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May 18, 2002

### Biography of Pastor Edward Renz

I find the study of history through the eyes of another to be the most effective and satisfying for me. Whether it was tracing my own family history through my maternal grandfather, born in 1885, or researching the growth of the church that I grew up in through older members, I have been fascinated by the wealth of knowledge stored in a person's memory.

It was an opportunity and a privilege, therefore, to record for others, the biographical information, anecdotes, and foremost, the ministerial activities of Pastor Edward Renz on videotape. As genuine and caring as he appears on this tape, so he is in person.

In the following pages, you will find the general line of questioning for the interview and "A History of Spiritual Services for Military Personnel." It is a concise paper of the early beginnings of the *Spiritual Welfare Commission, Evangelical Lutheran Joint Synod of Wisconsin and other States, for Men in Military Service*. The purpose, key-activities, growth, and brief biographical information on all of the pastors, who served the military from the early 1900s through 1982, will be found in this paper.

One observation that I made, throughout my contact with Pastor Renz, is that no matter what period of his life he is commenting on, he always praised God. Wherever he lived and regardless of those he was serving, he spoke positively about his experiences. The next page will outline the information on the tape, and the final pages are the history of the Civilian Chaplains.



Let's start with some of your biographical background:

1. Your date of birth and place -- Pastor who baptized & church
2. Your family -- Father and Mother
3. Your siblings -- brother and sister
4. Your schooling -- grade school, high school, college
5. Your marriage --

Let's continue with your work as a Pastor:

6. What was your first assignment from the Seminary?
7. Could you describe your work in what is now the South Atlantic District?
8. Who were the other pastors and their calls?
9. The European Civilian Chaplaincy was your next call - how did it get started?
10. What were your duties like during those ten years?

Let's look at some major changes during your lifetime:

11. Could you give me some background into the WI/MO split?
12. What warnings may you have for the WELS, to avoid the same problems?
13. Please comment on the current school system.
14. Do you see any possible positives/negatives to the current Seminary curriculum?
15. Finally, I know you have just a couple of stories you would like to record.



A HISTORY  
of  
SPIRITUAL SERVICES  
for  
MILITARY PERSONNEL





# A HISTORY OF WELS SPIRITUAL SERVICES

## FOR

## MILITARY PERSONNEL

**STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**      The continuing purpose of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, as a gathering of Christians, is to serve all people in God's world with the Gospel of Jesus Christ on the basis of the Holy Scriptures.

Sharing the Gospel with all people serves as the Synod's primary objective and among the Synod's stated policies which refer to this primary objective we find, "It is the WELS policy: To establish and maintain a ministry to members in the armed services."

The Synod serves its members in the armed services through its Special Ministries Board whose stated purpose is "To assist the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod and its churches and agencies in meeting the special spiritual needs of those who cannot be served with the Gospel of Jesus Christ through the regular programs of our churches and schools."

The Special Ministries Board has appointed a Military Services Committee. The objective of the Military Services Committee is "To share the Gospel of Jesus Christ with God's people who are serving in the military."

In order to carry out its objectives, the MSC has established as its Guiding Policies:

1. To call civilian chaplains to serve military personnel where a concentration of WELS members warrants a full-time chaplain.
2. To appoint contact pastors wherever possible when such a need becomes evident.
3. To develop and provide a mailing program of spiritual literature for military personnel
4. To review regularly contact pastors' reports and make recommendations when necessary.
5. To plan and conduct contact pastors' institutes.
6. To visit areas to be served when such a visit becomes necessary for the purpose of evaluation.
7. To meet with WLS graduates and meet with those who may be appointed as contact pastors and orient them to the work of a camp pastor.
8. To provide materials for those men from the field who are appointed as contact pastors which will help orient them to the work of a contact pastor.
9. To submit regular reports of its activities to the Special Ministries Board.

**EARLY YEARS**      The Synod's work among and for military personnel actually began long before it established the present Special Ministries Board. Even though we had no formal ministry to the military our pastors in certain areas were called upon to serve as camp or contact pastors. For example, a pastor, Paul Brockman of Waukesha, Wisconsin served as a camp pastor at Fort Douglas in Utah for some five years at the TURN OF THE CENTURY.

During WORLD WAR I there was complete cooperation among the members of the Synodical Conference in providing for the spiritual needs of our young men serving in the military. An Army and Navy Board was established to plan and organize a system to provide religious materials, camp pastors, and other services for our people in the military at home and on foreign soil. By mutual agreement the Wisconsin Synod was to pay one-fifth of the costs assigned to the members of the Synodical Conference for these services. More than 80,000 hymnals and prayer books were distributed, plus 12,000 New Testaments, 425,000 sermons, and 260,000 tracts. A "Soldier's and Sailor's Bulletin" was issued in 30,000 copies per month.

During the two decades between the World Wars a gradual growing apart between the Wisconsin and Missouri Synods became more and more evident. A difference in doctrine brought about the cleavage.

To maintain our conservative position as a Synod we realized that we would soon have to provide our own religious materials and our own religious services for the members of our Synod.

PRE WORLD WAR II      The writer of an editorial in a 1940 issue of The Northwestern Lutheran expressed the Synod's concern at that time for the men in the military by posing a question: "What about the spiritual care of men who have been or will be called to the colors to receive military training at one of our numerous training camps?"

The following paragraph of the editorial began with the statement: "This, of course, is definite: Our Synod will care for the spiritual needs of all our men in the training camps of the land wherever they may be located." This has been and continues to be the desire of the Synod, namely, to minister to the spiritual needs of our members who for various reasons are away from their home congregations for an extended period of time.

The following notice appeared in another issue of The Northwestern Lutheran in the year 1940: "Spiritual Care for our Young Men in the Service." Our general mission board is preparing to make provision for the spiritual care of our young men who have enlisted in the army or navy or who will be drafted in the future. A committee has been elected to take charge of this work. On account of conditions no definite plans have been made, but the Board herewith asks all pastors to report the names of such young men to Rev. M. J. Wehausen, Minnesota, stating:

1. Name and home address
2. Name of home church and pastor
3. Location of camp, post or ship to which he has been assigned.

President John Brenner."

