



REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF:

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
UNITED STATES ARMY TRIAL DEFENSE SERVICE
KANDAHAR FIELD OFFICE
KANDAHAR, AFGHANISTAN
APO AE 09355



AFDR-TDS

4 December 2012

MEMORANDUM FOR Assistant S-3, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 101st Expeditionary Signal Battalion, Kandahar, Afghanistan

SUBJECT: Response to Questions Posed by the Investigating Officer in re CH (1LT) Chris J. Antal

1. I am the Acting Senior Defense Counsel for the U.S. Army Trial Defense Service, Kandahar Field Office. As permitted by the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ), CH (1LT) Antal sought legal counsel and advice from me regarding an Army Regulation (AR) 15-6 investigation of which he was the subject.

2. It is my opinion that it is in the best interest of my client for me to answer your questions directly instead of him providing you a sworn statement. This decision is made not because CH (1LT) Antal has anything to hide or because he is reluctant to provide truthful information. Rather, as legal counsel to CH (1LT) Antal, I believe that I can provide you the information which can assist you in your investigation. Providing a sworn statement may cause unforeseen legal issues to which I do not want CH (1LT) Antal to be exposed.

3. Understand that I advised CH (1LT) Antal to present the information in this format. The fact that he is presenting the information in this format cannot be used against him. For example, when a person exercises his Fifth Amendment right to remain silent, remaining silent cannot be used against that person. Similarly, CH (1LT) Antal's decision to follow the advice of his legal counsel cannot be construed in a negative manner against him.

4. Listed below are the responses to your questions:

a. **Regarding the confession "A Veteran's Day confession for America" posted on the "Quest for Meaning" website, did you post that writing? If so, what was your intent for that posting?** CH (1LT) Antal posted the Confession. The Confession was intended as a religious ritual to facilitate cleansing and purification, and to restore right relationships with God and neighbor. Every minister in CH (1LT) Antal's denomination, the Unitarian Universalist Association, falls into two types of ministers: parish or community. All chaplains in the Unitarian Universalist Association, including military chaplains, are community ministers. Therefore, according to the denomination's Ministerial Fellowship Committee, all community ministers are required be in relationship and accountable to a congregation i.e. a church. Given the nature of CH (1LT) Antal's military ministry, he has a relationship with the Church of the Larger Fellowship which sponsors the website "Quest for Meaning," which is an online church. Church of the Larger Fellowship is for those who cannot attend church. It has outreach programs to families, prison ministries and military ministries in which CH (1LT) Antal

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participates. Since September 2012, CH (1LT) Antal posted seven postings as part of his pastoral duties. Before he began posting his material on this website, CH (1LT) Antal discussed it with Eric Durr, Director of Public Affairs at New York State Division of Military and Naval Affairs, and received verbal authorization.

b. Based on your understanding, what is the purpose of “Quest for Meaning” website? The website is a ministry of the Church of the Larger Fellowship, which provides a web-based ministry for those unable to attend a Unitarian Universalist Church, and for ministers seeking religious support and resources. Please see the enclosed letter from Reverend Meg A. Riley, Senior Minister, Church of the Larger Fellowship and chair of CH (1LT) Antal’s Committee on Ministry.

c. Why did you post “A Veteran’s Day confession for America” to a public internet site? The U.S. Army taught CH (1LT) Antal that he is a member of the Profession of Arms and his Profession serves the American public as a client. CH (1LT) Antal thought the American public might find the Confession a helpful resource for personal use. It is a Confession of self-reflection regarding American society’s attitude and treatment of current and former service members and its allies. Prior to his deployment, CH (1LT) Antal worked extensively with “Partners in Care” (PIC). PIC is a partnership between faith communities and the military chaplaincy. CH (1LT) Antal met many civilians hungry for resources that would help them provide genuine support to the military.

d. Why did you use the word “we” and “our” throughout the writing, vice “I” or “my”? CH (1LT) Antal followed a format of public confessions consistent with similar confessions found in the Unitarian Universalist hymnal, “Singing the Living Tradition.” The opening of the Confession is verbatim from “A Prayer Book for the Armed Services 2008” entitled “Confession of Sin.” The prayer book is published by the Episcopal Church. See enclosed.

