



Joseph F. Smith and the First World War:

Eventual Support and Latter-day Saint Chaplains

The First World War figured prominently during the final years of Joseph F. Smith's Church presidency. After decades of rising international tension fueled by European imperialism and an increasingly complex network of treaty obligations, the first truly modern war was triggered on June 28, 1914, when Francis Ferdinand, archduke of the Hapsburg imperial dynasty, was assassinated in Sarajevo, Serbia. One month later, on July 28, the Austro-Hungarian Empire declared war on Serbia and, in rapid succession, numerous countries followed suit, turning the regional conflict into a world war.¹ Before the war ended, over fifty-nine million men had been mobilized, and tens of millions of soldiers and civilians had died.² This essay considers the increasing role that President Joseph F. Smith played in supporting the American war effort, with an emphasis on his selection of three Latter-day Saint chaplains and their wartime service.

The United States declared its neutrality on August 4, 1914, and during the next three years endured a series of challenges to that position—such as the sinking of the *Lusitania* in 1915 and the *Sussex* in 1916, which resulted in the loss of hundreds of American lives; the January 1917 Zimmermann telegram, in

Kenneth L. Alford is an associate professor of Church history and doctrine at Brigham Young University.

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which Germany proposed an alliance with Mexico against the United States; and Germany's January 1917 declaration that it would conduct unrestricted submarine warfare on the open seas.³ In 1916, Woodrow Wilson won reelection as president based in large measure on the fact that "he kept us out of war."⁴ America's neutrality ended on April 6, 1917, when the United States declared war on Germany. As the Latter-day Saint historian Elder B. H. Roberts wrote, "The high plane on which the United States entered the war made it easy for even the saints to sustain the relationship of service to it without violence to their consciences."⁵ The nation widely accepted support for the war as a patriotic duty.

Joseph F. Smith's Wartime Leadership

Church President Joseph F. Smith set the tone and led the way in formulating the Church's response and reaction to the world war. In a general conference address on October 5, 1914, a few months after the beginning of the war, President Smith noted reluctantly that in the world, "nations are arrayed against nations. . . . Each [nation] is praying to his God for wrath upon and victory over his enemies. . . . God has [not] designed or willed that war [should] come among the people of the world, that the nations of the world should be divided against each other in war."⁶

While a proponent of peace, President Smith was not a pacifist. Speaking of patriotism and individual responsibility, he taught that "a good Latter-day Saint is a good citizen in every way."⁷ He believed "patriotism should be sought for and will be found in right living, not in high sounding phrases or words. True patriotism is part of the solemn obligation that belongs both to the nation and to the individual and to the home. Our nation's reputation should be guarded as sacredly as our family's good name. That reputation should be defended by every citizen."⁸

The Church withdrew American missionaries from Europe as an early consequence of the war.⁹ By the October 1914 general conference, President Smith told Church members that "every precaution has been taken that could be taken for the protection of our elders in those foreign missions where war exists. In Germany, France, Austria, and portions of other countries so dreadfully involved in war, our elders have all been invited to withdraw, to come away from those parts of the country, and so far as we know our German missionaries have largely and almost entirely withdrawn from that country, and also from France."¹⁰

In April 1915, President Smith reported that "the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is at peace with itself, and it is at peace with all the world. We

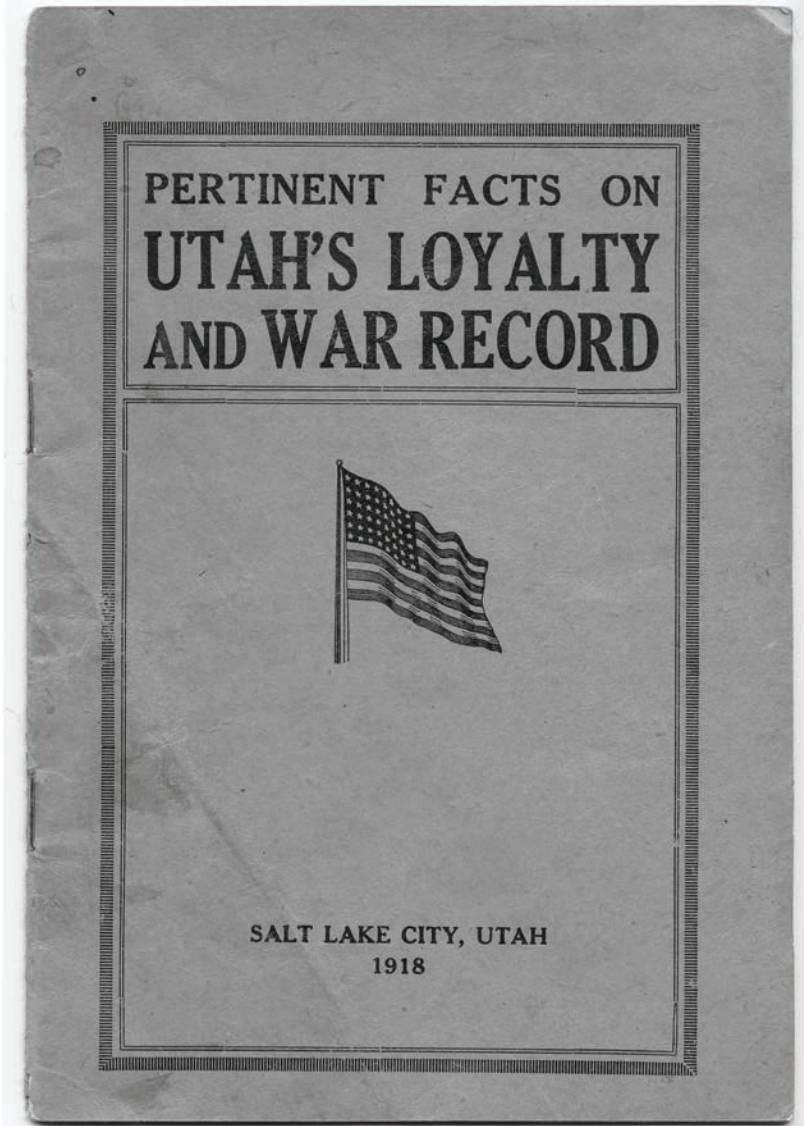
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have no spirit of war in our hearts. . . . I am glad that we have kept out of war so far, and I hope and pray that we may not be under the necessity of sending our sons to war, or experience as a nation the distress, the anguish and sorrow that come from a condition such as exists upon the old continent. Oh God, have mercy upon thy poor children in Europe, and throughout the world, who are brought under the awful conditions that exist there because of the ambition and pride of men.”¹¹ But as the war in Europe continued into 1916, President Smith’s public attitude was clearly shifting. The following October he said bluntly, “I do not want war; but the Lord has said it shall be poured out upon all nations, and if we escape, it will be ‘by the skin of our teeth.’ I would rather the oppressors should be killed, or destroyed, than to allow the oppressors to kill the innocent.”¹²

