## **American Veterans**





# Chaplain's Manual

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## National Constitution Preamble

We, the American Veterans who

have served or are serving in the Armed Forces of the United States during and since World War II, fully realizing our responsibility to our community, to our state and to our nation, associate ourselves for the following purposes: to uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States; to safeguard the principles of freedom, liberty and justice for all; to promote the cause of peace and goodwill among nations; to maintain inviolate the freedom of our country; to preserve the fundamentals of democracy; to perpetuate the friendship and associations of these veterans; and to dedicate ourselves to the cause of mutual assistance, this by the grace of God.

## The Chaplaincy

#### History and Development

When the word "Chaplaincy" is either seen or heard most think of the military. That is true because of the significant and historic role the Chaplaincy has long played in the military. That is still true. However, there are many types of Chaplain's service, including that of the American Veterans (AMVETS), available to those willing to serve in such a capacity. Each type of Chaplain's service is distinct depending upon its purpose and those being served.

The Chaplaincy has a long and honorable history; it is as old as the story of military operations. The term goes back to a legend of the fourth century about Martin of Tours. It is said that on his way home from battle he met a shivering beggar. He cut his cloak in two parts and gave one to the beggar. Legend says that night he had a vision of Christ wearing the part given to the one in need. His part known as a "cappa" was kept in a shrine called "cappella," becoming an object of veneration. French kings applied the term "chappelains," which meant "keepers of the cloak," to those clergy who ministered to them.

In the years that followed Chaplains were found wherever men went to war. In Colonial America the tradition was continued. The legal origin of the Chaplaincy as a part of the American military service dates from 29 July 1775 when the Continental Congress recognized the Chaplaincy as being part of the Army. From that date the role and mission of the Chaplaincy has grown. Now the Chaplaincy plays a significant role in all branches of service.

One might well ask, "Is the AMVETS (American Veterans) Chaplaincy important?" Our founding fathers must have thought so because an office of Chaplain was established. From that day until now the Chaplain has been an integral part of the total program. And no program is complete without the services of a Chaplain.

## The United States Military Chaplaincy

The Army: Chaplains had no role in the United States Army until 1791. However, colonial clergymen frequently raised military units from their own congregations and communities, and often led them in battle. A number of New England clerics served at Concord. Some even shouldered their muskets and fought alongside their fellow soldiers.

The first appointed Army Chaplain was Rev. John Hurt in 1791. He had already served seven years during the Revolutionary War. The history of the Chaplaincy from this time on (until the Civil War) is full of uncertainties.

During the War of 1812, Chaplain James J. Wilmer was the only chaplain known to have died during this war. During the Civil War the Army Chaplaincy developed many procedures still in place. Most chaplains became less a —fighting parson, and more —spiritual in their emphasis. The Civil War witnessed for the first time, a large number of Roman Catholic Chaplains in the field. It was also during the Civil War that we read of the first Jewish Chaplains and the first Black and Indian Chaplains. During the Civil War Four Army Chaplains were awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor.

The Act of 1883 mandated that the Chaplain should also —perform the duties of Schoolmaster at the Post. Additionally, Chaplains generally held services in civilian settlements; established Indian congregations; officiated at functions; visited the sick, prisoners and soldiers in barracks; served as post gardeners; and, occasionally as legal counsel. World War I and II had thousands of Chaplains from various faith groups serving the spiritual needs of the fighting men. Today, the Army Chaplains continue to serve the men and women of the United States Army, National Guard, and Reserves with spiritual and moral support.

**The Navy:** The Navy Chaplaincy dates back to the Continental Navy. What was critical was that the Continental Congress adopted regulations which provided a place for religion and the Chaplain in the Navy. Using the guidelines of the —Mother Country, Divine Services were written into the Navy Regulations.

However, few ships were authorized to be built and thus there were few Navy Chaplains. Rev. Benjamin Balch was the first Chaplain known to have served in the Continental Navy. From 1785 to 1798, there was no American Navy and, therefore, no Navy Chaplains.

The first Navy Chaplain to die as the result of enemy action was Chaplain John L. Lenhart, who was on board the Cumberland when she was rammed and sunk by the CSS Virginia (formerly called the Merrimack).

With a new edition of the Navy Regulations in 1802, additional duties of Chaplains stated that they should —perform the duty of Schoolmaster, instructing Midshipmen. The Navy Chaplain had to be a teacher of writing, mathematics, navigation, and whatever else they might need to make them proficient, besides his religious duties. That did not change much until 1906 when the Navy established certain guidelines that eliminated the teaching function and established procedures and qualifications for Navy Chaplains and the establishment of the Chaplain Corps.

Navy Chaplains have served with distinction during WWI, WWII, Korea, Vietnam, Desert Storm, and Iraqi Freedom. Navy Chaplains provide ministry to all the sea services, including, the Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, Sea Bees, and Merchant Marine.

To recount the history of the Chaplain Corps and omit two of its most revered Navy Chaplains would be a grave mistake. Chaplains Joseph T. O'Callahan and Vincent Capodanno were both awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor.

The Air Force: Before 1939, the Army's air arm was a fledgling organization. By the end of the end of WWII, the Army Air Forces had become a major military organization comprised of many air forces, commands, divisions, wings, groups, and squadrons, plus an assortment of other organizations. The National Security Act of 1947 became law on July 26, 1947. It created the Department of the Air Force, headed by a Secretary of the Air Force. From this beginning grew the Air Force Chaplaincy.

## Today's Chaplain

Today, the Chaplain is a highly respected and integral part of all branches of the military. You will find the Chaplain in many of the Fortune 500 companies of our great nation, as well as in police departments, fire departments, hospitals and emergency crews. Often called upon to minister to families in times of grief, marital, and family situations. The Chaplain is a friend and college who can be counted on when the need arises.

