1975

For God and Country: Mormon Chaplains During World War II

Richard Maher
Brigham Young University - Provo

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FOR GOD AND COUNTRY: MORMON

CHAPLAINS DURING WORLD WAR II

A Thesis

Presented to the

Department of History

Brigham Young University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

by

Richard T. Maher

August 1975
This thesis, by Richard T. Maher, is accepted in its present form by the Department of History of Brigham Young University as satisfying the thesis requirement for the degree of Master of Arts.

Thomas G. Alexander, Committee Chairman

Larry C. Porter, Committee Member

Leonard J. Arrington, Committee Member

15 July 1975

Thomas G. Alexander, Graduate Coordinator
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Approximately 12,000 chaplains served in the armed forces during World War II. Many books and articles have been written about them, and much of the material published was written specifically for and about certain denominations such as They Answered the Call by Caldwell and Bowman which is a story of chaplains of the United Presbyterian Church. War is my Parish by D. F. Grant contains stories about Catholic Chaplains. Chaplains of the Methodist Church in World War II was published by the Methodist Commission on Chaplains. The Story of Christian Science Wartime Activities was by the Christian Science Publishing Society and devotes a full chapter to the activities of its chaplains. And Rabbis at War by Philip S. Bernstein tells of Jewish Chaplains during World War II.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormon) provided the United States military forces with forty-five chaplains. The names, dates of appointment, branch of military service of the 45 World War II Mormon chaplains are contained in Appendix I.
served at the side of their men at such famous battles as Salerno, Attu, the Battle of the Bulge, Guadalcanal, Iwo Jima, Biak, Leyte, and Okinawa. Two of them received the Silver Star for bravery. Four others were awarded the Bronze Star for outstanding performances as United States Chaplains. One was seriously wounded during the battle for Okinawa and was awarded the Purple Heart; he later died in an accident while recuperating from his wounds in Hawaii.

Although much has been written on the subject of chaplains during World War II, to the best of this writer's knowledge, there have been no publications dealing with the chaplains who represented the Mormon Church during the war. Therefore, it is the author's intent in this thesis to tell the story of the Mormon chaplains who served their country and their church during the war period 1941 thru 1946.

The research material used for this thesis included the extensive use of oral history obtained from personal interviews conducted with many of the former chaplains. The author recognizes the limitation of oral history interviews inasmuch as individual recall of events happening approximately 30 years prior cannot always be relied upon to be completely accurate. Further, the interviewees, being human, may have, in some cases, over-rated their own achievements. Nevertheless, an attempt to evaluate the accuracy of the interviews was made by comparing the interviewees answers to a variety of similar questions.
The oral history project was done in cooperation with the Charles Redd Center for Western Studies at Brigham Young University. A second source employed was the chaplains' personal files. Another major source of material came from the Chaplain Commission Papers found in the Special Collection Section of the Harold B. Lee Library of Brigham Young University. This data was donated by Dr. Ernest L. Wilkinson who, during World War II, served as a member of the Chaplains Commission in Washington D.C. representing the Mormon Church. Other major sources of information include material obtained from the Improvement Era, The Deseret News, Church Edition, The Church News, LDS Service Men's Edition, and various books and articles pertaining to the subject of chaplains during the period of the study.

In addition to information regarding the activities of Mormon chaplains during the war, this study is designed to provide an insight into the activities of the Latter-day Saint Church during the war. This information can be provided because of the key role played by the chaplains in the Church servicemen's program. Another interesting aspect of the study answers the question, can laymen be effective chaplains? The Mormon Church is a lay church and does not have a professional ministry like many of the Protestant Churches, therefore, these chaplains formed a unique group. The question of their capability should be answered because questions existed in the minds of the Chief of Chaplains as to whether Mormons or other similar groups could serve
effectively as chaplains. Therefore, this study will examine
whether Mormon chaplains were able to perform the duties ex-
pected of them by the military. Other questions to be answered
are as follows: What relationship did the Mormon chaplain have
with his Protestant men as opposed to LDS men? What attitude
did he have toward his job? On what criteria was a Mormon
chosen to be a chaplain? Was the quota system used by the military
fair to the Mormon Church? How did he relate with chaplains of
other faiths? How did the Chaplains Corps regard Mormon chaplains?
And, what were some of their achievements, disappointments, short-
comings, and strengths?

The writer recognizes that this is not the last word on
the subject, for much information may well come to light in the
future which will allow another to expand upon the topic. Even
with the limited material used, however, the author believes that
this thesis will provide some very valuable information regarding
the activities of the Mormon chaplains and the Mormon Church
during the Second World War.

It is a pleasure to acknowledge those who helped in the
preparation of this Master's Thesis. The author is grateful to
all the chaplains for their cooperation in being interviewed;
to the Charles Redd Center for Western Studies for its help in
furnishing the necessary tapes and the typed transcripts used
in preparing this study; and to the Special Collections Section
of the Harold B. Lee Library at Brigham Young University for its
cooperation and use of the Chaplains Commission Papers. I am
extremely grateful to Dr. Thomas G. Alexander who guided and counselled me from start to finish. I would also like to express my appreciation to James B. Allen, Leonard J. Arrington, Eugene E. Campbell, and Larry C. Porter, who read the material carefully and provided many suggestions. Further, I would like to thank John F. Bluth of the Charles Redd Center for encouraging me to do oral histories of the chaplains, and to Russell C. Taylor of the Special Collections Section of the Harold B. Lee Library for his help in obtaining information used in this thesis. And finally, my appreciation to my wife, Marjorie, who worked so very hard in making suggestions and in typing this thesis.
CHAPTER II

PRIOR TO WORLD WAR II

War had raged in Europe, Asia, and Africa for two years prior to the United States formally entering into the conflict on December 8, 1941. Because of the uncertainty of world conditions, many Americans recognized the possibility that the United States might become a participant and the American Government prepared for war. In September 1940, the U.S. Congress passed the Selective Service Act which provided for a peace time draft, and many young Americans were drafted into military service. In addition, many serving in National Guard units were activated for a period of one year.

The rapid build-up of the services caused enormous problems for the military, including the procurement of personnel. This difficulty plagued all branches and departments including the Chaplain Corps. Many new chaplains had to be provided to meet the needs of the tens of thousands of new recruits and National Guardsmen who were called to serve. In the summer of 1940, the corps consisted of only 137 chaplains in the Regular Army and 145 Reserve Officers serving on active duty. In addition, approximately 1000 Reserve Chaplains served with the Civilian
Conservation Corps. At the time of the attack on Pearl Harbor, approximately one and one-half years later, there were 140 Regular Army Chaplains, 298 National Guard Chaplains, and 1040 Reserve Chaplains, a total of 1478 chaplains on active duty.

Included among the 1478 army chaplains called to active duty were ten members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormon). In addition, that church had one member serving as a navy chaplain on active duty at San Diego, California. Several of them had been chaplains for more than ten years serving with the National Guard, the Army Reserves or the Civilian Conservation Corps.

<table>
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<th>Name of Chaplain</th>
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<td>May 11, 1926</td>
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<td>Orlando S. McBride</td>
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<td>Milton G. Widdison</td>
<td>April 14, 1941</td>
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<td>Leo F. Freeman</td>
<td>May 16, 1941</td>
<td>U.S. Navy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John W. Boud</td>
<td>July 6, 1941</td>
<td>U.S. Navy</td>
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1Civilian Conservation Corps was a new deal project that put unemployed young men to work in the outdoors doing conservation and reforestation projects. The CCC camps were located in many areas of the United States. There were approximately 300,000 men working in approximately 1500 camps.


3Lowell Call, "Latter-day Saint Servicemen in the
The eleven chaplains representing the LDS Church served at various locations in the western United States.¹ Major C. Clarence Neslen, a former mayor of Salt Lake City, served on active duty at San Luis Obispo, California with the 145th Field Artillery. Utah Governor George H. Dern had appointed him a chaplain of the 145th in 1926. Major Theodore E. Curtis and First Lieutenant George R. Woolley of the 115th Engineers were also assigned to San Luis Obispo, California. Called to active duty, Captain Reuben Curtis, who had served as a Civilian Conservation Corps Chaplain for several years, was assigned to Camp Ord, California. Another Civilian Conservation Corps, First Lieutenant Reed G. Probst was called to active duty and assigned to Fort Lewis, Washington where the army stationed many young Mormon soldiers. Captain Robert G. Gibbons served at the recreational center at Fort Douglas, Utah. First Lieutenant Orlando S. McBride, a chaplain in the Arizona National Guard, was stationed at Fort Sill, Oklahoma. The War Department attached First Lieutenant

Philippine Islands: A Historical Study of the Religious Activities and Influences Resulting in the Official Organization of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the Philippines." (Unpublished masters thesis, Brigham Young University, 1955), p. 299. Note: The name of C. Clarence Neslen was not contained in the table of LDS chaplains included in Lowell Call’s thesis. The information pertaining to Neslen, the senior chaplain in World War II, was found in the Deseret News, Church Section, (Salt Lake City), 22 March 1941, hereafter referred to as Church News.

¹Church News, 22 March 1941. Information pertaining to the whereabouts of Milton G. Widdison, and John W. Boud was obtained in a personal interview. The whereabouts of Leo F. Freeman at that period of time is unknown.
Howard Clark Evans to the Air Corps at Salt Lake City, Utah.
First Lieutenant Milton G. Widdison served on active duty at Fort Warren, Wyoming, and John W. Boud, the first Mormon naval chaplain, was assigned to San Diego, California.

These were not the first Latter-day Saint chaplains to serve their country as military chaplains during wartime. During the First World War, the Mormon Church provided the U.S. Army with three chaplains. This was the first time in the history of the Church that it was afforded the opportunity to have chaplains serving with the U.S. military.¹ The U.S. Army permitted the Mormon Church to choose any three men it wished. The three men selected were Brigham H. Roberts, Calvin F. Smith, and Herbert B. Maw.²

Brigham H. Roberts, the dean of Mormon chaplains was also a General Authority of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, serving then as a member of the First Council of Seventies. He was 61 years of age in 1918 when he received his appointment as chaplain of the 145th Utah Artillery. Because of his age, he had to obtain special permission to receive the appointment. In addition, when the 145th Artillery was assigned overseas, he was

¹Interview of Herbert B. Maw by Richard Maher, November 9, 1974, Charles Redd Center for Western Studies. Oral History project: World War II LDS Chaplains. Copies of the tape and bound transcript of this and all other interviews cited are available in the manuscript section of the Harold B. Lee Library at Brigham Young University.

²Church News, 22 March 1941
granted special permission by Secretary of War Newton D. Baker to go with his unit. He served honorably, and after the war, he returned to Salt Lake City to resume his ecclesiastical duties.

Calvin F. Smith, son of Joseph F. Smith, the president of the LDS Church became the second chaplain. He was appointed as a chaplain at large and assigned to be 91st Division at Fort Lewis, Washington. Many Utah draftees served with the 91st Division, thus enabling Chaplain Smith to work with LDS men. While overseas, Chaplain Smith served with the 362nd Infantry, 3rd Battalion and was wounded. He remained in Europe after the conclusion of the war and attended school in England. He later became an outstanding educator in the state of Utah, serving as the superintendent of the Granite School District of Salt Lake County.

Herbert B. Maw was the third World War I chaplain. Maw served as governor of the state of Utah from 1941 to 1949. While training at Kelly Field, Texas to become a pilot, Maw received a telephone call from Charles W. Penrose, a member of the First Presidency of the Mormon Church. When told who was calling him, Maw said, "Are you kidding?" President Penrose replied, "Indeed I am not." President Penrose informed Herbert Maw that the govern-

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1 The First Presidency consisting of three Presiding High Priests, a President and two counselors, preside over all affairs and activities of the Church. John A. Widstoe, Priesthood and Church Government (Salt Lake City, Utah: Deseret Book Company, 1966) p. 186.
ment had allowed the Mormon Church to choose three men to serve as U. S. Army chaplains and that he was one of the three chosen. ¹

Needless to say, Maw was flabbergasted that the members of the First Presidency would know him, let alone select him for such an assignment. He was commissioned and assigned to Camp Funston, Kansas to serve with the 342nd Artillery. While on leave before reporting to Camp Funston, Maw returned to Salt Lake City and met with the First Presidency. While there, he was asked if he would like a blessing. This was one of the greatest experiences in his life to have the three members of the First Presidency, Joseph F. Smith, Charles W. Penrose, and Anthon H. Lund, lay their hands on his head and pronounce a blessing. He hoped that the blessing contained the words that he would be kept safe and that he would return safely. However, President Lund, who pronounced the blessing, did not guarantee him that he would return safely, but said, "We bless you with every protection and guidance and inspiration that a representative of The Church of Jesus Christ should have in a war."² He considered that all inclusive, and often in combat he felt that his special blessing gave him an edge, and helped him return home safely.

The 342nd Artillery consisted mostly of men from Arkansas and western Missouri including many members of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. Governor Maw felt

¹Herbert B. Maw interview.
²Ibid.
that Washington thought that he might feel more at home with members of a similar church not realizing that there might be some conflict. When it was learned that he was a Mormon chaplain, many resented his presence, but, in time, he was able to win many friends and break down many prejudices.¹

Overseas, his unit fought in a number of battles such as the Argonne Forest. At the conclusion of the war he served with the occupation troops.² He returned to the United States in July 1919.

While no formal requirements existed to serve as a World War I chaplain, the men selected and on duty prior to World War II had to meet certain requirements. The applicant had to pass a rigid physical examination, take an oral examination, and, in addition, write a minimum 2000 word thesis on an assigned subject. A college degree was essential, but waived in some cases. For example, Reuben Curtis and Milton G. Widdison did not possess college degrees. George R. Woolley described the typical oral examination as appearing before a board of officers and answering questions for four hours.³ His board consisted of eight officers, none of them ranked lower than a captain.

Prior to being called into the military, the eleven men held a variety of civilian occupations. Orlando S. McBride taught

¹Ibid.
²Ibid.
high school at Thatcher, Arizona; George R. Woolley was an instructor at the Federal Prison at Alcatraz; Reuben E. Curtis and Reed G. Probst were actively engaged as full-time chaplains with the Civilian Conservation Corps; Howard C. Evans worked for the Mormon Church as a seminary teacher, and John Boud practiced law in Salt Lake City.

While working as civilians, several of them, recognizing the inevitability of war, chose to serve as chaplains. Milton Widdison applied for the chaplaincy because he knew Reuben and Theodore Curtis as chaplains and knew the type of work they performed. John Boud, while exploring the possibility of getting a commission, discovered that no Mormon had ever been a Navy Chaplain. He applied, and received an appointment. Others became chaplains for different reasons. Orlando McBride felt it an opportunity to be of service, and accepted an appointment in the Arizona National Guard. George R. Woolley applied because the president of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Heber J. Grant asked him.


3 Church News, 22 March 1941.

4 George Woolley Interview.
Even though they came from a variety of backgrounds, entered the chaplaincy for an assortment of reasons, and served in a variety of locations, they all performed similar duties such as counselling the men, providing religious services, setting up discussions, group meetings, and providing sports activities.

As the chaplains performed services for the men in their command on the eve of World War II, the United States and Japanese governments negotiated the future of Asia as the United States tried to block Japanese expansion. This policy resulted in the surprise attack upon Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. American leaders had recognized just such a possibility and had prepared for war in 1940 when the U.S. Congress enacted the Selective Service Act. At the time of the attack upon Pearl Harbor, the U.S. Army had approximately 1,500,000 men serving on active duty. Although they were not all trained, the United States military position was not one of weakness,
CHAPTER III

THE GENERAL COMMISSION ON ARMY AND NAVY CHAPLAINS

Owing to Japan's surprise attack at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, the United States became a participant in World War II. The outbreak of the war found the armed forces of the United States prepared for war because of the huge build-up of its military establishment that had commenced approximately one year earlier in late 1940.

The large number of men drafted or called to active duty prior to World War II caused the need for more chaplains. This need presented the Chaplains Corps with two major problems, the recruitment and selection of qualified men. The General Committee on Army and Navy Chaplains, under the direction of the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America, helped the military meet this need during World War I and during the period between the two major wars.¹ In June 1940, the committee held a meeting, to which it invited a number of religious organizations and denominations concerned with endorsement of chaplains for the army or navy. Included in the group was The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

After a successful meeting, the committee was reconstituted and became the General Commission on Army and Navy Chaplains.\(^1\) It helped recruit Protestant ministers for the chaplaincy, and, in addition, processed the necessary paperwork insuring that the candidates met the proper qualifications.

