

Issue 1
2019

*A Journal for Seventh-day
Adventists in Military and
Public Service*

For God & Country





STAND BY YOUR PRINCIPLES

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God's people have been serving their country since time immemorial. Similar situations are found in the biblical record where we read of individuals in positions of power during the mightiest governments of their time. I am referring to Daniel and his friends, Queen Esther, Nehemiah, and others.

Their service was not easy. It was full of perils, challenges, and threats to their lives. What lessons can we learn from their amazing faithfulness and consistency?

We know that Daniel and his friends were definitely challenged early in their service. They did not like the food, but we know it was more than that. However, to the Babylonians, that may have been how they saw it. From the beginning Daniel and his compatriots

decided to *be true to their principles*. They knew that God's principles, including those of health, had a reason for being. "Every time the shuttle passes, it draws after it a thread which is fastened to right principles and holy actions,"¹ and we live by our principles.

They were "nobodies" at the "bottom of the totem pole." So far down they were not included on King Nebuchadnezzar's list of dream "consultants" (wise man). Upon learning they were scheduled to be executed, Daniel asked for time² and as a team he and his friends consulted God,³ never hiding their devotion to God from anyone.⁴ Remember, we need to *be true to God*.

Similar to Daniel and his friends, Esther is another example for us as we serve our country. Notice that these biblical examples were not in the best

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of circumstances. They were living in the midst of a society with a different religion and gods. Esther was a queen, but her husband, the king, had concubines with whom he apparently had intimate encounters. She was not the only one in his life, but she was the one whom he loved the most. When her time came to keep quiet and stand up for her people,⁵ she chose to *be true to her people* even if that would have cost her life.⁶

At the root of these previous lessons is faithfulness. Faithfulness to our *principles*, to our *God* and to our *Church* (our people). As a result, you will also *be true to your country*.

Today, as Daniel and Esther of the Bible, many Seventh-day Adventists around the world serve their nations, some in uniform with the military or police, or others without the uniform in a myriad of jobs. As a church we stand ready to minister to your needs. Our church policy states:

“The World/National Service Organization (WSO/NSO) is an integral element of Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries (ACM) and is the official military relations office of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Its

primary mission is *to provide pastoral care and religious resources to support the spiritual well-being of Seventh-day Adventists serving their nations in all aspects of government service, in and out of uniform, including military forces and law enforcement agencies around the world.*”⁷

We know and understand that you are not serving in the ideal circumstances, but we seek to understand your challenges and needs. We pledge to stand behind you and to support you as one of our own.

In the following pages of this issue of *For God and Country* you will find ideas, guidance, and encouragement to continue in your service knowing full well that your people, as in the case of Esther, also stand behind you.

¹ Ellen G. White, *Living by Principle*, (Silver Spring, Maryland: White Estate, 1898).

² Daniel 2:16

³ Daniel 2:17-18

⁴ Daniel 6:10

⁵ Esther 4:13-14

⁶ Esther 4:16

⁷ *General Conference Working Policy*, FA 45, p. 290.

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WHAT DO YOU SAY?

Every individual who chooses to raise their hand and take an oath to protect their nation or community does so for reasons understood best by them. For some, it's a desire to serve their nation and to give something back. A sense of honor, duty, and patriotism can be the driving force. The pull of family history and legacy of service by grandfathers, parents, uncles and aunts, can be a influencing factor. And there are individuals who embrace that the call to put on the uniform is God's calling and purpose for their life.

A Barna Group report on "How Faith Influences Military Service" shared that almost eight in ten of respondents noted that they serve alongside faithful Christians. Only five percent of respondents stated that they didn't know any Christians at all. In the same survey, eight in ten respondents (81 percent) said that they have "engaged in a conversation with a Christian about their beliefs in God or Jesus and those conversations are overwhelmingly positive, leaving people feeling affirmed (31%), inspired (29%), curious (26%) or uplifted (23%).¹

Among those Christians in all branches of military service are Seventh-day Adventist Christians. The World Service Organization recently surveyed more than 170 Adventist military chaplains from five countries. The non-scientific

survey gathered information and understanding of what Adventists face while serving in uniform. Chaplains often provide counsel and guidance to individuals seeking a listening ear and their input for the survey supplied current frontline reporting.

DAILY LIFE STRESSORS

Stressors of military life affect everyone. In addition to normal life challenges, military personnel are faced with deployments, change of duty stations, meeting physical fitness requirements, separation from family, and more. Each of these life-impacting scenarios can take its toll.

Survey esponses indicated the top three things Adventists in uniform come to their chaplain about are relationship with the spouse and children, mental health concerns (including depression, moral injury, and suicidal thoughts), and spiritual matters. Career concerns ranked fourth as a topic most requested for counseling.

ADVENTISTS AND RELIGIOUS ACCOMMODATIONS

These areas of personal challenges don't vary much for Adventists from the general military population. However, when discussing spiritual matters Adventists who serve must also address how they will request religious accommodation for Sabbath observance.

There are individuals who embrace that the call to put on the uniform is God's calling and purpose for their life.

Concerns over Sabbath observance is one of the issues that chaplains stated are among the top three issues for Adventists who serve. They noted that it's imperative for anyone considering military service to determine how they will navigate their own expectations and beliefs when they voluntarily place themselves in a pluralistic environment that may not be sympathetic to their religious convictions. One chaplain noted that some individuals have had "an inability to recognize the unique nature of military service is a 24/7 responsibility and may require some Sabbath activities." Others emphasized to be unafraid of standing by personal convictions.

One chaplain cautioned, "There will be things that challenge you, especially in the military. While standing for your convictions, pray for wisdom to know the difference between your convictions and your preferences."

When asked how they counsel fellow believers, one of the primary recommendations was to network with other Adventists. Finding others to worship with and staying connected to your beliefs provides the necessary foundation for a strong faith. One chaplain noted, "I have advised some to find ways to build a support group or worship group within the military unit."

It's important to follow the chain

of command and to work closely with the chaplain when requesting religious accommodation. Equally necessary is doing the best job possible in your work and demonstrating that you are contributing to the mission that you freely took on when you swore to protect and defend. "As a Chaplain, it matters not what the faith of my soldiers are, but that they are attempting to live up to their beliefs and to the oath that they swore when they joined the military,"

EDUCATE THE CHURCH MEMBERS

The official stance of the Seventh-day Adventist Church about military service is a recommendation of non-combatancy. However, the final decision of whether to serve or not is left to the individual and their conscience. No matter the individual choice made, the world church officially states that they have an obligation to provide religious support to everyone.

Ongoing education about this official position must be done at all levels—local church, conference, union, and division—to ensure against discrimination and unfair treatment. Sadly, there have been reports through the years, including recent events, where discrimination and ostracizing of church members who serve in uniform

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has been meted out by “the saints.”

Local churches can provide a welcoming atmosphere through inclusion of military personnel and their families. Start with praying for service members and their families, military chaplains, and veterans.

Next, develop a mission to support and minister to military families. It's not necessary to be near a large military installation. Many communities have local Guard and Reserve units of service members. Identify the congregation's strengths and available resources.

Meeting needs of this special people group come in forms of practical care such as support before, during, and after deployments; pastoral care—e.g. counseling (marriage, addictions, parental); education—e.g. marriage enrichment, parenting, finances; and building relationships both with each other and with Christ.

