



**PRESS RELEASE  
21ST THEATER SUSTAINMENT COMMAND**

---

Public Affairs Office, Unit # 23203, APO AE 09263  
Phone: DSN 484-8184 or Commercial in Germany: 49(0)631-413-8184

**FIRST IN SUPPORT**

For Immediate Release: # 2009-06-10-01

Contact:

Date: 10 June 2009

Lt. Col. Anna Friederich-Maggard  
Public Affairs Officer  
[anna.friederichmaggard@us.army.mil](mailto:anna.friederichmaggard@us.army.mil)  
Commercial: (0631) 413-8184  
DSN: (314) 484-8184

**21st TSC Chaplain's assistant selected as Army's only CSM in  
Chaplain Corps**

Story and photo by Angelika Lantz, 21st TSC Public Affairs

KAISERSLAUTERN, Germany – With the spotlight on her career and accomplishments, her first comments are not about herself but deal with a misconception about her chosen career field.

“For some reason, Soldiers believe that chaplain assistants are people who go to church a lot or who have gotten into some kind of trouble and therefore get assigned to work with the chaplain’s office. In truth, it’s an official military occupational specialty, and we go to school to be trained,” said Command Sgt. Maj. Marylena McCrimmon, the 21st Theater Sustainment Command’s senior chaplain assistant.

Actually, the MOS was established by General Order No. 253 at the War Department, Washington, D.C., Dec. 28, 1909, and celebrates its centennial this year. And, since June 8, when she was pinned with the rank of command sergeant major at a

ceremony on Panzer Kaserne here, McCrimmon is the highest ranking chaplain assistant in the Army.

In contrast to her modesty, the number of chaplain assistants present in addition to the military and civilian personnel from the 21st TSC reveal how well respected she is.

“The senior chaplain assistants from U.S. Army Europe in Heidelberg, from Southern European Task Force in Vicenza, Italy, and from Installation Management Commands across Europe are here to cheer her success. She is not only well respected, but also very well liked,” said Sgt. Maj. Pamela Neal, the senior chaplain assistant in Europe.

The pinning itself was a historic occasion. There is only one command sergeant major position in the Chaplain Corps, and McCrimmon, the second female to be promoted to that rank, is the first chaplain assistant to be pinned in Europe, Neal explained.

“I really wanted to show my support. Today is a great day for all of us. Command Sgt. Maj. McCrimmon has touched and influenced a lot of lives in a positive way. She has earned this position because she epitomizes what an NCO and a chaplain assistant should be,” said Master Sgt. Evelin Montealegre, the SETAF command chaplain’s noncommissioned officer in charge.

“No one would have traveled here if she didn’t have a place in our heart as well as our professional respect. She is my role model and represents everything a Soldier wants to be,” said Sgt. 1st Class John Alam, the NCOIC with the installation chaplain at U.S. Army Garrison Grafenwoehr and Vilseck.

Nonetheless, it's not what McCrimmon would have predicted for herself when she joined the Army 24 years ago. She grew up, attended school and graduated from college in St. Pauls, N.C., a small town of about 2,000 people.

"I wanted to move to a different place but wouldn't go without having a job lined up. I thought I would stay in the Army for four years, but ended up liking my job so much, the reenlistments just kept coming," McCrimmon said.

"When the recruiter asked what type of position I wanted, I didn't really know. I told him, 'I want one where I still will be able to go to church.'"

Yet, becoming a chaplain assistant is not quite that easy. Chaplain assistants attend a seven-week course on how to support the Army's religious ministry after going through basic combat training. In addition to basic prerequisites, like possessing a driver's license, typing skills and no convictions, there are some more specific requirements.

"We are required to uphold high moral standards, we must have the ability to support all religions and we cannot object to bearing arms," McCrimmon said.

This, of course, does not explain her success. McCrimmon is low key about it. "You lead by example; you don't just tell but show. Soldiers see you doing the right thing, they try to emulate you; they see you doing something bad, you lose all their respect," she said.

Besides, she is doing what she likes best. "I love to train and prepare Soldiers for their careers, and I love that I get to listen to them, that I can try to help them. I can't counsel, but I can be there for them – I can listen."

Neal, who has been friends with her since they joined the Army within a month of each other, has a different take. “Only the top performers make it to the level she has. She is in the top one percent of her MOS, which corresponds to her selection to sergeant major and later command sergeant major. She has reached all the benchmarks that guarantee success. She has been a drill sergeant, a first sergeant and an instructor.”

Col. Thomas MacGregor, the 21st TSC’s command chaplain, agrees.

“I have witnessed her consistent conduct both at First Army and at the 21st TSC. She came into the Army a little later than most recruits, but she quickly moved through the ranks due to her desire to do the hard tasks of training and leading Soldiers. Strength of character and a deep love for Soldiers and their Families have been the hallmarks of this outstanding NCO leader,” he said.

That love of training and leading Soldiers will serve her well in her new assignment as the command sergeant major of the U.S. Army Chaplains Center and School in Fort Jackson, S.C., where she will be in charge of overseeing the training programs.

#### CUTLINE:

Command Sgt. Maj. Marylena McCrimmon, the senior chaplain assistant at the 21st Theater Sustainment Command, receives a memento from Col. Sharon Duffy, the 21st TSC’s deputy commanding officer, during a ceremony on the parade field at Panzer Kaserne, June 8. McCrimmon will be assigned to the Army’s only command sergeant major position for the U.S. Army’s Chaplain Corps.