On the Front Lines of Faith: Chaplains’ Reconciliation of Conflicting Roles in the Vietnam War

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For the past three years, I have constructed documentaries about soldiers of the Vietnam War. Two years ago, as a part of my documentary regarding the Vietnam Veterans Memorial and its impact on the public’s perception of the veterans, I had the opportunity to speak with Rabbi Arnold Resnicoff about his experiences with the opening of the memorial. When speaking with him about challenges veterans faced returning home, including public isolation, I became interested in the conflicts of soldiers during the war. Specifically, I began to wonder about conflicts chaplains faced between their roles of religious leader and soldier. Serving in one of the most controversial wars in American history, I found it fascinating the ways in which chaplains gained credibility among the soldiers while still maintaining their religious beliefs.

I used both primary and secondary sources in conducting my research. Using secondary sources, such as books and articles, I found information regarding the ways in which chaplains reconciled conflicts between their two roles. I also acquired excellent primary source information through interviewing chaplains who served both in Vietnam and in subsequent wars. In a personal interview, Rabbi Resnicoff shared his experiences in Vietnam and the ways in which a chaplain he often met with influenced him to later become a chaplain himself. Other valuable interviewees included Rabbi Mitchell Ackerson, Father John Bauer, Reverend Jackson Day, Rabbi Israel Drazin, Father Richard Shannon, and Reverend Matthew Zimmerman. The information from all of these interviews greatly enhanced the research process. Other primary sources included images, film footage, and documents from various collections, including the National Archives, American Legion, New York Times, and Critical Past.

I decided to create a documentary since I enjoy making films. When creating the documentary, I wanted to incorporate the interviews in a powerful and meaningful way. To do
so, I utilized personal experiences shared by the interviewees. I also incorporated many images and video clips of the Vietnam War, focusing on the chaplains’ service to the troops.

The documentary related to this year’s theme, Conflict and Compromise, in several ways. During the Vietnam War, chaplains faced conflicts between their roles of religious leader and soldier. The Vietnam War, one of America’s most controversial wars, brought these role conflicts to the forefront as chaplains faced challenges regarding the morality of the war itself and soldiers’ conduct, including drug use. However, in the midst of the war, chaplains prioritized service to soldiers rather than questioning the war itself or passing judgment on the social conduct of their fellow soldiers. Rather than compromising either role, chaplains reconciled role conflicts by focusing on the religious and moral support they could provide to soldiers, reinforcing soldiers’ rights to the free exercise of religion under the Free-Exercise Clause. By focusing on support rather than judgment, the military chaplaincy maintained constitutionality and avoided compromising chaplains’ dual roles. Facing moral and religious conflicts, most military chaplains did not compromise their faith but rather reconciled their roles to accommodate for the realities of the Vietnam War.
Annotated Bibliography

Primary Sources

Personal Interviews


Mitchell Ackerson served as a military chaplain throughout numerous conflicts including in the Middle East and Asia. While serving as a rabbi, he viewed his role to be independent from the concept of war itself. As a member of the military that never bore arms, Ackerson claimed that his purpose was to support and counsel those soldiers in need. In this manner, Rabbi Ackerson came to his own internal reconciliation of conflicting roles by focusing on the soldier rather than the war itself. This primary source interview further enhanced the research by providing a description of the existing conflict and demonstrating how strategies used to reconcile these role conflicts in Vietnam were still used by military chaplains today.


Father John Bauer, a ninety-year-old priest, served as a chaplain during the Vietnam War and often encountered the struggles of a wartime situation. From drug use to death, Bauer faced day-to-day challenges in which it was his job to support the other soldiers through a difficult time period. Despite conflicts between his role as clergy and soldier, Bauer never felt as though he compromised his religious values. Rather than compromise his values, Bauer reconciled his roles as a clergyman and military figure. Father Bauer provided personal stories of his service, as well as the ways in which chaplains responded to conflicts in wartime situations.


Reverend Jackson Day served as a chaplain during the Vietnam War. While in service, he often noticed the conflict between his religious values and the experiences he encountered in Vietnam. However, as a result of this conflict, Reverend Day did not feel as though he compromised his beliefs; rather, he reconciled his dual roles. While he had recognized this conflict and determined his response while still in school to become a chaplain, he explained that many chaplains did not face this conflict until they went to Vietnam. There, many chaplains, similar to Day, faced a conflict of beliefs, but, like many chaplains, Day refused to compromise his faith. Instead, he reconciled his role as a chaplain within the circumstances of the Vietnam War. Reverend Day, a chaplain who served in the Vietnam War, provided useful information regarding his service in Vietnam and his lack of compromise of his moral and religious beliefs.
Drazin, Israel, Rabbi. Telephone interview. 28 Nov. 2017.