Military families aren't looking to be treated differently. They want to fit in and be a part of the church family. They want to share their God-given talents and worship together.

Local conferences and unions can be supportive by reaching out to military chaplains located in their

territory. Chaplains are pastors who minister outside the normal parameters of the local church setting. These faithful ministers have not left the ministry. Rather, they are using their spiritual gifts to provide care, comfort, and ministry to those who stand guard.

Conferences can invite chaplains to participate in pastoral events and support pastors who may serve as Guard or Reserve Chaplains. They can encourage local churches to develop military ministries. These are just a few ways to provide effective ministry from the conference and union levels.

Divisions who provide the means for military chaplains to become endorsed and minister to the service members of the nations in their regional territory are expanding the influence of their pastors to locations that may not be reached by other methods.

Service members who have a visible faith tradition and live that out daily are missionaries in uniform. One chaplain wrote, “There are truths to the difficulties in keeping Sabbath. However, there are also many opportunities to foster service and ministry. Although military service is not for everyone, there are great opportunities for service and to be a positive influence for others.”



JUST DO IT!

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Challenges and hurdles exist for us all. However, how an individual handles these complex issues in his/her work life requires a combination of wisdom, tact, and merely standing up for yourself.

Some may believe that they “don’t want to ruffle feathers” by pointing out something that needs attention or correction.

This is mainly a concern for the military service member who might face perceived harassment or being passed over for advancement/promotion opportunities due to faith preference or practice. Practical questions arise as to how can one maintain an appropriate, yet Christian attitude with the daunting feeling of being knee-deep in the conflict? Additionally, what should be our stance toward our boss, supervisor, or commander when our faith practices go against the goals or mission of the organization? What are the principles that should guide our actions?

If we know we are on good and reasonable grounds, and though we might even be a little fearful, we can trust God will be with us.

Very early on in my military career, while I was at the Chaplain Officer Basic Course, there was a situation in which an event was to be conducted during Sabbath hours. As I thought about what I should do, I approached someone with knowledge of the situation and was essentially told: “the command was just waiting to see if you would stand up for your faith practices.” Imagine the credibility I might have lost if I had been willing to compromise my faith and personal beliefs!

In the middle of wondering what to do or even how to do it, I will sometimes tell myself or others to adopt the old Nike advertising slogan of “Just Do It.” If we know we are on good and reasonable grounds, and though we might even be a little fearful, we can trust God will be with us.

Each branch of the military has specific guidelines or regulations in place to assist service members with religious practices and accommodations. The U. S. Army, in AR 600-20, states the following: “the Army will approve requests for accommodation of religious practices unless accommodation will have an adverse impact on unit readiness, individual readiness, unit cohesion, morale, discipline, safety, and/or health.” So, it is not that we need to

establish a reason for accommodation. Instead, we just need to specifically proclaim what we need to further witness to our faith while serving on the job.

When Soldiers have approached me and asked how can they ask to be released from duties that may conflict with Sabbath hours as an example, I usually give this recommendation. “Be as consistent in your Christian walk as you possibly can so that when the time comes for the organization to allow you some flexibility, then a likely favorable decision will follow.” This would be true in all professions and walks of life as well. How can we genuinely point others to Christ if we ourselves are not willing to do what we say we would do?

Being consistent, day-in and day-out is one of the keys here. One cannot declare to be a Seventh-day Adventist Christian only when it is convenient. It is very tempting to just “fall in line” with the behaviors or words of our peers. However, it takes real commitment and courage to be able to stand up for what we believe.

Besides, if we are faithful to what we know, we might even be a little surprised at the result God has in store for us. It could potentially far surpass what we have ever imagined.

WHEN KILLING ISN'T MURDER



By James J. North, Jr., D.Min., Chaplain (Lt. Colonel) U. S. Air Force, Retired
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This study is an effort to establish what kind of killing is and is not included under the sixth commandment. Based on views passed on from generation to generation, various Seventh-day Adventists have considered the commandment to prohibit not only murder, but killing in war, suicide, and killing in self/family-defense. We have used the commandment to frown on, if not to prohibit, the bearing of arms-guns, as instruments of war, law enforcement, and hunting. Many would not have a weapon/gun in their homes as an instrument of self- and family-protection fearing that it would be a sixth commandment violation to kill the intruder. Are these perspectives

founded or unfounded based on the Old Testament. A second article will explore aspects of this issue in the New Testament.

The commandment in English (KJV), “Thou shalt not kill,” is translated from the original Hebrew in two texts in the Old Testament, Exodus 20:13 and Deuteronomy 5:17. Both are quotations from God’s spoken and written law, called the Decalogue, or the Ten Commandments. They are statements of the sixth commandment, given initially by God from Mt. Sinai¹ and repeated by Moses.²

The phrase, “Thou shalt not kill” is the 1611 King James Version (KJV) English translation of the

original Hebrew language of the sixth commandment. The Bible, including the Ten Commandments, was written in Hebrew. In order to read and understand the Commandments in English speaking countries, the Hebrew had to be translated into English. The principal translation that brought the Bible and the Commandments in English to us is the KJV, the translation authorized by King James of England, completed in the year 1611. Presently, there are numerous translations, some using the word “kill” and others using “murder.”

Helpful at this point is a brief explanation about the Hebrew word which is translated as both “kill” and “murder.” In the Hebrew language of Bible times, almost all the words were based on a three-consonant root. Thus, the Hebrew word for “kill” is built on three consonants, the Hebrew letters for r, ts, and kh (a “k” sound). We will use their transliteration equivalents, respectively, r, s, and h, with a dot under the s and the h to indicate their unique sound in English, since English does not have single letter equivalents for the latter two letters. With vowels, which do not show up as letters in the Hebrew, the three-letter word would be pronounced Ra-TSaKH. Think or pronounce RaTSaKH wherever you see the three letters together. We will hereafter only refer to it as rsh.

STUDY REMINDERS

So, we start with a gentle reminder that the Word of God in English was preceded by and sprung from the Word of God in Hebrew. Thus, the meaning of the English must be first and foremost interpreted by the meaning of the Hebrew.

Difficult as it may be, we must be willing to adjust our understanding of Scripture when exegetical, historical, and contextual study corrects our views, even when these views have been handed down to us by revered leaders and writers.

A second reminder and beginning point in this study is that our understanding of Scripture is not static. A number of factors have caused and will cause us to adjust our understanding of the Bible—archeological discoveries, studies of the ancient languages, historical research, and systematic Bible study. “But the path of the just is as a shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.”³ A literal translation is, “But the path of the righteous is the light of dawn, which shines brighter and brighter until full day.”⁴ Difficult as it may be, we must be willing to adjust our understanding of Scripture when exegetical, historical, and contextual study corrects our views, even when these views have been handed down to us by revered leaders

The Cities of Refuge were selected so any unintentional killer might not die at the hand of an “avenger of blood” until he was judged or tried by his peers.

and writers. This was the experience of our Adventist pioneers, who grew as they studied and restudied Scripture. They learned and changed. This has been our history and it will be our future.