One of the modern day Chaplain's major purposes is to help individuals grow in their relationship to the Creator God and to one another. The Chaplain helps to develop an environment in which those who are served can grow personally, spiritually, and morally.

The Chaplain is non-denominational and non-sectarian. This means the Chaplain cannot pick and choose those he or she will minister to, but regardless of race, religious belief, or color, the Chaplain will do everything possible to minister to the needy.

## **Qualifications of Chaplains**

The qualifications for the AMVETS Chaplain are not academic or ecclesiastical. An AMVETS Chaplain candidate is not required to be a —professional clergy person (most Post Chaplains are not). The qualifications are simple yet important:

- 1. A willingness to serve the office.
- 2. A commitment to provide a Chaplain's ministry.
- 3. Should have a good self image and a positive attitude.
- 4. A caring person.
- 5. A desire to help people.
- 6. A sense of spiritual maturity.
- 7. The ability to keep things confidential.
- 8. Willing to be neutral and objective when settling disputes.
- 9. Voice projection and the ability to read well in public.
- 10. Chaplains should be proud of their office and determined to do a good job.

## **Duties and Responsibilities of the Chaplain**

No matter where the people served are coming from, they perceive the Chaplain as their Pastor. Therefore, Chaplains are called to nurture the living, care for the dying, and honor the dead. In a non-sectarian manner, you should be prepared to listen to your fellow comrades and their family members, and provide aid and spiritual comfort in times of stress, sickness, or bereavement.

- 1. Spiritual Guidance: The Chaplain is available to help individuals and their families with their spiritual needs.
- 2. Assistance in Emergency Situations: In times of crises such as hospitalization, injury, or death, the Chaplain will help and provide assistance to veterans and their families.
- 3. Conducting / Assisting at Funerals: The Chaplain is available to assist families with funeral arrangements and to officiate at the service or assist the family minister. The Chaplain can help with organizing an Honor Guard, having a Bugler present at the cemetery, and having a presentation of the flag as a token of service and honor on behalf of the AMVETS Post and fellow veterans of military service.
- 4. Weddings: The Chaplain is available to assist with weddings. When properly credentialed, the Chaplain is available to conduct weddings.
- 5. Counseling: The Chaplain is available to provide pastoral care and counsel and when necessary to help veterans and their families find appropriate resources for dealing with such issues as post-traumatic stress disorder, substance abuse, or other critical incident stress management problems.
- 6. Visitation: Visitation with veterans and their families to provide comfort and encouragement is an important function of the Chaplain.
- 7. Attending Functions: The Chaplain may be called upon to represent the Post at official functions or public meetings, and asked to give invocations, dedicatory prayers, or benedictions. Participation in Parades, 9/11 Memorial Services, Veterans Day Programs/Services, and POW/MIA Services will also be expected.

## Important Role of the Post Chaplain

The Post Chaplain has been aptly designated as the VIP (Very Important Person) of the AMVETS.

The Chaplain need not be a clergy but he/she must be a person capable of moral and intellectual leadership and one who gives dignity and respect to the office. He/she should be in close touch with the Commander and other officers of the Post and should attend all meetings of the Post and Executive Committee. The leadership in many of the Post's activities belongs right to the Chaplain and when this office is filled by the right person the usefulness of the Post to the Community will be greatly increased.

If the Chaplain is a clergyman he/she can invite the Post to attend his/her church as a body on Memorial Sunday and Armistice Sunday (Veteran's Sunday). The sermon should be patriotic, holding up high ideals of American citizenship. If not a clergy, he/she can arrange for these services alternately with churches of the community.

He/she should cooperate with the Post Historian in his/her graves registration work and inspire the Post to its full duty in seeing that all graves of servicemen/women are appropriately decorated on Memorial Day. In case the Post Historian is negligent in his/her duty, the Post Chaplain should not hesitate to bring the matter before the Post.

Some of our comrades are in jails and prisons. Nevertheless - they are still part of our family. He/she can visit them and help them work out their moral reformations. Experience shows that Chaplains in such cases have done much to rehabilitate character.

The Post Chaplain should present the condolences of the Post either in writing or personally to the families of those who met death.

It is suggested that you work closely with your Post Publicity Officer, meet and know your newspaper editors and writers and your radio and television station managers and broadcasters so that Post worthy activities may receive fullest credit.

## **Invocations**

#### The AMVETS Official Prayer

Almighty God, the Father and Guide of our great nation, we beseech Thee to give us the light and strength faithfully to uphold and defend our constitution, to safeguard our principles of liberty and justice, to promote the cause of peace throughout the world, and to strengthen the bonds of friendship and mutual assistance among our fellow citizens. **Amen**.

Dear Lord, as we gather for this meeting, give us the use of your gift of peace and understanding that we may approach the matters we must handle with sincere and just hearts. May You watch over and guide our tongues that we may not hurt our friends with whom we work for the betterment of our communities and our country. Keep us always true to the principles on which the AMVETS are founded. We ask this in Your name. **Amen.** 

Almighty God, creator of all that has been, that is, and is still to come, be with us we pray, as we meet as comrades and friends of the AMVETS. Be with us as we meet our commitments as members of this great organization. Guide our hearts and our minds as we work together for you, our God, and our country. **Amen**.

Our Father in heaven, we hallow and praise Thy name. We praise Thee for the gift of Thy great love, for all Thy blessings, for this gathering in which we unite with other posts to further our programs in AMVETS. Guide us and direct us in our decisions, that in all things it may be pleasing in Thy sight. In Thy Holy Name we pray. **Amen.** 

Oh God, we come to Thee for help and light. Grant that we may hallow this meeting to Thy service and find in Thee peace, wisdom, and strength. Grant that we may serve Thee in truth and build our work on the good foundation of justice and charity. Be with us in all our deliberations; give us this grace to think what is right and be our guide and counselor as we work for the good of our comrades, our communities, and for our state, and our beloved land. Amen.

