

Newsletter

Special Conference Issue

Military and Veterans Affairs Endorsers and Chaplains

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"One of the most important things we can do is give soldiers a safe place to tell their story."

Chaplain Robert Powers,
Joint Readiness Training
Center and Fort Polk

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Chairman's Views

Letter from NCMAF Chairman Steve Doan

Dear Colleagues,

Caring for one another! There is hardly a concept more central to any of our faiths than this – we are called upon to be people who care. Caring draws us to the chaplaincy and it is what keeps us going when all else seems to be failing around us – the knowledge that we can be the one who cares for our neighbor.

At our recent conference perhaps the most memorable presentation was the panel discussion in which we had actively serving chaplains share with us their perspectives on how we can care for them. All of the chaplains who participated were incredibly articulate and perceptive and provided much for us to consider. They addressed us in terms of confirmation of our ministry as well as challenging us to strive to care ever more.

One chaplain in particular captured a very key thought for me which goes to the heart of why we meet together and why there is value in an organization such as NCMAF. He shared,

"You are sensitive to the needs of others around you and because there is a sense in which there is value in all of you acting as a body of endorsers because none of you can get to all of your people with the regularity and frequency that you would like to. Wherever you are if you would look around at the others and give them a little bit of care and attention to the degree you are able to that is beneficial."

Colleagues, there it is in a nutshell – not only do we as endorsers provide for our own but we also care for all.

Thank all of you for participation in our recent conference. Many thanks especially to those endorsers who went the extra mile and sponsored chaplains to attend the meeting with them. The feedback sheets you provided rated this new provision in our meeting as one of the most appreciated. We certainly intend to continue the opportunity into the years to come. Please plan now to be one of those who bring your chaplain next year.

This special issue of our Newsletter is intended to both highlight our annual meeting and remind you of some of the important information and insights provided. It also focuses particularly major issues which confront us as agents of pastoral care during this time of transition in our nation's military posture and the time of great need among those who have served and supported so faithfully. I hope it proves helpful to you as you continue your ministry of caring.

Collegially,
Steve Doan



A publication of the National Conference on Ministry to the Armed Forces (NCMAF)
and the Endorsers Conference for Veterans Affairs Chaplaincies (ECVAC)

Letter from ECVAC Chairman David B. Plummer

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Dear Colleagues,

Sometimes the best way to learn and remember something is to confront it through vivid contrast. Remember how wonderful a warm cup of hot cocoa was and the memories it implanted when it was served to you by caring hands after you had been exposed to frigid temperatures for a seemingly endless period of time. In such a situation, we all appreciate the bit or warmth the cocoa brings into our lives.

Such a contrast formed a similarly vivid memory for me from our recent annual conference. Chaplain Bill Smith from Togus VA in Maine provided us with great information on treatment of traumatic brain injury (TBI) and post-traumatic stress (PTS) in our returning veterans. He was able to emphasize also as the care which is essential for their families. Chaplain Smith did a superb job of bringing together the physical and spiritual perspectives in such a way that we can understand and help our chaplains as they seek to be agents of care and concern in the lives of those who now have needs due to these particular issues. Thank you Chaplain Smith.



The contrast for me occurred in juxtaposing Chaplain Smith's presentation with the video we watched in which April Marcum, wife of [Technical Sergeant Tom Marcum](#) describe their families experiences in navigating through the frustration and discouragement of gaining adequate care and treatment for their family. Her story was gripping and makes all who are confronted with it realize TBI and PTS are not simply conditions, they are afflictions of real live children of God. The personal and family struggles these afflictions create can be overwhelming. Our chaplains can and do help.

In this special issue of our newsletter you will find several articles and links which, in the whole, seek to highlight some of what is being done to confront these personal struggles. We can join with others in seeking to address the afflictions which are, in a very special sense, pressing on our military members, our veterans, and their family members at this point in time. In addition to TBI and PTS, family struggles, interpersonal relations, job insecurity, health and wellness concerns, and questions of value and purpose all must be considered as we seek to be advocates for those who serve and have served.

The contrast and comfort you and your chaplains bring to people's lives in the days and months ahead may not be that of a warm cup of cocoa on a frigid winter day in the literal sense; it may however be the metaphorical equivalent as a person in need is touched by the warmth and kindness of a person who truly cares.

Collegially,
David Plummer



A n n u a l C o n f e r e n c e s

Mark the dates!

NCMAF AND ECVAC 2013 CONFERENCE

January 15 and 16, 2013

Hilton Mark Center Hotel in Alexandria, Virginia



.....

[2012 Conference Speakers](#)

[Lieutenant General Darrell Jones, USAF](#) [Air Force Deputy Chief of Staff for Manpower, Personnel and Services](#)



“We started a tradition of never going into battle without our chaplains. That hasn’t changed today. When I talk to my counterparts who are forward doing duty today they are very very close to their chaplains because the job can’t be done without what you bring to the fight.

And what you bring to the fight is the ability to help the Airman be resilient. The ability to help them go somewhere where they have no fear, they can confide in people, they can tell people what they are really thinking.

We are really a very terrible service, all of us, when it comes to admitting our weaknesses. We are trying to get people to come out now and go to mental health counselors and talk to people when they feel like there is a little chink in their armor. But we are still fighting an uphill battle. Recent statistics in the Air Force show fewer and fewer people think there is a stigma about going to talk to mental health counselors when they are having trouble.

Interestingly enough, that stigma does not carry over to the chaplaincy. “

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[Vice Admiral John Bird, USN](#) [Director, Navy Staff](#)

“Today the role of the chaplain includes but is not limited to principal moral, ethical, and spiritual advisor to the commander; advising the commander on multicultural engagement and outreach; an organic resource to facilitate, provide, care, and advise for our Sailors; a key player to help warriors unpack the moral, ethical, spiritual, and emotional impact of traumatic experience.

As a sounding board (chaplains) are the lead agent to reframe life and death experiences, (and promote) the recognition of a spiritual dimension giving purpose and meaning to traumatic events; (thus) inspiring hope and promoting spiritual readiness.

