

CHRONICLE: THE UNITED STATES ARMY CHAPLAIN SCHOOL

WORLD WAR II -- THE FIRST TWO YEARS

*by Chaplain (LTC) Arthur C. Piepkorn
Commandant, U.S. Army Chaplain School
1 March 1948 to 15 October 1950
Edited by Nella Hartog*

EDITOR'S NOTE: In the spring of 1942, the United States was mobilizing its industrial and military might to meet the crisis of world war. The requirement to supply many new chaplains to the Army fell upon what was, in the beginning, a modest reactivation effort for the Chaplain School.

This two-part article by Chaplain (LTC) Arthur C. Piepkorn, the School's ninth Commandant, recounts the School's activities to transform from a peacetime to a wartime institution. During this period, it underwent a relocation without a break in instruction and witnessed its monthly classes swell from 70 to over 400 students before being scaled back again. The first part, included here, deals with the School at Fort Ben Harrison. The School's activities at Harvard will be summarized in the Spring 1993 issue.

PART I. The Beginnings

Reactivation

After the graduation of the 14th Session from the peace-time Chaplain's School at Fort Leavenworth, KS, in 1928, the School, although never formally deactivated, ceased to function as an organization for training of resident chaplain students. While paragraph 10 of Tech Manual 16-205, "The Chaplain," dated 21 April 1941, defined the mission of the Chaplain's School as the preparation of correspondence courses for chaplains' Army extension work, this limited function had been entirely taken over by the Office of the Chief of Chaplains in Washington, D. C. by 1940.

Actually, all that was left of the Chaplain's School at Fort Leavenworth was the name, together with a fund of \$101.92, two hundred pounds of records, a library of fifteen books, and ten framed pictures of past classes.

The outbreak of World War II stimulated thinking along all line of military thought. On 11 December 1939, Major General J. J. Brees, Commander of Eight Corps Area, Fort Sam Houston, suggested to the Chief of Chaplains that new chaplains be given "a brief course of instruction upon entry into the service, which would tend to orient them and give them a more practical approach to their job when they join their station." Two days later the Chief of Chaplains, Chaplain (MG) William R. Arnold, in response to an inquiry of the Chief of the National Guard Bureau, stated: "this office will give due consideration to having a session of the School at such a

time as the National Guard Bureau thinks it advisable that a course be conducted for National Guard chaplains and there are chaplains available to attend. The school is located at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas."

On 26 August 1940, the Office of the Chief of Chaplains submitted a proposed Table of Organization for the Chaplain School to the Assistant Chief of Staff. It called for six Regular Army chaplains [one colonel, one retired lieutenant colonel, four retired majors]; five branch immaterial Reserve officers [four captains & one first lieutenant; 25 enlisted men; 63 civilians.

On 25 September 1940, the Chief of Chaplains submitted a memorandum to the Secretary of the War Department General Staff in response to a request of the Secretary of War "for a very brief study outlining the plans of the Chief of Chaplains for meeting the situation as regards the spiritual welfare of the Army arising out of the Selective Service Act." Part of that response read: "It is now apparent that provision should be made for the reactivation of the Chaplain School. Recommendation therefore will be submitted for consideration when the situation requiring the same has become clearly defined."

The reply by The Adjutant General stated: "With reference to the recommendation that consideration be given to the reactivation of the Chaplain's School, the Chief of Chaplains received this assurance: Such request, when submitted, will receive favorable consideration."

Changes were proposed to Army Regulation 350-1500 to bring directives "into harmony with the present army as a whole, . . . and with the current practices in the chaplains' service as dictated by present training doctrine and policy." The Assistant Chief of Staff G-3 approved the changes and these appeared in Circular No. 70, War Department, dated 15 April 1941. In March, 1941, a routine estimate of \$200 was submitted by the Chief of Chaplains to the Quartermaster General for the purchase of books for the Chaplain's School in the fiscal year 1943.

