

AGC Chaplain Ministry Report

The Associated Gospel Churches

Enabling Local Church Missional Access into Restricted Institutions for over 75 years!

We will rejoice in Thy salvation, and in the name of our God we will set up our banners. (Ps 20:5a)

Office: 864-268-8707 / secretary@agcchaplains.com / www.agcchaplaincy.com

May 2017

Memorial Day - Remembering the Significant!

Article Written by CH Chuck Flesher, AGC National Field Representative (NFR)



CH (COL) Chuck Flesher
USA Reserve, (Retired)
AGC NFR
speaking at the
2017AGC Annual
Sustainment Training
at Suber Road Baptist
Church in Greer, SC

The Hebrew word for memorial means “to remember.” So that God’s people would not forget His love and grace in delivering them from bondage, He instructs Moses to issue this warning just before the Israelites entered the Promised Land: “Beware, lest you forget the Lord who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the land of bondage” (Deut. 6:12).

It is this tendency for us to forget God’s blessings, His mighty acts of deliverance that led the Lord to instruct Joshua to erect a memorial stone in Joshua 4:1-7. According to these verses, 12 men chosen earlier (3:12) were to go back to where the priests were standing in the middle of the river, holding the ark. Each man was to pick up a large rock or stone from the middle of the Jordon and carry it to the side of the river where Israel would camp in the land of Canaan. This incident underscores some important truths.

Memorials remind us what God has done. Joshua said that one day their children will ask, “What do these stones mean to you?” The stones were to be a reminder to those who were present of their personal experience. Joshua wanted them to keep on telling their story so that they will never lose their own sense of awe and wonder of what God had done in their lives. What kind of memorials do you have in your life? No, not monuments of stone, but ones built of memories.

There are memories of places, places that trigger memories just as the memorial stones in Gilgal. For many Viet Nam veterans the Wall brings back such emotional experiences that many have been seen spending several days there just sorting out their feelings. 58,220 people died in the Viet Nam War. 47,000 of these were 21 years of age or younger. 17,539 were married and the average age of those who perished was 23. 303,000 were wounded, 75,000 were severely disabled and 1,600 are still missing in action. Though sobering, these statistics can’t begin to convey the flesh and blood experiences of those who served there. If you know a Viet Nam veteran, this Memorial Day would be a good time to remember his sacrifice and let him know your gratitude for his service.

In addition to places, people also invoke powerful memories. Often these are people that the Lord has used to influence us for Him and for good. Paul took an entire chapter in Romans (16) to remember significant people in his life at Rome. He remembered how the Lord had used them in his life. But how often do we sit down and thank God for people the Lord has used in our lives? Why not use this Memorial Day to either write or phone them and tell them how much we appreciate what they’ve meant to us.

God knows how we think and that is the reason that He instructs Joshua to build a memorial. Each time the Israelites saw it they would be reminded that they had not crossed the Jordon on their own ability, but because of the Lord. Spend time thinking through your memorial stones and let them draw you closer to God and remind you of His faithfulness.

Then, the memorial stones were to be a signal to the lost world (vs. 24). Jericho, a pagan walled city was only five miles away. These pagans would fear Yahweh when they heard of this miraculous crossing. When people drive by our local assemblies does it cause them to reverence God? Do the unsaved sense God can change their lives because He has changed ours?

Memorials can also be a time of rolling away old defeats. Forty years of wandering in disobedience was rolled away from the children of Israel as they brought these memorial stones to Gilgal (4:19-5:4). Gilgal means “the reproach has been rolled away.” This was the dawn of a new beginning in a new land. God is so good to give us opportunities for a new beginning. The Hebrew verb *aber* occurs 21 times in chapters 3, 4, and 5. It means to “cross over.” God’s people crossed over and they left something behind. They were given an opportunity to roll away the past (symbolized in circumcision). It’s been suggested that the crossing of Jordon represents the movement from a life of defeat to a life of victory. A life of unfaithfulness to a life of trust and confidence in our faithful God. We, too, can make that journey. By grace we can begin the journey and keep on continuing the journey.

Some churches have taken the name New Beginnings. The great new beginning is when we turn from the old life and receive the new life in Christ (II Corinthians 5:17). But some Christians may also need a new beginning. This Memorial Day can be a time to remember anew God’s grace to us in Christ and dedicate ourselves to serve Him with our whole hearts.

