



The Chapel of Four Chaplains  
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Guidelines for  
Four Chaplains Interfaith Memorial Services

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We are grateful to all those organizations and communities who through the years have honored the memory of the *Four Chaplains*, and we hope these guidelines will be the stimulus for continued remembrances.



## FOUR CHAPLAINS MEMORIAL SERVICE

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Dear Friends of the Chapel of Four Chaplains,  
Thank you for taking the time to plan, organize and execute a Four Chaplains Memorial Service. Churches, Synagogues, Military Fraternal Organizations, Military Chaplains and other groups too numerous to mention have been performing Four Chaplains Memorial Services since the sinking of the U.S.A.T Dorchester on February 3, 1943.

The heroic acts of the Four Chaplains; CH (LT) George L. Fox, CH (LT) Alexander D. Goode, CH (LT) Clark V. Poling and CH (LT) John P. Washington have been memorialized through these services to help teach the next generation of the values of interfaith cooperation and selfless service.

I served 29 years in the Army Chaplain Corps as a Religious Affairs Specialist and worked with hundreds of chaplains who where “Called to Serve” Soldiers, Airmen/women, Sailors, Marines, Coast Guard Personnel and Merchant Marines. We also see dedicated chaplains serving in the Police and Fire Departments, FBI, CIA, Congress, hospitals, VA and other organizations. They are on the front lines bringing “God to People and People to God.”

I would ask you for three favors as you plan your program:

1. Make it a special event and take time to thank all the Service members and Veterans in attendance.
2. Consider using our Legion of Honor Awards Program to honor a local Veteran or leader who has performed acts of selfless service in your community.
3. Consider taking an offering in support of the Chapel of Four Chaplains National Headquarters. The Four Chaplains Memorial Foundation is a nonprofit 501c3 Tax # 23-1458015 and relies on your support to maintain our chapel/museum facility on the Navy Yard in Philadelphia and our Four Core Programs (See attached details)

Bill Kaemmer  
MSG, USA, Ret.

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## SUGGESTED INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

### A FOUR CHAPLAINS SERVICE

On February 3, 1943, the U.S.A.T. DORCHESTER was tragically sunk. Of the 902 young men on board, only 230 survived. Many of those survivors owe their lives to the courage and leadership exhibited by the heroic Four Chaplains, who, in sacrificing their lives, created a unique legacy of brotherhood.

Since 1951, *The Chapel of Four Chaplains* has spread the message of interfaith cooperation and selfless service, touching the lives of thousands of people across this great country.

Thousands of Four Chaplains Interfaith Memorial Services will be held across the nation on or near February 3<sup>rd</sup>. This service is a tribute to those courageous Chaplains and the 672 brave young men who lost their lives on that fateful night. Further, this service honors all those who have served, and whose courage and faith have sustained our country.

It is imperative that we teach our children and youth about these great events and great sacrifices, for young people are our future. It is vital for them to understand what selfless service on behalf of others can accomplish.



## **THREE SUGGESTED FORMATS FOR FOUR CHAPLAINS SERVICES**

### (1) **Breakfast or Banquet Program:**

- Posting of the Colors
- Pledge of Allegiance or National Anthem
- "America, The Beautiful" (Assembly or Solo)
- Welcome
- Invocation
- Meal
- Introduction of Guests
- Homily Message (Focused on The Four Chaplains and Sacrificial Service)
- Tributes to The Four Chaplains (Wreath Laying or Candle Lighting by Four clergy or other persons of each faith)
- Offering (For the Chapel of Four Chaplains, Philadelphia, Pa)
- "Let There Be Peace on Earth" (Assembly) (See Suggested Hymns in this Packet)
- Benediction
- Retirement of Colors

### (2) **Comprehensive Program:**

- Posting of the Colors
- Pledge of Allegiance or National Anthem
- Welcome
- Invocation
- Introduction of Guests
- The Collect (Read aloud by Assembly) Musical Selection (Choral or Band)
- Homily / Message (Focused on The Four Chaplains and Sacrificial Service)
- Tributes to The Four Chaplains (Wreath Laying or Candle Lighting by Four Clergy or other persons of each Faith)
- Offering (For the Chapel of Four Chaplains, Philadelphia, Pa)
- "Let There Be Peace on Earth" (Assembly) (See Suggested Hymns in This Packet)
- Benediction
- Moment of Silence
- Taps
- Retirement of Colors

### (3) **Short Program:**

- Pledge of Allegiance
- "America, The Beautiful" (Assembly or Solo)
- Invocation
- Welcome
- Introduction of Guests
- The Collect (Read Aloud by Assembly)
- Homily / Message (Focused on The Four Chaplains and Sacrificial Service)
- Offering (For the Chapel of Four Chaplains, Philadelphia, Pa)
- Benediction

This interfaith prayer may be read aloud by everyone at the appointed time in the program. This prayer is a part of each Legion of Honor Award Service sponsored by the *Chapel of Four Chaplains*.