In July, a memorandum calling for the activation of the Chaplain School was submitted to the Chief of Chaplains by his staff. This study, with changes, became the basic supporting document submitted with the formal request for reactivation of the Chaplain's School. On 26 November 1941, the Adjutant General's Office issued a letter titled "Training Reserve Officers at the Service Schools" which included: "Para 3: Insofar as practicable all Reserve Officers ordered initially to extended active duty will be sent to the appropriate school of their arm or service before reporting for duty with a troop unit."

Two days after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor the Chief of Chaplains formally requested reactivation of "The Chaplain School" as soon as possible . . . A site in or near Washington was recommended in the interest of more adequate supervision by the Office of the Chief of Chaplains. A sufficient number of chaplains "over age" for troop duty and retired chaplains recalled to duty in the emergency were declared to be available as instructors.

It was noted in a memorandum appended to the request for reactivation of the School that the number of chaplains on full time active duty had increased from 125 in 1939 to more than 1600

in 1941. The great majority of chaplains recently called to extended active duty were lacking in knowledge of the newer and more advanced techniques of the work of the chaplaincy. It was deemed advisable to give chaplains newly assigned to active duty, and some already serving on extended active duty, opportunity to refresh themselves in the techniques and theory of efficient chaplain activity by attendance at a short refresher course. The suggested locations subject to available facilities were identified: Washington, D.C.; Fort Myer, Virginia; Arlington Cantonment, Virginia; Fort Belvoir, Virginia; Fort Meade, Maryland.

The memorandum also cited that, under the provision of Army Regulation 350-110, direct supervision and control of the School was to be vested in the Chief of Chaplains. The Commandant was to have charge of the general administration of the School. The Director, to be selected by the Chief, was to be in immediate charge of instruction and administration. A student body of from 50 to 75 was described as desirable, composed chiefly of Reserve and National Guard Chaplains of company grade. One session each calendar month was proposed, with 25 days of instruction and a total of 200 academic hours:

<u>Subject</u>	<u>Hours</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Hours</u>
Practical Duties	25	Office Organization and Administration	15
Army Morale	15	Rules of Land Warfare	20
Organization of the Army	15	Map and Aerial Photograph Reading	20
Military Law	25	Military Discipline, Customs and Courtesies	10
Burials & Graves Registration	15	Military Sanitation and First Aid	20
	Defense against Chemicals	20	

Proposed Course of Instruction for Chaplains in 1941.

The student body in the plan was to be divided into three sections, each not to exceed 25 students. To insure uniformity of instruction, all sections were to be taught by the same instructor, wherever possible. It was estimated that 10 instructors would be required, six of them from branches other than the Chaplain Corps. In addition to a Director, an Executive Officer and/or a Secretary would be required who would instruct as necessary in addition to performing administrative duties. With the initial activation of the School, provision would be made for the assignment of the Director of the School effective one month before the date determined for the School's opening. It was recommended that civilian personnel, eleven initially, be used for the clerical force. A need for 3,550 square feet of office space was anticipated, in addition to four classrooms and an assembly room.

The basic plan was informally approved and Fort Benjamin Harrison was tentatively selected as the best available site. The Office of the Chief proceeded with the

preparation of specific plans to reactivate the School. One of the first items for the Chief's attention was the selection of a Commandant.

Chaplain (LTC) William D. Cleary of Fort Knox, Kentucky ("The Armored Force" Chaplain) was designated by the Chief of Chaplains for this position. Born in Ireland, Chaplain Cleary was a graduate of the Sorbonne in Paris and the College des Irlandais and had been ordained to the priesthood of the Roman Catholic Church at St. Sulpice, Paris, in June of 1908. Cleary had served both in the United States and with the American Expeditionary Force in France and Belgium during WWI. He had accompanied the Army of Occupation into Germany. At the outbreak of the present emergency, with over twenty years of service (including two tours of duty in the Philippines), he had been chosen as chaplain of the First Armored Division. With the expansion of the Armored Command, Cleary became successively chaplain of the I Armored Corps and the entire Armored Force. Chaplain Cleary wired his acceptance to the Chief of Chaplains on 3 January 1942.



