

Prayer breakfast tradition continues

by Tina Miles
902nd MI Group

Following the traditions of our country's founding fathers in seeking spiritual guidance, the 902nd Military Intelligence Group held its annual Holiday Prayer Breakfast at the Club Meade, Fort Meade, Md., Dec. 3.

In his welcome message, Col. Michael D. Bisacre, commander, 902nd Military Intelligence Group, mentioned how relevant it is today, as it has been for years that Soldiers and civilians come together in search of divine guidance for their leaders.

Bisacre noted the history of prayer breakfast groups. In 1942, with the awesome responsibilities of leading a nation at war, members of the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives inaugurated the first prayer breakfast.

In 1953, members of the congressional prayer breakfast groups established with President Eisenhower the first Presidential Prayer Breakfast. Each year since then, the breakfast has brought together the president, members of his cabinet, the Supreme Court, Congress, the diplomatic corps, military leaders and leaders in the fields of business, labor, education and science from every state in the union.

More importantly, he reminded the audience of another reason for holding such an event. Just prior to the breakfast, Bisacre said he was approached by a mother who said her son had been recently redeployed to Iraq and asked that he be remembered in prayer.

"That is why we are here today," said Bisacre. "As thousands of Americans, just like

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photo by Tina Miles

Members of the U.S. Army Field Band Brass Quintet play during the 902nd MI Group prayer breakfast Dec. 3.



photo by Tina Miles

Sgt. Maj. Eric Seals, 902nd Military Intelligence Group, bows his head in prayer during the prayer breakfast.

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you, gather together for Christmas and Hanukah celebrations, remember those who are away.”

Chap. (Maj.) Ernest Vermont, 902nd MI Group, followed with an invocation. Then the U.S. Army Field Band Brass Quintet supplied holiday music. The festivities included a bountiful breakfast of eggs, meats, potatoes and a variety of pastries, coffee and juice.

The 902nd Military Intelligence Group was privileged to hear not only the words of guest speaker James O’Byron, a national defense and security consultant, but his powerful singing as he sang a song he had written. O’Byron, a retired Department of Defense employee at the Pentagon, also shared some personal memories, including his experiences Sept. 11, 2001, when the Pentagon was attacked.

“The event forever changed my life and I’m

sure the lives of nearly everyone who survived that day,” said O’Byron.

He went on to talk about his 37-year career with the Department of Defense, and having the privilege of serving in the Pentagon for seven different secretaries of defense, beginning with Casper Weinberger and retiring while working for Donald Rumsfeld.

“It has been quite a run with many opportunities to learn and serve this nation,” he said.

One of the experiences O’Byron used was that of his visit to a small summer camp for teens in New Hampshire a number of years ago. He told the story of how he noticed a shy, young boy sitting by himself near a chess-board. Soon the two played a game of chess when O’Byron realized the boy was much more skilled in the game than he was.

Endeavoring to change the rules a little, O’Byron suggested they remove the kings from the board and play again. The boy agreed and the new game continued almost normally for about 15 turns when it became obvious that the game was taking some unusual turns.

The boy inquired, “How do you know when you’ve won since the king isn’t on the board?” O’Byron responded with, “And how do you know that you’ve lost either?” They played a few more turns and decided to quit since there was no goal or object for the game.

As he concluded his speech, O’Byron paralleled that game to life, saying, “A lot of people are living without a king in their lives, no one that guides them and gives them hope and a goal.”

O’Byron was presented with a special appreciation citation and Group coin by Bisacre, and the Group Prayer Breakfast closed with a benediction.

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*James O’Byron,
national defense consultant and
prayer breakfast guest speaker*