Rabbi Israel Drazin served as a chaplain during the Vietnam War but did not personally deploy to the region. While in service, he noticed a conflict derived from challenges to his moral and religious values in this time of war. Following the Vietnam War, the potentially conflicting roles of chaplains as clergy and soldiers was addressed in the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals Case Katcoff v. Marsh. Drazin developed the arguments in the case, which led to the Court ruling that the role of chaplains in the military was constitutional. Rabbi Drazin provided useful information regarding his service in the military and the lack of compromise he experienced. In addition, as a key member of the Katcoff v Marsh court case, Drazin could speak on the importance of chaplains in the military, despite role conflicts they might face.


Arnold Resnicoff served on a naval ship during the Vietnam War. While in service, he often spoke with a chaplain who frequently came to each of the nearby ships. As one of the few Jewish soldiers on the ship, he intrigued the Christian chaplain, and Resnicoff later became a chaplain because of his experiences with this chaplain in Vietnam. Following the Vietnam War, as a military chaplain, Resnicoff often encountered conflict between his two roles as military officer and religious leader. In response, he focused on support of the troops, reconciling his two roles. Specifically, Resnicoff often worked with soldiers who personally had conflicting beliefs about the morality of the war and helped to support them through such a difficult time. Resnicoff shared a first-hand account of his struggles and resolutions to the conflicts faced while serving in wartime situations.


Father Richard Shannon served as a chaplain during the Vietnam War. As both a military and religious figure, he often encountered challenges between his religious values and his experiences in Vietnam. Because Father Shannon did not view the challenges faced specifically as conflicts, he did not feel as though there was any compromise to be made. Despite the way in which Shannon classified these challenges, he, like most other chaplains, refused to compromise his faith.


Reverend Matthew Zimmerman served as a chaplain during the Vietnam War. Amidst such a controversial war, he often made it his priority to serve the needs of the soldiers. Specifically, rather than compromising his values, Zimmerman chose to reconcile his roles and provide a spiritual outlet to his comrades. Following the Vietnam War, Reverend Zimmerman later became the first African American Army Chief of Chaplains. From this position, he facilitated the increase in representation of the faith backgrounds of chaplains following Vietnam. Reverend Zimmerman, a primary source, provided detailed information about his service in Vietnam and how chaplains in Vietnam shaped the modern chaplainsy.
Films


From the AP Archive, this primary source included footage of the Battle of Khe Sanh and US Bombing raids in 1968. A clip from this battle footage was used in the documentary to show a B-52 carpet bombing a section of Vietnam as Reverend Day speaks about hearing carpet bombing while leading troops in a hymn.


From the National Archives, this primary source video footage showed a chaplain conducting a religious service in Vietnam. The clip, part of an army report, was used within the documentary to show a way in which chaplains served the troops in Vietnam.


From military location YA 939913 Fire Support Base, this primary source video footage showed soldiers of the 3rd Battalion 8th Infantry, 4th Infantry Division. In the clip used within the documentary, a Catholic chaplain put on a camouflaged vestment and led the Mass while soldiers left for a patrol in the background. This footage from Critical Past video archive was used with permission for National History Day.


This footage of the U.S. Marines from Battalion Landing Team 3/8 in Afghanistan depicted a modern example of a chaplain serving troops while they deployed overseas in a wartime situation. The primary source footage was posted by Gunnery Sergeant Bryce Piper who served with this battalion and was used in the documentary to show modern-day chaplains serving troops in wartime situations.


Marine cameraman R.J. Del Vecchio recorded this primary source footage of a chaplain conducting a religious service near DaNang. The footage was used in the documentary to
show the ways in which military chaplains provided religious support for troops serving in Vietnam.


From the Department of Defense, this primary source footage featured a chaplain conducting a service in Vietnam in 1966. The footage was used within the documentary to show how chaplains supported the troops.


This primary source footage from FedFlix showed a chaplain conducting a service in Vietnam and was used in the documentary to highlight how chaplains supported the troops.


This Department of Defense video from 1966 showed chaplains conducting a service in the field. The primary source footage was used within the documentary to emphasize the religious support that chaplains provided for soldiers in order to meet their religious needs while serving in Vietnam.


This primary source footage from the Catonsville Nine collection at the Enoch Pratt Library highlighted the burning of draft cards by members of the Catonsville Nine during the Vietnam War. The clip was used within the documentary to demonstrate how many clergy, including those in the Catonsville Nine, were involved in protests against the Vietnam War while other clergy served oversees as military chaplains.


