VIETNAM

The morning paper dated January 28, 1973 carried the headline:
"HOPEFUL" PEACE FINALLY COMES

Reference is to the undeclared war between North Vietnam and the United States. It began January 2, 1961. Now documents had been signed calling for a cease-fire.

The war had lasted twelve years—the longest war the U.S. ever had. 45,933 American young men had lost their lives. In fact, when the page of the calendar was turned dated June 23, 1968, the title "longest war" became a reality.

More than 3,000,000 Americans took part in the war.

The war cost $137 billion dollars.

U.S. planes dropped 3 times as many tons of bombs as in World War II, 10 times more than in Korea.

Millions of Vietnamese civilians lost their lives, their homes, their cattle. The beautiful countryside now bears the ugly signs of war: bombcrated valleys; defoliated forests; and mangrove swamps.

The war divided America. On the one side were the peace marches, campus unrest, breakdown in morals and morale. On the other side "the silent majority" exerted its power less vocal than those on the left.

Now we have come to the end of an era. It remains for history with its more accurate judgment to tell its story.

Here in brief: THE STORY OF A WAR (1961-1973, 12 years)

May 1954 Dien Bien Phu falls to Ho Chi Minh

December 1931 President Kennedy declares U.S. is ready to help the South Vietnamese preserve their independence
December 1962  U. S. Forces at 11,000; deaths at 65

March 31, 1968  President Johnson announces he won't run for re-election

January-February 1968  North Vietnam launches its Tet offensive resulting in 350,000 refugees

September 3, 1969  Ho Chi Minh dies

May 10, 1969  Peace talks begin in Paris

January 1969  U.S. troop strength reaches peak of 542,400; deaths at 11,527

January 21, 1971  100th meeting of the Paris Peace talks

South Vietnam deaths since 1961: 183,528

Enemy deaths since 1961: 924,048

July 8, 1969  President Nixon announces first troop withdrawals: 25,000

April 30, 1970.  Nixon announces invasion of Cambodia

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Political background.

The state of Vietnam came into being on 5 June 1948, when French High Commissioner Emile Bollert, General Nguyen Van Xuan and World War II's occupation head of government and former Emperior, Bao Dai, was designated Chief of State to administer the affairs of Vietnam within the French Union.

Shortly after the fall of Dien Bien Phu, a nine-sided conference met at Geneva on 21 July, 1954. Attending were the United States, the Soviet Union, Communist China, Britain, France, the two Vietnams, Laos and Cambodia. They reached accord on an an armistice, six chapters, 47 articles and a final declaration, in brief:

An immediate cease-fire

Declaration of autonomy for the independent states of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia

Partition of Vietnam at the 17th parallel

Free elections to be held within two years on the issue of voluntarily reunification

Vietnamese citizens living above the 17th parallel who wished to
relocate in the South were granted permission. Emigrant expecting to go North from the South were also permitted.

Supervision of agreements was vested in the International Control Commission of the United Nations.

The first active involvement of U.S. chaplains in Southeast Asia took place during a massive humanitarian effort known as Passage to Freedom. This effort aimed to aid desperate Vietnamese. There were eighteen navy chaplains participating in this effort from August 1954 through May 1955. These chaplains were first ministering directly to the men of their navy ships to which they were attached. They were part of the Seventh Fleet.

Second, they were making it possible for desperate Vietnamese to escape from Ho Chi Minh's communist regime in northern Vietnam to freedom south of the 17th parallel.

All told more than 300,000 were evacuated (exactly 287,002 civilians and 17,846 military personnel).

As Commander Withers M. Moore in *Navy Chaplains in Vietnam: 1954-1964* points out: The burden of world leadership pressed upon the United States during World War II. The small and the weak nations turned to her with confidence both in her ability and willingness to assist them and in her posture of disciplined altruism.

Already the communists were blocking the Vietnamese who wanted to go southward and choose freedom. They created many fears saying the American personnel would take them out to sea and disgorge them; the American sailors would push them into the sea. They even used violence to keep the southern-bound Vietnamese from boarding the ships.

In spite of these obstacles, the American ships carried on, evacuating about 100,000 a month. But not without difficulties.