The newly formed commission selected Dr. Moody as its first full time director. Two other directors served on the commission during World War II, Reverend S. Arthur Devan and Bishop Edwin Lee.\(^2\) The director became the administrator for the committee. His duties consisted of holding monthly meetings with representatives of the various denominations, processing routine paperwork, and handling the finances for the operation of the commission.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints received an annual assessment from the commission. The amount depended upon the number of chaplains each denomination had serving on active duty. The cost in 1944 was $7.00 per chaplain.\(^3\) In 1945, the cost rose to $8.50 per chaplain.\(^4\) The money helped defray the cost of operating the commission including the salary of the director, rent, secretarial expenses, miscellaneous travel expenses, and the commission's monthly publication "The Chaplain" which was

\(^1\)Ibid, p. 226.

\(^2\)Ibid.

\(^3\)Gustave A. Iverson to First Presidency, December 13, 1944. "Chaplains Commission Papers" located in the Special Collection Section of the Harold B. Lee Library at Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, file MSS 298.

\(^4\)Ibid.
forwarded free of charge to each chaplain. In addition to the annual assessment, the Church contributed to other fund raising projects of the commission such as the American Christian Committee for Refugee's Inc. to which the Church donated $250.\(^1\) The Church also donated $1,000 to the memorial building for World War II Chaplains who lost their lives.\(^2\) An assessment of $1,000 was asked from each denomination for each chaplain that died. The one Mormon chaplain who gave his life during World War II was L. Marsden Durham, who died in Hawaii while recuperating from wounds he received in the battle of Okinawa.

The LDS Church had one humorous experience with the commission over a financial matter. The Church received a bill for $320 for four issues of "The Chaplain". They paid the money, but felt "the price is exhorbitant, but paying it just to go along." However, an error existed in the paper work and Mr. Marriott returned the money informing the First Presidency that the cost was only $12 not $320.\(^3\)

In addition to financial matters, the annual endorsement of each chaplain was handled through the General Commission.\(^4\)

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\(^1\)First Presidency to Iverson, October 3, 1944. Ibid.


\(^3\)First Presidency to Marriott, June 5, 1946, Marriott to First Presidency, Ibid.

\(^4\)Marriott to First Presidency, December 13, 1947 citing Paragraph 2c AR 140-25 as authority on endorsements, Ibid.
In order for a chaplain to remain in the chaplaincy he had to have an annual ecclesiastical endorsement from Church authorities. In order to withdraw an endorsement, the church had to show cause.

On one occasion the Church found itself in an embarrassing position when it withdrew the ecclesiastical endorsement of Chaplain Leo F. Freeman. Chaplain Freeman was extremely unhappy with his assignment in England. He wished to be transferred to an area where he could work with LDS men. Military authorities denied his request, and he sought to resign from the military. He performed his job in a satisfactory manner and neither his commanding officer nor the Chief of Chaplains would grant his request. Therefore, he asked the Church to withdraw his ecclesiastical endorsement so that the military would have to release him. After he harrassed the First Presidency with a barrage of correspondance, the First Presidency withdrew its endorsement of him, only to find out from the commission that there had to be cause. Church leaders didn't have any, and, therefore, felt slightly embarrassed over the way the situation was handled.¹ Leo Freeman served to the conclusion of the war and received an honorable discharge.

The Mormon Church became involved with the commission after it received an invitation to send a representative to attend

¹Many letters found in the commission papers covering the subject. Ibid.
a meeting of the commission in June 1941.\textsuperscript{1} The First President sent Gustave A. Iverson, the Eastern States Mission President located in New York City to represent the Church at the opening meeting.\textsuperscript{2} The meeting was held under the direction of the Reverend S. Arthur Devan who later became director of the commission. The meeting granted Iverson the title "denomination chairman of the General Commission on Army and Navy Chaplains", and thus became the representative of his church affiliation on matters dealing with army and navy chaplains. He processed all chaplain applications from the men of his denomination before they were analyzed by the commission prior to being submitted to the respective departments of the government whose jurisdiction chaplains served.\textsuperscript{3}

At the reorganization meeting, Iverson became one of twelve members of the Executive Committee,\textsuperscript{4} and, in addition, he learned that the Mormon Church, because of its membership (500,000 to 1,000,000 members), was allowed to have three representatives on the commission. However, the First Presidency elected to have only Iverson serve on the commission at that time.

\textsuperscript{1}Iverson claimed he attended the reorganization in June 1941. Honeywell claimed the reorganization took place in June 1940.

\textsuperscript{2}Iverson to First Presidency, May 6, 1943, "Chaplains Commission Papers".

\textsuperscript{3}Iverson to Senator Elbert D. Thomas, March 15, 1943, Ibid.

\textsuperscript{4}Iverson to First Presidency May 6, 1943, Ibid.
Gustave Iverson served as the Eastern States Mission President for the Mormon Church from September 15, 1940 to April 8, 1944. Previously, he had served as the Third District Judge in Utah, and went to Washington D.C. as a special representative to the U.S. Attorney General in the Coolidge Administration. He served as the "denomination chairman" on the commission until his death on May 8, 1945. J. Willard Marriott, a prominent Washington D.C. businessman and a member of the Washington Stake High Council, and Ernest L. Wilkinson, a prominent attorney in Washington D.C. and a member of the Washington Stake Presidency succeeded him on the commission. They served on the commission for several years until the military no longer needed Mormon Chaplains.

Apparently, Judge Iverson returned to New York City to take up his duties as Mission President for the Church without further interest in the commission. Beyond this, neither he nor Church Leaders seemed to recognize the importance of the commission. Nevertheless it soon became apparent to the First Presidency that only one member of the Church had received an appointment as an army chaplain after the appointment of Leo F. Freeman on May 16, 1941. In an attempt to find the reason, Hugh B. Brown, the Coordinator for LDS Servicemen during World War II, went to Washington.¹ Brown learned that the commission processed

¹This probably would have been in late 1942 or early 1943.
chaplains applications before sending them to the office of the Chief of Army or Navy Chaplains. In processing the applications, it made sure that certain requirements were met and the commission felt that the Mormon Church ignored the requirements by endorsing any man that the Church deemed "worthy" regardless of his eligibility to meet requirements established by the armed forces. Therefore, the commission ignored applications for men of the Mormon faith. Hugh B. Brown reported his findings to the proper church authorities informing them that if the church followed proper procedures, it would receive its fair share of chaplains. Following Elder Brown's report, the Church took the necessary action by instructing Judge Iverson to take an active part on the commission in Washington, D.C., and to process chaplain's applications as required by the army and navy.

Shortly after Hugh B. Brown's visit to Washington, Vernon A. Cooley and Eldin Ricks were appointed to the chaplaincy in February 1943. They were the first two Mormon Chaplains appointed to the U.S. Army since Gerald L. Erickson's appointment in March 1942.

Soon after his arrival in Washington, D.C., with the task of getting more Latter-day Saints appointed to the chaplaincy, Mr. Iverson informed the First Presidency that he felt that one

1Verification letter initiated by Hugh B. Brown, August, 1974
of the major reasons that Church members were not getting more appointments as chaplains was due to the influence of the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America. It was the organization that formed the commission, and had a great deal of influence both within the commission and within the Chaplains Corps itself.\(^1\) It helped establish the eligibility requirements which hindered Mormon appointments.

In addition to consulting the First Presidency, Judge Iverson contacted Senator Elbert D. Thomas, a member of the Church and the Utah representative in the United States Senate, regarding the matter. He wanted help in getting more Mormons appointed. Mr. Iverson referred to the members of the commission and the military as having a very narrow view of the term "minister". He wrote, "... it is difficult for some of the higher-ups and others also to give anything but a narrow definition of the term "minister".\(^2\) Apparently Senator Thomas was unable to help him in getting more Latter-day Saints appointed as chaplains.

Gustave Iverson found the job of representing the Church in Washington to be more than just a part time venture. In June 1944, shortly after being released from his assignment as the Eastern States Mission President, Judge Iverson advised the First Presidency that he would be moving to Washington, D.C. for the

\(^1\)Iverson to First Presidency, March 2, 1943, "Chaplains Commission Papers".

\(^2\)Iverson to Thomas, March 15, 1943, Ibid.
duration of the war as he was needed in a full time capacity to look after the chaplaincies of the army and navy.¹

Neither the Church nor the commission made the final decision as to who would be appointed a chaplain, this was done by the Chief of Army or Navy Chaplains. For example, the Church submitted a priority list of approximately 30 names requesting that chaplains be appointed by the following preference:²
(1) Calvin H. Bartholomew; (2) Richard T. Wooter; (3) Chester Hill; (4) Donald J. Cannon; (5) Harold H. Smith; (6) Harold F. Hansen; (7) Lyman C. Berrett. . . On this particular priority list, the Chief of Chaplains did not select any of the first six men. It selected the number seven man, Lyman C. Berrett.

Further, Gustave Iverson received a letter from Mrs. June B. Thany blaming him for not appointing her husband as a chaplain. Iverson replied to her letter:

It is to me a matter of deep concern that my duties and responsibilities as a member of the General Commission on Army and Navy Chaplains are so generally misunderstood by our people. Failure to be commissioned Army or Navy Chaplains is sometimes charged to me, when, as a matter of fact, I have absolutely nothing to do with the appointment of chaplains nor has the General Commission--except by way of recommendation to the Chief of Chaplains of their respective government establishments concerning those qualifications which make up the basis for the issuance of certificates of Ecclesiastical endorsements. The appointment of chaplains is wholly and exclusively for the Chiefs and when they reach a conclusion upon the records placed before them there is no recourse but to accept.

¹Iverson to First Presidency, June 13, 1944, Ibid.
²Hugh B. Brown to Iverson, February 23, 1944, Ibid.
³Iverson to Mrs. June B. Thany, April 23, 1945, Ibid.
Mr. Iverson performed duties other than processing chaplain applications in his capacity as "denomination chairman" for the Church on the commission. From time to time he would furnish church leaders the addresses of all LDS Chaplains.¹ The information would be published in The Church News, LDS Service Men's Edition for the benefit of any Mormon in that given area. In addition, he supplied the Church with information that it requested. For example, he found out what other denominations were doing for their members who were in custody of POW camps² in the United States and advised Church leaders what course of action should be taken.

His advice was sought when Chaplain Vernon A. Cooley wrote a letter to the Servicemen's Committee requesting that an LDS civilian coordinator be sent to Italy to organize church members because of the large number of Mormons stationed in the area. Judge Iverson received a letter from the First Presidency requesting his advice as to what appropriate action the Church might take. The letter read as follows:

... We now have on record nearly 2000 LDS men in this area. We have by no means contacted all who are here as we are tied by the regular Protestant work of our units. Because of our desire to serve our LDS men and because of our not being able to do so properly, it is our suggestion that a full time coordinator be sent into this Theater to contact all LDS men possible and organize them into groups. This could be done on the same basis as the Christian Science War Ministers who are civilians working actively in this theater. We would cooperate with a coordinator

¹First Presidency to Iverson, March 3, 1945, Ibid.
²First Presidency to Iverson, June 14, 1944 and Iverson to First Presidency June 30, 1944, Ibid.
and help him as our duties permitted. Some of our chaplains have come under severe criticism for doing too much LDS work. 1

Iverson answered the First Presidency informing them that a civilian coordinator would have a very difficult time in a war zone. Further, he informed them that the Christian Science Church didn't have many men who were eligible under military regulations, and therefore, were allowed to substitute War Time Ministers. 2 He advised them that it was up to the Theater or the Area Commander whether or not civilians could be used in a given war zone.

The First Presidency advised Chaplain Cooley to contact General John Kenneth Cannon, who was a Mormon and was in the Mediterranean Theater for help. 3 Apparently he was not able to help as no civilian coordinator was sent to the area.

Judge Iverson handled other problems that arose between the Church and the military. One such case involved Hugh B. Brown, the LDS Servicemen's Coordinator and Mission President to England. He wrote to Iverson shortly after the invasion by the Allies upon the European continent, informing him that "it is of the utmost importance that someone get into France and Belgium and later on into Holland in order to organize our servicemen and through them reach the Saints. I should like very much to get permission to

1First Presidency to Iverson, January 9, 1945, Ibid.

2Iverson to First Presidency, January 18, 1945, Ibid.

3First Presidency to Vernon A. Cooley, January 22, 1945, Ibid.
go on that errand."¹ He asked Iverson to use his influence with General William R. Arnold as he was unable to get any cooperation from the senior American chaplain in London, England. The senior chaplain in London objected to Brown's going believing that he would encounter too many problems on the continent because of his status as a civilian. President Brown, however, felt that he held some prejudices against him because of his religious beliefs. Judge Iverson visited with General Arnold explaining the situation, and informed Hugh B. Brown that while General Arnold was sympathetic toward his dilemma, he could do nothing as it was in the hands of the senior chaplain in London.²

Another incident involved a request from Harold B. Lee, Chairman of the LDS Servicemen's Committee during World War II,³ that Judge Iverson suggest to the Chief of Chaplains that Latter-day Saint chaplains be appointed to areas where there were a large concentration of LDS men assigned. Mr. Iverson replied to Elder Lee that the "attitude of chaplains is that any chaplain can give to the men his spiritual needs regardless of affiliation--

¹Iverson to First Presidency, December 13, 1944, Ibid.
²Ibid.
³As more Mormons entered the military, the need for an organization to deal with them arose and the First Presidency organized the LDS Servicemen's Committee in the latter part of 1942. It consisted of Harold B. Lee as its chairman, with John A. Taylor and Hugh B. Brown as members. In May 1941, Hugh B. Brown became the coordinator for LDS Servicemen,
It's part of a larger body and that's the problem."\(^1\)

However, this attitude within the Chaplain Corps changed after the war. For example, when Harold B. Lee wrote to J. Willard Marriott requesting that he ask the Chief of Naval Chaplains to transfer Chaplain Jack B. Watkins to the Oakland Bay area from Terminal Island, San Pedro, California, to be near as possible to help the many Latter-day Saints who were being processed at Shoemaker.\(^2\) The Chief of Naval Chaplains, William N. Thomas, said "He'd transfer Watkins to the Bay area so that he could be in a position to help our boys."\(^3\)

In addition to his many duties on the commission, Judge Iverson gained the friendship of both Chief of Army Chaplains General William R. Arnold, and Chief of Naval Chaplains Admiral Robert D. Workman.\(^4\) These friendships enabled him to work within the framework of the military system and assist the Church.

He had a high regard for the men with whom he worked. When rumors existed that Luther D. Miller replaced General Arnold as Chief of Army Chaplains because of his handling of situations regarding the behavior of many Catholic Chaplains, Iverson informed Church leaders,

\(^1\)Iverson to Harold B. Lee, January 27, 1945, Ibid.
\(^2\)Lee to Marriott, March 11, 1946, Ibid.
\(^3\)Marriott to Lee, March 20, 1946, Ibid.
\(^4\)Iverson to First Presidency, December 13, 1944, Ibid.
The principal reason, if not the only one for the change in the head office is General Arnold's long tenure. True, there have at times arisen that he might have dealt a little more effective with what some are pleased to term arbitrary or arrogant conduct on the part of Catholic Chaplains in the field, but I doubt that there is any basis for such claims. . . . 

The First Presidency, also, had a high regard for General Arnold. Upon being notified of the change, they informed Iverson to stay in Washington, and get to know Luther D. Miller, a Lutheran and the new Chief of Army Chaplains, and made the following comment concerning General Arnold:

. . . We have a high regard for General Arnold and esteem him as an officer who has discharged his duties of his office with dignity and justice. In all our dealings with him he has been courteous, fair, and considerate. It is with regret that we hear of his transfer from his present office. 

Not only did Iverson have a high regard for the men with whom he worked, but they also held him in high esteem. Shortly after his death, J. Willard Marriott and Ernest L. Wilkinson wrote to the First Presidency, and informed them of the extremely fine job that Mr. Iverson did. They said:

He performed a great service for the Church. . . . The information which comes to us is that he exercised great tact and discretion in his contact with his associates and with the Chief of Chaplains, and that they came to have a high regard for him and his judgement and wisdom. 

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1 (quoting Iverson) Marriott and Wilkinson to First Presidency, May 11, 1945, Ibid.