A pretty big role to fill!”





Colonel Carl Coffman, USA
Commander, Ft. Myers/Henderson Hall Joint Base



“Based on the future challenges and the core competencies of what I think a Chaplain should be capable of let me lay out what I think is important for our Endorsing Agents. You are recruiting and selecting individuals that will be extremely important to the wellbeing of our force. You have the most important recruiting duty in the military.

As a young major, my wife convinced me to attend a one day conference while I was attending Command and General Staff College. You have to understand I was having a hard time giving up my Saturday to attend a marriage/parenting seminar but I actually learned a great deal from Stu Webber. What

stuck with me was the essential characteristics of a parent; Teacher, Warrior, Mentor, and Friend. Love your children until they feel it and be a living example.

Since a preacher taught it there must be some correlation to ministering. What I expect of you as an endorsing agent is to recruit and endorse preachers, teachers, counselors and leaders. The order of priority is leader, preacher, counselor and teacher. If you can find one that can sing that is a bonus.”



Professor Robert Tuttle, J.D., Ph.D.
David R. and Sherry Kirschner Berz
Research Professor of Law and Religion,
The George Washington University,
Washington, DC



“My reason for thinking in these practical and conceptual terms is that an emphasis on the Free Exercise rights of chaplains distracts our focus from what I think is best described as the instrumental character of chaplaincy.

The institution, and every person in it, is justified because it is a reasonable government response to the needs of service members. So the chaplaincy does not exist as an end in itself. It is itself a response to other needs; so it has an instrumental function.

That means Chaplains are instruments; that was the title of the article that Chip Lupu and I wrote.

I don't in that sense in any means think that people find it anything less than fulfilling – it is a blessing that so many people find being an instrument is personally and spiritually fulfilling. But from the government's perspective it is instrumental.”



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[The Honorable Allison Hickey](#)
[Under Secretary of Benefits, Department of Veterans Affairs](#)

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“When I come out to talk to groups like you and others I don’t ever say veteran without also saying family member and survivor. The bottom core line of it; they work together, they heal together, they hope together and we have to serve them together.

While you look at where you are going in the future I think there is even a greater expectation because I know we are certainly focused on that even in our technology solutions. How do we connect our survivors into our technology solutions so they stay connected for their entire lifetime so they don’t fall out of the news and out of the understanding of the benefits and the services they are entitled to just by the nature of their loved one and their service in uniform?

I would encourage you to think even broader about that as you go.”



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Veterans Affairs Chaplain receives Four Chaplains Memorial Foundation Award

Chaplain Jeni Cook is the recipient of the *Legion of Honor Bronze Medallion* awarded by the [Four Chaplains Memorial Foundation](#). The award was presented to her at the combined luncheon of ECVAC and NCMAF during the annual meeting.

The *Legion of Honor Award* program publicly recognizes and honors outstanding members of society whose lives model the giving spirit and unconditional service to community, nation, and humanity without regard to race, religion, or creed exemplified so dramatically by the *Four Chaplains*. To be considered for any of the five awards, the selfless and transformative achievement must be above and beyond that of a professional resume or organizational position. The *Legion of Honor Bronze Medallion* is the second highest award and is granted for extraordinary contributions to the well-being of others at the national or world level, to world peace, or to inter-faith and inter-ethnic understanding.

Chaplain Jeni Cook is a most deserving recipient for membership into this Legion of Honor. She became the first female chaplain in the Department of Veterans Affairs Chaplaincy history to become the National Director of VA Chaplains. She was instrumental in establishing a network of female chaplains and has served as a mentor for female chaplains throughout the VA in a population that has been dominated historically by male chaplains. She has not limited herself only to female chaplains but has selflessly given herself to aid all chaplains in becoming the best that they could be. She presently serves as an Associate Director at the National VA Chaplain Center.



In presenting the *Legion of Honor Bronze Medallion*, Chaplain Michael L. McCoy, Associate Director, National Chaplain Center, Department of Veterans Affairs, stated "I believe she would add honor to the roll of past awardees and is most deserving of membership in the Four Chaplains Legion of Honor."



Soldiers Involved in High Number of Violent Incidents Since Coming Home from Iraq

By Kelly Twedel, Email the author, February 6, 2012

During Thursday's address to the 14,000 troops welcome home retreat ceremony, Lt. Gen. Frank Helmick brought up the number of incidents that affected service members and their families. Since December, six soldiers had taken their lives and at least 25 cases of spousal abuse were reported over the past month.

Mental health service providers have increased over the past year at Bragg to accommodate the growing numbers of cases, and the installation is working on reassuring its soldiers that there is no stigma attached to seeking help.

According to [Sunday's Fayetteville Observer](#), here are some high-profile local incidents involving soldiers over the past two months:

- Iraq War veteran Martin Abel Poynter, 33, who had suffered mental illness since leaving the army as a Special Forces soldier in 2007, shot a Moore County Deputy and then himself to death on Dec. 8 when the deputy tried to arrest him on a child-custody charge.
- Paratrooper Seth Andrews, 24, shot his new wife, Hillary, and then himself to death at their Raeford home, on Dec. 10.
- On Dec. 14, weapons, explosives and drug-related materials were found at the home of Fort Bragg soldier Joshua Robert Kompf, 25, when police were serving a warrant charging him with choking a woman.
- Fort Bragg soldier Christopher Ervin McNeal, 23, has been accused of shooting two people and trying to shoot three others at the Brookstone apartment complex on Dec. 16.
- Fort Bragg paratrooper George James Desormeaux II, 34, died of an undisclosed cause near Cameron in Moore County.
- On Jan. 17, Fort Bragg Sgt. Taylor B. Self, 25, was found dead of an apparent self-inflicted gunshot in his Fayetteville home.
- Fort Bragg paratrooper Pete Peterson, 32 was found dead in his Fayetteville home Jan. 31; police said he died of a self-inflicted gunshot wound.