SPIRITUAL WELFARE COMMISSION      On January 30, 1941, the "Spiritual Welfare Commission, Ev. Lutheran Joint Synod of Wisconsin and other States, for Men in Military Service" was formed at a meeting in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

The executive committee of the Spiritual Welfare Commission met on February 20, 1941, to study plans for the development of its work. It was evident that the need for our men to serve in the military was here to stay and that it would be necessary to provide for the spiritual care of these members while they were serving in the military. The following suggestions were submitted to the constituency of the Synod:



1. Do not grow impatient and follow your own course, but maintain close contact between your church and its own members.
2. Send the names and addresses of all your members in training to the commission of your Synod. No matter what arrangements will be made as to providing spiritual care in the various camps, your commission should, in view of the fact that this is a permanent part of our Synod's work, have a complete list of all the men from our congregations.
3. Ask your members to begin at once to increase their contributions for missions liberally, for this work will be supported from our mission funds. We want to do this work to the best of our ability, but our missions must not suffer.
4. Ask your church to send The Northwestern Lutheran to its members.

The members of the SWC realized from the very beginning that their task was enormous in scope. The commission sought to establish policies true to our confessions while striving to be practical and effective in serving our members in the military.

A bureau of records was established consisting of an alphabetical file of the men in the service and a file of the men according to camps and bases. In 1941 the file listed 113 different camps and bases including those who were serving on ships at sea. A plea was sent to all pastors that all names and changes of address be forwarded immediately to the SWC. Pastors were urged to submit the subscription price of \$1.00 for The Northwestern Lutheran for the men in the service. Arrangements were made for pertinent articles to appear in The Northwestern Lutheran. Steps were taken for the publication of suitable literature for distribution to the men in the service. Meetings were held with the Army-Navy Board of the Missouri Synod in order to avoid, as far as possible, duplication of cost and work. Efforts were made to secure the names of pastors at or near all camps and bases to whom the names of the men on file could be forwarded. The commission planned to restudy the "chaplaincy question" and present its findings at the Synodical Convention at Saginaw, Michigan in August, 1941. The home church and pastor were urged to keep in regular communication with their men in service. Such contact means a great deal to the men away from home.

Our government, in peace and war, does everything possible to take care of the physical well-being of our men in the service of their country. As members of the church, there is another matter that should be of the greatest concern to us, and that is the spiritual welfare of our servicemen. We want our members to be loyal citizens and good soldiers, but we also pray that they remain faithful Christians and loyal soldiers of the Cross. For after all, it is the loyal Christian who is the best citizen. Such thoughts were expressed in issues of The Northwestern Lutheran in 1941. The members of our congregations were urged to keep in touch with our people in the service of our country in every possible way. Such strength and encouragement are also very much in order in our day and age. We do well to remember: We are our brothers' keepers.

WORLD WAR II      In May of 1941 more than 1,000 names of servicemen were on file with the SWC. They were scattered throughout our country in some 175 camps and bases. The greatest concentration of our Wisconsin Synod men was in Louisiana (about 400) and California (about 200). Steps were taken to send pastors to such camp communities where we had a larger concentration of our members.

Many letters of appreciation for the mailing program of the SWC were received by Pastor E. R. Blakewell, the executive secretary of the commission. The following are quotes from several of the letters:

USS Texas, Newport, R.I.: Dear Sirs, I received your letter and booklet "Life Everlasting" in which I found much joy and comfort as I was on a sick bed at Easter time - - thanking you for your kind attention to me, I am  
Yours Truly,

Fort Sheridan, Illinois: Dear Sir: Received your letter and devotional booklet, Thanks a lot and would gladly hear from you again. Sincerely,

Fort Leavenworth, Kansas: Dear Sir: I think it is a splendid idea for the church to keep in contact with its members in the armed forces. I know I appreciate it. I remain a fellow church member.

Later in the year 1941 the list of names on file with the SWC grew to 1,512.

The following resolutions were adopted at our Synod Convention in Saginaw:

The SWC was instructed to continue to provide spiritual care:

1. By a continuous communication
  - a) through their local pastor and congregation
  - b) through the office of the executive secretary.
2. By sending pastors where feasible to camps and bases where larger groups of men from our circles are stationed.
3. By directing our men to pastors near the camps wherever this is possible.

Communion Identification Cards were made available to our servicemen. SWC offering envelopes were made available to the members of our Synod

Pastor A. Sydow of Tacoma, Washington, conducted Lutheran Services every Thursday evening at Fort Lewis.

The number of servicemen on file increased to over 2,000 names. Form cards were made available to our congregations so the SWC records could be kept up to date. There were four categories: Registration, change of address, notice of discharge and communion identification.

**CAMP VISITATIONS** Early in 1942 Pastor E. R. Blakewell, Professors Schweppe and Kowalke visited a number of camps and bases in various states. These camp visitations were of an experimental nature to discover, if possible, ways and means of serving the men in service in a more personal way. From these findings the SWC hoped to establish whatever other policies of spiritual service could be inaugurated under the existing circumstances.

Professor Kowalke in an article in The Northwestern Lutheran urged a continual flow of mail to the men in the military from the home, from friends and from the church. A statement from General Wm. T. Sherman in his summary of lessons to be learned from the Civil War was quoted: "Lastly, mail facilities should be kept up with an army if possible, that officers and men may receive and send letters to their friends, thus maintaining the home influence of infinite assistance and discipline."

It was noted that the material sent out by the SWC cheers and comforts the men, gives them solid spiritual food which they need and want, and strengthens the bond which binds them to family and church. It acts as an anchor that serves well to keep them from drifting away from their church and their faith. The article also mentioned that the men in the camps have given ample testimony by word of mouth and by letter that they like this service and want it to continue.

In his article, "A Civilian Visits the Army Camps," Professor Kowalke pointed out that if one observes the camp rules and regulations, one can depend on uniform courtesy and helpfulness on the part of every person to whom one applies for help in locating a soldier. The writer also pointed out that mail that comes to the soldiers from their church is not treated like advertising matter. It is not mere wastebasket fodder, but is really read, appreciated, and passed on to others.

At the close of the year 1942 our Synod had 22 key pastors, men serving congregations in the vicinity of camps, naval stations and airfields. Thus they could personally minister to the spiritual needs of our servicemen.

