

American Legion

Department of Virginia

District 17

Chaplains Newsletter

From the American Legion Website

BE THE ONE

Let's change the narrative. Instead of talking about the staggering number of daily suicides, BE THE ONE to save ONE veteran. We can end the stigma surrounding mental health with your help!

Want to learn more about American Legion suicide prevention programs? See also the American Legion Tango Alpha Lima podcasts:

- Veteran Suicide Part 1 - Idaho American Legion One More Day Program.
<https://tangoalphalima.fireside.fm/83>
- Veteran Suicide Part 2 - "The American Legion Saved My Life."
<https://tangoalphalima.fireside.fm/84>
- Veteran Suicide Part 3 - NUPD POPPA Program with Sean Powers.
<https://tangoalphalima.fireside.fm/85>

BE THE ONE

TO ASK VETERANS IN YOUR LIFE HOW THEY ARE DOING.

TO LISTEN WHEN A VETERAN NEEDS TO TALK.

TO REACH OUT WHEN A VETERAN IS STRUGGLING.

Reference: <https://www.legion.org/betheone>

District 17 Four Chaplains Memorial Service

Mark Your Calendars Now - Save the Date - Feb 5, 2023



The Four Chaplains
https://www.army.mil/article/34090/chaplain_corps_history_the_four_chaplains

District 17 will have our Four Chaplains Memorial Service on Sunday, February 5, 2023 at 10:30am. The memorial service will be at Post 177 Fairfax.

Volunteers are needed! Please contact Paul McComb (pmccomb98@gmail.com) to help volunteer with planning and during the event!

For those not familiar with the Four Chaplains, here's some of the story.

It was Feb. 3, 1943, and the U.S. Army Transport Dorchester was one of three ships in a convoy, moving across the Atlantic from Newfoundland to an American base in Greenland. A converted luxury liner, the Dorchester was crowded to capacity, carrying 902 servicemen, merchant seamen and civilian workers.

It was only 150 miles from its destination when shortly after midnight, an officer aboard the German submarine U2 spotted it. After identifying and targeting the ship, he gave orders to fire. The initial blast killed scores of men and seriously wounded many more.

Others, stunned by the explosion were groping in the darkness. Panic and chaos quickly set in! Men were screaming, others crying or frantically trying to get lifeboats off the ship.

Through the pandemonium, four men spread out among the Soldiers, calming the frightened, tending the wounded and guiding the disoriented toward safety.

They were four Army chaplains,

- Lt. George Fox, a Methodist;
- Lt. Alexander Goode, a Jewish Rabbi;
- Lt. John Washington, a Roman Catholic Priest;
- and Lt. Clark Poling, a Dutch Reformed minister.

Quickly and quietly, the four chaplains worked to bring calm to the men. As soldiers began to find their way to the deck of the ship, many were still in their underwear, where they were confronted by the cold winds blowing down from the arctic.

Once topside, the chaplains opened a storage locker and began distributing life jackets. It was then that Engineer Grady Clark witnessed an astonishing sight. When there were no more lifejackets in the storage room, the chaplains simultaneously removed theirs and gave them to four frightened young men. When giving their life jackets, Rabbi Goode did not call out for a Jew; Father Washington did not call out for a Catholic; nor did Fox or Poling call out for a Protestant. They simply gave their life jackets to the next man in line.

As the ship went down, survivors in nearby rafts could see the four chaplains -- arms linked and braced against the slanting deck. Their voices could also be heard offering prayers and singing hymns.



If you're in crisis, call the new Veterans Crisis Line number.

Dial 988 then Press 1.



<https://www.veteranscrisisline.net/>

Veterans Crisis Line

The latest updates to get you through the day

There's a new, easy-to-remember way to reach the Veterans Crisis Line—Dial 988 then Press 1. Millions of Veterans have called when they needed crisis support. We're here if you need us.

Signed into law in 2020, the National Suicide Hotline Designation Act authorized 988 as the new three-digit number for the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. As part of the law, all telephone service providers in the U.S. had to activate the number no later than July 16, 2022.

Veterans can use this new option by dialing 988 and pressing 1 to contact the Veterans Crisis Line. Veterans may still reach the Veterans Crisis Line with the previous phone number—1-800-273-8255 and Press 1—by text (838255), and through chat (VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat).

Veterans Crisis Line responders are continuing to support Veterans, service members, and their families via 988. Responders are trained in crisis intervention and military culture.

For more information, visit [VeteransCrisisLine.net](https://www.veteranscrisisline.net).

TRAINING

Combined Americanism Conference

The latest updates

Annually, the Americanism Commission of The American Legion national headquarters gets together with our department counterparts combining all the Americanism programs into a single conference. This conference focuses on sharing ideas, best practices, rolling-out program updates, and allows department program directors an opportunity to provide needed feedback to our national programs.

The Combined Americanism Conference consists of eight segments which occur as either in-person or virtual meetings. These conferences occur in September of each year. In 2022, there are three segments that will occur in-person including American Legion Oratorical, Boys State, and the American Legion Auxiliary Girls State. All other segments will occur virtually. Conference program agendas will be available early September.

American Legion Chaplain training will be virtual on September 17th. ALA Chaplain training will also be on the September 17th.