President Smith was kept apprised of America’s movement toward a declaration of war by United States senator and Apostle Reed Smoot. The day after war was declared, Smoot wrote to President Smith and shared an experience that occurred on April 4, 1917, on the floor of the Senate as that body debated a resolution to declare war:

I had my notes prepared to speak in favor of the resolution, but before asking recognition late in the evening, an impression came to me not to speak but to offer an appeal in the form of a prayer. Just before eleven o’clock I obtained recognition from the Vice President, the galleries were packed, I waited until you could hear a pin drop in the Chamber, and then said, “Mr. President, I rise to make this simple but earnest appeal: God bless and approve the action to be taken by the Senate this day. Oh, Father, preserve our government and hasten the day when liberty will be enjoyed by all the peoples of the earth.” I do not believe that there has ever been a statement made to the Senate that had such an effect as this prayer had upon not only the Senators but everyone in the galleries. No further remarks were made on the resolution, and the vote was taken upon it.¹³

Although President Smith was “slow at first to recognize that the hour had struck for the United States to drop the neutral attitude and enter the World War on the side of the allies,”¹⁴ he quickly joined with President Wilson and Congress in supporting the war. During the April 1917 general conference, which was held during the same week that the United States declared war on Germany, President Smith declared, “Let the soldiers that go out from Utah be and remain men of honor. And when they are called obey the call, and manfully meet the duty, the



In 1918, Church leaders authorized the publication of this pamphlet, which documented Utah's active support of the war. Courtesy of Kenneth L. Alford.

dangers, or the labor, that may be required of them, or that they may be set to do; but do it with an eye single to the accomplishment of the good that is aimed to be

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accomplished, and not with the blood-thirsty desire to kill and to destroy.”¹⁵ As the United States changed from a peacetime to wartime footing, President Smith could agree with President Wilson when he said, “We have no selfish ends to serve. We desire no conquest, no dominion. . . . We are but one of the champions of the rights of mankind. We shall be satisfied when those rights have been made as secure as the faith and the freedom of the nations can make them.”¹⁶

President Smith took a direct role in supporting the American war effort. Through a common consent vote during the October 1917 general conference, the Church (which itself had only recently paid off its debts and become solvent) authorized President Smith, as the trustee-in-trust, to purchase \$150,000 in Liberty Bonds with Church funds. Six months later, in April 1918, President Smith proposed that the Church purchase another \$250,000 in Liberty Loan Bonds, and his proposal was unanimously approved by conference attendees. Following the vote, President Smith said, “This Country gave us the right in its Constitution to believe religiously according to the dictates of our own conscience, and it is only right that we should stand by the Nation with our wealth in money, resources and spirit.”¹⁷ Between 1917 and 1919, the Church purchased a total of \$850,000 in Liberty Bonds (about fifteen million dollars today), demonstrating that Joseph F. Smith meant what he said in April 1918: “There isn’t a feeling in my soul nor in any fibre of my being that is disloyal to the Government of the United States.”¹⁸

With President Smith’s approval and encouragement, the Church took several other actions to support the war. The Relief Society gave more than 100,000 bushels of wheat, 42,000 quarts of canned fruit and jelly, and over sixteen tons of fruit and vegetables to the United States Food Administration.¹⁹ With Church assistance, the Salt Lake City Red Cross prepared 250 million medical dressings for local and army hospitals.²⁰ President Woodrow Wilson issued a proclamation, sustained by the First Presidency, calling for Sunday, June 17, 1917, to be observed as Red Cross Sunday. Bishops and branch presidents across the United States were encouraged to “provide speakers, music and other exercises in harmony with the spirit of the occasion, the duty of the hour, and the lofty object of the cause.” Over eight hundred wards participated.²¹ With the support of state and Church leaders, “Utah did her part in the great war to the last man called and the last dollar required of her.”²²

In 1917, almost two-thirds of Utah’s population consisted of Latter-day Saints. Utah’s response to military recruiting and war bond drives reflected

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Joseph F. Smith (1838–1918), pictured here with one of his wives, Edna, supported the cause of peace and hoped that the United States would be able to remain neutral, but he became an ardent supporter of the American war effort after war was officially declared on April 6, 1917. Courtesy of Utah State Historical Society.

