Leaving a Legacy: Identity

By: SFC Dustin M. Hall

On 01 July 2017, Regimental Sergeant Major (RSGM) Alvin J. Chaplin passed the torch of being the Senior Enlisted Advisor to the Chief of Chaplains on to SGM Ralph Martinez. During his time as the RSGM, Chaplin charted a new course for what it is to be, and serve, as a Chaplain Assistant (56M). To be entirely accurate, he redefined the Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) from the ground-up, including the MOS title.

Soon, on 01 October 2017, Chaplain Assistants will officially become “Religious Affairs Specialists.” This term better defines where Chaplin wanted the MOS to go in terms of increased job capabilities and a deeper professional identity.

Chaplin wanted to ensure there was more than a change in what the enlisted religious support members called themselves, and he took great strides to ensure that happened.

A visionary, the RSGM started focus groups, called “Tiger Teams,” throughout the Army. These teams were comprised of 56Ms and were tasked with finding ways to capitalize on his progressive strategy. He led the MOS to create sweeping changes in structure, educational courses, and capabilities.

Arguably the biggest change under RSGM

New RSGM, Continued Progress

By: RSGM Ralph Martinez

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself as your Regimental Sergeant Major, and give you my expectations of the Chaplain Assistants in the coming years. In my twenty-nine years as a Chaplain Assistant, I have been assigned to many operational and strategic level commands to include seven consecutive years at a Geographical Combatant Command and four years at the institutional command.

On 01 October 2017, our MOS will officially change to Religious Affairs Specialist/NCO and with the name change, the Army leadership will expect changes in our functions and capabilities. My expectations for the future Chaplain Assistant are in line with the Chief of Chaplains’ Lines of Effort. I expect you to be fully Integrated within

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New RSGM  
(continued from pg. 1)

all that you do, provide quality **Leader Development** at all levels, and support the Chief of Staff of the Army’s number one priority: **Readiness**.

For this edition of “The Pulse,” I will focus on Readiness and will discuss the other two in sequential editions. Those of you who know me, know it is my belief that **physical fitness** is one of the cornerstones in building a fit and conditioned fighting force. It is an individual responsibility to ensure that we are prepared to meet the physical demands for the current fight. We must be ready to fight today, and prepare to fight tomorrow in a complex world. We must be proficient in our technical and tactical skills and implement them into our training plan to meet the demands of the Army. Our aim should not be the least acceptable standards, our standards should allow us to be “**All that We can be**”. The ultimate winner on the battlefield is the force that is physically fit, proficient in their Warrior tasks, and led by competent leaders.

Lastly, I expect all NCOs to fulfill your obligation as a leader and the charge you took when you became a member of the “Backbone of the Army.”

**All In, for God and Country.**

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**My AIT Perspective**

*By: Pvt Keishly Vallebelen*

While I was in training, my Drill Sergeant asked me about my MOS. I responded with “I’m a 56M,” and he told me that it was a waste because our job is not as important as other jobs. He said that the only thing we do as 56Ms was give candy away and babysit the Chaplain. While I was in Basic I wanted to change my MOS because of his comments, I did not want anyone to look down on me.

Once I got to Advanced Individual Training (AIT), I noticed that the Drill Sergeant was not well-informed. During AIT, I learned we assist the Chaplain, help Soldiers and their families, provide religious accommodations, referrals, religious activities, and much more. Yes, our principal mission is to assure the Chaplain’s security, and yes, paper work is a given. The hardest thing though about our job is that everyone holds the 56M to a higher standard because we work directly with the Chaplain, and the Chaplain represents the Word of God.