Grant us, oh God, to know that which is worth knowing, to love that which is worth loving, to do that which pleases Thee most. Increase in us wisdom and strengthen us from our weakness that we may work for Thy glory. **Amen**.

Give us O God, the spirit of loyalty; loyalty to convictions, to our friends, and to our country. Thus inspired we shall walk not in the darkness of indecision and weakness but in the Light of Divine Guidance. **Amen.** 

Oh God, teach us to serve You as You deserve. Show us how to give without counting cost, work toward Your cause without tiring, and seek only Your will without seeking personal reward, knowing that we do what You require of us. **Amen.** 

O God, our Father, look down upon us gathered here and bestow upon us Thy loving benediction. O God, from whom are all right counsels and just works, give us that peace which the world cannot give. Direct our activities and carry them on by Thy assistance that every work of ours may begin with Thee and thru Thee be happily ended. **Amen**.

Grant to us, O God, vigilant hearts. Give us minds to know Thee, diligence to seek Thee, and wisdom to find Thee. Give us ways of like pleasing to Thee, perseverance to trust and await Thee and finally to embrace Thee. **Amen.** 

O God from whom proceed all graces and blessings, grant to our country Thy divine blessing in this land of abundance. Thou hast permitted men of all races to gather together under one flag. Here they can work out their salvation according to the ideals of right government and right living. May this land that has lighted the torch of liberty for the oppressed and directed them with the ways of peace be guided ever onward by Thee. **Amen**.

O God, guard our homes, churches, and schools, our entire land and all therein from harm and destruction. Preserve the integrity of this nation founded on religious principles by protecting it from all enemies within and without. **Amen.** 

## **Benedictions**

Let us pause this moment that each of us, in the faith of his own heart, may hallow the memory of those, our fallen comrades, who made the supreme sacrifice, and gave their lives on the altar of patriotism to a great and grateful America." (Pause 30 seconds.) "God of all consolation and all mercy, may those comrades ever sleep in the bosom of Thy love. And do Thou bless us, our loved ones, our comrades, and our fellowman everywhere, now and evermore. **Amen.** 

As we depart one from the other, may God bless us and keep us. Into His gracious protection we commit ourselves. May He be near us to defend us, with us to refresh us, around us to preserve us, before us to guide us, behind us to justify us, and above us to bless us and keep us from all evil. **Amen.** 

Be gracious unto us, O God, and bless us. As we depart from this place stretch forth Thy protection and guard our country that we being devoted to Thy service, may ever be defended by Thy power. **Amen**.

God grant that the information of this meeting might become the inspiration we need as we go forward to the task of serving Thee and our country. May Thy will be done in all our efforts together. May the Lord keep watch between me and Thee while we are absent one from the other. **Amen.** 

Our Heavenly Father, with heads uncovered and bowed in tribute to our fallen comrades, we bring this meeting to a close. Before we part and go our separate ways we pause to think of our members who are experiencing difficult times. For them and their families we pray for strength and courage. **Amen**.

May the strength of God sustain us. May the power of God preserve us. May the hand of God protect us. May the way of God direct us, and may the shield of God defend us. **Amen.** 

God bless us and keep us. Unto his gracious protection we commit ourselves. May God be near us to defend us, within us to refresh us, around us to preserve us, before us to guide us, behind us to justify us and above us to bless us. **Amen.** 

## For the Sick, Wounded and Dying

#### **Catholic**

O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended You. I detest all my sins because of Your just punishments, but most of all because they offend You, my God, who are all and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve, with the help of Your grace, to sin no more and to avoid the occasions of sin. **Amen.** 

#### **Protestant**

Almighty and most Merciful God and Savior, extend to Your servant comfort of Your gracious care. Help him/her to see this sickness as a time for strengthening both his/her spiritual and physical well-being. If it be Your will to restore him/her to health, assist him/her by Your Holy Spirit to lead the rest of his/her life in godly respect and for Your glory. If Your fatherly wisdom wills that his/her share in this present life be ended, give him/her grace to accept in faith the salvation won for him/her by Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Amen.** 

#### **Jewish**

O Lord, my God and God of my fathers, my destiny is in Your hands. If it be Your will, grant me speedy healing of my wounds (illness). But if not, then grant me complete trust in Your wisdom and love, that I may accept whatever may be in store for me. Give me the power to understand that only with You is perfect knowledge and only through You can one find boundless happiness and eternal peace. Most sincerely and humbly I acknowledge my faith and trust in you: Sh'mah Yis-ro-al, Ah-doh-noi e-loh-hay-noo Ah-doh-noh-noi e-chod. Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is One!

#### Orthodox

O Master and Almighty Lord, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, You have told us You desire all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth, and that You desire not the death of sinner but that he/she turn and live. We therefore implore You to absolve Your servant from all sins from his/her youth until now. You alone can loose the bonds and restore the contrite. You alone are the hope of the despairing and can remit the sins of everyone who trusts in You. Receive now in peace the soul of Your servant and give it rest in that place where all Your saints dwell; through the grace of Your only-begotten Son, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, with whom You are blest, and Your all-holy and life-creating Spirit; now and forever and unto ages of ages. **Amen.** 

## **Prayers**

#### **Prayers for Youth**

We invoke Thy blessing O God on the children of America. Give joy to their hearts, understanding to their minds, courage and resoluteness to their wills, that they may be guided throughout life's journey, be strong in the fight against evil, and pursue that which is right and just. May their faith in Thee never waver and may it make them ever true to themselves, to others, to their heritage as Americans, and true to Thee O God. **Amen.** 

#### **Building Dedication**

O God, we invoke thy blessing on all of us assembled here for the dedication of this new building. Grant, we beseech Thee, that these walls be hallowed with deeds of love and service for God and Country. Instill into the hearts of all who will meet here the inspiration to be true to the ideals of the AMVETS and quicken their spirit of comradeship. Bless those who have worked and sacrificed to make this building a reality and preserve in the hearts of all, the traditions of the AMVETS. May this building be for those who built it a joy and pride and a lasting memorial to their service in time of war and their loyalty and love in time of peace. **Amen.** 

#### **Independence Day**

As our Nation unites again to celebrate the gift of liberty, we give thanks for all those patriots and defenders of our Nation's ideals who have sacrificed so much for the sake of others. Give to us a renewed dedication to the preservation of the finest principles of freedom and justice which have shaped our Nation's destiny, and help us to call to mind the part that Your revealed truth has had in bringing this all about. To You we give all honor and praise. **Amen**.