Chaplain (BG) William D. Cleary

The Office of the Chief of Finance, in a 6 January memorandum to the Assistant Chief of Staff G-3, concurred with the selection of Fort Benjamin Harrison as a suitable location for the Chaplain School.

On 12 January 1942, orders were issued to Chaplain Cleary and to Chaplain (MAJ; later LTC) Herman Riddle Page, also of Fort Knox, selected as Secretary of the School, directing them to proceed to Fort Benjamin Harrison and assigning them to the Chaplain's School upon activation. On 13 January, the two visited the fort and examined the available facilities. On 16 January, a board of officers (COL Walter S. Drysdale, Fort Benjamin Harrison Post Commander, COL John C. Daly, Assistant Chief of Staff G-4 Fifth Corps Area, COL John W. Dansby of the Office of the Chief of Finance, and Chaplain Cleary) met and found that Building 115-B, a brick structure of recent construction, was available and met all requirements for the Chaplain School. They determined that there would be no overlapping between finance activities at the post and the Chaplain School; an estimate \$698 was required for minor alterations; the necessary quarters for the faculty and staff were available; and no necessity existed for an administrative union of the School and the activities of the Finance Department of Fort Ben Harrison.

Five days later the Chief of Chaplains recommended four chaplains as instructors for the School: Chaplain (LTC) Oscar W. Reynolds, 3rd Armored Division, Camp Polk, LA; Chaplain (LTC) Paul B. Rupp, 6th Infantry Division, Fort Leonard Wood, MO; Chaplain (LTC) Mylon D. Merchant, 4th Armored Division, Pine Camp, NY; and Chaplain (LTC) Ralph C. Deibert, New York Port of Embarkation. These four reported for duty during the first week after the School's activation.

Now that all of these steps had been taken, the following letter was issued from the Adjutant General's Office:

WAR DEPARTMENT
The Adjutant General's Office

AG 352 Ch Sch
(12-9-41) MR-M-C

Washington

February 2, 1942

SUBJECT: Activation of the Chaplains' School.
TO : Chief of Chaplains.

1. The Chaplains' School will be activated at the earliest practicable date at Fort Benjamin Harrison, Indiana, with a student capacity of approximately 75, utilizing permanent building 115-B and two Chapels when not in use for religious services of the garrison.

2. The Chief of Chaplains is authorized to select a Chaplain to be especially designated as Commandant of the Chaplains' School

By order of the Secretary of War:

/s/ Otto Johnson
Adjutant General

Chaplain Cleary was advised by telephone that the foregoing directive had been issued in Washington and that General Orders No. 1, Headquarters Chaplains' School, Fort Benjamin Harrison, Indiana, was published whereby Chaplain Cleary assumed command of the School and Chaplain Herman R. Page was appointed as Secretary. Soon afterward, Chaplain Cleary's new responsibilities as Commandant of the Chaplain School were recognized by his promotion to the temporary grade of colonel.

At Fort Benjamin Harrison

At the suggestion of the Chief of Chaplains, the School's curriculum was modified to include a five hour course in Leadership and Administration instead of Office Organization; Land Warfare and Army Morale were cut to 10 hours a piece; Military Law, Military Hygiene, and Defense Against Chemicals were cut to 15 hours each; 15 hours were added for Military Correspondence and Surveys; 5 hours of Money and Property Accountability, 5 hours on Investigations, Interior Guard Duty, and Military Intelligence, 5 hours on Recreation, Education and Music, and 10 hours on the Administrative, Supervisory and Cooperative Duties of Division, Corps and Army Chaplains and Staff were added to the course. Chaplain Cleary received this proposed schedule on 7 February. Recognizing the necessity for equipping chaplains physically as well as academically, Cleary suggested a reduction in the number of academic hours and the introduc-

tion of a program of exercise and drill. He felt that such was necessary to harden the chaplains to enable them to take their proper part in the training program of their own units. The Chief and the War Department concurred and Cleary's suggestion was carried into effect with the arrival of the first students.