On one night-time trip to Tourane (now Da Nang) aboard an LST Chaplain Zeller and the Captain were standing on the bridge, when the Captain noticed
a small red glow forward on the main deck. He asked the chaplain to investigate. Chaplain Zeller went forward and found a Vietnamese family happily situated about their charcoal burner atop a cluster of high octane gasoline drums. Charcoal, burner and all went over the side, and promises of replacement were hardly sufficient to calm the startled family. 3

Chaplain Wm. R. Howard, a Southern Baptist, was aboard Consolation, a hospital ship. He remained on call 24 hours a day and seven days a week. In addition, he arranged to conduct religious services aboard other Service Folk ships in the harbor and for visiting ships without chaplain. Moreover, he invited aboard the Consolation church parties from nearby ships.

Another Southern Baptist, Chaplain R. L. Bonner, was the Protestant chaplain aboard the USS Haven, the second and only other hospital ship to participate in the humanitarian efforts of Passage to Freedom.

The Haven had been deployed off Korea from January through August and was due to return to the United States. At the request of the French government, the Haven's orders were changed. She was diverted to Saigon to embark French army, navy, and foreign legion patients for France and home.

Some of them had been in Vietnam as long as four years and had contracted many of the tropical diseases affecting the general populace. Tuberculosis was common as were skin and parasitic conditions.

A week out of Japan, the Haven moored in Saigon River on the 8 September and began loading patients around the clock. Forty eight hours later 721 patients, most of whom were bedridden, were embarked.

Most of the patients were Moslems. When the ship reached the Red Sea, the ambulatory patients were out on deck to pay homage to Mecca, their holy city. Chaplain Bonner had been able to secure 100 copies of the French New Testament to distribute among the French patients. The Protestant program also had an excellent choir which the patients thoroughly enjoyed.
Chaplain Bonner recalled: "We passed through the Suez Canal on Sunday. The British pilot who came aboard as we entered the canal called my attention to the point where Moses led the children of Israel across the Red Sea. We had just finished church at that point. I had used the story in my sermon that morning and the decks were lined with 'shutter bugs' taking pictures. Over the public address system the British pilot narrated the major points of the event."

After four days in Marseilles where the French soldiers were debarked, the Haven sailed for the Panama Canal and Long Beach, California, arriving at home port on 1 November, 1954, the only hospital ship to circle the globe.

GROWING COMMUNIST THREAT


Many communists remained in the South as they located their families in the North. Here they were for active guerrilla activity. Bernard B. Fall, the historian, pointed out that by 1959 more than 13,000 village officials had been slain by the Viet Cong terrorist. As a result more and more territory was lost to the Viet Cong. Political integrity of the provinces was shaken.

During 1960 the gravity of the military crisis prompted the United States to increase its involvement. The U. S. Navy was called on to take a more prominent role in the implementation of American policy in Southeast Asia.

OPERATION SHU-FLY

By the end of 1961 the situation in Vietnam was critical. President
Kennedy had repeatedly met requests for more economic assistance. Nevertheless, the situation continued to deteriorate.

Maxwell Taylor was sent to Vietnam to assess the situation; and upon his report it was decided that a new direction for the struggle had to be initiated. A broad new program for improving living conditions among the South Vietnamese people was announced.

Moreover, a protective shield was stretched around each hamlet. Marine units were deployed to support the South Vietnamese troops. As the name implies: "Shu-fly." Together the ARVN troops and the Marines would "shoo" the "flies" away from the strategic hamlet pie.

This operation continued from April, 1962 to March, 1965.

As the fighting Marines themselves came ashore to assist the South Vietnamese, the first Navy chaplains also came ashore. On April 12, 1962, the first Navy chaplain came ashore for duty in Vietnam. His name was Chaplain Ernest S. Lemieux.

SHU-FLY's Protestant chaplain, Richard P. Vinson was relieved by Chaplain Hugh D. Smith, a Southern Baptist. Smith was responsible for the religious program.

For the first two months of Chaplain Smith's tenure with Operation SHU-FLY, chaplain services continued to be held in the airbase mess hall.

In February and March, Smith reported:

One of the buildings in the compound was renovated and remodeled to make a nice chapel. It was dedicated on the third Sunday in March. In the rear of the chapel was a large area used for the chaplain's office. Sunday services and weekday Bible study were held in the chapel. Evening prayers were given at 2200 over a loud speaker system for the entire command.

More and more on his own initiative the Navy chaplain at Da Nang found himself ministering to the U. S. Army Special Forces personnel near to and in strategic hamlets dotting the countryside. Chaplain Smith recalled:
One specific Special Forces camp was at Mangbuk about 50 miles southwest of Da Nang. Worship services were held in a grass-covered shack and the response was warm and cordial. The Army Special Forces people were most appreciative of every effort on our part. They were more than worthy of anything we could do for them.