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directly upon the Church. Utah received initial enlistment quotas for 872 men. With the approval and encouragement of President Joseph F. Smith, almost five thousand men responded during 1917. In 1918 nearly twenty thousand additional Utah men volunteered to serve in the army, navy, and marines. By the end of the war, over 5 percent of Utah's population was serving in the military.²³

Latter-day Saint Chaplains

One meaningful way to support both the nation and the soldiers who served was to provide chaplains for active duty military units.²⁴ General John J. Pershing, commander of the American Expeditionary Force, was quoted as saying that military chaplains "are very important influences in the highest efficiency of the army. The men need them for all kinds of help. They sustain the men especially at the most critical times."²⁵ The First World War was the first time that the United States military invited the Church to directly select active duty Latter-day Saint military chaplains, a practice that continues to this day.

Only one Latter-day Saint chaplain had served on active federal military duty prior to World War I. Elias S. Kimball, a younger brother of Elder J. Golden Kimball, was serving as president of the Southern States Mission when the Spanish-American War began. On June 14, 1898, Kimball received a letter from the First Presidency notifying him that the "Presidency had been invited by Col. Willard Young of the 2nd Regiment Volunteer Engineers to name the Chaplain for his regiment, and the question was considered at to-day's meeting. It was unanimously decided to recommend you for that position, and Col. Young was informed of this by telegram to-day. He is at present at Washington, D.C., and you are requested to report by letter to him, care of Senator F. J. Cannon, if you feel to accept of the appointment." Colonel Young could have selected his own chaplain, but he deferred to the First Presidency. President Kimball had mixed feelings regarding the request, confiding to his diary that "in the vernacular of the street, this is what would be called a 'corker.'"²⁶ The following day he wrote the First Presidency that he "would accept of the position of Chaplain"; he served in Cuba with great dedication.²⁷

During the Church's October 1918 general conference, David A. Smith, a member of the Presiding Bishopric, noted that the Church had "nearly fifteen thousand of our young men" in the army and navy of the United States and observed that the Church had received only three chaplain positions. "According to the ruling of the government," he said, "we should be entitled to the appointment

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of others.”²⁸ In June 1919, President Heber J. Grant suggested that the Church should have been “entitled to twenty chaplains.”²⁹

With only three chaplain positions to fill, President Joseph F. Smith and other senior Church leaders wanted to ensure that each appointee would represent the Church well. The three chaplains selected—Calvin S. Smith, Herbert B. Maw, and Brigham H. (B. H.) Roberts—each had a unique relationship with the Church’s First Presidency. Calvin Smith was one of Joseph F. Smith’s sons. Herbert Maw’s father was close friends with the brother of Charles W. Penrose, a counselor in the First Presidency. And B. H. Roberts served as a Church General Authority (one of the seven presidents in the First Council of the Seventy) and knew the First Presidency well. A brief summary of the service of these three Latter-day Saint chaplains follows.

Calvin Schwartz Smith

The second child of Joseph F. Smith’s last wife (Mary Taylor Schwartz), Calvin S. Smith (May 29, 1890–June 15, 1966) was one of six sons of the prophet who served in the military during World War I.³⁰ Chaplain Smith was called in February 1918 to serve as an active duty army chaplain for the Ninety-First Infantry Division. He defined his assignment as serving as an “at-large” chaplain, meaning he was to “look after the [approximately 1,800] members of the LDS Church in the division as a whole.” (A World War I division contained up to 28,000 men.) Regarding his call, he said, “If I’d have had my own choice of a position in the Army, it wouldn’t have been chaplain.” He was concerned that he “had no training whatever” and “didn’t know what was expected of a chaplain,” but his father had faith in his ability to serve.³¹ After initial training in the United States, his division landed in France on July 22, 1918.³²

Few people owe their life to a can of beef, but Chaplain Smith did. In September 1918, allied armed forces moved to occupy a position recently evacuated by German soldiers. After passing a graveyard for German soldiers, he walked into a nearby field and suddenly “became aware of the fact that somebody was shooting at [him].” He “flattened out on the ground” and waited while the enemy “shot two or three times and then quit.” That evening at dinner, he discovered that a bullet had “gone through the top of the can” of beef he carried in his mess kit and “part way out of the back.” As he started to eat, he reported,

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“I nearly cracked my teeth because it was dark when . . . I bit down on the bullet. It was in the mess kit. It saved me from being wounded in the back.”³³

