

# OBAMA'S WAR ON RELIGION IN THE RANKS

*After reading an article by Kansas Congressman Tim Huelskamp on the state of religious liberty in the military, I asked a staff member to contact his office, requesting permission to reprint it. It was happily granted. It is the best summary of this subject I have seen.*

*We have been tracking this issue for some time, and we are especially concerned about the undue influence that Mikey Weinstein has had in bullying the armed forces to walk his secular line. Weinstein is the president of the Military Religious Freedom Foundation. Earlier this year his lawyers tried to bully me when I criticized his work, but to no avail: I told them to take a walk.*

*As president of the nation's largest lay Catholic civil rights organization, and as a U.S. Air Force veteran of the Vietnam era, I take great umbrage at those who seek to squash the First Amendment rights of servicemen and women. Things have gotten out of control, and that is why I threw the support of the Catholic League behind Rep. Huelskamp's bill, the Military Religious Freedom Protection Act.*

*For decades, a movement has been under way to secularize our culture and our social institutions. We, along with others, have been pushing back, and have scored a number of victories. But the assault on the military, in the form of political correctness, is not just another turf war: it's a pernicious effort to drive religion away from those who rely on it for life and death reasons.*

*This article was originally published on August 1 by Breitbart.com. Please pass it around to your family and friends, especially to those in the military, and veterans.*

*Thank God we have congressmen like Rep. Huelskamp, a Roman Catholic, to represent us.*

*Bill Donohue*

Congressman Tim Huelskamp:

If Army chaplain Emil Kapaun served in Afghanistan today rather than Korea six decades ago, President Obama would probably give the Catholic priest discharge papers instead of the Congressional Medal of Honor.

In Obama's Army, the Pentagon brass is ordained in the priesthood of political correctness, while devout Christians such as Medal of Honor recipient Emil Kapaun are shunned and ostracized. At all times between the presidential terms of George Washington and George W. Bush, the open practice of Christianity in the ranks was widespread and the open practice of homosexuality was deemed incompatible with military service. In the Obama era, the reverse is true.

President Obama is a wartime Commander-in-Chief. No, I don't mean the obvious (Iraq or Afghanistan). I'm talking about his preference for waging a race war, a gender war, class warfare, generational warfare, and – with escalating aggression and mounting casualties – a culture war. With the exceptions of free enterprise and traditional marriage, no institution has been more “radically transformed” by the Obama regime than our Armed Forces. Given President Obama's notorious contempt for Americans who “cling to their Bibles” and “guns,” perhaps we shouldn't be surprised by his Administration's hostility to service members who espouse traditional Judeo-Christian beliefs.

The persecution of Christians and conservatives has become increasingly brazen and pervasive since the President took office four and half years ago. To “protect patients” from proselytizing or prayer, Walter Reed Army Medical Center banned wounded warriors' family members from “bringing or

using Bibles” during visits. The Department of Veterans Affairs barred Christian prayers at a National Cemetery. The President signed the law that repealed “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell,” the Attorney General refused to defend the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) in court, and the Department of Defense authorized unholy “matrimony” ceremonies at military installations even before the Supreme Court struck down part of DOMA.

A war games scenario at Ft. Leavenworth identified evangelical Christian groups as a national security threat.

A field grade officer listed the American Family Association and Family Research Council as “domestic hate groups” and directed his subordinate officers to monitor soldiers who might be supporters. Evangelist Franklin Graham was un-invited from the Pentagon’s National Day of Prayer service. A training exercise funded by the Department of Homeland Security portrayed home-schooling families as the domestic terrorists.

Last year, I introduced the Military Religious Freedom Protection Act. The bill requires the military to accommodate service members’ moral principles and religious beliefs so long as they don’t “threaten good order and discipline,” forbids the military from using an individual’s beliefs as the basis for an adverse personnel action, and forbids the military from forcing chaplains to perform homosexual marriage ceremonies. My bill’s language was included in the National Defense Authorization Act passed by Congress last December.

When President Obama signed it into law, he claimed the conscience protections I authored were “unnecessary and ill-advised.” But recent events confirm the new law was necessary, well-advised, and prophetic. These episodes exemplify the new military culture, one that rebukes those who practice Christianity and rewards those who worship at the altar of political correctness.

Army Master Sergeant Nathan Sommers' superiors told him to remove the conservative, Republican, and scripture-quoting bumper stickers from his personal vehicle. He was told he must avoid being seen reading books authored by Mark Levin, Sean Hannity, or David Limbaugh while in uniform. He was investigated for serving Chick-fil-A food at his promotion party to express his support for traditional marriage. In retribution, the Army is pursuing trumped up disciplinary charges against him.