From the Critical Past video archive, the film report depicted the role of a navy chaplain in Vietnam during the Vietnam War. The footage included a marine reading a Bible, a chaplain preparing for a religious service, marines participating in a service, and a Jewish chaplain leading a service. Clips from this video were used within the documentary to show various ways that chaplains met the religious needs of troops. The footage was used with permission from Critical Past.

This primary source footage from the Miller Center of the University of Virginia's YouTube Channel showed President Lyndon Johnson explaining the rationale for the Vietnam War. The clip from this speech was used to show that early in the war, many felt there was strong justification for sending American troops to Vietnam.


The primary source clip of President Lyndon Johnson seeing off troops as they left for Vietnam was used in the film to highlight the need to take up arms, in some cases, even though this was contrary to many religious doctrines which called for the protection of human life.

*Vietnam in HD.* The History Channel, 2011.

The History Channel's *Vietnam in HD* provided primary source video clips of combat in Vietnam. The combat footage was used to depict the type of situation in which Chaplain John Durham found himself as he faced the conflict of his roles of religious leader and soldier. As a soldier, he thought about taking up arms in defense of his fellow soldiers, two who were wounded and one who was a conscientious objector. As a chaplain, a religious leader, he recognized that he was not permitted to use a weapon while serving.


*The Vietnam War* provided unique film footage that included primary source images reflecting morally questionable acts during the Vietnam War. Clips used within the documentary included footage of soldiers dumping dead Vietnamese bodies, Martin Luther King, Jr. speaking out against the war, and drug use by the soldiers. The primary source film clips enhanced the documentary by portraying some of the immoral acts that occurred during the Vietnam War, which brought added conflict to military chaplains.

**Articles**


In this *New York Times* Article, the courts ruled that the hiring of chaplains in the military did not violate the First Amendment's separation of church and state. Instead, the chaplains provided for the religious needs of soldiers who did not have alternatives for the free exercise of religion when serving in wartime situations. Therefore, the chaplaincy was held constitutional. The headline of this article was used within the documentary to show the verdict of the courts.

Many chaplains of the military had been criticized for not opposing war. Since most religions have doctrines against killing, many wondered why, as religious figures of the military, clergy would not have spoken out on such an issue. According to Blumenthal, preaching religion was not viewed as the main purpose of a chaplain. Instead, clergymen who served in Vietnam believed their role to be supporting the soldiers in the tasks they had to carry out. Rather than opposing the war, clergy in Vietnam reconciled any moral concerns with the war in order to support the troops. The source helped the research process by describing the conflict between the perceived role of military chaplains by themselves versus the public.


Many military clergy struggled to resolve the conflict between their religion and the war in which they were a part. In particular, this newspaper article focused on a chaplain in the Vietnam War who gave his life to support his comrades. While many chaplains opposed the war, they often recognized the greater importance of supporting the soldiers around them. In some cases, chaplains even sacrificed their lives to serve those around them. The primary source article, written for a military newspaper in Hawaii, provided factual information regarding the sacrifices made by military clergy.


Rabbi Rosenblum served as a chaplain in the Vietnam War. While in Vietnam, he and the other soldiers constantly heard about the protests against the war occurring in the United States. However, as Rosenblum viewed it, these protests only increased the tensions and conflict. Unlike in prior wars, the soldiers themselves were criticized; they were called “baby killers.” As a chaplain, these accusations brought forth major conflict. This primary source article explained another major conflict of chaplains in Vietnam, as they also faced the perception of the public.


This New York Times article described how two law students sued the Army and the Department of Defense claiming that the hiring of chaplains by the military was unconstitutional and violated the Establishment Clause. The headline from this article was used in the documentary to highlight the post-Vietnam lawsuit of Katcoff and
Weider who questioned the conflicting roles of chaplains as religious leaders and military officers.


Many soldiers in Vietnam opposed the war of which they were a part. However, in the case of clergymen, views on the war itself were put aside in order to aid the soldiers. In particular, chaplain Vincent Capodanno gave his life supporting his comrades. Despite enemy fire and initial injuries from a nearby mortar, Capodanno continued to pray for the wounded until his own final, fatal injury. Although chaplains typically were not in favor of war, soldiers often found chaplains reconciling this viewpoint to assist them. Rather than preaching their religion, clergy in Vietnam often found it more useful to preach their support. The source supported the research process by providing detail on a specific case in which a chaplain gave his life praying for the wounded.

**Memos, Letters, Programs, and Reports**


Chaplain Clyde Wood created this program for the 11th infantry brigade's worship service held on February 1, 1970 in Vietnam. The service included hymns, readings from scripture, meditation, as well as a sermon entitled, "The Word of Salvation." This primary source provided an example of the pastoral support that chaplains provided to troops while they served in Vietnam.


