman that someone cared. That same professionalism demonstrated to me that chaplain assistants are messengers of hope and invaluable partners in Chaplain Corps ministry. ■

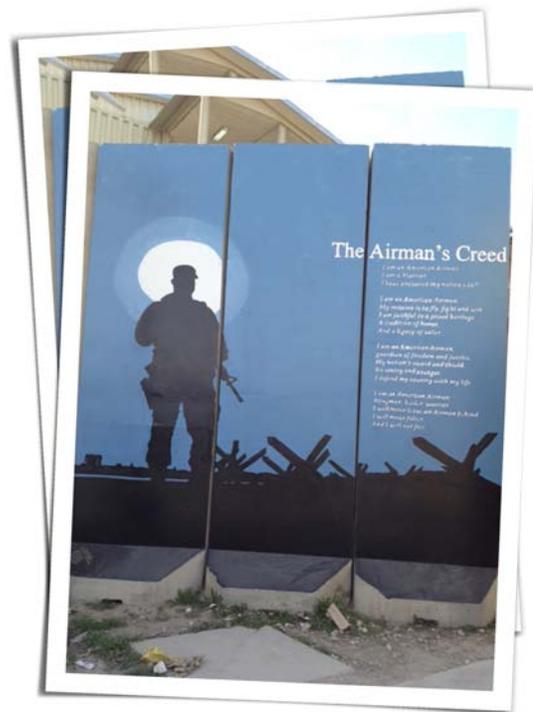


Photos courtesy of the Author

HOPE IS A LEGACY

By: MSgt Kathryn Manning
Bagram Air Field, Afghanistan

Though our Chaplain Corps team makes up less than 1% of the population at Bagram Air Field, our impact here is quite powerful. We are mighty in our skill, and contribute to not only the safety and security for all of Bagram Air Field, but we dominate air, space and cyberspace as well. Given that, it seems fitting that we leave a legacy.



As a member of the TOP III council, I had the pleasure of participating in a legacy project that will serve as a powerful reminder, not only of our presence, but of our heritage. Of the many great things I have been a part of in my time here, painting The Airman's Creed on T-walls has been the high point and a labor of pride. Spanning three T-walls, and strategically placed where it is always illuminated, this larger-than-life reminder greets

almost everyone who passes through Bagram. Our hope is that Airmen will stop and look at the artwork, and feel a deep sense of pride in how they support and defend our great nation. Built from our heritage and warfighting ethos, The Airman's Creed identifies our purpose in the face of great challenges unlike any we have faced in our past. It is who we are: wingmen, leaders, warriors. It is, quite simply, an Airman's promise to his/her country and fellow Airmen. ■



Photos courtesy of the Author

HOPE IS A BIRTHDAY WISH

By: TSgt Dustin Martin
Lackland AFB, TX

When Virginia Stafford's eight children asked her what she wanted for her 90th birthday, she said she wanted to revisit the place where she and her late husband were married 69 years ago.

In 1943, Virginia traveled by train for three days from Dayton, Ohio to San Antonio, Texas to meet her fiancé, Robert, for their wedding. She carried her wedding dress in a box on her lap the entire trip. At the time, Cadet Robert Stafford was enrolled in the San Antonio Aviation Cadet Center.

On Monday, June 21, 1943, only two years after the Airman Memorial Chapel was built, Virginia A. Jefferson and Robert W. Stafford met at the chapel at 9:30am, as scheduled, only to discover that the priest, Chaplain Eugene McCahey, had forgotten about the wedding. The entire wedding party, in full wedding attire, waited until 4:30pm when the chaplain was finally available to perform the ceremony.

I received a phone call last week from one of Virginia's children asking about information on the Airman Memorial Chapel. She was trying to verify if it was indeed the chapel in which her parents were married. After a short phone conversation, I was able to confirm that her research was correct. She informed me of her mother's birthday wish and asked if I could accommodate



her, her mother, her siblings, and their spouses by giving them a tour of the chapel. I agreed to meet them that Sunday afternoon.

I met the group at the gate to escort them on base. I found out that Virginia, her eight children, and their six spouses had traveled all the way from Centerville, Ohio for a "trip down memory lane." They had already gone by the place where Virginia and Robert called home for their first year of marriage. Unfortunately, the house had been demolished and a parking lot sat in its place.

When we pulled up to the chapel, I saw Virginia pull out a black and white photo of her and her late husband standing in front of the chapel on their wedding day. You could see all the memories flooding back to her from the look on her face. As soon as I opened the doors and everyone entered, Virginia saw the signature look of the exposed wooden beams and she knew without a doubt that this was the place she was married. I sat down and talked with Virginia to get more information and I was astonished at the memory of this 89-year-old woman. Her family mentioned how she could remember things that no one else could. She told me her husband's graduation date from the cadet school was March 4, 1944, class 44C. Throughout his career, they were stationed at Bonham AFB, Sherman AFB, and Eglin Field in Houston to name a few. She also recalled that Robert piloted the B-24, B-17, and B-29.

