



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on December 24, 2011

## Calif. Air Force Base Stands up to Secularists over Nativity Display

Included in the nativity scene, posed under a rough stable-like structure, are figures of Mary and Joseph, an animated baby Jesus in a manger, along with a surrounding cast of animals. The traditional Christmas display is accompanied by a simply constructed representation of a Jewish menorah — the nine-branched golden candelabrum centered prominently by a Star of David.



Katherine Ritchey, an attorney for the MRFF, complained that the “conspicuous display of ritual objects is a clear endorsement of religion in violation of the Establishment clause of the First Amendment...” She warned in a letter to officials at the base that the display “must either be removed from the premises or moved to a more appropriate location on the Air Force Base to ensure compliance with the United States Constitution.”

The secular group claimed that it had received a letter from an airman at the base complaining about the display. “The presence of these clearly religious displays on the main corner of the base deeply concerns me,” the anonymous airman supposedly wrote. “I am not alone in my feelings of distress. I know many other people are similarly offended and confused.”

The airman complained that he had “joined the military to support and defend the Constitution of the United States, not to spread the gospel. I fear that the religious symbols so prominently displayed on my Air Force Base convey a different message.”

In response to the complaint and threat from the secularist “military” organization, officials at the Air Force base released a statement announcing their decision to allow the morale-boosting display to remain for the inspirational benefit of the military personnel.

“While we appreciate the concerns raised by the Military Religious Freedom Foundation,” the statement read, “the Office of the Air Force Judge Advocate General, upon review, concluded the inclusion of a Wing Chaplain sponsored nativity scene and Menorah as part of a broader, secular holiday seasonal display does not violate the establishment clause of the United States Constitution.”

With the full-tilt assault on Christmas from groups such as the MRFF, the ACLU, and the Freedom From Religion Foundation, it was not surprising that the high-profile attack on the Travis Air Force Base would generate an abundance of outrage across the nation.

Tony Perkins of the [Family Research Council](#) said the MRFF assault represented “yet another flyby-



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attack on Christianity.” Perkins pointed out that no one was “forced to stand in front of the Nativity, and salute it, but people in this country should have the right to celebrate Christmas and what it means.”

Perkins told Fox News that increasingly, “people are saying it is time to stop the bombardment of our religious freedom by this zealous minority.”



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