

## Chaplain news

# Gateway to ministry

## *Reserve chaplains sought to serve at Lackland*

### Chaplain (Col.) James Cooke

*Former, IMA to the wing chaplain, Lackland AFB, Texas*

“Gateway to the Air Force” is the motto of the once and future sprawling Air Force city of Lackland Air Force Base. Best known as the home of basic training, Lackland is more multi-faceted than most realize.

Lackland’s chapel mission is intriguing because it has six chapels, 23 chaplains, 15 chaplain assistants and nearly two dozen lay leaders — the biggest chaplain service operation in the Air Force. Among the 16 different worship/faith groups are: Muslim, Buddhist, Eckancar, Wicca, Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, Eastern Orthodox — more active faith communities than found at the Academy!

Our goal is to facilitate the right to worship for all Air Force, Army, Navy, Marine and allied troops that are here for basic training, technical training, language training, international training and all permanent party personnel.

And we need you here!

As you might guess from the description above, visitation opportunities abound, whether among the basic trainees, members of our sister services, students, foreign guests, or the permanent party that support Lackland’s mission.

Just as your ministry is more than visitation, so it is here. Opportunities for training at Lackland are superior to any base in the Air Force, because of the built-in variety of our mission. Drawing on its 75-year history and tradition, Lackland leads the way into the new century.

Chaplain Jerry D. Lewis’ Basic Military Training Chapel is a good example. To reach better the hoards of young men and women that make up the greater part of his parish, Chaplain Lewis recently went quite modern. With dual theater-quality projectors in BMT Chapel’s sanctuary, both of which are computer-controlled, the bi-weekly orientation and information briefings as well as Sunday’s sermons are presented with unforgettable graphics, text and illustrations. Using in-house digital and VCR capabilities, presentations take on freshness and new life and yet are easily updated without tedious paperwork and monotonous delays. Chaplains here are also players in the weekly graduation and parade of new airmen.

The other chapels shine with their own uniqueness. Medina Annex has an Air Force chapel staffed by a U. S. Army chaplain and chaplain assistant. Hope Chapel, responsible for ministry to our technical trainees, has a presence at Camp Bullis, the security forces field-training site north of San Antonio.

But at the other end of the spectrum, Hope chaplains are present at the Defense Language Institute, where English language training is provided to allies from more than 90 nations. They also minister by way of a coffeehouse ministry known as “The Get-



IMA Chaplains (Col.) James Cooke and (Capt.) Derrick Reaves visit with military training instructors TSgt. Pamela Rathers and SSgt. Robert Wilshire in the courtyard of the Basic Military Training Chapel at Lackland AFB, Texas.

away.” Chaplain Jim Hough, Hope Chapel branch chief, reminds us often, “There is always Hope!”

Lackland Chapel, the permanent party chapel, regularly trains reservists as they welcome and brief newcomers. It provides a more traditional Air Force family setting for worship services and rites.

Soon Kelly Air Force Base, with its unique Air Intelligence mission, will become Kelly Annex and be added to the ministry opportunities. Fort Sam Houston is the site of a national cemetery. Even though it is on the opposite side of town, contact is frequent as we honor veterans who have passed away and comfort the grieving family and friends.

After all the hair-raising stories about duty at Lackland have been told, one solid, unchanging fact remains shining through. At Lackland, you will have a chance to influence the Air Force of tomorrow. Of all those who participate in molding our next generation, few are more important than the chaplains and chaplain assistants who minister to 100 percent of enlisted accessions and a significant percentage of those officers who join the Air Force after their ROTC experience. Chaplain Jonathan Scalone, senior-most Catholic reservist at Lackland, has found this level of face-to-face engagement satisfying and fulfilling.

Come and train here to ensure a win-win impact on your present assignment.

Because we need you here!

*(Editor’s note: Chaplain Cooke retired from the Air Force Reserve March 30 after 28 years of service.)*