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

## **Weekly Newsgram - January 31st 2018**

### **Remembering**

## **Four Chaplains Memorial Day**

### **February 3rd**

## **75th Anniversary of the Sinking**

## **of the USAT Dorchester**



We often think of war heroes as people who defy odds and evade the personal dangers of exploding mortar rounds and deadly bullets to take out a machine gun nest or retrieve a wounded buddy. Fortunately, we have had many fighting men of that caliber.

Non-combatants who unselfishly sacrificed themselves for others in a cause bigger than them have also blessed us. One such event occurred on Feb. 3, 1943.

The S.S. Dorchester, a troop ship carrying 900 soldiers and its crew, was steaming towards Greenland in the North Atlantic. Early in the morning, a German U-Boat torpedoed the Dorchester. Among the 900 soldiers, there were four U.S. Army chaplains on their way to assigned units. The eventual destination for these troops was most likely England, where a buildup and marshaling was occurring for the eventual invasion of Europe.

In the chaos following the torpedo strike, the chaplains assumed their pastoral duties and helped the disoriented and wounded in the darken ship to lifeboats. They passed out life jackets to others. When there were no more life jackets left, they took off theirs and gave them to potential survivors.

This sacrificial act was witnessed by many of the survivors, who also saw the chaplains with linked arms praying and singing hymns at the aft railing as the Dorchester slipped below the waves.

Six hundred and seventy-two Americans died that morning. Four U.S. Army chaplains led them through the Gates of Glory. The Rev. George Fox was a Methodist minister, Rabbi

Alexander Goode was a Jewish rabbi, the Rev. Clark Poling was a Dutch Reformed minister and Father John Washington was a Catholic priest.

In 1988, Congress declared that Feb. 3 each year would be Four Chaplains Memorial Day and federal flags would be flown at half-staff to honor these men.

The acts of these men of faith was not something they had to discuss at a meeting. Their faith and training instinctively told them what to do. I am sure they were welcomed into glory by the words, "Well done, my good and faithful servants".

[Story by Richard Pender is the senior vice commander of North Brunswick American Legion Post 459.](#)

[Army Historical Foundation article on the Four Chaplains](#)

Lyman Smith  
Executive Director



## In Memoriam

***Fredrick H. Hoffman***

Chaplain (Lieutenant Colonel) United States Army, Retired

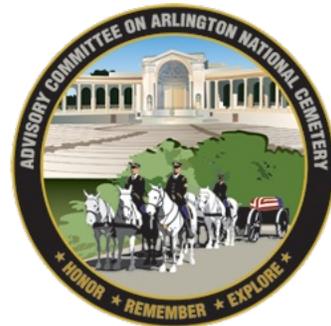
Deceased September 13, 2017

Age 100

Huntington, PA

## [Advisory Committee on Arlington National Cemetery](#)

### **Honor Subcommittee**



The Advisory Committee on Arlington National Cemetery operates under a charter from Congress and serves as an independent advocate to protect the interest of veterans and surviving family members as well as the public for the operation and strategic planning for future development of Arlington National Cemetery as part of the Army National Cemeteries Program.

The Honor Subcommittee reviews and provides recommendations to the parent Commission on extending the future of active burial grave sites, veteran eligibility criteria and master planning.

Yesterday, January 30, the Subcommittee hosted a public meeting to discuss the results of a public survey conducted last year to glean the public's opinion on the future of ANC. 28,745 respondents participated in the survey and provided insight to the Committee from the standpoint of veterans, actively serving members of the service, service family members, and those unaffiliated

with the military.

Some results of the survey can be seen on the [graphic](#) provided to those participating in the meeting available here.

Two key considerations in looking to the future of ANC are the policies regarding who may be interred at Arlington and expansion of the grounds. Expansion is limited at best and very expensive in any case. Two current expansions are underway as can be seen from the graphic [here](#). With these two expansions, ANC will no longer be able to accept members for interment after 2054 using current projections.

In the survey reported on yesterday, several different policy changes regarding eligibility were considered to extend ANC as an open cemetery. The most effective change in policy to permit ANC to remain open for burials is to restrict access to honorably discharged veterans and retirees. If this change is made, those who have been killed in action or the line of duty, Medal of Honor recipients, POWs, and other recipients of valor awards would find the cemetery open for interment beyond the year 2300.

Another survey is being developed by the Committee and is scheduled to go to the public later this year. The hope is to gain further insight on the desires of the American people with regards to this unique national treasure. We will let all know when this new survey is published and how you may participate in this dialogue. Standing by.

## Army Religious Ministry Team Training

*[From the Fort Campbell Courier by Sgt. Samantha Stoffregen 101st Airborne Division Jan 25](#)*

Chaplain (Maj. Gen.) Paul K. Hurley, chief of Army Chaplain Corps, met with unit ministry teams from across the installation, Jan. 17-Friday, to conduct ministry training at Fort Campbell.



**Retired Chaplain (COL) Dick Stennebaken tells a notional tale about being a chaplain during the Nuremberg Trials**

Chaplains and religious affairs specialist spent two days conducting various small group activities and listening to speakers who helped them understand more about who they were and how that impacted their ability to help Soldiers and Families.

"This year's [training] focus is on chaplain and religious affairs specialist identity," Hurley said. "Our training is based on helping chaplains and their assistants go a little deeper with their own sense of who they are."

Retired Chap. (Col.) Dick Stenbakken somberly took the audience through his notional experience as a chaplain during the Nuremberg Trials and how, as a chaplain, he had to find the ability to serve men who had committed heinous crimes.

"I think [Stenbakken] did an excellent job honoring the chaplains of the past, as well as portray to the younger generation [of UMTs] of what it was actually like emotionally, so they can better understand our legacy," said Sgt. Joshua Binion, religious affairs specialist with Fort Campbell Garrison.

"We operate in a very ambiguous environment and often what we need to do is not in a book," Hurley said. "You can't open up a Field Manual and say go to Chapter Six and it will tell you how to save this person's soul who is going through x-y-z."

A religious affairs specialist's mission is to understand others and that first comes from the inside, Binion said. The training encouraged everyone to learn, grow, build and reconnect with people, which is the primary component of a religious affairs specialist's job.

"This training is important because we're trying to take care of people's spirits and souls," Hurley said. "You can't touch a spirit or a soul and a lot of the things we deal with are intangible."

**The 50th Annual  
Four Chaplains Day  
Banquet**

Honoring

*THE FOUR CHAPLAINS  
& THE CREW OF THE  
USAT DORCHESTER*



*The 75th Anniversary of the Sinking*

2018 Gold Medallion recipient:  
LTG. Nadja Y. West, US Army Surgeon General

The 2018 Humanitarian of the Year:  
Twilight Wish Foundation-Cass Forkin

KEYNOTE SPEAKER:

***Steven A. Schaick, Ch, Brig Gen,***  
USAF Deputy Chief of Chaplains

Thursday, February 8, 2018  
Sheraton Philadelphia Society Hill Hotel  
1 Dock Street (2nd & Walnut Streets) Philadelphia, PA 19106

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Philadelphia, PA 19112

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## **2017 Giving Statements**

Statements detailing giving and other professional payments to the Military Chaplains Association from members and friends in 2017 have been prepared and sent via email. If you have not received yours or have questions please contact us at [chaplains@mca-usa.org](mailto:chaplains@mca-usa.org).

Thank you for your continuing support.

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If you missed the January 24th edition of the Newsgram [click here](#)

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