Chaplain Smith’s final wartime letter to his father, President Joseph F. Smith, was written in France on November 15, 1918, four days after the armistice. In it, he shared several of his combat experiences. He wrote that he ministered to Latter-day Saint soldiers in the 346th Machine Gun Battalion, joined a medical detachment and “tried to be generally useful.” At one point, he “put on a French uniform and helped the intelligence officer of the 362nd infantry [regiment] map out the trails which were to be cut through the forest to the front line trenches,” and survived an aerial bombardment when a dud bomb dropped a few feet from him. Finding himself at the front lines, he “went over the top” with his unit to attack the enemy. Serving as part of a medical unit, Chaplain Smith said, “I went out with stretcher-bearers to find wounded. . . . [We] worked till nearly exhausted. . . . We tried to sleep, [but] we nearly froze.” During the same offensive, the Germans launched a systematic artillery barrage on his location—shells “fell every dozen feet, and soon there were many cries for help. One shell lighted within a dozen feet . . . as I lay in the hole.” Suddenly, he “felt as if someone had lashed [him] with a whip and blood began to run down [his] trousers.” He recognized that he had been wounded. Although injured, he “got up many times during the night to help carry wounded [soldiers] to the automobiles.” His colonel recommended him for a promotion, but, as he informed his father, “A chaplain serves seven years as a first lieutenant and then is automatically promoted,” which led him to believe (correctly, as it turned out) that “this recommendation may never be acted on.”³⁴ A few days later, his unit again marched to the front and was ordered into action at Ypres, where he was wounded again, this time in his right arm.

In his letter home, he acknowledged the armistice and wrote, “I am happy to say that peace seems to have come. . . . I felt happy to be alive and safe. . . . I hope I come home from this war more of a man than I went into it. If I don’t I’ll feel that I have not played my part.” President Joseph F. Smith never had the opportunity to read his son’s last letter; the prophet died November 19, 1918, just four days after the letter was written.³⁵

The book *Utah in the World War*, a 1924 history of Utah’s participation in World War I, observed that in the 362nd Infantry “there was no more popular man in the division than the chaplain, who never considered personal risk when he could serve his comrades.”³⁶



Chaplain Calvin Smith wrote to his father, President Joseph F. Smith, to share some of his war experiences just four days after the Armistice ending the war was signed in this railroad car on November 11, 1918; President Smith died before the letter reached Salt Lake City. Courtesy of Library of Congress.

Herbert Brown Maw

In 1916, prior to the American declaration of war, Herbert Maw (March 11, 1893–November 17, 1990) enjoyed a busy life as an aspiring lawyer and teacher at LDS High School in Salt Lake City. In July 1917, shortly after the United States declared war on Germany, he enlisted in the Army Air Service and was accepted for pilot training.³⁷ He graduated from ground school and found flying to be “a thrilling experience.”³⁸

Maw soon learned that “life . . . had other plans for [him] which did not include becoming a pilot in the army.” His military service changed in a dramatic way when he received a long-distance telephone call in March 1918 from President Charles W. Penrose, one of Joseph F. Smith’s counselors in the Church’s First Presidency. President Penrose informed Maw that “the U.S. Army had authorized the appointment of three Mormon Chaplains to serve for the duration of the war; that they were to be selected by the First Presidency of the Church; and that this was the first time the Church had ever received such recognition from the military forces of our country.” President Penrose notified Maw that he was to be one of the three chaplains. “I was flabbergasted! I thought at first that someone was kidding me, for I could not conceive of my being called by the First Presidency to such

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First Presidency (from left: Anthon H. Lund, Joseph F. Smith, and Charles W. Penrose), circa 1911–12. President Penrose invited Herbert B. Maw (1893–1990), newly called to serve as an army chaplain, to meet with the First Presidency in 1918. © Intellectual Reserve, Inc.

an assignment,” Maw later reflected. “The conversation,” Maw recalled, “ended with my reluctantly accepting the call even though I much preferred continuing my training as a pilot.” As their telephone conversation concluded, President Penrose invited Maw to visit him the next time he was in Salt Lake City.³⁹

Newly commissioned as a first lieutenant, Chaplain Maw was assigned as a chaplain with the Eighty-Ninth Infantry Division stationed at Camp Funston, Kansas. A few weeks later, Maw found himself in Salt Lake City on furlough. Summoning his courage, he decided to visit Church headquarters to take advantage of President Penrose’s invitation. When Maw asked “if there were any special instructions as to [his] official duties,”

President Penrose told him to “be a good example to the soldiers.” He then took Chaplain Maw to the office of President Joseph F. Smith, where he also met President Smith’s first counselor, Anthon H. Lund. The First Presidency asked Chaplain Maw if he would like to receive a priesthood blessing. Maw said, “Of course I did, so they all arose and placed their hands on my head as I sat in my chair.” During the blessing, he was promised “every protection, guidance, and inspiration that a representative of the Church of Jesus Christ should have in a war”—a blessing that was soon fulfilled in combat.⁴⁰

Chaplain Maw quickly learned that his division had very few Latter-day Saint soldiers but did contain numerous members of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints from Missouri who were not very excited, initially, about being assigned a Mormon chaplain. Through continued patience and service, he “gained the confidence of the men and a wholesome religious spirit” developed. He ministered to soldiers at the front and was “exposed . . . to almost continuous enemy fire.”⁴¹

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Chaplain Herbert B. Maw served as the governor of Utah from 1941 to 1949. Courtesy of Utah State Historical Society.

