



Members of Captain Miles MacDonell Assembly in Winnipeg, Man., present signed yellow ribbons to Father W. Lance Magdziak (second from left) of St. Marguerite Bourgeys Chapel at 17 Wing Winnipeg. The ribbons, signed by Knights from 13 councils and other local residents, were shipped to Canadian troops stationed in Kandahar, Afghanistan. Also pictured is (from left): Erich Mantler, Jack Blair, Faithful Friar Father Raphael Glofcheski and Robert Girouard.

Pearl Harbor Anniversary

Our Lady of Guadalupe Council 12011 in Wetumpka, Ala., honored four Knights who are veterans of World War II. The Knights were honored on Dec. 7, 2008, the 67th anniversary of the attacks on Pearl Harbor.

Soldiers' Memorial

Pope John XXIII Assembly in Warren County, N.J., provided an honor guard for the dedication of a memorial in honor of U.S. Army Spec. Steven R. Koch, who was killed in Afghanistan March 3, 2008. The memorial is located at Our Lady of Lourdes School, where Koch attended elementary school, and pays tribute to soldiers missing, killed or captured while in the line of duty.

A Special Donation

Fort Belvoir (Va.) Council 11170 donated \$6,000 to the U.S. Army Community Service program at Fort Belvoir. The funds are used to assist military families who have children with special needs.

The Moving Wall

Marysville (Ohio) Council 5534 hosted the Moving Wall Vietnam memorial in its community. Knights from five area assemblies provided an honor guard during the memorial's visit.

Hugs for Troops

Father Chirouse Council 5816 in Lynnwood, Wash., provided financial backing to council member Arnie Wheeler after he became involved with The Hugs Project. The initiative sends care packages to U.S. soldiers serving in Afghanistan. Knights provided funding for one of Wheeler's shipments.

Military Ball

Padre Louis de Soto Assembly in Bradenton, Fla., held a military ball to honor men and women serving in the U.S. Armed Forces. Army Staff Sgt. Donald Wendt, who earned the Bronze Star while serving in Iraq, was the event's guest of honor.

CD/DVD Drive

St. Padre Pio Circle 4992 in Henderson, Nev., held a CD/DVD drive for U.S. troops stationed overseas. Squires collected 142 DVD movies and 45 music CDs to send to troops serving in foreign countries.

Helping the USO

All Saints Council 9709 in Raleigh, N.C., made renovations to the USO lounge at the Raleigh-Durham International Airport. Knights purchased and installed \$1,300 worth of cabinets and countertops to help expand the facility.

MAKING CHRISTMAS MERRY FOR THOSE IN UNIFORM



Chicago Fire Commissioner John Brooks delivers remarks at a press conference while flanked by members of the Knights of Columbus. Since 2006, Cardinal Samuel Stritch Assembly has spearheaded the collection of care packages for U.S. troops serving overseas. With help from local councils around Chicago, as well as the Chicago Fire Fighters Union, the assembly shipped 500 gift boxes to soldiers prior to Christmas.

Treats for the Troops

Father Robert W. MacDonald Council 395 in Richmond, Va., hosted a "Treats for The Troops" event to benefit U.S. soldiers serving overseas and those recovering at area hospitals. Knights joined forces with more than 20 area organizations to provide treats and toiletries for deployed troops and for those recovering at the Hunter Holmes McGuire VA Medical Center.

Messages from Home

Marian Council 3852 in Cutchogue, N.Y., assembled care packages to send to U.S. troops stationed in Iraq and Afghanistan in time for Christmas. Each package also included letters and cards from students in the Oysterponds school district. Bishop Peter L. Ireton Council 6189 in Richmond, Va., with help from local volunteers, shipped 385 Christmas stockings to U.S. soldiers serving around the world.

Local Heroes

Father Francis Coppens Council 4336 in Tewksbury, Mass., hosted a fundraiser to benefit Local Heroes, an organization that ships care packages to U.S. troops stationed overseas. The event raised \$3,000 to help Local Heroes ship its Christmas care packages.