Chaplain Smith stated that the major proportions of his busy schedule was devoted to:

counseling, preaching, writing articles for the daily newspaper, flying to the hamlets for services, visiting the Montagnard tribesmen in the hills, and assisting the missionaries in various ways.

While the list was more suggestive than exhaustive and included only a portion of the activities, he noted that each item was in itself both time and energy consuming.

He recalled that these were:

frustrating times for all of our men because of being attacked. It was a rewarding ministry for me and I give thanks to God that out of our squadron only one man was lost. One of our pilots crashed and was killed while searching for a downed army aircraft. The army pilot was rescued.

Chaplain Smith reported that he invited Army and Air Force personnel stationed in the area, local missionaries, and representatives from their congregations to participate in an area-wide Easter worship program. An Vietnamese youth of the mission churches presented a Easter pageant depicting the biblical story of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. More than 300 persons attended the worship services that morning in the Da Nang Air Base compound.

Chaplain R. V. Thornberry, Southern Baptist, relieved Chaplain John G. Harrison during the first week in August (served as Shu-Fly chaplain 3 August 1964 to 25 September, 1964).

He corroborated the psychological change which occurred in the SHU-FLY mood and which was discussed by his predecessor. Speaking of the problems inherent in a ministry to troops involved in counter-
insurgency activities, he first noted that dispersion of troops in small groups among outlying areas presented a problem of access.

Thornberry made as many flights with planes as possible, not in an effort to demonstrate bravery, but rather to express confidence and in the meaning and importance of the work the men were doing. 5

Thornberry pointed out that the isolation of small, detached units placed a transportation problem upon the chaplain, giving rise to the need for broader authority to move from unit to unit. Commanders responsible for the chaplain's safety were naturally reluctant "to put the chaplain in an area where pick-up could prove to be a problem. No one wants to play the hero, but the chaplain needs broader freedom of movement, and his orders should spell out more specifically this area of his responsibility. Such orders would enable the Task Element Commander to use the chaplain more effectively."

Chaplain Thornberry suggested to the Wing Chaplain that with the changing complexity of the war, the Vietnam bound chaplains would profit from exposure to the Medical Field Service School at Camp Pendleton, California. He suggested that advanced first aid training would prove to be increasingly helpful as guerrilla activity and patrol ambushes intensified.

Southern Baptist chaplain Wayne A. Steward, was aboard the seaplane tender Currituck (AV-7). It negotiated the Saigon River immediately following the sinking of the Card. The crew was tense. But upon their arrival in Saigon, the hazard of travel in a confined space and the possibilities of attack by Viet Cong mortars being past, the chaplain and the crew relaxed and prepared for a busy in-port period.

On their ship was a large quantity of Project Handclasp material: food, clothing and toys, Some of this was made available to local Vietnamese; some was stored; and the rest distributed later at Cam Ranh Bay.
Stewart sought out the Southern Baptist missionaries in the Saigon area and invited them to have dinner aboard the Currituck.

Several chaplains, attached to the ships of the Amphibious Ready Group and to the marine battalions, participated in the Tokin Gulf incident. Chaplain J. E. Nunn (Southern Baptist) was aboard the flagship.

Another Southern Baptist chaplain, M. L. Chamberlin, rode the remaining Amphibious Force ships as the Phibron Three circuit riders.

He continued to be in the thick of the fray at Tonkin riding USS Winston (AKA-94), the USS George Clymer (APA-27), USS Tulare (AKA-112), and USS Tortuga (LSD-26). 7

On this deployment, Chamberlin wrote:

I was on board all the ships of the squadron with the exception of Weiss. I was at sea all but forty-five of the 179 days we were deployed, and conducted from one to four divine services each Sunday, all but seven of them being at sea.

Because of the extended periods at sea boredom became one of the major problems. Various efforts were made to alleviate the problem.

Contests, games, cookouts on the fantail were employed to combat the boredom. The chaplain was often involved in arranging these activities.

Evening prayers over the IMC became a meaningful part of the daily routine. Prayers were directed toward particular events of the day in an effort to capitalize upon the thoughts and/or inner conflicts of the crew. Frequently our people would mention to the chaplain that these moments were the most meaningful of the day. 8

Chaplain Chamberlin on August 8, 1964, experienced his first high-line transfer in the 22 months he had been on the Winston. He sat nervously as the boatswains chair as the safety strap was secured. Just as the chair was put over the side, the skipper called down to the chaplain to ask if he had said his prayers. Chamberlin said later:

We made it but just as I was free from the chair on the Elkhorn, I was greeted with the cheery word that this was the Elkhorn's first attempt with the high-line. 9
Two Southern Baptist chaplains were with the Headquarters Support Activity in Saigon during the period September 1962 until March 1965: W. D. Powell and G. T. Healer. Chaplain Powell for a period was aboard the *Princeton*.

