



## Sharing the Love of God Among Veterans

A tenacious advocate who provides extraordinary help to people in his community

BY RALPH MAGNUS

John Kolanchey isn't your typical 78-year old. He is a Canadian veteran of the Korean War who suffered post-traumatic stress disorder at a time when there was neither recognition nor help for veterans with such problems. Having found healing and new purpose in Christ, John has given the last 15 years of his life to helping other veterans.



Recently he was one of 75 individuals honoured with the Governor General's Caring Canadian Award. It was created in 1996 to recognize volunteers who have provided years of extraordinary care to people in their communities. John was also among the 2008 recipients of the Minister of Veterans Affairs Commendation, acknowledging his outstanding contribution to the well-being of veterans.

After the war, John found it difficult to fit into regular society. Like many veterans, he had problems with addictions and had difficulty holding a steady job. While Alcoholics Anonymous was

helpful, it was the higher power AA refers to that made the difference. John credits God as the real power behind the turnaround in his life.

When John retired at age 63, his wife asked him what he would do. His reply was "I'd like to help other veterans." It wasn't long before he was asked to serve as chaplain for the Korea Veterans Association of Canada. Other veterans see John as a man they can trust and the love of God for hurting people flows out of his life. Needing a denomination to endorse his work as a chaplain, God brought John to the Alliance. He was recognized as an Alliance Chaplain in 1999 and is currently a member of Beulah Alliance Church in Edmonton, Alberta.

John serves as a volunteer chaplain for both the Korea Veterans Association and the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry Association. At the Kipnes Centre for Veterans in Edmonton, he chairs the Liaison Committee and serves on the Pastoral Board. If you don't find John leading worship at Kipnes Centre or at Glenrose Rehabilitation Hospital, he could be visiting veterans in hospitals throughout the region or leading a funeral service.

A tenacious advocate, he also serves on the Western Advisory Council, Edmonton Liaison Committee for Veterans Affairs and Advisory Stakeholder Committee for the Occupational Stress Injury Clinic. John has been instrumental in getting psychological, medical, financial and housing assistance to veterans who, through the years, had been lost by the system. His life demonstrates what can be accomplished by ordinary people who respond to God's call and pursue that one thing God has laid on their hearts.

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John admits age has slowed him down a bit but he has no intention of giving up this labour of love any time soon. With the assistance of his wife Shirley, who has been an indispensable support to his ministry, John keeps looking and caring for veterans who need help. ☪

*Rev. Ralph Magnus, a chaplain at the Grey Nuns Community Hospital in Edmonton, met John through the Association of Alliance Chaplains*