In this letter, Bowser requested the assistance of the unit's chaplain in communicating the news that her son's wife had had a miscarriage. Mrs. Bowser turned to the chaplain for sharing this tragic news, as she felt that her son would receive the support needed from the chaplain during this difficult time. This primary source document demonstrated the importance of the military chaplain in providing support for soldiers serving in Vietnam.

This primary source technical report from the Department of Defense provided statistical data regarding the extent of drug use present in the military during the Vietnam War. In addition to providing a detailed picture of the drug problem among the troops, the report was used within the documentary to highlight that 25% of soldiers regularly used marijuana during their time in Vietnam.


This letter, written by Chaplain James Haney of the U.S. Navy, described his role in counseling a soldier, William Simpson, in his plans for a second marriage in the coming year. This primary source demonstrated the type of counseling support that chaplains provided to soldiers during their service in Vietnam that neither created conflict for their role as religious leader nor as soldier.


Donald Campbell of the Episcopal Theological School in Cambridge, Massachusetts wrote this letter to Lieutenant James Haney, a U.S. Navy Chaplain. While Campbell acknowledged that many in the United States struggled with understanding the reasoning behind the country's involvement in Vietnam, they did recognize the importance of the role that chaplains served in providing pastoral care for those serving in the Armed Forces. This primary source supported the research by demonstrating the moral questions raised by the country's involvement in Vietnam and the potential conflict that it caused for chaplains serving in this controversial war.


In this memo to the Commanding Officer of the Naval Reserve Division, Chaplain James Smith detailed his findings following an interview with Gordon James regarding his application for conscientious objector status. As chaplain, Smith was required to determine whether or not this status should be granted. Based upon the interview, Chaplain Smith determined that James, while having philosophical objections to war, did not demonstrate an objection based in religious belief. This primary source document
supported the research demonstrating the conflicting role in which chaplains were placed as they had to determine a soldier's conscientious objector status. Granting this status could undermine the effectiveness of the unit, while denying the status could, in some cases, differ from the chaplain's religious beliefs.


This Command Report, created by the United States Army Vietnam, provided a statistical analysis of the chaplaincy in Vietnam for fiscal year 1971. According to the primary source report, there were 286 army chaplains in Vietnam at the time, including 204 Protestant, 79 Catholic, and 3 Jewish chaplains. The report described one of the objectives of the chaplaincy as providing the military personnel the opportunity to attend the religious services of their choice. According to the report, "chapel" attendance was at approximately 20 percent. This report confirmed the types of religious support chaplains provided for soldiers while they served in Vietnam.

**Memoirs**


In this oral history, conducted as part of the Veterans History Project from the Library of Congress, retired Army Chaplain Curtis Bowers described his experiences in Vietnam as part of the 101st Airborne. In addition to describing his counseling and religious support of soldiers, he also described a time when his commanding officer offered him a gun when they were under heavy fire. Chaplain Bowers chose not to accept the gun, citing his role as a chaplain. The oral history helped to support the research on how the chaplain's role differed from that of typical soldiers in Vietnam.


Chaplain John Durham, in his memoir, described some of the challenges and conflicts he faced while serving as a chaplain in Vietnam. One such conflict occurred when he was caught within enemy territory with a conscientious objector and two wounded soldiers. Chaplain Durham debated whether or not to take up arms, even though chaplains were specifically prohibited from doing so. This further demonstrated the conflict faced by chaplains between their role as a soldier, serving in war zones, and a religious leader.
This oral history of Chaplain Eumid Freeman from the Veterans History Project at the Library of Congress provided a first-hand perspective of the chaplain’s role in Vietnam. Chaplain Freeman reflected on his experiences as an Army Chaplain in Vietnam, including the controversy surrounding the war. He described in detail how the military recognized the right of individuals to file as conscientious objectors so as not to violate their beliefs. Chaplain Freeman also indicated that chaplains were never required to violate their religious convictions while serving in this role. This primary source supported the research claim that chaplains did not compromise when fulfilling their dual roles of religious leader and soldier.

Westling, Lester Leon. *All That Glitters: Memoirs of a Minister*. Redding, Hillwood Pub., 2003. Lester Westling, a chaplain in Vietnam, recalled his experiences in service throughout this memoir. In particular, he described the conflicts he encountered. First, he shared the internal conflict of the warfare. As a religious figure, he found it to be very conflicting when seeing young men on the front lines of one of the bloodiest wars, many of whom had never even seen armed combat. In addition to the internal conflict, he also encountered conflict between himself and some of the soldiers. Specifically, he recalled a time when a battalion Executive Officer viewed him as an outsider, being a soldier that did not even fight or train in the same ways. Westling described this struggle of earning credibility among the soldiers and the ways in which he did so.