Another SWC expansion step was taken August 18, 1942. The Rev. Erwin R. Scharf of Slinger, Wisconsin was called to serve Synod men stationed in the four large camps in the vicinity of Alexandria, Louisiana. The camps were: Beauregard, Livingston, Polk, and Claiborne. His responsibility also included Alexandria Air Base, North Camp Polk, and DeRidder Air Base. The pastor received a leave of absence for one year from his congregation. However, because of the large number of Wisconsin Synod men in the area, his tour of duty was extended to February, 1944.

**SWC OFFICE** Since early in 1941 the office of SWC was located at 1916 E. Thomas Avenue in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. This office had a staff of six full-time employees. When mailing time arrived, which was twice in every three week period, volunteer groups from the Milwaukee churches were called upon to help. The mailing list at this time contained the names and addresses of over 10,000 service personnel.

The following notice appeared in the February 7, 1943, edition of The Northwestern Lutheran: "Because of war department restrictions on mail for army personnel addressed to APO's overseas effective January 15, 1943, the mailing of The Northwestern Lutheran to APO addresses must be done by the Northwestern Publishing House." A copy of the war department order No. 19687 on mailing restrictions of periodicals was included with the notice. Then a list of instructions was given as to how the congregations were to proceed in carrying out the war department's order.

**LETTERS OF APPRECIATION** Three and one-half pages of excerpts from thank-you letters from servicemen were printed in the March 7, 1943, issue of The Northwestern Lutheran. Typical of the thousands of such letters received by the SWC is the following: "Thank you for your literature. It has given me a great deal of pleasure to read and reread it. It is a godsend to have an organization such as yours to look after us men in the service of our country, and more so in the service of our Lord. I am sure you are interested in the whereabouts of many of our men. I am permitted to state that at present I am stationed at the Solomon Islands. This is all I can say or tell you about. But I can truthfully say that our Savior Jesus Christ has been and is with us all and has not forsaken us - - -."

**WOMEN IN THE SERVICE** The October 31, 1943, issue of The Northwestern Lutheran was the first issue which mentioned the fact that women

from our congregations were now also serving in the military. An article entitled News and Notes stated that the SWC does send literature to all army and navy nurses, WACS, WAVES, SPARS and other members of the women's auxiliary military branches of the armed forces. Also included in the mailing program were members of the Synod who had temporarily left their home community to engage in defense work in areas not served by Synodical Conference Lutheran churches. Pastors were requested to send the names of all such persons to the SWC office.

At this time the SWC files contained the names of more than 15,000 men and women of our Synod who were serving in the military. As time went on greater demands were made on Pastor Blakewell's time and energy because of the increased work program of the SWC. It became apparent that the time had arrived for the appointment of a full-time executive secretary. At the beginning of the year 1944, Rev. John Raabe of Shickley, Nebraska, began to serve as the executive secretary of the SWC. All correspondence was to be directed to the newly established office of the SWC at 2020 East North Avenue, Milwaukee 2, Wisconsin.

After the outbreak of WW II several large concentrations of our men were found throughout our country. As many as four to five hundred of our people were located in a single area. Such concentrations provided splendid opportunities for contact work. By March of 1944 the picture had changed dramatically. There were only a handful of military establishments in our country which contained as many as 100 of our service personnel. Of the 17,000 men and women on file, some 9,000 were located in our country. However, those 9,000 were spread out over 1,000 different areas. There was a similar situation overseas. In spite of these difficulties the assignments were faithfully carried out by the various contact pastors.

**PRISONERS OF WAR** It was reported that through the cooperation of the International Red Cross the SWC was able to send our Christian literature to our American prisoners of war. To show that the mail does go through a copy of a thank-you note from a prisoner of war was sent August 7, 1944 for the readers of The Northwestern Lutheran. (See Appendix A)

**THE WOUNDED** Materials were also sent to our wounded, hospitalized. Requests for our literature from the unchurched and other religious denominations were also honored. The SWC files contained the locations of all the government hospitals, veterans' administrations, facilities and homes in the various camps, bases and cities, both here and overseas. It was reported that as of July, 1944, more than 800 of our men were confined in hospitals. Special literature was sent to them on a weekly basis. Pastors and congregations were continually urged to keep the mailing program current by immediately reporting any changes in the addresses of their members.

**EXECUTIVE CHAIRMAN** At a special meeting of the SWC held at Northwestern College, Watertown, Wisconsin, June 11, 1944, Rev. E. R. Blakewell, pastor of Salem Ev. Lutheran congregation of Milwaukee was formally called as executive chairman and director of said commission. At that point in time we had over 20,000 men and women in the service of our country. In the middle of the year 1945 the SWC was moved to 2401 N. Maryland Avenue in Milwaukee.

**CONTACT PASTOR** Pastor Frederic Gilbert's first association with the military took place while he was pastor of St. Paul's Church of Hustler, Wisconsin. During the summer encampment periods of 1939 and 1940 soldiers from the Wisconsin National Guard appeared at his church services. This resulted in regularly scheduled WELS services at Camp Douglas in the summer months of 1941

through 1944. Pastor Gilbert accepted the call to serve the military establishment in the Tomah area from 1942-1944. Pastor Gilbert also conducted Lutheran services for German prisoners of war at Camp McCoy. On September 1, 1944, the LSWC asked him to serve our WELS members at the U.S. naval base at Camp Farragut, Idaho. In November 1944 he returned to his congregation in Wisconsin. During this time Rev. Arthur Berg of Sparta, Wisconsin, was called to temporarily serve at Camp McCoy.

**STATISTICS** In the summer of 1945 statistics showed that 364 of our members were listed as "killed in action" or "died in service" and "missing in action" 151, prisoners of war, German 62, Japanese 8, honorably discharged from the military service 1,825, unlocatable 165, total number of names in our files 22,205. Letters and cards of appreciation to our office from servicemen 31,729, contributions for the SWC from servicemen \$2,540.15.

**WW II ENDS** With the conclusion of the war it was evident that the services of the SWC would still be needed. The Synod's sick and wounded numbered over 1,100. They were scattered throughout our land and in foreign lands in some 304 different hospitals and localities. They were receiving ministrations from 190 Synodical Conference pastors. Some WELS members remained in the service and many more would be drafted under the new selective service act as amended by the Congress. The executive secretary, Pastor J. Raabe, who was called during the war emergency, accepted a Call to Fond du Lac, Wisconsin.