e. In the confession you stated things like “Raising our children to kill without remorse” and “We are morally disengaged, outsourcing our killing to the one percent,” for example. What is your official position, as a Chaplain, regarding the morals of our leaders and Soldiers in combat? ”? CH (1LT) Antal believes that Soldiers and leaders need to develop strategies for keeping morally engaged in combat, which means, among other things, killing only out of necessity, as a last resort, and with remorse. In addition, American society shares a moral responsibility for what our leaders and Soldiers do in combat and also must stay morally engaged in our Nation’s war-making. As a chaplain, CH (1LT) Antal feels driven by the U.S. Chaplain Corps’ value of accountability and religious leadership to help keep Soldiers and society morally engaged. This is a proper tenet in Christianity and an established principle of the U.S. Army Chaplain Corps.

f. In the confessional, you wore your uniform and listed your official rank and position in the United States Army. What was your purpose for doing that? Posting a religious ritual to facilitate cleansing and purification, and restore right relationships with God

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and neighbor seems to be entirely consistent with CH (1LT) Antal's role and duties as a chaplain in the U.S. Army. If one reads the Confession in its entirety and in context, this posting is essentially supportive of the U.S. Army and its Soldiers and veterans. It is a wake-up call to the American public about how it does not properly treat those in the military who serve its citizens. Obviously, if certain sentences or paragraphs are referenced without the proper context, it may seem more negative than it really is. However, a proper reading of the Confession, as a whole, will reveal that it is a confession for how our society misuses and mistreats the concept of war, the service members and allies who have fought on behalf its people.

g. In the article you stated that "We have made our Veteran's into false idols." In your official opinion, as a U.S. Army Chaplain, is military service honorable? Why or why not? In CH (1LT) Antal's opinion, service is absolutely honorable. CH (1LT) Antal ended his Confession with a plea for courage to "give honor to whomever honor is due." Service members assume unlimited liability and put themselves at great personal risk in service to a purpose higher than themselves. The American public needs to honor veterans by listening to their painful truths rather burdening them with false projections and ignoring their pain and suffering. Veterans should not be treated as false idols or placed into hero myths. They are real people who have suffered real pain and real injuries to which the American public seems to be turning a blind-eye.

h. Do you feel that you were wrong for posting the article? If so why? CH (1LT) Antal posted this Confession with proper intentions. He regrets that people may have misinterpreted the Confession as some sort of condemnation of the U.S. Army and its Soldiers. It was not the intended purpose of the Confession.

i. Were you at any point apologetic for posting the article? If so why? To whom did you apologize? How did you apologize? If in writing, please provide a copy of that apology? CH (1LT) Antal wrote two emails after posting the article. The first one is enclosed and was written to COL Greg Dreisbach, his Battalion Commander. In his message, CH (1LT) Antal regretted if the Confession brought discredit to his unit and command. Moreover, he acknowledged that he may have crossed a comfort line by pointing out with great candor how society treats its Soldiers and veterans. The other email was from CH (1LT) Antal to CH (COL) Eric Olsen in his capacity as spiritual advisor. However, this message is protected as privileged communication, "not to be disclosed to a third party in any context, legal or otherwise." AR 165-1, 16-2 (a). The email message to CH (COL) Olsen should not have been disclosed to you at all because it was sent to CH (COL) Olsen in his capacity as a chaplain.

j. I have received information stating that you were the subject of an investigation and/or adverse action for your comments and/or speech during chaplain OBC. Describe the comments and speech that were the basis for action. What adverse action was received? Please provide a copy of the action. As his legal counsel, I am concerned by this question. First, I do not believe it is relevant to this investigation at all. Second, the person who provided you this information may have some hidden agenda and may be tainting the fact-finding process of this investigation. However, to answer your question, the information you received is incorrect. CH (1LT) Antal was not subjected to an investigation and/or adverse action

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during Chaplain OBC. CH (1LT) Antal has received no adverse action in his entire military career. In fact, CH (1LT) Antal received a coin for moral excellence from CH (COL) Olsen upon graduation from Chaplain OBC.

k. Do you know a LTC George McHugh from the 27th IBCT NYARNG? If so, what is your relationship with him? CH (1LT) Antal does not recall whether or not he has ever met LTC George McHugh. LTC McHugh sent CH (1LT) Antal an email on 14 November 2012 in response to his Confession. That is the extent of their relationship.