Boxes for Servicemen

Thomas A. Brandon Council 451 in Fort Wayne, Ind., mailed care packages to council members who are currently serving with the U.S. Armed Forces in Iraq and Kuwait. The council has three Knights and two family members on active duty.

U.S. Air Force looks to foreigners to end priest shortage

Editor's Note: This article originally appeared in the Air Force Times on Sept. 29. It has been reprinted here with permission.

To combat a record low number of Roman Catholic chaplains, the Air Force chaplains' office is pitching a plan to turn foreign-born priests into naturalized blue-suited clergy.

"We're working on getting non-native Americans to come into the Reserve and then we would fast track them to American citizenship," said Air Force Chief of Chaplains Maj. Gen. Cecil Richardson. "Once they became citizens, we will bring them into the [active] military as priests."

Currently, there are 79 chaplain priests in the Air Force. Of those, 17 have medical problems that prevent them from deploying, and at least nine plan to retire by the end of the year. In short, priests for the Air Force are "a critical need" for the 25 percent of all airmen who are Roman Catholic, said Lt. Col. Gary Linsky, a Catholic chaplain in the plans and programs division of the Air Force Chaplain Service.

To blunt the blow, the Air Force will follow a trend in civilian parishes that have relied on foreign-born priests for years. But recruiting foreign priests into the active U.S. military presents more hoops than just getting an out-of-town padre a green card.

It's like an SAT question: If all active-duty U.S. chaplains are officers, and all active-duty officers are U.S. citizens, are all active-duty chaplains U.S. citizens?

Yes, by law.

So the Air Force Reserve and the Chaplain Service want to use a provision in Title X of federal law that allows foreign legal residents to take reserve commissions. Once in, priests would undergo an accelerated naturalization process, based on President Bush's 2002 executive order, in order get an active commission.

"What we've heard is three to six months, but we have yet to prove that," Air Force Reserve Col. Anne Hamilton said. The Chaplain Service proposal comes in addition to other Air Force



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Msgr. Brian Donahue from the Diocese of Fargo, N.D., celebrates a field Mass for two soldiers in Iraq.

efforts that let priests take commissions when they are older, stay in longer or get waivers for problems that would get other candidates laughed out of the recruiting station, Richardson said.

The need for the clergy in the military is crucial since only ordained priests can administer Catholic sacraments such as holy Communion, confession and anointing of the sick.

In forward operating areas, Air Force priests are in as much demand as special operators. Come January, Catholic chaplains will be required to deploy for six months at a time, at a dwell rate of 1-to-1 — six months in theater, then six months at home. Chaplains of other denominations deploy far less.

The clergy shortage is not unique to the Air Force. In the past 20 years, the Archdiocese for the Military Services, USA, has seen the number of priests drop from 1,500 across all services to about 290 active-duty chaplains and 250 in the reserves and the National Guard, said Msgr. Ronald A. Newland, the archdiocese's chancellor. Catholic chaplains are responsible for nearly 1.5 million troops and family members worldwide covered by the military diocese.

The priest shortage in the military reflects a larger trend in the Roman Catholic Church.

"I can recruit a priest into the military, but I can't recruit a young man into

the priesthood," Richardson said. "It's a Catholic Church problem."

On average, each year only brings 450 to 500 new priests to the Church in the United States, said Mary Gautier, senior research associate at the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) at Georgetown University, a group that researches demographics in the Roman Catholic Church. That rate will only make up a third of what the U.S. Church loses each year to priests' deaths and retirements, Gautier said.

And most new priests are not American. The countries that are seeing the most new priests are, in order, Mexico, Vietnam, Poland, the Philippines and Colombia, according to Gautier's data. For Chief of Chaplains Richardson, the program awaiting Chief of Staff Gen. Norton Schwartz's approval is imperative to the welfare of Catholic airmen.

"We need to meet the needs of the men and women who've pledged to support and defend the Constitution and say, 'By the way, I'm Roman Catholic,'" he said. ■

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