



The National Conference on Ministry to the Armed Forces (NCMAF)

Post Office Box 7572 | Arlington, Virginia 22207

August 31, 2018

Colonel Toya Davis, USA
4800 Mark Center Drive
Suite 04J25-01
Alexandria, VA 22350-9000

Dear Colonel Davis,

We are writing to tell you about a Women In Ministry training for military chaplains we co-hosted with the Military Chaplains Association (MCA) in May of this year. This was a first of its kind for both organizations and took two years of planning because of our limited resources.

NCMAF's membership is comprised of nearly 150 religious organizations who endorse military and VA hospital chaplains. We typically focus on the interaction between the Department of Defense, the individual service Chiefs of Chaplains, and our members. Our sponsorship of this training was in response to a perceived unmet professional need. The response and feedback overwhelmingly demonstrated this was the case.

We are at an impasse and not totally sure on how to proceed at this point. Women military chaplains are a minority identity group and seem to be struggling based on our observations and conversations with many of them. Our appeal to the services to establish a partnership for future events was rejected.

The options before us seem clear: 1) Do nothing - which seems like an abdication of responsibility and abandons women military chaplains. 2) Foster a collaborative approach with all three Chiefs of Chaplains, and potentially other civilian groups like MCA, to continue to provide training and support. 3) Each service conducts their own training without the assistance and involvement of NCMAF or anyone else. We are not in a position to decide which action is best but are committed to helping if necessary.

Included is a copy of our after action report highlighting the successes and challenges as well as a copy of the agenda.

We are willing to discuss this matter further either in writing or in person. You may reach me at ed@ncmaf.com or at 703-608-2100.

Sincerely,

Chair, Executive Board
Sarah Lammert

Executive Director
John H. Lea III



Connect. Cultivate. Contextualize.

***Women In Ministry Training Agenda
Bon Secours Retreat and Conference Center
1525 Marriottsville Road, Marriottsville, MD 21104***

May 29-31, 2018

Tuesday, May 29:

<u>Time:</u>	<u>What:</u>	<u>Responsible POC:</u>
1300 - 1700	Check-in/Registration	Event Committee
1700 - 1800	Evening Reception: Time of Connection Welcome/Intro of Keynote Speaker/Ice Breaker	Rev. Sarah Lammert CH Jack Lea
1800 - 1845	Dinner: Dining Hall (Gather 3x5 cards/questions for Sr Leaders Panel)	CH Ken Bush
1900 - 2000	Networking: Sharing Hopes/Expectations	Small Group Leaders
2015 - 2100	Evening Worship: Sponsored by AME	CH Monica Lawson

Wednesday, May 30:

<u>Time:</u>	<u>What:</u>	<u>Responsible POC:</u>
0800 - 0900	Breakfast: Dining Hall	
0915 - 0945	Opening Devotion	CH Karen Meeker
1000 - 1130	Keynote Speaker Connect and Cultivate-Building Resilience	CH (Maj-Gen, Retired) Potter
1200 - 1300	Lunch: Dining Hall	
1300 - 1400	Senior Leaders Panel: Sharing Best Practices	Senior Leaders
1415 - 1500	Discussion of Keynote and Sr Ldr Panel	Small Grp Ldrs

<u>Time:</u>	<u>What:</u>	<u>Responsible POC:</u>
1530 - 1645	Personnel Briefs	Service Representatives
1700 - 1745	Summary Session/Interest Groups	CH Kristy Moeller
1800 - 1900	Dinner: Dining Hall	
1915 - 2115	Screening of Movie/Theological Reflection	CH Boyd

Thursday, May 31

0800 - 0900	Breakfast: Dining Hall	
0915 - 0945	Devotion	CDR Judy Malana
1000 - 1130	Contextualizing Women in Ldrship	CH (COL-Ret) Janet Horton, Christian Science Endorser
1130 - 1200	Closing Ritual	Rev. Sarah Lammert
1200 - 1300	Lunch: Dining Facility	