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[Robins Chaplain Attacking High Air Force Divorce Rate](#)

by Gene Rector

Air Force readiness doesn't begin with the ability to generate aircraft and put bombs on target.

The starting point is much more basic and personal. For many airmen, it is the health of their marriage ... and, frankly, the latest figures show the Air Force is not doing very well.

In data just released by the Defense Department, the divorce rate across all service branches is the highest it's been since 1999 with the Air Force showing the greatest increase. Ten years ago, as the war on terror was beginning, airmen experienced 2.5 divorces per 100 marriages. By the end of fiscal year 2011, the rate was 3.9.

Divorce among enlisted airmen was even greater at 4.6 with military women having the highest rate for both officers and enlisted.

Although the specifics for Robins Air Force Base are not available, Chaplain (Capt.) Lane Campbell knows the local installation is no exception. That's why he has placed much of his focus on a program called Marriage Care.

The program, developed by the Chaplain Corps College, offers weekend retreats to married couples hoping to put new life and vigor into their relationship.

"It is not designed to save a marriage," Campbell quickly points out, "but to focus and help couples strengthen their marriage."

Twenty-six couples attended the last session in November. Another retreat is scheduled for March.

The agenda includes ice breakers, group and couple activities, games, handouts and videos. But the focus is on the traditional vows that most couples recite on their wedding day.

“They’re simple but sacred words,” the chaplain noted. “We talk about what their wedding day was like. Some things were funny. Some were serious. Some challenging. Some were good memories while others were not. But we all took vows.”

The program begins with “I take thee.” What does that mean? Does it include the extended family? Children from a previous marriage? Or did they mean only part of them?

“Every bit of a person is included when you said that,” Campbell believes.

The session continues with “to have and to hold” and “for better and for worse.”

“We try to get some tools in their marriage tool box,” the Colorado native said. “We focus on communications and what it means to communicate

effectively. How to know your spouse’s love language. We try to empower them to be the couples God wants them to be.”

Campbell was a Seventh Day Adventist pastor and university teacher for more than 18 years before joining the Air Force some three years ago. Feedback from the Marriage Care sessions tell him they work.

“Before our last retreat, we asked the couples to rate their marriage on a scale of 1 to ten,” he indicated. “The men had it at 7 and the women 7.5. After the retreat, both the men and women jumped to 9.”

Continuing the weekend sessions will take money. So far, chapel offerings and tithes have covered the bill, but other base resources will be needed.

“I believe the program strengthens marriages and keeps them intact,” Campbell said. “I have words from people who say they were ready to leave but now they’re committed to changing some things.”

He hopes senior leaders will attend one of the sessions and experience first-hand the impacts the retreat can have. He stressed that stable, functioning marriages are critical for overall readiness.

“Commanders should consider the value of sponsoring and hosting these retreats,” Campbell said, “especially since the Air Force divorce rate is the highest in the Defense Department.”

Read more: [The Warner Robins Patriot - Robins chaplain attacking high Air Force divorce rate](#)



[Chaplains Take Leading Role in Rooting out US Military Sexual Assault](#)

Anna Mulrine | *The Christian Science Monitor* | Jan 19, 2012

Inside a classroom at Fort Jackson in South Carolina, a group of some 40 Army chaplains are wrestling with what they just heard.

They are focused on an overhead projection of congressional testimony from a former US Army sergeant allegedly raped by a fellow soldier. When she sought out a military pastor, she said the chaplain suggested the rape must have been God's will and that she should go to church more often.

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Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Thomas Fey, briefs General Bruce Carlson, Air Force Materiel Command commander, about the Airmen's Ministry at Robins Monday. U. S. Air Force photo by Sue Sapp

A firestorm of discussion ensues. What chaplain could have said such a thing? How should he have counseled her? What if a chaplain disagrees with how a victim is living her life? What if he simply doesn't believe her?

The debate is a portrait in real time of how one of the Pentagon's most important tools in its fight against sexual abuse – the Army chaplain program – is learning to cope with rising reports of sexual assault as well as new responsibilities.

Last year, an Air Force study – the most comprehensive survey yet conducted by the military – found that 1 in 5 female airmen says she has been sexually assaulted since joining up. The report was seen as a key motivation behind an unprecedented push by the Pentagon to address sexual abuse in all service branches.

Last week, three Air Force Academy cadets in Colorado were charged with unrelated sexual assaults on female cadets only weeks after the academy released a report showing an increase in abuse from the previous year.

In the effort to combat sexual abuse, chaplains are indispensable. Fewer than 1 in 6 sexual assaults among US troops is reported, according to estimates. For this reason, chaplains are often the first responders. Two years ago, Army chaplains became bound by confidentiality for the first time (other service chaplains have long been bound by their ministry to the

This new privilege is a rare benefit in a workplace where soldiers not only work, eat, and sleep in close proximity, but also where even the most trivial of infractions can quickly become matters of high command. But confidentiality has also created new challenges for the chaplain corps – as has the Pentagon's new focus on rooting out sexual abuse.

Here at the Army school at Fort Jackson, military chaplains are wrestling with those changes in their work. In the case of sexual assault, "chaplains need to know what the procedures are and how to provide not only the correct response within the Army, but also, because we're chaplains, how to provide for the emotional individual as well," says Col. David Smartt, commandant of the school.

The congressional testimony of the Army sergeant is a teachable moment. The instructor, Lt. Col. Carl Rosenberg, asks the class what they think of the chaplain's words. Some doubt the victim's claim; others are outraged. "It frustrates me, sir," says one chaplain. "I'd say the chaplain's response is – I wouldn't say equally traumatic, but now you have two traumas instead of one."

Rosenberg later seizes on that theme. "I hope and pray for you, that you will take this seriously so as to develop care practices that will not re-traumatize victims," Rosenberg says. "Let's use this time to develop our skills as a corps."

This is a serious issue for chaplains. They are not sexual-abuse counselors. And as followers of different faith traditions, they bring their own values to the cases that come to them.

What if, one chaplain asks, a soldier who has had an abortion as a result of a rape asks for guidance? "I would feel for that person, but I'm not going to ... say it's OK."