A third reminder has to do with hermeneutics—how we interpret Scripture. Three well-proven principles of biblical interpretation are particularly relevant to this study. The first is that the Bible interprets itself. Gerhard Hasel wrote, “The classical understanding for the self-interpretation of Scripture is the famous Protestant principle of *sola scriptura*, ‘the Bible only’, often referred to as the Scripture principle. The Scripture principle—the formal affirmation of the position that the Bible is its own interpreter—is based on its divine-human origin.”⁵

A second principle of Scripture interpretation is that “it is not permissible to use the etymology (origin) of words in the English Bible or any translation to explain the meaning of the biblical word. In fact, the meaning of a word in the biblical languages may have a larger or smaller range of meanings than

the corresponding term in a modern language”⁶ Therefore, we need to know the meaning of the word in the original language.

A third principle is an expansion of the second, and deals with context. “When investigating words, the most important principle is to allow the context ... to define the meaning of the respective word.”⁷ The context can be its use in the immediate sentence, all its other uses by the author, and its use in the rest of the Old Testament, that is, all the texts containing that word.

With these several points in mind, let us plunge into a study of the Scriptural meaning of “kill” as derived from a study of *ršh* as translated into English, particularly in the King James rendering of the sixth commandment in Exodus 20:13 and Deuteronomy 5:17. *Ršh* occurs for the first time in Scripture in these two texts, that is, with the proclamation of the Decalogue by God at Sinai. However, the concept of illegal killing or homicide and its consequences appears with the murder of Abel by Cain in Genesis 4:8-15. Cain knew that he committed a capital crime.⁸ The taking of life as a capital offense is re-emphasized in Genesis 9:6, “Whoso sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed: ...” The Decalogue codifies this principle.

The Hebrew wording of Exodus 20:13 and Deuteronomy 5:17 is identical, transliterated, “*lo tiršah*.” “Lo” is the negative “not.” “*Tiršah*” is a verb form of the Hebrew root word “*rašah*” (*ršh*), which fundamentally means to crush or bruise, and to kill or to murder⁹ Literally, the commandment says, “Do not murder.” Dr. Gane writes, “The familiar KJV rendering ‘Thou shalt not kill’ is misleading because the sixth commandment does not forbid all killing.”¹⁰ The

Seventh-day Adventist Bible Dictionary in its article captioned “Murder,” states, “The sixth commandment expressly forbids murder.”¹¹

Keeping in mind our three hermeneutic principles, particularly since the sixth commandment carries no explanation, and the rest of the commandments do not provide any context to ascertain the scope of the commandment as it relates to killing, we must look at the broader biblical context to accurately determine the meaning of *ršh*.

Ršh is used a total of forty-seven times in the Old Testament. Excluding the two citations of the commandment, the bulk of these uses, thirty-four, occur in Numbers 35 (20 instances), Deuteronomy 4 and 19 (6 instances), and in Joshua 29 and 21 (8 instances). These are all found in a common context, the cities of refuge. One other use, in Deuteronomy 22, is unrelated to the cities of refuge. The remaining ten uses are scattered among eight Old Testament books—1st and 2nd Kings, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Hosea. These all are clear references to murder, as we will see. A chart of the parallels is given at the end of this article.

We start with an overview and analysis of Numbers 35. This chapter is entirely devoted to God’s mandate to Moses to specifically designate as Cities of Refuge, six of the forty-eight Levitical inheritance cities.¹² The Tribe of Levi was excluded from the allotments of large land areas in Canaan since their livelihood came from their work in the Sanctuary. Out of the land allotments to the other eleven tribes they were to be given forty-eight cities, including the land immediate to those cities, for the housing of their families and for the

domestic animals they needed.¹³ The purpose of the six cities of refuge was so that someone called a “slayer” or “manslayer” (the Hebrew word is *ršh*) could escape there.¹⁴

Numbers 35 may be divided into nine paragraphs according to themes.

- Vv 1-5** The Levites inheritance—certain cities and surrounding land.
- Vv 6-8** Forty-eight Inheritance cities—six Cities of Refuge to which unintentional slayers should run for asylum.
- Vv 9-15** Cities of Refuge general location and purpose
- Vv 16-21** Death penalty for intentional killing—six examples of intentional killing
- Vv 22-25** Examples of unintentional killing; trial and sanctuary for killer
- Vv 26-28** Exception to sanctuary
- Vv 29** Perpetuity of Refuge statutes
- Vv 30-34** Safeguards: At least two witnesses necessary to convict; all ransom forbidden; ransom is land pollution

In these verses *ršh* is translated “slayer,” “manslayer,” and “murderer” as a noun or participle and “slay” or “murder” as a verb.

The term “slayer” or “manslayer” is defined in vv. 11, 12, and 15 as someone who kills a person without intent. The Cities of Refuge were selected so any unintentional killer might not die at the hand of an “avenger of blood” until he was judged or tried by his peers (the congregation, v. 12). This provision included

Israelites, strangers, and sojourners (v. 15). Deuteronomy 19:1-3, 7-10, and Joshua 20:1-6 echo and support this information, as Moses reminded Israel of the divine provision and Joshua executed the land apportionment mandate. Unintentional killing is further defined as killing someone unintentionally without having been at enmity with the person in the past.¹⁵

God gives very concrete examples of unintentional killing or manslaying (also, killing unawares or unwittingly¹⁶).

NUMBERS 35: 22-25

- ▶ stabbing someone suddenly without enmity
- ▶ hurling an object without lying in wait
- ▶ casting a stone on someone without seeing him.

In each of these cases the slayer must not have been the slain person's enemy and the slayer did not seek the victim's harm.

DEUTERONOMY 19:4-6

- ▶ In cutting wood, an axehead slips off an ax handle and kills a neighbor.

Again, a key criterion is that the person who owned the slipped axehead had not been at enmity with his neighbor in the past.

Inspiration is quite clear that although the slayer has killed, he is innocent of murder and does not deserve capital punishment because he was not at enmity with his neighbor. Yet, because life is irreplaceable, there is accountability, and the slayer must outrun the avenger to a city of refuge to be safe.¹⁷

God instructs Joshua further in Deuteronomy 20:1-6 that, upon arriving at the gate to a city of refuge, the manslayer must there explain his case to the elders. The elders must give him sanctuary, and he must remain there. If the avenger is pursuing him, the elders shall not hand him over to the avenger. But the slayer must remain in that city until the current high priest dies. He is then free to return to his own home and the avenger cannot kill him.

Numbers 35:24, 25 indicates that the congregation should judge between the slayer and the avenger, and in this case, they shall restore him to the city of refuge, where he must live until the high priest's death.

Joshua 20:9 assures the Israelite and the sojourner of a trial by the congregation before an avenger can have access to him. If the slayer should venture from the city of refuge and the avenger finds him, the avenger may kill him and not be guilty of blood.¹⁸

In a single instance in Numbers 35:27, *rsh* is used of the avenger of blood, the next of kin to the deceased, who is legally permitted/instructed to *kill* the one convicted of murder and not be guilty of murder himself.

Six examples of intentional killing are clear, as is the penalty.

NUMBERS 35:16-21

- ▶ striking someone and causing death
- ▶ with an instrument of iron
- ▶ with a stone in hand
- ▶ with a wood weapon in hand.

Each of these statements is followed by the instruction, "he is a murderer; the murderer shall be put to death."