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On one occasion near Metz, France, he accompanied a balloonist aloft to observe and report on the effectiveness of an artillery barrage. After ascending to two thousand feet, they found themselves being attacked by an enemy airplane. The balloon was at risk of exploding, so both the observer and Chaplain Maw were forced to jump from the balloon and parachute to the ground. Noting that he had never jumped from a plane or balloon before, Maw commented wryly that events like that “added a considerable amount of interest and excitement to the routines of army life.”⁴²

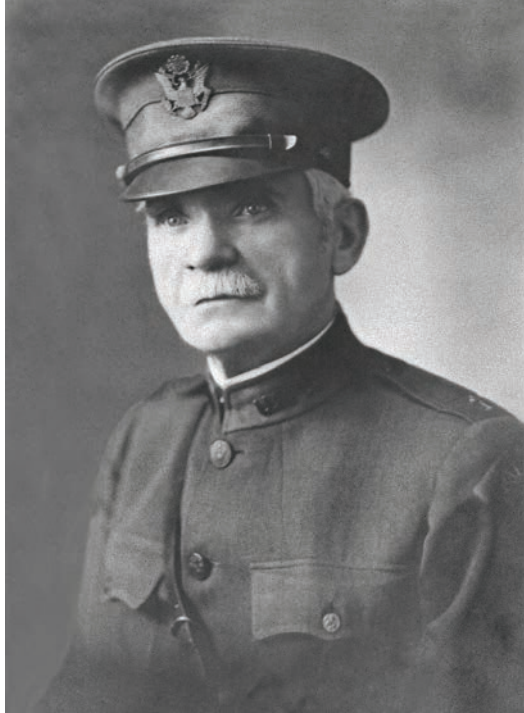
Chaplain Maw later observed that “scores of times at the front, that pronouncement of protection, guidance, and inspiration [from the First Presidency] was fulfilled during months which followed, for I was repeatedly prompted to move from places of danger which would have resulted in disaster for me if I had not heeded those promptings.”⁴³ He was mustered out of the service in June 1919.⁴⁴ In 1940 he was elected as the eighth governor of Utah and served with distinction; his reelection in 1944 remains the closest gubernatorial election in Utah history.

Brigham Henry Roberts

In the October 1914 general conference, Elder B. H. Roberts (March 13, 1857–September 27, 1933) described the developing world war as “inevitable.”⁴⁵ When Utah launched a military recruitment effort, Governor Simon Bamberger appointed Roberts chaplain (and captain) of the First Utah Light Field Artillery (which was soon renamed the 145th Field Artillery Regiment). The governor shortly thereafter promoted Roberts to major.⁴⁶ According to a general order from March 1917, the unit included “B. H. Roberts appointed Major and Chaplain on [the] Governor’s Staff.”⁴⁷ To assist with Utah’s recruiting efforts, Elder Roberts traveled around the state giving speeches encouraging young men to enlist. In fact, he spoke at a recruiting rally in Manti on the day that war was declared.⁴⁸ During a March 1917 rally in Ogden, Major Roberts said, “I want to tell the fathers and mothers of Utah that if their sons go to the trenches I will go with them.” The audience reportedly cheered for three straight minutes.⁴⁹

Although he was past sixty years of age, B. H. Roberts asked to serve as the unit’s active duty chaplain. Not surprisingly, his initial request was rejected. He turned to Senator Reed Smoot of Utah to help obtain a chaplain’s commission, telling him, “You must get me in!” Senator Smoot’s appeal on Roberts’s behalf was successful, but it came with two stipulations. First, Roberts must enter

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Although over sixty years old, Elder B. H. Roberts served during World War I as an active duty chaplain for the 145th Field Artillery Regiment from Utah, 1918.

active duty several ranks lower as a lieutenant—the standard active duty rank for new chaplains—and second, he had to complete the standard chaplain’s officer training program before he could join his unit. Elder Roberts promptly agreed to both conditions.⁵⁰

Chaplain Roberts, now a lieutenant, and the 145th Field Artillery Regiment—“distinctively a Utah organization”—were mustered into service on August 5, 1917 when the Utah National Guard officially became part of the National Army.⁵¹ Chaplain Roberts later wrote that with almost fifteen hundred Latter-day Saint soldiers, “one unique thing about this Utah regiment was that it was so nearly recruited from one religious body . . . that the 145th F.A. [Field Artillery] (1st Utah) came nearly to being a ‘Mormon’ regiment.”⁵²

Chaplain Roberts’s unit was sent to Camp Kearny near San Diego. He reported to Officer and Chaplains School at Camp Zachary Taylor near Louisville,



*Utah's Governor Simon Bamberger appointed Elder B. H. Roberts as a chaplain.
Courtesy of Utah State Historical Society.*

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Kentucky, in April 1918.⁵³ The commandant offered to ease his program requirements, but Chaplain Roberts answered, “No, sir; I came here to take the full course.”⁵⁴ He completed the entire training program—all of the course work, obstacle courses, marches, bivouacking, marksmanship, and physical fitness activities—without receiving any waivers. After successfully completing the course, he commented, “It was the most strenuous and anxious six weeks within my experience.”⁵⁵ When Roberts returned to Camp Kearny in June, his unit was away on a road march. He was offered a car to visit them, but “he chose instead a spirited horse. . . . As he approached the regiment, he kept out of sight until he was at the head of the column. Then he galloped into view, reining his horse high on its haunches and lifting his hat to sweep the sky in a symbolic gesture that electrified the men.”⁵⁶ The *Salt Lake Tribune* reported that “from every throat” of the sixteen hundred men in his regiment “there arose a mighty cheer. Discipline relaxed and there was a waving of arms and a tumult of shouting. . . . To these men, their chaplain was a heroic figure of a man, nothing less.”⁵⁷ According to historian Truman G. Madsen, “then the chaplain left his mount, shouldered the standard sixty-pound pack, and joined his men in the hike on equal terms.”⁵⁸