2 First Presidency to Iverson, April 30, 1945, Ibid.

3 Letter Marriott and Wilkinson to First Presidency, May 11, 1945, Ibid.
Upon the death of Judge Iverson, the First Presidency of the Mormon Church selected J. Willard Marriott and Ernest L. Wilkinson to succeed him on the commission. J. Willard Marriott became the chairman of the committee. The First Presidency suggested that he be chosen because of his ability to have free time due to the nature of his business.¹

The new commission members performed the same duties and followed the same policies that Judge Iverson had. They helped the Church where and when they were asked to. They made friends with the Chief of Chaplains. When William N. Thomas succeeded Admiral Workman as the Chief of Naval Chaplains, Edgar B. Brossard, a member of the United States Tariff Commission, advised him that he should get to know Admiral Thomas to see if the Church could get more chaplains appointed "as you know, up to now, we have had nothing like our share of naval chaplains..."²

As members of the commission, Marriott and Wilkinson used their influence in aiding the Church in vital matters other than dealing with chaplains. For example, when informed by Church leaders that the Commanding Officer at the Birmingham General Hospital at Van Nuys, California refused to let Latter-day Saints hold services in the hospital chapel, they consulted with General Miller. He corrected the situation so that members of the Mormon faith and other minorities could hold services in the hospital chapel. "The Church... is very much obliged to you for

¹First Presidency to Wilkinson and Marriott, May 22, 1945, Ibid.

²Edgar B. Brossard to Marriott, June 1, 1945, Ibid.
making arrangements whereby minority groups will be authorized to use the Birmingham chapel for religious activities. . . ."1

In addition, another area of major concern to Church leaders was in the marking of the servicemen's "dog tags." The military recognized three major religious denominations, Roman Catholic, Jewish, and Protestant. Inasmuch as the Mormon Church wasn't Roman Catholic or Jewish, it became classified with the Protestant denominations. Therefore, members of the LDS Church had a "P" placed in their dog tag which denoted that they were Protestants. The Church requested that LDS be placed on the dog tag. Mr. Iverson contacted Admiral Workman, Chief of Naval Chaplains, and General Arnold, Chief of Army Chaplains, and found that having ones religious preference stamped on the dog tag was not a regulation, but it was allowed. However, the decision was up to the commanding officer in the area where they were issued. The Chief of Chaplains suggested that the Church issue its men a special identification tag that could be worn with the "dog tags". 2 It should be noted that the Lutheran Church issued its members a supplementary tag for special identification during World War II. 3

It appeared to be definitely a command decision, because many had no problem getting the "dog tags" marked LDS while others could not. For example, Naval Chaplain Glen Richards said, "some

1Wilkinson to Luther D. Miller, March 28, 1946, Ibid.
2Iverson to Lee, July 22, 1944, Ibid.
3T. A. Rymer to Marriott, December 10, 1947, Ibid.
stations would grant the request whereas others didn't."¹ Marc Sessions said he "had to pull strings to get it done."² Ray L. Jones said, "about four attempts at various posts and I finally had to give up trying to get my dog tags marked with LDS".³ The members of the commission worked at changing the policy so that LDS could be marked on the dog tag instead of the required "P". The military policy did not change during the war, but after its conclusion, the Church got the policy changed so that LDS could be placed on the dog tag to denote that the serviceman was a member of the Latter-day Saint Church.

The General Commission of Army and Navy Chaplains acted as a cooperative agency for the purpose of assisting the Protestant Churches and the government in the selection of suitable men for the chaplaincy.⁴ The vast majority of the commission consisted of Protestant denominations such as Lutheran, Methodist, Baptist, Disciples of Christ, Presbyterian, Episcopal, and Congregational Churches. Protestants being in the majority, the commission reflected the view of the major Protestant denominations which caused some problems for the Latter-day Saint Church especially in the area of eligibility. The term "minister" to the major denominations meant a professionally trained person as opposed to a lay minister which

¹Questionnaire to LDS chaplains and Assistant Coordinators, Ibid.
²Ibid.
³Ibid.
⁴Iverson to First Presidency, December 23, 1944, Ibid.
represented the Mormon Church.

Even though the commission generally reflected the professional Protestant point of view, the commission benefited the Mormon Church inasmuch as the Church had a voice in influencing policies such as reassigning men and with changing the dog tags to read LDS rather than "P".
CHAPTER IV

TWO MAJOR OBSTACLES

Mormon chaplains appointed prior to World War II did not have to meet the same eligibility requirements as those appointed during the war. The reorganized Commission on Army and Navy Chaplains used requirements established by the government to determine the eligibility which disqualified most Mormon men. In addition, the Chaplain Corps adopted a quota system to determine the number of chaplains appointed from each denomination. From the start, the quota system was obsolete as it used the 1916 religious census in determining the membership of each denomination and also based the quota upon the number of chaplains from each denomination who served during World War I.

Prior to World War II, chaplains who served in the Regular Army met the requirements of regularly ordained ministers, and caused no problem within the framework of the Chaplains Corps.¹ However, the Second World War brought into the military millions of men from many denominations, both large and small. This caused the Chaplains Corps to reevaluate its requirements in determining who could and who could not serve as chaplains.

¹Honeywell, Chaplains, pp. 223, 224.
The commission found that a number of denominations did not fit their stereotype of usual organization or practice.

...Among these were the Christian Scientists, the Friends, and two branches of the Eastern Orthodox and of the Mormon Churches. These organizations observe rites or emphasize principles so different from those to which the majority of Americans are accustomed that a serious question arose concerning their ability to minister effectively to persons not affiliated with their respective groups. This question was especially important because the comparatively few adherents of these churches were dispersed so widely in the Army that a chaplain of any of these faiths would find it impossible to bring together any considerable number of coreligionist at any time. It was argued, however, that all chaplains perform many important services which are totally independent of the faith they profess or that of the men they serve and that, whenever possible every soldier should be able to consult a chaplain of his particular faith in situations of special importance.

Inasmuch as The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is a lay church and had no professional ministry, standard eligibility requirements could not apply, and requirements had to be modified for members of the Mormon faith. A member needed to have served three years in the ministry. Ministerial service included time as a full-time missionary, serving as a bishop, or time served in teaching religious education such as a seminary teacher. In addition, the applicant had to be in the teaching profession at the time applied. The "teaching profession" was

1Ibid, p. 220.

2General William R. Arnold to Senator Albert D. Thomas, August 26, 1941, "Chaplains Commission Papers".
interpreted to mean a full time seminary or religion teacher.

The regulation governing LDS applicants, which is still in force, is that they shall have an 'unquestionable A.B. degree' and in view of the fact that the Church does not have a professional ministry with seminary preparation must be 'engaged in religious teaching as their principal vocation'—the idea being that this was the nearest approach to the professional ministry which the other churches have.¹

The requirements set forth by the Chaplains Corps eliminated most Latter-day Saints from becoming chaplains, and early in the war, most men appointed were seminary teachers.

For example, Eldin Ricks applied for an appointment to the chaplaincy early in 1942. He met the basic requirements of having served three years in the ministry as he served two years on a mission and at that time was employed as a seminary teacher. In order to be accepted, he had to write an essay on the subject: "Psychology as a Factor in Social Control". He also took an eight hour written test, and finally appeared before a board of chaplains for an oral examination to ascertain his qualifications.² Apparently the tests were used to measure whether or not the applicant was capable of graduate caliber scholarship. Having passed the test, Eldin Ricks was appointed to the chaplaincy in February 1943.

¹Director S. Arthur Devan to Iverson, 4 March 1943, Ibid.

As the war progressed, the corps modified this method of selecting Latter-day Saints for the chaplaincy. The board of review was eliminated, and the General Commission processed the necessary paper work and forwarded them to the Chief of Chaplains who made the final selection.

In addition to procedure changes in selecting chaplains, the requirements used to determine eligibility of Latter-day Saints changed several times during the war. Initially, it changed from one teaching in Church schools to one "... teaching in a school of higher learning as their principal occupation ..."¹ The final change read, "... be engaged in teaching public schools, church schools, or higher institutions of learning as his principal occupation in life. ..."²

The eligibility requirements set forth by the Chaplain Corps hindered the appointment of many Latter-day Saints who might otherwise have qualified. The greatest problem, however, was the quota system used which caused the Mormon Church to receive less than one-half the number of World War II chaplains that it should have received. The quota system was based upon the number of chaplains which served each denomination during World War I, and the membership of each denomination based upon the 1916 religious

¹Iverson to Tom I. Flint, May 25, 1944, "Chaplains Commission Papers".

²General William R. Arnold to Iverson, 23 May 1944, Ibid.
census.\textsuperscript{1} The quota's were established in 1924 and placed the LDS Church with the miscellaneous group which included all churches that had a membership of less than 500,000 persons. The miscellaneous group comprised 16\% of the total and determined the Mormon Church's multiple factor as .003.\textsuperscript{2} That is, if there were 8,000 chaplains serving on active duty, the Mormons would be allowed 8,000 x .003 or 24 chaplains.

After a slow start of getting its members appointed to the chaplaincy, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints always filled its quota. This was due in part to Judge Iverson's taking an active part in the commission processing applications, and working closely with the Chief of Army and Navy Chaplains in getting proper eligibility requirements established.

Many denominations did not fill their quotas and in order to fill the needed position the Chaplains Corps allowed every denomination to appoint 35\% more chaplains than their set quota. The Mormon Church always filled the 35\% average and, in addition, had many qualified men waiting for an opening to be appointed to the chaplaincy.\textsuperscript{3}

During World War I, the quota had been one chaplain for every 1200 men in the army. For World War II, the Chief of Chaplains recommended that it be one chaplain for every 1000 men.

\textsuperscript{1}Iverson to Lee, August 15, 1944, Ibid.
\textsuperscript{2}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{3}Iverson to First Presidency, October 20, 1944, Ibid.
The World War II ratio of chaplains per number of men reached its goal of one chaplain per 1000 men. There were 8,171 chaplains in the army or under orders on July 1945. This was considered to be the greatest number of chaplains which served at any specific time during World War II. The army at that time numbered approximately 8,200,000 men thus making the ratio to be almost one chaplain per 1000 men.¹

Church leaders became concerned over the low number of Mormons appointed to the chaplaincy and questioned the quota system used. Judge Iverson informed Harold B. Lee, the Chairman of the LDS Servicemen's Committee, that the quota system used was obsolete and antiquated but it was in the process of being upgraded, and the Mormon Church would be entitled to 90 chaplains when the new rules were adopted.² In addition, he informed Elder Lee that there should be one chaplain for every 1200 men serving in the army, and this included all faiths. Elder Lee replied that the Church had at least 70,000 men in the military and probably 10,000 more unaccounted, and with those figures the Church should have at the minimum 60 to 70 chaplains.³ Elder Lee's estimate was low as a revised system of quotas published on May 1, 1945 showed clearly

¹Honeywell, Chaplains, p. 217
²Iverson to Lee, August 15, 1944, Ibid.
³Lee to Iverson, August 29, 1944, Ibid.
how the quota system was detrimental to the Mormons. The new figures were based upon the 1936 religious census published in 1939. Although ten years old, it showed the growth of the LDS Church.

TABLE II
QUOTA SYSTEM USED IN DETERMINING NUMBER OF CHAPLAINS FROM EACH DENOMINATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Quota Percentage</th>
<th>Quota Number</th>
<th>On duty 1 Sept. 1945</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Roman Catholic</td>
<td>30.46</td>
<td>2589</td>
<td>2278</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodist</td>
<td>11.00</td>
<td>935</td>
<td>1200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baptist, South</td>
<td>8.89</td>
<td>756</td>
<td>947</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish</td>
<td>3.70</td>
<td>315</td>
<td>243</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lutheran, Missouri Synod</td>
<td>2.200</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latter-day Saints</td>
<td>1.07</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian Science</td>
<td>.57</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Both the quota system and the eligibility requirements used during World War II were unfair to members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, because the eligibility requirements limited the opportunity to become a chaplain to a select few, those involved in the teaching profession. The requirements eliminated most Mormons from seeking an appointment based solely upon the civilian occupation that they chose to pursue. The military justified its decision upon the concept that the experience gained from teaching came nearest in meeting the duties and responsibilities of a chaplain. In addition, the quota system used by the army, being obsolete and antiquated, pre-

1Honeywell, Chaplains, pp. 215, 216.
vented other qualified Mormons from becoming chaplains. While many qualified members of the Mormon faith waited for an opening in the quota system, the demand for chaplains continued as many other denominations were unable to fill their allotted quota. Further, the lack of a sufficient number of Mormon chaplains prevented many servicemen of the Mormon faith from obtaining help or counsel from a Mormon chaplain.
CHAPTER V

TRAINING

Approximately one-sixth of all chaplains who served sometime during World War II were on active duty on December 7, 1941.\(^1\) The majority of them received little formal training because of their status as National Guard, Army Reserve, or Civilian Conservation Chaplains. Many of the reserve chaplains served as bishops, professors and pastors and had no time to spend training with the military. Others felt that military training was a waste of time.\(^2\) In general, the only formal training that they received was through an extension course. Pre-war chaplains such as Reuben Curtis described his training as strictly "on-the-job training".\(^3\) Milton Widdison, when assigned to Fort Warren, Wyoming, recalled that he just went out and did the job. He received neither formal instruction nor training.\(^4\)

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\(^1\) Honeywell, *Chaplains*, p. 243.

\(^2\) Honeywell, *Chaplains*, p. 206.

\(^3\) Interview of Reuben E. Curtis by Richard Maher, March 1, 1974, Charles Redd Center for Western Studies. Oral History Project: LDS Chaplains of World War II.

\(^4\) Milton Widdison interview.
As the military expanded and the need for chaplains increased, the Chief of Chaplains in September, 1940, recommended that a resident school for chaplains be reactivated. In February 1942, the first class opened at Fort Benjamin Harrison, Indiana. It held four sessions, and in August 1942, the school moved to Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts, where twenty-two sessions were held. In August 1944, the school moved to Fort Devans, Massachusetts and held seven sessions. Finally in July 1945, the school moved to Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia for the final three sessions. Each session lasted four weeks and the instruction included classes in practical duties and psychological adjustment, courtesies and customs, army morale, graves registration and military funerals, army organization, army administration, defense against chemical warfare, map reading and aerial photography, military law, military sanitation and first aid, malaria, classification and utilization of manpower, army postal service, military training, and special lectures.

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1Honeywell, Chaplains, p. 243.

2Ibid, p. 245.

3Form, "Completion of Basic Course for Chaplains" for 201 File of Eugene E. Campbell dated 23 August 1944. Received from Headquarters Chaplain School, Harvard University, Cambridge, 38, Massachusetts.
Rather than learning theology, which the chaplains were expected to know, the chaplain school taught the basics of military life. In some cases, training did not end when they left chaplain school as Chaplain Wilford Smith recalled the jungle training he received in the United States prior to going overseas.\(^1\) Chaplains served with their men, and they had to be in the best of physical condition in order to go where the men went. Chaplain Lyman C. Berrett walked 30 miles with his unit at Camp Polk, Louisiana in twelve hours.\(^2\) He credits his great conditioning to an Irish Buck Sergeant who was the drill master at Harvard University. Many of the chaplains who attended Harvard will never forget the Irish Sergeant and the experience of getting their shoes to fit them. When being taught close order drill, the Sergeant said:

I don't care what kind of rank you guys got, I am the commanding officer. You obey everything I say. He taught us to do a couple of formations and then marched us right into the Charles River. We were up to our arm pits in the water and we stood there for about five minutes. He gave us an about face and marched us out onto the bank, and said, Now we will walk until your shoes are dry, and if any of you get blisters or corns, you can sue me. The shoes were brand new and after than they dried out and fit like a glove. . . .\(^3\)

\(^1\)Interview of Wilford E. Smith by Richard Maher, July 23, 1973, Charles Redd Center for Western Studies. Oral History Project: LDS Chaplains of World War II.

\(^2\)Interview of Lyman Berrett by Richard Maher, October 24, 1974, Charles Redd Center for Western Studies. Oral History Project: LDS Chaplains of World War II.

\(^3\)Ibid.
Apparently the policy at the training school was to mix people of different religions so that one might learn and appreciate the doctrine of others. It was common to have in the same room a Catholic Priest, a Methodist, a Southern Baptist, and a Mormon. Invariably religious beliefs would be discussed. One young Mormon chaplain told of a discussion he had regarding the subject of smoking. Two of the chaplains sharing the room with him smoked, and he chided them for using tobacco. He told them that they should serve as examples. One of the Protestants agreed with him, but the Catholic chaplain felt it had nothing to do with religion. A few days later this LDS chaplain mentioned how the LDS Chapels are designed having a cultural hall for dancing, and when he said this he was interrupted by a Southern Baptist chaplain who said, "You hypocrite, you criticize me for a little habit like smoking, while you actually espouse a great evil like dancing."¹ From discussions like this one, the many LDS chaplains became enlightened on the beliefs of other men. From being closely associated with these other men, the LDS chaplains often learned to have a high respect for ministers of other faiths.

