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The Voice for Chaplaincy - Chartered by Congress - Serving Since 1925

Weekly Newsgram - May 30th 2018

Executive Director Notes



[Chair of House Armed Services Committee Mac Thornberry](#)

First, I trust that each of you had the opportunity to participate in a Memorial Day commemoration this past weekend, either in a formal event, at your place of worship or a simple event in your neighborhood. Our colleagues in the UK observe Armistice Day in November (what we call Veteran's Day) with a degree of solemnity that recalls their losses, especially in WW I, in a straight forward fashion. Here in the U.S. we seem to have lost that same focus as we observe Memorial Day, which is truly about sacrifice for those who did not return home. My sense from talking with many of you is that you were able to clearly remind folks that Memorial Day is not a celebration; but truly a commemoration.

Turning the focus now to pending legislation, the House Armed Services Committee has set forth the markup for the FY 2019 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA 19). There are two chaplain specific provisions the House will now consider in floor action.

The [first](#) is proposed legislation that would require each service Chief of Chaplains to be promoted to O-8 on installation into office, Major General for the Army and Air Force, and Rear Admiral, Upper Half (RADM) for the Navy. This would address the recent administrative decision to reduce the Navy's Chief of Chaplains to a Rear Admiral, Lower Half (RDML) upon the retirement of the incumbent. As of yet there is no indication either the Army nor the Air Force plans to follow the Navy action.

The [second](#) piece of proposed legislation clearly defines chaplaincies of the armed forces. On the surface a good thing. However, once enshrined in statute both what is included and what is not included become very important and often controlling. In this case a nuance not mentioned may have major implications. The amendment, as written, specifics our purpose is to accommodate the religious needs of members of the Armed Forces. What it does not say is this is done in a pluralistic environment and that every chaplain is required to provide for the needs of all within their care. One of the hallmarks of military chaplaincy is that we, in representing the commander, seek to ensure religious liberty is available to all service members - even within the confines of the military environment. And we sometimes ensure provision of spiritual care is available for those whose belief systems vary markedly from our own. We intend to work with the members of the House and Senate as the bill goes to conference, seeking to strengthen the

language which is a bedrock of our existence.

My observation over the years from civilian healthcare chaplaincy has always been that the critical and clear distinction between military and civilian chaplaincy has been the understanding of every chaplain that they ensure provision for all.

If any of you have any questions or insights, please email our President, Mike Langston at mwlangston77@gmail.com, our Vice President, Dave DeDonato at dmd777d@gmail.com, our Communications Officer, Lyman Smith at lyman.m.smith@gmail.com or myself at RazzW@aol.com.

And as Summer comes into full force with PCS moves, vacations, and travel, please be safe as out there.

Executive Director
Fr. Razz Waff, DMin, BCC
RazzW@aol.com
[Cell: 847-269-9066](tel:847-269-9066)

[NDAA Amendment Chief of Chaplains Rank](#)

[NDAA Amendment Chaplaincies of the Armed Forces](#)

[To see all the amendments under consideration in the House go here](#)

WWII chaplain died a hero; daughter honors memory with cross-globe pilgrimage



Chaplain Markus Lohmann

[Story by Lacey Crisp, Cleveland 19](#)

"I never met him, I never knew him," said Marcia Luecke.

Luecke's dad, Captain Markus Lohmann, was an Army Chaplain.

He served in the Southern Pacific during World War II, and was sent overseas before Marcia was born.

"He didn't as a chaplain, expect he would be giving up his life, but that is what happened," said Luecke.

The boat he was on lost power, so the chaplain and two others decided to swim back to shore to get help.

"He sacrificed his life to save others," Luecke said.

Marcia's father did not survive the swim.

The other two did, and they were able to bring Marcia's father's body back to shore. Marcia was just 18 months old at the time.

"I wanted to honor him and be closer to him and be in a place where he had preached, sacrificed his life, died," she explained.

Last Easter, Marcia made the voyage to the very beach where her father had been.

She had a memorial made up for her father; she left one on the beach, and keeps one at home.

"It brought me closure, and it brought me closer to him," she said.

While most of us spend Memorial Day with friends and family grilling out, or at the park, Marcia wants us to remember the real reason for the holiday.

"I think of my father in heaven and he's there so I can have this wonderful life here, and my children and grandchildren. We are all here because of his sacrifice," Luecke said.

Chaplains, Memorial Day, and Public Policy

[A Seeker After Truths: The Life and Times of G.A. Studdert Kennedy \(Woodbine Willie\) 1883-1929](#)

As we reflect on Memorial Day 2018 and the national remembrance of the sacrifice of those who have given their lives in service to our nation, we are also confronted as individuals with the complexity of life in the modern world. As chaplains we are not immune to this complexity and we are also sometimes looked to for expert commentary on how to navigate the larger issues of war and peace. This is especially so when great horror can be unleashed by decisions of a moment.



In [A Seeker After Truths](#) we find the presentation of a chaplain who went from well known advocate for war to a dedicated proponent of peace. The following discussion of his life is from an article posted on [TLE](#) (The London Economic) based on an interview with Linda Parker, the author.

When Britain went to war with Germany in 1914, few men stirred the troops like the army chaplain Geoffrey Studdert Kennedy, whose rousing speeches and patriotic poetry boosted morale on the frontline and at home. But by the time World War One had ended, Kennedy had become one of the country's most outspoken critics of military action.

Geoffrey Studdert Kennedy, nicknamed "Woodbine Willie" because of his habit of generously distributing cigarettes to the troops, was as enthusiastic as many of his contemporaries about the necessity of a war with Germany in 1914: "I cannot say too strongly that I believe every able-bodied man ought to volunteer for service anywhere."

However, he was fully aware of what war would entail and based his opinion on a careful study of the history and psychology of Germany, reaching the conclusion that, "If we refused to accept the challenge, a greater and more awful disaster would fall upon us."

His patriotic and sometimes jingoistic speeches and poetry at the beginning of the war gave way in the light of his experiences as a frontline chaplain to a deeper understanding of the cost of war and a determination that the sacrifices should not be in vain.

On his return from war, Kennedy was praying for peace, not victory. His expressions of militancy and patriotism were replaced by a rejection of war. His poem 'Waste', for example, heavily criticised post-war British society:

*Waste of Muscle, waste of Brain,
Waste of Patience, waste of Pain,
Waste of Manhood, waste of Health,
Waste of Beauty, waste of Wealth.*

Kennedy assessed the need for war with thorough historical knowledge and reassessed it after the horrors and waste of war.

As an army chaplain and Military Cross holder, his patriotism was hard to question but he was clear that Christians could have "no more to do with nationalisms and imperialisms that find their final sanction in force" and was clear that the future peace of Europe lay in cooperation of countries.

Our global security problems of the 21st century may be of a different nature but a detailed examination of Kennedy's attitudes and his move from jingoism to pacifism could prove instructive.

Perhaps one or more of our members would like to write a review of the book for an upcoming issue of The Military Chaplain and open a discussion of this role of chaplains.

The Military Chaplains Magazine 2018 Themes and Submission Deadlines

Summer Issue - *Chaplains and World War 1*
Articles to be submitted by June 30
Publication July 23

Fall Issue - *Religious Accommodation in 2018*
Articles to be submitted by September 30
Publication September 24

Winter Issue - *Chaplaincy and Religion in a Post-Truth World*
Articles to be submitted by November 30
Publication December 21

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