**Ch(LtCol) Scott Nupson, USAF
Maxwell AFB, AL**

February and March were both very busy with our National Prayer Breakfast and Unit Effectiveness Inspection. Then in April we have our Airshow. We praise the Lord that the Chapel program was one of 2 base units highlighted as having an outstanding program during the inspection. We also worked through an IG complaint by Mickey Weinstein regarding our National Prayer Breakfast. I am thankful for a Commander who will not back down to his demands. Also our JA and PA have stood in strong support of the Commander. I was able to connect with Ch, Capt Josh Rumsey at the AF Chaplain Corps Summit. The theme at the summit was "Faith Works!" with regard to a person's spiritual health impacting every other aspect of their lives. A spiritually healthy Airman will be able to accomplish the mission. *PTL for nine rededications this reporting period.*

**CH(LT) Nathanael Gentilhomme, USN
USS FRANK CABLE (AS 40)**

I am writing to you all from my hotel room here in Vancouver, WA...Shipyards are not known for being the most exciting parts of a Navy Sailors time in service, unless, however, you happen to be a Navy Chaplain who witnesses **a devout Atheist do a dramatic 180 and become a devout new follower of Jesus Christ**...4-6 weeks ago, when our ship was on the last leg of our journey from Hawaii to Portland, we held three consecutive viewing/discussion sessions over The Great Debate between Billy Nye "the Science Guy" and Ken Ham, founder and CEO of Answers in Genesis and the Creation Museum. It is over 2 hours long, so I split our sessions up into 30 minute viewing periods with time for discussion, etc. On the second night, a young Sailor came in, an Atheist to see what this 'Great Debate' was all about. Little did he know that in addition to a book, 'Enemies of the Heart' that his mother sent him, this debate video and discussion with the Chaplain and other Sailors would put him on the road to eternal life through Christ.

**CH(Major) Wade Matuska, USAF
Keesler Air Force Base, MS**

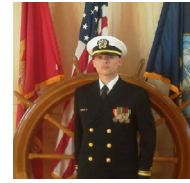
March was a busy month in the Fishbowl, and it culminated in a March Madness Event with 260 students in attendance. In addition, we completed the Chapel Self-Assessment and an active shooter exercise. I preached once in the services and provided counsel to 27 individuals.

**CH(CPT) Kevin Brosius, 2nd Bn,
19th Special Forces Group(Airborne)**

February was our 4 week annual training (minus the week I attended AGC conference) in the ARNG. During this month I conducted 2 Bible Studies and 2 Worship Services. I was also involved in hosting 2 MWR events at the chapel and conducted counseling sessions. Ministry of presence was a major factor of my ministry which involved participating in training along with the rest of the Soldiers in the unit. *Pray* for a Soldier that I spent the day with. He is the Casualty Notification Officer for a notification I did and we were able to talk about spiritual matters and he mentioned he was interested in our discussion. Also for preparations for a wedding I will be conducting in April.

**CH(MAJ) Todd Kepley, USA
Fort Lee, VA - Family Life Chaplain**

I have received my Retirement Orders for the end of this year. There are several medical issues I am trying to resolve to include a possible back surgery. My ministry here at Fort Lee is to serve the Soldiers that God puts in my path. I conduct retreats and training to educate and give tools to the families and Soldiers so they can improve their relationships with Christ and one another. I help at a chapel on Post and preach about once per month as well as leading Communion Services. At the Family Life Center I offer private counseling sessions for individuals, couples and families, EMDR sessions to help treat PTSD, and teach suicide prevention classes. God has used this ministry in the lives of many and I am humbled to serve in this way. **Praise the Lord for two soldiers who were led to Christ this month.**



**CH(LTJG) James Block
at his Navy Officer
Development Course
Graduation
at Newport, RI**

**CH(LTJG) James Bock, US Navy
Navy Chaplain School Fort Jackson SC**

I am a student at the Basic Chaplain's course in Columbia, SC. I will be joining the 4th Marine Corps District (New Cumberland, PA) following my graduation on May 10th as the Command Chaplain. My duties will focus on ensuring resiliency and spiritual preparedness for the men and women of 4th MCD as they face the rigors of recruiting duty.

**CH(MAJ) Clint White, USA
177th Armor BDE, Camp Shelby, MS**

Things are continuing to go well in ministry. I had the opportunity to go out of town for a chaplain training event that was a good opportunity to sharpen my skills and to fellowship with other chaplains. I also conduct a lunch time Bible study each week in my unit that has been slowly increasing in attendance. It has been a great opportunity to encourage believers and to share the Gospel with those who are lost.

**CH(CPT-P) George Perry, USAR
345 Combat Support Hospital**

Finally assigned to a new unit in St. Petersburg, FL. Working with a chaplain who has been in the unit for 8 years – a KJV man. So far, so good. Looking forward to useful service here.