**Images and Political Cartoons**


This image from the National Archives collection is a primary source photograph of Articles 3 to 12 of the United States Constitution. The articles, ratified on December 15, 1791, by three-fourths of the State Legislatures, constitute the first ten amendments of the U.S. Constitution. In the documentary, the image was displayed for the discussion of whether or not the chaplaincy violated the Establishment Clause.


This primary source photo depicted a Buddhist chaplain leading a meditation. The photo was used in the documentary to show the increased diversity of the military chaplaincy in the years following Vietnam.

The photograph showed a chaplain serving in the Korean War. The primary source was used in the documentary to show that chaplains have served in all wars since the Revolutionary War.

*D-Day Chaplain from World War II. Huffington Post*, s-i.huffpost.com/gadgets/slideshows/352753/slide_352753_3824680_free.jpg.

In this primary source photo, Father John McGovern, serving as a chaplain during World War II, led a mass on D-Day during World War II. The image was used in the documentary to show how chaplains have served throughout history, including during the World Wars.


Provided by Marcia McManus, Director of the U.S. Army Chaplain Corps Museum, this photo depicted chaplains receiving military training while attending Chaplain School during the time of the Vietnam War. This training expanded upon chaplains' own theological backgrounds by providing them with guidance for their role as soldier. Used with permission from the museum, the photo was incorporated within the documentary to highlight the training received for chaplains' role as military officer.


The primary source photo from the Washingtonian displayed a protester holding a sign during a Washington protest stating, "My son was killed in Vietnam. What for?" The photo was used in the documentary to highlight that the public began to question the rationale behind the Vietnam War.


This primary source displayed a poster of the Jewish Welfare Board, the sponsoring organization for Jewish chaplains serving in the military. It was used in the documentary within a collage with other sponsoring organizations.

This photo depicted Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. taking part in a protest against the Vietnam War. The primary source photo was used in the documentary to show protests against the war in Vietnam that included clergy, such as Martin Luther King, Jr.


This primary source photo shows a current example of a chaplain in the military. The photo was used in the documentary to show the expansion of the military chaplaincy to include chaplains of over 200 denominations, including Islam, in the years following Vietnam.


This primary source photo depicted Father John G. Breaux, Jr., a priest from the Diocese of Lafayette, La., as he gave Communion to a soldier during a Mass. In the documentary, the photo highlighted the current role of chaplains in the military as they serve soldiers in order to provide them with the opportunity to practice their faith while serving their country.


This photo, provided by Marcia McManus, Director of the U.S. Army Chaplain Corps Museum, shows chaplains attending a session at Army Chaplain School during the time of the Vietnam War. In the documentary, the photo reflected the military training provided to chaplains in addition to their prior religious training. The photo was used with permission of the U.S. Army Chaplain Corps Museum.


This AP Photo depicted a soldier from the 1st Cavalry Division, 2nd Battalion with "Peace" hand drawn on the back of his helmet. The photo was used in the documentary to show how many soldiers serving in Vietnam did not support the war, some of whom went as far as to apply for conscientious objector status to serve in non-combat roles.

This primary source photo depicted injured soldiers in Vietnam. It was used during the documentary to emphasize the chaplains' struggles with the need to preserve life and the need to sometimes defend one's values and life through force.


Pickerell photographed Chaplain William Carter as he assisted an injured soldier north of Saigon. The primary source photo was used to represent Chaplain John Durham as he faced the conflict of whether or not to take up arms when in the middle of a battle alongside a conscientious objector and wounded soldiers.


This primary source photo from the *Pritzker Military Museum and Library* was used at the beginning of the documentary to emphasize the religious role of chaplains in the military through a chaplain leading a service in Vietnam.


This primary source photo depicted new soldiers being sworn in as they entered the military. The image was used within the documentary to show the volunteering of clergy to go to Vietnam in support of the troops there.


The primary source photo showed Retired Navy Chaplain Ray Stubbe leading a prayer service. In the documentary, the photo emphasized that chaplains served the moral and spiritual needs of the troops while they served on the front lines.


The primary source photo from NPR showed clergy and others engaged in an anti-war protest. The photo was used in the documentary to show clergy that demonstrated against the Vietnam War.

This primary source from the Library of the University of California San Diego's "Dr. Seuss Went to War" political cartoon collection showed Adolf Hitler and General Hideki Tojo in a World War II propaganda cartoon. Within the documentary, the cartoon emphasized what had been considered a "just war" in comparison to the Vietnam War.