In addition to having chaplains of various denominations mingle with one another, the training school served other purposes. One such purpose was to orientate the chaplain to military life. He learned the army way of doing things. A chaplain, in addition

¹Interview of Eugene E. Campbell by Richard Maher, July 17, 1973, Charles Redd Center for Western Studies. Oral History Project: LDS Chaplains of World War II.
to being a man of God, served as an officer, and the military expected him to act as one. Inasmuch as many chaplains had no prior military experience, the need for the type of training received at the chaplains' school was necessary. A typical problem that confronted recently appointed chaplains would have been similar to that of Wilford E. Smith. He received his commission at Fort Douglas, Utah, and told to get a uniform and report to Harvard University. He said, "I didn't even know how to salute, or what type of uniform that I should have." In addition, they received training which got them into good physical shape. This was necessary as many chaplains received assignments to combat units, and the chaplain served wherever his men were located.

1 Wilford E. Smith Interview.
CHAPTER VI

NAVY CHAPLAINS

Of the approximately 3000 chaplains that served in the United States Navy\(^1\) during World War II, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints provided only eight. Three of the eight served overseas and the remainder served at various locations within the United States.

### TABLE III

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Date of Appointment as Chaplains in United States Naval Reserve</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>John W. Boud</td>
<td>July 31, 1941</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milton J. Hess</td>
<td>March 10, 1942</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glen Y. Richards</td>
<td>September 10, 1942</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Gifford Jackson</td>
<td>October 23, 1942</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rex L. Christensen</td>
<td>June 9, 1943</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elbert R. Simmons</td>
<td>November 20, 1944</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jack B. Watkins</td>
<td>January 14, 1945</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Briant G. Badger</td>
<td>March 20, 1945</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

World War II saw the first member of the Mormon faith appointed as a Navy Chaplain. John W. Boud of Salt Lake City

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\(^1\)During World War II, Navy Chaplains also served men of the United States Marine Corps.

\(^2\)Call, "Church in the Philippines", p. 299.
received his appointment July 31, 1941, and was on active duty at San Diego Naval Station on December 7, 1941, when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. He and Milton J. Hess of Farmington, Utah, the second Mormon appointed as a Navy Chaplain, worked together as lawyers in a law firm in Salt Lake City with two others, Bruce R. McConkie and Lawrence L. Summerhays. Both John Boud and Milton Hess recognized the possibility of U.S. involvement in a major war and made plans. Learning that there had never been a Mormon chaplain in the United States Navy, they both applied requesting that their law degree be substituted for the Divinity Degree required by the Navy. John Boud took both applications to San Francisco. He turned his in to the proper military authority, but Milton Hess had not signed all copies of the application as required and his was returned to him for signature, thus delaying his appointment until March of 1942.

Prior to being appointed chaplains, the eight worked in a variety of positions. John W. Boud and Milton J. Hess practiced law in Salt Lake City. Glen Y. Richards served as the chaplain of the Utah State Penitentiary. Gifford Jackson worked for the Civil Service Commission as an investigator. Rex Christensen received his appointment while attending Yale Divinity School. Elbert R. Simmons and Jack Watkins served in the U.S. Navy as pharmacist mates when appointed. And Briant G. Badger held the position as publicity director for the Improvement Era, an LDS Church publication.
The Navy did not use a quota system nor did it use the same eligibility requirements that the army used. Its appointments were arbitrary and made according to need. However, without using a rigid formula for appointing men from each denomination, the Mormon Church did not receive its fair share of Navy Chaplains. Church leaders felt that the Church should have received as its fair share approximately 25 chaplains.\(^1\)

Apparently the shortage of appointments was caused by the method used by the office of the Chief of Navy Chaplains in evaluation of Mormon chaplains. When Marriott confronted the Chief of Navy Chaplains with the evidence of this apparent discrimination,

Chaplain [Robert D.] Workman indicated—as did his assistant—that there was a tendency upon the part of our boys to organize groups and then leave them on their own; also, some tendency to not perform some of the regular duties belonging to a chaplain.\(^2\)

J. Willard Marriott explained how the Group Leader Program set up by the Church worked, and of the use of the Priesthood and its authority. However, it is quite likely that they did not fully comprehend the program. This lack of understanding can be seen by the following:

The Chaplain who had charge of all chaplains in John Boud's area said to him one day, 'How can you report truthfully that you held three meetings at the same hour? Surely you could not be in three places at the same time. . .' Chaplain Boud explained that there were LDS men in every

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\(^1\) Marriott to First Presidency, June 19, 1945, "Chaplains Commission Papers"

\(^2\) Ibid.
group who had the same authority in the Church which he himself had. One could always be selected to take over in any group of LDS boys and do as well as he could or maybe better. Boud’s superior could hardly understand.¹

Further, apparently a serious problem existed between Mormon chaplain Rex L. Christensen and the United States Navy which did not enhance the image of the Mormon chaplains, and may have caused the Chief of Navy Chaplains to look unfavorably upon the performance of Mormon chaplains.

You have already been advised that Chaplain Rex L. Christensen, Farragut, Idaho has resigned. . . . He was given an honorable discharge. In light of recent reports concerning Chaplain Christensen’s attitude toward the duties and responsibilities of the chaplaincy, I am not surprised at this unhappy ending. . . . ²

Prior to Chaplain Christensen’s discharge, the Mormon Church had only seven chaplains serving on active duty, and two of them had recently received their appointments. Therefore, the Chief of Navy Chaplains had only five chaplains to evaluate properly, and if one did not perform well, it probably affected his overall judgement regarding the ability of Latter-day Saints to perform effectively as chaplains.

Mormon chaplains served in the Navy primarily in the role of Protestant ministers. However, where possible, the Navy assigned them to areas where they could be most effective working with LDS

¹ Castle H. Murphy, Castle in Zion—Hawaii’s Autobiography And Episodes from Life of Castle H. Murphy (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1963), pp. 116, 117.

² Iverson to First Presidency, April 3, 1945, “Chaplains Commission Papers”.
men. Elbert Simmons received verbal orders to work with and organize LDS men. He worked in the Bay area at Treasure Island, Camp Park, the Naval Hospital at Shoemaker, Fleet City, and Oak Knoll Hospital.\(^1\) Another Latter-day Saint chaplain that had a similar experience was Glen Y. Richards. He received from his superiors the primary assignment to see to the spiritual needs and welfare of members of the Mormon faith.\(^2\)

Further, when Jack B. Watkins asked to be transferred to the Oakland Bay area to be near LDS men, J. Willard Marriott contacted Admiral William N. Thomas with the request. Thomas told Marriott that he would "transfer Watkins to the Bay area so that he could be in a position to help our boys."\(^3\) This can be compared to the army's attitude that "any chaplain can give to the men his spiritual needs regardless of affiliation—it's part of a larger body. . . ."\(^4\)

\(^1\)Interview of Elbert R. Simmons by Richard Maher, October 10, 1974, Charles Redd Center for Western Studies. Oral History Project: LDS Chaplains of World War II.

\(^2\)Interview with Mrs. Alberta Marie (Reeve) Richards, date unknown.

\(^3\)Marriott to Lee, "Chaplains Commission Papers".

\(^4\)Iverson to Lee, January 27, 1945, Ibid.
The Navy's formal training school for chaplains was located at William and Mary College in Williamsburg, Virginia. Training consisted of both classwork and physical activities including swimming. One of the requirements at the school was that each chaplain had to pass a swimming test. Most of the Mormon chaplains attended the school, but the navy had no formal chaplain's school at the time that John Boud and Milton Hess received their appointments. They received their training at San Diego by attending a series of lectures delivered by a variety of people on the subject of Navy relief, military procedures, administering to the sick and conducting services. Chaplain Hess felt that his training was as good as any that the chaplains who attended the formal training school received.¹

Chaplains Boud and Hess both attained the rank of Lieutenant Commander and served overseas. While stationed at San Diego, they worked with the Navy Relief Society. This organization helped dependents of Navy personnel with their domestic and monetary problems. Because of their background as lawyers, they helped a considerable number of dependents being able to offer professional legal advice.

Chaplain Boud served at San Diego and in the Hawaiian Islands. He organized many LDS men into MIA groups in the San Diego area, and in addition, organized meetings for the servicemen

¹Milton Hess Interview.
at the U.S. Naval Training Station, U.S. Marine Corps Base, Camp Matthews, and Camp Callen. In 1944, he left San Diego for an assignment in the Hawaiian Islands. While in the Hawaiian Islands, he became the assistant to the District Chaplain of the 14th Naval District. In addition to his duties as an Assistant District Chaplain, he aided Castle H. Murphy, the Assistant Coordinator for LDS Servicemen in the Hawaiian Islands.

Chaplain Boud was one of our most active chaplains. He assisted me in setting up servicemen's organizations in the Navy, especially at Pearl Harbor. Another member of the Mormon Church served as an Assistant District Chaplain. When Milton J. Hess returned from his overseas assignment in the Aleutian Islands, he attained the position of assistant to the District Chaplain of the 11th Naval District. Because of his position, he wielded much influence within the 11th Naval District. This influence enabled him to organize several area conferences, and on one occasion, had the president of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, George Albert Smith come onto the station and address the members of the Church.

Mormon chaplains served the navy in many areas and with a variety of assignments. Chaplain Anthon Gifford Jackson, the third Mormon chaplain assigned overseas, served with the U.S. Marine

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1Church News, 3 April 1943.
2Murphy, Castle in Zion, pp. 116, 117.
3Milton Hess Interview.
4Ibid.
Corps in the Marianas, Guam, and Iwo Jima. Glen Y. Richards spent approximately fifteen months at Farragut, Idaho. He was a Navy veteran of World War I, and, because of his age, could have avoided military service, but felt it was his duty to serve his country in its time of need. After Farragut, he served in the Bay area where he worked primarily with Mormon men. Rex L. Christensen also served at Farragut until his resignation in early 1945. Elbert Simmons worked with Latter-day Saints in the Bay area of California. Jack Watkins served at Terminal Island, San Pedro, California before his transfer to serve Latter-day Saints in the Bay area. Briant Garr Badger served with the Marines at Cherry Point, North Carolina and with the navy at San Diego.

Although the Mormon chaplains served in many areas, the U.S. Navy tried to assign them to work primarily with members of their own faith. For example, John Boud worked primarily with Latter-day Saints while stationed at San Diego and in Hawaii. The navy, at one time, provided Boud with transportation from Hawaii to Midway for the sole purpose of organizing LDS men into MIA Groups. Elbert Simmons conducted only one Protestant service during his time in the navy, because he spent his Sundays visiting the many MIA groups in the Bay area.

Even though the navy's policy on the assignment of LDS chaplains conformed to the desires of Church leaders, they remained unhappy with the number appointed. Church authorities felt that 25 members of the Church should have been appointed as opposed to only eight. Inasmuch as the navy could have appointed
any numbers of Latter-day Saints to the chaplaincy, and chose to appoint only eight, the appearance remains that a problem existed within the Chief of Chaplains' office greater than Admiral Workman's excuse that Mormon chaplains have a tendency not to perform their duty. Milton Hess and John Boud were placed in positions of high responsibility and, in addition, received high ratings for their performance.\(^1\) John Boud felt that discrimination existed within the Chief of Chaplain's Office. He said, "... I believe that the reason we had so few chaplains in the navy is because the Chief of Chaplains was prejudiced against the Church ... ."\(^2\) But, not enough evidence exists to come to that conclusion.

\(^1\)Milton Hess Interview.

\(^2\)Questionnaire, "Chaplains Commission Papers"
CHAPTER VII

THE WAR IN THE PACIFIC

The surprise attack at Pearl Harbor by the Japanese
on December 7, 1941 crippled the United States Naval Fleet in
the Pacific. Japanese military forces advanced across the
southern and southwestern Pacific capturing the Philippines,
Singapore, New Guinea and the Netherlands East Indies. A
bleak outlook faced the American people early in 1942 as
victory over Japan seemed far into the distant future. In
June 1942, the first American victory and the turning point of
the war occurred at the battle of Midway. The naval battle re-
sulted in a standoff between the Japanese Navy and the U.S. Navy,
but caused the Japanese Navy to retreat from the area.

Shortly thereafter, the first major land battle in the
Pacific occurred at Guadalcanal and Mormon chaplains were in
evidence there and elsewhere in the Pacific. Captain George
Woolley, a Mormon chaplain, served at Guadalcanal with the United
States Army troops as they mopped up after the 2nd Marine Division
departed for a well deserved rest. In addition to Guadalcanal,
Latter-day Saint chaplains served in all major battles in the

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Pacific including Attu, Kwajalein, Biak, Iwo Jima, the Philippines, and Okinawa. A total of 21 Mormon chaplains served in the Pacific War.¹ Several of them spent 30 months or more in the area. Two won the Silver Star for bravery, three were awarded the Bronze Star for outstanding service, and one was wounded at Okinawa and awarded the Purple Heart.

The 21 Mormon chaplains who served in the Pacific during World War II were:

TABLE IV

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Branch of Service</th>
<th>Area Where Served</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theodore E. Curtis</td>
<td>U.S. Army</td>
<td>New Britain, Guadalcanal &amp; Philippines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George R. Woolley</td>
<td>U.S. Army</td>
<td>New Britain, Guadalcanal &amp; Philippines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reuben E. Curtis</td>
<td>U.S. Army</td>
<td>Attu, Kwajalein, Philippines &amp; Okinawa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reed G. Probst</td>
<td>U.S. Army</td>
<td>Australia, Biak, New Guinea &amp; Philippines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Howard C. Evans</td>
<td>U.S. Army</td>
<td>New Caledonia &amp; Okinawa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milton G. Widdison</td>
<td>U.S. Army</td>
<td>Okinawa and Korea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John W. Boud</td>
<td>U.S. Navy</td>
<td>Various islands in Pacific, served w/Seabees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milton J. Hess</td>
<td>U.S. Navy</td>
<td>Pacific, served in Aleutian Islands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gerald L. Erickson</td>
<td>U.S. Army</td>
<td>Sainpan and Tinian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anthon Jackson</td>
<td>U.S. Navy</td>
<td>Marianas, Guam, Iwo Jima</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hyrum A. Hendrickson</td>
<td>U.S. Army</td>
<td>New Guinea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marsden Durham</td>
<td>U.S. Army</td>
<td>Leyte, Phil., Okinawa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John W. Fitzgerald</td>
<td>U.S. Army</td>
<td>Saipan, Phil., Biak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samuel George Ellsworth</td>
<td>U.S. Army</td>
<td>Philippines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ray L. Jones</td>
<td>U.S. Army</td>
<td>Okinawa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lyman C. Berrett</td>
<td>U.S. Army</td>
<td>Okinawa, Cebu, Phil.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilford E. Smith</td>
<td>U.S. Army</td>
<td>Okinawa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roy N. Darley</td>
<td>U.S. Army</td>
<td>Philippines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vadal W. Peterson</td>
<td>U.S. Army</td>
<td>Leyte, Luzon, Phil.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warren Richard Nelson</td>
<td>U.S. Army</td>
<td>Luzon, Korea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albert O. Mitchell</td>
<td>U.S. Army</td>
<td>Philippines</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹A total of 45 Mormon chaplains served during World War II
Because of the attack at Pearl Harbor, the military considered Hawaii as a war zone area, and two Mormon chaplains were assigned to Hawaii immediately after the attack.

Chaplain Theodore Curtis departed the United States on December 6, 1941 for an assignment at Fort Stotsenburg in the Philippines. Because of the attack upon Pearl Harbor the following day, his assignment was changed to the Hawaiian Islands.¹

Milton Widdison left for Hawaii almost immediately after the attack at Pearl Harbor. He recalled the "Pearl Harbor Hysteria" both on the ship and upon his arrival in the islands.² On board ship, everyone expected to see the Japanese Navy at any moment or to be torpedoed. At Hawaii in the early days of the war, everyone expected the Japanese invasion momentarily. Chaplain Widdison served in the Hawaiian Islands for approximately three years before seeing combat on Okinawa. In addition, he spent time in Korea before returning to the United States.

While stationed in a war zone, the duty of the chaplains remained the same, but the atmosphere changed as men went into combat or were placed on alert. Chaplain Theodore Curtis said, "... We live in the field. I travel from gun position to gun position holding services..."³ Another typical example was

¹Church News, 19 May, 1945.
²Milton Widdison Interview.
³Church News, 28 March 1942.
expressed by L. Marsden Durham, "... In garrison life I learned that a chaplain had a certain worth. In combat, I found, however, that worth enhanced and magnified... The men rely on him...":

Another example regarding the change of atmosphere was in the attitude of the combat soldier towards religion. A chaplain could always tell when combat approached, because the number of men attending religious services increased. Chaplain Reuben Curtis plotted a chart showing church attendance for Protestants in the 7th Division rising from 3500 to 11,000 as the battle of Attu approached. After the battle, the attendance dropped to 5500 and then rose again to over 15,000 as the battle for Kwajalien approached.