**KOREA** During the Korean conflict the task of the SWC was again expanded. Again the plea was placed before our people that the names and addresses of those entering the military be sent to the SWC office as soon as possible. The new address of the commission now called (1950) The Lutheran Spiritual Welfare Commission was listed as 900 East Henry Clay St. in Milwaukee. Then because of increased activity, larger office operating quarters were needed. In September 1950 the office moved to the Northwestern Publishing House building. For various good reasons the mailing address at 900 E. Henry Clay St. was retained until April 1951 when the address changed to 3624 W. North Avenue.

As of January 1, 1951, we had about 2,000 men in uniform.

Again the commission found it necessary to call a full-time contact pastor. Pastor Luther Voss accepted the Call and began serving the Camp Rucker, Alabama, area on April 1, 1951. At that time about 200 Wisconsin Synod servicemen were stationed there. In addition a number of servicemen's families were living in the area.

By December 1951 about 4,000 servicemen were on the LSWC list to whom devotional literature was sent at regular intervals.

**SERVING OVERSEAS** The number of names on the LSWC mailing list in the late 50's remained fairly constant at about 3,500. In November of 1959 the commission began sharing office space with the Audio-Visual Aids Committee of the Synod on the first floor of the annex building.

In 1952 another major step was taken by our LSWC in an effort to make personal contact with as many of our people as possible with the Means of Grace. Pastor Fred Tiefel formerly of Spokane, Washington, accepted the Call to do exploratory work in the interest of our servicemen and women stationed in the Japan-Korea area. Under the direction of the General Mission Board he was also to investigate the possibility of opening new mission fields in these countries.

MILITARY SERVICES COMMITTEE For the sake of efficiency the LSWC divided itself into two committees in 1962. Pastor C. Krug became the chairman of the Military Services Committee. Other members of the committee were Rev. F. M. Brandt and Mr. D. Branch. Professor C. Frey became chairman of the Student Services Committee. Other committee members were Pastors Kleinhans and Schroeder. The office manager, Pastor W. Kleinke, was given a new title, administrative assistant. Mrs. Virginia Stolper who had served as part-time secretary since 1950, now became a full-time secretary in the office. Pastor Arnold Schroeder now served as chairman of the LSWC. The list of men in 1962 included a total of 3,000 men in the service. Of this number 1800 were stationed in the states. The planning of the MSC included the calling and placing of two full-time contact pastors, one in the Washington, D.C. area and the other in Texas. It was estimated that at least eight part-time pastors would also be needed to serve as contact pastors.

By 1963 24 contact pastors had accepted appointment by the LSWC and were at work.

In January 1963 the LSWC extended Calls to two men to serve as full-time contact pastors or "circuit riders." Both declined. Then Pastor Luther Voss accepted the Call to serve as a contact pastor in the Washington, D.C., area.

FUTURE PROGRAMS The following is a copy of the LSWC-MSC proposed program for the years 1965 to 1967:

#### LUTHERAN SPIRITUAL WELFARE COMMISSION PROGRAM - M.S.C.

1965 to 1967

Before the beginning of 1965 we hope to have reached the following goals:

- 1) Place a contact pastor in the Eastern area camps and bases.
- 2) Employ competent assistance in our office.
- 3) Intensify program to enlist full cooperation of pastors and congregational committees.
- 4) Study and reevaluate the latest service regulations re military ministry; advise Synod if indicated.
- 5) Establish the Synod as an "entity" in the Pentagon; file outline of our objective; define our policy.
- 6) Concentrate on a smoothly functioning contact pastor program; fix European and other foreign contacts.
- 7) Explore Southern area camps and bases.

#### 1965

- 1) Intensively publicize our program among the Synod's members.
- 2) Publish helps for contact pastors, monthly newsletter and monthly sermon to servicemen.

- 3) Establish uniform program and procedures.
- 4) After Easter conduct a conclave of contact pastors to exchange views; invite Seminary faculty representative and senior students.
- 5) Call full-time pastor to serve in Southern area.

### 1966

- 1) Have "servicemen's alumni" analyze our objectives, program and approach.
- 2) Set up contact program at every Army, Navy, Marine and Air Force school and hospital.
- 3) Conduct "school" for contact pastors with full-time contact pastors serving as faculty.

### 1967

- 1) Condition the Synod for full participation in the U.S. military ministry program, except for salarizing by government. (Mission opportunities.)
- 2) Seek permission for our full-time contact pastors to attend the U.S. Chaplain's School for required nonreligious briefing.
- 3) Continue our training school for contact pastors.
- 4) Establish full-time contacts in large V.A. hospitals and homes.
- 5) If required, secure clinical training for our pastors.

## CIVILIAN CHAPLAINS IN VIETNAM

CHAPLAIN LUTHER M. VOSS  
1965-1967

A major step was taken by the Synod when in December 1965 Rev. Luther M. Voss, pastor of Siloah Lutheran Church of Milwaukee, accepted the Call to become our first full-time civilian chaplain to serve our members in the military who were stationed overseas. Chaplain Voss arrived in Vietnam in time to conduct Christmas services for our military personnel stationed in that area. His home base and main area of activity was the huge and teeming city of Saigon. He made numerous trips to other places in Vietnam to contact WELS members. Locations such as Tan Son Nhut Air Base, Cholon Navy Compound, Cam Ran, Nha Trang, Cholon 17th Field Hospital, Dalat, and others soon became familiar territory to him.

While Pastor Voss saw in Vietnam he experienced a great deal of success in serving our personnel in their time of need. All involved in this ministry concluded: "Our method of ministering to our own people through our own civilian chaplains, without compromising our principles, is turning out to be workable and is attracting the interest and even the admiration of persons outside our circles who are concerned about constitutional guarantees of religious freedom, and about a wholesome separation of church and state.

Chaplain Voss returned to the states on August 30, 1967. He then served the spiritual needs of our military personnel on the Eastern seaboard of the U.S. until his retirement in 1970.

CHAPLAIN ERWIN SCHARF      In 1967 Professor Erwin Scharf of Watertown, Wisconsin,  
1967-1968                      accepted the Call to serve as our second civilian chaplain  
   in Vietnam. Our college in Watertown had just experienced  
the resignation of two veteran professors and for that reason Professor Scharf re-  
ceived only a six-month leave of absence from his duties as professor at Northwestern  
College.