Indeed, the clash of conscience with compassion can chill the effectiveness of chaplains in dealing with sexual abuse. Army Sgt. Andrea Neutzling, who says she was raped by two fellow soldiers during a year-long deployment to Iraq in 2005, says her experience with a chaplain compounded her feelings of isolation and sadness.

The chaplain seemed to cast aspersions on her by saying she didn't act like a rape victim. And when she felt most vulnerable, he recommended that Neutzling's rifle be taken away after she joked to him that she wouldn't mind maiming her attackers.

"I'll admit, because of him I kind of lost respect for chaplains," she says.



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One chaplain wonders if there are circumstances when a pastor should request a release from the sexual-assault victim to speak to the commander. "I'm reluctant to tell a commander that kind of information," Rosenberg says. Another chaplain agrees. "Regardless of it being a closed investigation – it's not. Someone else always finds out."

Also difficult is when chaplains must counsel perpetrators as well as victims. "That's one of the more difficult juggling acts," says Maj. Harold Cline, course manager for the Chaplain Basic Officer Leader Course at Fort Jackson.

The bottom line, the chaplains agree, is striving for care that helps to heal, rather than further injure victims. Toward the end of the class, Rosenberg turns the discussion back to the chaplain in the congressional testimony.

"That chaplain was a bonehead," he said. "It is not God's will for someone to be raped. It's not. And anyone who wants to argue theologically on that, I'm glad to do it right now."

The point is to "offer a space that feels safe. It's not our responsibility to be the investigators," says Rosenberg. "Suspend judgment, and trust that this person is speaking their truth to us."

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News You Can Use

Army Study Shows Decline in Behavioral Health Stigma

By Rob McIlvaine, Army News Service, WASHINGTON, Jan. 20, 2012

A newly released Army study on behavioral health shows a decline in soldier suicides and more seeking treatment for their problems.

Gen. Peter W. Chiarelli, Army vice chief of staff, discussed the findings of the report, "Generating Health and Discipline in the Force, Ahead of the Strategic Reset," at a Pentagon news conference yesterday. The three-year study outlines the problem of suicide in the Army and related issues of substance abuse, spouse abuse and child abuse.

Two years ago, the Army reported 210,000 soldiers sought treatment for behavioral health problems, Chiarelli said, adding that public reaction was, "My gosh, you've got that many in the Army? That's not good, is it?"

"I told them we'd like to see that number go up," he said. "And in fact, it has gone up. It's gone up to 280,000. I think we have begun the process in the Army of destigmatizing behavior health issues. That, to me, is absolutely critical. People who need help, get the help that they need."

More soldiers seek help because of the help of commanders and leaders at all levels, Chiarelli added.

Suicide Prevention

Three years ago, then Army Secretary Gen. Pete Geren and Chief of Staff Gen. George Casey appointed Chiarelli to look at driving down the number of soldier suicides.

Chiarelli found that drug abuse, suicide attempts, alcohol abuse, prescription drug abuse and anger management all are high-risk behavior common to soldiers who committed suicide.

In 2011, he said, overall suicide numbers decreased by 10 percent, from 350 to 315. "The only category



where we had an increase of five suicides was in the active-duty category," Chiarelli said.

Most important, he said, is that more soldiers are receiving early intervention and treatment.

"This shows why I think we have arrested this problem and hopefully will start to push it down, because we have leader involvement," Chiarelli said. "They're not walking past the problem, and [they] are getting soldiers the help that they need. And that, to me, is a very positive sign."

Traumatic Brain Injury

One of the "huge advances" the Army has made downrange are the protocols that last year led to diagnoses for 9,000 soldiers who had concussions downrange, Chiarelli said. The protocols include an initial screening and keeps soldiers off the battlefield for another 24 hours for a second screening.

"If they fail any of those two screenings, they are sent to one of our concussion recovery centers," he said. "Some of them stayed up to 21 days until their brain looked normal."

Traumatic brain injury and the cognitive issues involved, Chiarelli said, occur when concussions are not treated.

"I think this is a huge step forward that we made," he said, added that the Army has diagnosed 126,000 cases of TBI in the past 10 years of war. "But I've got to tell you, if they're treated properly, most soldiers will have a full recovery from traumatic brain injury. The problem is if they return and get a second concussion before the brain has healed."

Post-traumatic Stress

"PTS is one of the key ones," Chiarelli said. "It represents a prevalent psychological injury with over 70,000 soldiers diagnosed by the Army since calendar year 2003. That's not 70,000 out of 1.1 million. That's 70,000 out of a much greater number because we have soldiers entering and leaving all the time."

The problem with PTS, he said, is it is hard to diagnose. It shares many of the same symptoms as TBI and sometimes symptoms don't appear for weeks, months, or even years after the event.

"I don't think we've done a good job in explaining the immaturity in the science of the brain," Chiarelli said. "I was quoted a figure that basically said that from the time an initiating event for PTS takes place to the time that somebody gets into treatment is 12 years. Twelve years nationally -- that's not with soldiers, that's nationally."

"And the horrible thing about that is all the bad things that happen in between," he said. "The abuse of alcohol, the abuse of drugs, prescription drugs, the anger management issues."

Drug Abuse

The Army continues to close the gap in drug surveillance and drug rehabilitation programs, although there was an increase last year believed to be related to increased surveillance, Chiarelli said. Illicit drug use declined by 19 percent from earlier highs in 2006 and 2008, he said.

Army substance abuse programs saw more than 24,000 soldiers last year. "I know because of the connection of alcohol abuse to post-traumatic stress, many people who go untreated for PTS self-medicate with alcohol," he said. "I know that after 10 years of war, those numbers have gone up. So seeing an increase in the number who are in the program is a positive step."

Sexual Assaults

Chiarelli said he is most concerned about an increase in violent sex crimes that rose 64 percent from 2006 to 2011. "This is unacceptable. We have zero tolerance for this," he said.

