



REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

3 December 2014

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

SUBJECT: Letter of Support for Chaplain (Captain) Joseph Lawhorn

1. I have known Chaplain Joe Lawhorn for close to two years. I have worked closely with him over the past ten months as a fellow staff officer, and I say without hesitation that he is the best battalion chaplain that I have known during my six years in the Army.
2. I was present during the Suicide Prevention Class in question. Throughout the briefing, he continuously mentioned secular ways of dealing with depression. He presented religious material only as a reflection of how he dealt with the event personally. Joe had even gone above and beyond for people who were uncomfortable with being counseled by a chaplain by scheduling a secular Military Family Life Consultant to be available on the day of the briefing.
3. I have seen Joe go out of his way at every professional development and training event to ensure that members of the Battalion who are associated with either no or differing religions felt comfortable during the presentation. He stresses that he uses faith to guide him through his daily life but does not push it upon others.
4. In my opinion, any effort to paint Chaplain Lawhorn in a negative light is either exaggeration or taken strongly out of context. I would not hesitate to serve with Joe again at any opportunity. The Army needs more caring, compassionate, and smart individuals like Chaplain Lawhorn.
5. I am available to speak on his behalf at any time at [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

04 December 2014

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

SUBJECT: Letter of Support for CH (CPT) Joseph W. Lawhorn

1. The purpose of this memorandum is to provide a letter of support for CH (CPT) Joseph W. Lawhorn, and speak to his character as an officer and chaplain.
2. I have known CH (CPT) Lawhorn since my arrival at the unit in March 2013. In addition to serving as a peer officer on the battalion's staff, he has also become a friend and respected colleague.
3. I am not going to speak to the class he gave on 20 November because I was not present due to other duty obligations; however, I will say that CH (CPT) Lawhorn is a respected and valued member of our battalion. He is always quick with a smile and a positive attitude.
4. As an agnostic myself, I have found that CH (CPT) Lawhorn is quite secular and inclusive of all people, regardless of their beliefs. He always seeks to do what is right, and what is best for the members of this battalion- he truly cares about those around him. I have found when he does reference religion, it is usually as a means to an end because it is what he is knowledgeable about and familiar with. Furthermore, he caveats his statements to ensure everyone knows that these religious references are his own personal beliefs.
5. I would definitely enjoy and benefit from the opportunity to serve with CH (CPT) Lawhorn again. I have seen many chaplains in the Army, but he is certainly the most passionate and caring that I have had the opportunity to work alongside.
6. Please feel free to contact me with additional questions at [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

4 December 2014

To whom it may concern, -

My name is [REDACTED], and I currently serve as the [REDACTED] [REDACTED], where I have served with Chaplain Joseph Lawhorn since July 2013.

Throughout this tenure of service together I have learned that Chaplain Lawhorn is a dedicated Chaplain whose primary concern is to help the Soldiers and Family members of [REDACTED] [REDACTED] manage their personnel and professional lives while dealing with crisis's of all types.

With Chaplain Lawhorn being a Christian Chaplain it is expected that he would probably share some of his Christian experiences as it relates to personal crisis during any voluntary meeting sessions with him. As it relates to me, who also am of the Christian faith, I have and will continue to consult Chaplain Lawhorn on many issues that I struggle with. He fills the role of my Pastor when I'm far-away from my current Pastor. So I understand what I'm getting when I seek his advice on certain matters, which is warranted from a man in his position and with his skill sets.

I have had the opportunity to interact with Chaplain Lawhorn on many occasions as he brings the Church to the Soldiers and family members of this organization, and there has not been a time where I have experienced him forcing his faith beliefs on anyone. I have always experienced him sharing how he got to where he is today, and what helps him maintain his sanctity during the crisis's he has endured in his lifetime.

The Soldiers, family members, and Ranger students appreciate the comfortable presence that Chaplain Lawhorn brings when he speaks to them. He doesn't bring the traditional aura of Chaplains/Preachers of past. His approach is always as a brother or friend, which really sets the atmosphere and gives the people around him the sense of trust and confidence to share their issues with him, and their issues not be maligned to the public.

I don't know what the code is to breaking the suicide/depression demons, that so easily beset our Soldiers, but I'm willing to listen to whoever has a personal story to share that helped them get through their particular crisis of life, no matter who the presenter is or the method that they used to defeat their crisis. I want to hear what worked for them, I want to visually see and hear them speak about what worked for them, and I choose to take what worked for them and apply it to my crisis or not.



REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY



4 December 2014

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

SUBJECT: LETTER OF SUPPORT FOR CPT JOSEPH LAWHORN

1. As the [REDACTED], I had the pleasure working with CPT Joseph Lawhorn for nearly two years. Due to the nature of our professions, we deal with many of the same issues within the unit. This has also provided me with countless interactions with Joe Lawhorn in both military and civilian settings. There is no doubt in my mind that he possesses the virtues, values, and ideals required of army officer of the highest caliber. I have closely observed his professionalism and dedication to mission accomplishment. Joe is strong, yet tactful and represents a person of excellent moral character. I can recall a specific event on 20 November 2014, when Joe Lawhorn gave the most impressive briefing on Suicide Prevention that I have seen or heard in almost 14 years of service. When dealing with the subject of suicide, Joe spoke eloquently, intelligently, and very passionately on the subject from past personal experiences. At absolutely no point did I feel that he was promoting himself as a religious leader or follower. Joe simply connected with the audience on a human level that in the future will probably save someone from making a poor decision to end their own life. The army and the world needs more Joe Lawhorn's.

2. The point of contact for this memorandum is the undersigned at [REDACTED]



04 DEC 14

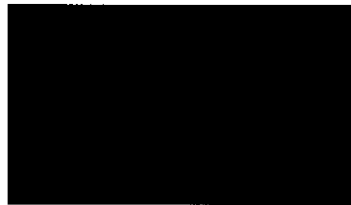
To whom it may concern:

Over the course of the time Chaplain Lawhorn has been here on [REDACTED], I have only known him to up hold the Ranger Creed in every way possible, he in my opinion has played a significant role in my career, life, and my personal beliefs. I want to address that his professionalism has stood out to me above the rest of the staff officers stationed here at CFM. He is a minister, ordained, and an expert at it to be quite honest. Furthermore, he is a direct reflection of his profession and his leadership. Let's take it into consideration that we may need more leaders like this, better yet, more leaders that exemplify the courage to stand up for their beliefs and how it helped them through the most pitiful time in their life. He would never force his religious beliefs onto anyone.