**NO SANCTUARY WHERE THE ACTION IS**

Dallas Lee, Associate Editor, *Home Missions* says one of the questions debated heavily in Vietnam was: Where is the chaplain's place—with the rear guard or out front where the action is?

Chaplain Billy R. Lord believes it is best for the chaplain to stay close to his men. The goal of the military chaplaincy, he points up, is to provide moral and spiritual guidance to U. S. servicemen in any and all situations, including combat.

In Vietnam with the 1st Battalion, 12th Cavalry, Lord won his point, at least temporarily, in a series of dramatic rescues that earned for him the Silver Star for gallantry in action.

This was the first such citation awarded a chaplain in Vietnam. Date: 12 October 1965. Lord's citation said in part:

Chaplain Lord, upon learning that a company had been ambushed, immediately proceeded to the ambush site. Although the unit was pinned down by concentrated small arms, automatic weapons fire and grenades, he continuously exposed himself to intense hostile fire to apply first aid to the wounded. Chaplain Lord gave spiritual and moral guidance and physically assisted in the evacuation of the wounded. After the wounded were safely evacuated across a river... Notice that the unit medic, who was wounded, was not among the other members of the unit, Chaplain Lord returned to the ambush site through intense hostile fire and evacuated the medic to safety...

Many Southern Baptist chaplains distinguished themselves in the Vietnam War, both through bravery in battle and through plain hard work behind the scenes, either of which earns outstanding respect.

Among those cited for their efforts in Vietnam are:

Chaplain (Capt.) Robert E. Saunders of Wynnburg, Tennessee, who received the Legion of Merit for facing hostile fire to minister to the wounded and
dying for "diligent efforts." to secure welfare and recreational programs for his men.

Chaplain (LCDR) Richard M. Tipton of Glen Ellyn, Illinois, who received the Navy Commendation Medal for demonstrating extraordinary fortitude and compassion for his fellowman when...he braved the savage fire attacking Viet Cong suicide squads to comfort the numerous wounded Marines...."

For the most part, perhaps few of the 50 or so Southern Baptists out of nearly 300 chaplains (July, 1966. At peak 100 Southern Baptist chaplains) assigned to Vietnam are involved in combat situations. But the job remains the same, and the challenge just as tough.

Chaplain Robert L. Morris, Jr., of Norfolk, Virginia, who says his weapon is "a 66 (the Bible), and not a .45 or 105 howitzer," travels from the Mekong Delta area in the South to the North Vietnamese border in the North to minister to members of his unit, which is the 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne), 1st Special Forces. He and two other chaplains travel mostly by air, but quite often down the dangerous highways and canals that weave through dense jungle and unprotective highways.

By land, air, or water, they are always subject to ambush, as was tragically depicted in May when a Catholic chaplain and a lutheran chaplain were among those who died when the Viet Cong shot down a U. S. helicopter. They were the first chaplains to be killed in the Vietnam war.

"We try not to establish any regular pattern in our travel, especially on land and water," Morris said. "I have traveled roads and canals where my men have suffered wounds and deaths, yet when it is necessary to use these means of transportation in order to reach my men, I go without hesitation.

"Once," he recalled, "when we arrived at a camp near the Cambodian
border by vehicle, a report came in later that six (Viet Cong) had been waiting for us, but because we were traveling at such a rapid rate of speed, they had decided not to fire. I like decisions like those...."

Morris works without an established chapel facility, usually ministering to small groups and conducting services in "tearooms."

"Quite often there are 'playboy' pictures on the wall and beer cans on the bar," he said. "Protestants, Catholics, Jews, and others come together and in most cases a spirit of worship generates from the hearts of these men overcoming the environment."

(A report in Time magazine showed that only about 17 percent of U.S. troops in Vietnam attend services on Sunday with any sort of regularity—35,000 men at 1,000 services. Chaplains estimate that more than 60 percent of the soldiers never go at all. Time quoted an Air Force captain as saying one reason for low attendance is that the Vietnam war is "considerably less deadly than World War II," in which "there was constant fear in so many cases" that made men think of God. "Here," he said, "relatively few guys are confronted with death every day."