### **THE COLLECT**

God of our Fathers and our God, we thank you for the unity that the U.S.A.T. DORCHESTER Chaplains, these four men of God, demonstrated in life and in death.

Unity that is not uniformity.

Unity that strengthens within each of us every worthy loyalty of faith and practice.

Unity that transcends all our differences and makes us one in loyalty to our country and our fellowmen, and to you our God.

Grant us now your abiding presence and may we remain faithful to the spirit of our Four Chaplains who, having learned to live and serve together, in death were not divided.



## **SUGGESTIONS FOR A FOUR CHAPLAINS SERVICE**

### **BACKGROUND:**

These community services began to be held in the late 1940's across the nation on or near February 3rd of each year. They are held to honor the Four Chaplains and the other 672 men who perished when the U.S.A.T. DORCHESTER was torpedoed and sunk on February 3, 1943. Because of the interfaith nature of the sacrificial act of the Four Chaplains, this is an excellent way to bring together people of all races, faiths, and creeds in an observance of a common unity among Americans. We urge your organization to hold a Four Chaplains Observance with this purpose in mind.

### **MUSIC:**

Elsewhere in this packet is a list of appropriate music for Four Chaplains Services. The sheet music for The Four Chaplains Anthem, sung at Chapel services, is available upon request.

### **OFFERINGS:**

Many organizations take an offering during the service for the work of the *Chapel of Four Chaplains*. These offerings enable us to continue our many worthwhile programs and are truly appreciated. (Attached are a brief description of our Four Core Programs)

### **GUESTS:**

Make sure you take the time to recognize any honored guests such as: Service Members (Active/Reserve), Veterans, Gold Star Family members, former POWs, local officials, clergy etc. Today there are no longer any survivors of the sinking of the U.S.A.T. Dorchester but sometimes family members may attend. Please recognize them if they are in attendance.

### **LOCATION:**

The service can be held in veterans or fraternal halls, auditoriums, parks, churches, synagogues, and chapels. We recommend that clergy or representatives of the different faith groups be participants. Clergy to represent the Four Chaplains is always impressive.

### **PROGRAMS:**

Printed programs add to the dignity and importance of the occasion. (Attached is an example program)

### **PUBLICITY:**

News releases can be sent to local newspapers, television stations, and radio stations. Encourage the media to publicize the upcoming service or to do a follow-up report. (Attached is a copy of a News Release – feel free to edit it for your use)

**INTRODUCTIONS:**

For a smooth flowing service, we recommend minimal introductions be done. Let each participant follow the other as listed in the program. There should be a brief introduction of the main speaker. The person presiding is responsible for keeping the service flowing smoothly.

**REHEARSAL:**

A rehearsal prior to the event always makes for a more effective service.

**COLOR GUARDS / HONOR GUARDS:**

Veterans, civic, and fraternal organizations wishing to participate with their color/honor guards, including organizational flags, enhance the service.

**FOCAL POINTS:**

To symbolize the tragic sinking of the U.S.A.T. DORCHESTER, create a focal point for the service: four lit candles, four red roses, a lifejacket, or four empty seats near the altar or speaker's area. (For a breakfast or banquet, this can be a completely set table for four, but with no one sitting at the Four Chaplains table.)

**A FINAL WORD:**

To make your Four Chaplains Service special and memorable, be sensitive, creative, and enthusiastic!

**AWARDS:**

Please consider taking the time to recognize all your volunteers and community members who helped make the program possible. It is also a good time to thank your sponsors. Finally, consider honoring a Veteran or local volunteer with our Legion of Honor Award. Please refer to the Program Tab on the website for nomination guidelines. Please request awards several weeks in advance of your event. Minimum two weeks for a standard award and six weeks for a medallion.

## SUGGESTED MUSIC FOR FOUR CHAPLAINS SERVICES

The following is a suggested, but not inclusive, list of music appropriate for Four Chaplains Services. In a gathering of Jews and Christians, it is preferable to have music acceptable to all, or to counter one selection with the other.

