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Weekly Newsgram - March 14th 2018

MCA Strategic Objectives

Partnerships

From the Executive Director

This week I address the second of the MCA's strategic objectives, strategic partnerships with our fellow Military Service Organizations (MSOs) and Veteran Service Organizations (VSOs). At our January National Executive Committee meeting in January, we emphasized the importance of these connections and noted we already have an excellent relationship with the [Military Officers Association of America](#) (MOAA).



Military Coalition Chief Executives

Strategically it is important for us to be engaged for both visibility and input to our fellow organizations. Arguably the highest level of strategic engagement is with [The Military Coalition](#) (TMC), which is the collective body of MSOs/VSOs which regularly provide Congressional testimony and input to White House decisions that effect serving members of the military, retirees, and veterans across the board. As chaplains our expertise is sought as we see what happens "after the media" has left a situation, and what the effect is on the service member and their family. MCA is a valued member of TMC, and has been able to remind other TMC members of what the challenges are for the service member/veteran that are often not addressed and can be overlooked.

At the individual level, a number of us belong to a number of organizations. As an example, I am a member not only of MOAA, but also of the Association of the United States Army (AUSA), The Reserve Officers Association (ROA), the Senior Army Reserve Commanders Association (SARCA), the Military Order of World Wars (MOWW), as well as the American Legion. I am sure that is the same for each of us, with time often the limiting factor on how much we can be involved in each of the organizations.

While very often a local chapter will want our expertise as a cleric, especially when there is a death or serious illness or injury of a member, often times our leadership skills will be used

as well which is the case with the Columbia chapter of MOAA (they just elected a chaplain as their president). Additionally, a number of us might also be a member of the Civil Air Patrol (CAP), either as a regular Senior Member or as a chaplain. Another recently announced member opportunity is the Coast Guard Auxiliary, which has launched its own chaplaincy program.

The impact of our interaction, whether at the strategic or local level, is the same: we are at the table with our peers offering professional insights. We enhance understanding and action on chaplaincy issues as well as providing critical insight on issues that are of key importance to the members of our partner MSOs and VSOs.

Please, let us know how you have made a difference through your cross-membership in one of our strategic partners so we can learn from what you have done. Feel free to email me and we'll do a future Newsgram article on how our members have "made a difference."

Fr. Razz Waff, DMin, BCC
RazzW@aol.com,
Executive Director



In Memoriam

Chaplain Jack Rowan, III

Colonel, US Army, Retired
Bible Fellowship Baptist
born December 18, 1932
deceased March 7, 2018
Little River, SC

Chaplain Otis Dean Essex, Jr.

CDR, CHC, USN, Retired
United Methodist Church
born November 7, 1926
deceased February 25, 2018
North Canton, OH

Town Hall on TRICARE Program Changes (sponsored by MOAA)

Facebook Live at <https://www.facebook.com/moaa>

March 15th at 2:00 p.m. EST

The 2017 National Defense Authorization Act enacted sweeping changes to the Military Health System, which resulted in major reforms to the TRICARE program. Among these reforms was the plan to reduce TRICARE regions from three to two and to simplify health plan options by creating the new TRICARE Select (formerly TRICARE Standard and Extra).

The objectives were to save the government money and to decrease administrative hassles for military beneficiaries, who tend to move around frequently between regions. Many of these changes have worked out well, but there also have been challenges. Some of these challenges have been due to the change of TRICARE contractors in both regions Jan. 1, new fee increases, and other changes.

The Defense Health Agency is aggressively addressing these challenges and providing the required oversight of the managed care support contractors. There are mitigation strategies and corrective action plans in place that address key issues. These will be discussed during the town hall.

Moderator of the Town Hall: Capt. Kathy Beasley, USN (Ret), director of health affairs, MOAA Government Relations,

TRICARE Spokesperson: Mr. Ken Canestrini, director of DoD's TRICARE health plan.

Format: Approximately 45 minutes of an interview-style discussion, followed by 15 minutes of a relaxed, conversational Q&A session via Facebook Live. The interview will take place in MOAA's call center to ensure high responsiveness.

National Guard Chaplains Meeting Focuses on Resiliency in Combating Suicide



Chaplain Steve Chisolm

ARLINGTON, Va. -- Chaplains and chaplain's assistants from throughout the National Guard gathered recently at the Herbert R. Temple Jr. Army National Guard Readiness Center Arlington Hall Station, here, for a training conference focused on building greater resiliency among Guard members, suicide prevention and ways chaplains can build support among each other.

"You and I have an incredible amount of influence over people," said Air Force Brig. Gen. Steve Chisolm, a chaplain and the director of the Office of the Joint Chaplain at the National Guard Bureau. "[And] for such a time as this, you have been allowed to care for those men and women who desperately need you."

Chisolm said the event allowed the more than 50 chaplains who attended the conference to share information with each other so they could better address the needs of Guard members back at their home units.

Building resiliency, Chisolm said, is the backbone of suicide prevention.

"If I am a resilient individual, I am maybe going to take a good punch in the stomach, but then [I'll] get back up and maybe even go forward in a stronger capacity," he said.

However, working to prevent suicide also means asking the right questions of service members who may be exhibiting signs of suicide ideation, said Dr. Kelly Posner, a clinical professor of medical psychology at Columbia University, who spoke during the event.

Some of those questions include directly asking those individuals if they have contemplated suicide or have taken steps to end their lives.

Asking those questions is about "breaking through the silence, connecting with a troop and building a path to resilience," said Posner, who has researched and developed multiple methods of suicide intervention and prevention.

"The idea is to give them some resources -- not trying to convert, or postulate -- but trying to help them with resources in the local community," said Chisolm.

But when it comes to "caring for the caretaker," Chisolm reminded chaplains that inspiring

resiliency often starts with them.

"Make sure [Guard members] see that self-care, nurturing part of you,"he said, adding that chaplains are no different than anybody else. "In some instances, we may be impacted more because you and I have been called to share the burdens of those entrusted to us."

[Article by By Tech. Sgt. Erich B. Smith | National Guard Bureau](#)



Military Chaplains Association in Israel

From February 5 - 13 three of our MCA Life members [pictured here at Kibbutz Ein-Gev, on the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee, (L-R) Dave DeDonato (SC - Army), Merrill Muller (IA - Air Force), Doug Waite (WA/HI - Navy)] traveled to Israel on a pastors mission trip sponsored by Christians United for Israel. They were part of a 30-person group made up of Presbyterian and Methodist ministers. In addition to visiting the traditional biblical sites, the group also met IDF soldiers at an outpost near the Lebanese border, prayed at the Western "Wailing" Wall, were guests at a Shabbat dinner in the home of a rabbi and his wife, and toured the border wall separating Israel from the West Bank. Other highlights included sailing on the Sea of Galilee, visiting the Garden of Gethsemane and the Garden Tomb, Masada, and the National Holocaust Memorial at Yad Vashem. There was also the opportunity to float on the Dead Sea. To sum up the trip, we recall the words of our rabbi host, when he said, "You don't come to Israel to vacation; you come to Israel to be transformed!" We were transformed, indeed!

by Dave DeDonato

We'll Meet Again

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.



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 or [888-558-6449](tel: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.

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](#).

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

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