Many of the soldiers in Vietnam appear to have an obsession about not attending the services, several chaplains said. But GIs apparently respect the chaplain who illustrates in a real way his concern for their lives. An army sergeant from Florida, who recently escorted home the body of a friend, talked with admiration about how a Protestant chaplain whose name he couldn't even remember responded when his buddy was killed in an artillery accident near Saigon. And then he said he also admired that chaplain because he spoke out honestly.

"He told us he wanted us all to pick up a New Testament after the service," the GI said. "But he said: 'If you don't intend to read it, don't take it. You've all heard the old story of a soldier's being saved when a
Testament stopped a bullet short of his heart. But this testament will do more for you if you read it—an armored vest will do a better job of stopping a bullet."

Chaplain McCarter probably operates in a moral typical situation, away from combat but with all the added tension created by this war, without a front threatens every sanctuary.

"My work is certainly not much different from stateside duty," he said, though I confess that the situation of being able to serve these men under such pressing conflicts and tensions makes my presence here worthwhile. We may not agree to the war but I dare not neglect the men who are thrown into the fire.

One major change in the routine from stateside duty: "I check my vehicle every morning for hidden explosives," McCarter said.

And this points up what probably is one of the most serious problems faced, not only by chaplains, but by every American in Vietnam. "Some of the usual circumstances include difficulties in transportation, making sure your jeep is well guarded off the compound, cold showers, guessing games on whether the last mortar was incoming or outgoing, and worst of all—not being able to distinguish the enemy from friendly," Chaplain Charles R. Prewitt of El Reno, Oklahoma, said.

Prewitt, assigned to the 6253rd Combat Support Group, hasn't seen any combat action, but he has participated in psychological warfare.

"I flew without Air Commandoes, and I had the job of 'bombing' about six small towns and villages with leaflets, from the premier, notices showing how much money they could get for turning in VC weapons, and free passes for VC defectors," he said. "Hundreds of these people are
surrendering each month now. With a kill ratio conservatively estimated at about four to one, a lot of lives are saved this way."

"This is my kind of war," he added. "Fighting with words is the best way if one has to fight."

Prewitt did come close to being involved directly in an attack on his compound. He arrived in Nha Trang about the first of December 1965, and on Christmas night he was awakened by a blaring loudspeaker.

"Someone was saying, 'Attention in the compound, attention in the compound--this is not a practice alert--turn off all lights and man your positions,' he recalled. "I got dressed and waited around in my room for ever several long hours. I could see figures moving about in the dark below, and I hoped they were 'good guys. I finally dropped off to sleep and had several nightmares."

The next morning, Prewitt learned the story. A team of Viet Cong had launched a grenade attack on the tent city area near Prewitt's billet, wounding 14 Americans.

The frustrations and tensions of the war-torn country bring out virtually every type of problems a chaplain could possibly face, from standard "Dear John" situations to a terror that won't allow a man to sleep. And terror can be generated from more than gunfire in Vietnam; the jungles are full of natural hazards, including tigers, poisonous snakes of every type, and disease-carrying mosquitoes.

"Pastoral counseling is one of my greatest challenges here," Chaplain Prewitt said. "One example of the type of counseling is the case of a career staff sergeant who suddenly became very terrified. When I saw him at the request of the psychiatrist, he was too frightened to work, eat, or sleep."

"The doctor was able to get him some relief for nights so he could sleep,
but he was having most of his trouble in the daytime," Prewitt explained. "This man was able to overcome this to some extent and remained on the scene. I have heard of a number, however, who were too frightened to be retained in the country."

Prewitt also tells of several men who learned just before they were shipped overseas that they were to be unwed fathers. Another GI, whose father died very suddenly, told Prewitt he was certain that God killed his father because of his own adulterous behavior.

According to Chaplain McCarter, one of the most acute problems is marital difficulty.

"These are either the long-standing problems that exist before the serviceman departs, and which are complicated by absence, or the marital problems that have resulted from hasty marriage just before overseas shipment," he said.

"Many families are broken up under the pressures," Chaplain Morris said. "What can you say when a man comes up and says his wife has left him when he has spent three of the last four years away from your home? You could never convince a Special Forces soldier whose wife has remained loyal and faithful over the years that she is not something special also."

Many of the chaplains find time to participate in the support of a local orphanage, more often than not one already heavily supported or even started by U. S. Forces. Chaplain Heyward P. Knight of Ravenel, South Carolina, attached to the 10th Army Transportation Battalion, helped to organize at his chapel a Protestant Men of the Chapel group, which adopted as its first project the support of the Vietnamese Evangelical Orphanage at Honchong, on the shore near Nha Trang.