l. What in your words are the duties and responsibilities of a Chaplain? CH (1LT) Antal understands the tension between shepherding our troops and sounding the prophetic voice and knows that shepherding the troops always comes first and that is what he is committed to doing. Shepherding the troops means accommodating the free exercise of religion in the military and performing or providing religious support for Soldiers in his assigned unit, and area of operations (AO).

m. Do you teach the ideas stated in your confessional during your official Chaplain Ministry services? It depends on how one defines "official Chaplain Ministry service." CH (1LT) Antal adheres to the Association of Professional Chaplain Code of Ethics in all his official chaplain ministry services. According to that code, "Members shall affirm the religious and spiritual freedom of all persons and refrain from imposing doctrinal positions or spiritual practices on persons whom they encounter in their professional role as chaplain." (Code of Ethics 130.13)

n. Were the words in your confessional part of any worship services you led or helped to lead? Yes, CH (1LT) Antal read the Confession as a part of the Unitarian Universalist Service at KAF on Veteran's Day on 11 November 2012.

o. Did you provide a service for Veteran's Day? What was the program for that service? Yes. The Order of Service was as follows:

Opening Hymn, Opening Words, Welcome and Announcements, Lighting the Chalice, Reading of the UUA Principles and Purposes, Sharing of Joys and Concerns, Candle lighting to Honor the Dead, Silent Meditation, Hymn, Reading of Veteran's Day Confession for America," Sermon on "Integrity," Closing Hymn, Extinguishing of the Chalice.

p. What was the purpose of your trip to FOB leatherneck? CH (1LT) Antal went to Leatherneck to provide care and support to another military chaplain from his denomination.

q. Do you have a personal relationship with someone at Leatherneck? CH (1LT) Antal would characterize his relationship with the military chaplain as professional – he is a comrade in arms and a colleague in his ministry. His intention in visiting the chaplain was ministerial in nature.

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r. **Did you see that person? If so, how much time did you spend with that person during that trip?** CH (1LT) Antal met the chaplain and he spent about three hours together with the chaplain.

s. **What activities did you engage in during your trip?** CH (1LT) Antal provided emotional and religious support for the chaplain from his denomination and another military chaplain who met CH (1LT) Antal when he arrived at Leatherneck. They discussed the tragic death of a service member who had been in their care that had happened a couple days prior to his visit. See the enclosed announcement. CH (1LT) Antal also provided empathic listening, pastoral counseling, and prayer and oil of anointing to a third service member suffering from post traumatic stress. Part of CH (1LT) Antal's ministry is to talk with and listen to service members, drink tea with them, share a cigar or use other methods to reach out and communicate with them.

t. **Did you obtain approval for your trip to FOB Leatherneck?** Yes.

u. **If yes, how did you obtain approval?** CH (1LT) Antal's chaplain assistant submitted an Air Movement Request (AMR). The AMR is classified and will be handed to you in person.

v. **Who approved your trip? How did he or she approve it (ie. in writing, verbally, describe the approval).** The process at the time was to get approval from the Company 1SG and Company Commander. It is my understanding that at the time, Battalion Commander approval was not necessary. However, CH (1LT) Antal sent an email message to the Battalion Commander, as a courtesy, informing him of the general nature of the trip. As he recalls, CH (1LT) Antal did not disclose the identity and position of the chaplain as it was privileged information.

w. **Whom did you speak with prior to obtaining approval? What did you say to those persons regarding the intent and purpose of your trip?** CH (1LT) Antal exchanged emails with the chaplain and with his ecclesiastical endorser, the Rev. Sarah Lammert. Please see the enclosed email and letter from Rev. Lammert who wanted CH (1LT) Antal to see the military chaplain discussed above. CH (1LT) Antal forwarded the email from Rev. Lammert to his Battalion Commander prior to his trip.

x. **Do you feel that you are effective within the Battalion in your role as a Chaplain?** Yes. However, CH (1LT) Antal acknowledges that, as a First Lieutenant and on his first deployment, he still has a lot to learn about the Army.

y. **How do you feel that Soldiers within the 101st ESB perceive you as a Chaplain?** CH (1LT) Antal has only received positive feedback from Soldiers in his unit. For example, CH (1LT) Antal offered an overnight Spiritual Fitness retreat for 101 ESB soldiers during mobilization training in Texas and received post-retreat evaluations from all 20 participants.