**Ch(Lt Col) Don Mikitta,
Civil Air Patrol (CAP)**

Red Wing, MN

I taught 9 Character Development labs at three units (Red Wing, 130th (I am mentoring a CDI at this unit) and Viking Squadron; Attended a 4 day Chaplain Emergency Service School, Train the Trainer at Maxwell AFB, AL in January. Attended a *Training Leaders of Cadets Course* in February; Serve as North Central Region Chaplain and Minnesota Wing Historian (assistant), St Paul MN, Unit chaplain (TDY) Red Wing Composite Squadron, Red Wing MN; Oversight of a 7 State region and 88 volunteer staff (Chaplains and Character Development Instructors).



**US Army CH Candidate
2Lt Geoff Bischoff, with his wife Julie, son
Ezra, at his Army CHBOLC Graduation
1LT James Johnson,
UT Army National Guard**

In March the entire UTARNG CH Corps had a training with 1st Army...the entire Corps attended Chapel services at the Sunrise Chapel on Camp Williams. I was asked to perform the non-denominational service...I was able to preach the Gospel to the entire CH Corps.

In April I was in the field with the Battalion I am serving, and to whom I will be assigned after the FEDREC Board on May 10th. We had a good field service with 14 attending most of whom are LDS. I also attended the viewing for the step daughter of one of my soldiers. It was a tragic loss for the family and it opened the door to build a relationship with this soldier. Pray that as the weight of loss sets in for this soldier and his family that I can introduce them to Christ.

Congratulations, James was selected for the Army National Guard Chaplaincy!



**Chaplain Candidate (LTJG)
Justin Ellsworth preaching his first
post-ordination Sermon at
Colonial Baptist Church, Virginia Beach**



**CH(1LT) Kevin Duke, USAR
receiving his Army CHBOLC Diploma
at Fort Jackson, SC**



**Army Chaplain (CPT) Jason Southard
offering the Prayer Breakfast Invocation
CH(CPT) Jason Southard, USA,
USARPAC HHBn, Fort Shafter HI**

This month we have had the opportunity to minister in a multitude of environments to include Field training, BRIG confinement, Chapel Services, Spiritual Fitness Events and daily office ministrations. Regardless of the context, Christ has been the constant, extending grace and mercy to all who will receive. We give praise to Him for his unspeakable joy that gives hope to all.



**AGC VP Chaplain Ron Benzing
teaching Seminary Students at
Virginia Beach Theological Seminary,
“The Chaplain as a Staff Officer”**

**CH(CPT) Tom Withers, 386 EN BN
TXARNG, Corpus Christi, TX**

I am working my way through the C4 DL course! We lost a Soldier in late January to an apparent suicide and I spent two of the past three IDT drills visiting the affected unit. I was **able to lead one Soldier to the Lord** in January!

Prison CH Cliff Jones, Ft Dix, NJ

Still awaiting the final word from the Army PEB as to my disability board results as well as the VA ratings; had a staff member move away, now we're short staffed; I'm able to take care of my areas of responsibility; much more of my time is consumed in administrative areas, but that helps keep our team on track; My wife and I launched a new online website for our ministry to those working thru miscarriages, infertility and/or adoption. The link is now www.mia2hope.org.

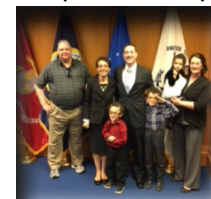


**Chaplain Brown with CH(MAJ)
Tommie Pickens, USA at Fort Knox, KY
CH(MAJ) Kirk Thorsteinson,
Alaska National Guard**

Drilled in Anchorage; provided area religious support to multiple units; trained on UMT tasks; mentored my brigade Religious Affairs NCO; provided an invocation/benediction at an event to welcome Basic Training/AIT graduates into the AKARN and let them join their unit for the first time; performed monthly American Legion, VFW, and Pioneers of Alaska Post Chaplain duties; wrote Intermediate Rater comments and counseling comments; submitted a Chaplain award; participated in a fun run; and wrote an Officer Candidate School recommendation; viewed the movie “Chaplains: On the Front Lines of Faith.”

**CH(LTJG) Kevin Marshman, USN
Recruit Training Cmd, Great Lakes**

Ministry here has been non-stop this past month. Our staffing woes are finally being resolved, but the last stretch was a tiring one. I continue to counsel an average of 25 sessions with recruits each week. The preaching schedule was just released, and due to the influx of Evangelical Chaplains, I will only be preaching a few times between now and August. I gave the Invocation at the local Navy Seabee Ball. I was also the accompanying Chaplain for two CACO notifications. *Please pray* for the family of the CACO call I accompanied. The service member who passed away was a Navy LT in Japan.