The set of cases is followed by the instruction, “the avenger of blood shall himself put the murderer to death; when he meets him, he shall put him to death.”

The last three examples of intentional killing are:

- ▶ stabbing someone from hatred
- ▶ hurling at someone from lying in wait
- ▶ striking someone in enmity with one’s hand.

The last case is followed by the instruction, “he who struck the blow shall be put to death; he is a murderer; the avenger of blood shall put the murderer to death, when he meets him.” In every case “murderer” is *ršh*.

Deuteronomy 19:11-13 gives the case of a murderer who flees to a city of refuge. A man hates his neighbor, ambushes him, and mortally wounds him, and then flees to a city of refuge. The instruction is, “The elders of his city shall send and fetch him from there, and hand him over to the avenger so that he may die”(RSV). No pity is to be shown. The guilt of innocent blood is to be purged from Israel ...”

God informs Israel that these statutes and ordinances are perpetual “throughout your generations in all your dwellings”¹⁹ and proceeds²⁰ to set standards for witnesses in the conviction for murder and forbid the ransom of murderers or manslayers.²¹ A slayer can be convicted of murder only on the testimony of two or more witnesses. And ransom cannot be paid in lieu of the death penalty or to allow a manslayer to return to his home before the death of the high priest.

Ransoms in either case pollute the land, because blood pollutes the land,

“Premeditated homicide is first-degree murder, but unpremeditated manslaughter is not. While the language of the commandment forbids all homicide, obeying it or not involves choice”

“and no expiation can be made for the land, for the blood that is shed in it, except by the blood of him who shed it. You shall not defile the land in which you live. In the midst of which I dwell; for I the Lord dwell in the midst of the people of Israel.”²²

It is important to note that even in the case of a manslayer protected in a city of refuge, a death must take place—the death of the high priest expiates the innocent blood that is shed unintentionally and accidentally. So even though the manslayer is innocent of murder, responsibility for the death is his, carried in his forced exile in the city of refuge until the death of the high priest. After the high priest’s death, he is free.

Deuteronomy 4:43 names three of the cities of refuge and Joshua 20:7-9 all six. In both passages *ršh* is the slayer or manslayer who kills (*ršh*) unintentionally. Also, in Joshua 21: 13, 21, 27, 32, 36, 38 the six cities of refuge are named, and in each case,

except verse 36, the city is designated “the city of refuge for the slayer (rṣh).”

We might note at this juncture, that, as Dr. Roy Gane writes, “As a commandment, the prohibition only has in view the willful act of taking another’s life. It makes no sense to prohibit accidents.”²³ Gane further explains in his *Old Testament Law for Christians*,

“The sixth commandment prohibits the illegal, unjustifiable taking of life. The verb is the qal of r-ts-kh, which refers (including in participial forms) to premeditated homicide (e.g., Num. 35:16–19, 21, 31) or involuntary (accidental) manslaughter (e.g., vv. 11, 25–28). Premeditated homicide is first-degree murder, but unpremeditated manslaughter is not. While the language of the commandment forbids all homicide, obeying it or not involves choice, which is lacking in cases of accidents. Prohibiting an accident can only mean that one must be careful to avoid it.”²⁴

So, God has made a clear distinction between manslaughter and murder. A person committing manslaughter is not guilty of death and can escape and be sheltered from the vengeance of the slain person’s family.

THE OTHER 12 TEXTS

Now we will complete this study with a survey of the other twelve texts that use the Hebrew word rṣh.

1 Deuteronomy 22:26 is in the context of a man who rapes a woman in the open country where her screams for help cannot be heard.²⁵ Only the man is to be put to death, for “this case is like that of someone who attacks and murders (rṣh) (NRSV. KJV-slayeth) a neighbor.”

2 Judges 19:4. In this chapter, a Levite and his concubine, en route from Bethlehem to the hill country of Ephraim, take an overnight rest stop in Gibeah at the invitation of a very hospitable old man. The men of the city bang on the host’s door demanding he bring the Levite out so they could have sexual intercourse with him (Hb. Know him). After some perverse negotiation, the Levite’s concubine is put outside. In the morning, after having been ravished all night, the concubine lies at the threshold unresponsive. The Levite puts her on his donkey, takes her home, severs her body into twelve pieces and has the pieces sent throughout Israel, with an invitation to respond. Four hundred thousand armed soldiers show up asking, “How did this criminal act come about?”²⁶

In relating the Levite’s answer, the Scripture states, “The Levite, the husband of the murdered (rṣh) (NRSV. KJV-slain) woman, answered ...”²⁷ The context seems to indicate she died from the multiple rapes, not from the Levite’s knife. The act is referred to as rṣh, a murder.

3 1 Kings 21:19. The chapter portrays King Ahab intensely coveting a vineyard owned by Naboth which adjoined the palace. Jezebel has Naboth falsely accused of cursing God and the king and he is stoned. Ahab, en route to possess the vineyard, is met by Elijah, who, at God’s order, rebukes, “Have you killed (rṣh) (KJV & NRSV), and also taken possession? ...”²⁸ Although Jezebel actually instigates

this wrongful execution, God employs the same word as the sixth commandment in laying the blame on Ahab. He coveted, he did not stop his wife from causing innocent blood to be shed, he did not execute her or any of those who participated, and he fully intended to take possession of the vineyard. Clearly this was an intentional killing motivated by greed. And Ahab is judged as though he cast the stones.²⁹

4 2 Kings 6:32. Benhadad, king of Syria, was besieging Samaria.³⁰ The king of Israel, Joram³¹ making the rounds of his starving people, was confronted with a case of infanticide.³² Joram blames Elisha and vows to cut off Elisha's head that same day. Elisha³³ is sitting at home talking with the elders when the king dispatches a man to get him. Elisha says to the elders before the messenger arrives, "Do you see how this murderer (rṣḥ) (NRSV, KJV-son of a murderer.) has sent to take off my head?"

5 Job 24:14. Job is rebutting Eliphaz's accusation wickedness and his appeal to return to God so that he can be restored.³⁴ Job describes God as an absentee God, One Who allows the wicked to abuse the poor and needy.³⁵ One of his assertions is "The murderer (rṣḥ) (NRSV & KJV) rises at dusk to kill the poor and needy, and in the night is like a thief."³⁶ Clearly, he is referring to intentional killing.

6 Psalm 62:3 (MT/BHS 62:4). David is asserting his absolute dependence on God in the face of his enemies' (three

"friends") assaults. He reproves them for their judgmental and condemning words. The KJV translates the verse, "How long will ye imagine mischief against a man? Ye shall be slain (rṣḥ) all of you: ..." The New American Standard Bible translates rṣḥ very literally, "How long will you assail a man, that you may murder (rṣḥ) him, all of you ...?" In the KJV, David is prophesying capital retribution on his attackers. In the ASB, David accuses his attackers of attempted homicide. The RSV, NRSV, and the JPS translation quote David as reflecting the intent of his attackers, using the words "shatter," "batter," and "crush," respectively, instead of "murder." The last part of the verse refers to "a bowing wall and a tottering fence." The NIV Study Bible, to me, seems to reflect the best sense of the verse. Its note to 62:3 reads, "Question to the assailants: Will you never give up? *Leaning wall ... tottering fence.* A metaphor for David's fragile condition ..." If they were seeking to murder him, it would have to be his spirit. In any case this is personal violence between individuals, not a civil or international war.

