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

Weekly Newsgram - January 2nd 2019

Chief Chaplain, Department of Veterans Affairs Chaplain Michael McCoy Retires



Acting Deputy Secretary of Veterans Affairs James Byrne and Chaplain McCoy

Along with many other events affecting chaplaincy in 2018, one which is both joyful and challenging was the retirement of Chaplain Mike McCoy as the Chief Chaplain of the Department of Veterans Affairs in December. Mike had two retirement ceremonies - one at the VA Headquarters in Washington, DC, where he traveled frequently to advise on chaplain ministry within the entire department, and one in Hampton Roads at the VA chaplaincy center.

Chaplain McCoy was appointed Director, Chaplain Service effective November 29, 2015. Chaplain McCoy was the top professional Chaplain in the Department of Veterans Affairs, reporting to the Chief Consultant, in the Office of Patient Care Services.

Chaplain McCoy was responsible for the on-going integration of spiritual/pastoral care into the multi-disciplinary spectrum of VA health care. He managed and directed the National Chaplain Center, with responsibility for: developing policies, guidelines, and professional standards for the practice of Chaplaincy in VA; liaison and collaboration with internal and external stakeholders; directing the VA national spiritual care training program; evaluating the spiritual/pastoral care given at VA facilities; and managing recruitment and examining of chaplain candidates.

Chaplain McCoy's professional accomplishments include:

- Graduate Senior Executive Strategic Leadership Course II, Kenan-Flagler

Business School, The University of North Carolina, 2016

- Completed VHA Healthcare Senior Executive Coaching Network Program, 2016
- Graduate of Leadership VA (LVA) 1999
- Achieved the rank of Lieutenant Commander, US Navy Chaplain Corps
- **Past National President of the Military Chaplains Association of the United States of America.**
- Executive Director of the Department of Veterans Affairs National Black Chaplains Association;
- National Coordinator of the NCC Veterans Community Outreach Initiative (VCOI)
- Member of the VA Central Institutional Review Board
- Certified Mediator and Trainer State of Virginia, and VA Office of Resolution and Management

Michael continues active in ministry. We are thankful for his service in so many venues throughout his long and distinguished professional career and bid him fair winds and following seas as he remains a chaplain for life.

In Memoriam



Mrs. Ruth Ann Moran

*(wife of Chaplain Geoff Moran
Colonel, United States Army, Retired)*

born October 25, 1943
deceased October 21, 2018
Santa Barbara, California

Executive Director Notes

Two items for this week's column: A recognition for so many of you who serve in so many ways, and a note to those of you who live in the metro Denver area.

First: As we segue from one year to the next it is common to note those who have done some pretty remarkable things on a daily



basis. I thought about this a bit and how it applies to chaplaincy, and it became clear that MCA chaplains do that on a regular basis, both while serving actively as a military, VA, or CAP chaplain, and then just as robustly after "active" service.

The first person who comes to mind- who is still serving as an active duty Air Force chaplain, Chaplain, Captain John Ruetemann, does not seem to be challenged enough to be on active duty. Rather he has gone out of his way to contribute during his down time as a Civil Air Patrol chaplain as the Deputy Chief of Staff for Cadet Programs for the five state Rocky Mountain Region. The second chaplain who comes to mind is Chaplain Bob Hicks, a retired Air Force chaplain, who has now traveled as a volunteer to meet with current Ukrainian chaplains, seminarians and family members of those who have been killed in the Russian-Ukrainian conflict in Crimea.

Of course, our president, Chaplain Mike Langston and vice president, Chaplain Dave DeDonato, immediately come to mind for the remarkable work they have been doing with the South Carolina State Guard chaplaincy program.

The second thing I would like to share is to let folks who live in the metro Denver area that the National Executive Committee - which we are now more appropriately referring to as the Board of Directors - will be meeting in Denver on Monday and Tuesday, 6 and 7 March. We will have a dinner on Monday to which we would like to meet as many Denver area chaplains as possible. More information on this as we get closer to the date.

I am sure each of you have others you know who also remarkably invested in what they do outside of duty hours, doing remarkable things simply because for each of them it's the right thing to do.

Happy and joyful New Year to all.

Fr. Razz Waff, DMin, BCC
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FEDVIP Enrollment Officially Extended for Three Months

Sign-ups for the Federal Employees Dental and Vision Insurance Program (FEDVIP) have officially extended for three months, officials at the Office of Personnel Management have informed MOAA.

