

Padre Chaim Mendelsohn a perfect fit

By Ms Ruthanne Urquhart

OTTAWA—Orthodox Rabbi Chaim Mendelsohn is the first Jewish padre to serve with the CF since the Second World War.

His age and his family provide him solid common ground with the CF personnel he'll be counseling – at 27, and the married father of two young children, the CF's newest padre is a perfect fit.

"I think so," Padre Mendelsohn says, laughing. "It's wonderful. I deal with the same issues as they do. When people turn to a rabbi, or a spiritual leader from any spiritual background, it's always the same challenge, and I hope being young and active in my community will make me a more effective spiritual guide for them. After meeting my unit and speaking to them as a group, I was able to listen and respond to them. It made me feel good, and it made me wish I could have the opportunity to do this full time. I admire these people so much."

Padre Mendelsohn will serve as chaplain, with the rank of captain, to 28 Field Ambulance, an Ottawa unit providing health support services to local members of the Reserve Force.

In civilian life, Rabbi Mendelsohn is the leader of Chabad of Centrepointe in Ottawa and Chabad's Canadian representative on Parliament Hill. While Judaism is what inspires him and directs his life, he joined the CF as a spiritual leader, a moral compass and an ethical guide for the CF personnel he will be working with.

"I'm not looking to bring them Judaism," he says, "but I am looking to bring an added richness to their lives. I'm looking to be there for them in their times of need. It will definitely be a challenge, but one I'm looking forward to."

While he acknowledges there are very few Jews serving in the Forces right now, Padre Mendelsohn feels that may change as a result of his decision to join the CF chaplaincy.

"In the 1940s, there were many Jewish chaplains because there were many Jewish soldiers," he says. "So when it was warranted, the military provided [Jewish chaplains]. I want to build a team of rabbis to serve all across Canada as chaplains. As rabbis join the military, I think there'll be more Jewish soldiers joining."

After meeting with his unit's higher-ranking officers, he was surprised by how much they care about their troops. And with assurances from the CF leadership that everything will be done to allow him to serve and observe as an Orthodox Jew, Padre Mendelsohn feels his addition to the Forces shows the CF is serious about welcoming people from every part of the Canadian fabric, and about being sensitive to their ethical, moral and religious needs.

"To have a chaplain representing the few [Jewish] soldiers," he says, "is something that expresses the sensitivity that the decision-makers in the military have for each and every soldier."

The padre's first weeks in have been hectic and exciting; being the first Jewish chaplain in more than 60 years has meant



MCPL JILL COOPER, CF SUPPORT UNIT (OTTAWA) PHOTO SERVICES.

Rabbi Chaim Mendelsohn signs on as the first Orthodox Rabbi to serve in the chaplaincy of the CF since the end of the Second World War. Col David Kettle, left, Director Pastoral Operations and Chancery Services, conducted Padre Mendelsohn's March 13 installation at the National Defence Medical Centre.

a lot of interviews and photographs. But now that the media hoopla has subsided, the padre is simply "...looking forward to having meaningful relationships with members of my unit for many years to come."

➤ Read "The Canadian Forces Chaplaincy" at www.forces.gc.ca/site/newsroom/view_news_e.asp?id=2081.

➤ Visit the CF Chaplain Branch at www.forces.gc.ca/hr/chapgen/engraph/home_e.asp.

➤ Visit Chabad of Centrepointe at www.chabadcentrepointe.com/.

With files from Ms Nathalie Lauzon, CMP comms advisor, and Mr. Andy Levy-Aizenkopf, The Canadian Jewish News. ♣

➤ ACCOMMODATION from page 2

- identify new roles and responsibilities; and
- supply clear and concise guidance/instructions regarding the management, administration and maintenance of Living Accommodations.

As a result, the DND Accommodation Board—co-chaired by Chief Military Personnel (CMP) and Assistant Deputy Minister (Infrastructure and Environment) [ADM(IE)], with Level 2 Environmental Command members—tasked Directorate Quality of Life (DQOL) to work collaboratively with the Living Accommodation Working Group to develop the guiding principals for the management of DND Living Accommodations.

"DND Living Accommodation" [Defence Administrative Orders and Directives (DAOD) 5024-0] and its companion document, Directorate Quality of Life's (DQOL's) "DND Living Accommodations Instructions" are a direct result of this collaborative effort. They present greater detailed guidance on the management, administration, maintenance and custodianship of DND Living Accommodations, and identify existing policy documents requiring cancellation, amendments, supersession and/or repeal. ♣

Military Families Fund

By Ms Stephanie Webster, CFPSA Media Relations Co-ordinator

General Rick Hillier, Chief of the Defence Staff (CDS), introduced the new CDS Military Families Fund April 2 in Ottawa.

Developed in recognition of the outpouring of support for CF personnel by Canadians, the CDS Military Families Fund is a "rapid response" means to providing assistance to military families. Within hours of being advised of the need, base commanders and Military Family Resource Centres throughout Canada will partner to help military families in their areas.

"When our families call out for help," Gen Hillier said, "we must be able to answer that call immediately and substantially. Our families have been here for us through our enrollment, our training, our deployments, and our homecomings. Military life places significant demands on our loved ones. They did not volunteer for service, but serve they do – and with great distinction. It is our turn to be there for our families."

The Canadian Forces Personnel Support Agency (CFPSA), the morale and welfare arm of the CF that provides programs and services for the wellbeing of the CF community, will administer the fund.

"Canadian military families are the strength behind the uniform," says CFPSA Director of Military Family Services Ms Celine Thompson, "and they demonstrate their resilience time and time again. When CF families reach out for help, we want to ensure they receive all of the support they need."

The fund will grow through contributions from private citizens and corporations. Contributions can be accepted by phone or mail, as well as through participation in fundraising events that will be announced later this year.

So, when you're staffing a CF booth at a trade show or boosting someone onto a Coyote at the fair or leading a ship's tour, and someone asks, "What can I do? What can my group do? How can my company help?," tell them they can:

- mail cheques or money orders, made out to "CFCF – CDS Military Families Fund", to [CDS Military Families Fund, c/o Canadian Forces](mailto:CDS.Military.Families.Fund@canadianforces.ca)

Personnel Support Agency, 4210 Labelle St., Ottawa ON, K1A 0K2 (please mention to potential contributors that they should not send cash);

- telephone 1-877-445-6444;
- contact Ms Stephanie Webster at Webster.SA@forces.gc.ca or at 613-996-6204; or
- go to www.cfpsa.com. ♣

"I QUIT!" winners

Here are the "March 1st I QUIT!" national winners:

Quit smoking

1st prize: **Sgt Peter Wallbridge**, CFB Wainwright, \$2500

2nd prize: **Cpl Bradley McMullen**, CFB Cold Lake, \$1000

3rd prize: **Pte Kevin Kearney**, CFB Borden, \$500

Non-smoking supporter

MCpl Patrick Mousseau, CFB Kingston, \$1000 ♣