7 Psalm 94:6. David calls on God to bring vengeance on the wicked.³⁷ In listing their evil deeds, he accuses, "They slay the widow and the sojourner; and murder (rṣḥ) the fatherless." (KJV & NRSV-murder).

8 Proverbs 22:13. Here, Solomon quotes the sluggard, "The sluggard says, 'There is a lion outside! I shall be slain (rṣḥ)

in the streets!” (KJV/ NRSV-killed) This is the only time that *rsh* is attributed to an animal. Of course, the sluggard could be using personification. But the implication is clear—he has a fear of being killed, either by the wild animal or by an unscrupulous, violent person, in which case it is murder.

priests are banded together; they murder (*rsh*) (KJV & NRSV) on the way to Shechem ... ”

SEVERAL OTHER OT EXAMPLES

In Genesis 14, Abraham’s nephew, Lot, is taken prisoner with his whole household⁴⁰ by a four-nation military coalition which successfully defeated a five-nation rebel alliance.⁴¹ Abraham led 318 trained men, servants born in his household, along with three allies,⁴² in an impressive surprise night attack and defeated the four-nation army, rescuing Lot, his household, and all their possessions.⁴³ This military undertaking raises several questions. Where did Abraham get this training? We can only suppose he received this tactical training in Ur of the Chaldees, where he was raised. It seems reasonable to assume that he received this training in defending his hometown and family against enemy raiders. That he had God’s blessing is evidenced by three factors: 1) his victory against a most formidable force, 2) his vow to God to limit his share to what his servants had eaten and what they were due, and 3) Melchizedek’s blessing.⁴⁴ This event lends itself strongly in support of family defense and defense of those taken advantage of as outside the purview of the sixth commandment.

Moses, having been adopted as a prince into Pharaoh’s family by Pharaoh’s daughter,⁴⁵ became proficient in military tactics in the royal school. And while we have no record of him personally bearing arms in battle, he was certainly the commander-in-chief of the Israelite army with Joshua as his arms-bearing

9 **Isaiah 1:21.** In Isaiah’s first vision, God is calling to rebellious Judah and Jerusalem³⁸ to return to him and repent. In characterizing the state of Jerusalem, He mourns, “How the faithful city has become a harlot, she that was full of justice! Righteousness lodged in her, but now murderers (*rsh*)” (KJV & NRSV).

10 **Jeremiah 7:9.** Jeremiah 7 is part of God’s promise to Judah and Jerusalem, “For if you amend your ways and your doings³⁹ ... I will let you dwell in ... the land that I gave of old to your fathers forever.” Clearly pointing out the sins, God says, “Will you steal, murder (*rsh*) (KJV & NRSV), commit adultery, ... and then ... stand before me ... and say, ‘We are delivered!’—only to go on doing all these abominations?”

11 In **Hosea 4:2**, the Word of the Lord comes to Israel, “... the Lord has a controversy with the inhabitants of the land. There is no faithfulness or kindness, and no knowledge of God in the land.” Verse 2 continues, “There is swearing, lying, killing (*rsh*) (KJV & NRSV), stealing ... ”

12 **Hosea 6:9** is another recitation of the sins of Israel, “As robbers lie in wait for a man, so the

vice-commander in their battle with Amalek, their first.⁴⁶ This was obviously not in conflict with the sixth commandment. His killing of the Egyptian⁴⁷ while not termed *rsh*, was most certainly a pre-Sinai capital crime according to Genesis 9:5,6.

Israel went on to fight many battles through the time of the judges and the monarchy in acquiring land spiritually forfeited by the heathen inhabitants and in defending themselves against raiders and oppressive heathen nations.

One other example comes from the book of Esther. Haman had induced King Ahasuerus to sign an edict making possible for Haman to arrange the elimination of all the Jews—a kind of ethnic-cleansing or genocide.⁴⁸ Haman seemed not to realize that the queen was a Jew. When Esther revealed to the king what the edict would achieve, in addition to the execution of Haman, King Ahasuerus, gave his signet ring to Mordecai, authorizing the Jews to defend themselves against anyone who sought to execute the previous decree.

These examples fit with the full text of Dr. Gane's statement in his book, *Old Testament Law for Christians*:

“The sixth commandment prohibits the illegal, unjustifiable taking of life. The verb is the *qal* of *r-ts-kh*, which refers (including in participial forms) to premeditated homicide (e.g., Numbers. 35:16–19, 21, 31) or involuntary (accidental) manslaughter (e.g., vv. 11, 25–28). Premeditated homicide is first-degree murder, but unpremeditated manslaughter is not. While the language of the commandment forbids all homicide, obeying it or not involves choice, which is lacking in cases of accidents. Prohibiting an accident can only mean that one must be careful to avoid it.

The familiar KJV rendering “Thou

Israel went on to fight many battles through the time of the judges and the monarchy in acquiring land spiritually forfeited by the heathen inhabitants and in defending themselves against raiders and oppressive heathen nations.

shalt not kill” is misleading because the sixth commandment does not forbid all killing. According to Old Testament law, justifiable killing includes slaughter of animals for food (e.g., Deuteronomy 12:15–16, 21–24) or sacrifice (e.g., Leviticus 1–9); legally mandated execution of criminals convicted of capital offenses (e.g., Leviticus 20:2, 27; 24:16; Numbers. 35:19, 21); justifiable war (e.g., Numbers 31; Deuteronomy 20); and self-defense killing of a person who invades one's home at night (Exodus 22:2–3 [22:1–2 MT]), implying the right to protect the lives of oneself and family members with deadly force, if necessary, when evidence for the intent of such an invasion is concealed by darkness.”⁴⁹

Several facts have become obvious: 1) In Numbers, Deuteronomy, and Joshua, in the context of the cities

The Church body, at least in North America, has frowned on using disciplinary measures against persons who volunteer for military service or those who become law enforcement officers or security guards for commercial businesses.

of refuge, *rsh* is used mainly of only two types of killing—accidental or unintentional killing and intentional or premeditated killing of one individual by another. The former is termed manslaughter and the latter, murder. 2) The only exceptions in these three books are Deuteronomy 22:26, where *rsh* is used in an analogy to rape, and when an “avenger” is legally permitted to execute a murderer. 3) Outside of Numbers 35, Deuteronomy 4 and 19, and Joshua 20 and 21 in its other eleven occurrences, *rsh* refers to intentional killing or murder and to lesser but illegal violence. Only in Psalm 62:3(4) is its exact meaning in doubt, yet it is clear that it still refers to acts of interpersonal violence. 4) *Rsh* is never, in all of the 47 citations, used in connection with war or in relation to the killing that takes place in war.

5) *Rsh* is never used of any other kinds of killing, such as animal sacrificing, killing of animals for food.

It is the conclusion of this study that *rsh*, employed in the commandment, “Thou shalt not kill,” is more accurately translated, “thou shalt not murder.” This satisfies the three rules of hermeneutics mentioned earlier. 1) The Scriptures using *rsh* have interpreted its use. 2) The meaning of *rsh* is not based on one text, but on all 46 texts in which it is employed. And 3) the contexts of the use of *rsh* have determined and limited its meaning and scope. Additionally, there are numerous opportunities in the Old Testament for *rsh* to be used in connection with war, but it is never used in this connection (see 2 Kings 6:32-7:20).

