

Should the military be paying clergy? Can the military tell them how to act? How does a Christian chaplain minister to a Buddhist? A Muslim? An atheist?

To explore these questions, filmmakers Lee Lawrence and Terry Nickelson spent three months in Afghanistan and Iraq. They joined them on patrols and missions, hung out with them in guard towers, flew on medevacs with the wounded, attended memorials. The result is *Chaplains Under Fire*, an independent documentary that examines the world of military chaplains through the lens of the Troops they serve in combat and the controversies they trigger at home.

*more on page 11*



# Wartime Sacrifice

When I was a boy growing up during the Korean War, I was reminded of the risks our men in uniform were enduring and of the need for us at home to make some sacrifice in support of their efforts in that far away country. I heard stories of the enforced sacrifice of World War II, of ration stamps for sugar, gas, and other commodities. I was taught that it was a civilian duty to make such sacrifices when the nation was at war so that our fighting forces would have first choice of materiel needed to be successful and victorious.

Sometime in the early 1960s, however, we started to hear about “guns and butter” – the idea that we could fight a war without giving up anything, any comfort or necessity, in our daily lives while our armed forces were fighting, bleeding, and dying in Vietnam. We even declared a “war on poverty” with a promise to increase the benefits of our civilian economy for all our citizens. Unfortunately, one result of this approach was to reduce or eliminate any sense of personal participation in the war effort by our people at home. We have continued this same course since then, and I believe it is time for the President to call for a new national sacrifice in support of our war efforts in southwest Asia.

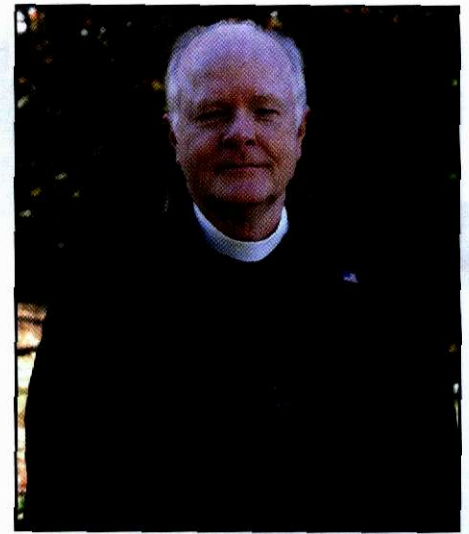
That sacrifice, not of commodities and comfort, should be for the nation to heed the words of President Lincoln in his second inaugural address: “*With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in*

*the right as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in, to bind up the nation’s wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow, and his orphan, to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations.*”

It is not enough for the Departments of Defense and of Veterans Affairs to do all in their power to care for our combatants, our veterans, and their families. Their resources will never be adequate to do all that needs to be done for the men and women who put their lives on the line for all the rest of us. Faith communities, civic clubs, and employers all have a sacrificial role to play in caring for the social, spiritual, and economic welfare of our troops and their families. We need to welcome them, employ them, and assist them in their full integration into the communities in which they live and work.

Doctors, dentists, and professional counselors likewise have a responsibility to care for the physical and psychological wounds suffered on our behalf. Every healthcare professional should enroll as Tricare provider and welcome service members and their families to their practices.

While many of us have started saying “Thank you” to people in uniform, we need to take that gratitude another step. Let us start asking, “What may I do for you?” By taking an active part in the lives of others, we can lessen the strain of family separation



*The Rev. Dr. Robert G. Certain, Rector of St. Peter & St. Paul Episcopal Church in Marietta GA; founding president of Care For The Troops, Inc.*

and frequent deployments, we can hold open or create new jobs for returning members of the National Guard and Reserves, we can act as problem solvers for families at home, and we can help to heal the wounds of war both seen and unseen.

When our armed forces are deployed to engage in combat, they are not the only ones at war – we as a nation are at war. Trying to have it both ways has not served us well. Perhaps by supporting and upholding our men and women in uniform and their families at home, we can recover our sense of unity as a people and our appreciation for the high cost of our freedom.

*Robert Certain  
Prisoner of War, Vietnam  
Chaplain, Colonel, USAF (Ret)*

## Military Children

*continued from page 10*

continue to be available for families facing their second, third, and fourth deployments. These families need support programs and their community as much as, or more than, those saying goodbye for the first time.

### What is next?

The National Military Family Association is gathering key nonprofit, military, corporate, education, community, faith-based, and research leaders to form an expert task force and lead a national conversation on the

needs of military children and families. In May 2010, the task force will present a plan to address both the immediate and long-term research implications. The task force working groups will focus on the following goals: building resiliency in youth, addressing the needs of girls, engaging communities to support military families, investing in military spouses, and improving the mental health of caregivers and kids.

### About the National Military Family Association

The National Military Family Association (NMFA) is committed to strengthening and

protecting the families of the men and women currently serving, retired, wounded or fallen. The Association provides families of the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, Coast Guard, and Commissioned Corps of the USPHS and NOAA with information, offers life quality programs, and vigorously pursues advocacy for benefits.

The National Military Family Association is one of MCA's partners in The Military Coalition, Inc. Visit [www.MilitaryFamily.org](http://www.MilitaryFamily.org).