Chaplain Lawhorn's professionalism is what has; in my opinion, carried his career. It's one his best; of many, attributes as a leader here at [REDACTED]. I really couldn't imagine him hurting a fly, let alone another human being. Joe Lawhorn is a father to six children, he is a husband, and yet he is being judged for simply stating what got him through the lowest point he's ever experienced in his life. I personally would have no complaints if all Suicide Prevention classes were conducted in this matter. I support CPT Lawhorn's actions as a service member, minister, father, and friend. He upholds the Army Values in and out of the Army uniform every day.

Second, CPT Lawhorn is an ordained minister. He is completely in his right to share these things, whether it pertains to Suicide Prevention or if we have a group prayer meeting within our organization here at CFM. I have known Joe since he arrived here at CFM, I have gone to him many times when I felt that there was no one else to go to, and no, not just for religious purposes; mostly, to hangout and build morale. He is the epitome of an officer, he is an expert in his profession, but most off all Joe Lawhorn is hands down the best chaplain I have ever worked with in my nine and half years in the military.

Lastly, I believe that the leadership that CPT Joe Lawhorn exemplified that day was courageous, heart-felt, and of natural ability. I would also like to point out that this type of leadership, in my opinion, we have got away from. He represents and defines the word leader, and he truly is what I expect out of a leader and professional. Without a guy like this within our ranks it would be devastating, and at least the Army's loss.



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

[REDACTED]

of

4

FM FOR RECORD

ter of Support for CPT Joseph W. Lawhorn

[REDACTED] and CPT Lawhorn is currently my Battalion
letter to advise the reader of how I view CPT Lawhorn's character
If both on and off duty.

I have known CPT Lawhorn for about a year now and have spent time around
g many hours of volunteer marriage seminars. I have been in the
ed for 9 of those. Over those first 8 years, I had yet to attend any
urs or events held by a Chaplain from any of my previous units. I
I had with CPT Lawhorn, I noticed how well spoken and professio
im, I have attended two of his planned events with my wife, and f
so much that I even began promoting his events around work.

I see in CPT Lawhorn is his caring attitude. He has the capacity

To whom it may concern,

I am providing a Letter of Support for CPT Joseph W. Lawhorn, a consummate professional that constantly places the Soldiers of the [REDACTED] above his own wellbeing. In fourteen months of working with CPT Lawhorn, I have observed nothing less than a stellar performance from him in his capacity as a Chaplain and as a Staff Officer. He is without a doubt the finest Chaplain I have observed in over nine years of service and a true standard bearer for the Chaplain Corp. I have personally observed zero occasions where CPT Lawhorn forced his own or any religious belief or practice on Soldiers within the unit or students training. CPT Lawhorn's intentions and motivation are driven by his love for the Army and its Soldiers and families.





REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

[REDACTED]

5 December 2014

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

FROM: [REDACTED]

SUBJECT: Character Statement for CPT Lawhorn

1. My name is [REDACTED] and I have been a Ranger Instructor stationed with [REDACTED] since December 2013.
2. I have been informed that CPT(CH) Lawhorn was accused of abusing his authority during a battalion-level Suicide Prevention class by forcing his religious beliefs onto the entire battalion that attended the briefing.
3. The briefing was honestly the best suicide prevention class I have ever received because it was heartfelt, genuine, and attempted to show the audience that getting help for issues is not a sign of weakness. CPT(CH) Lawhorn referenced some Biblical quotes to illustrate one of the primary ways he dealt with his own personal issues, not to force religion onto the unit.
4. In conclusion, I do not believe that CPT Lawhorn used his position to force religion onto others and only intended to use his religious faith as an example of one way of many to deal with depression and help prevent suicide. CPT Lawhorn is the best chaplain I have served with and demonstrates his care of subordinates daily through his actions.

[REDACTED]

To the Investigating Officers,

In response to the "alleged" incident with our [REDACTED] chaplain. Chaplain Lawhorn is a complete professional. He supports all faiths, and I have never seen him force religious beliefs on anyone. What is evident is that he absolutely cares for the Soldiers here, and would do anything for them. It is unfortunate that someone in our organization wants to act in a toxic way, and look for opportunities to degrade the unit cohesion. There were verses from the bible on the handout. These were examples of what the Chaplain specifically used to find his own strength and hope in depression. He made this very clear, and everyone understood this. He also made it clear that everyone has to find their own anchor or hope if they are going through depression, whatever that may be. The Chaplain always gives everyone an opportunity to attend or not for anything pertaining to religion. His briefing was in regards to suicide prevention, and it was a put together with inspiration and quality. I completely support our Chaplain.

[REDACTED]

Two questions come to mind when I consider the roles of a Chaplain in the Army. First, what is the primary role of the chaplain within the organization in which he serves? Secondly, how does a United States Army Chaplain serving in a Ranger community relate with the members of the organization?

I have served in the military now for 13 years and have noticed many key roles and responsibilities that the chaplain must fulfill. Some of the more obvious are; having to counsel the soldiers within the organization through marital problems, substance abuse and sometimes to the extremes of possible suicide or domestic violence. In all these years I know one thing to be true. No one listens to the chaplain that does not have the ability to relate personally with the soldiers. Just as much as credibility is important for a Company Commander to have the respect of the Company, the chaplain's ability to relate to the individual's circumstances through firsthand experience is what makes a chaplain effective in fulfilling his mission to the United States Army.

A captive audience is not attained merely because of the position that the individual holds, but more so because of the credibility the speaker has with the audience. For example: at the start of our classes we had an LPD on the invasion of Panama and the events leading up to this invasion. At the end of this LPD we had the opportunity to hear one of [REDACTED] members on firsthand experience of this conflict. Someone who is a seasoned war veteran that knows the difficulties of the battalion just as much as he knows the hardships of war. Everyone listens intently as he describes the many days that he trained for some of the missions leading up to the capture of Manuel Noriega. Not because of his rank or position in the battalion, but because of his experience and his ability to relate with the soldiers within the unit. He has built a relationship with individuals at the camp and has set an example that is worthy of following. No agenda is pushed to any of the members in the organization nor is there any desire to do so. The desire is only to share his real life experiences with others that may one day have to face similar circumstances in war. They are truly lessons learned that are incredibly effective in captivating an audience just as much as it is essential for professional growth.