#### **Prayer for The President**

Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, be with the President of these United States to guide him/her with Your wisdom, to assist him/her in the discharge of his/her duties, that under his/her leadership we may preserve our Nation's integrity, guard her against all enemies, and keep her a bulwark of freedom and justice and a beacon of love and hope to light the way to a world of peace. **Amen.** 

#### Medal of Honor

Almighty God, we are here today to pay tribute to men of our Nation who have been bestowed the highest award our Nation can offer to her fighting men and women. They have answered the call of courage and bravery by offering themselves in self-sacrifice and beyond the call of duty. Accept our thanksgiving for their sacrifices and acts of bravery and courage. Let our spirits be proud of them. May Your Holy presence be with us now. We pray in Your Holy Name. **Amen.** 

#### **Pearl Harbor Day**

Heavenly Father, we are gathered here to commemorate those who gave their lives at Pearl Harbor on December 7th, 1941. Let us always honor the memory of the brave men who sacrificed so that we may experience freedom in a Country that is free. Let us be reminded of life, liberty, justice, freedom and democracy that we may be ever grateful to You and those veterans who gave so much for their Country. We ask Your blessing upon us this day and grant unto us Your continued fellowship that makes abiding peace. **Amen**.

#### Korean War Remembered

( ) years ago the Korean War ended. Hundreds of thousands of young men and women served their country in that War and thousands gave their lives. Let us pray. O Lord, we thank You for the sacrifices our Korean Veterans made for us and for peace. We gather here in these moments to remember them. We pray that You would bless and protect all Your people. Guide us on the path to unity and harmony that we may serve You and Your people in keeping with Your Holy Will. May this day be a day of commemoration and honor to those who sacrificed in order to give South Koreans liberty and assure greater freedom in our world. **Amen.** 

#### Vietnam War Remembered

Almighty God, we are here today to pay tribute to brave men and women, living and dead, who have gone to a distant land called Vietnam. Accept our thanksgiving for their sacrifices and the sacrifices of their families. Cause us to never take for granted their devotion to liberty. Grant, we pray, joy and fulfillment to those still living; and for those who are at rest, remember them, O Lord, in Your mercy, and have compassion on us. Make us a generation of wisdom, discipline, and good faith. **Amen.** 

Prayer for Our Prisoners of War (Ceremony instructions are available in separate handout) Lord, shelter the prisoners of war in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Open the hearts and minds of their captors that they may be restored to their homes and loved ones. Each has carried the burden of battle. Each has discharged on obligation of his country. Each has been subjected to hazards, pain, and imprisonment beyond the lot of the soldier. O Lord, these gallant men who bear so great a burden must not be forsaken. God of Justice to whom we pray, thy compassion we beseech. Lift their burden, give them strength and strike the shackles that deny them freedom. Amen.

#### **Veterans Day**

O God of Hosts, we bow our heads in thankfulness for the victories Thou hast granted us, to us and to those peoples who have united with us to stamp out the evils of aggression, intolerance and greed. **Amen.** 

#### **Memorial Day Prayers**

Almighty God our Heavenly Father, in Your hands are the living and the dead; we give You thanks for all those, our comrades and sisters, who have laid down their lives in the service of our Country. May they rest in peace, and may perpetual light shine upon them. May the good work of seeking justice for the oppressed and peace for all mankind be rewarded with success, that their sacrifices shall not have been in vain. And may we never fail to remember the awesome cost of the freedom which we enjoy. **Amen.** 

#### For All in the Service of our Country

O Almighty Lord God, who neither slumbers nor sleeps; Protect and assist, we beseech Thee, all those who at home or abroad, by land, by sea, or in the air, are serving this country, that they, being armed with Thy defense, may be preserved evermore in all perils; and being filled with wisdom and girded with strength, may do their duty to Thy honor and glory. **Amen.** 

#### **Prayer for our Troops**

Heavenly Father, I pray that You continue to protect our troops that are in harm's way. Bless the leadership of the military and give them the wisdom that surpasses all understanding to make clear cut, decisive decisions to defeat the enemy completely. I pray for our military Chaplains. Give them strength in the Holy Spirit so that they will be able to give spiritual guidance to those troops that have experienced the horrors of war. Keep all safe from harm and bring them safely home to the loving arms of their families. **Amen**.

#### For the Nation

O Eternal God, through whose mighty power our fathers won their liberties of old; Grant, we beseech Thee, that we and all the people of this land may have grace to maintain these liberties in righteousness and peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**.

#### For our Armed Forces

Heavenly Father, we commend to Thy gracious care and keeping all the men and women in our Armed Forces at home and abroad. Defend them day by day with Thy heavenly grace; strengthen them in their trials and temptations; give them courage to face the perils that beset them; and help them to know that none can pluck out of Thy hand those who put their trust in Thee; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**.

O Eternal God, we commend to Thy fatherly care, all those who are enlisted in the Armed Forces. In time of preparation, grant that discipline and training may fit them worthily to serve our country, and in the day of strife guide and sustain them in upholding the cause of justice and freedom; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.** 

#### For the Army

O Lord God of Hosts, stretch forth, we pray Thee, Thine Almighty arm to strengthen and protect the soldiers of our country. Support them in the day of battle, and in the times of rest and training keep them safe from all evil; endue them with courage and loyalty; and grant that in all things they may serve without reproach; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**.

