

## **ABBREVIATED HISTORY OF PWOC**

*With the advent of dependents in the European commands in the early 1950's, women's organizations made their appearance in the chapels of USAREUR (US Army Europe). In 1952, the Nuremberg Post formed a group called "Protestant Women of the Chapel" becoming a forerunner of what would soon become PWOC-Europe. In 1955, CH Edwin Kirtley, USAREUR Chaplain, called for women in all chapels to form PWOC groups. He invited leaders of all women's groups in the European Theater chapels to a training and organizing conference in October 1955. One hundred and fifty women attended that conference and in those few short days, these women put together the basic organization that prevails today in PWOC.*

*In 1989, at the 34th Annual Leadership Training Conference in Germany, Chaplain Herbert M. Goetz, PWOC-Europe Navy Advisor, invited attendees who would be leaving Europe that summer to meet to discuss a "Vision of Connecting of PWOC". From that meeting, Chaplain Goetz and 11 women volunteered to organize the concept of developing "PWOC-America." They found that the desire to build a PWOC network among U.S. military chapel communities was very strong for the following reasons: to provide continuity of discipleship for those women who chose to worship in stateside chapels; to provide a strong, Christ-centered bridge between women in the U.S. and foreign U.S. military chapel communities; and to retain the momentum of faith building, prayer, evangelism, stewardship, teaching and community service nurtured in military chapel communities outside the states. On January 9, 1991 the establishment of PWOC-USA was unanimously endorsed during the 235th meeting of the Armed Forces Chaplains' Board in Washington DC.*

*In April of 2004, at the request of Army Chief of Chaplains (MG) David Hicks, ministry realignment committees were set up to examine how chapel auxiliaries (namely PWOC and its Catholic counterpart, MCCW) could be realigned to meet the challenges presented by the realignment of military forces world-wide. As a step toward the realignment, PWOC-USA and PWOC-Europe shared a 2005-2006 theme to celebrate PWOC's 50th Anniversary: "We are Workers Together for Christ." The women of the six regions that comprised PWOC-USA and the women of PWOC-Europe transitioned into one body on April 24, 2006, as PWOC Europe installed its first Regional President and the PWOC-USA board transitioned into service as the first international Board. "Unity to Let the World Know," from John 17:23 was selected as the first International theme for 2006-2007. Over 1000 women attended the first International Conference in Virginia Beach in October of 2006.*

*In December of 2012, the Army Chief of Chaplains reorganized all chapel auxiliaries, including PWOC, to operate solely at the local installation level under the authority of the local Chaplain. The PWOC International Board and all nine Regional boards (Europe, Korea, Japan, Northeast, Southeast, Central, West, Hawaii and Alaska) decentralized on February 28, 2013. At that time, over 130 local PWOC groups existed at U.S. military installations (Army, Air Force, Navy, Marines and Coast Guard) around the globe.*

*PWOC functions under the authority of the Chaplaincy. The ministry is designed to help Chaplains minister to women associated with the military, especially those who participate in a military chapel. This mission remains unchanged. We retain our proud history and focus. As we move forward, we honor our past and anticipate our future. Our God is faithful!*