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

Weekly Newsgram - August 14th 2019

National Institute Registration
please register at the door
Monday or Tuesday - Aug 19 or 20

Spiritual **toughness: 31st** **MEU Chaplain** **provides daily** **workouts, wisdom** **aboard USS Wasp**



story by 2nd Lt. Jonathan Coronel

Red-faced Marines and Sailors guzzle water and dry their faces with towels in the muggy bowels of the ship - the first of her class, the amphibious assault ship USS Wasp (LHD 1) - surrounded by light armored vehicles and humvees, trying to quickly catch their breath before the dreaded timer goes off once again.

"3..2..1..Go!," Lt. Cmdr. Jay Weatherwax, chaplain with the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit exclaims, as the Marines and Sailors begin doing pushups on cue.

Such is the scene every afternoon at "Chap's Fit", a daily workout that Weatherwax runs for the Marines and Sailors of the 31st MEU aboard the USS Wasp. With the motto "Right inside, right outside", Weatherwax helps Marines stay in shape physically and spiritually amidst the hustle and bustle of life deployed on ship. With most days spent busily planning and executing simulated amphibious operations and preparing for contingencies in the Indo-

Pacific region, Chap's Fit gives Marines and Sailors a daily respite from the strain of deployment.

"The first time I attended Chap's Fit was out of curiosity. I was immediately hooked by the great workout and camaraderie among the group. No matter how challenging the PT [physical training] session was, I always had the spiritual discussion group to look forward to afterward," said HN1 Vincent Fernandez, a corpsman with Combat Logistics Battalion 31, 31st MEU.

A Chap's Fit session typically runs for about an hour, consisting of a warmup followed by a high-intensity workout. By the end of the workout, Marines are usually exhausted as they wearily put away their kettlebells and wipe down the mats. But Chaps' Fit isn't over just yet.

"Chap's Fit is a means of talking about spiritual toughness, thinking about our 'why' and how it impacts our daily decisions. For the MEU, we are busy. It's challenging to throw in one more class. So by combining a workout with a conversation, the Marines and Sailors can work on being right inside and outside," explains Weatherwax.

While the days are long and the work fast-paced on ship, Marines and Sailors can always count on a brief escape in the most unlikely places: down in the scorching well deck of the ship, surrounded by a hodgepodge of kettlebells and barbells, and Chaplain Weatherwax: standing by with his daily workouts and wisdom.



In Memoriam

Chaplain Richard Allen Goldsmith

Lieutenant Colonel, United States Army, Retired

deceased August 8, 2019

Baptist

Grandville, Michigan

Executive Director Notes

The MCA presence with the Chaplain Corps at the national Civil Air Patrol conference last week in Baltimore went extremely well! As you can see in the photo, we enjoyed good fellowship and professional growth during our sessions together.



Due to a death in the family of the CAP Chief of Chaplains, Charles Sattgast, one of MCA's strongest supporters in CAP, the senior chaplain during the conference was Chaplain John Murdoch, the only CAP chaplain to ever be the President of MCA (John will join us at our conference this coming week). We continue to keep Charlie in our prayers and look forward to welcoming John into our midst during our conference as a Past President. We also need to keep John in our prayers. He will come to Columbia directly from a family funeral on Saturday. The past few weeks have certainly been hard on the senior chaplaincy leadership of CAP.

An additional note is that both last year and this year I was able to have an office call with the National Commander of CAP, Major General Mark Smith, who has been extremely appreciative of both the MCA Distinguished Chaplain program and also the support that MCA has provided over all to the CAP Chaplain Corps.

Our National Institute is next week, the 19-21 of August, at the Embassy Suites in Columbia. If you have not yet registered it is not too late to come. Please send an email of show up at the door - you will be welcomed.

This year members will be asked to look at some very hard fiscal numbers and make decisions to either carry MCA into the future, or intentionally wind things down. The root of this dates to the Great Recession of 2008 to 2010 when MCA took a fiscal beating reducing our fiscal resources by about 75%. Coupled with this are some extenuating circumstances such as a record number of Life Memberships, which in itself is a good thing, unless that is the last time we hear fiscally from a Life Member. Several our members have written MCA into their trusts and wills, which is also a good thing, except for MCA to benefit the member then must use their third, and final, VA benefit.

Last year we began a Sustaining Member program and at the most we have 10 to 12 members who availed themselves of that option. What we have not had are either a significant number of sustaining members to get back up to where we were in 2008 before the Great Recession took it's bite out of our finances, nor have we had members who are getting to the point where they need to start making Required Minimum Distributions (RMDs) from their IRAs and other saving plans.

A nice touch about RMDs is that we can thank our members who exercise that option in this life, not at a memorial service. Along with your elected leadership, I will provide some viable options to stay solvent and relevant. We will also explore ways in which we can retire our colors with dignity. Your presence and insights next week will be greatly valued and appreciated.

We hope to see as many of you as possible at our Annual Meeting on Wednesday morning immediately before lunch, per the agenda in this Newsgram, and we will welcome your concerns and questions throughout the conference.

For those of you unable to attend, we will certainly welcome your emails, text messages and phone calls as well. Your thoughts and prayers are most welcome, however either a concrete plan to regain fiscal viability would be most welcome, or a good plan for how to gracefully fold our tent. Whichever option you feel is most viable, please let us know your course(s) of action that you recommend for the good of MCA. We look forward to seeing you next week, and your engagement for what MCA will look like in 2020.

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[When His Daughter](#)

Was Shot in an El Paso Walmart, a Chaplain Held Fast to His Faith

EL PASO, Texas --The pastor had never prayed so fervently.

