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

## **Weekly Newsgram - March 7th 2018**

### **Military Specialty Certification**

#### **Association of Professional Chaplains**



#### **Now Available**

The Military Specialty Certification offered by the BCCI is now available and applications are being taken. To provide more information on this important achievement for our profession, here are some quick observations on the program, to include what it requires "first," what it is not, what it is, and what it could mean:

**What does this process require "first"?** It could be easy to skip over this, however to insure that no one does that, it first requires the basic level of board chaplaincy certification by the Board of Certified Chaplaincy, Inc (BCCI), the certification arm of the Association of Professional Chaplains. (APC). This requires four quarters of clinical pastoral education (CPE) or approved equivalency, faith group endorsement, a Master of Divinity (MDiv) (or faith tradition equivalent) and the completion of one year of professional experience as a professional chaplain, as well as meeting the competency requirements laid out in the BCCI requirements in writing, and then articulated in meeting a certification committee.

**What it is not:** It is not an additional graduate degree in addition to a MDiv or equivalent to a DMin

**What it is:** It is a specialized certification process that demonstrates a professional specialized competency in the field of military chaplaincy, and it does require additional documentation, and a committee appearance.

**What it could mean:** From my experience as a General Officer having sat on eight Department of the Army Promotion and Command Selection Boards, this can be a clear and articulate positive discriminator for both promotion boards and assignments. Receiving this certification will demonstrate a focus and dedication to go "above and beyond" basic certification as a BCC chaplain, with a depth and knowledge of military chaplaincy that demonstrates expertise in the field. When sitting on a board, or having discussions with branch managers when I was the Deputy Commanding General of the Army's Human Resources Command (HRC), we were always looking for the distinctive, qualitative positive discriminators that could identify an officer from their peers for special assignments and promotions. This could be one of those tools that allow boards and branch manager/detailers to do that more readily.

In conversations with Chaplain Jan McCormick, DMin, BCC, who has worked this from concept to actualization, there are already folks who have lined up to start this process and be the first ones out of the gate to work toward this level of professional competence. In my experience with APC over the past 30 years, this will definitely be a seminal event for military chaplains to be recognized by their chaplaincy peers for the contribution they have made- and will continue to make- in the field of military chaplaincy.

We are looking forward to assisting as many of you as possible in this process. If you have any questions, feel free to go to the APC website for additional information, or feel free to ask Jan, Lyman, Mike Langston, or me about what the next steps can be for you. We are excited as this becomes a reality, and from what we have heard so far, so are a number of you as well.

We will be telling the stories of those who earn this certification, and what it means for them to be recognized for this professional achievement both in future Newsgrams and in our magazine.

Fr. Razz Waff, DMin, BCC  
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[FAQs regarding Military Specialty Certification](#)

[Guidelines for Preparing the BCC-M Application](#)

## FBI Chaplains

### *Bringing the Light in the Darkest Hours*

FBI special agents and other Bureau professionals who respond to the bloody, chaotic scenes of mass casualties do so to help and to find answers: Who did it? How? Why?

And there are times when they can't help but ask another question, one that does not have an easy answer.

"Sometimes the common question when facing such scenes is, 'Why, God?' " said Gary Morefield, pastor of the GV Christian Center in Henderson, Nevada, just outside Las Vegas.

Morefield is one of about 130 FBI chaplains, part of a robust crisis intervention program that provides psychological first aid to FBI employees. The program also includes mental health professionals and specially trained peers.

Like other chaplains, those who work for the FBI are ordained clergy. Although some may lead a church, synagogue, or mosque, FBI chaplains provide spiritual support and guidance to a broader population in the Bureau. They are accessible to anyone, regardless of faith.

"Some people just feel better talking to a chaplain instead of a licensed clinician or a peer," said Special Agent Paul Bertrand, a regional employee assistance program manager.

The FBI added volunteer chaplains to its roster in 1991, on the heels of a seminar that examined critical incidents involving the FBI. Seminar participants said FBI employees involved in shootings and who work gruesome scenes needed additional support beyond that provided by mental health professionals. FBI chaplains are protected by workplace rules and have security clearances but are unpaid. Many are chaplains for other organizations or lead their own congregations.

