

Southern Baptist tapped as Army chief of chaplains

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By Ken Camp

Managing Editor

Chaplain Douglas Carver has been nominated to serve as the next U.S. Army chief of chaplains—the first Southern Baptist to lead the Army's chaplain corps in more than 50 years.

Carver, 55, also has been recommended for promotion in rank from brigadier general to major general. Pending Senate confirmation, he will be promoted to his new position at a July 12 ceremony at Fort Belvoir, Va.

Douglas Carver

Carver is a graduate of the University of Tennessee and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., as well as the Army War College in Carlisle, Pa.

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He has served as pastor of Baptist churches in Kentucky, Colorado and Virginia, and he is endorsed by the Southern Baptist Convention's North American Mission Board.

"Any position of responsibility in life that comes to us comes from the Lord, and I know God is the one who has done this," he said.

Carver expressed appreciation to the "Sunday school teachers, Royal Ambassador directors and others within my community of faith who have shaped me since childhood."

He served as a chaplain with the 101st Airborne. He also was director of training at the U.S. Army Chaplain Center and School in Fort Jackson, S.C., before becoming deputy chief of chaplains for the Army in 2005.

Chaplains serving in the current conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan not only face the stresses common to all military chaplains, but also some unique challenges, Carver noted.

"Many of the chaplains in my generation missed Vietnam. They have served in a series of relatively short-term military interventions, but nothing of the duration or scale of the current engagement," he said.

All military chaplains prepare for ministry to wounded personnel and to bereaved families, but medical advances and the extensive use of improvised explosive devices combine to make the current ministry setting somewhat different, he noted.

"The good news is that advances in medicine have extended the lives of soldiers with extensive injuries," he said. At the same time, he acknowledged, "because of the IEDs, we're dealing with more traumatic brain injuries, as well as acute traumatic stress."

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