#### For the Navy

O Eternal Lord God, who alone spreadest out the heavens, and rulest the raging of the sea; Vouchsafe to take into Thy Almighty and most gracious protection our country's Navy, and all who serve therein. Preserve them from the dangers of the sea, and from the violence of the enemy; that they may be a safeguard unto the United States of America, and a security for such as pass on the seas upon their lawful occasions; that the inhabitants of our land may in peace and quietness serve thee our God, to the glory of Thy Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.** 

#### For the Air Force

O Lord God of Hosts, who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain; Watch over and protect, we pray Thee, the airmen of our country as they fly upon their appointed tasks. Give them courage as they face the foe, and skill in the performance of their duty. Sustain them with Thy Everlasting Arms. May Thy Hand lead them and Thy Right Hand hold them up that they may return to the earth with a grateful sense of Thy mercy; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.** 

#### For the Marine Corps

O Eternal Father, we commend to Thy protection and care of the members of the Marine Corps. Guide and direct them in the defense of our country and in the maintenance of justice among nations. Protect them in the hour of danger. Grant that wherever they serve they may be loyal to their high traditions and that at all times they may put their trust in Thee; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.** 

#### For the Coast Guard

O Lord, who of old didst still the raging of the sea, watch over, we beseech Thee, the men of the Coast Guard as they sail upon their missions of helpfulness and succor. Grant them courage and skill and a safe return, and a grateful sense of Thy mercy toward them; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.** 

#### For the Merchant Marine

Almighty God, who raiseth the wind and who maketh the storm a calm, we pray Thee for Thy blessing upon the seamen of the Merchant Marine, Grant that they that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters, may see thy works, O Lord, and Thy wonders in the deep. Preserve them from all peril, both of body and of soul, both at sea and ashore; and give them a heart to praise Thy Holy Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.** 

#### For the Chaplains in the Armed Forces

Blessed Lord, who didst commission Thy disciples to continue the work which the Father sent thee into the world to do, support, we beseech Thee, with Thy Holy Spirit, those who minister in the Armed Forces of our country. Give them grace that they may both by their life and doctrine, set forth Thy true and lively word, and rightly and duly administer Thy Holy Sacraments. Strengthen them in their temptations and make them courageous in the perils of their calling, that they may glorify thee before all men; and do Thou hold them ever in Thy gracious keeping; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.** 

#### For the Wounded

O Lord, we pray Thee to have mercy upon all who are this day wounded and suffering. Though kindred and friends be far away, let Thy grace be their comfort. Raise them to health again, if it be Thy good pleasure; but chiefly give them patience and faith in Thee; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.** 

#### For those in Mental Darkness

O Heavenly Father, we beseech Thee to have mercy upon all Thy children who are living in mental darkness. Restore them to strength of mind and cheerfulness of spirit, and give them health and peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.** 

#### **For Prisoners**

We beseech Thee, O God, for all prisoners and captives, and all who suffer from oppression, that Thou wilt manifest Thy mercy toward them, and make the heart of man merciful as Thine own, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.** 

#### For the Lonely

Have compassion, O Most Merciful Lord, on all who are lonely and desolate. Be Thou their Comforter and Friend; give them such earthly solace as Thou seest to be best for them; and bring them to the fuller knowledge of Thy love; for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**.

#### For the Persecuted

O Blessed Lord, who Thyself didst undergo the pain and suffering of the Cross; Uphold, we beseech Thee, with Thy promised gift of strength all those of our brethren who are suffering for their faith in Thee. Grant that in the midst of all persecutions they may hold fast by this faith, and that from their steadfastness Thy Church may grow in grace and we ourselves in perseverance, to the honor of Thy Name, who with the Father and the Holy Ghost art one God, world without end. **Amen.** 

#### For the Dying

Unto God's gracious mercy and protection we commit you. The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make His face shine upon you, and be gracious unto you. The Lord lift up His countenance upon you, and give you peace, both now and evermore. **Amen.** 

#### For One Departed

Almighty God, we remember this day before Thee Thy faithful servant (name), and we pray Thee that, having opened to him the gates of larger life, Thou wilt receive him more and more into Thy joyful service; that he may win, with Thee and Thy servants everywhere, the eternal victory; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**.

#### For those Who Mourn

Almighty God, who didst offer Thy only Son to be made perfect through suffering, and to win our salvation by enduring the cross; sustain with Thy healing power all those whose loved ones have given their lives in the service of our country. Redeem, we pray Thee, the pain of their bereavement, that knowing their loss to be the price of our freedom, they may remember the gratitude of the nation for which they gave so costly a sacrifice. And grant, O Lord, that these dead shall not have died in vain, and that out of the distress of this present age there may arise a new and better world in which Thy will shall rule, to the honor of Thy Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. **Amen.** 

#### For our Enemies

O Saviour of the world, our Redeemer, whose love embraces all mankind, we hear Thy prayer from the Cross: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Forgive, O Lord, those who have poured out the innocent blood and caused suffering in the world. May our prayers be for them a ministry of reconciliation. We ask it in Thine own Name. **Amen**.

#### **Birthday Dinner Prayer**

O God, Judge over Nations, be with us as we come together this day to pay tribute to our \_\_\_\_\_ AMVETS Birthday. We rejoice that we are a source of support to our country. Help us with thy guidance in the work of our great organization. May our activities be counted among the good deeds that please thee. We ask for strength and the ability to do the tasks you set before us. Keep us concerned about the welfare and improvement of our community, the safety and pride of our homes, and the moral and spiritual values that guide our community living. We ask thy blessings upon our members and guests here gathered and to bless the food which we are about to partake together. All of this we ask "For God and Country". Amen.