As in the case of the other chaplains he made his headquarters in Saigon, Vietnam.  
With the aid of the military he flew all over the country even as far north as Da Nang.  
President Oscar Naumann had prepared credentials for him which impressed General  
Westmoreland to the extent that he was granted an ID card for his travels with the  
military. Thus he was able to bring the Word and the Sacrament even to our people  
in outlying areas.

Since Professor Scharf was scheduled to be back in the classroom for the second  
semester at NWC he returned to the states on February 1, 1968. On his return trip  
he was able to contact our servicemen in Thailand, Taiwan, and Hawaii. For Chaplain  
Scharf those were indeed busy, difficult, and dangerous months while he was overseas,  
but they were, as he himself commented, "Without a doubt, these were the most re-  
warding and gratifying months of my ministry."

CHAPLAIN FREDERIC GILBERT      In November 1967 Pastor Gilbert received the Call to  
1967-1968                      become our third civilian chaplain in Vietnam. Upon  
   his acceptance of the Call he received a six month  
leave of absence from his congregation in Wisconsin to relieve his predecessor who  
had been serving our men in that area for a similar period of time. He arrived on  
the scene in December 1967. He began to contact our people and established a regular  
schedule for our people with the same zeal as the chaplains who had preceded him.  
His ministry to our WELS people was suddenly interrupted by the TET Offensive which  
took place during the night of January 30, 1968. For his own physical protection he  
was placed under civilian arrest by our embassy officials. On February 17, 1968  
the U.S. government ordered him out of the country and provided him air transportation  
back to the states.

CHAPLAIN MELVIN SCHWARK      Pastor Melvin Schwark became the fourth civilian chaplain  
1968-1969                      to serve our members stationed in the Orient. He served  
   in this area from December 15, 1968, to November 20, 1969.  
Besides the regular Sunday morning service at 10:30 in Saigon, Chaplain Schwark con-  
ducted services at many other locations in Vietnam and in Thailand.

Since there was a lapse in the services of our chaplains to the military personnel  
in Vietnam prior to Chaplain Schwark's arrival he, in many respects, had to make a  
new beginning in establishing our program in that area of responsibility. He en-  
countered some difficulties, but with the assistance of key military personnel who  
were sympathetic to our cause, he was able to reestablish our program of serving  
the spiritual needs of WELS members in that theatre of the world. During his minis-  
try overseas he was able to make personal contact with 116 different young men from  
our Synod. Pastor Schwark, some years later in reflecting upon his services in  
Vietnam, stated: "I am happy that our program has improved since I was in Vietnam.  
I pray that the Lord will bless others the way he blessed me."

CHAPLAIN WALDEMAR HOYER      Our fifth civilian chaplain to serve in Vietnam was  
1969-1970                      Pastor Waldemar Hoyer of Rochester, Minnesota. He  
   arrived in Saigon in November 1969 and returned to the  
states in November 1970.



Chaplain Hoyer was able to obtain Invitational Travel Orders which permitted him to travel anywhere, anytime, in any military craft or vehicle. This permitted him, with relative ease, to contact our servicemen and women in Vietnam and Thailand. At one point in his overseas ministry he had the names and addresses of about 800 WELS members. He wrote letters to all of them inviting them to attend the communion services at various locations. He held regular monthly communion services at Long Binh, and Sunday morning services in Saigon. In addition vesper services were held in the French Reformed Cathedral in Saigon.

Many base commanders were impressed with our Synod's program of serving the spiritual needs of our people. Chaplain Hoyer stated that he received excellent cooperation from base chaplains and other officers in arranging for communion services and visits to the naval hospital ship and the Mac V Headquarters at Ton Sonhut Airport.

### SPECIAL MINISTRIES BOARD

In 1963 President Naumann in his report to the convention called attention to the need for a specialized ministry department. "We must take the initiative," he reported "and make it possible for our pastors called into this work (of specialized ministries) to consult with one another, to study their type of ministry, to establish definite policies and set forth clearly the Scriptural principles underlying this work." It was also stated that the responsibilities of the LSWC would be transferred to the new board for specialized ministries.

The Synod in its 1969 convention authorized the establishment of a Board for Specialized Ministries.

An organizational meeting of the Specialized Ministries Board was held on January 22, 1970.

The minutes of the Specialized Ministries Board of April 24, 1970 reveal the fact that the official title of the Board now is Special Ministries Board.

CHAPLAIN ROLAND EHLKE  
1970-1971

Pastor Roland Ehlke of Resurrection Lutheran Church in Milwaukee served as our sixth civilian chaplain in Vietnam from September 13, 1970 to September 1971. In reflecting upon his ministry to our WELS members in Vietnam, Pastor Ehlke remarked that ministering to a fatally wounded GI was unforgettable. Watching the soldier's eyes light up (he had no voice) with the using of some Bible gem like John 3:16 does not leave the memory. Several men who had served in Vietnam later the same year became members of Pastor Ehlke's church in Milwaukee. While he, as his predecessors, experienced some difficulties in getting to certain military bases, there was always the joy and satisfaction in meeting members of our churches and sharing with them the one thing needful.

In one of his reports Pastor Ehlke related the happy experience of meeting one of our servicemen who was faithfully witnessing for his Savior. This GI was in charge of a lounge at a base and in that capacity was eager to acquaint others with the Good News of God's salvation through His Son Jesus Christ. This soldier-witness, through Pastor Ehlke, requested the LSWC to send him a supply of Meditations so he could distribute them among his fellow soldiers. The request was gladly and quickly honored. This was truly mission work. It brought peace and joy to men who were daily facing temptation and death in a foreign land.

CHAPLAIN KARL J. OTTO  
1971-1972

On Sunday, July 18, 1971, Pastor Karl J. Otto was commissioned to serve as our seventh civilian chaplain in southern Asia. He, as the other pastors who served in Vietnam, was granted a year's leave of absence from his congregation. He arrived in Saigon on August 1, 1971, as a replacement for Chaplain Roland Ehke. Our chaplain in Vietnam conducted services in places such as the chapel of the 3rd Field Hospital in Saigon, the air force chapel at Tan Son Nhut, the army base at Long Binh and St. Christopher's French Reformed Church in Saigon.

At the halfway mark in his tour of duty in Vietnam Chaplain Otto expressed a prayer of thanksgiving to the Lord for His protection and for the wonderful opportunities He had given to speak His word and to offer His faith strengthening Sacrament. At the turn of the year he wrote in his New Year's letter: "After living in a war zone for five months and seeing its toll in many ways, we shall more fervently pray in this new year for peace for Vietnam."

