



"Like a point man on patrol, our Chaplaincy Corps will likely be the first to draw fire if [Don't Ask, Don't Tell] is dismantled," said an active-duty chaplain, who withheld his name and aspects of his service to avoid censure.

Friendly Fire

Members of the U.S. military could soon find that defending marriage or sharing the Gospel puts them in the crosshairs of a new law advocating homosexuality.

by Catherine O. Snow

Life changed on Sept. 20 — albeit covertly — for military chaplains and Bible-believing service members throughout the U.S. Armed Forces.

On that day, the repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" (DADT), the 1993 prohibiting open homosexual behavior in the Armed Forces, took effect. It was also the day gay activists' legislative weaponry — "anti-discrimination," "hate speech," "equality" and "diversity" laws — took aim squarely at military servicemembers' religious freedom.

When it comes to the gay agenda, it's a zero-sum game. And this "victory" for gay activists poses a grave threat to the freedoms of Christian troops.

Opportunities Seized

As the ancient military strategist Sun Tzu wrote, "Opportunities multiply as they are seized." That's exactly what gay activists and the Left have done since the end of 2010. With their newly gained foothold in the military culture, gay activists already are trying to leverage momentum toward

imposing same-sex marriage nationwide.

In fact, gay activist and philanthropist Anna M. Curren wrote to fellow donors: "My gifting, of both money and time, is most intensely directed to reversing the six-decade old statute [banning gays from openly serving in the military]. ... I am convinced that until this last bastion of federally authorized discrimination is eliminated we have little chance of advancing other significant GLBT legislation, in particular marriage rights. With [the] repeal ... we will open the floodgates to complete civil rights and citizenship."

Elaine Donnelly, president of

the Center for Military Readiness (CMR), said DADT was repealed in anything but a stealthy manner. “They used an assault vehicle” to achieve it.

Activists’ first opportunity came when Americans turned their attention to Christmas plans last year. Departing U.S. lawmakers, who had nothing to lose, voted during Congress’ “lame duck” session to repeal DADT. Signed into law on Dec. 22, conservatives’ 17-year battle to retain the conduct standards of the Uniform Code of Military Justice ended with little public notice.

Over the following months, the effort to speed up the new law’s implementation gained steam. A politically deadlocked Congress proved to be no obstacle, as a series of Sun Tzu-like “opportunities” came in rapid succession from various government agencies. Only now, looking back, do these series of decisions look to be coordinated maneuvers.

On Feb. 23, the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) announced it would no longer defend in federal court the 1996 Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) — handing gay activists at least a decisive morale boost, if not a partial victory. Under DOMA marriage is defined as being between one man and one woman, affecting more than 1,100 federal rights, benefits and privileges.

As June approached — also known as “Gay Pride” month — more federal agencies seized the chance to chip away rights and benefits protected under DOMA. The Internal Revenue Service on May 28 unilaterally skirted DOMA by deeming California domestic partnerships to be the equivalent of marriage for tax purposes. On June 10, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services issued a directive to cover federal employees’ same-sex partners under Medicaid and Medicare. Then a 20-judge

Real Questions, No Response

Here are a few questions regarding the repeal of DADT, outlined in a 25-page list. All of the questions have gone unanswered by the Pentagon:

- Will sermons, religious services and programs be censored if someone is “offended”?
- In the eyes of the military, will homosexuals be considered a protected class?
- Will marriage retreats for evangelical service members and their spouses now be mandated to include same-sex couples?
- If a service member tells a

chaplain that he/she is struggling with same-sex attraction, will the chaplain be subject to “anti-discrimination” charges if he says it’s a sin?

- Are chaplains free to preach biblical truth about sexual behavior?
- Must chaplains affirm same-sex relationships?
- If left up to the individual commander, how will decisions be uniformly applied?

To view the entire detailed list of questions, visit MilitaryCultureCoalition.com.

panel of the U.S. Bankruptcy Court for Central California chose not to dismiss a same-sex couple’s joint tax-return case, saying that “there is no valid governmental basis for DOMA.” A federal appeals court ruled to stop the worldwide enforcement of DADT on July 6.

