



UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST
ASSOCIATION OF CONGREGATIONS

January 29, 2013

Brigadier General Scottie D. Carpenter
Department of the Army
Headquarters, 311th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary)
Kandahar Airfield, Afghanistan

Dear General Carpenter,

I am writing in support of CH (1LT) Chris Antal, who is currently serving with the 101st Expeditionary Signal Battalion in Kandahar. As Chaplain Antal's Ecclesiastical Endorser, as well as the Director of Ministries for our denomination, I have been privy to all evaluations of Chris in his ministry, both civilian and military. Until the recent letter of general reprimand, Chris has received the highest marks for excellence. During his deployment, Chris has maintained steady communication with our office. It is clear to me that Chris is providing invaluable pastoral care to the troops in his care. He speaks with awe and compassion of the complex moral and spiritual strain required of our service members, and he is incredibly thoughtful about providing care that will aid in the spiritual resilience of our soldiers. Members of his small, growing UU congregation in Kandahar speak glowingly of the support and spiritual nourishment they experience under Chris' ministerial leadership.

Chris is relatively new to military chaplaincy, and this is his first deployment. I understand that Chris may have made a poor decision in allowing a strongly worded confessional prayer to be published on a domestic church website. I believe we are all learning about the appropriate use of social networking when it comes to matters of religious life. I am dismayed that Chris wasn't afforded the opportunity to work with a mentor to overcome any growing edges, but is instead slated to return to the United States prematurely. It is our soldiers who will pay the price, as they will lose the extraordinary care of a dedicated chaplain. The fact that Chris voluntarily undertook a separation from his wife and five children in order to serve impresses me as a sign of his integrity and honor. In addition, I am confident that Chris would have provided honest and thoughtful counsel to his command.

Thank you for taking this into consideration,

Sincerely,

The Rev. Sarah K. Lammert
Director of Ministries and Faith Development and
Official Endorser