Many of the Mormon chaplains serving in the Pacific found themselves involved directly in combat. A typical example of combat conditions could best be described by Reuben Curtis, the younger brother of Chaplain Theodore Curtis and the Division Chaplain for the 7th Infantry Division, who served at Attu when the United States Army recaptured it from the Japanese.


2Chart of "7th Division Church Attendance, January 1943 - April 1944", contained in personal file of Reuben Curtis.
The landing was a thrilling experience: sitting on a case of bangalore torpedoes in a fast landing barge, surrounded by scores of others that churned the water into a frenzy of angry froth, heading through the dense fog towards—we knew not what. Chaplains accompanied their troops into the front lines and, unmindful of their own security visited groups of men, bringing comfort and cheer, holding services for individuals and small groups as the opportunity presented itself, providing such things as hot drinks, clothing, medical supplies, etc. In such quantities as could be obtained from any source.

He reflected upon his experiences at Attu:

It is true that one can be at peace in the midst of conflict and the true tranquility and calm comes from within and has nothing to do with the noise and violence of our poor deluded civilization. One day I sat upon a rock on a hillside reading from the New Testament and not many yards away a fierce battle was in progress. The artillery was belching forth red hot steel, and tracer bullets from machine guns and small arms criss-crossed the valley like a Fourth of July fireworks display gone crazy.

Again, I climbed a mountain range and recovered the body of an aviator who had crashed. Unable to get the body down the steep slope I dug a grave on the hillside, and with uncovered head, sang a hymn and held a simple graveside service. I could see in every direction and all seemed so peaceful and beautiful that I could hardly bring myself to believe the distant roar was anything but thunder and the flashes of fire anything but lightning.

While at Attu, Curtis responded to the Chief of Army Chaplains request for information on combat experiences. He and other chaplains at Attu made recommendations to the Chief of Army Chaplains commenting that chaplains lacked experience and skill

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1 Journal History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, July 17, 1943 located in Church Historian's office, hereafter this collection will be referred to as Journal History.

2 Ibid.
in first aid work, especially bandaging any part of the body. The Chief of Army Chaplains viewed his report as most revealing and forwarded copies to the Chaplain Training School hoping to eliminate this deficiency.\(^1\)

In addition, his responsibilities included the burial and identification of American soldiers. He located a beautiful area called Little Falls for the cemetery. Here the men were buried, and Chaplain Curtis had a photograph taken of the location and with a letter to the next of kin forwarded a picture of the Little Falls Cemetery in order that they might see where their loved ones lay. Many of the parents sent their appreciation to him. One letter read in part, "... I received my picture of the Little Falls Cemetery, where my son's body lies. I have thought so many times if I could only have a picture of the place, never dreaming I would ever get one. These things help so much. ..." Another replied, "... I did not know that anyone ever thought to do things like this for those who lost their dear ones in service far from home. You make it seem as though I have the whole army backing me and sort of helping me to carry on. ..." And another said, "... It helps

\(^1\)War Department, Services of Supply, Office of the Chief of Chaplains, Washington, Frederick W. Hogan to Reuben E. Curtis, 23 August 1943.
to know that he is in a place like that. We at home have such an awful picture in our minds of battle graves."1

Another Mormon chaplain that served in combat in the Philippines was L. barsden Durham. He landed with the fifth wave on the first day, and spent 32 consecutive days on the front lines. He next served on Okinawa where he was wounded when hit on April 6, 1945 by a bursting mortar shell. He said of the incident; "Others standing near me, at my elbow, were killed instantly while my life was spared, so that I feel my guardian angel was working overtime again."2

He was awarded the Purple Heart, and evacuated to Hawaii to recuperate. While there he met with an unfortunate accident when he fell from Alaska Falls near Hilo, and died. Castle murphy referred to him as, "... Choice among God's noblemen. Much loved here. Hawaii mourns..."3

While serving in combat, several of the Mormon chaplains received decorations for heroism and outstanding service. Chaplain Theodore Curtis received the Silver Star for heroism while aiding a wounded man during the battle for the Philippines.

1"Quotations from letters received from next of kin of Attu deceased" contained in personal file of Reuben Curtis.


3 Deseret News, 26 September 1943.
His citation read in part, "... through heavy fire he crawled to the wounded man, prayed with him and later helped carry the body to the Yanks line..." \(^1\) Another Silver Star was awarded to Chaplain Reed G. Probst while serving under enemy fire at Biak Island on June 8, 1944. His citation read in part, "... While the area around the beachhead was smothered with fire, Chaplain Probst moved about without regard for his safety giving aid and assistance to the wounded. Throughout the battle he never stopped his work..." \(^2\) Three others were awarded the Bronze Star; Chaplain Reuben Curtis, for outstanding services performed at Attu, Kwajalein, Leyte, and Okinawa. \(^3\) L. Marsden Durham won his for gallantry and meritorious service while on Leyte. \(^4\) The third Bronze Star was awarded to Gerald L. Erickson for outstanding service at Saipan. \(^5\)

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\(^1\) Newspaper Article found in the Personal Papers of Reuben Curtis, dated February 19, 1945 from Bamban, Luzon, P.I. (Delayed) (CIPS).

\(^2\) Church News, 19 August 1944.

\(^3\) Citation for Bronze Star, Headquarters XXIV Corps, n.d.

\(^4\) Church News, 3 March 1945.

\(^5\) General Order Number 30, Headquarters, Western Pacific Base Command, APO 244, 31 January 1946.
In addition to serving with his men in combat, the chaplain provided services for the Protestant men, saw to it that the Catholic and the Jewish men of his unit had services provided. In addition he counselled them and provided wholesome recreation as morale was a major problem in the Pacific. Many men served in the Pacific for several years and many of the islands of the Pacific offered no entertainment. The chaplain provided games, athletic events, books to read and even movies. Chaplain Woolley said he showed the film "King Kong" at least a thousand times.

Although the Mormon chaplains served men of their own unit, many felt it their responsibility to work with members of their own faith. A typical experience of Mormon chaplains working with LDS servicemen in the Pacific would be in the organizing of conferences. Chaplain Theodore Curtis, while at Guadalcanal, in addition to his regular duties, organized a General Conference for Mormons. He informed Church leaders that,

I keep track of every LDS man I meet. During the last month I wrote 155 personal letters to parents and wives. I am just beginning to get replies—replies which more than repay me for the time and effort required in writing the letters.¹

¹Church News, 29 April 1944
While serving in the Pacific, the Mormon chaplains served in many places and with a variety of assignments under all types of conditions. One army chaplain, Albert O. Mitchell spent more time aboard ship than did any of the navy chaplains. He served on a transport ship which moved army and navy personnel throughout the Pacific including the islands of the Philippines and Japan. Wilford E. Smith served as a hospital chaplain. A. Gifford Jackson worked with marines and served at Iwo Jima, Tinian, and Biak. Lyman Berrett, while assigned to the 77th Infantry Division on Okinawa, had the major responsibility for grave registration. He claimed "... it was quite an experience burying the dead ... out of the 770 bodies we buried on Okinawa, there were only 6 or 7 that we couldn't positively identify."1 While serving on Guadalcanal, George R. Woolley recalled the plague of flies and he thought that it must have been just like the one Egypt had during the time of Moses. There were so many that he couldn't take a spoonful of food without having at least a dozen flies attached to it. And Reuben Curtis remembered the difficulty of trying to sleep in a foxhole during the rain while on the Philippines.

Another type of assignment dealt with command positions. Reuben E. Curtis, while serving as the assistant chaplain in his division, received a promotion to Division Chaplain of the 7th

1Lyman Berrett Interview.
Infantry Division. A short time later, he received another promotion to Corps Chaplain of the X Corps, and was promoted to the rank of full Colonel. He became the highest ranking Mormon chaplain of World War II. In addition, he attained the highest position by virtue of his assignment as the X Corps Chaplain. His brother, Theodore, rose to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel and attained the position of Division Chaplain for the 40th Division. He chose as his assistant a Mormon, George R. Woolley.

Mormon chaplains who served in the Pacific could be divided into two groups: those who served on active duty prior to Pearl Harbor or were appointed shortly thereafter, and the other group which received their appointment in late 1943, 1944, and 1945. The men in the first group, or the veteran group, spent approximately three years in the Pacific War Zone, and three of them attained command positions. Included in this group were Theodore E. Curtis, George R. Woolley, Reuben E. Curtis, Reed G. Probst, Howard C. Evans, Milton G. Widdison, Gerald L. Erickson, and A. Gifford Jackson. Of that group, Theodore Curtis and Reed Probst won the Silver Star, and Reuben Curtis and Gerald L. Erickson won the Bronze Star. These men saw action from the first great battle at Guadalcanal to the last great battle at Okinawa.

Much of the fighting in the Pacific had been done by the time the other group received their appointments late in 1943, 1944, and 1945. Nevertheless, many were involved in the battle
for the Philippines and/or the battle for Okinawa. L. Marsden Durham was among the first chaplains to serve in the battle for the Philippines, and Wilford Smith, Ray L. Jones, and Lyman C. Berrett were involved in the battle for Okinawa.

Of the two groups, the first group or the veteran chaplains had more experience; were involved in more battles and won more battle stars, and had more rank than did their contemporaries that came into the military later in the war. However, they had in common the desire to serve and the ability to serve. A similarity between the veteran and the contemporary can be seen in the following. The veteran chaplain, Reuben E. Curtis, while at Attu, displayed concern for his men when, "Unable to get the body down the steep slope, I dug a grave on the hillside, and with uncovered head, sang a hymn and held a simple graveside service . . . ." A contemporary of his, L. Marsden Durham displayed the same concern and attitude while encountering combat duty, ". . . In combat, I found, . . . The men rely on him. His very presence on the battle scene is an asset, and a nod to this man, a smile to that, a word of prayer with another, and a comforting arm thrown about still another combines to fortify and replenish the spiritual needs of the men."

Many servicemen learned to rely on their chaplains, and chaplains like Theodore Curtis and Reed Probst risked their lives to serve their men. When Chaplain Roy M. Darley replaced Reed Probst in the Philippines, he learned of his outstanding reputation. Several officers told him that Chaplain Probst would
boldly go onto the battle field as bullets whipped around him, and drag the wounded and the dead back to the lines.¹

In addition to relying on the chaplain, many servicemen needed the chaplain, they felt that he represented God, and as the time for battle drew near, many drew closer to God through their chaplains.

CHAPTER VIII

MEDITERRANEAN THEATER OF OPERATIONS

War raged in the Mediterranean for more than two years before British and American forces launched Operation Torch in November 1942.¹ The British victory at El Alamein followed by the invasion of American and British troops in North Africa at Oran, Algiers, and Casablanca caused the final defeat for the German army in North Africa and their surrender at Tunis in May 1943. The allies proceeded to invade Sicily, then Italy, and finally southern France in August 1944. The Mediterranean Theater of Operations became a secondary front once the Allied Forces landed in Normandy and invasion forces moved across Europe towards Germany. The battle to defeat the enemy in Italy lasted approximately 18 months due to the stubborness of the German soldiers and the leadership of Field Marshal Albert Kesselring.

Mormon chaplains arrived in the Mediterranean Theater of Operations over a period of approximately two years. The first, Eldin Ricks, arrived in Oran, North Africa early in September 1943.

¹Operation Torch was the code name used for the invasion of North Africa.
Two weeks later, he joined the invasion forces at Salerno, Italy. Royden C. Braithwaite, the last Mormon chaplain in the area, arrived after hostilities ceased.

TABLE V

LDS ARMY CHAPLAINS WHO SERVED IN THE MEDITERRANEAN THEATER OF OPERATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Area Where Served</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eldin Ricks</td>
<td>North Africa and Italy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vernon A. Cooley</td>
<td>North Africa and Italy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timothy H. Irons</td>
<td>Italy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert C. Gibbons</td>
<td>Italy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royden C. Braithwaite</td>
<td>Italy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mormon chaplains served with a variety of military units. Eldin Ricks served with the 93rd Infantry Division, an all black unit. In addition, he served with a hospital and an ordnance unit. Vernon A. Cooley, the first Latter-day Saint chaplain to serve in the U.S. Army Air Corps, served with the 15th Air Force. Timothy H. Irons served with combat engineers, and Robert Gibbons served with a railroad company.

One of the major responsibilities of the chaplain was to counsel his men. Counselling sessions with a chaplain provided an opportunity for the men to discuss their personal problems with someone they could trust. As might be expected under wartime conditions these sessions included discussion of a variety

\[1\text{Eldin Ricks Interview.}\]
of problems. Some included soldiers intention to marry Italian
girls, family problems back home, pregnant girl friends,
commissioned or non-commissioned officers who seemed to pick
on one man, not getting promoted, or homesickness.

Chaplain Ricks experienced a situation in which one of the
black soldiers of his outfit reported that some white sergeant
was going to shoot him. Chaplain Ricks went with the man and
found the Sergeant, who was dead drunk. He confronted the
drunken man who insisted that the gun wasn't even loaded and
that he was only trying to scare the soldier. Ricks, never-
theless, reprimanded the man. This seems to have increased his
stature in the 93rd Division as the word got around that the
chaplain would stand up for the rights of his men.¹

Another major concern of a military chaplain dealt with
letter writing. Often a chaplain received mail from parents who
were concerned for their sons. Chaplain Ricks didn't wait to
receive letters from parents. He felt it his duty to inform all
the parents of the men assigned to his unit of their welfare.
He devised a newsletter which he mailed to all the parents
periodically. The newsletter contained information about the
unit, the condition under which they served, and Chaplain Ricks

¹Ibid.
usually wrote a message of inspiration. One such newsletter read, "Your service man is well and happy... and the fact that he is not where he has to 'sweat out' enemy shells—accounts for this."¹ Many parents wrote to him thanking him for his concern. One parent responded, "Mother received your kind letter recently... words cannot express our thanks and appreciation to you..."² Another answered, "Thank you very much for your kind and helpful letter,"³ and a third replied, "It's nice to know someone, somewhere... is devoting time to making things easier and a bit more pleasant for the boys."⁴ In addition, he wrote letters regarding the wounded and the killed. In a letter to Mrs. Lucy A. Fretwell, he told her that her son John had been wounded. His letter spared her great unpleasantness as she had apparently been told by the government that he had been killed. "Your letter arrived before the government telegram and saved me many bad moments as there was a very unpleasant mistake made in delivery..."⁵

¹Newsletter - Eldin Ricks to Mrs. S. L. Focht, n.d.
²Mrs. Mason Hart to Eldin Ricks, n.d.
³Freda Kay to Eldin Ricks, January 7, 1945.
⁴Mrs. Wilma Bitchun to Eldin Ricks, January 14, 1945.
⁵Lucy A. Fretwell to Eldin Ricks, July 2, 1944.
The morale of the men was another major concern of the chaplain. The men in Chaplain Vernon Cooley's outfit suffered from an extremely high venereal disease rate apparently caused by sexual relations with girls who frequented a bar room in the local town which the men from the base visited when off-duty. Chaplain Cooley took action to eliminate the problem by giving the men an alternate place to spend their free time. He received permission from his commanding officer to commandeer a railroad station located next to the bar room. He turned the station into a day room with a pool table, ping pong tables, a piano, radio, and magazine racks. In addition, he provided a little refreshment stand for the men. The day-room gave the men a choice of places to spend their time. So many men chose the day-room instead of the bar, that after a short period of time, he was able to commandeer the bar room in order to expand the day-room facilities.\footnote{Interview of Vernon A. Cooley, October 20, 1974, Charles Redd Center for Western Studies. Oral History Project: LDS Chaplains of World War II.}

In addition to performing his regular duties as a Protestant chaplain, the LDS chaplains sought to locate men of the Mormon faith. Eldin Ricks, the first Mormon chaplain in North Africa and Italy, did not know of a single Mormon in the area. In order to locate members of his church, he began mentioning that he came from Salt Lake City and attended Brigham Young University hoping that those listening might ask him if...
he were a Mormon. The technique worked in many instances. Vern Cooley printed the word Deseret on the front of his jeep and on the side he painted a picture of the angel Moroni blowing his horn. He knew that Mormons would immediately recognize both symbols and if they were interested would make themselves known to Chaplain Cooley. Using these techniques, Ricks and Cooley located many Mormon servicemen.