Despite all the gains, gay activists were antsy, as the DADT policy was still in effect while the military conducted “diversity” training in the various service branches. On July 22, with training still incomplete, the executive branch and the military Joint Chiefs certified that the law to allow gay-, lesbian- and bisexual-identified personnel to serve openly — starting Sept. 20 — would not affect military morale, cohesion, recruitment or readiness.

New Orders, Vague Assurances

In its “hail Mary” effort to repeal DADT, Congress left out one key provision: religious freedom protections. Despite repeated requests

by thousands of active-duty and retired chaplains, lawmakers omitted protections for military personnel who adhered to Scripture on human sexual behavior.

Robert “Bob” Maginnis, a retired U.S. Army lieutenant colonel and senior fellow for national security at the Family Research Council, said this was by design.

“Let there be no doubt: Homosexual activists have taken captive one of the nation’s most conservative institutions,” he told *Citizen*, “and they intend to use it as a platform to further transform the nation’s moral landscape.”

As an integral member of the 1993 Pentagon team tasked with preserving the more than 200-year-old prohibition of homosexual acts among troops, Maginnis said the Pentagon’s 2010 Comprehensive Review Working Group (CRWG) failed on a number of fronts. The most egregious was to adequately assess and report whether the DADT repeal was even appropriate.

Instead, CRWG's questions focused on "mitigating the consequences" of lifting the ban.

In its Nov. 30, 2010, report to Congress, the CRWG acknowledged that "a significant portion of the [military] respondents did suggest that a change in policies resulting in chaplains' free exercise of religion or free speech rights being curtailed would lead them to withdraw their endorsement."

Nevertheless, it concluded, "... No modified or revised policy is required, particularly in light of the training and education we are recommending in the event of repeal. In our view, existing policies regarding individual expression and free exercise of religion by Service members are adequate. Service members will not be required to

Ways to Support Chaplains and Bible-Believing Service Members

Christians — individually and corporately — are encouraged to:

- Contact the Christian Alliance for Religious Liberty and ask about adopting a chaplain.
- Commit to pray for the military, especially evangelical service personnel and their families.
- Send care packages or encouraging emails and letters to deployed chaplains and service personnel.
- Reach out to families of deployed chaplains and service personnel.
- Invite a military chaplain to speak at your church.

change their personal views and religious beliefs; they must, however, continue to respect and co-exist with others who may hold different views and beliefs."

'A New Form of DADT'

To Donnelly and Maginnis, those words ring hollow.

"The Pentagon used a three-tiered process to 'educate' the troops, commanders, special staff and key individuals, including chaplains and lawyers," Maginnis said. "The 90-minute sessions included video statements by senior officials and discussions about what lifting the ban meant for all members.

"Although the training included a time for questions and answers, few troops dared to ask about the rationale behind the decision," he added. "Repeal was a political decision, and military readiness was its victim."

Donnelly agreed.

"Trainers essentially said chaplains had the option to have endorsement withdrawn," she told *Citizen*. "There's zero-tolerance in the military."

And, she added, if you're not considered a "team player," there are career penalties.

"You have a culture of obedience having to meld with the San Francisco lifestyle," she said. "The military is on the cutting edge of very liberal social change. 'Diversity' is implemented without restraint. We now have a new form of DADT — against people of faith."

Donnelly recently received a letter from a new recruit set to deploy in January, who expressed concerns about personal privacy in close quarters under the new policy. Later the same day, the young man's recruiter and a superior officer cancelled his deployment with no appeal, ending his military career before it began.

A senior active-duty chaplain,



Retired U.S. Army Col. Ronald A. Crews

who withheld his name to avoid censure, wrote in an opinion piece for CMR prior to the repeal:

"The handwriting is on the wall that such a move could occur, as senior leaders in the military unabashedly announce that anyone disagreeing with rescinding DADT can vote with their feet and leave the military. Such a statement likely means only one thing: The religious teaching and doctrines held as a matter of conscience by chaplains have to yield to the state authority.

"Such a dangerous decision would pave the way for greater state control over the lives of soldiers, the loss of freedom of speech and the reengineering of the Chaplain Corps as an instrument of the government to carry out its social policies, even when they are directly opposed to biblical teachings."