I think that our MOS should be longer than 7 weeks so that we can learn more than just the basics. Our MOS requires a lot of understanding, basic human interaction, and religious support. Ever since I started AIT my perspective of the 56M changed drastically. Now I understand the importance of my job and where I stand as a Chaplain Assistant and I’m ready to go serve Soldiers.
Observer Coach/Trainer Sends:

By: SFC Crystal Jones

As an Observer Coach/Trainer (OC/T) at the Joint Multinational Readiness Center in Hohenfels, Germany, it is my responsibility to coach and train unit ministry teams on religious support operations in a decisive action training environment, with a focus on multinational operations and interoperability, which is unique to Europe. The most successful UMTs, and specifically 56Ms, have been those who knew and executed their critical tasks according to the outlined performance steps. It is often difficult to coach on the multinational and interoperability aspects of training because many UMTs have not trained on or perfected our MOS-specific critical tasks at home station.

Skill Level 1 Chaplain Assistants are expected to prepare UMT input to running estimates, OPLANS, and OPORDS, as well as develop religious area analyses and religious impact assessments. These tasks have historically been a 56A responsibility, but this is no longer the case. Chaplain Assistant NCOs will build upon their knowledge of Skill Level 1 tasks in the execution of advisement for Soldier and Leader Engagements and maintaining situational understanding of the brigade area of operations for religious support. Division and brigade Chaplain Assistant NCOICs must incorporate the critical task list into their monthly training. Chaplain Assistants can access the task list on the following websites: Army Training Network, the Central Army Registry, or the Training for the Corps. Each task has performance steps and these performance steps are a rubric to successful accomplishment of each performance measure.

Gone are the days when Chaplain Assistants only perform preventative maintenance checks and services on vehicles and provide security.

There is an expectation that Chaplain Assistants bring critical and creative thinking, as well as tactical proficiency, to the accomplishment of the religious support mission. This starts with training and knowing the 56M role in the Unit Ministry Team!

56 Mike Spotlight

Born in June 1987 in Minas Gerais, Brazil, SGT Rene W. Couto was a law student who decided to change paths and join the Army as a 56M. While serving as a Religious Affairs Specialist, SGT Couto deployed to Afghanistan in support of OEF XIII-XIV with the Combat Aviation Brigade (CAB), 1st Infantry Division. SGT Couto is currently assigned to a Special Operations unit in Fort Bragg, North Carolina.

His awards and decorations include the Army Commendation Medal (1 OLC), Army Achievement Medal (1 OLC), Military Outstanding Volunteer Service Medal, NATO Medal, Army Parachutist Badge, German Armed Forces Parachutist Badge, and the Singapore Armed Forces Parachutist Badge.

SGT Couto's favorite quote is: "Make His decision, your decision."
Chaplin’s leadership was the Religion and Cultural Affairs Course (RCAC). Slated to begin online pilot classes in October 2017, the RCAC is a groundbreaking initiative that will take the 56M from the historically defined role of a Chaplain Assistant, to truly becoming a Religious Affairs Specialist.

More than a perennial aide to a chaplain, Religious Affairs Specialists are professional, skilled members of the Unit Ministry Team that bring expert credentials to bear. This shift, spearheaded by Chaplin, also created the first civilian educational partnership with a collegiate institution for 56Ms in the history of the Army. In the months and years to come, 56Ms will begin climbing the steps that Chaplin built. They will don their new role as experts in Religious Affairs and they will grasp the dream, made reality by RSGM Chaplin.

RSGM Chaplin certainly made historic changes to the Chaplain Corps and the Army, but most importantly to the future and identity of the Religious Affairs Specialist.

Fun Fact:
One of the last initiatives started by RSGM Chaplin was the creation of a newsletter that would encourage the progressive identity of the 56M: The Pulse.

Religious Advisement

By: 1SG Thomas Roldan

Religious support operations are complex and demanding, and must be led by adaptive, highly-skilled professionals who understand how to provide timely and relevant information and analysis to their organizations to support the commander’s priorities and intent. The Army requires members of the Chaplain Corps to have the capabilities to provide religious support and advise commanders on the impact of religion. The ability to advise commanders and the staff on religion, both internal and external, is significant because of the joint nature of military operations. The responsibility of providing critical advisement with timeliness falls not to just the chaplain, it falls to the team, which consists of an enlisted counterpart. The question is, how do you, as a Religious Affairs Specialist, effect positive organizational support and critical external advisement for the units in which you serve? In order for you to be a key player in religious advisement, you must be an expert at your military occupational specialty and have the trust of the organization.