In addition, Ricks, Cooley, Irons, and Gibbons kept track of many of the members of the Church in the area by maintaining a card for every known Latter-day Saint in the area. When learning of a Mormon in the command, a card was made out containing his name, unit and home address, and placed in the file. Upon receiving the card, the chaplain wrote to the serviceman's parents informing them that they had contacted their son. The card file grew to contain over 2000 names.

Further, the four chaplains sent out a newsletter each month to all known Mormons in the area. Only a chaplain would have done this for any other officer would have been questioned regarding the mailing of so many newsletters each month. Since part of the chaplains' duty is to write letters, sending 2000 letters per month went unquestioned by military authorities. The newsletter

1 Eldin Ricks Interview.
2 Vernon Cooley Interview.
contained such information as the location of various MIA Groups in the area, the time and place for various meetings in the command and requested that the names of newly arrived men in the area be forwarded to the chaplains for inclusion in the card file.\(^1\)

These activities were usually done after the Mormon chaplain completed his duties with the Protestants of his unit. Vern Cooley's commanding officer told him, for instance, that once he fulfilled his responsibilities to the men of his unit, he could work with the Mormons all he wished. Cooley reported that many times his commanding officer cut orders allowing him to visit Mormon meetings at various places in central Italy.\(^2\). On the other hand, Eldin Ricks' supervising chaplain felt that he spent too much time with members of his church, and reprimanded him for it.

Because the typical Mormon chaplain felt it his duty and responsibility to oversee the affairs of the Latter-day Saints stationed nearby, conflicts existed occasionally between a commander and the chaplain. An example of how strong one LDS chaplain felt about the issue was the conflict between Chaplain Ricks and his supervising chaplain who was a Lutheran. His supervising chaplain asked him why he felt that his first consideration was for men of the LDS faith. Ricks replied that

\(^1\)Eldin Ricks Interview.

\(^2\)Vernon Cooley Interview.
Mormons had many things in common such as coming from the same area, knowing many of the same people, holding the same priesthood, and a bond of brotherhood existed between them. He felt so strong about being able to work with men of the LDS Church that he told his supervising chaplain that if he refused to let him work with them, he would contact his Church authorities and ask them to withdraw his ecclesiastical endorsement.

The question arises as to where many of the Mormon chaplains felt that their duty was; with the Mormons or with the men of their assigned unit. Ricks reminded his supervising chaplain that he always performed his duties to the men of his unit prior to working with LDS men. An example of his concern for the men of his unit was shown in the newsletter that he mailed to all the parents of the men in his unit. The basic attitude of most of the Mormon chaplains was one of fulfilling his responsibility to the men of their unit and then to work for the members of their own Church.

In meeting the needs of those of their faith, the Mormon chaplains in Italy took the role of Church leaders. They had to do this as no one else held the authority. The Church had authorized chaplains to set apart and issue certificates of appointment to MIA Group Leaders. Within the limits of the United States many others had the authorization, but overseas only the chaplain had the authority. In addition to having authority from their Church, they held the position in the
military that enabled them to effectively work with the LDS men in the area. No one other than a chaplain could have kept in contact with 2000 men each month.

The Mormons as a group in Italy were far better organized than in any other of the major areas. This accomplishment in part was due to the presence of the Mormon chaplains. They had knowledge and the whereabouts of a large number of LDS servicemen in Italy. The use of and the maintaining of a card file aided them in their performance in this area. However, it must be recognized that the battle area of Italy moved much slower than the battle areas in Europe or in the Pacific. It was much easier to keep track of men in the peninsula of Italy as compared to Mormons fighting in Patton's Third Army.
CHAPTER IX

EUROPEAN THEATER OF OPERATIONS

For several years prior to the allied invasion, the war in Europe remained primarily an air war. The Allied Forces bombed German territory day and night. Germany retaliated with their "buzz bombs". The Allied Forces used England as its major area of operations to launch the invasion upon the European continent. On June 6, 1944, the Allied Forces landed at Normandy, and after the initial breakout, moved rapidly across France, Belgium, and into Germany bringing about the formal surrender of Germany on May 8, 1945.

A total of seven Mormon chaplains served in the European Theater of War.

TABLE VI

LDS CHAPLAINS WHO SERVED IN THE EUROPAN THEATER OF WAR DURING WORLD WAR II

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Area Served</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leo Freeman</td>
<td>Ireland, England, France &amp; Germany</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jay B. Christensen</td>
<td>England, France, Belgium &amp; Luxembourg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timothy H. Irons</td>
<td>France and Germany</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Howard C. Badger</td>
<td>France and Germany</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grant E. Mann</td>
<td>France, Germany and Austria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eugene E. Campbell</td>
<td>France, Belgium, Germany &amp; Austria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leon H. Flint</td>
<td>England, Holland and Germany</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The seven Latter-day Saint chaplains served with a variety of units in the European Theater of War. Grant Mann, assigned to the Rainbow Division, a part of Patton's 3rd Army, received the Bronze Star for outstanding service during the period that his unit spent 119 consecutive days of front line action moving across Germany into Austria. He served among the first American units into Austria. Another Mormon chaplain, Eugene Campbell, also served with Patton's 3rd Army. Howard C. Badger's unit captured the Remagen Bridge, and he also served at the Battle of the Bulge. Timothy H. Irons served with the 3rd Armored Division of the 1st Army. Leon Flint served with the 9th Army. Leo F. Freeman served with the 92nd Replacement Battalion in France and Germany. And Jay B. Christensen served in the theater with assignments in England, France, Belgium, and Luxembourg.

In general, chaplains faced a difficult challenge in the war zone, because the men of their units were dispersed over a very large area as the front lines were never at stable locations. As other chaplains, the Mormons travelled extensively to serve the men. In the war zone, several Mormon chaplains found it extremely hazardous as they often found themselves behind the enemy lines while looking for particular units. On one occasion, Chaplain Campbell, while heading for Fulda, Germany to meet his head-quarter unit, detoured because a bridge on the road had been destroyed. He went through two German towns on his way and noticed that the German citizens had hung out their white sheets as he was going through the town. When he arrived in Fulda, he was told that
his unit had not yet arrived. When questioned as to where he had been, the officers in charge said, "Congratulations, Chaplain, you just conquered two towns." A similar experience happened to Chaplain Irons. While trying to catch up to his unit, he unknowingly passed them and came upon a small German town. When the citizens saw Irons they started pulling the Nazi flags down as fast as they could. They thought the German army was coming and did not expect American soldiers, but an American chaplain and his driver arrived ahead of their unit and a town hurried to put up the white flags and surrender. Another incident occurred to Chaplain Irons while he travelled down the highway looking for his unit. He came upon a road sign that read "Berlin 25 kilometers". He knew that he was headed in the wrong direction, and hurried to get back as he didn't want to meet with either the Germans or the Russians.

Of principal concern to the chaplain was the welfare and morale of his men which caused many chaplains to improvise to meet combat situations. Chaplain Grant Mann's unit saw 119 consecutive days of front line activity, from which the men received no breaks. In addition, the food was often inadequate. In response to the problem, Chaplain Mann brought hot food to the men in the front lines such as hot coffee, chocolate, milk, and sandwiches which he received from regiment headquarters. When conditions

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1Eugene Campbell Interview.


3Ibid.
made it possible, he set up a small canteen, and, with the permission of the officers in charge of the men, established a rotation system so that the soldiers could come to the rear for a period of 24 hours. In addition, he provided hot showers for the men when they were in an area where hot water was available. His commanding officers observed what he did for the morale of the men and sent his name in for a battlefield promotion which he received.\footnote{Interview of Grant E. Mann by Richard Maher, October 12, 1974. Charles Redd Center for Western Studies, Oral History Project: LDS Chaplains of World War II.}

The morale of the men remained a major responsibility of the chaplain after hostilities ended. Chaplain Campbell promoted sports such as volleyball, basketball, and softball immediately after the war. In addition, he served as the football coach for his unit.\footnote{Eugene Campbell Interview.}

The Latter-day Saint chaplains served as Protestant chaplains for the units to which they were assigned. In this capacity, their duties consisted of holding Protestant services for members of the various Protestant faiths, and, in addition, insuring that the Catholic and Jewish men of the unit received the opportunity to attend their own services. In addition, the Mormon chaplains generally saw a duty and responsibility to members of their own Church. This peculiarity did not go unnoticed by others. Eugene Campbell's Assistant Division Chaplain,
Chaplain Pippin, noticed that Chaplain Campbell always looked up members of the Mormon Church whenever he could. It remained so noticeable that Chaplain Pippen kidded him about it, and whenever a strange group of people appeared, like a group of Menonites dressed in black, Chaplain Pippen would say, "Let's get Chaplain Campbell, there are some Mormons in town."\(^1\) This peculiarity could cause problems for the Mormon chaplain if the Commanding Officer felt that he neglected his duties to the men. Grant Mann believed that as long as the staff and the Commanding Officer had confidence that the chaplain served the men of his unit first, he allowed them to serve members of the LDS faith all they wanted. Grant Mann felt he had that confidence.\(^2\) Howard Badger's Commanding Officer encouraged him to serve the Mormons when he finished his work with the men to whom he was assigned.\(^3\)

Many of the Mormon chaplains in Europe, after fulfilling their responsibility to their assigned unit, worked with the men of the Mormon Church. They helped organize and set apart Group Leaders throughout the area, and attended LDS services whenever they could. Chaplain Irons organized the first General Con-

\(^1\)Ibid.

\(^2\)Grant Mann Interview.

\(^3\)Interview of Howard Badger by Richard Maher, November 20, 1974. Charles Redd Center for Western Studies. Oral History Project: LDS Chaplains of World War II.
ference in Europe at Paris in April 1945 with Hugh B. Brown, the Mission President of England, presiding.

In addition to the close relationship between the Mormon chaplain and Mormon soldiers, the chaplains also felt it their responsibility and duty to help members of the Church who happened to be Germans. Allied military power devastated Germany. Its people suffered because of a lack of food and shelter. Many Germans were members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The military issued a non-fraternizing order, but most American soldiers ignored it, including some Mormon chaplains. Members of the military contacted German members of the Church and aided them by providing them with food and clothing. However, the most valued commodity was cigarettes. At that time the black market flourished, and cartons of cigarettes were valued anywhere from $30 to $100. This commodity was sought after most by the German Saints as they could exchange cartons of cigarettes for food or clothing. Chaplains Mann and Irons gave cartons of cigarettes to German civilians to aid them.¹ In addition, Chaplain Irons helped the Branch President in Frankfurt get Church money released from the local bank. The German bank officer wouldn't release the money, but when Chaplain Irons went to the U.S. Finance Officer in the area with the problem, the money was soon released to the Branch President.²

¹Grant Mann Interview.
²Timothy H. Irons Interview.
Irons and Mann received from the States, packages to be dispersed to German civilians. In many cases they had to travel extensively to deliver the packages to the German members of the Church. This aid helped alleviate much of the suffering among German members of the Church.

The end of the war brought new problems to the military including American men fraternizing with German women, black marketeering and loss of discipline among the soldiers. Chaplain Campbell said he wrote more letters of condolence home after the war ended than he did during combat. This was mainly due to carelessness on the part of the men. Many drank too much, drove carelessly, and played with their souvenir weapons, and caused many accidents. Leon Flint attributed much of the problem to the army itself because of all the liquor it supplied to the men.

Life became much easier during the occupation as several chaplains "had it made". Chaplain Campbell did a lot of sight seeing in Austria and Germany. In addition, he and Chaplain Mann received an assignment to attend the first conference of the World Council of Churches at Bern, Switzerland. Timothy H. Irons was reassigned and worked with LDS men only.

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1 Grant Mann interview and Timothy H. Irons interview.
2 Eugene Campbell interview.
3 Interview of Leon Flint by Richard Maher, February 25, 1975. Charles Redd Center for Western Studies, Oral History Project: LDS Chaplains of World War II.
4 Grant Mann and Eugene Campbell interview.
5 Timothy H. Irons interview.
Badger travelled throughout Europe with Ezra Taft Benson, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, visiting military and civilian members of the Church.¹

LDS chaplains served in the European Theater of Operations both in combat and with the occupation forces. In general, chaplains lifted the spirits of most men by being with them on the front lines. Men responded, "Oh boy, the chaplain is here".² Most Mormon chaplains received battle stars for participating in key battles. They received many memorable experiences during the war. Their experiences might be summed up best by Chaplain Campbell, "the war was a great adventure for me . . . I wouldn't want to do it again, most of it anyway, but it was a rich experience for me."³

The LDS chaplain's desire to serve members of their faith extended to the enemy. Shortly after the end of hostilities, some Mormon chaplains sought out German members of the Church and provided them with food, clothing and cigarettes which helped them overcome the hardship that the German civilians faced. This concern for the enemy was caused because of the similarities of beliefs. Their beliefs, in many instances, caused them to remain aloof from the rest of the world. The doctrine of the LDS Church specified no drinking, smoking, or partaking of coffee or tea. In addition, the doctrine stressed high moral standards, as compared to the military which had a reputation

¹Howard Badger Interview.
²Grant Mann Interview.
³Eugene Campbell Interview.
of promoting low morals. A Mormon doctor claimed that VE (Victory in Europe) day should have been re-named VD (Venereal Disease) day, because of all the sexual relationships between the American soldier and the German girls. Another explanation for this unique attitude was that the Church existed as a minority religious body, and this resulted in members forming closer bonds with one another.

Prior to battle all men were afraid, and by virtue of this fear, helped them to get closer to one another whether the soldier be Jewish, Mormon, Catholic, or Protestant. Chaplain Campbell recalled that several men felt this close bond with one another just prior to going into combat. Several of the men in his unit got together to sing some of their favorite church songs. Songs chosen represented many religious denominations and caused Chaplain Campbell to reflect that these men came from a variety of places in the United States, had many different heritages, and belonged to different religions, and yet, in that moment, there existed between them a bond of being one. The knowledge that one might die soon had a psychological effect that formed a bond between the men.

The chaplains of the Mormon faith who served in the European Theater of Operations had many similar experiences including getting lost trying to find their units, providing

1 Eugene Campbell Interview.
2 Ibid.
religious services for their men under combat conditions, visiting the sick and wounded and helping to build the morale of their men. In addition, a number of them aided German members of the Church who needed help due to the devastation of Germany by war. Europe differed from other war areas inasmuch as many thousands of members of the Church were citizens of Germany and other European nations. Those civilians received help from Mormon servicemen, including chaplains, because of the similarity of belonging to the same church. There were no enemies just friends.
CHAPTER X

MISCELLANEOUS ASSIGNMENTS

The remaining thirteen chaplains of the Mormon faith served with assignments overseas, and within the United States. In addition to serving in the Pacific, European, and Mediterranean Theater of Operations, one served in the China-Burma-India Campaign, another was stationed in the Canal Zone, and a third was assigned aboard the transport ship, S.S. Rushville Victory, which transported military personnel between New York and Europe. A total of ten Mormon Chaplains did not receive assignments outside the continental United States. One of the ten, Delbert Barney, served in England, Belgium, France, and Germany as an enlisted man during the war.¹ His appointment to the chaplaincy did not occur until August 1946, one year after hostilities ended. The following thirteen chaplains, because of the nature of their assignments, are placed in the miscellaneous group: (See Table VII).

¹Church News, 27 October 1945

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TABLE VII

MISCELLANEOUS ASSIGNMENTS FOR MORMON
CHAPLAINS DURING WORLD WAR II

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Area Where Served</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C. Clarence Neslen</td>
<td>U.S. Army</td>
<td>Camp San Luis Obispo, Calif.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Fort Douglas, Utah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Fort Lewis, Washington</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orlando S. McBride</td>
<td>U.S. Army</td>
<td>Camp Barkley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Camp Clayton, Canal Zone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Camp Roberts, California</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glen Y. Richards</td>
<td>U.S. Navy</td>
<td>Farragut, Idaho</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Treasure Island, California</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rex L. Christensen</td>
<td>U.S. Navy</td>
<td>Farragut, Idaho</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marc H. Sessions</td>
<td>U.S. Army (Army Air Corps)</td>
<td>Santa Anna Air Force Base, Nellis AFB, Nevada, Indian Springs AFB, Nevada, Yuma AFB, Arizona</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lee W. Dalebout</td>
<td>U.S. Army</td>
<td>China-Burma-India Campaign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jack B. Watkins</td>
<td>U.S. Navy</td>
<td>San Pedro, California</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Bay Area, California</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elbert K. Simmons</td>
<td>U.S. Navy</td>
<td>Bay Area, California</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George K. Rowley</td>
<td>U.S. Army</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brian Badger</td>
<td>U.S. Navy</td>
<td>Cherry Point, N.C. with U.S. Marines, Norfolk Naval Air Station, Va., San Diego Naval Training Station</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wendell O. Rich</td>
<td>U.S. Army</td>
<td>Troop Transport, New York to Europe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert A. Nelson</td>
<td>U.S. Army</td>
<td>Los Angeles Port of Embarkation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delbert Barney</td>
<td>U.S. Army</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Mormon chaplains performed a variety of duties.