Chaplains also undertake small jobs at a scene, like handing out water or meals. "It takes an emotional load off them," said FBI Phoenix Chaplain Chad Goucher, who deployed to Las Vegas in



An FBI Special Agent speaks to two chaplains at Ground Zero in NYC 2001

the aftermath of the mass shooting. "A lot of time the people working these scenes forget-they forget they are hungry or they need water. The last person they are typically thinking about is themselves."

Those small acts of kindness remind the responders to take care of themselves and that there is someone to talk to, said Chaplain Robert Hicks, assigned to the FBI's Orlando Resident Agency. Hicks deployed to the Pulse Nightclub shooting in Orlando and other scenes. "It also reminds them of their humanity," Hicks said.

Chaplains work part-time but hold regular office hours when they are not deployed in the field, meeting with employees and practicing their ministry of presence.

"It's a process, to allow them the ability to share," Morefield said. "People will be struggling with this for a long time. This shooting here, it was just pure evil."

The above is excerpted from a March 5th article on the FBI website. Read full article [here](#)

## **The Mental Wellness Needs of Military Women Community Driven Solutions**



The Service Women's Action Network (SWAN) has released its [2nd Annual Research Report](#). The data collected and considered in the report clearly shows that service women are struggling with their mental health both while in the military and after they leave service; and gender bias, sexual harassment and sexual assault during military service is significantly contributing to their plight. The findings come amid rising concern over military women's mental health after the Department of Veterans Affairs released data last September showing women veterans have a 250 percent higher suicide rate than women who have never served.

What is always unique about SWAN's research is that it is directly informed by the words, experiences, and stories of our service women members.

SWAN is actively translating this report into a series of Policy Recommendations and Action Items to improve how military women can access mental wellness services to address their needs.

The attached summary provides more information and suggests ways everyone can be a part of advancing policy changes to address these urgent needs. [Take Action](#)

**SWAN is also inviting interested parties to participate in their new survey - [Military Women's Reproductive Health Access Survey](#).**

Have you used VA or military health services? Tell us about your experience with military and VA reproductive health care, ranging from access to birth control to your experience with fertility treatments, by filling out the short survey found [here](#).

Comprehensive and quality health care for service women is one of SWAN's key advocacy issues. Participant responses will help drive policy reform efforts on behalf of service women and women veterans.

## We'll Meet Again Heroes of 9/11 The Story of Two Chaplains

The PBS Series hosted by Ann Curry features dramatic reunions of people whose lives crossed at pivotal moments. In the series we can view history through their eyes and hear their stories of heroism, hope, and the forging of unbreakable bonds.



A recent episode, Heroes of 9/11, featured two military chaplains who had a chance encounter while serving at the Pentagon on the day of the terrible attack. The short encounter changed both of their lives and their ministries going forward. Through the efforts of the program these two chaplains were reunited to deepen the shared bonds between them those many years ago. You can watch the episode [here](#).

Blink Films, the producer of the series, is now **in the process of researching for a second season** and hopes to include the events of the Gulf War. They would love to connect with the servicemen and women who served in these operations and might be looking to reconnect with someone significant they crossed paths with during these events. And although they are particularly interested in looking at stories from the Gulf War, they are keen to hear potential stories from any operation.

Please contact Katie Johns at [katie.johns@blinkfilmsuk.com](mailto:katie.johns@blinkfilmsuk.com) or 888-558-6449 for more information. As you consider your own ministry paths and those of others you have known, this may be your opportunity to share history through the eyes of ordinary people who experienced its events directly.

Visit our [website](#). There you will be able to [update your contact information](#), [join](#), [pay your dues](#), [make donations](#), [file ministry reports](#), contact our supporters, [read The Military Chaplain magazine](#) and otherwise [connect to resources](#).

If you missed the February 28th edition of the Newsgram [click here](#)

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