## Chaplain's Calendar

January	New Year's Day	January 1
	Vietnam War Cease Fire	January 27, 1973
February	Four Chaplains Sunday	First Sunday
	Ash Wednesday	46 days before Easter
March	National Vietnam War Veteran's Day	March 29
	Purim	14 <sup>th</sup> day of Adar
April	Month of the Military Child	April
	Ramadan	The first and last dates of Ramadan are determined by the lunar Islamic calendar.
	Passover	15 Nisan-21 Nisan
	Good Friday	Friday before Easter
	Easter	22 March-25 April (within 7 days after full moon)
	Orthodox Easter	Sunday after first full moon after Passover
	Yom HaShoah (Holocaust Remembrance Day)	April 28
May	National Day of Prayer	First Thursday
	VE Day	May 8, 1945
	Mother's Day	Second Sunday
	Military Spouse Appreciation Day	Second Friday
	Armed Forces Day	Third Saturday
	Rolling to Remember	Memorial Day Weekend

May	Memorial Day	Last Monday
June	PTSD Awareness Month	June
	D-Day	June 6, 1944
	Women's Veterans Day	June 12
	Army Birthday	June 14, 1775
	Flag Day	June 14
	Father's Day	Third Sunday
	Eid al-Adha	10 <sup>th</sup> day of Dhu al-Hijjah (lasting 4 days)
July	Independence Day	July 4
	Korean War Cease Fire	July 27, 1953
	National Buffalo Soldiers Day	July 28
August	AMVETS National Convention	Third Week
	Coast Guard Birthday	August 4, 1790
	VJ Day	August 14, 1945
September	National Suicide Prevention Month	September
	Labor Day	First Monday
	Remembrance Day	September 11, 2001
	Air Force Birthday	September 18, 1947
	National POW/MIA Recognition Day	Third Friday
	Rosh Hashanah	1 <sup>st</sup> day of Tishrei
	Gold Star Mother's Day	Last Sunday
October	Yom Kippur	10 Tishrei
	Navy Birthday	October 13, 1775
November	Election Day	First Tuesday after First Monday

November	Marine Corps Birthday	November 10, 1775
	Veteran's Day	November 11
	Thanksgiving	Fourth Thursday
December	National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day	December 7, 1941
	AMVETS Birthday	December 10, 1944
	National Guard Birthday	December 13, 1636
	National Wreaths Across America	Third Saturday
	Space Force Birthday	December 20, 2019
	Hanukkah	25 <sup>th</sup> day of Kislev in the Hebrew calendar
	Christmas Day	December 25
	Kwanzaa	December 26-January 1

#### **Table Graces**

We thank Thee, O God, for this food which reminds us of thy care over us and pray that it will strengthen us for the doing of Thy good pleasure and give us power to render better service to thee. **Amen.** 

Our Heavenly Father, Grant us, we pray for wisdom and strength to serve day after day, Bless this food to our use and make us quite strong. So we can continue to serve well and long. **Amen**.

Our Father, how great Thou art. You have blessed us in so many ways and we thank You for the opportunity to unite in this moment of prayer, this special privilege we have in America. We ask for Your blessings on this food. May our fellowship as we partake be an added blessing as we strive to keep America "One nation under God." **Amen**.

## **Visitation**

Visitation ministry is an important part of the Chaplain's responsibility to Veterans and their families. You do not take the place of a patient's regular pastor, who visits to encourage the patient's spiritual life, offer the comfort of faith and express the concern of the congregation.

While you may also do these things, depending upon your relationship with the patient, you are an extension of AMVETS.

One does not need to have formal Ministerial training to be an effective visitor of patients. A caring personality is the greatest qualification. Spiritual preparation is the basic and best preparation for the Chaplain because spirituality is the unique gift you have to offer. Unlike the medical doctor, the Chaplain has no pills. The heart of ministry is spirituality. Chaplains who do not prepare spiritually have nothing to give that can't be given by a social service agency.

The beginning point of spiritual preparation is the individual's own experience with God. This is the spring that feeds the streams of spirituality and waters the fields of one's life and ministry. What grace did Paul have to share before his Damascus road experience? The source of spirituality is the transcendent. Scripture and prayer are doors into the spiritual. Private devotion and meditation are essential to spiritual preparation.

There are other paths to spiritual preparation, too. Reading devotional literature, listening to spiritual music, and seeking out a spiritual director who can offer insights and asking questions can move one toward spiritual sensitivity. A good Chaplain will never stop preparing for the task and opportunity that come from God's call upon his or her life.

#### **Guidelines for Visitation**

Learn the culture of health-care facilities. Familiarize yourself with the protocol and regulations of the places you visit. This means more than just finding out the visiting hours. Most hospitals have a system for registering Chaplains who desire access to patients. Ask for information to guide you in your regular visitation. You will also want to meet the in-house Chaplain.

Make contact with key hospital workers. Introduce yourself to staff physicians and nursing directors. Along with floor nurses and other workers, these are the people with whom you want to be on good terms as a regular visitor.

Respect patient and family wishes regarding visits. Many hospitals and nursing homes have a confidential "Pastors List" that includes room numbers, patients' religious preference, and a notation as to whether or not they welcome visits by a pastor or priest. If in doubt, consult a family member. You may need to use a personal ID to access the list.

Respect privacy and nursing needs before entering a room. Always check with a floor nurse or clerk before visiting on a floor to ensure that you are not interrupting a procedure. Knock before entering and give the patient time to respond before going in. You are not calling on the patient to entertain him or occupy time, so make your visit short and to the point. Listen more than you talk. Take your cues from the patient as to what he or she wishes to discuss. Also, be sensitive in your physical approach to the patient; remain standing unless invited to take a seat. If the patient is asleep or medicated, don't wake him or her; leave your card with a note that you called.