**AGC's newest US Air Force Active Duty
Chaplain - Rev. John Gillispie
at his Commissioning Ceremony**



Dr. W.O.H. "Bill" Garman

*This address was given by
CH(COL) Ron Benzing at the Dedication of the
"Garman Chaplain Ministries Building,"
the New AGC HQ Building on 15 Feb 2017*

We gather before this beautifully renovated building this evening to dedicate it as the Dr. W. O. H. Garman Chaplain Ministries Building.

Much could be said of Dr. Bill Garman, but in the fashion of a Baptist Preacher, I would share three characteristics of his life. He was a man who was PASTORAL, a man who was PASSIONATE, and a man to was PRINCIPLED.

Pastoral. He was devoted to the Lord, his family, his pastorates, and military chaplaincy. His three children are present tonight. What better testimony of a godly man, than that his children walk in the Lord. Joyce said of him, "After expositively teaching the Word and encouraging his people as they faced their trials of daily living, he closed the service with a benediction. In his black suit, he would step down from the pulpit and stand facing the congregation, bow his head and raise his right hand in blessing his flock, and from memory with the greatest assurance and unshakable confidence offer either Hebrews 13:20-21 or Jude 24-25."

Dr. Garman's Pastor's heart moved him even in his mid-seventies to accept the call as Pastor of Grace Fundamental Chapel after he already served Callendar Memorial Church for 34 years. What a great example for his chaplains. Our President, Steve Brown, still emphasizes that AGC Chaplains are "Pastors in Uniform" and that retirement from military ministry is not retirement from God's usefulness in His kingdom. This was Dr. Garman's example.

From June 1967 until his retirement in 1981, I served under his endorsement and was greatly encouraged by his pastoral leadership.

**Dr.
Bill
Garman
regularly
preached
on the
Radio**



We younger chaplains felt his love and support as we sometimes muddled through the pressures of ecumenicity and compromise. I never felt judged by him. He listened carefully and responded kindly to our questions. He demonstrated care for us in many ways, like answering our letters. I have a file of several of his letters on onion-skinned typing paper. During his latter years when his eyesight was escaping him, he still answered his correspondence. Sometimes he had to dictate to Mrs. Heinrucker, his secretary

Passionate. He exercised a love for lost souls. When he came to Bob Jones University to speak at the Chapel Service in the Fall of 1966, we listened to a silver-haired preacher who passionately challenged us "preacher boys" to consider the military chaplain ministry. "The military is one of the greatest mission fields in the world," he declared. "I need Gospel preaching men who will lead Soldiers to Christ. The doors are open because of the Viet Nam War." Of those five who met him after the chapel service, four of us entered active duty by June 1967 and served in Viet Nam. Over the ensuing years, Dr. Garman faithfully encouraged us about the opportunities and responsibilities to win souls to Christ. Although he delighted in chaplain promotions, he



**Dr. Garman
with two
of his
Chaplains,
Phil Kissinger
and
Billy Baugham
Both men
would become
AGC Presidents**

rejoiced even more from reports that Soldiers, Marines, Sailors, or Air Force personnel were coming to Christ. Air Force Chaplain Ralph Andrews and Army Chaplain Phil Kissinger were two examples of what Dr. Garman called, "soul-winners."

Principled. On one hand, Dr. Garman⁴ was a compassionate, loving Pastor; on the other, he was a fierce fighter. How refreshing in an environment so heavily controlled by Liberal theologies and organizations as the Federal Council of Churches during the early 1940's, that a principled man like Dr. Garman broke the monopoly of FCC. He not only stood on biblical principles; he bravely defended them and his Chaplains. Maybe this is why Dr. Garman loved the hymn "The Battle Hymn of the Republic."

As the Director of the Commission on Chaplains under the American Council of Christian Churches, President of the Independent Fundamental Churches of America, and working in other organizations, he battled those agencies who opposed Bible-believing Chaplains from entering the military. After much prayer and spiritual combat, God moved upon the Army Chief of Chaplains, MG William Arnold, at the beginning of WWII, to instruct Dr. Garman to find ten chaplains he would endorse. This was the first quota given to Fundamentalist Chaplains and ultimately resulted in the proclamation of the Gospel in every American war and conflict until this very hour.

Combining his pastoral heart, his passion, and his principles, Dr. Garman continued to protect his chaplains from unfair discrimination as Bible preachers. No doubt ever entered the minds of us AGC Chaplains about his support; we were confident he would travel to the ends of the earth to defend us.

The Garman Chaplain Ministries Building is not only a monument to his memory, but a strategic operational center which will continue to advance the work of the AGC Chaplains' ministries to reach Soldiers, Sailors, Marines, Air Force Airmen, Coast Guardians, Civil Air Patrol, Hospital and Prison personnel with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

May I close with this Benediction that Pastor Bill Garman used so often from Jude 24-25:

Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to the only Wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever.

Amen.