The Utah Air National Guard cancelled the six-year re-enlistment contract of Tech Sergeant Layne Wilson because he told a chaplain he thought the chapel at West Point shouldn't be used for a homosexual wedding. An Air Force officer was required to hide from view the Bible he once kept on top of his desk. An Air Force chaplain's video tribute to sergeants was banned for fear it would offend an "agnostic, atheist, or Muslim." The chaplain's video narration said: "On the eighth day, God looked down on His creation and said, 'I need someone who will take care of the Airmen.' So God created a First Sergeant."

Coast Guard Rear Admiral William Lee told a National Day of Prayer audience that Christian service members are being told to hide their faith and religious liberty is being threatened by Pentagon lawyers. Army Reserve training materials listed Evangelical Christianity, Catholicism, and Orthodox Judaism as extremist religious groups alongside Al-Qaeda and Hamas. This is especially outrageous since the Obama Administration continues to classify the mass shooting at Ft. Hood (in which 13 people were killed by Army Major Nidal Hasan) as "workplace violence" rather than admit it was a terrorist attack carried out by a radicalized Muslim.

In April, several Generals consulted Mikey Weinstein—the anti-Christian zealot dedicated to attacking men and women of any faith—to solicit his help writing Air Force policies concerning "religious tolerance." If there's one person whose

advice the Pentagon brass shouldn't solicit, it is that of Mr. Weinstein, a man who says the military ranks are full of "Christian fundamentalist monsters" whose evangelizing constitutes "spiritual rape," "a national security threat," and "sedition and treason." After Weinstein telephoned the Pentagon to complain about a painting displayed at Mountain Home Air Force Base in Idaho, it was removed less than one hour later. The painting bore the word "Integrity" and the citation "Matthew 5:9" (the verse says: "Blessed are the peacemakers for they will be called children of God").

Mr. Weinstein bragged to the *Washington Post* that the Defense Department expressed its willingness to ban proselytizing (i.e., evangelizing, sharing one's faith, or spreading the Gospel) and added, "We need half a dozen court-martials real quick." Days later, the Pentagon issued a statement to the news media that announced: "Religious proselytization is not permitted within the Department of Defense." After reading about this alarming situation on my Facebook page, a Sergeant First Class posted the following comment: "This is why I am retiring. ... The liberals are destroying our values." One wonders how long before the radical Weinstein and his Pentagon pals find and punish this Sergeant.

These revelations highlight the fact that Obama's war on God-fearing servicemen is not only morally repugnant, but also threatens the long-term soundness of our voluntary military. Who wants to join an organization that increasingly caters to homosexuals and atheists, meanwhile denigrating Christians and traditional marriage? If you care nothing at all about the constitutional free exercise rights of our servicemen, surely you can at least see the dangers to military readiness posed by such harassment and persecution.

In April, I attended the White House ceremony at which President Obama presented Ray Kapaun with the Congressional Medal of Honor awarded posthumously to his uncle, Chaplain (Captain) Emil Kaupan. A farm boy from my congressional

district in Kansas, the “Patriot Priest of the Korean Conflict” saved countless lives of fellow soldiers on the battlefield, along the death march to the Pyoktong Prisoner of War camp, and during the seven months of captivity that preceded his murder by communist Chinese guards in May 1951.

I can only imagine what Mr. Weinstein would say about the “how to witness Christianity” proselytizing clinic that Fr. Kapaun put on in the POW camp or this report of repatriated American soldiers: “He was their hero – their admired and beloved ‘padre’. He kept up the G.I.’s morale, and most of all [caused] a lot of men to become good Catholics.”

It speaks volumes that Fr. Kapaun had Protestants, Jews, and atheists saying the Rosary, singing the Lord’s Prayer, and praying together at the Easter sunrise service he led, all in defiance of the communist camp guards who ridiculed his devotion to faith and punished him for it. In a detailed account of the priest’s life, Arthur Tonne wrote: “He has transmitted to every one of us a new appreciation of America, and a keener, more realistic understanding of our country’s greatest enemy – godlessness.”

When Fr. Kapaun was being carried to the “Death House” (i.e., isolation without food or water), the Muslim POWs from Turkey stood at attention to honor him. According to witnesses, Fr. Kapaun blessed the very guards who were murdering him by saying, “Forgive them, for they know not what they do.” President Obama should be earnestly and prayerfully seeking more such men, not forging a military where they are not welcome, or where the very actions that once earned them the Medal of Honor are now forbidden by the Commander-in-Chief.

*Congressman Tim Huelskamp represents the Big First District of Kansas.*