One of the five principles of the Army Profession is military expertise. Though difficult to master all aspects of our craft, we must consistently strive to get better every day, focusing on the self-development domain of training. It’s not easy to advise a division commander...
with over twenty-five years of military experience unless you speak with expertise in your specialty. You must be able to convey mastery of your skill to those who need to know and one way to do that is by establishing positive relationships with those around you. Relationships are key to advisement and relationships are built on trust.

Trust, the bedrock of our profession, is unequivocally the most important part of our lives as military professionals. Without trust it is almost impossible to lead, advise, and care for the Soldiers and Families we are honored to serve. Commanders and command sergeants major must regard the Religious Affairs Specialist as a trusted agent who applies military expertise to all facets of religious support.

The combination of relationships built on trust and the demonstrated ability of your military expertise will pave the way for valued religious advisement. While it is possible to advise without expertise and trust, how far will that get you? Will you be valued? It’s doubtful that you will make a lasting contribution to the organization. Advisement is a skill that takes time to cultivate, but it is a critical component to religious support.

“Without trust it is almost impossible to lead, advise, and care for the Soldiers and Families we are honored to serve.”

The AIT “56 M ic”: Who is your Favorite Super Hero?

Superman
“Because he’s super-fast, strong, and handsome!”

CPT America
“Because he is selfless.”

Batman
“Because he works under the cover of night.”

Jesus
“He knows the true meaning of how to express Agape love.”
Religious Affairs & the Future

By: SGM John Proctor

On 01 October 2017 our title will change from Chaplain Assistant to Religious Affairs Specialist/NCO. With this change comes the expectation of a widened and deepened range of capabilities from us. Your personal initiative in acquiring skills, knowledge, and abilities for the effective delivery of religious support will be critical to meeting the Army’s expectations following this change.

Army Directive 2017-03 issued on 03 January 2017 delegates decision-making authority for religious accommodations to brigade commanders. This policy when considered in the light of Army Directive 2016-34 which widened the types and categories of religious accommodations places increased responsibilities on brigade, group, and regimental UMTs to deliver quality religious advisement to their commands. Army Techniques Publication 1-05.04, Internal Advisement published in March 2017 explains the ways UMTs and chaplain sections can deliver internal advisement to ensure the free exercise of religion for all authorized members without adversely impacting readiness.

In addition to advisement, “the Chaplain Corps will provide training to leaders at every level that process requests for religious accommodation, and units that lead Soldiers who receive approved religious accommodation requests” (AD 2016-34). The intersection of these policy changes with our nomenclature change present an enormous opportunity for us to demonstrate new and unique ways we provide religious support and advise on the ways religion impacts operations. However, without your personal initiative and professional investment, these expectations can also go unmet and the change in MOS 56M may appear to be merely cosmetic.

The Army will also expect a religious affairs specialist to provide advisement on the way religion impacts unified land operations (ADP 3-0). ATP 1-05.03 explains this as external advisement. Every Religious Affairs Specialist and NCO should thoroughly understand these terms and apply the techniques explained in the ATPs. Until our institutional education and training is able to build these capabilities into initial entry training and the NCO Educational System, your personal initiative as leaders and operators will be critical to the success of meeting the current religious support requirements for our Army.

Implied in this personal initiative is the professional investment to develop our understanding and agility in navigating world religions. This will cost us something – time, education, and training. Let’s get out ahead of these new requirements with the exceptional commitment our MOS is known for and deliver excellent religious support as Religious Affairs Specialists.

Pro Deo et Patria!
Reflections from a Former RSGM

By: Stephen Stott, Ret.