"Army leaders take sexual assault seriously," Chiarelli said. "We're expanding our surveillance and response against these crimes. We've identified numerous sex crime factors, such as alcohol and the newly designed barracks that offer privacy, coupled with a lack of leadership."

This impacts the youngest and most junior female soldiers, and the perpetrators mirror that age, he said.

Domestic violence among soldiers increased during the same five-year span by 33 percent, Chiarelli said, while child abuse cases rose by 43 percent.

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Alcohol associated with domestic violence increased by 54 percent, and with child abuse by 40 percent, he said.

The research also shows that PTS contributes to domestic violence, Chiarelli said, with person diagnosed with PTS three times more likely to participate in some kind of partner aggression.

"That is why it is so critical to eliminate the stigma associated with PTS and get people in for treatment for their alcohol problem, their drug-abuse problem, prescription drug-abuse problem, or anger-management problems, spouse abuse and child abuse," Chiarelli said. "That, to me, is critical. And the National Institute of Mental Health lays this out as not just an Army problem, this is a national problem."

Looking to Reset

Similar to any post-war period, reset and recovery must remain focused on the health and discipline of the volunteer force, Chiarelli said.

"We have an opportunity to avoid mistakes of prior post-war environments by applying science and the many lessons learned to mitigate health, discipline and readiness challenges," he said. "I often tell folks if you were to ask somebody what good comes out of war, they would point to military medicine and the advances that are made that benefit us all. And I think if you were to ask somebody today what is the greatest advancement in military medicine in this war, they would probably point to the advancements we've made in prosthetics.

"But I honestly believe 10 years from now with some of the things that I'm seeing and the advancements we've made in brain science, that ... people are going to look back and say, 'You know the greatest advancements that were made in these particular conflicts was our understanding of the brain,'" Chiarelli said.

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[Lost Warriors: Families struggle with military suicide](#)

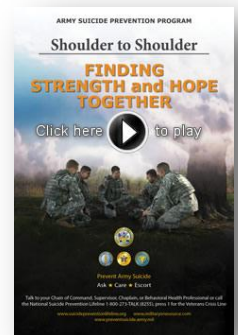
Updated: January 20, 2012 - 2:59 PM

After a decade at war on two fronts, the U.S. is facing a crisis at home. Last year, more American troops killed themselves than died in combat in Iraq and Afghanistan. When Guard and Reserve troops are combined, the U.S. military had its highest rate of suicides since the Department of Defense began keeping track. That includes Minnesota National Guard, which has one of the highest rates of suicide of any Guard unit in the country. Programs have been added and professionals have been hired to beef up suicide prevention programs. But interviews with family members and the Army's own internal records of soldiers who have killed themselves show patterns where pleas for help have been disregarded and red flags dismissed.

The video [here](#) provides a first-hand account of how one family related to their personal tragedy. It may provide insight and understanding of a severe problem now confronting our military personnel.

[Military Suicide Prevention Resources](#)

- [Army](#)
- [Navy](#)
- [Marines](#)
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- [Coast Guard](#)
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- Contact the Community Covenant staff

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ARMY STRONG

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Revised DODI 1304.28 dated January 19, 2012

A revised Department of Defense Instruction 1304.28, Guidance for the Appointment of Chaplains in the Military Departments, became effective as of January 19, 2012. The revision incorporates updated guidance on eligibility to participate in the military chaplaincies most notably related to national security issues. The revised [DD Form 2088](#) dated OCT 2011 is referenced in the revised Instruction and should be used for all endorsement actions.

Items of Interest

More women in combat means more mothers with PTSD

By Kyra Phillips and Michael Cary, CNN, updated 1:16 PM EST, Tue December 13, 2011

Palo Alto, California (CNN) -- It wasn't until five months after Army Staff Sgt. June Moss returned from the Iraq war in 2003 that her real battle began. The horrors of the war -- witnessing decapitated and burned bodies amid mass destruction -- led to post-traumatic stress disorder.

"I do notice when I'm stressing out that I start having dreams about what I saw and how I felt," says Moss, now 40 and retired from the Army. "It does come back as if to haunt you."

The percentage of women in the military has doubled in the last 30 years, with more than 350,000 serving as of 2009, according to the Department of Veterans Affairs' latest figures. With more female troops in combat, there has been an increase in PTSD diagnoses: One in five female veterans suffer from PTSD, according to the VA.

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Army Staff Sgt. June Moss provided checkpoint security in Baghdad during the Iraq War.

the mall or the grocery store."

Six years ago, she cut her wrists to end the pain. Today, Moss has progressed significantly after specialized therapy provided by the local Veterans Affairs in Palo Alto, California, where the focus is on female vets like herself.

"Women tend to be diagnosed more often, at least with our recent returnees, with depression, whereas men are being diagnosed more often with substance abuse," says Natara Garovoy, program director of the Women's Prevention, Outreach & Education Center at VA Palo Alto Health Care System.

Garovoy says recent studies show the percentage of women veterans suffering from PTSD is on par with the percentage of men: 20%.

"Women are exposed to combat now more than ever before, and they're proving to be just as resilient to those exposures as men," she said.

There is no cure for PTSD, only treatment.

"It takes a lot to live with PTSD," Moss says. "I hate to compare it with being an alcoholic, because I'm not one, but that's the best description I can give. You're always one incident from spiraling out of control back to where you were -- being depressed, not coming out of the house, not being able to sleep, having night terrors, night sweats, all those kinds of things."

Moss attributes an angry outburst in her workplace last year to PTSD, after she says she had become complacent with her treatment. Moss physically struck a fellow employee with whom she was romantically involved.

"I just went off. It went from verbal to physical. And, thank God, I didn't lose my job over it. But I did get in trouble," says Moss, who was suspended for three days without pay. "Those feelings came out of nowhere."

Moss says she realized that even years later, she needed to actively engage in her weekly therapy. She also turned to her boss, the chaplain at the Palo Alto VA, to focus on her spirituality.

"I'm constantly working on how I'm thinking," Moss says of her regimen today, which includes morning meditation, listening to gospel music and exercising.