Wendell O. Rich served aboard the transport ship **S.S. Rushville Victory** which transported troops across the Atlantic. His duties on board ship consisted of conducting Protestant services, visiting troop compartments twice daily, checking with the men in the mess hall during meal times, visiting the sick twice daily and more often if necessary, providing small discussion groups among the
Protestant men, and holding regular office hours for consultation.\(^1\)

Lt. Colonel C. Clarence Neslen served as the Post Chaplain at Fort Lewis, Washington. He administered and coordinated the activities of 70 chaplains and 17 army chapels to insure that the men at his post received the spiritual instruction they required. In reporting his activities, he said his chaplains were "... making every effort to hold proper services for all the 20 odd religious sects represented by the men in this area. No religious sects are favored."\(^2\) While at Farragut, Idaho, Chaplain Glen Y. Richards organized an "Abstinence Club." Men who belonged to the club promised to refrain from partaking of alcohol in any form, tea or coffee. In addition, they pledged not to partake of tobacco in any form. The men received a card upon making the pledge, and if unable to keep their pledge, returned the card. The club's membership rose to 500 in a very short time. Chaplain Dalebout conducted five services every Sunday, four for men of the Protestant faiths, and the other for members of the LDS Church.

Like other Mormon chaplains, those in this group felt a desire to work with LDS servicemen also. While serving in Lido, India, Lee Dalebout kept a record of every known Latter-day Saint serving in the CBI (China-Burma-India) Campaign similar to the one kept in Italy. Each month he published a newsletter and mailed a copy to each Mormon serviceman. He

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\(^1\)Voyage Report, Chaplain (1st Lt.) Wendell O. Rich, 11 October 1945.

\(^2\)Church News, 11 July 1942.
called it "The Mormon Messenger", and it contained inspirational articles from the Improvement Era, an assortment of stories, and he usually wrote an article himself. He posted his name and church affiliation on the bulletin board at the airport knowing that most new arrivals checked it, and he knew that many of the newly arrived LDS men would look him up.

The Mormon desire to associate with one another did not go unnoticed in the CBI. A Catholic friend of Chaplain Dalebout commented on it by asking "Why is it that all LDS men going through stop to look you up? It isn't that way with the Catholics."

In another part of the world, another Latter-day Saint chaplain sought to work with LDS men. Jack Watkins, a Navy Chaplain was unhappy with his assignment because few Mormons were stationed at San Pedro, California. He wrote Church leaders asking for their assistance in getting him reassigned to Treasure Island where a number of Mormon servicemen were stationed, which they did.

One of the most demanding duties of the military chaplain remained in the area of counselling. Chaplain Elbert Simmons stationed in the Bay area counselled with sailors virtually every day.¹ He counselled them upon many matters including marriage, health, and at times, how to write letters home. Chaplain Dalebout assigned to the CBI said "... there was more

¹Elbert Simmons Interview.
counselling than anything . . . ."  

Chaplain Rich, assigned to a troop ship between New York and Europe, counselled returning soldiers daily.  

The LDS chaplain who remained in the United States performed his duties in such a manner as to receive a great amount of praise by the men he served such as "Chaplain McBride, a gifted speaker . . . added materially to the success and spirit of our service . . . ."  

Another said, ". . . several LDS chaplains have brought joy to the men of Camp Roberts by their humble influence in the military clergy. . . ."  

A third said, ". . . Colonel Neslen is the best known and the best loved officer on the post . . . ."

Although the thirteen chaplains spent their military service assigned to various locations, their primary duty as chaplain remained constant. Their duties and responsibilities to their men included counselling, providing for and conducting services, visiting hospitals, and providing "small talk".

Further, when the war ended, new questions had to be answered by the chaplains such as what will it be like being a civilian again? What will my family think of me? and what about the G.I. Bill?

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1Lee Dalebout Interview.


3Church News, 6 November 1943.


5Ibid, 5 August 1944.
CHAPTER XI

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

AND ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH ITS CHAPLAINS

In early 1941, the United States military called thousands of young Latter-day Saints to active duty. At that time The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints had no formal program for dealing with its members serving in the military. The majority of the members of the Church called to active duty served first in the Western United States at Fort Ord, California, San Luis Obispo, California, Fort Douglas, Utah, and Fort Lewis, Washington. Church leaders learned that thousands more of its young men would be asked to serve,¹ and in May 1941, appointed Hugh B. Brown, former President of the British Mission, to serve as the co-ordinator for LDS servicemen. On May 1, 1941, he departed for Glendale, California where he set up his headquarters. The tasks assigned to him read, "To investigate and look after the religious and social activities of the Latter-day Saints now in army centers on the Pacific Coast".²

The number of Mormons called into the military increased

¹Church News, 19 April 1941.
²Deseret News, 28 April 1941.
rapidly. Approximately 20,000 Latter-day Saints served on active
duty in the latter part of 1942.\(^1\) The total increased to approxi-
mately 40,000 by August 1943 with 10,000 of them serving overseas,\(^2\)
and to 70,000 by July 1944.\(^3\) The final estimate of Mormons that
served during World War II reached over 100,000.✓

As the number of Church members serving in the military
increased, so did the need for more effective administration of
the program. During the latter part of 1942, Church leaders
organized the L.D.S. Servicemen's Committee with Harold B. Lee,
a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, as chairman.
In addition the council consisted of two others, John H. Taylor,
a member of the First Council of Seventy, and Hugh B. Brown, the
LDS Servicemen's Coordinator. In 1944, the committee added Mark
E. Petersen, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

The committee recognized its limitations as members of the
Church served everywhere and were scattered all over the world.
To aid them, Church leaders selected an additional twelve men to
act as assistant coordinators. They served in selected areas of
the United States where members of the Church were stationed. Two
served outside the United States. Hugh B. Brown served in England
with responsibilities extending into Europe, and Castle H. Murphy
served for Latter-day Saint servicemen in the Hawaiian Islands.

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\(^1\)\textit{Church News}, 20 February 1943.
\(^2\)\textit{Ibid}, 7 August 1943.
\(^3\)\textit{Ibid}, 15 July 1944.
In order to facilitate the organization, the Church organized the M.I.A. Group Leader Program to coordinate the military program. Qualified and worthy Latter-day Saints were set apart and given the authority to organize other men into groups and hold meetings keeping with the standards of the Church such as Sacrament, Testimony Meetings, Priesthood, Sunday School, and MIA activities. In order to acknowledge their authority, the Group Leaders received a certificate of appointment. Each was to select two counsellors to aid them in his work. The war caused members of the Church to be assigned to many parts of the world and in many cases they served in areas where no formal Church organization such as a Mission, Stake, Branch, or Ward existed. Using the MIA Group Leader Program, the Church adapted itself to meet the conditions of war by relying upon its Priesthood holders to operate its programs.

The Mormon chaplain played a vital role in the M.I.A. Group Leader Program as he received authority from Church leaders to seek out and set apart Group Leaders. Once outside the limits of the formal Church organization, only the chaplains remained in a position to organize and set apart the Group Leaders. Almost everywhere, Mormon chaplains set apart Group Leaders, at Guadalcanal, Chaplain Theodore Curtis organized six groups,¹ and

¹Church News, 27 May 1944
"somewhere in the Pacific" George Woolley made a special trip by air to organize a group.\(^1\)

The advice of Mormon chaplains had a definite influence upon decisions made by Church leaders regarding military policy. Chaplains Vern Cooley and Eldin Ricks complained of the excessive wait in getting Church literature. Magazines and similar material carried a low priority for shipment overseas, and were shipped only when space became available. They suggested to Church leaders that the best way to send literature to the men in the military overseas was by first class mail. They suggested a newsletter especially for servicemen be mailed which was small enough to go first class.\(^2\) The Church apparently adopted the idea as the *Church News, L.D.S. Service Men's Edition* shortly was provided. Its size was approximately three and three quarter inches wide and five and one fourth inches high which was small enough to be sent by first class mail. The paper contained inspirational messages, stories, letters from servicemen, advice from Church leaders, it answered servicemen's questions, gave instruction to chaplains and Group Leaders, and told of the newsy happenings in the Church. It's first publication was in May 1944 with a total of 70,000 copies printed and that rose to 90,000 copies after a few months.

\(^1\) *Church News*, 24 July 1943.

\(^2\) Eldin Ricks Interview.
Chaplain Theodore Curtis wrote to Harvin O. Ashton of the presiding Bishopric suggesting that it would be a worthy project for Priesthood Quorums to write weekly to servicemen emphasizing the desirability of every serviceman to receive a letter each week from home. He suggested that the letters contain newsy bits of information about the little things that happened at home.\(^1\) Shortly after receiving Chaplain Curtis' letter, the Presiding Bishopric's office suggested to the membership of the Church that they write often to the servicemen.\(^2\) They felt that the servicemen needed and appreciated letters from home.

The Church provided a pocket size edition of a Book of Mormon and a Compendium, *Principles of the Gospel* for every serviceman during World War II. Originally, the Church planned only to issue the Compendium, but later decided to issue a pocket edition of the Book of Mormon. It is possible that they elected to publish the Book of Mormon because of the influence of a chaplain. Before going overseas, Chaplain Reuben Curtis talked with Harold B. Lee, informing him that many of the Churches provided their men with a copy of the Bible. Chaplain Curtis felt that now would be a golden opportunity for the Church to provide

\(^1\) *Church News*, 28 March 1942.

\(^2\) *Ibid*, 18 April 1942
every Latter-day Saint in the military with a copy of the Book of Mormon. Elder Lee informed Chaplain Curtis that the Church was in the process of publishing a Compendium for the servicemen. Chaplain Curtis said to Elder Lee, "Why don't you give them both?" Elder Lee replied, "that's not a bad idea." The Church apparently adopted the idea and published both books.

Following the war, Church leaders interviewed many of the chaplains seeking their recommendations as to how the Church could be more effective in dealing with its servicemen if the need arose again. In addition to the personal interview, the Church sent every chaplain and the assistant coordinator a questionnaire asking for his comments on various aspects of the military program. The questions included some like: What was your reaction to the MIA Program? How did the LDS men respond to it? Was the work of the coordinators helpful? How could it be improved? Can an LDS chaplain do all of the work required of a Protestant chaplain in a satisfactory manner from the point of view of the Chaplaincy Services? In what way could the Central Servicemen's Committee be more effective?

Most of the chaplains commented positively on the work of the Church during the war, especially its MIA program. Most

1Personal interview with Reuben Curtis, 2466 Highland Drive, Salt Lake City, July 18, 1974

2Questionnaire, "Chaplains Commission Papers".
criticism on the Church came in the area of providing men with literature, formal instructions and keeping in touch with all of them. Eldin Ricks commented that he felt the Church should make every effort to contact every man when he entered the military and keep in contact with him while he remained in the military.

"I think a very great number of our boys, perhaps the greater part of them, felt lost and uninstructed."¹ Some Mormon chaplains felt that the Church did not utilize them as well as they might have. Chaplain Campbell commented that the Church should have become ". . . better acquainted with the chaplains set up and utilize their positions more effectively."²

In addition to organizing men into MIA Groups, the chaplains organized many conferences for members of the Church throughout the world. Chaplain Irons developed and coordinated the plans for the first LDS Conference in Europe held in Paris in April 1945.³ Chaplains Ricks, Cooley, Irons, and Gibbons organized a conference in Foggia, Italy in December, 1944.⁴ Reuben Curtis set up the first LDS Conference held in the Philippines,⁵ and on Okinawa set up the first LDS Conference held on that island assisted by four other Mormon chaplains,

¹Ibid.
²Ibid.
³Church News, 5 May 1945.
⁴Ibid, 6 January 1945.
⁵Call, "Church in the Philippines", p. 144.
Chaplains Ray L. Jones, Wilford E. Smith, Lyman Berrett and Milton G. Widdison.¹

The Church recognized the importance of its chaplains in its military program. The Church knew that the chaplains in the military possessed a great deal of influence within any military unit, and, therefore, knew that the chaplain could be of service to members of the Church. In order for its servicemen to be able to locate a meeting place anywhere in the world, the Church published a directory which contained information on names and addresses of meeting places and key members of the Church located wherever LDS Servicemen might be assigned. This directory contained the names and addresses of many of the Latter-day Saint chaplains. In addition to the directory, the whereabouts of a number of Mormon chaplains was published several times in the Service Men's News.

The Mormon Church did not have a formal policy for dealing with its chaplains during World War II. It did not send out bulletins, brochures, literature, and circulars to its chaplains as many of the other religions did.² The First Presidency apparently felt that communications existed between the Church's Servicemen's Committee and most of the chaplains most of the time, enabling them to furnish information back and forth anytime it

¹Church News, 21 July 1945.
²General Commission to Iverson, April 24, 1943, "General Commission Papers."
was needed.  

Apparently The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints saw no need to have its members serve as chaplains in the military. "The Church does not call or encourage brethren to serve as chaplains in the armed services." The outward appearance did not reflect the action taken by the Church for when its men applied for appointment to the chaplaincy, the Church did everything in its power to aid them. Early in the war, Church leaders recognized that Mormons were not receiving appointments to the chaplaincy, and sent Hugh B. Brown to Washington, D. C. to investigate the matter. In addition, Church authorities assigned Gustave A. Iverson to serve on the Chaplains Commission in Washington and insure that the Mormon Church received its fair share of appointments. Judge Iverson processed the necessary paper work and tried to change the rigid requirements set forth by the military authorities regarding Mormon eligibility inasmuch as the only Latter-day Saints qualified under the regulations were those who had been involved in education. Further, during the war the Church brought pressure upon the Chief of Army and Navy Chaplains when it learned that the quota system was discriminating against men of the Mormon faith.

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1 First Presidency to Marriott, Ibid.

2 Handbook of the LDS Servicemen's Program, Salt Lake City, 1961.
An excellent relationship existed between the Mormon chaplain and his Church, and there is no doubt that the Latter-day Saint chaplain played a major role in the Church's military program. Some chaplains criticized Church Leaders for not using them more effectively in the program. Church leaders recognized that a Mormon chaplain's first duty was to serve as a Protestant chaplain, and after he completed that assignment, if time allowed, he worked with members of his own faith. In addition, Church authorities recognized the existence of military regulations and had to be careful when using its chaplains to benefit members of the Church. Nevertheless, the Church assigned its chaplains a major role in its program as they received the authority to select, set apart, and organize men into MIA Groups which was the backbone of the program, and overseas no one else had that authority.

There existed two areas where leaders of the Church could have become more involved with its chaplains. The first dealt with the selection of chaplains. The Church appeared to endorse anyone deemed "worthy" regardless of qualifications. A person's worthiness did not necessarily qualify him for the chaplaincy. Therefore, the Church should have placed other criteria upon the applicant before endorsing him. Inasmuch as the chaplain played a major role in the military program of the Church, the Church could have set up a committee or department to select those it wanted to serve as chaplains. The second area dealt with correspondance.
The Church should have had a policy dealing with printed material exclusively for chaplains. Inasmuch as the Church required them to write weekly advising them of their activities, there should have been no problem corresponding with one another. It should be noted, however, that many of the chaplains were unaware of this policy. Some information obtained from these letters could have been shared with all the chaplains to improve their performance; for example, Eldin Hicks' newsletter to the parents of the men in his unit was an excellent idea, or Reuben Curtis' concern for the next of kin of those who died at Attu when he mailed the photographs of the Little Falls Cemetery. The sharing of ideas such as these, may have helped other Mormon chaplains become more effective.
CHAPTER XII

CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this thesis is not only to furnish information regarding the activities of the Mormon chaplains during World War II, but to answer several questions regarding their effectiveness, and, in addition, the relationship between the Mormon Church, its chaplains, and the military.