As our military forces were being withdrawn from Vietnam the Special Ministries Board asked Pastor Otto to make an evaluation of the military situation in Europe. He arrived on European soil in May, 1972. He was able to contact many of our WELS members in Germany, England, Italy, Greece and Turkey. Because of the large number of WELS people both military personnel and civilians, it was resolved that a full-time civilian chaplaincy be established in Europe.

#### CIVILIAN CHAPLAINS IN EUROPE

CHAPLAIN E. C. RENZ  
1973-1982

The Call to serve as our first full-time civilian chaplain in Europe was extended to Pastor E. C. Renz who had been serving Mount Calvary Ev. Lutheran Congregation in Tampa, Florida. The commissioning service was held on March 18, 1973, at the Seminary chapel in Mequon, Wisconsin. On March 30, 1973, Pastor and Mrs. Renz arrived at the Frankfurt International Airport anxious to bring the Means of Grace to our members who for various reasons were residing in Europe.

U.S. MILITARY INSTALLATIONS VISITED

On Sunday, August 29, 1971, Pastor Clayton E. Krug was commissioned to serve as civilian chaplain at large in the continental United States. In addition to visiting the military camps and bases in the USA, Pastor Krug was given the assignment to evaluate the Synod's entire program of serving with the Word and Sacrament the many members of the Wisconsin Synod stationed in military environments.

In June of 1972 Pastor and Mrs. Clayton Krug returned to Wisconsin from a 10-month, 32,000-mile tour of military installations in the United States. They visited many members of our Synod who were in the armed forces, the local contact pastors of the Synod who ministered to their spiritual needs, and representatives of the U.S. military. On many Sundays Pastor Krug was invited to speak at a WELS or an ELS church.

In his report to the Special Ministries Board and to the Synod at large, Pastor Krug wanted to thank publicly the officers and men of the armed forces who met with them and helped them, as they so regularly helped our local contact pastors. The military chaplains were invariably cordial once they understood why they were there. Nevertheless, Pastor Krug concluded that the Synod's firm decision not to commission any of our pastors for the military chaplaincy taken at the outbreak of World War II was then, and remains an eminently correct, Scriptural, and necessary position.

That position, taken 30 years earlier, forced the Synod to try to find another way to take care of the spiritual needs of our people in the military. Experience has proven that our mailing program and the services of our contact pastors and our civilian chaplains remain the best way to serve the spiritual needs of our people who are away from their home congregations for an extended period of time.

An unsolicited word of praise for our concern for our people spoken by a post chaplain included the thought: "You (WELS) people and the Seventh Day Adventists, are the only ones who are doing anything for our young people in the service."

CHAPLAIN RENZ, CONTINUED      The major allied powers who stationed troops in West Germany and Berlin following WW II were the United States, England and France. In the beginning these troops were looked upon as an occupational force. As time went on our U.S. forces became an integral part of the NATO alliance and were then considered more in the nature of a protective force and an important part of our national defense program. Through the years the members of U.S. Military personnel in Europe has remained at about the 325,000 to 350,000 level. For obvious reasons we find that of this number about 220,000 are stationed in West Germany. Since the majority of our WELS people who live in Europe at a given time are in the military, it was obvious that our chaplain and his wife live in West Germany. Again, because of the concentration of the U.S. army installations in the Frankfurt, Wiesbaden, Heidelberg area, the natural conclusion was that the chaplain reside in the proximity of these installations. In addition our U.S. Air Force bases at Rhein Main, Ramstein, Hahn, Spangdahlem and Bitburg could readily be reached from the Mainz-Weisbaden area.

Military privileges on the bases, the use of military vehicles for travel, and the like were all governed by SOFA, the so called Status of Forces Agreement. The regulations contained in this agreement were established by the allied powers following WW II. This agreement granted very few privileges to our civilian chaplains. The privileges which had been granted to our civilian chaplains in Vietnam were non-existent in Europe.

Since he could not obtain Invitational Travel Orders he had to provide for his own transportation from one base to another. It was established that the automobile would be the most practical means of transportation for our chaplain. The autobahns, especially in Germany which have no speed limits, except in restricted areas, make it possible to travel from one part of the country to another with relative ease.

With the cooperation of key military personnel he was gradually able to establish a schedule of communion services at our U.S. military chapels. When a chapel was not available the services would be held in a member's home, an office, conference room, or some other meeting place which was suitable to our needs. Whenever possible a fellowship hour was held following the service together with Bible Class and Sunday School.

Since military chapels usually have a full schedule of Sunday morning services, he found that 2:00 p.m. (1400 hrs.) was normally the most convenient time for the WELS worship services. Through the years we learned that this schedule proved to be especially advantageous to our people who traveled great distances by car or train to attend the services.

Through the years communion services were conducted at chapels in Frankfurt, Mannheim, Kaiserslautern, Wiesbaden, Wurzburg, Kitzingen, Nuernberg, Munich, Augsburg,

Stuttgart, Nellingen, Berlin and the air force chapels at Hahn, Spandahlem and Bitburg. In Italy the chapels at Vincenza and Aviano, and in England the chapels at Bentwaters, Woodbridge and Upper Heyford served the needs as he met with our people in these areas for the worship services. On several occasions he used the navy chapels at Roto, Spain, and in Iceland for the communion services in those areas.

Many private communion services were conducted on board ship for our people in the navy. Other military personnel or civilians received the Word and Sacrament privately whenever they were unable to attend the regularly scheduled communion services. Such services were especially welcomed by the people who were stationed at some remote base, site or military installation.

The majority of the baptisms were conducted during the regular services at the military chapels. Again, because of certain circumstances many baptisms were performed in the homes of the members. There were occasions when communion services and baptisms were held at the chaplain's home.

Instruction classes for children and adults were normally held at the home of the members. These classes were usually conducted on a one-to-one basis. This naturally involved a great deal of travel time on the part of the chaplain.

As new members arrived in Europe, the chaplain would immediately send them a welcome letter. The new members would be welcomed to the Church of Europe. On an attached form the new members could fill in information concerning their work schedule and other data which would be helpful to the chaplain in serving their spiritual needs. Invitations to the church services which included the date, time and place of the service would be sent to the members. The newsletters would keep the people informed as to the activities of the Church of Europe, new arrivals and they would contain a devotional study based on the Word of God.

