

Five Church of God Army Chaplains Promoted to Major

Last week marked a first for the **Church of God** Chaplaincy in Cleveland, Tenn.

Five Church of God **Army chaplains** were selected for promotion to the rank of Major. The announcement came last Thursday morning when the Army released the 2013 Chaplain Major Promotion Board results.

The five chaplains were among the 96 Chaplain Captains who were competing for the 57 available Major slots. Though only 59 percent of the captains considered were selected, all five of the Church of God chaplains made the list.

In the Army, selection for promotion is not based on religious affiliation, but on individual performance and overall potential for future success. This is the first time five Church of God military chaplains have been considered by the same promotion board, and it is a significant event for all five to be selected.

The five chaplains, Neal Durham, Bill Martin, Jeff Roberson, Dasha Somaratna, and Barron Wester, are representative of the outstanding clergy the Church of God provides to serve as pastors-in-uniform to the men, women and families in the military community.

These chaplains have served at the rank of Captain for the past eight years, during which time they have ministered at the battalion level, providing **pastoral care** to an average of 700 soldiers and their families on an ongoing basis. They have preached, counseled and encouraged the troops in combat and at home. The magnitude of this ministry is challenging and it

demands a high level of ministerial competency. These five were not only successful, they were selected among the best qualified of their peers to continue service at a higher rank.

The promotion to major will bring with it both increased responsibility and broader opportunities for ministry for these chaplains. All of them will have the responsibility to serve as a supervisory chaplain at the brigade level where they will supervise up to six subordinate chaplains offering religious support and pastoral care for up to 6,000 soldiers and their families.

Most of them will also be given the opportunity to attend one of a number of civilian and military schools for a year, as a fulltime student, to obtain advanced education in counseling, ethics, homiletics, resource management, world religion, and other specialties. Promotion to Major is a significant milestone in the career of a **military chaplain**. It is the norm for a chaplain to complete at least a 20-year career in the military once promoted to this rank.