The office of the Chief of Army Chaplains questioned whether members of the Mormon Church could serve effectively as Army Chaplains during World War II, because the Latter-day Saint Church practiced ordinances and taught doctrines different than most American Protestant Churches. In addition, persons belonging to the Mormon Church were classified as lay members inasmuch as the Church had no professional clergy. However, the chaplains who served during World War II had experienced a great amount of religious training. Sunday School and Priesthood were attended on a weekly basis. In high school, seminary was offered for approximately one hour daily, and in college most attended the Church sponsored Institute of Religion which offered college level religious courses to its members. Further, most of them served on a two year mission and actively preached the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Their background in theological
training was not as deficient as one might imagine, even though they did not attend a professional theological seminary. Most felt comfortable in their role as Protestant chaplains, and felt that they performed their duty as well as any Protestant minister. Quite a number of chaplains indicated that although theology played a major role in the duty of the chaplain, they did not feel inadequate in this area. One chaplain expressed the opinion that Mormonism and Protestantism are very similar in many ways and as long as the chaplain remained within the limits of Protestantism, he found no problems.\(^1\) They delivered sermons on general topics such as love, forgiveness, kindness, and morality. However, some felt inadequate in the area of counselling and felt that a better background in the area of psychology and sociology would have aided them in their work. But, it is quite probable that chaplains of other denominations suffered from the same inadequacy.

When asked whether they felt they could perform all the duties that a Protestant chaplain could, Howard Badger answered, "Yes, and more of it than most Protestant chaplains."\(^2\) Vernon Cooley replied, "Yes—very definitely, my own records show that the standard of my work was the highest possible."\(^3\) George Woolley said, "Yes and better, most commanding officers who have had LDS chaplains serve with them have given the highest praise

\(^1\) Wilford Smith Interview.
\(^2\) Questionnaire, "Chaplain Commission Papers".
\(^3\) Ibid.
of their work."¹ Leon Flint responded, "I feel we can do it a little better in many respects."² Royden Braithwaite answered, "I do not know of a service an LDS man could not perform satisfactorily."³ The Chief of Army Chaplains praised the effectiveness of the Mormon chaplain.⁴ In addition, several received high praise from their commanding officer. Chaplain Berrett received a letter from Luther D. Miller, Chief of Army Chaplains, advising him of a commendation that he received from his commanding officer. It read in part "... Chaplain Berrett's keen interest in religious service, athletics, and all forms of entertainment for the men, have done much to raise the morale of the men of the 305th Infantry and relieve the strain of our recent combat operations."⁵ The commanding officer at Fort Lewis Washington was quoted as saying of Chaplain Neslen, "Chaplain Neslen is the best post chaplain I have ever served with."⁶ For an outstanding performance rendered at Attu, Chaplain Curtis received a commendation of praise from both the Chief of Chaplains and from the Office of the Chaplains for the Western Defense Command and the Fourth Army.⁷ When Roy M. Darley asked why he had been transferred to what seemed a tough assignment, the X

¹Ibid.
²Ibid.
³Ibid.
⁴Harriott to First Presidency, June 19, 1945, Ibid.
⁵Miller to Berrett, 3 December 1945, Ibid.
⁶Church News, 5 August 1944
⁷Ibid, 3 June 1944.
Corps chaplain replied, "... over a period of several years I have seen the Curtis boys and Chaplain Probst in action, and I have decided that if you need a nasty job done, assign a Mormon chaplain."¹

There is no doubt that many Latter-day Saint chaplains felt their major responsibility and duty was to serve the men of the unit to which they were assigned whether the men were Protestant, Catholic or Jewish. A typical example of this would be, "Chaplain Boud is very interested in his men, and during his assigned hours conforms to the chaplains rules, no proselyting for any church, but acting as minister and a guide to every race, creed or color that needs help."² The Mormon chaplain performed an assortment of duties including visiting the men, counselling them, providing wholesome activities such as sports activities and other forms of entertainment, and providing religious services whether in a chapel or travelling to areas where they were located to offer services for them. "... I travel from gun position to gun position holding services as the weather and the duties of the men permit ... I have averaged about two services per day, seven days a week ... Most of the men are Catholic and Protestant."³

¹Roy Darley Interview.
²Church News, 3 April 1943
³Ibid, 28 March 1942.
But with his assigned work finished, many of the LDS chaplains spent the remainder of their time working with members of their own faith. This was due to the fact that they had so much in common coming from the same geographical area of the United States, knowing common people, worshipping the same way, and holding to the same standards such as abstaining from drinking and smoking and of the same religious heritage. Many Latter-day Saint servicemen seemed to regard their chaplains as very special men as many letters written to Church leaders attest, "We express thanks for the privilege of having a Latter-day Saint chaplain George R. Woolley, who understands our problems and can direct us under the spirit of the Holy Priesthood." Another wrote, "They (Eldin Ricks and Vern Cooley) have rendered much worthwhile help and inspiration to us and all whom they are serving . . . ." But, it should be noted that a highly significant number of Mormon servicemen existed who never saw a Mormon chaplain during the entire war period, and there probably existed other members of the Church that could care less whether there was a Mormon chaplain in the area or not.

A third question to be answered is, What kind of an attitude did the Mormon chaplain have towards his job? Most had a very positive attitude toward their job of serving as chaplains. Most felt a great deal of satisfaction as they served others. L. Marsden Durham said, " . . . I have said from the beginning and I repeat it again, that I have as a
chaplain the best job the Army has to offer."¹ Most enjoyed their service as chaplains and several suggested that they would like to make it a career. Theodore Curtis said, "I would welcome the opportunity to serve as a regular army chaplain."² Robert Gibbons replied, "I would like to go into the army or navy as a regular chaplain if the opportunity should arrive."³ Several others, while enjoying being a chaplain, did not like army life, Chaplain Campbell said, "I have no desire . . . I resent many of the requirements of military life."⁴ George Ellsworth responded, "enjoyed serving as a chaplain, but the military is not attractive to me as a permanent and especially peace-time work."⁵

Another question to be answered is on what criteria was a Mormon chosen to be a chaplain? Inasmuch as The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is a lay church and has no professional ministry, standard eligibility requirements could not apply, and requirements had to be modified for members of the Mormon faith. A member needed to have served three years in the ministry, ministerial service included time as a full-time missionary, serving as a bishop, or time served in teaching religious education such as a seminary teacher. In addition,

¹Church News, 24 June 1944.
²Ibid, 3 March 1945.
³Questionnaire, "Chaplains Commission Papers".
⁴Ibid.
⁵Ibid.
the applicant had to be in the teaching profession at the time applied.

The quota system used by the military in its appointments of chaplains by denomination hindered the appointment of many eligible and qualified Latter-day Saints. The information used for the quotas was based upon World War I figures and did not allow for church growth. The Mormon Church not only filled its allotted quota, but filled the 35% overage allowed by the Chaplains Corps. In addition, it had other eligible and qualified men waiting for an opening to be appointed. The unfairness of the quota system was evident when the new quotas were issued in September 1945. It authorized the Mormon Church to have 91 men, but at that time, only 34 served on active duty.

Mormon chaplains, as a general rule, had an excellent relationship with chaplains of other denominations as they held other chaplains in very high esteem. However, in some instances, isolated problems existed which caused conflicts between chaplains. One such example happened when Chaplain Campbell experienced a serious problem with a Catholic chaplain in Germany while using a Catholic Church for Protestant services. The Catholic chaplain reprimanded Campbell for using the church. This experience caused Chaplain Campbell to regard Catholic chaplains as arrogant. On another occasion, Eldin Ricks had problems with his supervising chaplain regarding his behavior.
toward members of the LDS Church. After a discussion, the problem was solved. Nevertheless, most Latter-day Saint chaplains felt that other chaplains leaned over backwards to aid members of the Church and its MIA Group Leader program by providing facilities and supplies for their use.

The Chief of Army Chaplains rated Mormon chaplains very high. "General Rixey and General Miller both praised our chaplains very highly. They especially pointed out the activities of Chaplains Curtis and Probst. They said their work was outstanding."¹ While the Chief of Army Chaplains praised the work of the Mormon chaplain, the Chief of Naval Chaplains showed concern about the way Mormon chaplains performed their duties. "Chaplain Workman indicated— as did his assistant—that there was a tendency upon the part of our boys to organize groups and then leave them on their own; also, some tendency to not perform some of the regular duties belonging to a chaplain."²

This caused concern within the Church. Church leaders tried to explain how the Church functioned with its Priesthood authority and its MIA Group Leader Program. However, it is doubtful that the Naval chaplains' establishment understood.

The chaplains that represented The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints during World War II achieved excellent

¹Marriott to First Presidency, June 19, 1945, "Chaplains Commission Papers".
²Ibid.
service records. Two won the Silver Star for heroism. Four
were awarded the Bronze Star for outstanding service. Reuben
Curtis attained the rank of a full Colonel and became a Corps
Chaplain. His brother Theodore became a Division Chaplain. Lt.
Colonel C. Clarence Neslen served as a Post Chaplain at Fort
Lewis, Washington. Many of them served under combat conditions
with their men and 36 of them out of a total of 45 saw overseas
duty.

Tragedy touched the lives of two LDS chaplains, L.
Marsden Durham and Reed Probst. Chaplain Durham was wounded
at Okinawa and while recuperating in Hawaii met with a tragic
accident and died. Reed Probst served almost three years in the
Pacific and contracted malaria. The disease prevented him from
being appointed to the chaplaincy in the Regular Army and caused
his separation from the army. While suffering from depression
due to recurring malaria, he killed his wife and then committed
suicide.

The chaplain exists to serve. He is there to help his
men with their problems and inspire them to do better. He guides,
directs and teaches. In battle, his presence can build morale
and lift spirits. "... His very presence in the battle
scene is an asset, and a nod to this man, a smile to that, a
word of prayer with another, and a comforting arm thrown about
still another combines to fortify and replenish the spiritual
needs of the men."  

1Church News, 23 March 1945.
Although the chaplain's primary job was to serve his men, he was classified as an officer, and treated as such. He displayed his rank on his uniform, and his rank was contained within his official title such as Chaplain (Captain) John W. Fitzgerald. The difference between being an enlisted man and being an officer at times caused stress. One such incident occurred when Chaplain Campbell waited in line with a group of enlisted men. He said, "... I would wait in a long line like the enlisted men, but I soon got the word that the men didn't appreciate that. I was an officer and that was not where I ought to be."¹

The most notable trait of the Mormon chaplains was their desire to work with and serve members of the LDS Church. Some, when assigned to an area where they were unable to work with Mormons, became unhappy and requested a transfer to an area where Latter-day Saints were located. The question arises as to their effectiveness when placed in a situation where they worked at two jobs. The answer lays in their performance as effective chaplains as indicated by the high rating received from many of their commanders. Their ability to handle two jobs and not feel stress was due to their involvement with a lay church. Lay members of the Mormon Church worked for a living and performed their church duties after working hours. What the Mormon chaplains experienced in World War II which appeared to be a conflict was

¹Eugene Campbell Interview.
very similar to what they had experienced as a civilian.

By virtue of his position in the military, the chaplain played a key role in the Church's servicemen's program, and did an effective job. The effort was handicapped, however, as the Mormon Church had a total of only 37 chaplains in the army during the war. The small total reflected the obsolete quota system. The new quotas issued in May 1945 allowed the Mormon Church to have 91 chaplains with a quota percentage of 1.07. Inasmuch as approximately 9,000 chaplains served during World War II and using the quota percentage assigned to the Church of 1.07 x 9,000, the Church should have been entitled to 96 chaplains. Allowing 35 percent overage, the total number of Mormon chaplains would have been (96 x 1.35) 130 chaplains. Having 130 chaplains on active duty and serving around the world would have aided the military program of the Church greatly.

An area of apparent discrimination resulted in only eight appointments to the navy chaplaincy. No Mormon Navy chaplain served in the Atlantic, the Mediterranean, the Caribbean, or the Far East. In addition, only one served with the Marine Corps. This limited the effectiveness of the Church military program. Those that did serve in the Navy aided the Church Servicemen's program. For example, while stationed at Pearl Harbor John Boud visited every ship he could. He asked for permission to visit with men of the Mormon faith and announced over the loud speaker a meeting place. Ten or more men usually
showed up for the meeting and generally they were surprised to find others on the ship who were members of the Church. If more Mormon Chaplains could have performed this service for their Church, the MIA program could have been far more effective.

Although the Church did not have as many chaplains as it should have, World War II resulted in many benefits for the Latter-day Saint Church. The Chaplains Commission in Washington provided the Church with a voice in the policy making decisions regarding religion in the military. Also, by performing well, the chaplains established a good reputation that enhanced the image of the Church. Another example would be the visit of George Albert Smith at the Naval Training Station at San Diego. Milton Hess felt that prior to the war, it would have been quite unlikely that the president of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles could have spoken at a military installation such as San Diego.

In World War I, the U.S. Army allowed the Mormon Church to select any three men it wanted for the chaplaincy. It selected three exceptional men. Each attained, during his lifetime, high positions in the field of his endeavor. Would it have been better if The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints made the selection in World War II as it did in World War I? Could it have done a better job than the military? It may have, but it appears that the military selections turned out to be an elite group of men. The former Mormon chaplains attained
positions of achievement in many professions. Two retired from
the military after serving for over twenty years as chaplains,
one is a professional medical doctor, another became the
president of a college, a fourth is the General Agent for one
of the nations largest insurance companies, several are college
professors, and many others are highly successful in the fields
of business, law, and education.
# APPENDIX I

## TABLE III

**MORMON CHAPLAINS THAT SERVED DURING WORLD WAR II (1941 - 1946)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Appointment Date</th>
<th>Branch of Service</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C. Clarence Neslen</td>
<td>5-11-26</td>
<td>U.S. Army</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theodore E. Curtis</td>
<td>7-1-28</td>
<td>U.S. Army</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George R. Woolley</td>
<td>12-13-28</td>
<td>U.S. Army</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reuben E. Curtis</td>
<td>4-9-29</td>
<td>U.S. Army</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reed G. Probst</td>
<td>4-26-34</td>
<td>U.S. Army</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert G. Gibbons</td>
<td>6-4-36</td>
<td>U.S. Army</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Howard C. Evans</td>
<td>5-3-40</td>
<td>U.S. Army</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orlando S. McBride</td>
<td>8-31-40</td>
<td>U.S. Army</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milton G. Widdison</td>
<td>4-14-41</td>
<td>U.S. Army</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leo F. Freeman</td>
<td>5-16-41</td>
<td>U.S. Army</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John W. Boud</td>
<td>7-6-41</td>
<td>U.S.N.R.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gerald L. Erickson</td>
<td>3-6-43</td>
<td>U.S. Army</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milton John Hess</td>
<td>3-10-42</td>
<td>U.S.N.R.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glen Young Richards</td>
<td>9-10-42</td>
<td>U.S.N.R.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anthon Gifford Jackson</td>
<td>10-23-42</td>
<td>U.S.N.R.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vernon A. Cooley</td>
<td>2-9-43</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eldin Ricks</td>
<td>2-23-43</td>
<td>U.S. Army</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rex L. Christensen</td>
<td>6-9-43</td>
<td>U.S.N.R.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nanc H. Sessions</td>
<td>8-7-43</td>
<td>U.S. Army</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hyrum A. Hendrickson</td>
<td>8-9-43</td>
<td>U.S. Army</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marsden Durham</td>
<td>10-13-43</td>
<td>U.S. Army</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lee W. Dalebout</td>
<td>10-28-43</td>
<td>U.S. Army</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grant E. Mann</td>
<td>2-19-44</td>
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<td>Jack B. Watkins</td>
<td>3-6-44</td>
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<td>Howard C. Badger</td>
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<tr>
<td>John W. Fitzgerald</td>
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<td>John B. Christensen</td>
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<td>U.S. Army</td>
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<td>Samuel G. Ellsworth</td>
<td>4-14-44</td>
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<td>Ray L. Jones</td>
<td>5-1-44</td>
<td>U.S. Army</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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FOR GOD AND COUNTRY: MORMON CHAPLAINS
DURING WORLD WAR II

Richard T. Maher
Department of History
M.A. Degree, August 1975

ABSTRACT

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormon) is a lay church inasmuch as it has no professionally trained ministers. Because of this, the Chaplains Corps during World War II questioned whether members of the Mormon faith could serve effectively as chaplains. The answer to the effectiveness of Mormon chaplains is found in their performance as many received high praise from their superiors.

During the Second World War, the Mormon Church provided the military services with a total of 45 chaplains, and although only 45 served, they saw duty in all theaters of war and served at such major battles as Attu, Kwajalein, Iwo Jima, Biak, Salerno, and the Battle of the Bulge. Several became command chaplains and two were awarded the Silver Star for heroism.

In addition to serving as Protestant ministers, the Mormon chaplains played a significant role in the Church service-men's program, because they had the authority to organize and set apart men for the MIA Group Leader program.

COMMITTEE APPROVAL:

[Signatures]

Thomas G. Alexander, Committee Chairman
Larry C. Porter, Committee Member
Leonard J. Arrington, Committee Member

Date: 15 July 1975

Thomas G. Alexander, Graduate Coordinator