Executing the physical fitness program, however, proved difficult. Only vacant periods in the academic schedule could be used for physical training. Of that available time, three-fourths was devoted to close order drill and one-fourth to calisthenics.

A modest physical training goal was set: to give the student chaplains adequate physical exercise and to train them to be sufficiently proficient in close order drill to make a creditable showing at the graduation day review.

Thus the School began its first class, staff and faculty consisting of thirteen officers, fourteen enlisted men and nine civilians. By March 1942, the enlisted strength had been augmented to twenty.

NAME	NOLAND, WILLIAM R.		RANK	Captain	ASN	1642 0295857
LAST ADDRESS	Ft Leonard Wood, Mo.		DATE OF RANK IN GRADE			
HOME STATE						
ASGD TO:	Ch Sch, Ft Benj Harrison, Ind.					
Authority	Par 8 80 104 WD 22 Apr 1942					
Effective date of asgmt	9 May 1942					
Date reported	9 May 1942					
City or town and state where last served as civilian clergyman:						
TRANSFERRED TO:	95th Inf Div, Cp Swift, Tex					
Authority	Same as above					
Effective date of order	13 June 1942					
Date departed						
LEAVE:			DENOMINATION:	Methodist		
REMARKS (See other side)			MARITAL STATUS:	Married		

CH-5 Form A-1

RECORD OF ATTENDANCE AND GRADES					
NAME NOLAND, WILLIAM R.					
Course	Req	Att	Gr	Instr	Remarks
Army Administration	5	5	85	Camp	
Army Morale	10	10	88	Monteaut	
Army Organization	5	10	85	Camp	
Calisthenics	24		xx		
Chemical Warfare	5	12	73	R.S.B.	
Classification	2		xx		
Court & Customs	10	10	75	Ripley	
Adm. Chap. Conf.	10	10	90	xx	Ripley
Drill Periods	50		xx		
Grave Registration	10	15	95	Luman	
Map Reading	10	12	97	Luman	
Military Law	5				
Mil. San. & F. A.	10	15	100	Keller	
Postal Service	2		xx		
Practical Duties	20	20	85	Kee	
Supervised Study	36		xx		
Review of Land Warfare		5	95	Ripley	

100 8

Front and reverse of student chaplain's record card in 1942.

A "Reserve Pool" of the Chief of Chaplains had been established at the School, with Chaplain Cleary as Commanding officer. This pool's purpose was to provide a reservoir of chaplains from which needed replacements for vacancies, created by the rapidly expanding Army, could be drawn. Thus, while students began to arrive within a few days of the activation of the School, most of them were as promptly ordered out again. The absence of line instructors and enlisted personnel, and this unpredictable ordering in and out of student chaplains, prevented any kind of formal instruction worthy of the name for nearly a month.

Some of the problems faced by the new school were reflected in Chaplain Cleary's letter:

"We started limited instruction at 9:00 a.m., 9 March, with an enrollment of 52 students and only four chaplain instructors. At 9:30 that same morning orders came through relieving 27 of these chaplains from duty at the school and assigning them to three different posts immediately."

The reason for the aforementioned "limited instruction" was that none of the line and staff officers had reported yet for duty.

Late in March 1942, the Chief of Chaplains verbally informed the School Commandant that the upcoming revision of Army Regulation 350-1500 would designate the installation as the "Chaplain School" rather than the "Chaplains' School." The change became official with the publication of the new edition of AR 350-1500 on 11 June 1942.

