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

Weekly Newsgram - January 25th, 2017

The Passing of Charles James Angelo Liteky



"Through his indomitable inspiration and heroic actions, Chaplain Liteky saved the lives of a number of his comrades and enabled the company to repulse the enemy. Chaplain Liteky's actions reflect great credit upon himself and were in keeping with the highest traditions of the U.S. Army."

These are the concluding words of the Medal of Honor citation detailing the exceptional heroism of Chaplain (Capt.) Angelo J. Liteky for actions in Vietnam on the 6th and 7th of December, 1967. At one point in the midst of the battle, Liteky "rolled on his back, placed the (wounded and heavy) man on his chest and through sheer determination and fortitude crawled back to the landing zone using his elbows and heels to push himself along."

Twenty-four years later Charles Liteky (Charles was his birth name; Angelo was taken by him in seminary) was on trial before U.S. District Court Judge Robert Elliot. Liteky and others had defaced a portrait gallery at the School of the Americas (SOA) at Fort Benning, GA. During the trial Elliot blocked testimony about the work of the school and also about the impact Vietnam had on Liteky.

"All your experiences in Vietnam and all of that, how that may have affected your life and so on, that has nothing to do with the trial of this case. You are the person named in this indictment. That's who you are."

Liteky was sentenced to two six month terms in prison, among the first of 245 who were incarcerated over time for protest at the SOA.

Charles Liteky passed from this life on Friday, January 20, 2017. He is perhaps known best as the only recipient of the Medal of Honor to return it in protest over political dissent. In 1986 he left the medal in an envelope with a letter addressed to President Reagan at the Vietnam Memorial. It was retrieved by National Park Service personnel and eventually became part of the collection of the American History Museum.

As one might expect, Liteky's actions and directions were not appreciated by all. But many also recognized the courage and commitment he evidenced even in his protests. As one example, the Commanding General of the SOA invited Liteky to participate in a forum on human rights. Liteky acknowledged that even though he had renounced his Medal, it still provided opportunities for him.

[Paul Bucha](#), a fellow recipient of the Medal of Honor and past President of the Congressional Medal of Honor Society said of Liteky, "I have respect for the courage of his views. It's difficult to be an iconoclast. It's much easier to go along. Men like Liteky make us stop and think. They should not be ostracized or criticized for this. They are entitled to their view, and maybe we'd be better off if we listened."

For Liteky, his actions of protest at the SOA and his heroism on the field of battle were no paradox. "I find it ironic that conscience calls me to renounce the congressional Medal of Honor for the same basic reason I received it—trying to save lives."

May the Lord have mercy on his soul.

Lyman Smith
Executive Director



TAPS

Chaplain John R. Doughty

Lt Col, Civil Air Patrol
Coalition of Spirit Filled Churches
Joined MCA June 2009
Deceased May, 2016
Albuquerque, NM



Annual Members

Chaplain Jennifer Lane

CPT, USA

American Baptist Churches

Wahiawa, HI

Chaplain William Greaver

Cpt, USAR and CAP

National Association of Congregational Churches

Tacoma, WA

Medal of Honor Chaplains

In conjunction with the lead article the attached [booklet](#) from [Home of Heroes](#) provides history on military chaplains who have been awarded the Medal of Honor as well as other notable recognitions. The authors even details the award of a Medal of Honor to a soldier serving as a Chaplain's Assistant prior to the creation of that specialty. Sadly, the booklet has not been updated to include the story of [Chaplain Emil Kapaun](#) who received the Medal on April 11, 2013.

The Military Chaplain

March Issue

On Being a Professional Military Chaplain

What are your thoughts on being a professional military chaplain? As we put together the next issue of The Military Chaplain I invite you to submit your articles on what it means to you to be a professional. What has helped form you in your journey and what advice would you give to others? As we continue to explore this aspect of our service, your thoughtful comments will be greatly appreciated.

You may send your submissions to us at chaplains@mca-usa.org. Thank you.

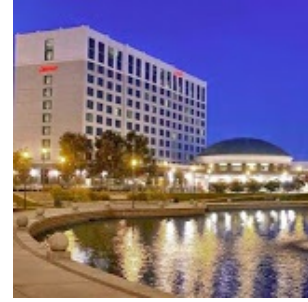
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