The primary source photo showed U.S. soldiers in battle in Vietnam. It was displayed in the documentary to represent the idea of the need to take up arms against an enemy.


This propaganda poster was distributed in Asia in the early 1950s in order to encourage countries to stop the spread of communism. As the war in Vietnam began, many believed that stopping the spread of communism was adequate rationale for sending the troops. The poster was included within the documentary in order to emphasize that this had been part of the rationale for the involvement of the United States in Vietnam.


This photograph shows Father Thomas H. Mooney, Chaplain of the 69th Infantry Regiment of the New York State Militia, and soldiers at a Catholic Mass at Fort Cocoran, Virginia on June 1, 1861. The image was used in the documentary to show that chaplains have been in the military throughout American history, including during the Civil War.


This photo depicted a priest participating in a protest to support the troops in Vietnam. This primary source photo showed that there were clergy in the U.S. who supported military action in Vietnam.


In this primary source image, Army Chaplain Ibraheem Raheem led Muslim soldiers in prayers at Camp Victory, Iraq. Raheem was one of only six Muslim chaplains in the Army, and is the only one currently deployed in Iraq. The photo was displayed in the
documentary to show that chaplains have remained in the military throughout modern wars and conflicts and have diversified in the religious faiths that they represent.


Army Protestant Chaplain Lt. Col. Craig Pache felt God's call to serve as an Army Reserve chaplain to serve soldiers of all faiths: Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu, etc. In the primary source image, Pache is seen having a conversation with a colleague, and it was used in the documentary to show that chaplains aid soldiers in both times of peace and war.

War is hell. 18 June 1965. *Rare Historical Photos*, rarehistoricalphotos.com/soldier-war-is-hell-vietnam-1965/.

During the Vietnam War on June 18, 1965, 173rd Airborne Brigade Battalion member Larry Wayne Chaffin displayed "War is Hell" on his helmet. The primary source image was used in the documentary to represent the controversy and tension brought by the Vietnam War, including on the battlefield.


In this photo from CNN, Vietnamese women and children huddle in a canal as they try to take cover during a Viet Cong attack. In the documentary, the image was used to convey how the Vietnamese civilians were oppressed under the attack of the communist regimes, including the North Vietnamese and the Viet Cong.


This primary source photo shows Navy Chaplain Lieberman preparing a Passover service for Jewish troops in the Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa and Camp Lemonnier. The photo showed a modern example of military chaplains supporting the troops.
Secondary Sources

Books, Dissertations, and Articles


Bergsma, a Commander in the U.S. Navy, described a detailed account of chaplains’ service with the Marines in Vietnam between 1962 and 1971. Within this extensive profile of Marine chaplains, Bergsma recounted a visit from the Chief of Chaplains, Rear Admiral James Kelly, and his concern over how protests in the United States impacted the mental well-being of soldiers, including chaplains, while they served in Vietnam. He also highlighted the challenges chaplains faced in meeting the spiritual needs of the soldiers while in the midst of combat zones that often required them to access the soldiers by helicopter. As a result, chaplains focused on ways that they could meet the needs of all soldiers within a unit regardless of specific faith backgrounds. Bergsma emphasized the role of support that chaplains provided amid the growing controversy and challenges of the war.


Cooper's secondary source article described the military service of Charles Liteky, a Catholic chaplain who received the Medal of Honor for his heroism in Vietnam. Liteky, who had been on a mission with his company when they came under heavy fire, carried more than 20 wounded soldiers to safety despite his own injuries. He also administered last rites to others in the jungles. Over the next decade, Liteky became a peace activist and eventually left his medal at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in protest of military action being taken in Nicaragua. Liteky, like many other chaplains, focused on his service to soldiers while in Vietnam, and, only later, chose to demonstrate his opposition to particular military actions.


In this secondary source dissertation, Fitzmorris described how even for those chaplains who believed in the Just War Theory, Vietnam presented a particular challenge. He acknowledged the conflict this presented for chaplains and described how chaplains recognized that the soldiers were not perfect but that they needed the support that the chaplains could provide. In addition, some chaplains faced conflicts as they attempted to
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relate to the troops when drinking or profanity were involved. The dissertation supported the research by reinforcing the claims made by other primary and secondary sources.


Hancock's article highlighted an anniversary celebration of the Chaplain Corps and the valor and determination displayed by Vietnam-era chaplains. Since 1775, approximately 25,000 clergymen have played a meaningful role in the military, remaining vital through modern wars because of their support of their comrades. This secondary source article, written by an author for the U.S. Army Public Affairs Office, provided information regarding the need to honor chaplains of the military and showed the conflict between war and religion for clergymen in Vietnam, emphasizing their devotion to the troops despite their views of the war.