Daily Facilitators:

Tuesday: Rev. Sarah Lammert

Wednesday: CH Kristy Moeller

Thursday: CH Jack Lea

May 2018 Women in Military Ministry Conference



From May 29th to May 31st this year, the National Conference on Ministry to the Armed Forces (NCMAF) and the Military Chaplains Association (MCA) co-sponsored the first ever *Women in Military Ministry Conference*, at the Bon Secours Retreat Center in Marriottsville, MD. More than 100 female military chaplains, from as far away as Okinawa, Bahrain, Guam, and Germany attended the highly successful event. Conference planners initially hoped for 30 chaplains to attend. The overwhelming response required us to add off-site lodging and eventually close registration due to meeting room space limitations.

The event's theme was "Connect, Cultivate, and Contextualize." Chaplain (Major General) Lorraine Potter, USAF (Ret.), the first female Air Force Chief of Chaplains, was the keynote speaker. She challenged the women to live into their strengths and affirmed their contributions to the people and the mission of the Armed Forces. CH (COL) Janet Horton (Ret.), an early woman member of the chaplaincy, highlighted how far women in uniform, particularly chaplains, have come.



Chaplain (Major General) Lorraine Potter, USAF (Ret.)

She celebrated the unique gifts women clergy bring to the services. Both women told stories about the challenges they faced as women pioneers in the chaplaincy. Their stories were very inspiring.

A senior panel, comprised of 0-6 chaplains and a general officer, fielded questions about the struggles and issues facing women in the military today. Participants highly praised the event which included seminars, worship, fellowship, mentoring and networking opportunities.



Senior Panel Discussion

Attendees had many positive things to say about the training. One that typifies the feedback received read:

"Thank you so much for organizing and making this year's Women Chaplains' Conference come to life. I've been in the Army 12 years and have never been able to attend one of these before (on my dime or anyone else's!) The fellowship and camaraderie has been very badly needed!! I hope and pray I can be of use to organize the next event."

The conference's cost was largely underwritten by generous donations from several NCMAF endorsers and a MCA grant. Additionally, some endorsers directly assisted their chaplains with travel and registration fees. Yet, many who attended, paid their expenses out of their own pockets – including overseas travel.



Seminar Participant Interaction



Inter-Faith Chapel Prayer Service

Hoping to establish synergy for this training we reached out to the Chief of Chaplains' offices starting January 2018. Their responses varied. The Air Force was the most supportive, publishing a Memorandum of Instruction (MOI) to promote the event and providing travel money to attend. As a result of the inconsistent support, many chaplains only found out about the event by word of mouth. The lack of official support from the Army and Navy hampered potential participants from learning of the opportunity and securing command support. Attendee survey responses frequently requested official support for future similar events. Even so, demand exceeded the conference facility's capacity.

In July 2018, the Executive Committee of NCMAF unanimously agreed to sponsor similar training by 2021 with the full partnership of all three Chiefs of Chaplains' offices. NCMAF came to this decision based on participant feedback and lessons learned during the training. This action was communicated to the Armed Forces Chaplains Board (AFCB) for discussion at their next meeting. Recently, the AFCB told us that while the services appreciated our sponsorship of this important training, they have no current interest in partnering with us for a similar event in the future. As of this writing, unofficial communication with the AFCB indicates they will not pursue such joint sponsorship at this time. As the leaders of NCMAF, which represents over 100 faith communities who endorse chaplains to the military, we find this lack of commitment disappointing. Our experience in May of this year demonstrates such events address a critical professional need. Furthermore, women are severely under- represented in each Chaplain Corps and are experiencing difficulty in their career advancement compared to their male colleagues. We believe this event can only reach its full potential with the strategic partnership and support from all three Chiefs of Chaplains' who are, in fact, charged with these officers' professional training and development.