

# The Vintage Voice

Serving The Church Pension Fund's Family of Beneficiaries

■ May 2010

## Sharing in Christ's Service

*The Reverend Canon George I. Chassey*

What is it that makes retirement meaningful? Of course there are things that come to mind immediately, such as more free time to do those things that were not possible due to the time restraints of carrying out parish duties — travel, reading, pursuit of hobbies, to name a few. Still, the activities mentioned do not necessarily give meaning to a life of retirement. Boredom can set in. As we know, an ordained person retires from a particular set of duties, but not from being a deacon or priest. In retirement, there are numerous ways to continue in Christ's service.

I have been the Chaplain of the Ninth Air Force Association since it was formed in the 1980s for the purpose of maintaining the history and tradition of the accomplishments of the Ninth Air Force in North Africa, England, and Europe in World War II. During World War II, I served as a crew chief on a P-51 Mustang in the 353rd Fighter Squadron, 354th Fighter Group, part of the Ninth Air Force. From England, France, and Germany we fought the war through six military campaigns. I went to France by way of Omaha Beach on D+8: June 14, 1944, Flag Day. I was part of the initial cadre to establish the first fighter base a mile inland from Omaha Beach. The German lines were just a short mile from the end of the dirt runway from which our P-51 Mustang fighters took off carrying out our tactical mission — giving air support to General Patton's Third Army.

Every year, my wife Mary and I travel around the country to attend the Association's annual meeting, where I conduct a memorial service in remembrance of those Ninth Air Force veterans who died during the past year. During the year, I send condolence cards to the families of those who have died.

As we drove to a recent gathering in St. Louis of those who make up the "greatest generation," I realized how meaningful my years as Chaplain have been to me, particularly in retirement. Most meaningful are the responses from recipients of my condolence cards. Through telephone calls, letters, and personal conversations at the annual meeting, many have expressed their appreciation at their time of bereavement for the card and the message it contained. I have had, and continue to have, the opportunity, through the memorial service and the condolence cards, to share in Christ's service and bring the God of hope into the lives of those with whom I served in the war.

In my remarks at the St. Louis memorial service, I said, in part, “Freedom, liberty, and the worth and dignity of human life were the abiding purposes of those comrades we remember this day. They heard the call of duty, the call to rescue humanity from the clutches of evil, the call to uphold the highest ideals of humanity, the right to justice, freedom, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Now they have answered the final call, the call to the greater life of abiding peace in the arms of a loving God. We say to those we remember this day, ‘Go in peace. You have run the race with dignity. Receive now the Crown of Glory.’”

There are numerous opportunities in the community for one to share in Christ’s service. If retirement is getting boring or lacks fulfillment, there is a place for you to serve. Whether a priest or a bishop, first and foremost one is a deacon. At the Ordination of a Deacon, the bishop, after the laying on of hands, prays, “As your son came not to be served but to serve, may this deacon share in Christ’s service, and come to the unending glory of him who, with you and the Holy spirit, lives and reigns, one God, for ever and ever.” Amen.



Canon Chassey retired in 1989 as Canon to the Ordinary, Diocese of Upper South Carolina. In retirement, in addition to serving as Chaplain for the Ninth Air Force Association, he has served as the Director of Development for the South Carolina Episcopal Retirement Community at Still Hopes in West Columbia, S.C.; Consultant for Stewardship and Financial Development, St. Joseph Roman Catholic Church and School, Columbia, S.C.; Coordinator for Province IV, the Church Pension Group’s ministry to retired clergy and spouses. He is currently Chair of the diocese’s Committee on Property and Insurance. He lives with Mary, his wife of 67 years, at the Still Hopes Episcopal Retirement Community in West Columbia, S. C. They have two daughters, six grandchildren, and two great grandchildren. Their son was killed in an accident while serving in the United States Air Force.



We apologize for any confusion about the Travel Protection benefit cited in the March edition. This benefit is available *only* to members of the Medical Trust’s Comprehensive, Plus, or Premium Medicare Supplement plans. Third-party supplement plans such as Kaiser or Group Health, which are available in some geographic areas, do not qualify for this benefit. For more information or clarification about your health benefits, please call our Customer Engagement call center: (866) 273-4545.