More changes were to come. On 1 April, the Chief informed Chaplain Cleary that effective with the course beginning 11 May, by direction of higher authority, the session at the Chaplain School was being reduced to 28 days in order to conform to the schedule for activating new divisions. No reduction in the quantity of subject matter being taught was authorized.

A Chaplain School General Mess was established. A four-man mess council was formed, consisting of the mess officer, a member of the faculty, the detachment commander, and a member of the student body (selected by students). The establishment of the mess brought with it problems of its own. On 16 June, MAJ Haywood, Mess Officer, reported to the Commandant that when the mess served its first meal, 10 enlisted men and noncommissioned officers were assigned to operate the facility serving 68 chaplains. When it became apparent that they could not adequately function without assistance, a detail of five privates was obtained from the Reception Center. The May session increased the chaplain population to 90. Overlapping of personnel from one course to another resulted in the necessity of serving as many as 135 chaplains without additional help. The third session consisted of 142 students.

"A great many of the students have practically to wait upon themselves, because it is absolutely impossible for four men to wait on fourteen tables properly."

The first graduation exercise, conducted on 25 April 1942, was somewhat informal. Few of the 71 graduates had been members of the class when instruction was officially begun on 9 March. The graduates represented by no means the total number of those who, for longer or

shorter periods, had been students of the Chaplain School during its first hectic weeks. Nevertheless, the occasion, marked by an address by Colonel Walter S. Drysdale, Post Commander, served as a milestone. It marked the end of the first groping phase of the School's existence. The second graduation, on 6 June, addressed by the Chief of Chaplains, recognized 71 graduating chaplains and was more in keeping with the tradition of Army commencements.

A new edition of AR 350-1500 was published on 11 June 1942, superseding the much longer regulation of the same number, dated 16 August 1926. It authorized a school known as the Chaplain School "at such place as may be prescribed by the Secretary of War."

Its objects: to give chaplains specific training in ministering to the moral and religious needs of the military personnel, to acquaint them with the methods of work which experience has shown to be the most effective and with the customs of the service, to instruct them regarding the organization and administration of the Army, and to promote cooperation and a fraternal spirit among chaplains.

The regulation stipulated that the Commanding General, Services of Supply, may direct the following and related subjects comprising the curriculum: conduct of public worship and religious ceremonies, pastoral duties such as ministration to the sick, wounded, and distressed, to prisoners, and to the families of military personnel; organization of the Army, military law and regulations, rules of land warfare, functions and staff relations of chaplains in administrative positions, correspondence and records, equipment and property accountability, interior guard duty, topography, military hygiene, defense against chemicals, first aid, and graves registration; discipline and leadership, morale, courtesies and customs, recreation and welfare, education, and community relations.

The third class nearly doubled its predecessor in size (with 148 students) and made the authorized capacity of 75 students nearly meaningless. At the same time, the expanding procurement objective made it clear that sessions would soon exceed 300 students each and that Fort Benjamin Harrison lacked the facilities to accommodate a school of this contemplated size.

With all military reservations taxed to and beyond capacity, the educational institutions of the East and the Middle West were canvassed to locate the Chaplain School at one of them. The choice finally narrowed down to Duke and Harvard Universities.

A personal inspection of facilities on both campuses by Chaplains Cleary and Page revealed that Duke would be unsuitable for a number of reasons. Limited class room and office space, the lack of adequate room for the School's headquarters, and inadequate facilities for indoor drill, and the segregation policy of southern educational institutions, separating the white and Negro races in education, were all shortcomings. Harvard University, on the other hand, was in a position to offer everything that the School required except an Officers' Mess. Even here, however, it was believed that the mess halls of the Divinity School of Harvard and of the nearby Episcopal Theological School in Cambridge, plus the commercial restaurants in Harvard Square, would adequately meet the need of the student chaplain personnel. On the basis of Chaplain Cleary's recommendations, the transfer of the U.S. Army Chaplain School to Cambridge was ordered.●