In July, as the 145th Field Artillery Regiment was traveling from California to New York bound for Europe, they stopped in Salt Lake City. Chaplain Roberts arranged for the unit band to serenade President Joseph F. Smith at his residence, the Beehive House. President Smith watched from the window and invited Roberts to join him on the balcony, where “President Smith gave the men a kindly reception and reminisced in a touching manner about his associations with Chaplain Roberts.”⁵⁹ Chaplain Roberts’s regiment traveled to France and was sent to Camp DeSouge for training. They were ordered to the front on November 9, 1918, but the armistice was signed two days later; the war ended before they saw any combat.⁶⁰

Perhaps the best known experience from Chaplain Roberts’s military career occurred during an interdenominational worship service on Thanksgiving Day in 1918. Sitting at the rear of the review stand, Chaplain Roberts had not been invited to participate in the program. During the service he was surprised to hear the presiding chaplain announce, “Elder Roberts, the Mormon chaplain from Utah, will now step up and read the Thanksgiving Psalm”—a scriptural reference he did not know. Several “years later, he testified that during the long walk to the front, he distinctly heard an audible voice announce: ‘The 100th Psalm.’ It was as clear as though another person had spoken at his side.” He reached the

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This Christmas postcard was produced by Chaplain B. H. Roberts's unit, the 145th Field Artillery Regiment, in France the month after the war ended. Courtesy of Kenneth L. Alford.

podium, opened his Bible, and read the 100th Psalm. “After Brother Roberts had closed his Bible and was returning to his seat, he noticed that his fellow chaplains refused to look at him; their eyes were immovably fixed on the floor. It was then he realized that his part on the program had been a deliberate attempt to embarrass him, the Church and the priesthood.”⁶¹

The *History of the 145th Field Artillery Regiment* records that Chaplain Roberts “was a fine chap and well liked by all, regardless of religion.”⁶² Unlike the wartime experiences of Chaplains Smith and Maw, Chaplain Roberts’s unit never saw any action or lost a man.⁶³ He left the military in January 1919 and returned to Church service as a General Authority.⁶⁴

During the June 1919 general conference, which had been postponed from April because of the Spanish flu epidemic and was the first conference after the armistice, President Heber J. Grant, newly sustained to replace Joseph F. Smith as Church President, commented on Elder Roberts’s military service. “We are grateful to Brother B. H. Roberts, who also volunteered, notwithstanding he was beyond the age limit, and did splendid service in looking after our boys, as chaplain,” he said. “He gained their love and their confidence and had an excellent influence over them for good.”⁶⁵

Summary

President Joseph F. Smith was deeply affected by World War I. While he was initially reticent to have the United States fight in Europe, he actively supported the nation's cause after war was declared. As Anthony V. Ivins (who served as a counselor to Heber J. Grant in the Church's First Presidency) noted, beginning in 1917 "the Church [was] brought into direct contact for the first time with a great world war. . . . Never before [had] the effect of war been so universally felt and the people put to a similar test."⁶⁶ During the Church's April 1920 general conference, President Grant read selections from speeches made in the United States Senate. Quoting Utah Senator Reed Smoot, President Grant read, "No one can examine the record made by [Latter-day Saints] during the World War without coming to the conclusion that no more loyal people live on this earth. No call was made upon them without an immediate response, and not only for the amount asked for but for nearly double the amount in most every case."⁶⁷

In his father's biography, Church President Joseph Fielding Smith wrote that Joseph F. Smith "regretted the outbreak of war, and the necessity of the United States entering the conflict, yet he encouraged the members of the Church in the United States to be loyal to their country, feeling that their cause was just and would eventually prevail."⁶⁸ President Smith lived long enough to learn that an armistice ending the war was signed on November 11, 1918, but he died just eight days later.

In outlining Utah's role during the First World War, historian Noble Warrum observed that President Joseph F. Smith "placed at the service of his country the most efficient non-military organization in the United States [The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints]."⁶⁹ The service rendered by President Smith included calling three faithful Latter-day Saint chaplains who served on active duty during the war with honor and distinction. They set a high standard for the Latter-day Saint chaplains who have followed them during the past century.

Notes

1. John Spencer Bassett, *A Short History of the United States, 1492–1920* (New York: Macmillan, 1921), 873–78.
2. Statistics regarding civilian and military death tolls from World War I vary widely. Some totals, for example, include deaths from the Russian Revolution and the Spanish influenza; others do not. Historian Martin Gilbert notes, "If each of the nine million military dead of the First World War were to have an individual page, the record of their deeds and suffering, their war-time hopes, their pre-war lives and loves, would fill twenty thousand books." Martin Gilbert,