After a photo session, we continued on to the parade grounds. As Virginia sat on a bench and enjoyed the view, some of her children took a walk around and looked at some of the static airplanes. They discovered that all three of the planes their father had flown were displayed there. After they finished touring the field, everyone was getting ready to leave when the national anthem began playing over the loudspeaker. As I stood there saluting the flag, the entire family placed their hands over their hearts. When the anthem was finished, I dropped my salute and overheard one of her children say, "What a perfect ending to a great day." With tears in their eyes, they thanked me for giving them the "highlight of their trip." Every one of the family members felt like Robert was there with them. It was truly a once in a lifetime experience for the Stafford family. ■

2011 & 2012 CHAPLAIN ASSISTANT

CHIEF / SENIOR MASTER SERGEANT SELECTIONS



**On behalf of the entire Air Force Chaplain Corps,
Air Force Chaplain Assistant Magazine congratulates all of
the 2011 & 2012 SNCO selectees.**

CHIEF MASTER SERGEANT (11E9)

Dale McGavran – Ramstein AB, Germany

Tiffany Smith – Lackland AFB, Texas

SENIOR MASTER SERGEANT (12E8)

Robert Jackson – Keesler AFB, Mississippi

Jennifer Laufer – Eglin AFB, Florida

Vickie Perry – Fort Jackson, South Carolina

The listed promotion and selection information was extracted from the Virtual Enlisted Promotion Release web site.
Additional NCO and supplemental SNCO selections will be featured in the next issue of this publication.

2011 AIR FORCE CHAPLAIN CORPS ANNUAL AWARDS



The Air Force Chaplain Assistant Career Field is proud to recognize the following individuals for their outstanding contributions. Our Annual Award winners have been chosen from a discerning board and are recognized for their above and beyond pursuit of excellence.



Outstanding Senior NCO of the Year Award

This award honors the late Chief Master Sergeant Gerrald Cullins, USAF (Retired), the first Chaplain Assistant Career Field Manager of the Air Force Chaplain Corps.

MSgt Michael Taylor

39th Air Base Wing, Incirlik AB, Turkey
U.S. Air Forces Europe

The annual winner is the active duty senior non-commissioned officer selected as the outstanding chaplain assistant SNCO of the year, based on leadership and job performance, significant self-improvement, and base or community involvement.



Outstanding NCO of the Year Award

This award honors Chief Master Sergeant Charles R. Meier, USAF (Retired), the second Chaplain Assistant Career Field Manager of the Air Force Chaplain Corps.

SSgt Tawny Crutcher

81st Training Wing, Keesler AFB, Mississippi
Air Education and Training Command

The annual winner is the active duty NCO selected as the outstanding chaplain assistant NCO of the year, based on leadership and job performance, significant self-improvement, and base or community involvement.

2011 AIR FORCE CHAPLAIN CORPS ANNUAL AWARDS



Outstanding Airman of the Year Award

This award honors Chief Master Sergeant Richard C. Schneider, USAF (Retired), the third Chaplain Assistant Career Field Manager of the Air Force Chaplain Corps.

SrA Luke Mackey

96th Air Base Wing, Eglin AFB, Florida
Air Force Materiel Command

The annual winner is the active-duty Airman selected as the outstanding chaplain assistant of the year, based on leadership and job performance, significant self-improvement, and base or community involvement.



Outstanding Reserve Chaplain Assistant of the Year Award

This award is presented annually to a member of the Category A or Category B Air Reserve selected as the outstanding chaplain assistant of the year.

SSgt Rachel Barnes

18th Wing, Kadena AB, Japan
Air Force Reserve Command

(Photo Unavailable at Time of Publication)

The annual winner is a chaplain assistant selected as the outstanding Reserve chaplain assistant, based on demonstrated superior initiative, technical skill, training accomplishments or contribution to mission support; exhibition of leadership qualities in contributing to civic, cultural, or professional activities in the military or civilian community; and enrollment in off-duty programs of professional self-improvement.



Spirit of The Four Chaplains Award

This award, honoring the Four Chaplains of the WWII USAT Dorchester, encourages service before self and celebrates the Air Force's religious diversity.

MSgt Esmeralda Aharon

HQ Air Mobility Command, Scott AFB, Illinois
Air mobility Command

The award recognizes those in the Chaplain Corps community who have given of themselves to enhance the spiritual lives of others. The award may be presented to any Chaplain, Chaplain Assistant, Chaplain Corps civilian employee or chapel volunteer.



AirForceChaplainAssistant

M A G A Z I N E

GLORIFYING GOD | SERVING AIRMEN | PURSUING EXCELLENCE



U.S. AIR FORCE

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