The National Anthem

The Four Chaplains Anthem

America, The Beautiful

How Great Thou Art

God of Our Fathers

My Country, 'Tis of Thee

Battle Hymn of the Republic

Eternal Father, Strong to Save

(Navy Hymn - includes stanza for each branch of military service)

This Is My Song

(Tune of Finlandia)

Pomp & Circumstance

(Processional/recessional)

God Bless America

Let There Be Peace On Earth

Taps

Auld Lang Syne

## INTRODUCTION FOR CANDLE LIGHTING CEREMONY 10

At 12:55 A.M. on February 3, 1943, the bell on the troopship U.S.A.T. DORCHESTER rang twice and never sounded again. The ship sank in less than 30 minutes.

The U.S.A.T. DORCHESTER was torpedoed by an enemy submarine and 672 young men paid the supreme sacrifice. Included in the 672 were Four Men of God -- a rabbi~ a Roman Catholic priest, a Methodist minister, and a Dutch Reformed minister -- all Army Chaplains.

These Four Chaplains gave their lifejackets to save four soldiers and, in so doing, gave up their only means of survival. They were last seen on the deck of the ship with their arms linked together and their heads bowed in prayer as they went to their watery graves in the North Atlantic off the coast of Greenland. Each chaplain received the Purple Heart and Distinguished Service Cross posthumously.

At this time, a candle will be lit for each of the Four Chaplains, as their biographies are read.



## I LIGHT THIS CANDLE IN MEMORY OF ...

### CHAPLAIN GEORGE L. FOX

George L. Fox, the oldest of the four, knew all about war. Lying about his age in 1917, he enlisted in the Army as a medical corps assistant. He won a Silver Star for rescuing a wounded soldier from a battlefield filled with poison gas, the Croix de Guerre for outstanding bravery in an artillery barrage, and the Purple Heart for wounds. A resident of Vermont, he was a successful accountant and family man when he heard God's call to the ministry. Fox went back to school and later was ordained into the Methodist denomination. When war came, he once again enlisted, telling his wife, "I've got to go. I know from experience what our boys are about to face. They need me." Fox began active duty on August 8, 1942 and served until that fateful morning of February 3, 1943.



**I LIGHT THIS CANDLE IN MEMORY OF ...****CHAPLAIN ALEXANDER D. GOODE**

Alexander D. Goode was both an outstanding athlete and scholar. Following in this father's footsteps, this young man known for his laughter and love of life, became a rabbi. While studying for his calling, he joined the National Guard and kept up an active membership. The return of the body of the Unknown Soldier had a profound effect on Goode. He attended the ceremonies, choosing to walk the thirty miles rather than drive or take a bus, because he thought it showed more respect. Goode married his childhood sweetheart and was serving a synagogue in York, Pennsylvania, when World War II broke out. He served on active duty from August 9, 1942 until February 3, 1943.



## I LIGHT THIS CANDLE IN MEMORY OF ...

### CHAPLAIN CLARK V. POLING

Clark V. Poling was the youngest of the Four Chaplains and the seventh generation in his family to be ordained in the Dutch Reformed Church. When war came, he was anxious to go, but not as a chaplain. "I'm not going to hide behind the church in some safe office out of the firing line," he told his father. The elder Poling replied, "Don't you know that chaplains have the highest mortality rate of all? As a chaplain you'll have the best chance in the world to be killed. You just can't carry a gun to kill anyone yourself." So, Clark Poling left his pastorate in Schenectady, New York, and enlisted as a chaplain. Just before he left for active duty, Clark asked his father to pray for him - "not for my safe return, that wouldn't be fair. Just pray that I shall do my duty ... and have the strength, courage, and understanding of men. Just pray that I shall be adequate." Poling began active duty on June 10, 1942 and served until February 3, 1943.



**I LIGHT THIS CANDLE IN MEMORY OF...****CHAPLAIN JOHN P. WASHINGTON**

John P. Washington grew up poor, scrappy, and determined in the toughest section of Newark, New Jersey. One of nine children born to an Irish immigrant family, he was blessed with a sunny disposition, a beautiful singing voice, and a love for music. He also loved a good fight and was leader of the South Twelfth Street gang when he was called to the priesthood. He played ball with the boys of the parish, organized sports teams and, when war came along, went with his "boys" into the Army. He began active duty on May 9, 1942. His wonderful voice, raised in song and prayer to comfort those around him, could be heard until his final moments on February 3, 1943.



It was known as Torpedo Junction, the U-Boat infested, icy water of the North Atlantic during World War II. On January 23, 1943, the U.S.A.T. DORCHESTER, an old coastal steamer quickly pressed into military service, left New York Harbor bound for Greenland. The U.S.A.T. DORCHESTER was escorted by three Coast Guard cutters. Two patrolled the flanks (The ESCANABA and The COMANCHE; the third, the TAMPA, was 3000 yards out front.