Her new mantra: "Staying positive and keeping negativity out of my life!"

Moss has lost 40 pounds in the last two years and is pursuing a degree in human resource management at San Francisco's Golden Gate University.

As a light-vehicle mechanic, Moss drove across Baghdad and provided security at checkpoints during her combat tour in Iraq. When she returned home, she became overly protective of her two children, fearing that someone was going to kidnap or harm them.

At the same time, she hunkered down inside her home, staying in bed, because she says it was too hard to face the most mundane tasks such as shopping.

"It was crazy. I couldn't even do crowds. It reminded me when we were in a marketplace (in Iraq), and we didn't know if somebody was out there to kill us," Moss explains. "I'm back home, and I didn't have to worry about a suicide bomber, but I still felt as if there was one lurking in



Today, with the help of her local VA, June Moss has gotten treatment for her PTSD.

Moss beams with pride when she discusses recent steps in her therapy made within the last six months. She went on a trip by herself to Philadelphia while her teenage children went away to camp. She says technology, like video chat, helped her make such a stride. Moss also took her daughter to a concert in October, braving a shoulder-to-shoulder crowd.

"It's a big deal to know that from then to now, I've come a long way," Moss says with a smile. "From head to toe, I'm a better me."



Historical Notes

The Ultimate Badge of Honor

By A. James Rudin/ Religion News Service, Published: January 26, 2012

Even though men and women from every faith have been members of our armed forces since the Revolutionary War, the struggle for Catholic and Jewish chaplains to gain equality within the American military has been long and difficult.

It's not a new fight.

In 1775, the Continental Congress restricted military clergy to Protestant ministers. Rabbis and Catholic priests were banned from serving as chaplains until the Civil War. And even then it was not easy.

It required the personal leadership of President Abraham Lincoln to enact legislation that was adopted 150 years ago, on July 17, 1862: "No person shall be a chaplain in the United States Army that is not a regularly ordained minister of some religious denomination," the new law said.

The only requirement was presenting "testimonials of his present good standing as such minister" from a religious denomination that had at least "five accredited ministers."

The key word was "some," and there was no specific definition of what constituted an acceptable or recognized "religious denomination."

Catholic and Jewish soldiers were at last guaranteed their spiritual leaders would accompany them into battle. Indeed, Rabbi Ferdinand Leopold Sarner of Congregation Brith Kodesh in Rochester, N.Y., was wounded at Gettysburg in July 1863. And at least two rabbis also served as chaplains in the Confederate army.

In the years that followed, it became commonplace for pastors, priests and rabbis to work together in the military. The most dramatic example of such cooperation took place on February 3, 1943 in the icy North Atlantic when a German submarine torpedoed the U.S.S. Dorchester, a small jam-packed American troop ship carrying 902 men, headed for Greenland.

The four chaplains on board — Protestant ministers Clark Poling and George Fox, Catholic priest John Washington, and Rabbi Alexander Goode — had become close friends at the Army Chaplaincy School. As the ship began to sink, the clergy colleagues helped move men onto lifeboats.



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When it became clear there were not enough life jackets for all aboard, the four chaplains gave their own life jackets to others. The four men, holding hands in solidarity and reciting prayers, went down with the ship. They were among the 672 who died that night.

As a result of their heroism, the so-called "four chaplains" were posthumously awarded medals for bravery, and a foundation was established in their memory to strengthen positive interreligious relations. A monument in Philadelphia commemorates the chaplains' act of courage.

In 1945, after the bloody battle to capture Iwo Jima, Navy chaplain Rabbi Roland Gittelsohn spoke at the dedication of a cemetery on that tiny Pacific island. His address endures as one of the great sermons in American history.

"Here there are no quotas of how many of each group are admitted. There is the highest and purest democracy," Gittelsohn said. "Any man among us, the living, who lifts his hand in hate against another or thinks himself superior to those who happen to be a minority makes this an empty mockery."

Yet, it was not until 1972 that a non-Protestant, the Rev. John J. O'Connor, was appointed senior chaplain at the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis. O'Connor later became Chief of all Navy Chaplains.

The world later came to know him as Cardinal John O'Connor, the archbishop of New York. Next month, in a ceremony at the Vatican, Pope Benedict XVI will elevate another former Army chaplain, former Baltimore Archbishop Edwin O'Brien, to the College of Cardinals.

I served as a U.S. Air Force chaplain in Japan and Korea. Living day in and day out with my fellow chaplains provided me an important introduction to Christian-Jewish relations. At the time, my seminary classmate, Rabbi Philip Schechter, was an Air Force chaplain stationed in New Mexico.

Today his daughter, Sarah, is also a rabbi and wears the Air Force blue uniform as a chaplain. She has already completed seven years of active duty, including several deployments to Iraq.

Since 1862 all American clergy representing "some religious denomination" have been able to serve their country and their faith communities as military chaplains, both in times of war and times of peace. Thank you, President Lincoln.

(Rabbi Rudin, the American Jewish Committee's senior interreligious adviser, is the author of the upcoming "Cushing, Spellman, O'Connor: The Surprising Story of How Three American Cardinals Transformed Catholic-Jewish Relations.")

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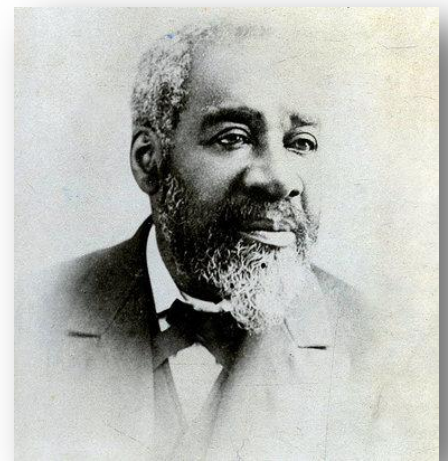
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[Samuel Harrison Served as a Civil War Chaplain](#)

Samuel Harrison, was born into slavery in 1818 and found his way to Pittsfield in 1850 to become the eloquent pastor of the Second Congregational Church. His congregation was small but his work for black equality put him on the national stage. He lectured and debated in cities up and down the East Coast and as far away as Seattle. For the most part, Rev. Harrison's weapon was the pen rather than the sword. For more than 50 years he wrote passionate essays, pamphlets, sermons and books condemning racism on every level. In an age of lynchings and violent bigotry he feared no man and no man or institution was too big for him to challenge.

