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Weekly Newsgram - March 28th 2018

Thursday, March 29 National Vietnam War Veterans Day!

National Vietnam War Veterans Day is a commemorative holiday in the United States which recognizes the sacrifices that veterans and their families made during the Vietnam War.



It is also a day to give proper recognition to the men and women who returned home from that war and didn't receive a proper welcome home. It's a holiday that's been celebrated since 1973 on either March 29th or March 30th of each year through a patchwork of state resolutions.

The last remaining American troops were withdrawn from Vietnam on March 29, 1973 as President Nixon declared "the day we have all worked and prayed for has finally come."

America's then longest war officially concluded 15 years ago tomorrow. During 15 years of military involvement, over 2 million Americans served in Vietnam with 500,000 seeing actual combat. 47,244 were killed in action, including 8,000 airmen. There were 10,446 non-combat deaths. 153,329 were seriously wounded, including 10,000 amputees. Over 2400 American POWs/MIAs were unaccounted for as of 1973. Captain Robert White, the last known American POW was released from captivity on April 1st.

On March 29, 2012, President Barack Obama proclaimed the day as Vietnam Veterans Day. The proclamation called "upon all Americans to observe this day with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities that commemorate the 50 year anniversary of the Vietnam War."

And in 2017, President Donald Trump signed the [Vietnam War Veterans Recognition](#)

Act. This act officially establishes March 29 as National Vietnam War Veterans Day. The Act also includes the day among those days on which the US flag should especially be displayed. March 29th is now officially known as National Vietnam War Veterans Day.

The Vietnam Commemorative Commission reports at least 1,200 commemorative events are planned across the Nation, during which Vietnam veterans and their families will be publicly and individually thanked and honored. That's amazing!

[Click here](#) to read Issue 3 of the Vietnam War Commemoration SITREP, which is dedicated to the upcoming National Vietnam War Veterans Day.

Executive Director Notes

We had an excellent response about the magazine last week, with a number of you offering to submit articles for review for publication, and a number of your offering to review books for us as well. To that end, tomorrow Mike Langston, our president, Lyman Smith, our Communications Director and I will have a conference call to discuss the themes of the issues going forward for this year. If any of you have any suggestions for articles or books for review, please feel free to let us know.



Easter Services, Operation Oklahoma Hills 1969

There is also some follow up information regarding Dr. Justin Heap who had applied to be a Navy chaplain as an atheist/humanist. Please refer to an article in the [Military Times](#) which updates the public discussion.

As noted in the Military Times article, Navy spokesman Lt. Ben Anderson issued the following statement, "Due to Privacy Act restrictions, the Department of the Navy is unable to disclose a specific individual's application to the chaplain corps or disposition of that application." Much of the reporting on this issue seems to have been based on personal accounts rather than official documentation.

We hope next week to provide more information on some of the policy and procedural issues related to this discussion.

Also this past week, as I continued to dig through 22 years of accumulated paperwork to prepare for our move from Gurnee, IL (8 miles north of Great Lakes) to Weaverville, NC (9 miles north of Asheville), I stumbled across my original MCA membership card from 1988!

What an interesting 30 years it has been, and what an honor it is to be your Executive Director. While we have more forms of communication now than 30 years ago, the critical nature of being in relationship - especially as chaplains - has not changed. I have received numerous emails and phone calls from you, and they are greatly appreciated.

Finally, for those of you who belong to a Western tradition Christian church, may you have a blessed Holy Week and Easter. And for those of you who are Jewish, may your Passover and Passover Seder be filled with meaning and hope.



Military Family Voting Survey

As we were all reminded by the special election held in the PA 18th Congressional District recently, absentee ballots can and do make a difference. In this election, the winner received only .2% more votes to establish the results. Absentee ballots could have easily decided the election. To this end, the ability of military members and their families to participate in our nation's electoral process is critically important.

A nonpartisan study is being conducted by researchers at the Institute for Veterans and Military Families (IVMF) and the MOAA Military Family Initiative to gather information from military families members about their perceptions, challenges and barriers associated with voting and absentee voting as active duty military members. By participating, your input will help us identify barriers and challenges that will inform our recommendations for improving voting outcomes and to advance policies, programs, and services for military members.

This study is for research purposes and, therefore, is completely voluntary. This study is intended to collect the perceptions and challenges with voting and absentee voting **from service members, veterans, and their spouses only**. To participate, you will be completing this online survey, which will take about 30-35 minutes. It may take longer depending on your responses. You may stop and continue this survey at any time from the same computer/mobile device.

All eligible participants may begin the survey [here](#).

Army National Guard Chaplains Stay Busy Cumulative Service Report 2017

Below are the services provided and the total numbers of each by our Army National Guard chaplains in 2017. Thanks to all who serve our nation in this demanding and profitable capacity.



Number of counseling sessions conducted by assigned chaplains

51,762

Number of worship services within the state during the reporting period

8,509

Number of military funerals were led by assigned chaplains

1,017

Number of military memorial services/ceremonies were conducted
590
Number of official events (promotions, retirements, Change of commands, etc.)
4,449
Number of hospital visits were made by assigned chaplains
1,967
Number of confinement (prison/jail) visits were made by assigned chaplains
159
Number of weddings conducted by assigned chaplains for military members
347
Number of religious rites, (e.g., baptisms, confirmation, etc.) performed
1,189
Number of religious classes conducted
3,486



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If you missed the March 21st edition of the Newsgram [click here](#)

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