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Part One:

In the era of World War I a Prayer Book and a symbol was created for the men going into the armed forces. The symbol was called the Episcopal War Cross. This cross has since been renamed the Episcopal Service Cross. The cross is circular but is fashioned after the Jerusalem Cross with the motto, "Christ Died For Thee" in the middle. The Prayer Book and symbol has been made available for every Episcopalian who enters federal service. The Office for the Bishop Suffragan has oversight of those called to ministry outside the parish. Since World War I this ministry has moved forward and has *taken on new and exciting responsibilities that have spread to ministry of chaplains in three federal institutions--military, prisons and veteran's hospitals.*

Episcopal chaplains in service to the federal agencies provide a ministry unlike diocesan or parish based ministries. While there are programs, it is a ministry of presence, patience and guardianship. Whether ministering to a soldier on the battlefield, an inmate in prison or a patient lying in a hospital room these individuals are called to this extraordinary ministry to provide uniqueness to our way of life; a freedom for all to worship without fear.

Episcopal chaplains' presence is to bring to their community a living faith that is emotionally, spiritually and physically at hand. They are there to create an atmosphere without fear to those who are seeking a relationship with Jesus and assist them on their journey. In order to make this possible, availability is the key. Availability to celebrate, mourn, comfort and counsel their charges and families. Availability to one's community must be balanced with the needs of the chaplain's family. This can be very difficult because life in the military, prison or hospital is filled with crisis, anxiety, uncertainty and separation for both the chaplain's family and the chaplain.

It is fundamental to the call to be a chaplain to be a voice to the voiceless. Whether in the military, prison or hospital, the enlisted, inmates and patients often find their voices silenced by authority. As Jesus was the voice for the "least of these" so the chaplain hears the cries and responds as Jesus would expect. The position of Bishop Suffragan for Federal Ministries is the "Chief of Chaplains." The role is to be the advocate, pastor and colleague to our clergy in the field.

I believe the role of the Bishop Suffragan is to not only be a voice, but also to be the outward and visible sign of this very special ministry to those who serve outside diocesan and parish life. It is also to determine from diocesan Bishops, clergy who might have a call to federal ministry. The Bishop Suffragan would also be the bridge for clergy who have been lent to these extensions of Christ's mission. The Bishop Suffragan's position is to bring to the House of Bishops the needs of those coming

home from war, incarceration, or hospitals. The Bishop Suffragan must ask our Dioceses and parishes the following questions:

Are we ready for the returning veterans and their wounds that are both physical and mental?

Are we willing to assist returning inmates as they seek to integrate themselves back into society the way we do for refugees?

Are we willing to set up ministries at local Veteran Administration Hospitals?

The Bishop Suffragan for Federal Ministries is an arm of the Presiding Bishop's office to help the church remember, our clergy, their families, those in the military, prisons or hospitals, for "...Lord, when did we you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison and did not help you?" (Matthew 25:44)

Part Two:

It is nowhere more clearly than the rank structure of the military system as well in the other federal bureaucracy that individuals can find themselves at odds with co-workers and those who have oversight. It is also a place where abuses have occurred and been hidden. Boundaries and rank sometimes have a way of infringing on the rights of others.

I believe the Bishop Suffragan must be present and protector. This takes energy, time, commitment and tenacity. Many superiors expect to be heard, followed and not necessarily questioned. I realized that this can be a generalization but I have experienced it.

The Bishop must be ready for traveling. When I consider the array of issues our clergy experience, especially with the fundamentalist Christian attitudes, it can be difficult for liturgical chaplains. This happens not only at home but also on deployment when families are separated and the Episcopal chaplain is without support. These are times of stress, anxiety and loneliness and it will impact their families and other relationships.

When I was assigned as the Wing Chaplain for the 121 Air Refueling Wing, Ohio Air National Guard, we were preparing for Desert Storm. Our first group to deploy was the Security Police. Prior to their 72 hour departure time they had been given notice to get everything in order-- powers of attorney, wills, financial issues and requirements of their dependants. This Security Police Squadron was made up of 25 young men and women. This had been the first federal call up in more years than anyone could remember. They had had state call ups from the governor for disasters, but they had never experienced a federal call up. I was called by the Wing Commander along with our other chaplains to deal with the needs of these fellow Guardsmen. These Guardsmen were hit with leaving their families, their jobs, their friends and their homes. We talked about the local customs, how long would they be gone, would their job still be here when they got back and even what will happen if they do not come back? Many were surprised that this was part of their military contract. We, the Chaplains, assured them that we were going to be here for their families while they were deployed. I found

out who their chaplain would be once they were in country and notified the chaplain of their arrival. We assured them that they were in our daily prayers. During those meetings a young Security Policeman, going to college and engaged to be married came with his fiancé to see me. A wedding date was set for that summer, but deployment was for February. It was a very hard time and his location was classified and the duration of deployment was indefinite. They were both afraid and strong at the same time. We spent a lot of time together and I drove many times from Portsmouth, Ohio to Columbus, Ohio to prepare them for the near future. Finally the call up came and on the morning of departure in the Base Chapel at 5:45 a.m., I officiated their marriage.

I believe connecting and relationship building must be a priority between our Federal Ministry families and the local congregations. The Federal institutions are more of a fish bowl than the parishes so that the local congregation and clergy must be willing to reach out to our chaplaincy families. The Bishop Suffragan of the Federal Ministries must link with the Bishops who have Federal installations in their dioceses. Being men and women who are called to a ministry of presence and protectors of religion will often find their calls endangered. The Bishop must be present and their protector. I have the will, the tenacity and the energy to do this for them who sacrifice so much and I have my family support.

Finally one such issue a chaplain could face, maybe already has, is the “don’t ask, don’t tell.” As the church and as a chaplain, men and women who offer themselves in service to their country should be welcomed, encouraged and honored. Yet with this opinion, what will the commander say or write in their performance review?