

Chaplain news

Conference focuses on mission

by Chaplain (1st Lt.) Myrtle Bowen
Dover AFB

Keeping the U.S. Air Force Chaplain Service mission of "Providing Air Force members and families the opportunity for the free exercise of religion," at the forefront, the Dover AFB, Del., Reserve chapel staff recently hosted a leadership conference.

With participants including Brig. Gen. David Webb, mobilization assistant to the chief, U. S. Air Force Chaplain Service, the staff created an all-inclusive forum during which active, Reserve and eligible family members gave input, suggestions, and comments about the Reserve chapel program. Wanting renewal for the coming years, the challenge was to poll segments of the Dover community to gain insight into the chaplaincy's future mission.

First among the speakers was Patti Solo, wife of the 436th Operations Group commander; Belinda Scott, wife of the command chief master sergeant; and Cindy Desilet, wife of the Dover First Sergeants Council president.

Understanding people make the mission happen, all three agreed that programs needed to be geared toward the needs of families, spouses and, especially, the growing number of teenagers.

Taking advantage of the opportunity, the women offered a few recommendations. They suggested that the chapel staff organize programs to help prepare teenagers for life. They also recommended that the staff offer spiritual retreat opportunities for both single and married military members.

Understanding the Reserve's role in the Total Force, active duty members were also given the chance to provide valuable feedback and information. Invited to represent this part of the community was Lt. Michael Lyle, sortie generation assistant flight commander, and MSgt. John Moore, Airmen Leadership School instructor.

In bringing their concerns to the forefront, they emphasized the need to focus on airmen between the ages of 18 and 30. In highlighting this group of young men and women, boredom was noted as the biggest problem for single airmen in that age group.

Recognizing the significant role played by senior leadership, conference organiz-

ers sought the views of leadership representatives Col. Mark Solo, 436th Operations Group commander, and CMSgt. Mike Mendoza, security forces manager.

According to Solo and Mendoza, the efforts already put forth by the chapel staff deserve thanks and applause. When looking to the future, they emphasized the need for continued support at all levels and with a combined voice asked chapel staffs to be a constant "visible reminder of the Holy."

As leaders within the organization, Solo and Mendoza not only asked for multi-level support, but invited the senior chaplain, or a representative, to attend commander's call as well as weekly staff meetings.

Filling two full days of communication, performance reports, mentoring and fellowship, the conference proved extremely valuable for not only the Dover community, but for all Air Force communities as the spiritual needs of today's Air Force transcend base and mission.

For more information on chapel programs, call Rabbi Brett Oxman, assistant chief, professional division, directorate of chaplain individual Reserve programs, HQ Air Reserve Personnel Center, at (800) 525-0102, Ext.71241, or DSN 926-6480 or e-mail at brett.oxman@arpc.denver.af.mil.

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