Former Army Chaplain Michael Grady had just learned that his 33-year-old daughter was lying in a pool of blood in Walmart.



Shot three times, Michelle Grady had managed to dial her cellphone to call her mother, Jeneverlyn, who jumped in her car and kept her on the line until she reached the store. His wife called him from the store, and Michael Grady raced to join them. The drive from his house to the Walmart normally takes about seven minutes. It felt longer.

When he finally arrived, the parking lot was already taped off. He saw his wife's car by the theater next to the store. He parked. He ran.

But his 65-year-old body, which had endured a quadruple-bypass heart surgery a few years prior, couldn't move nearly as fast as he would've liked. Grady prayed.

"I was asking God to make sure Michelle isn't in a lot of pain or was suffering," he said. "That we would get through to her and find her. That was my prayer."

When he saw her, it was bad. "I know she wasn't OK, but I told her she was going to be OK." It wasn't a lie. It was hope. The pastor doesn't believe God fulfills prayer requests like Santa Claus.

There weren't enough stretchers to move her out, so Grady and his wife lifted her body onto a Walmart shopping cart used for oversized items and wheeled her out to an ambulance.

At the emergency room the physicians told the family their loved one needed surgery. Probably more than one. There were no guarantees. He prayed for the doctors to have wisdom. He prayed for courage for his daughter, himself and his family - no matter the outcome. He prayed for the families of the other victims.

Grady, a burly man with a deep voice, knew plenty about death. He'd buried a sister, two brothers and his mother.

Grady was newly married when he joined the Army. He and his wife were stationed in Greece, Italy, Turkey and Germany. Several spots in the United States too. They had three daughters and a son. He counseled veterans - people who had seen friends die. People who had seen marriages break up. People in despair asking him where God was when their tragedy hit. Now he was sitting in the waiting room of a hospital, wondering whether he was going to lose his daughter.

"I wouldn't try to make excuses for God," he said. "God has a purpose, even in this. And he stands with you, and the people of God stand with you to cover you with love and grace and walk with you on this journey. It says 'walk through the valley of the shadow of death,' not 'stop in the valley of the shadow of death.'"

On Monday, Grady was at the hospital when the breathing tube was removed. Michelle was hoarse and couldn't speak. She was able to motion with her hands a little. He was grateful for that small gesture. He wasn't sure what her first words would be when she was finally able to talk. He hoped for, "Hi, Mommy. Hi, Daddy." His eyes welled with tears.

MCA Annual Meeting and National Institute

Schedule of Events and Speakers

Monday, August 19

1330-1700: Board of Directors Meeting (includes Past Presidents)
1800: Welcoming Reception

Tuesday, August 20

0730 - 0830 Past President/Executive Director Breakfast
(Other participants breakfast on your own - hot breakfast included for guests staying on site)
0830-0900 Devotions
0900-0920 Welcome and announcements
0920-1020 Plenary Session #1;

Chaplain Jason Nieuwsma "Mental Health and Chaplaincy in the VA: Opportunities for Integration and Education"

1040-1150 Plenary Session #2:

The Hon. Dwaine Thomas "The Efficacy of Veterans Courts in the Community"

1200-1330 Emerson Lunch: Special Speaker - **Chaplain Sam Boone**

1200-1330 South Carolina Public Safety Chaplains Association (SCPSCA) Executive Board Meeting (Members only)

1330-1530 SCPSCA Class (SCPSCA members only)

1400-1530 Keynote Address and follow up: **Chaplain (BG) Robert Pleczkowski, Deputy Chief of Chaplains, US Army Reserve**

1530-1600 Break

1600-1700 Panel Discussion

1800-1830 Reception

1830-2030 Awards Banquet -

Speaker- MG Robert Livingston, Retired, Adjutant General, South Carolina

Wednesday, August 21

Breakfast on your own

0745-0815 Devotions

0830-0915 MCA Memorial Service

0930-1045 Chaplaincy today address: **Chaplain, Major General, Steven Schaick, Chief of Chaplains, US Air Force**

1100-1230 Annual Business Meeting

1230 - Farewell and departure

Hotel Shuttle will be available for local area visits

Full Schedule available [here](#)

Annual Meeting Hotel Reservations Still Available



The MCA will hold its annual meeting/National Institute in Columbia, SC this August at the Embassy Suites by Hilton Greystone, 200 Stoneridge Drive, Columbia, South Carolina 29210

Reservations for lodging may be made [here](#).

Plan to arrive on the 19th and depart on the 21st to take in all the events. The hotel rate will be good through the 23rd if you would like to stay in Columbia for a few more days of adventure.

We look forward to seeing you there.

**Military Chaplains
Association**
[Revised Constitution
and By-Laws](#)

The National Executive Committee of the Military Chaplains Association of the United States of America has approved changes to our Constitution and By-Laws which will be submitted to our members for a vote of approval at the upcoming Annual Meeting in Columbia, SC.



A full version of the proposed revised Constitution is available [here](#)

The proposed changes include (among others) provisions to

- expand our membership to include chaplains from Federal and State Agencies which maintain standards for chaplains equivalent to those of the Department of Defense
- change the name of our national governing board from National Executive Committee to Board of Directors
- reduce the number of members serving on the National Executive Committee (Board of Directors) from 12 to 9

The full text of the proposed Constitution and By-Laws was forwarded to all members of the MCA in good standing via email for their review. If you did not receive your copy, please send a note to us at chaplains@mac-usa.org. Emails on record in our office were used for the distribution.

An affirmative vote by two-thirds of all regular members present and voting at the annual meeting of the association is required for the proposed revisions to take effect.

Just one more reason to make plans to attend next month. Registration is still open - see below

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 August 7th edition of the Newsgram [click here](#)

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