I don't believe that this is any different than the role of the chaplain within the organization. I also don't believe that Chaplain Lawhorn pushes his personal beliefs to those within the unit, and by no means has he ever used his rank to persuade others to listen to his words or to coerce them in any way. The only difference between the circumstances that Sergeant Major Connel (retired) spoke of compared to that of Chaplain Lawhorn's is that in one case it dealt with lessons learned in combat, while in the other hand Chaplain Lawhorn spoke about lessons learned through battling with depression and anxiety after deployment. During the course of the class there was little mention of faith and of the way he dealt with his depression firsthand. The purpose was to disprove any thoughts members had about the possible stigma that is consistently associated with depression and suicide. This class was not a lecture but more of a discussion that brought to light the reality of suffering with depression and how to be more empathetic to those that encounter this battle. The focus was not only the individuals possibly dealing with these problems but also the leaders that one day may be faced with helping a soldier seek the help needed to improve mission readiness.

I have had the privilege to serve in the battalion for nearly 4 years now and I have seen three Chaplains attempt to fulfill the great responsibility of increasing the moral of the men while maintaining unit readiness. I have had the privilege to serve with many more Chaplains in the 9 years at the [REDACTED]. In these years there is one simple truth. I have yet to see a chaplain that was capable of relating at such a personal level as Chaplain Lawhorn. Not because of his rank or position compared to the audience, but because he builds relationships with the individuals he speaks to with little and at times no mention of his faith. The questions of ifaith are brought by the people that wonder why he is the way that he is. Very rarely are these questions even asked in an open setting.

In order to truly be an effective instructor, you must have credibility with those you instruct. If that does not exist, you speak only to deaf ears. The Chaplain has found an incredible way to relate to individuals going through many hardships in their lives regardless of their faith and background. He has helped soldiers that share the same faith as well as helping those who do not. I know this to be true firsthand because for a few months I had the privilege to serve as the temporary chaplain assistant for the battalion. I spent many hours alongside Chaplain Lawhorn which allowed me to see how he related to Ranger students and cadre alike. He does it by simply making himself available for the ones who needed counsel. His professionalism and motivation naturally draws others to want to know more about his beliefs and faith, but it is never his agenda to coerce others to believe as he does. Many soldiers come and go from his office on a daily basis seeking counsel in their circumstances. A greater number exist among Ranger students when he simply walks among them on Mount Yonah. In either circumstance, the individual is refreshed and hopeful.

The Suicide Prevention class that was given by Chaplain Lawhorn aided in the understanding of depression and suicide among the ranks of all levels of the Army. It was not focused on one specific cause but on the overall responsibility that the Chaplain has at [REDACTED], which is, to ensure mission readiness. Not a personal agenda or to share his personal faith.

[REDACTED]



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

December 4, 2014

To Whom It May Concern

Sir/Ma'am,

I've served as Joe Lawhorn's company commander since my arrival to [REDACTED] in February of 2013. In that capacity and during that time, I've had the ability to observe, interact with, and evaluate Joe in countless situations on a daily basis as he balanced his duties as a battalion staff advisor, a pastoral leader, and an Army officer. Over the past 23 months, Joe has proven to be the best chaplain I've worked with in the Army because of how well he fulfills all three roles concurrently.

Beyond simply his professional obligations, Joe's utility to the battalion and his effectiveness with the Soldiers who comprise it emanates directly from his intrinsic and heartfelt desire to help people – to improve the personal health, morale, and fitness of everyone with whom he comes into contact in whatever way he can – regardless of beliefs.

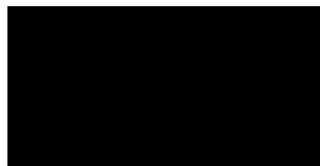
As a company commander, I have the utmost concern for the personal health, well-being, and welfare of all my Soldiers. During the past 23 months, whenever a Soldier in my charge has had a personal problem, I've sent him to Joe. Not because of the Soldier's beliefs or Joe's beliefs, but because there is no one else in the battalion more passionate about providing assistance to those who seek it and no one in the battalion has had more success at improving Soldier welfare.

During all my time working with Joe, I've never felt that he's intended to cross, blur, or compromise the demarcation between making religion accessible to those who desire it and forcing it on those who don't. I believe unequivocally that even the prospect of potentially disenfranchising the Soldiers he earnestly desires to serve, on religious grounds or any other, is a repugnant idea to Joe.

Joe's presentation regarding suicide prevention on November 20th concluded a series of presentations on various topics delivered to the battalion that day. Afterwards, I departed thinking that Joe demonstrated tremendous courage not only in identifying his problem but also in publically sharing his struggle and the path he chose to remedy it as a means of encouraging other Soldiers to seek help as they see fit.

I sincerely hope my Soldiers who are facing similar struggles follow Joe's example.

If I may be of further assistance, please contact me at [REDACTED]



To whom it may concern,

The suicide prevention brief presented by CPT (CH) Lawhorn, was an extremely professional brief. It was clear during his brief, that he has an extraordinary passion and dedication to the members of the [REDACTED]. He demonstrated this by opening his personal life to the audience and sharing his very private struggles in his own life, and the tool he used to get through it. The struggle he endured was clearly very personal and for him to share it with the entire Battalion, shows his felt responsibility for the welfare of the members of this Battalion. He also made it extremely clear that religion was his way of getting through his experience and that everyone needs to find their own source of strength to help navigate life obstacles.

I should state that I am not a religious person and yet, I did not feel that this was a religious briefing nor did I feel religious beliefs being pushed on me. If someone felt that the point of this briefing was about religion, they clearly missed the point. The point was that everyone, including CPT Lawhorn, goes through rough times and that you need to get help.

Very Respectfully,

[REDACTED]



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF

5 December 2012

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

SUBJECT: Letter of Character Reference, Chaplain Joseph Lawhorn

1. In over 14 years of service in the Army, I have never encountered or met a more involved and caring Chaplain. Chaplain Lawhorn's passion to help others, dedication to duty and overall devotion to see others succeed in times of hopelessness is unparalleled. Not only is he enthusiastic in his duties as a Chaplain with immeasurable knowledge of his craft and the human metric, he is also an outstanding leader.
2. In my own personal times of hardship and struggles to find hope, Chaplain Lawhorn was a beacon to guide me and a rock to lean on; providing me with the mentorship that I needed to push through tough times and regain my focus. Chaplain Lawhorn took it upon himself, knowing personally the struggles that I was going through, traveled over 3 hours to be with me and my family while my son was in the hospital battling a deadly illness. His guidance, tutelage and spiritual direction helped me through difficult times. Chaplain Lawhorn never once pushed his personal thoughts or beliefs on me; always first asking if he could share pieces of information or scripture with me that directly related to the situation and provided hope for the future.
3. In a time of uncertainty in our society and the military, Soldiers and families not knowing when or where the next battle might be coming from, Chaplain Lawhorn's presence, leadership, teachings and mentorship is exactly what we need. My words do not do him justice as to the true character and measure of a man he is. I hope to be able to continue to serve with Chaplain Lawhorn throughout my career in the Army. He is truly the epitome of a Leader, a Chaplain and a man of sound character and judgment.
4. POC for this memorandum is [REDACTED]