This limitation impacts the Church’s teaching on non-combatancy. We have taught, beginning during the United States War Between the States, that Adventist persons who are drafted should seek exemption from being required to train with a weapon and from ever carrying a weapon at any time during their service. One of the key texts in this teaching has been Exodus 20:13, “Thou shalt not kill,” thus interpreting the commandment as a broad prohibition of killing, including that done by the military in war. An Adventist classic in this area, *Seventh-day Adventists in Time of War* by F. M. Wilcox, states, “The sixth commandment of God’s moral law read, ‘Thou shalt not kill.’ To kill is to take life. The soldier by profession is a practical violator of this precept. But if we would enter into life, we must ‘keep the commandments.’”⁵⁰

The translation of the commandment has provided conveniently, but somewhat

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erroneously, a doctrine-like prohibition of military participation. If one is breaking a commandment in participating in military killing in war, that person is committing a grave sin, equivalent to committing adultery, idolatry, and Sabbath breaking. Such offenses require ecclesiastical discipline—censure or removal from membership—which the Church as a body has never attached to the legal bearing of arms in any form. But the commandment is not all-inclusive.

There have been isolated cases of attempts at, and, perhaps, actual removal from membership, for persons who have volunteered for military service, who, as such are not eligible for the U.S. Selective Service 1-A-O classification. Those who volunteer are automatically classified 1-A, which requires training with arms and the bearing of arms when ordered to. In fact, the church body, at least in North America, has frowned on using disciplinary measures against persons who volunteer for military service or those who become law enforcement officers or security guards for commercial businesses. Presently there is a moratorium on the draft, so that anyone who enters the U.S. military services has no choice in the matter of weapons bearing. Weapons training and use is mandatory and automatic.

In the light of this more accurate meaning and scope of the sixth commandment, we have done well not to discipline members who have legally trained with and carried a weapon. They have not violated the sixth commandment or one of the eleven Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual criteria for member discipline if they have been trained to use a weapon and have had to use it under circumstances that are legal, including military service.

Much as we might dislike having to say so, Bible translations have been influenced by the philosophical and theological views of the translators. One notable example of this is the saying of Jesus to the thief on the cross who asked Jesus to remember him when He comes in His kingdom. We take a view that is not in agreement with the translators' punctuation of Jesus reply. And there is no translation that punctuates it the way we believe Jesus said it, "I say to you today, you will be with me in paradise."⁵¹ We oppose this unanimous translation on the grounds that it is inconsistent with the rest of Scriptural teaching on the condition of persons in death.

So, in reading Exodus 20:13 and Deuteronomy 5:17 we must differ with the translation "Thou shalt not kill" on the grounds that it is too broad, and thus is inaccurate and inconsistent with all the contexts in which *rsh* is used and not used in Scripture.

Lest we become fearful that this article is encouraging the Church to scrap its teaching on non-combatancy, let me say that the teaching on non-combatancy has other Scriptural foundations, which will be taken up in the New Testament study. Our teaching on non-combatancy

Chaplains cannot be ordered to perform any duty that is out of harmony with their denomination's tenets. But while some of the Old Testament patriarchs and prophets took up arms, U.S. military chaplains are non-combatant.

has a basis very similar to that of vegetarianism. Based on Scriptural evidence and the health principles with which that evidence has been found to be consistent, we forbid the eating of unclean meats. The matter of whether to eat clean meats or be vegetarian in diet is a matter of individual conscience. But we do teach that an appropriate vegetarian diet is a much healthier diet than a non-vegetarian diet. There is no statement in Scripture prohibiting the eating of clean meats. In fact, Jesus and His disciples are clearly eaters of clean meats—lamb and fish, in particular. So, also, there is no Scriptural statement forbidding the legal bearing and use of arms.

We must look to the New Testament for further guidance on the use of weapons in military service and otherwise. We always want our lives

to be consistent with the life of Christ and His teachings on the Christian lifestyle and witness.

It is to be expected that there will be those who very strenuously oppose this understanding of the sixth commandment. That is their right. There are those who very strenuously oppose the eating of clean meats as a practice that exempts a soul from salvation. Fortunately, as a world church body, we do not support this view. And as a world church body, we should not teach non-arms bearing as a mandatory tenet.

A BRIEF CLOSING WORD ABOUT THE OLD TESTAMENT AND MILITARY CHAPLAINCY

While the biblical basis for military chaplains is rooted in the Israelite priesthood, there are several motifs or themes that speak to the validity of military chaplaincy ministry.

While the Old Testament does not make case at all for non-participation in the military or participation as a non-combatant, it certainly makes a pretty good case for military chaplaincy. Abraham was both the spiritual and military leader of his vast household. We already spoke of his 318 servants trained in military warfare⁵² with Abraham as their commander. Before engaging in a battle with the four-king coalition Abraham had a conversation with God in which he vowed not to engage in the selfish acquisition of spoils.⁵³ And wherever Abraham camped he built altars and led his itinerant household in worship,^{54,55} which obviously included civilian and military persons.

Moses built an altar at Rephidim

following the signal victory over Amalek.⁵⁶ As a spiritual/military leader he had many face-to-face consultations with God.^{57,58,59} The priests blew the trumpets to summon the people to war⁶⁰ and accompanied the people into battle.^{61,62} Deborah, a female judge and prophetess/spiritual leader-accompanied General Barak into battle—he would not go without her.⁶³ David made a practice of enquiring with the priest before he went into battle.⁶⁴ Other such priest/military functions are too numerous to mention here. There is not an exact match between the priesthood chaplaincy and today's military chaplains, but the parallel is clearly there. The Old Testament leaders—patriarchs, priests, and prophets—were indigenous ministers, that is they were inseparably identified with their parishioners. Today's military chaplains are inseparably identified with their parishioners—they wear the same uniforms, accept the same assignments, live under the same rules and regulations, are part of the same rank and pay system, and endure the same hardships under war-time situations as all the other military people in their particular branch of the military. Army chaplains are tented in the field with Army personnel. Navy chaplains go to sea. Marine chaplains are deployed with Marines. Coast Guard chaplains sail with the Coast Guard. Air Force chaplains are assigned wherever the Air Force is based around the world.

Just as the Old Testament spiritual leaders were expected to be faithful to the tenets of Israelite religion, chaplains of all faith groups are expected to be faithful to the doctrines and practices of the denomination or faith group that credentialed and endorsed them. Chaplains cannot

be ordered to perform any duty that is out of harmony with their denomination's tenets. But while some of the Old Testament patriarchs and prophets took up arms, U.S. military chaplains are non-combatant. They are not allowed to take arms training or to carry a weapon at any time. This last point is not true of military chaplains of some countries. The Old Testament priests, patriarchs, and prophets variously performed a variety of ministries in addition to liturgical duties. The priests and prophets performed health care/healing ministries, e.g., Aaron and his descendants and Elijah and Elisha. They also participated in worksite ministries—e.g., Samuel, Ezra, Nehemiah. They performed campus ministries—e.g., Samuel, Elijah, Elisha. They engaged in community efforts—e.g., Deborah. They ministered in correctional settings—e.g., Joseph. The military chaplaincy is a composite ministry. Within the military context chaplains are engaged in all the above ministries.

