

National Conference on Ministry to the Armed Forces

On 79th Anniversary of the Heroism of the Four Chaplains, Congress Thru NDAA Authorizes the Update of Chaplains Hill Monument at Arlington National Cemetery

New York, February 7, 2021

As veterans and religious communities across the country remember the “Four Chaplains” iconic heroes of World War II, Congress and President Joseph Biden have acted to direct that 27 names of chaplains who died in service be added to the Chaplains Hill Monuments located in Section 2 of Arlington National Cemetery.

US Army Chaplains Revs George L. Fox, Rev. Clark V. Poling, Fr. John Washington and Rabbi Alexander Goode were passengers on the troopship Dorchester sailing in the north Atlantic that was hit by torpedoes from a German U-boat on the night of February 3, 1943 resulting in the loss of 672 lives including the four clergy.

Survivors spoke of the heroism of the “Four Chaplains” who did all they could to help soldiers and civilian passengers off of the doomed ship in the minutes they had, even giving up their life preservers and gloves, they were last seen praying together. The story of their selfless service became a rally point during the war which continues to be commemorated nearly 80 years later.

Congress recognizing the timeless service of chaplains in the Armed Forces and especially those who have died in service included in the \$770 Billion 2022 National Defense Authorization Act signed by President Biden on Dec. 27th an amendment authorizing the Secretary of the Army to proceed with updates to Chaplains Hill at Arlington National Cemetery proposed by the National Conference on Ministry to the Armed Forces (NCMAF) and other veterans organizations.

“We are extremely happy that the United States Congress has authorized the Secretary of the Army and its staff at Arlington National Cemetery to move forward with updates to Chaplains Hill in Section 2 at Arlington,”

Said Rear Admiral ret. Rabbi Harold Robinson, past Chairman of NCMAF, and ANC Memorial Update Project Manager. Admiral Robinson added,

“The National Conference and the Navy Chaplains Foundation look forward to working with the Cemetery in the days ahead to complete the update to this important memorial for chaplains who gave their lives while serving their country in the line of duty.”

The NCMAF proposes adding a new plaque to the existing Protestant Chaplains Monument just below an existing plaque honoring chaplains who died in WWII, the new plaque that will honor the service of 25 Chaplains affiliated with Protestant denominations, who died in service during the Korean War, Vietnam War, the Cold War Period, and in post 9-11 conflicts. Three of the chaplains to be recognized at Chaplains Hill died as Prisoners of War in Korea remain Missing In Action.

Ken Kraetzer of NCMAF’s ANC Committee said,

“These updates to Chaplains Hill build on an earlier project of our committee which was the 2011 addition of the Jewish Chaplains Monument. This monument approved unanimously by Congress presented for the first time the name of Rabbi Alexander Goode the only one of the “Four Chaplains” not previously honored on Catholic and Protestant monuments as well as 13 other Jewish Chaplains who died in service.”

The National Conference expresses its appreciation to those members of Congress, from both parties, who have initiated and supported legislation to enable the project to move forward led by Senator Raphael Warnock (D-GA) who introduced the original legislation [S.1850, The Chaplains Memorial Preservation Act](#), in the Senate.

“Military chaplains who have made the ultimate sacrifice in defense of our freedoms deserve a final resting place that honors all the parts of their service, both to our country and to the souls of their fellow servicemembers,”

said Senator Warnock.

"I am proud that parts of my Chaplains Memorial Preservation Act were included in this year's National Defense Authorization Act, and that we are able to demonstrate our commitment to memorializing these brave chaplains who gave their lives for our country. This provision is the least Congress can do to properly honor the calling of these military chaplains, and their commitment to serve a mission greater than themselves."

In addition to Sen. Warnock, the National Conference thanks Senators John Boozman (R-AR), Tommy Tuberville (R-AL), John Kennedy (R-LA) and Bill Cassidy (R-LA), as well as Representatives Doug Lamborn (R-CO), Bill Keating (D-MA) and Jack Bergman (R-MI) for their ongoing support. Rep. Lamborn initiated [H.R.4350](#), The Chaplains Memorial Preservation Act in the House.

Bishop Derek Jones, current Chairperson of NCMAF's ANC Memorial Committee said,

"The National Conference appreciates and acknowledges the support it has received for this initiative from many other organizations, particularly, The American Legion, Sons of the American Legion Detachment of New York, the Association of the United States Army, The New York Council Navy League of the United States, The Navy Chaplains Foundation and the Vietnam Veterans of America."

NCMAF member organizations cover a cross-section of religious denominations and faith groups in America each of which recruit and certify chaplains for service in the Armed Forces. The National Conference on Ministry to the Armed Forces is the successor to the General Commission on Chaplains and Armed Forces Personnel, the group which originally placed the existing Protestant monument.

The National Conference on the Ministry of Armed Forces (NCMAF) is a professional organization comprised of over 100 religious organizations that seeks to individually sponsor the very best chaplains for service in the military, VA hospitals, and prisons. Our commitment to the 1st Amendment, and the "free exercise of religion" is our hallmark and our unifying theme. We are the successors of the organization which first placed monuments on Chaplains Hill at Arlington National Cemetery and remain committed to honoring chaplains of all faiths who died in service to our Nation.

We welcome your assistance and participation in this uniquely American endeavor. Please contact us through our website: www.ncmaf.net; or emailing us at info@ncmaf.com.

Stay up-to-date on what is happening with this important initiative by reviewing the press releases below.