It has officially been three years since I left the job as Regimental Sergeant Major. I have had some family challenges that demanded my attention almost immediately upon leaving active duty, but thankfully things have a way of sorting themselves out and I am really enjoying my retirement. Since I have retired I have become a life time member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the US Army Chaplain Corps Regimental Association, and of course I am still a very active member of STARFLEET the International Fan Organization. But enough about me, what I want to talk about is how I have been able to transition from active service and my views on the latest changes effecting the Corps and our Religious Affairs Specialists.

The bottom line up front in regards to being able to enjoy your retirement is to prepare for it while you are on active duty. I encourage you to take full advantage of the transition programs that the Army offers and use those benefits you have earned for your great service to this nation. I have met many retirees and Soldiers that ETSed from the Army that did not use resources available to them and are struggling on the outside. In most cases it was because they chose not to use them, not that they were denied the opportunity.

I am glad to see changes that are happening for our Religious Affairs Specialists. The name itself shows that we as a branch are growing and adapting to the changing environment and mission of our Army today. It is imperative that we continue to demonstrate relevance by way of identifying distinct roles that our specialists provide to the team. The most outstanding evidence of how our senior NCOs continue to demonstrate our professionalism is the numbers of Sergeants Major that receive the call to serve as Command Sergeants Major. Their outstanding service in that role comes in no small part from the skills they developed working in the Chaplain Corps and they continue to excel in all parts of the Army spreading their expertise and representing the Chaplain Corps in an excellent way.

Well that's all for now. I pray each and every one of you out there continue to live long and prosper.

“Live Long and Prosper”

Former RSGM Stephen Stott

RSGM Stephen Stott in April 2008 taking the lead of the Chaplain Corps enlisted force.
It is definitely an honor and a privilege to serve as the Command Sergeant Major of your Chaplain Center and School! It is my intent to be a model of integrity and fairness. As I walk the halls each day and travel around to the different installations, I am consistently impressed with the professionalism and commitment of the Officers, NCOs, and Soldiers with whom I come into contact. Our shared passion is what will make the Chaplain Corps soar in the accomplishment of our mission and the Chief of Chaplains’ vision.

I encourage you all to take ownership of the Corps. Excel where you are. It is not about a title or position. It’s about doing what is expected and asked of you at this particular point and time in your life, both professional and personal.

We have to be forward thinkers. We must be willing to consider all options and understand the consequences. As I sit and think about the future of the Chaplain Corps, I’m often reminded of a quote by Warren Buffett: “Someone is sitting in the shade today because someone planted a tree a long time ago.” We have to get this right. We have to make well-informed decisions as we move the Corps forward. I truly believe success is distinctively defined as acting with honesty and integrity, performing to the best of your ability, and appreciating the people who helped you achieve your goals. We have to passionately believe that we can make a difference.

I ask that you encourage others to support the cause of deepening the 56M identity. When people are encouraged, they feel valued and appreciated. Also, Soldiers believe they are respected when they feel encouraged and asked to be part of something bigger than themselves and it is meaningful. Words of inspiration can have a powerful and lasting impact to enhance a better commitment to help individuals reach their full potential.

We have to continue to thrive at being professionals who possess high character. Character is a unique set of moral and ethical qualities that define what you believe in, what you stand for, and what you expect of yourself and others. It is those character assets, those character qualities, which determine an individual’s response to any given circumstance. Soldiers must believe in you. Your character is as important as the instructions you provide. Subordinates look up to a leader who effectively communicates the truth, strives to do the right things, lives a moral and ethical life, and demonstrates their best.

We must continue to develop our leaders. As one of my previous commanders stated, “Every training opportunity is an opportunity for leader development.” It is not enough to say we are developing leaders. We must actually take the time to design, develop, implement, and evaluate a leader development strategy. I will assure you that this model will pay dividends for the individual and most importantly, the Chaplain Corps! Our talent management program should provide opportunities for people to grow, both personally and professionally.