5 December 2014

To whom it may Concern:

I am writing to offer my support for Chaplain Joe Lawhorn. I was in attendance on 20 November 2014 when he gave his Suicide Prevention Talk. It was the absolute most engaging and practical Suicide Prevention class I have sat through in almost nine years in the Army. It was not the standard, dry, run of the mill Army Suicide prevention class that we hear every quarter that leaves you only wanting for it to be over with. Rather, it was a real Soldier, a real man being honest and vulnerable about his struggle with depression and simply sharing "his story." Chaplain Lawhorn should be commended for his honesty, vulnerability, and desire to help fellow Soldiers.

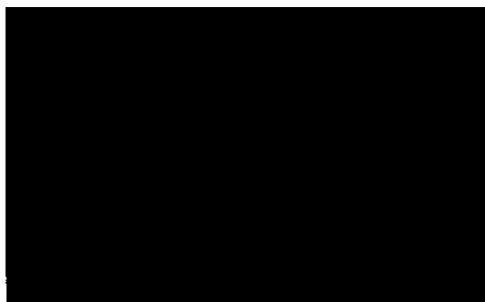
Yes, Chaplain Lawhorn used scripture and Biblical references to fill in the blanks of his story. Every time though, he clearly stated "this was simply my story" or this is "just what worked for me." Each time, he followed any Biblical reference with other options and philosophies that are available solutions for suicide prevention. Never once did Chaplain Lawhorn evoke or use the name Jesus. The only Biblical name he referenced was King David. However, scripture or a Biblical agenda was not the focal point of his class. The crux of his message was to get help and nothing more.

Military Association of Atheists and Freethinkers (MAAF) state on their website that:

"The chaplains Christian approach to suicide prevention would be 100% appropriate in the context of an 'opt-in' denomination Christian sermon, even if it were given by the chaplain on a military installation. Such an event would be clearly faith-based and optional. A mandatory official training event should not morph in Christian Church."

The Soldier who first alerted MAAF to Chaplain Lawhorn's class is actually one of my subordinates. Personally, I like this particular Soldier and have had much interaction with him. I have walked many patrols with him while serving together as Ranger Instructors. As recently as 03 December 2014 we walked together. Those patrols we walked together are neither 'opt-in' or optional. Those patrols are mandatory. Yet, more than once I have heard on those mandatory patrols while walking together, him express his atheistic views. During our most recent mandatory walk on 03 December 2014, he again expressed his atheistic views including the statement "Jesus essentially committed suicide."

I will refrain from explaining the irony of him using this platform or mandatory walk/patrol to express his atheistic views. I will though clearly defend the Soldier that it is his right to have such views and express them. The irony however that I will explain is that Chaplain Lawhorn never expressed his views. Rather, he told his story of depression with the caveat that "this" is just what worked for him. There is little difference in the two Soldier's having the right to certain views or to express them.



Character Reference for Joseph W. Lawhorn

4 December 2014

To whom it may concern,

I have known Joseph W. Lawhorn since 19 June 2014. In that time, I experienced daily interaction with him during official business, public settings, or engagements of a personal nature. I have 25 years of service in the U.S. Army, and he is by far the best Chaplain that I have had the opportunity to serve with. Chaplain Lawhorn has always presented an appearance of professional character, an attitude of caring, and the desire to help others in need.

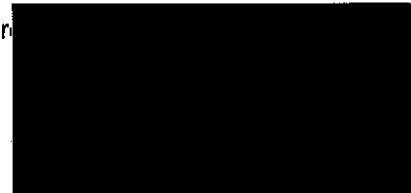
My first encounter with Chaplain Lawhorn exposed me to his professional character. He consistently maintains proper military appearance and bearing. During any leader professional development he led or was a recipient of, he presented an unbiased opinion and professional discussion. His references were relevant and beneficial for the entire group participating. As a staff officer, his potential is unlimited and he provided solutions to complex problems in the increasingly challenging environment that we operate in. Regardless of the task at hand, he pursued it with diligence and great effort in order to achieve the best results.

Chaplain Lawhorn is the epitome of what one would expect of a Chaplain. His caring attitude extends beyond just the uniform and what is within his duty description. He regularly provides the opportunity for Soldiers and family members to attend counseling at hours beyond the duty day and often at the expense of time he is able to spend with his own family. He frequently conducted the development of counseling for families, events such as Strong Bonds and marriage seminars, and also other events in support of Military priorities such as the Family Advocacy Program, ACE-S and ASSIST suicide prevention training. He planned, resourced, and led many of these events for all members of our organization regardless of sex, race, religion, or creed.

Joe's desire to help others in need is exceeded only by his humbleness. He was tasked with providing suicide prevention training to the organization prior to them taking Holiday Block Leave, a time of the year that is the highest risk for suicide. In his attempt to reach everyone in the audience and provide them with possible alternatives to giving up on life, he exposed his personal hardships and the methods that he used to combat depression and remain resilient. He provided references from numerous sources including military documents, suicide prevention programs, historic motivational quotes, and scripture from the Bible. All were well within his limitations as a Chaplain and he frequently referenced that this is what brought him through the toughest and darkest times of his life and that everyone had to find what would work for them.

1 The leadership traits and character that Chaplain Lawhorn provide will be sorely missed within the Army if he is used to make an example of due to one individual's personal opinion. I personally believe that many marriages have been salvaged and countless Soldiers were able to recover from depression or other hardships as a result of his leadership and concern for the well being of all.

Sincerely,



.Letter of Support:

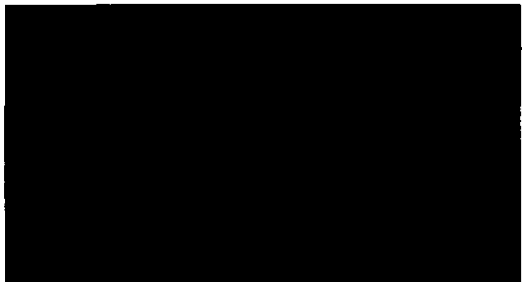
December 4, 2014

TO whom it may concern:

It is my intention to write a letter in support of Captain Joseph Lawhorn, our unit Chaplain.