Gently inquire about prayer. Many patients will appreciate your offer to pray at the end of your visit. Do not assume that everyone wants prayer; always ask before offering. If prayer is not desired, simply say "I am praying for you" as you leave the room. Prayer is a delicate issue unless you know the patient well, so be guided by empathy and divine guidance in this area.

Make follow-up visits or calls. Some people will welcome daily visits when hospitalized. Others like only one or two visits. After the initial visit, always ask if you may call again. If practical, make a follow-up visit after the patient goes home. In any event, make a phone call after he or she is home, or send a card. Your continued concern is a mark of your ministry. Always be discrete in discussing patients with others in your post, church or community.

## The Meditation

AMVETS Chaplains often come in contact with people of other faiths or no faith when called upon to conduct a Memorial or Funeral service. What we say at these times must be worthy of those we honor as well as those who attend our services. Our words must reflect truth, sincerity and compassion. Developing skill and confidence in writing the meditation – the heart of the service – will serve you well in your ministry to veterans and their families.

#### **Purpose of Memorials and Funerals**

- They are for the living.
- They are about the deceased.
- They are intended to glorify God.
- The human soul hungers for the divine at a Funeral or Memorial service.
- The message should center on God's reassurance amid the mystery of death.

#### **Preparation**

- Gather basic information about the deceased.
- Select a meditation theme and appropriate scripture.
- Observe and record life's daily experiences as a resource for meditation ideas.

#### Writing

- Opening statement, scripture, story
- Content, using a theme throughout
- Closing

#### Delivery

- Strength of voice
- Personal and physical setting
- Style, mood, tempo

#### Remember that a funeral or memorial service

- Provides a framework of supportive relationships for mourners.
- Reinforces the reality of death.
- Provides a fitting conclusion to the life of the deceased.
- Encourages the expression of grief.

## Look like a Chaplain - Act like a Chaplain - and Be a Chaplain.

## **Burial Ritual**

Arriving at the grave, the Post halts and opens order.

- The Firing Party forms in a single rank about 10 yards behind the foot of the grave and about 5 yards to the left of the grave.
- The Body Bearer's form in two files, facing the road and ready to receive the casket. The Bugler stands a few paces behind the head of the grave. All personnel stand at ease.
- When the hearse comes into view, the Commander calls the Burial Detail to attention.
- When the hearse is parked, the Body Bearers step forward and take the casket from the hearse.
- As soon as they have lifted the casket, the Commander brings the Firing Party and Bugler to the position of "Present Arms."
- The body is brought to the bier.
- The Post colors are dipped. (Never dip the U.S. flag.)
- The Post forms around the gravesite and the Chaplain pays tribute to the deceased.
- The Commander brings the Bugler and Firing Party to the order. With inclined heads, the Bugler and Firing Party assume the position of parade rest.
- The Body Bearers lift the flag from the casket and hold it over the grave at waist height, holding it taut so that it will not sag.
- The Chaplain invokes the Divine Blessing.
- When he/she finishes, he/she steps to one side and the Bugler takes his position at the head of the grave.
- When the Bugler is in position, the Commander brings the Firing Party to attention and the Bugler comes to the position of "Present Arms" at the same command.
- The Commander orders, "Firing party, Ready, Aim, Fire."
- The Post colors are dipped over the grave.
- The Firing Party fires three volleys and remains in the position of load. When the last volley is fired, the Bugler comes to attention and Taps is played.
- During the playing of Taps, the officer in charge of the Firing Party gives the order Present Arms and executes the hand salute. At the conclusion of Taps, the Commander brings the firing party to Order Arms.
- As soon as he has completed playing Taps, the bugler steps back a pace, salutes, about-faces and joins the firing party.
- The Body Bearers fold the flag (instructions for this procedure are found in a separate handout), hand it to the superintendent of the cemetery or the Commander, face the foot of the grave and march off to the rear of the firing party.
- The Firing Party, Body Bearers and Post members move off at quick time at the Commander's order.

#### Chaplain's Tribute: At the grave or at the home, the Chaplain can recite the following:

"As Chaplain of Post (number), Department of (state), of the American Veterans who have served or are serving in the Armed Forces of the United States during and since World War II, I bring to the next of kin, to the family and friends of our departed comrade, assurance of our heartfelt sympathy in their hour of sorrow, and assurance of our sincere appreciation of the service this departed veteran has rendered to our country and to us."

"Every Veteran stood one day in solemn pledging of himself to the service of his God, his country, and his fellow men, in time of war, in time of peace. That pledge was to last as long as life, for the good of all. Our departed comrade one day left home and loved ones to go out across the world, over land and sea as ordered, to fulfill that sacred oath. He (she) offered himself (herself) on the altar of patriotism for the nation he (she) loved. Only those who have suffered the wounds of war, physical and mental, can know the cost of sacrifice that is often necessary in fulfilling such an oath."

"In the time of national emergency, America has never lacked the brave, devoted sons and daughters to go out and do battle for her sacred cause. America cannot, and will not, forget those brave veterans who in time of war saved her and in time of peace have preserved for all her way of life."

"I speak for America and for every American today, when I say America would not be the America we know and love, were it not for the patriotic sacrifice of men and women like our departed comrade. It is a glorious thing to die for America. It is also a glorious thing to live for America. Our departed comrade speaks to us today and bids us to live for America as God-fearing, honorable citizens, ready to be of service at all times to our country and to our fellowman."

"I speak for every AMVET, for every veteran, and for the United States Government, when I say that the patriotic service of this (man /woman) will never be forgotten, and that we stand ready to be of help, in every possible way, to the family and dependents of this or of any other of our fallen comrades."

"One day each of us must go the way of all mortals, into the eternity of God. May that God deal kindly with His veterans, and may our ranks of comradeship once again form on the eternal shores of heaven and go marching on into the kingdom of God's blessed and everlasting peace."