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- The First World War: A Complete History*, 2nd ed. (New York: Henry Holt, 1994), xxi. See also “Source List and Detailed Death Tolls for the Primary Megadeaths of the Twentieth Century”; <http://necrometrics.com/20c5m.htm>; B. H. Roberts, *A Comprehensive History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 1965), 6:442.
3. Noble Warrum, *Utah in the World War: The Men Behind the Guns and the Men and Women Behind the Men Behind the Guns* (Salt Lake City: Arrow Press, 1924), 444.
 4. On November 9, 1916, Joseph F. Smith wrote to his son Wesley and made several observations regarding the elections held earlier that month: “The substitution of the pretentious, pedantic, two-faced democratic infidel W.H.K. [William H. King] in the Senate of the U.S. for the scholarly, consistent capable and friendly Geo. Southernland is a blistering disgrace upon the majority voters of Utah in this election. But the whole Nation seems to have been crazed over the silliest of all silly things, that:—‘Wilson has kept us out of war’!! The assalts [*sic*] made at Vera Cruz and by Gen. Pershing on Mexico, by order of Prest. Wilson, and the expenditure of three-hundred millions of money—to keep the army of the U.S. along the Southern Border of the Domain is not war!! Consistency is a Jewel! Mamma and all—Send love to all. Even Sincerely, Papa.” Joseph F. Smith to Wesley Smith, November 9, 1916, *Joseph F. Smith Letterpress Copybooks, 1875–1917*, MS 1325, box 36, folder 1, 402–21, October 20, 1916–November 30, 1916, also available in *Selected Collections from the Archives of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. Richard E. Turley Jr. (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 2002); <http://ldsarch.lib.byu.edu.eri.lib.byu.edu/CD%20Volume%201/Disc30/b36/seg25.htm>.
 5. Roberts, *Comprehensive History*, 6:453.
 6. Joseph F. Smith, in Conference Report, October 1914, 7.
 7. Joseph F. Smith, “Congress and the Mormons,” *Improvement Era*, April 1903, 469.
 8. “National Patriotism,” *Juvenile Instructor*, July 1912, 388–89.
 9. One of the mission leaders involved in Europe was Hyrum M. Smith, the eldest son of President Joseph F. Smith and his third wife, Edna Lambson; he withdrew missionaries from the continent of Europe first to Great Britain and then to the United States.
 10. Joseph F. Smith, in Conference Report, October 1914, 2.
 11. Joseph F. Smith, in Conference Report, April 1915, 3, 6. Interestingly, during the October 1915 and April 1916 general conferences, President Smith did not mention the war once during his addresses to the Church.
 12. Joseph F. Smith, in Conference Report, October 1916, 154.
 13. Reed Smoot to Joseph F. Smith, April 7, 1917, quoted in Joseph F. Boone, “The Roles of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Relation to the United States Military, 1900–1975,” vol. 1 (PhD diss., Brigham Young University, 1975), 160–61.
 14. Roberts, *Comprehensive History*, 6:467.
 15. Joseph F. Smith, in Conference Report, April 1917, 3–4.
 16. Roberts, *Comprehensive History*, 6:454.
 17. Benjamin Goddard, *Pertinent Facts on Utah’s Loyalty and War Record* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1918), 22–23. This Church-produced promotional pamphlet appears to have been written after June 1918 but prior to the end of World War I.
 18. Roberts, *Comprehensive History*, 6:467; Joseph F. Smith, in Conference Report, April 1918, 5.
 19. Goddard, *Pertinent Facts*, 17–19.
 20. Warrum, *Utah in the World War*, 61.

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21. "Passing Events," *Improvement Era*, July 1917, 846–47.
22. Warrum, *Utah in the World War*, 33. The war had an increasing influence on the affairs of the Church. In an effort to honor Latter-day Saint service members during the October 1918 general conference, President Smith declared, "Bishops should enter every member of their ward who is in the military service of the United States or its allies on the tithing record." President Smith further announced that "in consequence of so many of our young men being drafted into the war, the activities of our quorums of the priesthood, especially of the Elders, Priests and Teachers quorums, are very much impaired. In some wards nearly every priest and teacher of draft age is in the war. The quorums have been seriously depleted, and a corresponding effect has also been felt in the Sunday School and Y.M.M.I.A. (Young Men's Mutual Improvement Association)." Joseph F. Smith, in Conference Report, October 1918, 3.
23. Roberts, *Comprehensive History*, 6:455–56.
24. Joseph F. Smith had served as a chaplain twice during his life—once in a military setting and once in a pioneer company. Called as a young missionary to serve in the Sandwich Islands (Hawaii) in 1854, Elder Smith was recalled to Utah by Brigham Young in 1857 at the beginning of the Utah War. Departing Hawaii in October, he arrived in Salt Lake City on February 24, 1858. The day after he arrived in Salt Lake City, he enlisted in the Utah militia prepared to defend Utah Territory against the advancing US army. Later he was called to serve as chaplain in a regiment of the Utah militia. During the Civil War, Elder George Q. Cannon, a Church Apostle, asked Joseph F. Smith to accompany him in the fall of 1862 on a Church conference tour in Denmark. Returning to the United States in July 1863, he landed at New York City shortly after the battle of Gettysburg occurred in neighboring Pennsylvania. Not having sufficient funds to pay for a return trip to Utah, he found employment and worked his way to Florence, Nebraska, where he waited until he could join a company of Latter-day Saint immigrants traveling to Utah. He joined the John W. Woolley pioneer company later that year, serving as both chaplain and physician. Joseph Fielding Smith, *Life of Joseph F. Smith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1969), 204, 481.
25. "Chaplains Needed, Minister Cables," *Salt Lake Telegram*, July 12, 1918.
26. Elias Smith Kimball, journal, June 14, 1898, 3–4, MS 13348, Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City. A "corker" is something "that is excellent or remarkable" (*Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, 11th ed.) or something "that closes a discussion, or puts an end to any matter" (*Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. "corker," definition 2a).
27. Elias Smith Kimball, journal, June 15, 1898, 7. See also James Mangum, "The Spanish-American and Philippine War," in *Nineteenth-Century Saints at War*, ed. Robert C. Freeman (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, 2006), 155–93.
28. David A. Smith, in Conference Report, October 1918, 153.
29. The determination that Latter-day Saints should have received up to twenty chaplain authorizations was apparently based on undisclosed Church calculations. See Heber J. Grant, in Conference Report, June 1919, 110. In July 1918 there were "approximately 900 regular chaplains in the army and navy, and the number is rapidly being increased." "What the Church is Doing for Uncle Sam's Soldiers," *Salt Lake Telegram*, July 20, 1918.
30. Roberts, *Comprehensive History*, 6:476.