Register at the website:

<https://www.legion.org/cacregistration>

Questions may be directed to Americanism@legion.org or (317) 630-1203



The American Legion. [Legion.org](https://www.legion.org)

Department of Virginia

Religious Emphasis Committee

The latest updates



"For God and Country..."

The Department of Virginia approved a Religious Emphasis Committee (REC). We are waiting for additional information from the Department.

The May 2022 request for a REC included several example REC responsibilities.

- Duties of the Chaplain, per the *2021 American Legion Officer's Guide and Manual of Ceremonies*. For example, see page 13.
- Duties of the Chaplain, per the *American Legion Chaplain's Handbook*. For example, see page 4.
- Ministry and spiritual support to Department, fellow District and Post Chaplains.

- Foster and maintain a spirit of Religious Emphasis
- Chaplain Education & Training. Examples:
 - New Chaplain training.
 - Mentoring to new Chaplains.
- Department and District Chaplain newsletter articles.
- Department coordination with and support to the Four Chaplains Memorial Foundation.
- Guidance and support to District & Post Chaplains. Examples:
 - This includes support to Post and District Commanders with vacant or temporarily-absent Chaplain positions.
 - Assistance and mentorship to new Chaplains.
- Resource for Questions & Answers, funerals, visitations (family, hospital, hospice, etc), counseling, graveside committal service, Post Everlasting ceremonies, and memorial services.
- Provide an annual directory of District Chaplains for reference.
- Coordination with Department, District and Post Service Officers.

Bugles Across America How to Request a Bugler

To request a Bugler to play Taps to honor a Veteran, go to the Bugles Across American website:

<https://www.buglesacrossamerica.org/Request-A-Bugler>

Bugles Across American provides this service to honor our veterans at no charge: "It is our honor to serve."

Bugles Across America is looking for enthusiastic men and women to help with their organization. See their website for more information.



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<https://www.buglesacrossamerica.org/>

Chaplains Helping Chaplains

Chaplain Resources

References to Help the Post Chaplain

Here are several American Legion references available to assist the Post Chaplain.

The Chaplain's Handbook is available here: https://www.legion.org/sites/legion.org/files/legion/publications/Chaplains-Handbook-WEB_0.pdf

The Chaplain's Manual is available here: <https://www.ohiolegion.com/wp-content/uploads/Chaplains-Manual.pdf>

The Department of Ohio's Religious Emphasis webpage: <https://www.ohiolegion.com/about/commissions-and-committees/religious-emphasis/>

American Legion Post Officer's Guide and Manual of Ceremonies - This guide provides a tool for post officers, district and county commanders, and serves as a Manual of Ceremonies. Each chaplain should possess a copy of this guide for it contains many of the prayers that are helpful for special events.

The Chaplain's Prayer Manual has invocations, benedictions, table graces, and prayers for most American Legion events. There are prayers for our organization's birthday, Presidents' Month, the armed forces, memorial occasions, Post Everlasting ceremonies, Flag Day, Independence Day, Veterans Day, Thanksgiving, New Year, building dedications, and installations.

What is Religious Emphasis Week, and why does The American Legion encourage it?

Different institutions and colleges may conduct Religious Emphasis Weeks throughout the year to celebrate and bring attention to the religious part of their history, if applicable, and the Legion is no exception.

The marking of Four Chaplains Sunday – the first Sunday of each February – kicks off the Legion's Religious Emphasis Week. During this time, posts are encouraged to hold events highlighting the special role faith and religious ideas have played in the history and development of the United States.

Religious Emphasis Week is part of the "Service to God and Country" Americanism program, which according to the Americanism Manual "is basic Americanism" and "emphasizes the vital part the church must play in every community." More information can be found in the manual, which can be downloaded free of charge here or at www.legion.org/publications.

2022-2023 District 17

Planning Calendar (as of 19 AUG 2022)

Event	Location	Date/Time
17th District Org Meeting	Falls Church Post 130	14 August 2022 1300 pm
National Convention	Milwaukee, Wisconsin	26 August – 1 September 2022
American Legion Day	Various	16 September 2022
POW/MIA Recognition Day	Various	17 September 2022
Department Fall Conference	Williamsburg	October 21-23 2022
17 th District Fall Conference	Fairfax Post 177	30 October 2022 Exec Meeting: 12:30 pm Conference: 1 pm
Department Commanders Dinner	Springfield Post 176	10 November 2022
Veteran's Day Activities	Various	11 November 2022
Day on the Hill	Richmond	TBD
District Oratorical Contest	Fairfax Post 177	3 rd Sunday January 2023
Four Chaplains Service	Fairfax Post 177	5 February 2023
President's Day Parade	Alexandria Post 24	20 February 2023
Department Spring Conference	Portsmouth	March 3-5 2023
17 th District Spring Conference	Springfield Post 176	March 19, 2023 Exec Meeting: 12:30 pm Conference: 1 pm
District Nomination Committee	Vienna Post 180	17 April 2023 7 pm
Memorial Day	Various	29 May 2023
Boys State Orientation	Post 177	4 June 2023 1 pm
District Convention	Vienna Post 180	11 June 2023 1230 Joint Mtg 1300 Convention
Department Convention	TBD	TBD