I was present at the [REDACTED] Suicide Prevention training. I am aware of the current accusation of the training becoming a Christian sermon. The fact is that Chaplain Lawhorn prefaced the entire presentation with statements like, "this is my story," "This is what I went through", and "this is what works for me". I understand that someone in the audience who was not of a Christian faith might have not been very receptive with how Chaplain Lawhorn stated he dealt with past issues with depression with respect to the scriptures he referenced. The fact is Chaplain Lawhorn stated he had also sought help from a psychologist which some Christians might see as a pretty secular course of action. Chaplain Lawhorn made several references to multiple civilian agencies available in the local area for Soldiers and family members who might be struggling with depression or be experiencing Suicidal thoughts.

In conclusion, I would like to say Chaplain Lawhorn is the best Chaplain I have ever had the pleasure to serve with. He is the epitome of a professional. At his core it is obvious to all who have served with him; his driving motivation is to help people, Soldiers or civilians.





December 3, 2014

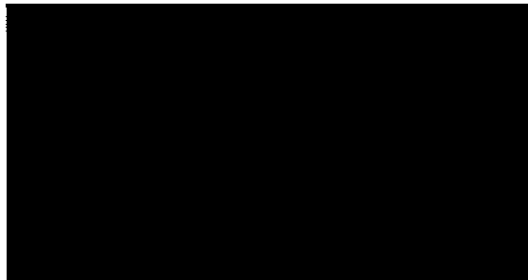
To Whom it may concern,

With absolute enthusiasm I am writing this letter of support for CH. CPT. Joseph Lawhorn. I have served with CPT. Lawhorn both stateside and deployed for nearly five years. We have served in the same Battalion at two separate duty stations. I have developed admiration and esteem through my observations and interactions with him or his dedication to the unit's members. CPT. Lawhorn is a companionate and thoughtful person who truly values those around him. He has an astute ability to see the wholesomeness in everyone. CPT. Lawhorn is a consummate professional who understands and executes his role as a staff officer in a manner others should emulate. It is my opinion that CPT. Lawhorn is among the top 5% of service men I have worked beside in my 16 years in uniform.

CPT. Lawhorn has demonstrated his ability to evenhandedly balance his roles as both a staff officer as well as that of a councilor and as a minister. During the suicide prevention briefing CPT Lawhorn related a narrative of a difficult period he had to cope with in his life. In his account he explained that he sought out counseling and used his faith to help him through his situation. The handout given out prior to the seminar addressed many ways to receive assistance. The information given in the class was multi-sourced and gave a variety of options that a person could choose from to make a comfortable decision for themselves.

It has been a privilege to know this dedicated humanitarian. I ask that you please call on me if I can further assist you in this regard.

Very Respectfully,



02 December, 2014

To whom it may concern,

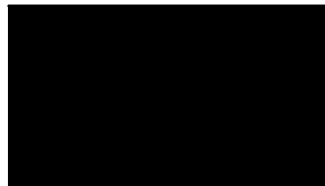
I am writing this letter in regards to the recent suicide class that was given by Chaplin Lawhorn to 5th Ranger Battalion.

Instead of the normal mandatory training slides that the audience takes nothing away except checking the block in training, Chaplin Lawhorn gave an atypical brief. He used a past experience in his life on how stressors at work caused him to become withdrawn from his family, depressed, and become a suicide risk himself. He spoke of how he was able to cope with and overcome this difficult time in his life; how he used his personal faith, support of his loved ones, co-workers, and assets (counselors, etc) available to him thru the Army to help him through this difficult time in his life.

This was honestly the first mandatory training brief that I have attended that I actually paid attention to and have an impact on me; one that during and after, had me self assessing myself to see if any of the indicators of suicide/depression I was displaying. To get me to take a look at my own life to see if I have withdrawn from my family or that I am doing all that I can with them versus isolating myself into my own world. In other words, finally a brief that caused members of the audience to actually assess themselves and to learn from the brief besides some useless/random facts generated to fill a slide show.

I am Roman Catholic, but only occasionally attend church. At no time during the brief did I feel that Chaplin Lawhorn was using the brief to preach to us, convert us, or anything else except to tell a personal event in his life to show that depression/suicide can affect us all and that there is various means of help out there.

A month ago, one of my Soldiers from a 2007 deployment to Afghanistan, who had since left the military, committed suicide. Maybe if others were willing to give a brief like the one that Chaplin Lawhorn gave instead of the normal power point brief that as it is getting over people make comments along the line of "after that death by PowerPoint, I now want to kill myself"; he would have been affected on some level and sought the help that he needed.

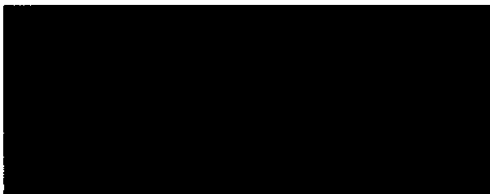


To whom it may concern,

On November 20th 2014, Chaplain Joseph Lawhorn presented a Suicide Prevention Class for the members of [REDACTED]. I understand that there has been controversy surrounding this event and would like to use this as an opportunity to state my own feelings regarding the situation.

As is mandated by regulation, the members of the unit were required to receive an informative block of instruction on Suicide Prevention. Normally, we as soldiers are made to sit through "death by power point" where information is regurgitated from slides. It is usually impersonal and half heartedly rushed through to "check the block". Chaplain Lawhorn had the personal courage and depth of conviction to stand up in front of the entire battalion and share his own story, his own real struggles. He conveyed a strong message of experience, strength and hope. He personalized the real danger of what we all go through, and told us how he was able to overcome these issues. At no time did he attempt to preach any religious agenda. He related to us how his faith was a major reason he was able to overcome his hardships and get better. He identified a problem, and like any effective leader, he offered a possible solution. The tone and theme of his message was not religious or GOD-centric, rather that it was possible to come out of the other side of depression and self doubt. Chaplain Lawhorn was candid and humble, and it was obvious to everyone in attendance that he was genuine in relating his own story to the topic. It was again a message of experience, strength and hope, not a sermon or him preaching his religious beliefs to the group. He related what worked for him and how it made him a stronger person.