In closing, I would ask that each of you take some time to think about three things. What am I doing to develop others? What am I doing to better the Chaplain Corps? What am I doing to improve my worth in order that I might invest in someone else?

"Leadership is based on a spiritual quality; the power to inspire, the power to inspire others to follow."
– Vince Lombardi

Thanks for all you do for God and Country!
Nurture the Living: Including Yourself!

By SFC Naomi Rankins

Staying in shape is not only our duty as Soldiers in the United States Army, it is an important element of living a healthy lifestyle. Physical Readiness Training (PRT) is mandatory, so we have no excuse for not exercising. However, when it comes to nutrition, we can easily get off track. One excuse I hear a lot is that people do not “have time” to eat healthy. Whether you are a single Soldier, or a married parent of four, eating a balanced meal is too easy. As a full time Soldier and full time mom, I have found that a slow cooker is an absolute life saver. Here is one of my favorite slow cooker recipes:

Ingredients:
- 2 pounds stew beef cut into 1-inch cubes
- 1 package McCormick Beef Stew seasoning
- 2 cups potatoes, cubed
- 2 cups carrots, sliced into ½ inch pieces
- ½ cup celery, sliced into ½ inch pieces
- 1 medium onion, sliced
- 2 tbsp flour
- 3 cups water

Mix water and seasoning packet in slow cooker. Add vegetables. In a separate bowl, coat the beef with flour. Combine all ingredients into slow cooker. Cook on low for 8 hours. NOTE: For gluten free, substitute McCormick Gluten Free Beef Stew Seasoning, and use Gluten Free flour. Yield: 8 servings

Serve with rice and corn bread and enjoy!

The 56 Minute Challenge!
Can you solve this puzzle in under 1 hour? Go ahead, use the internet!

Across
2. Some say "shazam," 7th IN DIV says "CH ____!"
3. It is and isn’t a “1st,” 56M name change ____ 2017.
6. The Red Sox had Pedro, 56Ms now have Ralph.
7. "56Ms, we got your back!” Personnel Proponent Office.

Down
1. 56M MoH recipient.
4. This Chaplain is not your father, or is he?
5. Soldier addicted to drugs? Get right on that.
8. USACHCS is running high with CSM ____.
9. SGM (Ret.) Monica Dixon doesn’t mean to ______, but it’s where she made history.

Be the first to submit solution to dustin.m.hall2.mil@mail.mil and be recognized on our page!
What is a Chaplain Detachment, Anyway?

By: SGM Ward Gros

Today’s Army needs proficient religious support, which requires highly trained, fully capable Unit Ministry Teams (UMTs) that can operate tactically and pastorally across the battlefield. Chaplain Detachments (CDs) are a special type of UMT. Per FM 1-05, Religious Support, a CD is a Reserve Component force that supplements religious support operations and provides or performs religious support across the range of military operations. While many UMTs are assigned at an organizational level (battalion, brigade, or higher), CDs have a unique position in religious support operations. CDs consist of five- or two-Soldier teams from the Army Reserve and National Guard and their mission is to augment religious support at home and abroad.

There are four types of CDs, each with its own force structure, capabilities, and manning requirements. Chaplain Assistants from all components should understand how each CD contributes to religious support operations, as Chaplain Assistants are inherently responsible for ensuring that training and employment of CDs align with force capabilities.

Alpha Detachments (two Chaplains and three Assistants) have historically served as the Religious Support Team for the TSC forward. The home station employment of Alpha Detachments focuses on technical supervision of subordinate CDs that fall within the TSC task organization.

The other three CD types (Bravo, Charlie, and Delta) each consist of one Chaplain and one Assistant. Bravo Detachments usually augment an expeditionary sustainment command (ESC) headquarters and task-organized elements without organic religious support. Charlie Detachments typically provide augmentation to a corps chaplain section. Delta Detachments augment at the division level. Although each of the four CDs share some common duties and expected missions, the level of responsibility is equal to the rank structure of the Soldiers assigned.