In addition to the regularly scheduled services religious retreats were held for people overseas. Such retreats offered our people throughout Europe a welcome opportunity to gather in one place for Christian fellowship and spiritual growth.

In all the activities of the Church of Europe the chaplain's wife played a most important role as helpmeet, companion, secretary and in general supported her husband in all phases of his ministry. Many students, guests and visitors received a warm welcome at the chaplain's home as they received private communion, consulted with the chaplain, or stopped for a visit or a meal or overnight lodging. The chaplain's wife was also a welcome guest in the homes of the members.

Monthly reports were regularly sent to Mr. A. Woldt, executive secretary of the Special Ministries Board and to Mr. Richard Raabe, chairman of the Military Services Committee. In these reports the chaplain summarized his activities at the church services, communion attendance, baptisms, Sunday school and Bible class attendance, offerings and the fellowship hour following the church services. The chaplain reported on his instruction classes for the adults and children, his hospital calls and calls on new arrivals or delinquents. Quarterly and annual statistical reports were also submitted.

The civilian chaplaincy program has proven to be a tremendous blessing to our WELS people who are living overseas in Europe. Blessings of the Lord during the overseas ministry of Pastor E.C. Renz from 1973 to 1982 are reflected in the following statistics: Total number of baptisms 77, total number of confirmations 24, total number of guests at the Lord's Table 5,140.

CHAPLAIN CLAYTON KRUG  
1977-1978

From the very beginning of our civilian chaplaincy program in Europe the hope was expressed that through the years we could intensify our efforts in bringing the Means of Grace to our people in Europe. This hope became a reality when a second pastor was called to expand our work in Europe. On April 17, 1977, Pastor Krug was commissioned as our second civilian chaplain in Europe. The commissioning took place in Trinity Ev. Lutheran Church, Waukesha, Wisconsin, where Pastor Krug had served for 21 years. With the arrival of the second WELS chaplain on May 3, 1977, the areas of responsibility, especially in West Germany were divided between the two chaplains.

Southeastern Germany became Pastor Krug's area with Erlangen and Nuernberg in the center of his activities. He conducted services in Warzburg, Kitzingen, Augsburg and Stuttgart. The services in the city of West Berlin were shared by both chaplains. At the fifth WELS European Retreat at Easter 1978 the participants were welcomed by two WELS pastors. The retreat was held in Mittelheim, Germany, along the famous Rhein River. Both chaplains took part in the Good Friday and the Easter Sunday services. They shared in leading the discussions during the Bible Study hour on Saturday morning. In December 1978 Chaplain Krug accepted a Call to a stateside parish in Pennsylvania.

CHAPLAIN CHARLES SCHLEI  
1978-1981

Our third WELS pastor to accept the Call to serve the spiritual needs of our people in Europe was the Rev. Charles Schlei. The service of installation was held on Sunday, July 30, 1978, at Bethlehem Ev. Lutheran Church, Hortonville, Wisconsin, the congregation which Pastor Schlei had shepherded for 21 years. Chaplain and Mrs. Schlei were welcomed to Europe by Chaplain and Mrs. Renz on August 2, 1978. The Schlei's made their home in a little German village near Erlangen, West Germany. During his three year stay in Europe Chaplain Schlei shared the responsibilities involved in conducting the retreats for our members in Europe. In addition to the regular worship service schedule which had been established by his predecessor, he began conducting services at the military chapel in Munich. He conducted instruction classes for several children in his area of responsibility. In the summer of 1981 Chaplain Schlei accepted a Call to become an instructor at Manitowoc Lutheran High School in Manitowoc, Wisconsin. The Schlei's remained in Germany to the end of July 1981 which gave the Tollefson's an opportunity to become acquainted with their new field of labor.

CHAPLAIN DONALD TOLLEFSON  
July 23, 1981

In May of 1981 the Special Ministries Board, upon their request, received a candidate from the Seminary graduating class to serve as civilian chaplain in Europe. Many blessed events took place in rapid succession in the life of the young Seminary graduate. On Sunday, July 2, 1981, Donald Tollefson was commissioned as a civilian chaplain for the WELS. During the commissioning service at his home congregation in Vassar, Michigan, he was ordained into the holy ministry. On June 27, 1981, he was married to Deborah Hoeting of Springfield, Virginia. The Tollefson's were welcomed to Europe by Chaplain and Mrs. Renz on July 23, 1981. As in the case of his predecessors, he serves the spiritual needs of our members in the southeastern portion of West Germany. His area of responsibility includes Italy and the city of West Berlin.

CHAPLAIN RICHARD FROEHLICH  
January, 1982

The process of calling a pastor to replace Chaplain Renz, the senior chaplain in Europe, extended over a period of nearly two years. In November 1981 the Lord of the Church led Pastor Richard Froehlich of Denmark, Wisconsin, to accept the Call to become the senior chaplain in Europe. His arrival in Europe was delayed because of the death of his father. On January 14, 1982, the Church of Europe welcomed the Froehlich family to Germany. Chaplain and Mrs. Renz remained in Germany until January 25, 1982, in order to give ample time for the Froehlich's to become settled in their new home and to acquaint Chaplain Froehlich with his new schedule

of services and instruction classes for our people in the military and in civilian life.

**CIVILIAN CHAPLAINCY FUND** Contributions to the Civilian Chaplaincy Fund have increased over the years. In fiscal year 1981-82 a total of \$19,484 was contributed. Approximately one half of this amount is received from men and women who are served through the military services program. The remainder represents gifts from interested congregations, organizations and individuals.

This fund is used to provide automobiles and office equipment for full-time civilian chaplains. It is also used as a contingency fund for unforeseen emergencies.

**TODAY** As of September 1982 the Special Ministries Board, through its Military Services Committee:

1. Has called two full-time chaplains to minister to the spiritual needs of 648 WELS members in Europe.
2. Refers 2,202 military personnel to 107 WELS military contact pastors and congregations.
3. Refers 107 WELS military personnel in Asia to the nearest WELS world missionaries.
4. Sends ministry-by-mail literature consisting of Meditations, The North western Lutheran, seven seasonal devotions and upon request, worship services on cassette tape to 1,600 addresses of military personnel.
5. Attempts to provide a current number of 2,967 military personnel with spiritual services.