Phil Salois served in Vietnam but was not particularly religious. However, the experiences that he encountered during the Vietnam War brought him closer to Catholicism, and he later became a priest. While reflecting on his experiences in Vietnam, he remembered the conflict between his personal beliefs and the wartime experience, as well as a noticeable conflict to modern wars. In both Vietnam and in modern wars and conflicts, Salois emphasized the importance of each individual life; he often noticed in Vietnam and future wars that soldiers were viewed as just another piece of the war. The secondary article, written by a media and communications director for The America Legion, explained the conflict between religious beliefs and the concept of war, as well as provided a connection to modern wars.


Loveland, a Professor Emerita at Louisiana State University, described the significant criticism of the military chaplaincy resulting from the Vietnam War. The divide of civilian clergy on the just nature of the war complicated the dual roles of chaplains as soldiers and religious leaders. When asked about the morality of the Vietnam War, Deputy Chief of Chaplains Gerhardt Wyatt explained that if the "justness" of a particular war was uncertain, people should support the government's position. Loveland furthered the research through her description of chaplains who were conflicted by the morality of this particular war but chose to focus on their responsibilities to the soldiers rather than preaching against the war while in Vietnam.
Many military chaplains have faced conflicts between their religious values and the wartime experience. This conflict remained particularly prominent throughout the Vietnam War. However, the ways in which clergy addressed these religious conflicts often differed between chaplains. Some refused to be silent, and they spoke out on issues that disturbed them. In other cases, chaplains viewed their role to be separate from the concept of war; they focused on the counseling of soldiers at a personal level rather than preaching religion. Furthermore, the internal conflict of many clergy remains today in modern conflicts.

In addition to the protesters at home, many soldiers opposed the war in Vietnam. However, chaplains Clanton and Granitt recalled the ways in which they supported their comrades through this widely-disapproved of war. In addition to supporting troops morally and religiously, chaplains would personally meet with soldiers to talk about personal matters, as well as aid those wounded. Rather than solely serving the military as a whole, Vietnam-era clergy went beyond this by aiding each soldier individually. The secondary source article, written the North American Mission Board, provided detailed information regarding the relationship between chaplains and the surrounding troops.

The article provided useful information about Southern Baptist chaplains during the Vietnam War. Specifically, the article focused on Vietnam-era chaplain, Charlie Clanton, who served in the late 1960s. Perry described the impact of Clanton on the soldiers around him, sharing the value of chaplains in the military. The secondary source was useful to the research process by explaining the importance of the military chaplaincy.
soldiers, including those who sometimes inflicted their own wounds upon themselves. The article reinforced the importance of the support that the chaplains provided for soldiers in Vietnam.


Ruane's secondary source article chronicles the story of retired Navy chaplain Ray Stubbe, who served in Vietnam and was pictured in the final photograph in the documentary. Stubbe supported the troops on the front lines during the battle of Khe Sanh. Stubbe, who suffers from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, described the horrors that he saw during the battle. Despite his own fears, other soldiers described Stubbe as heroic. In the article, Stubbe described that as he volunteered for the war, he wondered, "Can a Christian be a soldier --- or a Marine?" Yet, even as he wondered about these two roles, Stubbe indicated that he never doubted his faith. This article further supported the thesis that, despite potential conflicts between chaplains' dual roles, they did not believe that they compromised their faith.


Stahl argued that the Vietnam War caused the chaplaincy to become a "critical arena of conflict," as military chaplains faced increasing questions about the involvement of religious leaders in a military action that many considered immoral. The increasing controversy in the United States over the country's participation in the war and the immoral conduct of some soldiers complicated the relationship between chaplains' dual roles as soldier and clergy. Both within the United States and within the military chaplaincy, religious leaders were divided on their perceptions of this particular war. As a result, most chaplains focused upon the soldiers that they served rather than on their personal views of the morality of the Vietnam War.


Stanton's journal article reflected the challenges surrounding drug use among U.S. soldiers in the Vietnam War. In particular, this secondary source article provided data regarding heroin use among the soldiers, emphasizing that 20% were addicted to heroin while serving in Vietnam.

This secondary source article, written by Rear Admiral Mark Tidd, Chief of Navy Chaplains, detailed the centuries-old history of the navy chaplain corps. Tidd emphasized the role of chaplains as one of "presence" and support for military personnel of all religious faiths. He also reflected upon the importance of chaplains' confidentiality as they provide guidance for these individuals in particularly challenging situations. Tidd's article reinforced the research by reaffirming the constitutionality of the chaplaincy as it supports the free exercise of religion.


