

## **VA'S Chaplain Receives Top Award from the Four Chaplains Memorial Foundation**

Hampton, Va. —One of the nation's most highly recognized chaplain's foundations present VA's National Program Director of the Chaplain Service, Chaplain Michael L. McCoy, with its highest honor of the Legion of Honor Gold Medallion Award in a ceremony July 30 at the Hampton VA Medical Center.

The award from the Four Chaplains Memorial Foundation Board of Directors is presented annually to persons who have achieved national or international recognition for their acts of compassion or humanitarianism.

The Foundation is based on the real life story of four U.S. Army Chaplains who gave up their life jackets and prayed together when their transport ship, the U.S.A.T Dorchester was torpedoed eighty miles south of Greenland on February 3, 1943. The Chaplains came from different faiths and backgrounds.

The Legion of Honor Gold Medallion is the highest and most prestigious award presented at this time. It is given to a person whose leadership has brought his actions to worldwide attention, and whose very life epitomizes the spirit of the sacrifice of the Four Chaplains.

To be presented with the Foundation's award, the recipient must demonstrate selfless and transformative achievement which must be above and beyond that of a professional resume or organizational position. And Chaplain McCoy has certainly demonstrated those actions and qualities in his leadership role at the VA.

"If for some reason, life experiences brought me to a room full of chaplains, and if we were faced with the need to make substantial sacrifices for the safe(ty) of many outside of this room, I would want Mike McCoy to be in that room - -and be the leader," The Rev'd Dr. Gary R. Politt, Captain, Chaplain Corps, U.S. Navy (ret), said in the nomination letter for Chaplain McCoy.

"Chaplain Michael McCoy is a national leader whose unselfish sacrifice has been recognized by individuals and organizations across the span of his professional craft," said Chaplain Marvin L. Mills, Colonel, U.S. Army (Ret) in the nominating package. " He has been aiding Veterans, military persons and their families over 35 years.

In his acceptance remarks after giving thanks to all he stated: "it was God who place me in certain places in history to respond to my fellow men and women needs when the time came. My life is a life of serving others. It brings joy to my heart to know that along the way I've been a blessing and that someone can say "I am glad he came my way when I needed a lift." I humbly accept this medallion for all of those who came before and paved the way for me. God called me not to be awarded medals but to serve people, and that's what I do. Now if I am serving in my present role others indirectly, I am daily supporting, leading and serving those who do serve Veterans and others directly. I am most appreciative for this honor.

The Four Chaplains Memorial Foundation's vision is to impart the principles of selfless service to humanity without regard to race, creed, ethnicity, gender, or religious beliefs.

Chaplain McCoy was appointed director, Chaplain Services for the VA in November of 2015. He is the recipient of numerous other awards, including the Military Officers Association David E. White Award and Veterans Braintrust Award presented to him in 2013 by the Black Congressional Caucus ; and a number of others.

For more information you may call (757) 728-3180, <http://www.fourchaplains.org/legion-of-honor-programs/>;

Photo: Chaplain Michael L. McCoy was presented the Four Chaplains Memorial Foundation Legion of Honor Gold Medallion Award by Ronald Johnson, Director Hampton VA Medical Center.