During the Civil War he went head to head with Abraham Lincoln over equal pay for blacks serving in the Union Army. He won. And in June 1864 Congress granted equal pay for the 180,000 blacks who fought on the side of the North. Rev. Harrison knew first-hand how badly blacks were treated in the military. He served as chaplain of the famed Massachusetts 54th Regiment, the first all black infantry to fight in the Civil War. The exploits of this unit were dramatized in the movie "Glory," which,



Samuel Harrison persuaded President Abraham Lincoln that blacks serving in the Union Army deserved equal pay.

coincidentally, had as its hero another Berkshires man. Robert Gould Shaw, the 26-year old colonel who commanded the 54th, lived in a house that stood on the site in Lenox where [Ventfort Hall](#) stands today.

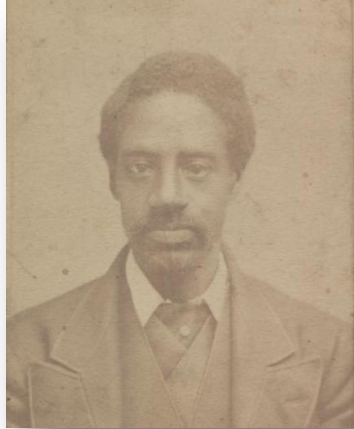
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[Excerpt from Biography of Samuel Harrison, Samuel Harrison Society, Pittsfield, MA](#)



Samuel Harrison (In his 40's - post Civil War)

Age 45 (Aug 1863) – Mass Gov John A Andrew arrived by train from Boston to visit the widow of Colonel Robert Shaw who died during the assault on Fort Wagner near Charleston SC. Colonel Shaw led the 1st and most famous all black infantry to fight in the Civil War, the 54th Mass Infantry that was immortalized in the 1989 Academy Award winning film “Glory”. During the Gov’s visit he called upon Rev Harrison and asked him to go to SC to express the sympathy of the Commonwealth over the tragic death of Colonel Shaw and that of nearly half the members of the regiment who died during the disastrous assault on Fort Wagner. Just 2 days before the tragedy a letter was sent from Gov Andrew’s Military Sec’y to Colonel Shaw citing a “strong and unanimous” endorsement by the Governor of Mass, the President of Williams College, and highly respected clergy and laymen of Western Mass for Rev Harrison as the 1st Chaplain of the Mass 54th. Rev Harrison reported for commissioning and duty at Morris

Island, SC and states in his autobiography that he was treated “in all respects...same as other chaplains of a fairer hue.” But when payday came around “the paymaster refused to pay the men of the regiment the same amount paid to white troops because they were of African descent”. Harrison wrote, “Three months passed and no pay. I knew that my family’s means were nearly used up My wife and six children, a debt of three hundred dollars on my house, and grocery bills. I had a hard burden to carry.” Chaplain Harrison filed a formal complaint to his superior officers, but to no avail. Harrison wrote, “I grew sick under the pressure.” So sick was he that he requested and received a medical discharge during his 4th month of service. He thereupon complained to Mass Gov Andrew at being declined equal pay on account of his African ancestry. Gov Andrew vigorously and repeatedly petitioned President Lincoln to honor Harrison’s claim for equal pay and that of all servicemen of African descent serving under an enlistment contract issued by the Sec of War acting under the orders of the President of the United States. In June 1864 legislation requiring equal pay, retroactive to Jan 1864, was passed in the army appropriations bill. Harrison states in his autobiography that it was suggested during his brief military service that he was “the victim” upon whom the whole matter of equal pay would turn and, as a consequence of the relationships he’d established with men of influence that indeed was the case



[Postcard from Massillon: Honoring Four Chaplains](#)

By Gary Brown, [CantonRep.com](#) staff writer, Posted Feb 04, 2012 @ 07:10 AM

The names make the metal more than just a marker designating a portion of state Route 172 in Massillon as Four Chaplains Memorial Viaduct.

- George L. Fox.
- Alexander D. Goode.
- Clark V. Poling.
- John P. Washington.

The four were first lieutenants in the Army during World War II. Each was a chaplain. They all gave their lives so others in their military flock might live.

“The sinking of the U.S. Army troopship Dorchester by a torpedo fired from a German submarine off the coast of Greenland on February 3, 1943, claimed the lives of 672 servicemen, including four Army chaplains” the plaque at the base of the viaduct reads.

“Chaplains Alexander D. Goode, Jewish; George L. Fox, Methodist; Clark V. Poling, Dutch Reformed; and John P. Washington, Roman Catholic, died as they had lived — in selfless service to others,” text on the plaque explains, “ultimately giving up their means of survival, their life jackets, to those in need.”

Friday was the anniversary of their deaths, and the deaths of those hundreds of other American men who were aboard the S.S. Dorchester. It is a date worth remembering seven decades later. The Four Chaplains Memorial Viaduct plaque seems the place to go for that recollection.

“Of the 904 persons on board ... only 229 were saved,” notes the website for American Legion Massillon Post No. 221, which was a force behind the placement of the plaque.

“Many of the troops on board never had a furlough to visit their families once leaving for military service in 1942.”

The website for The Four Chaplains Memorial Foundation at Philadelphia Naval Business Center recounts in vivid detail bravery of the four chaplains.

“Aboard the Dorchester, panic and chaos had set in,” the online history says. “Through the pandemonium, according to those present, four Army chaplains brought hope in despair and light in darkness. ... Quickly and quietly, the four chaplains spread out among the soldiers.

There they tried to calm the frightened, tend the wounded and guide the disoriented toward safety.”

The chaplains did the duty the military had assigned

them. And then their actions rose to answer their heavenly calling.