Today's U.S. military is all-volunteer. So, all who serve choose to do so. Some countries maintain conscription (a military draft). In the U.S. military, all who volunteer are required to take weapons training and are required to make effective use of the weapon issued to them when ordered to do so. Medical personnel are mandatorily trained with weapons for the defense of their patients. Military chaplains are forbidden to bear arms under the Geneva Conventions. Not all countries have signed these Conventions. We will say more about this as we discuss the New Testament and military service.⁶⁵

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NAD Director's Thoughts

GQ DAYS!

TITUS 2:6-8



I had a pivotal experience this morning that was at first gratifying. Then, it became a stultifying yet positive burden.

I woke up feeling good. My morning routine was energizing. Putting collar stays in my shirt and braces on my pants, I dressed meticulously. I buffed my shoes to a high gloss. After putting on my suit jacket, I glanced in the mirror, one more time, straightened the full Windsor knot, tended the dimple in my tie, gathered my sundries, grabbed my suitcase and started walking down the hallway of the hotel I was leaving. I felt pretty good and, in my own mind, looked like a Gentlemen's Quarterly magazine fashion model.

As I approached the elevator, a young boy of about 10 or 11 years got off of the elevator carrying a plate of food from downstairs. He noticed me, reflexively. Then, I saw him do a double take as he walked across the hallway and knocked on the door to his room. Then, he stepped back and looked at me again, with an intense, penetratingly eidetic gaze. Upon arrival, I greeted him, then pushed the button for the next elevator and waited.

I was positively shocked when he said, "Excuse me sir, are you somebody famous?" I could not help but smile as I turned around and said, "No son, I am not famous." He responded by saying "Well, you look like it." By then my elevator had arrived. I said, "Thank you son, you have just made my day." At that moment, the elevator doors began to close.

What a moment! I was a positive role model to a boy who had never seen me and whom I likely will never see again. Could it be that what he saw of me resonated with something deep within himself? Perhaps he saw himself, in the future, looking as I did then. I hope so.

The most prolific author of New Testament prose wrote a profound sentence to his mentee in Christian ministry, Titus. “Likewise, urge the younger men to be self-controlled. Show yourself in all respects to be a model of good works, and in your teaching show integrity, dignity, and speech that cannot be condemned, so that an opponent may be put to shame, having nothing evil to say about us.”

We who have lived to become mature and successful have an obligation to be models for the “youngers” behind us. We who have lived to become mature should not be intolerant and dismissive of the trends that people who are younger embrace. We should, however, live and comport ourselves so that they want and strive to be like we are rather than fighting to reject what we represent to them.

As you prepare to go out today, or, perhaps you are reflecting on the day that has ended, I want to challenge you to look into the mirrors in your mind. How do you look? Are you ready to strut down the runways in your circle of influence?

Will the youngers see the embodiment of dignity, nobility, integrity, and influence? Will those who witness your being today be inspired to imitate the way you dress, act, and project your values? If not, reconsider.

Everybody deserves a role model. If you want to become one of them, end your days with positive images. Start your days pondering four small thoughts that are the seeds of success.

- 1 What excites me, right now?
- 2 For what am I grateful, right now?
- 3 What am I committed to doing, achieving, changing, or creating, right now?
- 4 How can I advance my reason to be, today?

Clothing yourself in those thoughts, early in the morning, will condition what you choose to wear and how you project and protect your influence. Model your values! Let enthusiasm, grace, and graciousness be foundational to your makeup. Your accoutrements should include gratefulness and focused determination to make your part of the world a better place to live in.

Be and look like that person whom you always wanted to become, so that someone else can get a glimpse of who they might one day be.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Paul S. Anderson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping loop at the end of the last name.

Slagle Serves 45 YEARS



Chaplain Arthur Slagle retired on January 1, 2019 as Assistant Director of Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries for the Southeast Region. He'd served in this position since May 2012.

Prior to that Slagle was the Director of Pastoral Care at Park Ridge Hospital in Fletcher, North Carolina (2003-2012). His ministry also includes twenty-one years as a Navy Chaplain (retiring at the rank of Lieutenant Commander), six years as a United States Marine (including combat duty in Vietnam), three years teaching in the Potomac Conference, and eight years pastoring in the Greater New York Conference.

He has been a chaplain with the Civil Air Patrol the past seven years, and has served as chaplain for various

law enforcement and fire and rescue agencies for eighteen years.

A native of New York from an Orthodox Jewish family, he became a Seventh-day Adventist while in the Marine Corps when a nurse gave him a copy of *Steps to Christ*.

He is a graduate of Walla Walla College, Andrews University School of Graduate Studies, and he completed post-graduate work at Andrews University Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, the Catholic University of America, Columbia Union College, and the United States International University.

As an ACM Assistant Director,



1 Chaplain Arthur Slagle served as an ACM Assistant Director from 2012-2018.

2 Slagle served both as a Marine and Marine Corps chaplain.



Chaplain Slagle had the responsibility of assisting, mentoring, training, and recruiting potential chaplains with the goal of assisting them to become endorsed by ACM. Chaplaincy today includes, military chaplaincy, health care, campus, correction, law enforcement, fire and rescue, and community (Civil Air Patrol), Secret Service and FBI. There are currently 155 endorsed chaplains in the Southern Union.

Slagle is the recipient of the Chapel of Four Chaplains Legion of Honor Award. He was listed in Who's Who in High School Teachers twice and he has received over twenty-nine military awards and decorations, including the Purple Heart, Combat Aircrews Wings, three Navy-Marine Corps Commendation awards, two Navy Achievement awards, and numerous other decorations. His most recent award was for the 2018 Chaplain of the Year Award from the North Carolina Civil Air Patrol Wing.

Chaplain Slagle lives in Asheville North Carolina with his wife Genie. They have a blended family of three sons, one daughter, two daughters-in-law and three grandchildren, Caroline, Andrew, and Colton.



- 3 Slagle also serves as a law enforcement chaplain in his local community. He's pictured with Chaplain and Mrs. James Cox and Chaplain Roldan Mendoza.
- 4 Ryan McCollum is welcomed into the chaplaincy by Art Slagle.
- 5 Chaplain Art Slagle
- 6 The North Carolina Civil Air Patrol Wing awarded Slagle the 2018 Chaplain of the Year Award for his service as a Civil Air Patrol Chaplain.

YOU ARE Not FORGOTTEN



In a letter dated December 2, 1863, President Abraham Lincoln penned the following reflection. “Honor to the Soldier and Sailor everywhere, who bravely bears his country’s cause. Honor, also, to the citizen who cares for his brother in the field and serves, as he best can, the same cause.”

Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries-North American Division (ACM-NAD) hosted “You Are Not Forgotten: A Salute to Veterans” an inaugural event in honor of Veterans Day on Saturday, November 10.

In his opening remarks, Dr. Paul Anderson, Director/Endorser, ACM-NAD said, “We have gathered. We who have served, and those of you who endured while we served, have come today to recognize those who are still with us and those who are not.”

