

AIR FORCE'S BID TO APPEASE LT. BERRY FAILS

Yesterday, the Catholic League sponsored a press conference in Washington on the injustice that the Air Force is doing to Lt. Ryan Berry, the serviceman who is requesting a religious exemption from serving with females in an underground missile silo; the Air Force is penalizing Lt. Berry for not serving in this specific capacity.

Just prior to the press conference, Congressman Roscoe G. Bartlett, who is supporting the officer, received a letter dated August 3 from General Michael Ryan, Air Force Chief of Staff. "I fully agree that the United States Air Force must accommodate religious beliefs to the maximum extent possible," wrote Gen. Ryan. Regarding Lt. Berry, Gen. Ryan said that the young Catholic officer "will soon be scheduled for training to a new career field followed by an assignment to another installation."

William Donohue, who spoke to this issue in Washington yesterday, offered the following comments on this latest development:

"Lt. Berry's attorney, Henry Hamilton, labeled Gen. Ryan's overture 'vapid,' and I would certainly agree with that assessment. The only thing that really matters is whether the politically-driven negative evaluation of Lt. Berry—which followed two glowing accounts of his performance—will remain unamended. If it does, it effectively kills Lt. Berry's career.

"The Catholic League will conduct a media campaign against the U.S. Air Force for its actions. In addition, in the next issue of our monthly journal, Catalyst, we will ask our members to contact Gen. Ryan and their congressman about this issue.

“As I said yesterday, it is perverse that the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces can have oral sex in the Oval Office of the White House—and do so with impunity—while Lt. Berry is punished for wanting to avoid the very occasion of sin that disgraced President Clinton.”