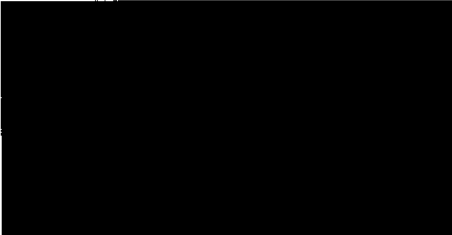
Chaplain Lawhorn is a professional, bottom line. I went through a VERY difficult time last summer that threatened every aspect of my personal and professional life. I was in a difficult position with no real idea of how to proceed. Chaplain Lawhorn was instrumental in my own personal recovery. He was able to help me understand and work through my issues, never forcing any religious agenda on me. He suggested to me what had worked for him, and how it had made him a stronger Ranger, husband and father. He is a role model to the men of this command, and he is able to find a perfect balance between being a minister of faith and a coach for continued mental stability and well being. I am not a religious person, and have always felt uncomfortable with chaplains and the like. Chaplain Lawhorn is the kind of leader that can identify hardship and struggle and truly help people, religious or not. He cares deeply for the Rangers and families of 5th RTB, and gives selflessly of himself to ensure a climate of balance. He is someone we all feel comfortable talking with, and he is always open and positive. I know that this message was taken out of context on the 20th, and was manipulated by someone with another agenda. I fully support Chaplain Lawhorn, and his courage to relate a serious topic in a personal way.



December 2, 2014

To Whom it may concern,

I am writing this letter of support on behalf of Chaplain Joe Lawhorn. I would like to say first off that he is personally the best chaplain I have ever been around. His professionalism and genuine care for soldiers that he is around is far above that of any other chaplain I have had the experience of working with. As for the annual [REDACTED] training that was conducted at the college I personally believe he did absolutely nothing wrong. He even stated to the audience that, "I am not going to church this up." He did not force the idea of church or Christ on any one, he merely shared a personal experience to the audience and told his story on where he found his strength. He also stated that not everyone finds strength in the same way. That portion of his suicide prevention was so brief compared to the actual bulk of his class in which he shared all the assets the army has to help soldiers find help in times of need. I would also like to say that many soldiers who have been in the army for a few years could stand up and put everyone to sleep with the same annual suicide prevention training that we are used to getting. For such a serious topic there is usually so little professionalism put into that class (death by PowerPoint) chaplain Joe Lawhorn made it interesting and shared his own experience. Instead of catering to the one person who was offended I think The Chaplain should be applauded for putting such a great effort on making the annual training so personal, and actually caring about help those in need. One person may have been offended but the amount of soldiers who needed to hear that class was far greater in comparison. Thank you for your time. I stand by my chaplain and think he did nothing wrong •



MEMORANDUM FOR SUPPORT

SUBJECT: Chaplain Lawhorn's Suicide Brief and Professionalism

TO: Whom it may concern

FROM: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] conducted a battalion safety day on 20 NOV 14. The day consisted of a Leader Professional Development discussing OPN Just Cause, vehicular safety and drug/alcohol awareness training by a Georgia State Trooper, a SHARP brief, and a suicide prevention brief. Chaplain Lawhorn facilitated the suicide prevention brief.

The religious beliefs of Chaplain Lawhorn were not forced upon those in the brief. His beliefs were provided and focused on; however, he consistently acknowledged that there are other ways of dealing with suicide and depression. Ranger Lawhorn upheld the Army Values during the brief and continually follows the Ranger Creed:

- He demonstrated 'Duty' by conducting a well rehearsed, well planned briefing and providing a printed list of all Army avenues for treatment.
- He demonstrated 'Respect' by allowing for differing opinions and providing examples of people in history that have dealt with the issue.
- Additionally, he further demonstrated the Army Values of 'Personal Courage' and 'Integrity' by sharing with the battalion his personal struggles.

Chaplain Lawhorn brought a unique perspective to his brief. He explained that depression is a major factor in those that attempt/commit suicide. His brief consisted of several examples of men of history that have experienced depression, an account of his personal experience, and an open discussion.

I have received multiple briefs on suicide prevention during my career. Chaplain Lawhorn's brief was by far the most sincere, most compelling brief on the subject that I have heard in the Army. Compare this brief to the typical regimented-check-the-block set of PowerPoint slides and the poorly rehearsed, monotone delivery by an unmotivated service member or DA civilian and it is easy to see the difference.

The Chaplain's approach to suicide prevention was to address depression. He stated that not everyone that has depression will commit suicide, but everyone that commits suicide has suffered from depression. This is an astute observation that should definitely be utilized when reaching out to our Soldiers. Talking about suicide is a poor attempt to treat a symptom when we could be looking for ways of getting to the heart of the matter. I believe that Chaplain Lawhorn made an extraordinary attempt in truly addressing the nature of this issue.

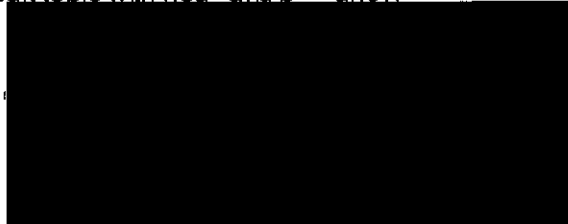
The brief offered three examples of men throughout history that have suffered with depression: King David, President Abraham Lincoln, and Prime Minister Winston Churchill. The Chaplain focused on King David by providing several quotes from his writings. During this portion of the brief the Chaplain explained that King David was an example that he looked to in his only dealings with depression, but offered to the audience that there are others to look to. While King David is an historical and Biblical reference Winston Churchill and Abraham Lincoln are only historical examples. In fact, Winston Churchill is known not to have adhered to a Christian religion saying, "If you tried your best to live an honorable life and did your duty and were faithful to friends and not unkind to the weak and poor, it did not matter much what you believed or disbelieved."

The Chaplain then went onto tell his story of dealing with depression. He spoke about his troubles at work and at home. He recounted a phone call to his friend, a military psychologist, and how he then progressed through his healing with the help of the counselor. He also spoke about how his faith helped him through it as well while also reiterating that there are other ways of dealing with depression.

Chaplain Lawhorn concluded his suicide prevention brief by facilitating a discussion. He did this by asking questions and allowing the audience to respond. This was an opportunity for anyone to voice their opinion regarding suicide prevention from their personal point of view.

Many Army briefs contain the word 'stigma.' The Army supposedly doesn't want its Soldiers to feel that their careers will suffer or that they will be looked down upon due to these issues. However, when Chaplain Lawhorn provided a heartfelt brief about his personal dealings with depression and his successful recovery he is now stigmata! Army leadership is conducting a kneejerk reaction and submitting Chaplain Lawhorn to the scorn (that they say isn't supposed to exist in today's Army) simply because one dissenting Soldier is too immature to seek redress in the proper channels or speak up when there was an opportunity to do so. This is counter intuitive of the Army's leadership and demonstrates one Soldier's lack of respect for the chain of command, Inspector General, and Chaplain Lawhorn. It also demonstrates this Soldier's lack of personal courage and integrity by addressing the article anonymously and with half truths.

