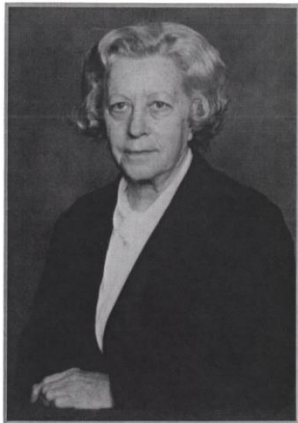


The First Army DRE

Army Directors of Religious Education celebrate Woman's History month by remembering a true pioneer, E. Bryan Johnson, the first Army DRE. Ms. Johnson was hired to work alongside Army Chaplains at Fort Bragg in 1948. She was born in 1913 in Clinton, NC. She received her B.A. from Flora Macdonald College (a women's college which became part of St. Andrews Presbyterian College in Laurinburg, NC) and a Masters in Religious Education from the Assembly Training School in Richmond in 1939 (which is now Union Theological Seminary & Presbyterian School of Christian Education). After graduating she worked in religious education ministry in Virginia and Texas. WWII led her to serve at the U.S. Naval Academy in the W.A.V.E.S. (Woman Appointed for Voluntary Emergency Service) for three years. After serving in the Navy, she continued her studies at the Duke Divinity School on the G.I. Bill. As a student at Duke, she was approached by a Presbyterian Army Chaplain from Fort Bragg in 1948 to consider working for the Army as a Director of Religious Education. She accepted and moved to Fort Bragg where she lived in barracks for single Department of Defense female employees. Eventually the Commanding General ordered them off post and she moved into a house with her sister who also worked at Fort Bragg. She went to work in the chapel every morning at 0730 and took Fridays off. Her Sundays were a long work day that she enjoyed. Ms. Johnson served as an Army DRE at Fort Bragg for 30 years until she retired in 1978. According to her sister, "Lucky" Johnson, E. Bryan was especially proud of conducting a two week summer Vacation Bible School with over 2,000 students that met in a row of 11 buildings and had 100's of volunteers. Those volunteers included two post generals. She also coordinated to have an Army Chaplain

in each age group. She was also proud of a protestant Sunday School that would have 2000 in attendance each week during the baby boom years. Ms. Johnson's innovative programming included an ESL class for foreign brides of servicemen to prepare them for their American citizenship exam. She truly supported the Chaplain Corps and strengthened Army families over the years. After retirement, she continued to serve as a Religious Educator in her at Graves Memorial Presbyterian Church in Clinton, NC. She passed away January 12, 1984 at the age of 71. Mrs. E. Bryan Johnson started the legacy of strong professional female Religious Educators that continue supporting U.S. Army Chaplains as Directors of Religious Education to this day.

Frank Leon, DRE, USAG Benelux



Frank Leon, DRE, USAG BENELUX