

# Memorial Day 2019

## Our Nation Remembers and Cares

**Psalm 34:18 – The Lord is near to the  
brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit.**

Official Memorial Day observances in our nation date back to the Civil War era. The tradition of decorating graves of war dead in the spring dates back centuries. As our nation observes this Memorial Day 2019, may we remember the over 1.2 million citizens who have given their lives in service to this nation.

Memorial Day is observed that we might remember and honor those whose lives were lost serving in the armed forces in defense of our nation. When we think of these souls, our attention is drawn to the ones who perished in battle, sometimes sacrificing their own lives that others might live.

On this Memorial Day I hope we also remember others whose lives have been lost through their service – but whose deaths may not be recognized as such. These honored citizens are our Veterans whose lives are all too often lost after returning home.

Today in our nation an estimated 20 Veterans end their lives through suicide each day. Often, the wounds which contribute to these deaths are invisible but are directly related to the battle the Veteran has borne. The deaths we hear about are those which occur in public manner – often due to the horrible reality of Veterans taking their lives on the campus of Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) facilities to express their frustration and loss of hope.

Yet, nearly 8 in 10 Veterans who take their lives each day have no substantive contact with the VA. We have more than 20 ministers of word and sacrament serving our veterans as chaplains within VA hospitals and clinics. Not only do these servants of Christ minister to the Veterans and families who come to them for treatment, they also reach out to congregations and organizations in the community to network with resources to help find the Veterans who need our assistance.

This Memorial Day, please remember and honor those who have given their lives for our nation. Also please pray for our chaplains as they lead others to connect with Veterans in need.

Lyman M. Smith  
Captain, CHC, USN, Retired  
Director, Presbyterian Federal Chaplaincies



*VA and National Guard Chaplain Fred Ehrman Offers a Benediction as a Welcome Home Event at Louisville VA Medical Center.*



# Prayer for this Memorial Day

Lord God – we remember those who have given their lives as they served our nation. We thank you for their bravery and sacrifice and pray that as a nation we would honor them by seeking truth, mercy, freedom, and justice. We pray also for Veterans now tempted to end their own lives as they cope with the troubles within. Protect them, O God, and enable your people to extend your loving arms of care and strength that peace may come. Encourage and sustain our chaplains as they herald your grace and embody your love. Amen

## The Presbyterian Council for Chaplains and Military Personnel

### *Who we are and what we do?*



We are Presbyterians who recruit, equip, enable, sustain, and celebrate the men and women who serve as chaplains within our federal institutions. Our Council members include the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, the Cumberland Presbyterian Church in America, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and the Korean Presbyterian Church Abroad.

All religious ministry professionals serving as chaplains in federal institutions require an endorsement from their religious faith group. The Council fulfills this requirement for our member denominations.

But we do much more than provide the necessary paperwork for our men and women who serve.

**Recruit** - We seek to work with candidates and other inquirers to help them discern their call to the chaplaincy.

**Equip** - We provide specialized training and credentialing to equip our chaplains for their special calling.

**Enable** - Our chaplains are prepared for service thorough counsel and mentoring helping them to make the transition to institutional ministry.

**Sustain** - Chaplains serve in remote locations under stressful conditions often separated from their traditional support networks. We visit with our chaplains to provide pastoral care to our pastors.

**Celebrate** – at career’s end we celebrate our chaplains when their service concludes. We seek to provide meaningful opportunities for their service to the larger church body.

***Please contribute to help the Cumberland Presbyterian Church support the ministry of the PCCMP***

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