"In less than one week since payday," Knight said last April, "the
PMOC already has collected over $200.00 and should raise this total to at least $1,000 before the next payday.

This orphanage started in 1953 with 28 children, today has 255, many of whom were left without parents by the Viet Cong.

Another responsibility chaplains counseling U.S. Marines have taken on involves lectures to the Marines on Vietnamese religions, beliefs, and customs.

The first lecture begins:

The more you know about people, the way they think, act, and react, the better is your opportunity to stay alive and to help others to do likewise.

The lectures cover a brief survey of Vietnamese history, both political and religious; a quick explanation of some of the minor religions practiced in the country, such as animism; and a fairly detailed review of the different sects of Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, and Cao Daism.

According to statistics observed by the chaplains, Roman Catholics comprise about 10 percent of the Vietnamese population, Protestants about 3 percent. No real religious census, however, has ever been completed in Vietnam.

Winston J. Crawley, the Foreign Mission Board's secretary for the Orient, said Vietnam is like the states of Virginia, North and South Carolina, and Georgia having a total of about 50,000 evangelical Christians. Southern Baptists are the only major evangelical denominational group at work in the country, Crawley said.

Chaplain Allen B. Craven of Kemner, Louisiana, with the Marine Corps in Vietnam for about seven months, made an effort to experience everything the combat Marine had to, at least once:

This means that I felt the tensions they felt on a lonely outpost at night, the fatigue of a day-long patrol through the dense jungle, and sharing the fear or sniper fire and mines as we walked along the trails. In Vietnam I realized that my ministry as a chaplain was the most important ministry on earth.

One of the highlights of Craven's tour was baptizing three Marines off Red Beach, the spot where the Marines landed when they first arrived in Vietnam. A rifle squad was positioned on the beach to watch for snipers.

One night Craven was on hand when a badly wounded Marine was brought into the compound. His abdomen was torn, his left lung had collapsed, and his legs had been shattered by shrapnel. As the doctors, and corpsmen worked frantically to bring him back from near death, Craven was informed that the young Marine was a Baptist.
"The boy was going in and out of coma, thrashing about wildly," Craven said. I asked the doctor if I could talk to him and he told me to please try. I took his hand and, talking into his ear, I told him I was the chaplain. His eyes flickered open and he saw the cross on my cap; he immediately calmed down, but my hand was in his the rest of the night."

"Each time I tried to remove it, he would start moving around and grip my hand even tighter," he said. "I went with him to X-ray, was gowned, and went into the operating room. Since he was evacuated before he could recognize many things around him, he probably will never remember my hand in his that night, but the look in his eyes when he saw my cross and the grip of his hand can never be erased from my mind."

**THE AGONY AND ECSTASY OF THE MILITARY CHAPLAIN**

Personal testimonies on the part of military chaplains who feel that God is calling them into this work. Note first what Chaplain George W. Foshee has to say on "the agony and ecstasy of the military chaplain."

There was a cry in the night—the cry of a six-month-old child in the home of a missionary in a Montagnard village.

It was eleven o'clock at night when the missionary mother answered the cry and moved the crib next to her bed. Suddenly the quietness of the night was rocked by a terrific explosion. The roof and walls of the adobe style house crashed upon the family. The missionary father and mother were in a state of shock and blood streamed from several wounds about their bodies. Escaping unscathed was their young daughter, whose life had been saved by the cry in the night.

Her mother had moved the crib from the wall where explosives had been planted outside in a drain pipe.

The U. S. Army helicopter was dispatched to remove the family to a hospital. A chaplain accompanied the family as they made the flight to Da Nang. The missionaries had made one mistake: they had been too successful
in their influence on the mountain tribe. Their lives and teaching had conflicted with that of local Viet Cong communists and could no longer be tolerated.

It is difficult for a chaplain to make a distinction between such incidents as this and the imprisonment of a Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the coercion tactics of a Hitler type regime on churches, pastors and others of previous years.

...But the missionary and the chaplain must take the gospel in the middle of the fray. They cannot stand back to merely rationalize and philosophize, neither can they refrain from ministering to the sick, the wounded and the dying, whether it is on physical or spiritual level.

It is in such anguish that the message of the gospel must be heard at the crossroads of life.

Where is there a better place to minister, where is there a more difficult place? But more, where is there a greater need? 11

WHY I AM HERE IN VIETNAM

This is the way Chaplain Joe Ellison answers this question:

I am proud to wear the uniform of the United States Army and the insignia of a chaplain.