Although the senior Chaplain assigned to each CD is not the unit commander, they do bear command responsibility which includes Commander Training Objectives, Unit Status Reports, and meeting all readiness requirements. In order to function independently when activated, Chaplain Assistants assigned to CDs must ensure that their unit gets full support from the unit to which they are assigned at home station. This support extends beyond simple beans and bullets and includes Unit Status Report requirements, specific S/G-1 manning requirements, and specific S/G-3 training and validation requirements. Due to all of these requirements, even the junior enlisted Chaplain Assistants assigned to Bravo Detachments must function as NCOs, because NCOs have a primary responsibility to conduct and report training for their unit. And Chaplain Assistants at all levels need to be involved in the planning process (from concept planning, to exercise, to after action reports and improvement) in order to stay ready and provide outstanding religious support to today’s Army.
Welcome to The Pulse!

From the Editor:

The Pulse is a historic and groundbreaking publication for Religious Affairs Specialists. We, on the staff of The Pulse, would like to invite you to contribute to future editions. The idea is to simply tell the story of 56Ms around the Army.

Whether you are in a foxhole in Afghanistan providing religious support, in an operations cell advising the command, or setting up for the next worship service here at home, we’d love for you to tell the branch what’s happening.

The articles we’re looking for should come from every pay grade, position, or duty title that a 56M can hold. If you’re doing something that’s working well, tell the Army and benefit others. If you have groundbreaking news, send it!

Our staff will conduct editing for grammatical correctness, and we may trim your article to fit the needs of the edition that you’re going to be published in.

Keep the articles to the criteria listed to the right, and enjoy telling the story.

Article Submissions:

- Try to keep your article between 200-400 words in length.
- Ensure you’re writing about or from the perspective of a 56M.
- Help our staff out and have the article proofread by some of your coworkers and supervisors before sending it our way.
- Pictures are worth a thousand words! Please try to send one or two pictures that tell the story of your article.

Code-Breaker Challenge!

Test your spy-like abilities in deciphering this message:

Be the first to submit solution to dustin.m.hall2.mil@mail.mil and be recognized on our page!

Topic:

“Something 56Ms already know!”
“ACT NOW”: It’s Your Career!

By: SSG Denise Min

I’m sure you’ve heard of the Army Career Tracker (ACT) Portal by now. Especially if you’ve PCSed or sponsored a PCSing Soldier within the last year, you’ve been on ACT to work with the Total Army Sponsorship Program (TASP) portion of the Portal. But did you know that there is SO MUCH more to ACT than just Sponsorship?? I encourage you to spend some time on the ACT Portal and see what it has to offer. ACT allows you to track your own career (appropriately named, am I right??) as well as the careers of your subordinates and mentees. It is a digital hub for much of your Army information... It pulls information from various databases, including (but not limited to) Human Resources Command (HRC) – your personnel and ERB information; the Integrated Total Army Personnel Database (ITAPDB) or Reserve Training Requirements and Resources System (ATRRS) – your military training history; and GoArmyEd – your civilian education history. All of this information is compiled into one place so that you can look at a snapshot of your career and then form an Individual Development Plan (IDP) to help you meet your future career goals. Additionally, you can correspond directly with your leaders, mentors, subordinates, and mentees through the Portal. It really is an amazing tool, especially if you are not co-located with the rest of your Brigade but still want to have an active mentorship relationship with your Brigade UMT leaders or subordinates.

And the fun of ACT doesn’t end with career tracking and development! The newest addition to the Portal are Communities. We have a Career Management Field (CMF) 56 Community on ACT where we share all kinds of information pertinent to being a member of this great MOS! You can find our Community at https://actnow.army.mil/communities/community/enlisted-cmf56 or by navigating from the ACT Homepage (click on "Communities" and then use the drop-down boxes to navigate to "ENLISTED" and "CMF56"). We look forward to having you join our Community!

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Want to join us? Contact the Proponent Office