Most of the men were seasick and green with nausea. The weather was bitterly cold with gale-force winds. Ice began building up on the decks, slowing the U.S.A.T. DORCHESTER to ten knots.

Moving among them were four Army Chaplains: George Fox, Alexander Goode, Clark Poling, and John Washington. The Chaplains talked with and listened to the men -- soothing apprehensions, offering encouragement, sharing jokes. By their concern and their camaraderie with the men and one another, they brought solace.

On February 2, 1943, the TAMPA's sonar detected the presence of a submarine; she dropped back and swept the periphery of the convoy but failed to find the submarine's position. That evening, the TAMPA returned to the patrol area up front, and the other ships followed.

The captain ordered the men to sleep in their clothing, with lifejackets close at hand. They were only 150 miles from Greenland. With daylight, there would be air cover from the American base.

It was just after midnight on February 3, 1943. An enemy submarine fired a torpedo toward the U.S.A.T. DORCHESTER's aging flank. The missile exploded in the boiler room, destroying the electric supply and releasing suffocating clouds of steam and ammonia gas. Many on board died instantly; some were trapped below deck. Others, jolted from their bunks, groped and stumbled their way to the decks of the stricken vessel. Taking on water rapidly, the ship began listing to starboard.

Overcrowded lifeboats capsized; rafts drifted away before anyone could reach them. Men clung to the rails, frozen with fear, unable to let go and plunge into the dark, churning water far below.

The testimony of survivors tells us that the sole order and the only fragment of hope in this chaos came from the Four Chaplains, who calmly guided men to their boat stations. They opened a storage locker and distributed lifejackets. Then they coaxed men, frozen with fear, over the side. Soon the supply of lifejackets was exhausted. Several survivors report watching in awe as the Four Chaplains either gave away or forced upon other young men their own lifejackets.

These four men of God had given away their only means of saving themselves in order to save others. The chaplains gathered and led the men around them in a prayer and a hymn. They linked their arms together as the slant of the deck became severe. And just that way, with their arms linked in brotherhood and their heads bowed in prayer, they sank beneath the waves.

It was a heroic act. It was not the only heroic act aboard the U.S.A.T. DORCHESTER, but it was especially significant because of the identity of these four young men: two Protestants, a Catholic, and a Jew.

Today, as it has these many years, the *Chapel of Four Chaplains* serves the memory of these brave men and carries their message of interfaith cooperation and selfless service to every part of the nation.



**DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY**  
**Personnel and Ecclesiastical Relations Office of the**  
**Chief of Chaplains**

Chaplain George L. Fox was one of the four Army Chaplains who gave away their lifejackets and perished when the troopship U.S.A.T. DORCHESTER was torpedoed and sunk on the morning of February 3, 1943, in the North Atlantic.

This biographical data sheet has been prepared in response to continued requests from the press and public for information concerning the Four Chaplains.

NAME:	Fox, George L.
GRADE:	1st Lt.
ASN:	0485690
DENOMINATION:	Methodist
ENTERED SERVICE FROM:	Gilman, Vermont
DATE AND PLACE OF BIRTH	15 March 1900, Altoona, Pennsylvania
WIDOW:	Mrs. Isadora H. Fox (deceased)
CHILDREN:	Dr. Wyatt R. Fox Mrs. Mary Fox Murray
PARISHES SERVED:	Downs, Illinois Rye, New Hampshire Waits River, Vermont Union Village, Vermont Gilman, Vermont
DATE OF APPOINTMENT:	24 July 1942
DATE OF ACTIVE DUTY:	8 August 1942
DECORATIONS:	Purple Heart (Posthumous) Distinguished Service Cross (Posthumous)
ARMY ASSIGNMENTS:	411th Coast Artillery Battalion (1942) Casual, overseas (November 1942) Killed in action (February 3, 1943)
EDUCATION:	Illinois Wesleyan University, 1932, B.A. Boston University School of Theology, 1934
HEIGHT:	
HAIR:	5 feet, 4 1/2 inches
EYES:	Brown
COMPLEXION:	Brown Fair

**DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY**  
**Personnel and Ecclesiastical Relations Office of the**  
**Chief of Chaplains**

Chaplain Alexander D. Goode was one of the four Army Chaplains who gave away their lifejackets and perished when the troopship U.S.A.T. DORCHESTER was torpedoed and sunk on the morning of February 3, 1943, in the North Atlantic.

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NAME: Goode, Alexander D.

GRADE: 1st Lt.