Throughout the Vietnam War, hundreds of clergymen served their nation, with many more serving in previous and subsequent wars. These chaplains provided a symbol of stability to the soldiers; while there was a chaplain around, enemies were typically not in the area. However, there were far more soldiers than chaplains in the war, causing the need for these chaplains to fly between military bases to serve as many comrades as possible. For many of these clergymen, their priority was supporting the troops. This secondary article, written by an author for the Vietnam Veterans of America, helped the research process by providing detailed information regarding the conflict for chaplains between moral absolutes and the realities of war.


While many chaplains in Vietnam opposed the war, so did many religious leaders in the United States. American chaplain William Coffin devoted his life to advocating against war. Although Coffin had served as a linguist in World War II, he did not serve in Vietnam, instead choosing to complete his theological studies. During the Vietnam War, Coffin took measures to support draft resisters and protestors, viewing war as immoral. Even following the Vietnam era, Coffin continued his life pursuit of anti-war advocacy. The article, written by a military expert and historian, provided information regarding the morality of the Vietnam War and enhanced the research process through its explanation of how many religious figures in the United States shared similar views to those clergymen in Vietnam who viewed this war as immoral.


This article, written for the National Museum of the United States Army, provided historical context to the chaplain corps. Chaplains have been in the army since 1775, and they have remained in the military throughout each war and conflict since the Revolutionary War. Furthermore, the article described the evolution of the chaplain
corps, which has greatly expanded in representation, now including many denominations from five major faith groups: Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, Muslim, and Buddhist. The secondary source provided valuable information about the chaplain corps and how it has expended since its creation in 1775.


Many religious figures that became chaplains in the Vietnam War quickly noticed an atmospheric change as they faced war, a subject in itself that conflicted with the morals of some. Furthermore, many soldiers took part in social customs of the war that were in opposition to chaplains' beliefs. As a result, chaplains often faced conflicts between their religion, moral absolutes, and the social aspects of war. The hundreds of chaplains serving in Vietnam differed in their ways of handling this conflict. Most clergy refused to compromise their beliefs, but found ways to reconcile the conflicts that arose from their roles as soldier and religious leader. For example, some chaplains reconciled issues such as drinking and drug use by not participating in it themselves, but recognizing that it was important to others with whom they served.

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Whitt’s book provides an extensive history of those chaplains who served in the Vietnam War. Specifically, the text emphasized the many conflicts chaplains faced, both internally and externally. From the seemingly unjust warfare to the immoral social conduct of some soldiers, chaplains encountered numerous conflicts between their two roles: military officer and religious leader. Whitt later explained the ways in which chaplains responded to such conflicts. Rather than compromise or compartmentalize the two roles, chaplains chose to reconcile the two roles by focusing on the support provided to soldiers. This allowed chaplains to maintain purpose in both roles without undermining either one.

Images and Political Cartoons

*Emblem of the Papacy. Wikimedia Commons, 19 Jan. 2007,*

This secondary source image displayed the emblem of the Roman Catholic Church, which was used in the collage of religious organizations that sponsored chaplains in the military.

*Former Secretary of the Army, John Marsh. Wikimedia,*

This secondary source photo of former Secretary of the Army John Marsh was shown within the documentary when detailing how Marsh was sued by Joel Katcoff and Allen Weider as they claimed that the military chaplaincy was unconstitutional and in violation
of the Establishment Clause. Katcoff and Weider lost the case and the chaplaincy was upheld.


This secondary source image displayed an engraving of George Washington praying during the Revolutionary War. It was used in the documentary to represent the presence of chaplains in the military since the Revolutionary War.


This secondary source showed the logo of the endorsing agency for Baptist Military Chaplains. During the documentary, it was used within a collage that included other sponsoring agencies.


This watercolor painting from the Library of Congress depicted Presbyterian Minister James Caldwell who served as a chaplain during the Revolutionary War. The painting was of his service during the Battle of Springfield and highlighted that the chaplaincy had existed in the American military since the Revolutionary War.


This secondary source photo displayed a variety of religious texts. It was used in the documentary to represent the religious doctrines of various faiths that all believe in the sanctity of life.


The painting depicted the Continental Congress and was used in the documentary to emphasize that it was the Continental Congress that commissioned the first chaplains in the U.S. military in 1775.


The secondary source photo of the Second U.S. Court of Appeals was used in the documentary to represent the *Katcoff v. Marsh* case, held in 1979 in order to argue the constitutionality of the military chaplaincy. The case was heard in the Second U.S. Court of Appeals.
Music


This song, "The Harder Ground," was used in the documentary during the title and thesis.


Used according to the license by Freeplay Music, the song was used throughout the documentary to enhance the mood.