**Divine Blessing:** The Chaplain may write his/her own prayer or invoke the following Divine Blessing:

"Blessed Lord God, we invoke Your presence with and blessing on us as we commit to Your grace and Love AMVET (name). We thank you, Lord, for the life of AMVET (name). We pray AMVET (name) will live with You in life everlasting. **Amen.**"

or:

"Lord God Almighty, maker of all that exists, we invoke Your blessing and peace on us as we entrust to You the soul of AMVET (name). Lord, Your grace be on us now and always. **Amen.**"

**Memorial Prayer:** The Chaplain may say his/her own prayer or the following:

"Loving God, eternal in heaven, our hearts are lifted to You in prayer. We do so, Lord, in thanksgiving for the life of AMVET (name). We thank You, Lord, for the love of AMVET (name) for You, for our country, and for family and friends; a love that has enriched all of our lives. We are most grateful that by the service of AMVET (name) in the armed forces of the United States of America, we are truly a free people in a free land. Your holy and infinite blessings be with the family and loved ones of AMVET (name) in all of time. Lord, receive AMVET (name) as Your own. Bless AMVET (name) with life everlasting. **Amen.**"

**Benediction:** The Chaplain may give his/her own Benediction or the following: "The peace and blessing of the Lord be with us always. **Amen.**"

or:

"The love of God, which brings to comfort and peace from our Lord, be with us always. Amen."

## Committal Service at the Gravesite

If there was no service at the Funeral Home or another location, you will want to extend the committal, possibly with additional scripture and a mini-Eulogy.

You will lead the procession from the hearse to the grave. Stand at the head of the grave and preferably at the left by the blue field of the U.S. Flag, if the casket is draped. Depending on the grave's location, crowd size, the tent and weather conditions, you will have to be flexible.

#### The Committal

- Reading of scripture
- Prayer
- Prayer of committal:
  - "Almighty God, into Your hands we commend your child (name of deceased) in hope for resurrection unto life eternal. This body we commit to the ground – earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust. Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord henceforth. 'Blessed indeed,' says the Spirit, 'that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow them" (Revelation 14:13, NIV).
- The Lord's Prayer, Matthew 6:9–13 (This is acceptable for Protestants and Catholics alike. However, Catholics omit the Doxology. Encourage those assembled to participate.)
- Benediction or Blessing
- Turn the service over to the Firing Squad Commander.
- After the presentation of the U.S. Flag and Taps, you may express your personal condolences to the family and offer any further assistance you believe appropriate.

#### **Funeral**

**Commander:** Another veteran has been called to the High Command, and has gone to report to the Commander of all of us.

Chaplain: Let us pray. Eternal God, Supreme Commander of us all, Lord of the far-flung battle line to whom the ranks of life report, we bow before You with reverent hearts and in sublime faith, knowing You lead us on in death as You have in life. For again You have ordered a veteran to that realm in the West, beyond the twilight and the evening star, where beauty, valor, and goodness dwell forever with the un-numbered multitude. Mindful of service nobly done You have called (name of deceased) to everlasting rest. You have sealed (his/her) lips. You have called our comrade to Eternal Peace, to the land of silent mystery. Hear now the sorrows of those who mourn. Touch their tired hearts, protect them with your holy care. Amen.

A short eulogy may be given by someone who knew our friend well.

Commander: This moment is sacred with the almost visible presence of the one who has gone before. We come to honor the memory of one who offered life and services for God and Country; one who has now enrolled in that great spirit army, whose footfalls cause no sound, but in our memory their soul goes marching on. Proudly we remember their service in time of war, because of them our lives are free and our nation lives. We realize how futile are mere words to express our deep and abiding sympathy in your loss. May you feel our comrade is at rest and in endless peace.

Chaplain: Lord, we entrust our (brother/sister) to your mercy. You loved (him/her) greatly in this life, Now (he/she) is freed from all its cares, give (him/her) happiness and peace forever. May (his/her) soul and all the souls of the faithful departed rest in peace. Amen.

All AMVETS present at the funeral service shall pass the casket and salute the deceased veteran.

## **Procedure at the Cemetery**

**Chaplain:** For as much as God hath taken out of the world the soul of our departed comrade we therefore commit (him/her) back to the ground to sleep and (his/her) soul to endless peace to rest. The dust returneth to earth as it was and the spirit returneth unto God who gave it.

Two pallbearers remove the Flag from the casket, fold it in the traditional manner, and hand it to the Chaplain who will give the Flag to the nearest of kin.

Commander: (as the flag is being folded) This banner of love and devotion, now being folded, is a living memorial of the courageous thoughts of our comrade, the one you came to honor today. The blue field represents the sky that overlooks our land and denotes the watchfulness of God. The red stripes tell us of the blood, sweat, and tears that have been offered and conquered by our comrade's devotion to the responsible freedom of his/her country. The white stripes boldly proclaim the peace that he/she helped to bring to our future generations. This is his/her flag; this is our Spiritual Heritage. Receive it with the tears of our minds and the faith of our hearts. Amen.

Firing squad fires three volleys
- "Present Arms" bugler plays Taps.

## References

- The Armed Forces Prayer Book
- The Chaplain"s Resource Manual, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States
- The American Legion CHAPLAIN'S HANDBOOK Service to God and Country

The Post Chaplain has been aptly designated as the VIP (Very Important Person) of the AMVETS.

The Chaplain need not be a clergyman but he/she must be a person capable of moral and intellectual leadership and one who gives dignity and respect to the office.

He/she should be in close touch with the Commander and other officers of the Post and should attend all meetings of the Post and Executive Committee.

The leadership in many of the Post's activities belongs right to the Chaplain and when this office is filled by the right person the usefulness of the Post to the Community will be greatly increased.