“The chaplains opened a storage locker and began distributing life jackets,” the Foundation’s history recalls. “When there were no more life jackets in the storage room, the chaplains removed theirs and gave them to four frightened young men. ...

“As the ship went down, survivors in nearby rafts could see the four chaplains — arms linked and braced against the slanting deck. Their voices could also be heard offering prayers.”

Survivor John Ladd once called it “the finest thing I have seen or hope to see this side of heaven.” Indeed it was a selfless act.

The erection of a plaque honoring the Four Chaplains in Massillon seems unselfish as well. None of them had ties to the community. The closest connection was Poling’s birth in Columbus, but as a minister he served churches in Connecticut and New York. Goode was born in Brooklyn, N.Y.; Fox in Lewistown, Pa.; and Washington in Newark, N.J.

When the bridge across the Tuscarawas River, commonly called the Lincoln Way viaduct, was rededicated on Sept. 22, 1993, by Massillon Mayor Francis H. Cicchinelli Jr., it became Four Chaplains Memorial Viaduct.

The plaque that honors the heroism of those four men is succinct in summation.

“For God,” it says, “and Country.”



CantonRep.com/Gary Brown

A marker designating a portion of state Route 172 in Massillon as Four Chaplains Memorial Viaduct

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Ch, Maj Paul T. Gunn
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Navy

Navy Recruiting now has a FACEBOOK page titled "[US NAVY CHAPLAIN CORPS](#)". On it, chaplains, students, and prospective applicants for all Navy Chaplain programs can find a wealth of information, and interact with chaplains on a variety of topics.

[FACEBOOK: US NAVY CHAPLAIN CORPS](#)



Ecclesiastical Endorsers visit San Diego naval activities on education/orientation visit.

Navy Chaplain Videos – [Ministry of Presence/Chaplain Roach/Chaplain Sweeney/Chaplain Miller/Chaplain Kim](#)

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[Veteran's Administration Chaplain Career Opportunities](#)

All opportunities to apply for employment can be found on the [USA JOBS](#)* or at [VA Careers](#). VA has immediate openings for Roman Catholic Chaplains. Additional information can be found in the [USA JOBS Announcement for Roman Catholic Chaplains](#)*.

Additional employment information:

- [How to Apply Pamphlet](#)
- [VA Chaplain Qualification Requirements and Application Procedures](#)
- [List of Ecclesiastical Endorsers](#)

Links You Can Use

[Military One Source](#)
[Military Health System](#)
[Department of Veterans Affairs National Center for PTSD –](#)
[The Military Chaplain's Association](#)
[The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life](#)
[Religious News Service](#)
[Christian Reformed Church Resources for Soldiers](#)
[J.M. Dawson Institute of Church State Studies – Baylor University](#)
[Religion Clause](#)
[U.S. Department of Defense – Defense Link](#)
[Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty](#)
[Warrior Care](#)
[Religious Diversity and Accommodation \(Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute\)](#)
[Armed Forces Chaplains Board](#)
[National VA Chaplains Center](#)
[Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America](#)
[Hooah4Health](#)
[Vets 4 Warriors](#)

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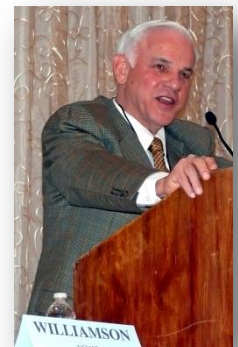
Executive Director's Note

Dear Colleagues,

Each year I have the same sense after our annual meeting – what a great time we had as we gathered together! This year was no different and as is always the case, I also think this was the best conference ever. Your attendance, support, interaction, comments and suggestions, and feedback all contribute to the value added in the time we share together. Thank you for your continued commitment to the ministry of chaplaincy.

As Steve mentioned in his letter, the inclusion of actively serving chaplains in our meeting not simply as attendees but as presenters helped our 2012 conference reach even greater heights of usefulness. Not only did they assure us of their appreciation for our ministry but they also challenged us to consider ways in which we can care for them with renewed vigor and dedication. Thanks to all the endorsers who made it possible for your chaplains to attend.

In addition to this special edition of the newsletter to highlight the events of the conference and to focus in a special way on the needs our various speakers addressed we are also seeking to extend the usefulness of the presentation in another way. Several of our members made audio recordings of the various presentations. Though not studio quality, the various recordings are quite good in permitting you to once again listen to what was said in our formal sessions. We are now working through the technical aspects of making these recordings available on line so you can listen to them to refresh your memories on what was said or perhaps to



listen to any of the presentations you were unable to attend. As soon as we have them available I will send a notice and provide information how you may access them.

Our Executive Committee will meet early next month to consider plans for our conference in 2013 and what must be done to prepare for it. At present I am in hopes we will conduct another chaplain/endorser survey similar to the one we did this past year. If you have suggestions on issues we may address in the upcoming survey please communicate them to me that they might be included in our design process. From your feedback at the conference, this is a valuable tool to help us improve our ministries.

Thank you for your continued work and support of military and veteran ministries. Your own efforts and your willingness to join with others in NCMAF and ECVAC are making a difference. We saw that this year in the comments from the three commanders who took their time to come and speak with us. They told us what they need – chaplains who care and who are well equipped for the ministry in the setting to which they have been called. You are the human agents who enable these great men and women to succeed.

Collegially,

Jack Williamson

NCMAF/ECVAC Executive Director



Your financial support is needed!

- **Please let us know if you will ask your chapel or faith community to assist in our ministry.**
- **Consider a designated or special offering to help support NCMAF and the military chaplaincy. Your financial and prayer support are both needed and appreciated.**
- **Offerings may be sent to**
NCMAF
c/o Rebecca Waldman
7724 Silver Sage Court
Springfield, VA 22153
- **(NCMAF is a non-profit organization authorized by the IRS to receive charitable donations)**

Please contact Jack at Jack@ncmaf.org or Lyman at Lyman@ncmaf.org for comments, suggestions, or questions concerning the Newsletter.

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