Why did I become an army chaplain?

1. To fulfill a dream. While serving as an enlisted man during World War II, although showing little interest in religious matters, there was a continual vision of serving as a chaplain. That dream never ceased seeming to be in my mind.

2. To follow a leading. During my eight years as a pastor, there was a lack of complete satisfaction and a yearning to be involved in the religious life of military personnel....
3. To be involved at the point of greatest contact. During the past nine years I have conducted worship services under trees, in mess halls, in day rooms, in clubs and chapels. I have been available to assist the youth of our nation in times of crises; be it personal, military, or religious problems....There is no civilian pastorate in the world with as great an opportunity to mold the future of the nation and the church as in the military setting.

4. To care for my family. I feel that I can provide my family better health, security, stability, education and Christlikeness as a chaplain.

5. I am a chaplain because here is where God has called met to serve. Regardless of any benefits or disadvantages, there is no other place for me to find satisfaction, happiness and peace than where I now serve—be it stateside or Vietnam.

"CHAPLAIN, STAY CLOSE TO YOUR DENOMINATION"

This is the advice of Chaplain Alpha A. Farrow. "These words," he says "have been good for me. I heard them from George Cummins in Tokyo. I heard them twenty years earlier from Alfred Carpenter."

I am a member of First Baptist Church, Lawton, Oklahoma, because my last stateside assignment was at nearby Fort Sill. My church sends me weekly bulletins and correspondence." Arthur B. Rutledge, executive secretary of the Home Mission Board, and his wife personally visited my hospital assignment in Japan and prayed with wounded young men. Such things help me to know that my denomination is staying close to me.

Six of my last nine years of service have been in foreign countries and nothing has been more helpful in "keeping in touch" than my close fellowship with foreign missionaries. These men and women are a group of dedicated servants of God. I have spent much vacation time seeing the work which they have accomplished.
They accept me as a brother "foreign missionary."

The missionaries' support was demonstrated when I was hospitalized for an operation. Many wounded young men were coming from Vietnam to our hospital in Japan. Gene A. Clark, pastor of Shibuya Mission, Tokyo, appealed to other missionaries to give up their study day to help. The response was immediate.

During my hospitalization, nine Southern Baptist missionaries helped Chaplain John Geiger minister to hundreds of critically wounded armed service personnel. It was proof my Baptist brethren were indeed interested in me and my work for Christ.

For missionaries Oscar Gardner and Clark this was nothing unusual. They had been ministering on a weekly basis as their time permitted. Many rewarding experiences occurred.

One involved a young man I shall call "Tom." Tom arrived in a critical condition. He could not see or talk, but he could hear. We learned that he had attended Baptist services in civilian life but he was not a Christian. We explained at his bedside the plan of salvation. As Clark and Gardner prayed, I said, "Tom, I know you cannot talk, but if you will take my hand and squeeze it, I will understand that you are now taking Jesus Christ as your Savior. Tom could not make that decision.

I had to go to other patients. Later Gardner noticed Tom hitting his oxygen tent, trying to stick his hand out of it. The nurse came but could not find out what he wanted. Mr. Gardner located me and I rushed back to his bed. When Tom heard my voice he again stuck his hand against the oxygen tent. I unzipped the tent and took his hand to feel the firm repeated clasp of all his remaining strength. Later
that night Tom went to be with his Lord.

To be a Baptist chaplain with the privilege of ministering to our young men in their hour of need any place they may go--this is for me God's greatest calling.

WHY I AM A CHAPLAIN

Chaplain E. H. Campbell, Jr., answers this question deep from his heart.

I am a chaplain because God has called me to this ministry.

I am a chaplain because at the beginning of my active duty I did not want to shirk my service obligation. Ministers are accorded a draft free status by our government. This tradition is solidly grounded in our history and should be maintained. However, in my opinion, young ministers should seek at least one tour of active duty. Our vocation does not accord us special privilege in the eyes of God, nor does it make us less responsible to the needs of our nation. As long as men are called out to defend America, ministers ought to go with them to bring them to God.

I am a chaplain because I wanted to see for myself what the military was like....Young men in my student pastorates were going into the military and I knew nothing of what they were facing or what they had done. I was curious. But even more, I wanted to be able to counsel intelligently those who were facing military service. I wanted to be able to relate effectively to those men who had completed their obligation. The only way to fill this gap in my knowledge was to enter active duty.