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Every participant strongly agreed with the statements "The Chaplain genuinely cares about my soul" and "The Religious Support Team respects my personal belief system."

z. **Do you feel you are approachable as a Chaplain? Why or Why Not?** Yes. One of CH (1LT) Antal's strengths is that he is emotionally available and present wherever he is. Soldiers have told him that can tell him anything without feeling judged. This is an important indicator of approachability.

aa. **How much time do you spend by the A and C Co 101st ESB compound areas?** CH (1LT) Antal spends several hours a week in counseling sessions with A and C Company Soldiers, but those meetings occur in his office at Camp Hudson. His experience has been that Soldiers prefer to speak to him away from their compound areas.

bb. **How many sites out sites have you visited thus far during the deployment?** So far, CH (1LT) Antal has visited Five: Walton, Leatherneck, Viper, Smart, and OCCP Qualat.

cc. **During a visit to FOB Walton, how much time did you spend with the 101st ESB Soldiers assigned to that location? What did you do while on site?** During the visit to FOB Walton, CH (1LT) Antal spent about three hours total with the 101st Soldiers assigned. CH (1LT) Antal visited FOB Walton with CH (CPT) Richard Browning, SGM Gina Lippi, and SPC Anthony Taylor as part of their left-seat right seat transfer of authority. They were there from Saturday afternoon until Sunday morning. He visited their place of work and met with the day and evening shift. CH (1LT) Antal and his assistant met with the local sexual assault response team and introduced them to our 101 ESB Soldiers. They met with the religious support team assigned to the FOB and introduced them to the 101 ESB AO. They visited the memorial dedicated to LTC James Walton and three NYARNG Soldiers: SGT Andrew Seabrooks, SPC Nelson D. Rodriguez, and SPC Anthony L. Mangano, and CH (1LT) Antal researched their stories and shared them with the 101 ESB Soldiers in order to honor the dead. CH Browning and he also paid a special memorial tribute to CH (CPT) Dale Goetz who was killed near the site. The following Sunday morning, CH (1LT) Antal performed a field service near the helicopter pad.

dd. **What is your view point on promoting religions other than UU to the Soldiers of the 101st ESB?** CH (1LT) Antal is adamant about the fact that he does not promote any religions. As a military chaplain, his duty is to honor the "no establishment free exercise" clause of the First Amendment. CH (1LT) Antal accommodates the free exercise of religion among Soldiers of the 101 ESB. To that end, he performs religious support to the extent that he is able, or does his best to provide that support through referral and educating 101 ESB Soldiers about the many religious support resources available at KAF or in the Soldier's AO.

ee. **How many Soldiers have you counseled since you mobilized?** CH (1LT) Antal has counseled more than 100 Soldiers individually multiple times and many have returned for ongoing care. If the definition of "counsel" includes group counseling such as suicide awareness training, and strong bonds, then CH (1LT) Antal has counseled more than 200 Soldiers.

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ff. **How many hours have you spent counseling since mobilization?** CH (1LT) Antal would estimate that he has spent more than 225 hours counseling Soldiers.

gg. **How many worship services?** CH (1LT) Antal has personally performed at least 30 worship services. If one includes spiritual fitness trainings like meditation as part of worship services, then that would add an additional 30 services for a total of approximately 60.

hh. **How many attendees of your worship services?** The cumulative total of attendees to all CH (1LT) Antal's worship services, including field services, would be more than about 300 attendees .

ii. **Other than counseling and worship services, do you provide other types of services to Soldiers? If so describe these services? When and how often are such services provided?** CH (1LT) Antal provides a weekly Unitarian Universalist Service Sunday mornings at KAF, and has provided Collective Christian Communion Services at four of the five out-sites that he has visited. In addition to those worship services, CH (1LT) Antal currently provides five services on a weekly basis. Since the first week of November, CH (1LT) Antal provided a class in meditation every Saturday at 0600 in the Fraise Chapel at KAF. Approximately, three weeks ago, CH (1LT) Antal began supporting a Strong Bonds Group for men in committed relationships on Friday evenings at 1900 at Camp Hudson. CH (1LT) Antal hosts a Chaplain's Tea on Sunday afternoons at 1500 at Camp Hudson. CH (1LT) Antal coordinates a couple of service projects like Platelet Donations for the ROLE 3 Hospital and recycling around Camp Hudson. Each week CH (1LT) Antal coordinates volunteers from the 101st ESB to serve local Afghan children at the Bazaar Boys School. CH (1LT) Antal also provides religious and spiritual resources to Soldiers. CH (1LT) Antal has distributed the following: 600 inspirational pocket stones, more than 200 multi-cam bandanas with Psalm 91 imprinted on it, more than 100 religious books from Christian, Muslim, Buddhist and other traditions, hundreds of greeting cards, and hundreds of "dog tags for kids" to parents in the unit. CH (1LT) Antal has also represented the 101st ESB during eight Dignified Transfer Ceremonies and continues to mentor a chaplain candidate assigned to the 101st ESB rear detachment.