Chaplain Lawhorn should not be admonished, chastised, or disciplined for his actions. Instead, he should be encouraged for having the vision to understand the issue beyond the symptom and for being able to address a difficult topic with heart and honesty.



03 DEC 2014

I was present in the auditorium when CPT Lawhorn was giving his speech and teaching his portion of the safety stand down. I would not consider myself an atheist although I share some humanist views and tend to side with logic. So everyone can be assured my opinion is not biased. I was raised in a particularly agnostic household and have always accepted others views. I have interacted on many separate occasions with the chaplain and not one of them was unpleasant. Religion aside he is a good person who truly cares for the people who surround him. I have been engaged in one on one conversation with CPT Lawhorn and not once in any part of our discourse have I ever felt pressured or uncomfortable. He has never mentioned anything pertaining to religion to me. He has made it abundantly clear that there is a difference between preaching and giving advice that suits everyone. If I were to complain every time I got a piece of advice from someone and I didn't like it; that would be an excellent indicator of my complete lack of emotional and mental strength.

Let me be clear. He made a point to say throughout his portion of time that he wasn't going to "church it up" and he did not. He gave advice from his own personal experiences and the way "he" understands it. He made it clear it may not be the same for everyone. All he did was encourage those suffering to get help. However that may happen.

I am beside myself at the guidance of my fellow soldiers on occasion. We are adults and professionals. CPT Lawhorn set a stellar example of how to conduct oneself professionally at work.



04 DEC 2014

To whom it may concern.

I was at the speech given by CPT Lawhorn to hear his part about suicide awareness. I am not in favor of any religious views, but a belief in logic and understanding. In the short time that I have been here, I have never felt pressured or uncomfortable to speak with our chaplain. I have a great respect for CPT Lawhorn and what he does. If I have ever needed his advice, he did not religiously preach to me.

CPT Lawhorn did not preach religion to us during his suicide awareness lecture. He gave us all personal experiences and advice that helped him, and that one day may help us. He let us know that there is always someone suffering in some way and that there is always someone there to listen.

I may not like every person that meet and work with, but CPT Lawhorn is a great friend and a Professional in his line of work.

[REDACTED]

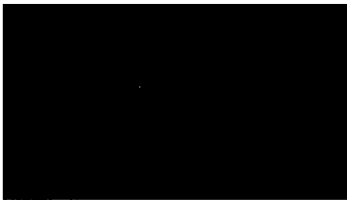
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

To whom it may concern,

I was present for CPT Lawhorn's class on suicide prevention during our safety stand down on 20NOV2014. CPT Lawhorn began our class by making sure that everyone in the room was aware that he was not trying to force any sort of religious views on us. He explained that religion was going to be referenced in his own story of personal suffering, but that was only because religion played a vital role in his own story of depression. Religion was not the focus of his story, his close and personal experience of depression was the focus. He told us his own personal story so that anyone suffering from depression would know that he had been there at one point in his life, so he knew what they were going through and he would understand. Religion happened to play a role in CPT Lawhorn's story, but CPT Lawhorn made it very clear at the beginning and at several points throughout his class that religion was only one of many ways to cope with problems like depression. He made it very clear that he wanted to help anyone who was struggling with life, and that it was quite possible to do that without religion.

I have talked to CPT Lawhorn many times during my time here at [REDACTED]. At no point did he ever talk to me about religion unless I was the one who brought it up to him. CPT Lawhorn is one of the best chaplains I have had in my career, he is very approachable and is one of the few people on camp who I am sure that would drop everything to help me when I am in need. I am honestly offended that one of our own would go around our chain of command, take his personal concerns outside of our organization, and put the Battalion Chaplain in such a situation before taking a professional approach.



04 DEC 2014

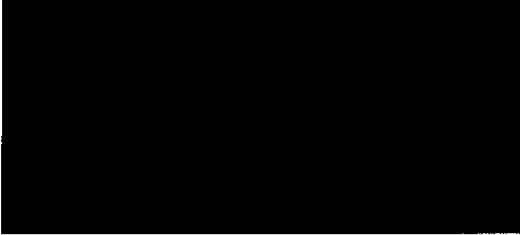
I am writing to show my support for Army Captain Joseph Lawhorn. Captain Lawhorn has been nothing but supportive to all the individuals on this installation and I personally have never felt like any religious views have been pressed upon me at any time that I have spoken or listened to him speak. Captain Lawhorn showed the highest level of professionalism during the suicide prevention brief and even stated before it started that it was not about religion and that he was only giving examples of what helped him through dark times. I am personally not a religious man and I found his personal story to be helpful and enlightening and at no point did I feel that his religious views were being pressed upon me.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

I am writing to show my support for Army Captain Joseph Lawhorn. Captain Lawhorn has been my Battalion Chaplain for the last two years. Over the last two years Captain Lawhorn has been both a great chaplain and staff officer. I have never seen Captain Lawhorn force religious beliefs onto anyone. During the suicide awareness brief Captain Lawhorn emphasized it wasn't a sermon and only referenced Army suicide prevention measures and where we could seek help. Captain Lawhorn shared his personal story of mental health struggles and what he used in order to build his resilience and perseverance. Again I would like to emphasize that Captain Lawhorn has never pushed religion on anyone, and has always been a professional in separating his duties as a staff officer and chaplain.

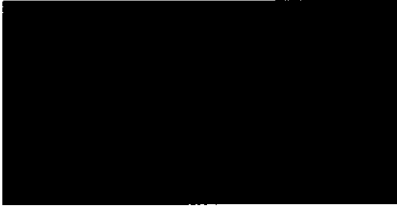


02DEC2014

02DEC2014

To whom it may concern:

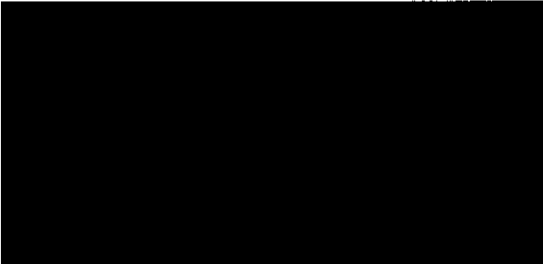
I am writing this letter of support for Army Chaplain Captain Lawhorn. Chaplain Lawhorn has been very supportive and helpful to me and many others in this battalion. He did not push any religious beliefs on me or anyone else and I have never felt pressured or obligated in any way to believe anything or feel anything because of him. He specifically told the class that he was not trying to force any religious views on anyone and kept true to his word throughout the class. The content in the class he gave directly related to the content of his class.