I am a career chaplain because I "found a home," so to speak. Military men and women are unique in that they are professional soldiers, sailors, and airmen. But they are at one and the same time human beings
in the richest sense of the term. Their religious needs are just as vital and just as real as are those of civilians.

For me meeting the challenge of telling the good news to military people is even more demanding and satisfying than in civilian life. This is not true because military persons are less "religious" than religious civilians; in actual fact the average sailor is no more or less/than the average civilian. The increased demands and satisfactions stem from the environment in which human beings are found.

It is difficult to go to men by "high line" from ship to ship. It is difficult to jump with paratroopers. It is difficult to expose oneself to hostile fire. It is difficult to live in a tent for months on end. These extra demands placed on the chaplain by the environment in which he exercises his ministry to men do not defeat that ministry, but rather add significantly to the personal satisfaction of the chaplain whose privilege it is to go with men into these situations.

I stand ready to go into any situation where men are: to carry the gospel, and to seek to help men develop a strong and living relationship to God.
MILITARY PERSONNEL MINISTRIES

From the very beginning, the Chaplains Commission realized that a ministry to service personnel was absolutely necessary. It aimed to encourage churches and associations to provide an effective ministry to their own military-related youth before, during and after service. A comprehensive program was set up to cover six areas:

1. Preinduction preparation for service.
2. In service communication with the church's military personnel.
3. Ministry to servicemen's families.
4. Ministry to servicemen and dependents by churches near military installations.
5. Post-service re-enlistment in the church's life.
6. Specialized ministries to military personnel and families through full-time workers appointed to areas on and near military installations in cooperation with state conventions and associations.

Military Personnel Ministries was transferred from the Missions Department on January 1, 1959, to become a department of work within the Division of Chaplaincy. Director was Dr. E. L. Ackiss.

Death claimed Dr. Ackiss on September 17, 1961.

Succeeding him to this department was Chaplain Willis A. Brown, a native of Pontotoc, Mississippi. He came from the pastorate at the Calvary Baptist Church, New Orleans, Louisiana. He joined the Commission staff on August 1, 1962.

Brown served until 1971 when he became Associate Director of the Division. Chaplain William L. Clark was appointed the Director of Military Personnel Ministries.

Through military subcommittees in local churches; through workshops; through Soutwide conventions; through publications—military personnel ministries were made effective.
Some of the literature published through the years and made available to chaplains and churches were:

- The Far Called
- Guidelines
- Soldiers Without Arms
- For Men Only
- Spiritually Prepared
- For Mom and Dad Only
- Your Life and Military Service

These publications encouraged young men and women to be true to their faith through their tour of duty. An answer was sought to the question: Will young people take a vacation from church and religion during their military tour or will they remain faithful to Christ and the church?

In the report of the Chaplains Commission to the Southern Baptist Convention (1964, p.152) the statement was made:

More than 57,000 of the finest Southern Baptist youth enter, and a like number leave military service each year. This number exceeds the total of all Southern Baptist institutions of higher learning in a given year.

In 1970 the Southern Baptist Convention Minutes (p.137) reported:

Approximately 2,325 churches and associations started or significantly expanded their ministry to military personnel.
GOD SUSTAINED THE POWS

Navy chaplain Lt. Comd. Alex B. Aronis, an American Baptist stationed at Subic Bay Air Station through which returning Vietnam prisoners were processed reported to the American Baptist Chaplaincy Service in Valley Forge, Pennsylvania. Some of the things he said:

The key to their (POWS) survival and to their mental and emotional health was a deep and abiding and growing relationship with God...

The story of the religious experience of these men is inspiring beyond words.

During the most difficult, the most painful, the darkest hour, God sustained them and enabled them to get through.

One returne declare his faith thus:

Without God, I would not have been able to survive.

Some of the POWS reported on the religious activities experienced while they were imprisoned: Setting up worship services; organizing choirs; conducting Bible studies (often from memory). It is said that the most frequently used Scripture passage was the 23rd Psalm. Other favorite passages were: 1 Corinthians; Romans 12.

When the ex-prisoners sat down for their first meal, they bowed their heads in table grace. The dietician observed that she had never seen so many people bow their heads. Their prison experiences made the men exceedingly "thankful to God. This thankfulness expressed itself in a spirit of courtesy, graciousness, and thoughtfulness.

In the prison camps the byword used by POWS was "God bless you." This was used freely by those who had professed to be agnostics and atheists. It was also a phrase that fell repeatedly from the lips of the former prisoners as they reached home. "God bless you. God bless you all."