5. In addition, as his legal counsel, I also wanted you to know CH (1LT) Antal's background because I believe it is relevant to your investigation:

a. The Rev. Chris J. Antal, MA, Mdiv, is Unitarian Universalist minister, ordained at the First Unitarian Universalist Society of Albany, NY, and is one of only five soldiers with ecclesiastical endorsement from the Unitarian Universalist Association, in Boston, MA. CH (1LT) Antal is assigned as Battalion Chaplain to the 101st ESB, based in Yonkers, NY, and was mobilized for his first deployment in support of Operation Enduring Freedom on 16 August 2012. He is currently the only chaplain from his faith group in any branch of the U.S. military in Afghanistan.

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b. CH (1LT) Antal received his formal civilian education for ministry at the Unification Theological Seminary, in New York, Hartford Seminary, in Connecticut, and Meadville Lombard Theological School, in Chicago. He was trained in specialized trauma ministry during two Clinical Pastoral Education residencies at Westchester Medical Center and Albany Medical Center - both Level 1 Trauma Hospitals in New York. He further trained in specialized veteran ministry during an internship at NY Harbor Veterans Hospital in Manhattan, and for the past four years has been in a mentee of Dr. Ed Tick, author of War and the Soul, and serves on the Treatment Team of the organization Dr. Tick co-founded, Soldier's Heart, based in Troy, NY.

c. CH (1LT) Antal is a 2009 graduate of the Chaplain Basic Officer Leadership Course, at Fort Jackson, SC. As a 2LT he completed the Combat Medical Ministry Course at Brooke Army Medical Center in 2010, and received the special indicator Combat Medical Pastoral Care Specialist. He completed the Master Army Profession and Ethic Trainer Course in 2011 at West Point. CH (1LT) Antal was promoted to 1LT in June 2010.

d. CH (1LT) Antal just celebrated his fifteenth wedding anniversary to Mitsuko Ishikawa, and they reside in the Hudson Valley of New York with their five children: [REDACTED], age 12, [REDACTED], age 11, [REDACTED], age 9, [REDACTED], age 8, and [REDACTED], age 7. See the enclosed photo. CH (1LT) Antal's father is a veteran of the Vietnam War and served as a U.S. Navy medical officer.

e. CH (1LT) Antal's current deployment to Afghanistan is the first time that he has been on Title 10, Active Duty, status. Since arriving at his current unit in May 2011, there has been no documentation to show that CH (1LT) Antal has received any formal counseling and mentoring from his rater or his senior rater regarding his duties. Despite what I call this "lack of leadership," CH (1LT) Antal has relied on his training and his perception of the needs of the Soldiers in his unit to carry out his pastoral duties.

f. Moreover, CH (1LT) Antal came highly recommended by CH (COL) Olsen. See the enclosed memo from CH (COL) Olsen. Given his performance in his first deployment, CH (1LT) Antal has proved that he "is purposeful as well as thoughtful and has the capacity to envision and implement good ideas that change our dynamic and culture for the better."

6. Given the information above, it is my opinion that CH (1LT) Antal has not committed any misconduct whether it be violations of the UCMJ, U.S. Army regulations or U.S. Army policies. Any perceived deficiencies in his performance are a result of miscommunication and misunderstanding by his chain of command.

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7. Point of contact is MAJ Sean S. Park at sean.park@afghan.swa.army.mil or DSN 318-421-5458.

Encls

1. Letter from Rev. Riley
2. Prayer Book
3. Email dated 16 Nov 12
5. U.S. Department of Defense Announcement
6. AMR Classified Document (not included)
7. Letter from Rev. Lammert
8. Email dated 4 Oct 12
9. Family photo
10. Memo from CH (COL) Olsen

SEAN S. PARK
MAJ, JA
Acting Senior Defense Counsel