More than 200 people gathered

at the Division’s headquarters in Columbia, Maryland to pay tribute, to reflect, to honor lives well lived and remember lives cut short too soon. Servicemen and women from the five United States military services—Air Force, Army, Coast Guard, Marine Corps, and Navy—attended in a show of respect and support.

SIX HONOREES

Special honorees for the evening included Rothacker Smith, who served in the U.S. Army, 92nd Infantry Division; Sgt. 1st Class Joseph D. Anderson, (ret.) for his service to the Army during the Vietnam War, and his leadership as Ward Master for Male Orthopedics at the FitzSimmons Army Medical Center in Denver, Colorado; Frank Damazo, M.D. was honored for the 60 years of advocacy and mentoring for the White Coats – 2,300 soldiers who volunteered as human subjects in experiments from 1954-1973 to develop the science of defensive capabilities against biochemical warfare; and Brig. Gen. James Hammond was honored for his outstanding public service in the South Carolina National Guard and the U.S. state of Maryland as a minister, teacher, counselor, and



highly decorated military leader. Also honored was Colonel Richard “Dick” Stenbakken, U. S. Army, Ret., who also served as the Director/Endorser of Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries from 1992-2004.

During his acceptance remarks, former WW II POW Smith described his ordeal. He’d been drafted at the age of 20 and was assigned to what ultimately became the only African-American infantry division to see combat in Europe during the war. After moving to the Italian campaign in the Tuscan region of Italy, Smith served as a non-combatant medic. On Christmas Day 1944, Smith and his unit came under artillery attack by the Germans. Only ten Soldiers survived the attack, including the severely injured Smith.

“We knew Hitler declared ‘instant death’ for any black capture. They surrounded us for almost two whole days before they came in to pick us up,” said Smith. “We knew we were going to be dead. There was no question that we were going to die.”

Instead, the soldiers were forced marched for approximately four days before, then loaded in a truck, and transported to a German prison camp. A month later, Smith and other

POWs from Allied countries were transferred to Germany. Freedom for the POWs came three months later on April 29, 1945 when American troops arrived in the region.

Smith asked God to forgive his sins when he believed he and his fellow survivors faced execution by the Germans. Once he had peace that he was forgiven, he accepted his fate because he was eager to see Jesus. “It’s a beautiful thing when you’re ready.”

A GOLD STAR FAMILY

In June 2004 a mortar attack struck Balad Air Base. Staff Sgt. Stacey Mastrapa was one of three soldiers killed in the attack. Mastrapa’s mother, Nancy attended the November 10 ceremony to accept an honor in his memory.

“It is our honor to appreciate the fortitude under which you bear the loss of your child and the character that you built within him,” said Anderson “On behalf of the president of the North American Division, your grateful church, and Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries, it is my honor to present you with this [award] as an appreciation for your life, the life of your son, and your commitment to God and His church.”

FOOTNOTES

- ¹ Exodus 20:1-17
² Deuteronomy 5:1-21
³ Proverbs 4:18 KJV
⁴ Logos interlinear translation
⁵ Gerhard F. Hasel, "Principles of Biblical Interpretation", in *A Symposium on Biblical Hermeneutics*, ed. By Gordon M. Hyde. (Washington, DC: Review and Herald Pub Assoc., 1974) p. 167.
⁶ Ekkehardt Muller, "Guidelines for the Interpretation of Scripture," in *Understanding Scripture: An Adventist Approach*, ed. By George W. Reid. (Biblical Research Institute, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2006) p. 125.
⁷ Ibid.
⁸ Genesis 4:14
⁹ Koehler and Baumgartner, *Lexicon in Veteris Testamenti Libros*, or *Lexicon of Old Testament Words.*, p. 907.
¹⁰ Roy E. Gane, *Old Testament Law for Christians: Original Context and Enduring Application*. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017), p. 261.
¹¹ Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary Reference Series, Vol. 8, p. 745.
¹² Numbers 35:6-8
¹³ Numbers 35:1-5
¹⁴ Numbers 35:6
¹⁵ Deuteronomy 19:4, 6; 4:41, 42, NRSV
¹⁶ Joshua 20:3, 5
¹⁷ Deuteronomy 19:6
¹⁸ Numbers 35:26-28
¹⁹ Numbers 35:29
²⁰ Numbers 35:30
²¹ Numbers 35:31, 32
²² Numbers 35:33, 34
²³ *The NIV Application Commentary: Leviticus, Numbers*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2004) p. 707.
²⁴ Gane, *Old Testament Law for Christians*, p. 261.
²⁵ Deuteronomy 22:23-27
²⁶ Judges 20:3, NRSV
²⁷ Judges 20:4
²⁸ 1 Kings 21:19
²⁹ Numbers 35:17
³⁰ 2 Kings 6:24-7:20
³¹ Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, (Hagerstown, Maryland, 2011), Volume 2, p. 887.
³² 2 Kings 6:26-32
³³ 2 Kings 6:32
³⁴ Job 22
³⁵ Job 24
³⁶ Job 24: 14
³⁷ Psalm 94:1, 2
³⁸ Isaiah 1:1

- ³⁹ Jeremiah 7:5
⁴⁰ Genesis 14:12
⁴¹ Genesis 14:8-11
⁴² Genesis 14:13-15, 24
⁴³ Genesis 14:15
⁴⁴ Genesis 14:18-20
⁴⁵ Exodus 3:1-10
⁴⁶ Exodus 17: 8-17
⁴⁷ Exodus 2:11,12
⁴⁸ Esther 3:7-15
⁴⁹ Gane, *Old Testament Law for Christians.*, p. 261.
⁵⁰ F. M. Wilcox, *Seventh-day Adventists in Time of War*, (Peekskill, New York: Review and Herald Publishing, 1936) p. 38.
⁵¹ Luke 23:43
⁵² Genesis 14:14
⁵³ Genesis 14:22
⁵⁴ Genesis 12:6-8;
⁵⁵ Genesis 13:4, 18
⁵⁶ Genesis 17:14-16
⁵⁷ Exodus 33:11
⁵⁸ Deuteronomy 5:4
⁵⁹ Deuteronomy 34:10
⁶⁰ Numbers 10:8,9
⁶¹ Numbers 31
⁶² Joshua 6:1-20
⁶³ Judges 4:4-16
⁶⁴ 1 Samuel 23:6-14; 30:7,8
⁶⁵ James North, Jr., "*Chaplaincy Ministries: The development and Implementation of a Course in Specialized Ministries as Vehicles for Seventh-day Adventist Self-understanding and Expression of Mission*, 1988, pp. 17,18, 22, 23, 71-74.

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FOR GOD AND COUNTRY is published by the World Service Organization (WSO), a chapter of Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries (ACM). It is mailed free of charge to Seventh-day Adventists who are involved in military and public service. Digital copies can be downloaded from AdventistsInUniform.org.

To be added to the mailing list, e-mail the editor or call 301-680-6785. Comments and/or articles are welcome and should be sent to the editor at acmeditor@gc.adventist.org. Include your full name, complete mailing address, telephone, e-mail address, and current digital photos with all submissions. Items submitted by mail will not be returned unless accompanied by a self-addressed stamped return envelope.

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"WHEN YOU ARE IN THE SERVICE OF YOUR FELLOW
BEINGS, YOU ARE IN THE SERVICE OF GOD."

— Anonymous



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