'Shrewd as Snakes, Innocent as Doves'

When calling His disciples to ministry, Jesus Christ said to them, "I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves." (Matthew 10:16)

This is the mind-set the Chaplain Alliance for Religious Liberty (CARL) has chosen to take in this new post-DADT environment, says retired U.S. Army Col. Ronald A. Crews, the

organization's executive director.

"We're encouraging our chaplains to continue to serve with the grace and dignity that they've always ministered to everybody who walks in their door or that they meet in the field or on the battlefield," he told *Citizen*. "But, that said, we are also encouraging our chaplains to be very circumspect and making sure that everybody knows that if they come to a chaplain for counsel, they are going to receive counsel from a biblical basis."

"And that they should not — in any way — waver from their theological beliefs, particularly concerning sexual issues and the definition of marriage."

The Rev. Roy Bebee, a retired U.S. Navy captain and the director for Evangelical Free Church (EFCA) chaplains, he told *Citizen* the military's spiritual landscape has grown increasingly difficult this year. Chaplains provide moral and ethical input for commanders and service personnel. Yet the challenge of how to minister to a more pluralistic, non-sectarian audience without compromising their beliefs and conscience is growing.

Since the repeal, "evangelical chaplains now must act with even greater discretion in their messages, counsel and overall leadership as moral agents to their Commanders, as well as to peers and soldiers," Bebee wrote to his endorsed chaplains in his monthly newsletter. "Chaplains must be constantly aware — whether they are speaking as a chaplain inside the religious context or whether they're speaking as a uniformed 'officer' outside of the religious context."

Warning Shots Fired

Gay activists and government sympathizers have wasted no time pressing their advantage since Sept. 20.

Without skipping a beat, fed-

eral lawsuits emerged to challenge DOMA, all demanding some type of same-sex "spousal" privilege or benefit.

On Aug. 3, the Air Force abruptly suspended an ethics course taught by chaplains for more than two decades. The reason? David Smith, spokesman for the Air Force's Air Education and Training Command, said the use of Scripture was "an inappropriate approach (in a) pluralistic society."

Then, another bomb dropped.

In an Oct. 6 memo, Clifford Stanley, undersecretary of defense for personnel and readiness, wrote, "A military chaplain may participate in or officiate any private ceremony, whether on or off a military installation, provided that the ceremony is not prohibited by applicable state and local law."

"I'll give you guys a freebie — next we're going to use those married active duty service members to get DOMA overturned!" one gay activist wrote in a blog. "Gotta love the irony of using freedom of religion to allow gay service members to marry on base in spite of DOMA!"

Crews learned about the directive from media reports, and was understandably horrified.

"The Defense Department was saying to the Chaplain Corps 'You can ignore federal law.' That's a real concern to us," he told *Citizen*. "It's a concern to me as an American, much less an endorser for chaplains, that we have the Defense Department's legal representative ignoring federal law."

CARL, which represents more than 2,000 military chaplains, as well as the Archdiocese for the Military Service, fired off letters of their own to the Pentagon, making it categorically clear: They will "not perform same-sex wedding ceremonies under any circumstances," on or off military installations.

Reinforcements Attempt to Mitigate Damage

To mitigate the repeal of DADT, the U.S. House of Representatives passed five key amendments protecting marriage and the religious freedoms of chaplains and service members. Both defense bills are now under consideration by Congress.

National Defense Authorization Act for 2012

1. Amendment Barring Same-Sex Marriages On Military Bases

2. Amendment Creating a Military Version of the Defense Of Marriage Act (M-DOMA)

3. Amendment Requiring All Service Chiefs Certify Repeal Of DADT (Not Just Political Appointees)

National Defense Appropriations Act for 2012

4. Amendment Stating That No Defense Dollars Can Be Used To Implement Changes Violating DOMA

5. Amendment Requiring The Continuation of a "Consistent Policy on Marriage" for Chaplains

"By dishonestly sanctioning the use of federal facilities for 'marriage counterfeits' that federal law and the vast majority of Americans have rejected, the Pentagon has launched a direct assault on the fundamental unit of society — husband and wife," the CARL letter stated.