ASN: 0485093

DENOMINATION: Jewish

ENTERED SERVICE FROM: York, Pennsylvania

DATE AND PLACE OF BIRTH 10 May 1911, New York, New York

WIDOW: Mrs. Theresa Kaplan (remarried)

DAUGHTER: Mrs. Rosalie Goode Fried

PARISHES SERVED: Marion, Indiana (1936-37)  
York, Pennsylvania (1937-42)

DATE OF APPOINTMENT: 21 July 1942

DATE OF ACTIVE DUTY: 9 August 1942

DECORATIONS: Purple Heart (Posthumous)  
Distinguished Service Cross (Posthumous)

ARMY ASSIGNMENTS: 333rd Airbase Squadron (1942)  
Casual, overseas (November 1942) Killed in  
action (February 3, 1943)

EDUCATION: University of Cincinnati, 1934, A.B.  
Hebrew Union College, 1937, B.H. John Hopkins  
University, 1940, Ph.D.

HEIGHT:

HAIR: 5 feet, 8 1/2 inches

EYES: Black

COMPLEXION: Gray  
Fair

**DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY**  
**Personnel and Ecclesiastical Relations Office of the**  
**Chief of Chaplains**

Chaplain Clark V. Poling was one of the four Army Chaplains who gave away their lifejackets and perished when the troopship U.S.A.T. DORCHESTER was torpedoed and sunk on the morning of February 3, 1943, in the North Atlantic.

This biographical data sheet has been prepared in response to continued requests from the press and public for information concerning the Four Chaplains.

NAME:	Poling, Clark V.
GRADE:	1st Lt.
ASN:	0477425
DENOMINATION:	Reformed Church in America
ENTERED SERVICE FROM:	Schenectady, New York
DATE AND PLACE OF BIRTH:	7 August 1910, Columbus, Ohio
WIDOW:	
CHILDREN:	Mrs. Bruce Cunningham (remarried & deceased)
PARISHES SERVED:	Previously Mrs. E. Gayle Fitzsimmons Dr. Clark V. Poling Mrs. Susan Poling Smith
DATE OF APPOINTMENT:	First Church of Christ, New London, CT First Reformed Church, Schenectady, NY
DATE OF ACTIVE DUTY:	10 June 1942
DECORATIONS:	25 June 1942
ARMY ASSIGNMENTS:	Purple Heart (Posthumous) Distinguished Service Cross (Posthumous)
EDUCATION:	131 QM Truck Regiment (1942) Casual, overseas (November 1942) Killed in action (February 3, 1943)
HEIGHT:	Rutgers University, 1933, A.B. Yale
HAIR:	University, 1936, B.D.
EYES:	
COMPLEXION:	Medium Brown (slight Chestnut cast) Brown Fair, with ruddy cheeks

**DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY**  
**Personnel and Ecclesiastical Relations Office of the**  
**Chief of Chaplains**

Chaplain John P. Washington was one of the four Army Chaplains who gave away their lifejackets and perished when the troopship U.S.A.T. DORCHESTER was torpedoed and sunk on the morning of February 3, 1943, in the North Atlantic.

This biographical data sheet has been prepared in response to continued requests from the press and public for information concerning the Four Chaplains.

NAME:	Washington, John P.
GRADE:	1st Lt.
ASN:	0463529
DENOMINATION:	Roman Catholic
ENTERED SERVICE FROM:	Arlington, New Jersey
DATE AND PLACE OF BIRTH	16 July 1908, Newark, New Jersey
SISTER:	Mrs. Anna B. Schwoebel
PARISHES SERVED:	Diocese of Newark
DATE OF APPOINTMENT:	24 April 1942
DATE OF ACTIVE DUTY:	9 May 1942
DECORATIONS:	Purple Heart (Posthumous) Distinguished Service Cross (Posthumous)
ARMY ASSIGNMENTS:	Chief of Chaplains Reserve Pool, Fort Benjamin Harrison, IN (May 1942) 76th Infantry Division, Fort George Meade, MD (June - Nov. 1942) Boston Port of Embarkation, Camp Miles Standish, Taunton, MA (Nov. 1942 - Jan. 1943) Casual, overseas (January 1943) Killed in action (February 3, 1943)
EDUCATION:	Seton Hall College, South Orange, NJ, 1931, A.B. Immaculate Conception Seminary, Darlington, NJ, 1935
HEIGHT:	
HAIR:	Sandy (brownish blonde)
EYES:	Blue
COMPLEXION:	Fair to Medium

**For more information please do not hesitate to contact one of our Regional Representatives, State Chaplains or the Four Chaplains Memorial Foundation Headquarters. Contact information can be found on the website.**

**THE END**