Open Season ended Dec. 10, however OPM has granted a "belated enrollment phase" for potential beneficiaries who missed the first deadline. Sign-ups should be granted until about mid-March.

The Military Officers Association of America influenced OPM to grant more time for beneficiaries.

"We kept the spotlight on this by tracking enrollment and communicating whenever our members had feedback or an issue," said Capt. Kathy Beasley, USN (Ret), MOAA's director of health affairs.



Did You Know?

Enrollees in the TRICARE Retiree Dental Program are required to sign up for FEDVIP if they wish to maintain dental insurance. FEDVIP provides 10 choices for dental coverage. As of early Dec. 13, about 639,000 beneficiaries had signed up for dental coverage. The target goal is at least 800,000 signups. Vision coverage is also offered, through four carriers. FEDVIP vision plans help pay for routine vision appointments and frames, lens and contacts. As of Dec. 13, about 300,000 people had signed up for vision.

To enroll online visit BENEFEDS.com or call, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. Eastern, at 1-877-888-3337.

OPM announced the belated enrollment phase in a Dec. 13 meeting at the Defense Health Agency in Arlington, Va., attended by military and veteran service organizations. Officials said that 80 percent of signups have occurred online and that the overall process has earned a 92 percent satisfaction rating from those surveyed.

OPM will review its Open Season policies and identify changes that might improve the process in 2019.

For those who have signed up: You will not see premiums taken out of your account until February. FEDVIP bills beneficiaries after each month of coverage.

Shutdown Facts: What Servicemembers, Retirees, and Survivors Need to Know

Unsure what the partial government shutdown means for your service-connected pay or benefits? Here's what you need to know about key issues:



Pay: The Defense Department is fully funded for the next fiscal year, so servicemembers in the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps will remain on the job and will get their checks as scheduled during the partial shutdown. U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps members are in a similar situation, with funding already in place for the Department of Health and Human Services.

The Department of Homeland Security is not fully funded, so Coast Guardsmen entered Dec. 28 planning to go without pay during the shutdown. The service announced a one-time fix late that day, saying "the Administration, the Department of Homeland Security, and the Coast Guard have identified a way to pay our military workforce on Dec. 31, 2018. This one-time action applies to military members that served on active duty in the month of December and those reserve military members that drilled prior to the lapse in appropriation."

The 321 members of the NOAA Commissioned Officer Corps also will receive their Dec. 31 paychecks, under an arrangement similar to what's been worked out for members of the Coast Guard (which is in charge of the NOAA Corps payroll). USPHS officers aboard National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration vessels will be paid under a similar setup.

Like the Coast Guard, these arrangements do not address any pay periods in 2019. NOAA Corps members will continue their mission regardless of funding arrangements. Those seeking further information on NOAA beyond weather updates likely will see this website in the coming days.

[RELATED: [How Coast Guard Members Can Get Financial Help During the Shutdown](#)]

Retired pay: A Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) spokesman confirmed to MOAA that this statement on DFAS's retired-military website remains operative: "Retiree

payments will be made as scheduled on December 31, 2018. Annuitant payments will be made as scheduled on January 2, 2019." DFAS has since updated its homepage with similar language.

Coast Guard, NOAA and USPHS retirees also are covered, according to this Dec. 26 news update from the Coast Guard's Pay and Personnel Center: "In spite of the government shutdown, the U.S. Coast Guard has identified essential personnel who shall continue to report to work; they will be responsible for ensuring the retiree and annuitant payroll for USCG, NOAA and PHS is run and distributed on time. As such, you may expect timely delivery of your pay on 31 December, 2018."

Other benefits: Like DoD, the VA is fully funded entering the new year. This means, per a recent statement from VA Secretary Robert Wilkie, that "all VA operations will continue unimpeded." This would include disability and survivor benefits, as well as any other VA-processed payments.

Also, all TRICARE Prime, Select, and TRICARE for Life claims will continue uninterrupted and with timely processing.

**MCA South Carolina Chapter
Meeting
Tuesday January 8, 2019
1145**

SOUTH CAROLINA CHAPTER



NCO Club Fort Jackson, SC.

RSVP Affirmative ONLY Please ... to this sjtboonegmil.com
or 803-673-9624 and leave a message.

Our speaker is still tentative ... we will install 2019' slate of officers ...

President: Ken Colton
Vice Pres: James Smith
Sec/Tres: Sam Boone

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If you missed the December 26th edition of the Newsgram [click here](#).

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