**SOURCES** The sources for gathering data for this historical record were:

1. Reports and Memorials - WELS, 1937-1981
2. Proceedings - WELS, 1937-1981
3. Reports to the Ten Districts - WELS, 1938-1982
4. The Northwestern Lutheran, 1940-1982
5. Minutes of the Spiritual Welfare Commission and The Lutheran Spiritual Welfare Commission, 1940-1969
6. Minutes of the Special Ministries Board, 1970-1982
7. Personal statements and reports from men who served as civilian chaplains and who were cited in this history.
8. Previous research compiled by the Rev. Clayton Krug.

**CREDITS** The research was done by the Rev. Edward C. Renz who for nine years served as a civilian chaplain for the WELS in Europe. This history was edited by Alfons L. Woldt, Executive Secretary of the Special Ministries Board. This project was authorized by the Military Services Committee, Mr. Richard Raabe, Chairman. The committee includes the Rev. Ernst F. Lehninger, Chairman of the Special Ministries Board, and Mr. Alfons L. Woldt.

(APPENDIX B)

PASTOR CALLED

PLACE SERVED

DATE OF SERVICE

CAMP PASTORS

Pastor Paul Brockman	Fort Douglas, Utah	Turn of the Century
Pastor A. Sydow	Fort Lewis, Washington	1941
Pastor Erwin R. Scharf	Camp Beauregard, Livingston, Polk, Claiborne, Alexandria AFB, North Camp Polk and De-Ridder Air Base in the vicinity of Alexandria, Louisiana	Aug. 1942 to Feb. 1944
Pastor Frederic Gilbert	Camp McCoy, Wisconsin, Air Force Tech. Tng. Command, Tomah, Wis, Camp Douglas, Wis. Camp Farragut, Idaho	1941-1944 Sept.-Nov. 1944
Pastor Walter Amacher	San Diego, Calif.	1944
Pastor Luther Voss	Camp Rucker, Alabama	April 1951
Pastor Fred Tiefel	Japan, Korea	1952
Pastor Luther Voss	Washington D.C. area	Jan. 1963

WELS CIVILIAN CHAPLAINS

Pastor Luther M. Voss	Vietnam - Thailand	Dec. 1965-Aug. 30, 1967
Professor Erwin Scharf	Vietnam - Thailand	July 31, 1967-Feb. 1, 1968
Pastor Frederic Gilbert	Vietnam - Thailand	Dec. 1967-Feb. 17, 1968
Pastor Melvin A. Schwark	Vietnam - Thailand	Dec. 15, 1968-Nov. 20, 1969
Pastor Waldemar Hoyer	Vietnam - Thailand	Nov. 1969 - Nov. 1970
Pastor Roland Ehlke	Vietnam - Thailand	Sept. 13, 1970-Sept. 1971
Pastor Karl J. Otto	Vietnam - Thailand Exploratory - Europe	Aug. 1, 1971-Apr. 20, 1972 May 1972-July, 1972
Pastor Edward C. Renz	Europe	Mar. 30, 1973-Jan. 27, 1982
Pastor Clayton C. Krug	Europe	May 3, 1977-Aug. 7, 1978
Pastor Charles A. Schlei	Europe	Aug. 2, 1978-July 28, 1981
Pastor Donald Tollefson	Europe	July 23, 1981
Pastor Richard Froehlich	Europe	January 14, 1982



# SPIRITUAL WELFARE COMMISSION

EV. LUTHERAN JOINT SYNOD OF WISCONSIN AND OTHER STATES  
FOR MEN AND WOMEN IN MILITARY SERVICE



## FROM A PRISON CAMP IN GERMANY

—"the mail goes through"



<b>AIR MAIL</b> Kriegsgelangenenenpost		
STALAG II B Postkarte <b>20</b> Ab <b>Pur Avion</b>		
GEPFURF SPIRITUAL WELFARE COMMISSION Gebührenreißel		MILWAUKEE, 2 WisCONSIN 2020 E. NORTH AVE. U.S. of AMERICA
Absenden Vor- und Zuname: DONALD HART		
ILINO Lagerstättennummer: 18152		
Lager-Bereichung: M.-Stammplatz II B		
Hilfs-Kommando-Nr.: 1633 Deutschland (Allernagel)		

Kriegsgelangenenenlager	Datum: August 7, 1944
<p>I have been receiving your booklets regularly, &amp; I, together with my fellow comrades, wish to thank very much for all appreciate them greatly, &amp; to insure our future re-shipment kindly address them to my new address on reverse side of card. Sincerely, John Doe</p>	

The above facsimile is self explanatory. "The mail goes through" is not just a catchy phrase. The U. S. Postal Service is rendering remarkable service to our cause. For four years it has consistently maintained better than 98 per cent delivery of our material. The following letter from the opposite side of the world is further evidence that "the mail goes through."

Southwest Pacific

Dear Friends:

In appreciation and to help carry on your great work I am enclosing \$5.00. While I have been overseas in many parts of the Pacific I received and appreciated your religious readings very much. The sermons and things you send have been my only contact with my church.

Gratefully,

PASTORS ATTENTION — have you ordered your S. W. C. Information Bulletins and Offering envelopes? Sixty thousand bulletins already been distributed. There should be one in the home of every member of the Synod. And — why not an S. W. C. Mission Offering Sunday sometime this fall? A card to our office will bring to you by return mail, Information Bulletins, Offering Envelopes and Sample Literature for distribution.

The response from the hospitalized servicemen to our special literature has been most gratifying and is an encouragement to further expand this work. Our files show a steady increase in the number of wounded and sick servicemen confined to hospitals. Wherever possible personal pastoral contact is also provided. Whenever an address or change of address is for such hospitalized, kindly note same across the card expedites our service to them.

Hospital

Dear Sirs:

I wish to thank you for the literature and pamphlets and etc., which I have received from you all the time I was in service overseas. I am now in the hospital and awaiting discharge. I so far have always read the things which I have received from you and I have found great comfort by reading them. I am sending \$5.00 so that you can send out more of your good work all over the world.

A Friend,

The S. W. C. appreciates the continued cooperation of pastors and congregations in keeping us informed of address changes. However, please that individual changes be sent immediately rather than an accumulation at intervals.

E. R. B.



Authorized by:

The Military Services Committee,  
a subcommittee of the  
Special Ministries Board  
3512 West North Ave.  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53208

October 1982