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31. Calvin S. Smith interview, December 29, 1965, MS 23095, Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City. Chaplain Maw was also described as serving as an “at-large” chaplain. “Bishop Charges Discrimination,” *Salt Lake Telegram*, July 27, 1918.
32. Warrum, *Utah in the World War*, 47.
33. Calvin S. Smith interview, December 29, 1965.
34. Calvin S. Smith to Joseph F. Smith, November 15, 1918, MS 1325, Church History Library.
35. Calvin S. Smith to Joseph F. Smith, November 15, 1918.
36. Warrum, *Utah in the World War*, 47.
37. Herbert B. Maw, *Adventures with Life* (Salt Lake City: n.p., 1978), 74–75.
38. Andrew Jenson, *Latter-day Saint Biographical Encyclopedia: A Compilation of Biographical Sketches of Prominent Men and Women in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Western Epics, 1971), 4:217; Maw, *Adventures with Life*, 78.
39. Maw, *Adventures with Life*, 79–80.
40. Maw, *Adventures with Life*, 81.
41. Maw, *Adventures with Life*, 82–83, 85.
42. Maw, *Adventures with Life*, 87–88.
43. Maw, *Adventures with Life*, 80–81.
44. “Mormon Chaplain Returns from War,” *Salt Lake Telegram*, June 13, 1919.
45. “Mormon Heads Sustained as Conference Closes,” *Salt Lake Telegram*, October 6, 1914.
46. Robert H. Malan, *B. H. Roberts: A Biography* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1966), 103.
47. E. W. Crocker, ed., *History of the 145th Field Artillery Regiment of World War I: 8-5-1917 to 1-28-1919* (Provo, UT: J. Grant Stevenson, 1968), 3.
48. “Utah Guards Await Mobilization Call,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, April 7, 1917, in *Journal History of the Church*, CR 100 137, Church History Library.
49. “B. H. Roberts Says He Will Go to the Trenches with Boys,” *Deseret Evening News*, March 28, 1917.
50. Truman G. Madsen, *Defender of the Faith: The B. H. Roberts Story* (Salt Lake City, Bookcraft, 1980), 302.
51. Warrum, *Utah in the World War*, 56; Crocker, *History of the 145th Field Artillery Regiment*, 8.
52. Roberts, *Comprehensive History*, 6:460. The fact that it was primarily a Latter-day Saint unit was illustrated in a soldier’s letter published in the *Vernal Express*; the soldier reported, “We haven’t one venereal case in our whole regiment now. Pretty good for Utah, isn’t it? Best record made by any regiment.” “Letters from Our Boys with the Flag,” *Vernal (Utah) Express*, March 1, 1918, 4.
53. “Utah Boys at Kearny Justify Pride of State,” *Salt Lake Telegram*, April 16, 1918. The chaplain training school at Camp Taylor opened on April 20, 1918. “The course aim[ed] to teach a civilian how to minister in a military environment. Thirty chaplains appointed since America entered the war and sixty just appointed” as of May 1918 were scheduled to take the course. “School Opened to Train Chaplains,” *Salt Lake Telegram*, May 6, 1918.
54. “Lieut. Roberts in His Missionary Days,” *Deseret Evening News*, August 31, 1918.
55. B. H. Roberts, remarks to the general board of the MIA, as recalled by Axel A. Madsen, quoted in Madsen, *Defender of the Faith*, 306.
56. Madsen, *Defender of the Faith*, 307.

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57. *Salt Lake Tribune*, October 2, 1933, 27, quoted in Malan, *B. H. Roberts, A Biography*, 107.
58. Madsen, *Defender of the Faith*, 307.
59. Madsen, *Defender of the Faith*, 307–8.
60. Madsen, *Defender of the Faith*, 311.
61. “Inspiration Key to Thanksgiving Psalm,” *Church News*, November 22, 1975.
62. Crocker, *History of the 145th Field Artillery Regiment*, 47.
63. Crocker, *History of the 145th Field Artillery Regiment*, 105. Some soldiers from the 145th Field Artillery Regiment replaced losses in other units, and some of them were killed.
64. Madsen, *Defender of the Faith*, 313.
65. Heber J. Grant, in Conference Report, June 1919, 110.
66. Anthony W. Ivins, in Conference Report, June 1919, 81–82.
67. Heber J. Grant, in Conference Report, April 1920, 7.
68. Smith, *Life of Joseph F. Smith*, 419.
69. Warrum, *Utah in the World War*, 408 (image caption).