02 DEC 2014

To whom it may concern:

I am writing this letter of support for Army Chaplain Captain Lawhorn, I have been stationed at [REDACTED] [REDACTED] for about a year now and at no point has Captain Lawhorn ever showed any bias opinions on religion, every encounter with him has always been a good experience and never once has he forced religion on me nor my fellow peers. Captain Lawhorn has always shown a high level of professionalism toward me and been a knowledgeable Staff officer and chaplain. The debate of Chaplain Lawhorn in my eyes is incorrect, I was personally at that meeting at no point did he force religion to anyone in the group, his direct comment at the beginning of his story was "this story is not about religion," and this was a true statement as his story did include religious views but the morals of the story were to show the struggles he went through and to teach others about suicide prevention and urge them to get the correct help needed, and gave both religious and non-religious sources for help. His whole speech was to give the proper advice to people in need of help who had depression and suicidal thoughts, not to push his religious beliefs upon anyone, I think the person who claims that it was a religious push was being childish and immature and did not get the true meaning of the meeting.



02DEC2014

to whom it may concern,

I am writing this "Letter of Support" for CPT Joseph W. Lawhorn. On 20 Nov 2014, CPT Lawhorn gave a suicide brief on [REDACTED]. He handed out papers as well, on one side it was religious and the other side was not. He even stated that for him he fell back on certain Bible verses to make it through hard times. He even stated that he was not pushing religion on anyone. He was trying to approach everyone from all religious groups and those who are not religious. His speech was geared towards his hard times, how he overcame those hard challenges, and how he sought help. In my opinion he is the best Chaplain I have ever had in my military career. He is authentic and is truly there to help the Soldier, no matter what religion or if they believe in God or not. He is able to separate being an officer and being a Chaplain.

Respectfully,

[REDACTED]

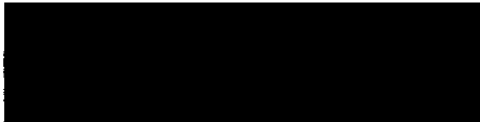
To whom it may concern,

I've interacted with CH (CPT) Joseph W. Lawhorn on numerous occasions. During those interactions I never got the impression that he was preaching or pushing religion onto me. Based on those interactions I can say that he has a great balance between his role as a staff officer and his role as a minister.

I attended the Suicide Prevention Class on 20 November 2014. During the training CH (CPT) Lawhorn shared some of his personal experiences with suicide/suicide prevention. This entailed his diagnoses of depression and CLINICAL treatment of it. Along with clinical treatment, he sought out spiritual treatment. He stated that the spiritual treatment that he sought worked for him but wouldn't necessarily work for us. We'd have to find what was important to us in life and use that to help battle our depression. At no point did he say that we "had to" or "needed to" participate in anything religious in order to assist with dealing with depression. He simply shared his experiences and what helped him to make it through them.

There was a sheet handed out with religious quotes on one side and contact information for Health Care Providers in the area on the other side. Only one side of this sheet was posted online which assisted in causing the stir up that it did. The religious quotes were what he turned to when he felt himself in despair, nothing more, nothing less.

I am not the least religious, I don't find salvation in God or look to him in time of need. I do though, understand that others do and respect that aspect of their life. Similarly CH (CPT) Lawhorn does the same, he does not preach to those whom wish not to be preached to. This is simply a case of something being taken out of context and used for a particular group's own agenda.



To whom it may concern,

This is a letter written on behalf of CPT Joseph W. Lawhorn by myself, [REDACTED].

On 20 November 2014, CPT Lawhorn was tasked with teaching a suicide class to the [REDACTED] Battalion. The location was an auditorium located at [REDACTED]. The battalion had an attendance of approximately 160 to 200 personnel. Several topics were covered and CPT Lawhorn began his presentation at approximately 12:10PM and lasted approximately one hour. To start his training, the Chaplains assistant passed out a two sided hand-out with information for those who may need to seek help due to depression, or if contemplating bodily harm to themselves.

One side of the hand-out had information which had no affiliation or reference to religious organizations, and on the other side were religious organizations which seemed to be the spiritual equivalent to the non-spiritual side.

CPT Lawhorn spoke very colloquial and in a manner which offered no perception of religiosity or a clandestine attempt to deliver a Christian message in his lesson. I personally felt this was a little odd, because I would expect a Chaplain to have heavy overtones of sermonizing and delivering a spiritual message; he did neither.

The message in his lesson was clear; if you need help, get it from whatever source will keep you from hurting yourself, falling into depression or committing suicide. He spoke from personal life experiences as would anyone delivering such a class to an audience. Some of his life experiences did include how he struggled with depression and how he overcame them thru his family and faith. One of his examples was going to an Army counselor and being on medications to help him overcome depression, while another example was of how his depression affected his work; and his work is being a Chaplain, so some of the examples included religious references as it related to his job.

It is my opinion; it would be ludicrous if a person was offended by any part of CPT Lawhorn's lesson. I feel it would be just as easy to be offended by any other lessons given that day.

In closing, I can say I have known CPT Lawhorn for 18 months, and in that time, he has proven to be the best Chaplain I have had the pleasure of knowing in my 25 years in the U. S. Army. Never have I seen a Chaplain be able to communicate on so many levels; as an Officer in the United States Army, a Chaplain, A family man, a friend and a person.

[REDACTED]



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

R: EPLVTO
ATTENTION OF

5 December 2014

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

SUBJECT: Captain Joseph W. Lawhorn

1. I attended CPT Lawhorn's suicide prevention brief on 20 November 2014 and believed it to be both professional and effective. At no point in time during the brief did I feel like religion was being forced on anyone, and although attendance was mandatory, given the option I would have stayed. CPT Lawhorn simply referenced personal experiences throughout his time as a Chaplain in the military and explained ways he coped with difficult times in his life. The fact that his religion and beliefs aided with his coping in those situations did not lead me to believe he was trying to push religion on me in any way at all.

2. Throughout my time at [REDACTED], CPT Lawhorn has proven to be an outstanding officer, a productive member of the unit, and most of all, the best chaplain I have seen in my time in the military.

3. [REDACTED]

...

[REDACTED]