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TOWN OF YORKTOWN, NY



American Legion Post #1009  
235 Veterans Road  
Yorktown Heights, NY 10598  
[www.nylegion1009.org](http://www.nylegion1009.org)

CC: TB ✓  
Alice ✓

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January 7, 2013

Yorktown Town Hall  
363 Underhill Avenue  
Yorktown Heights, NY 10598

Dear Supervisor Grace,

The Legionnaires of Yorktown American Legion Post #1009 cordially invite you to join us on Sunday, February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2013 at 2 PM for a short ceremony at our Post Hall to honor the Chapel of the Four Chaplains. This multi-denominational service commemorates the supreme sacrifice of four members of the clergy who were aboard a transport ship sunk during World War II.

The four chaplains, Lt George L. Fox, a Methodist minister; Lt Alexander D. Goode, a rabbi; Lt John P. Washington, a Catholic priest; and Lt Clark V. Poling, a Dutch Reformed minister were aboard the Dorchester on February 3, 1943 when a German submarine torpedoed and sunk her off the coast of Greenland. These men of different faiths handed life jackets out to all on board until there were none left, and then they gave their own life jackets to those who needed them. They calmed and inspired the troops as the ship sank into the icy cold sea. That night hundreds of servicemen died along with the four chaplains. The survivors told the tale of their bravery and for their actions that night the four chaplains were awarded the Purple Heart and the Distinguished Service Cross, posthumously.

Four prominent members of the local clergy will join in celebrating this inspiring story of faith and bravery with us; Mother Claire Woodley-Aitchison of St. Mary's Episcopal Church in Mohegan Lake, Rabbi Robert Weiner of Temple Beth Am in Yorktown Hts, Pastor Dan O'Brien of Calvary Bible Church in Yorktown Hts, and Msgr Thomas Sandi from St Elizabeth Seton Church in Shrub Oak. This is a ceremony that every American can be proud of, one celebrating bravery, cooperation, and faith.

Sincerely yours,

Albert Laughlin, Commander

Yorktown American Legion Post #1009

# **Four Chaplains Ceremony**

**2 PM Sunday, February 3, 2013**

**At**

**Yorktown American Legion Post #1009**

**235 Veterans Road, Yorktown Hts, NY**

**In February 1943, four US Army Chaplains on board a torpedoed and sinking troopship in the North Atlantic performed the ultimate sacrifice helping their fellow soldiers. One was a Rabbi, one a Dutch Reformed minister, the third a Lutheran minister, and the last was a Catholic priest. Each served their country, their religious beliefs, and their fellow soldiers on that fateful night. The survivors of the attack that night told of the bravery and inspiration these four Chaplains exhibited that night.**

**We are honored again to have four prominent local clergy members joining us to celebrate this inspiring story of faith and bravery. Mother Claire Woodley-Aitchison of St. Mary's Episcopal Church, Rabbi Robert Weiner of Temple Beth Am, Pastor Dan O'Brien of Calvary Bible Church, and Msgr Thomas Sandi from St Elizabeth Seton Church will help us honor these men of faith in our ceremony.**

**Join us in remembering the sacrifice of these uniformed men of faith.**

**Light refreshments will be served following the ceremony.**



# Four Chaplains Ceremony

Sunday, February 3, 2013

2pm

(Open to the Public)



For 10 anxious days, the crewmen of the American Troop Transport Ship (U.S.S. – Dorchester) watched the frigid North Atlantic for enemy periscopes, imagining how their lives might end. Then on February 3, 1943, came the explosion, the shudder, the smoke and screams and the scramble for lifejackets that would make *heroes* of the Dorchester's four chaplains.

Distinguished Service Crosses, a special Congressional Medal of Valor, presidential speeches, a postage stamp, a memorial chapel in Philadelphia, and a national day of recognition followed.

Only 230 of the 902 young men on the ship sailing from New York toward a base in Greenland survived the attack by the German submarine. It was one of the worst death tolls on any American ship sunk at sea in World War. That terrible loss was transformed, however, when survivors told rescuers what they had witnessed during the Dorchester's final minutes. *The ships four Chaplains – one Jewish, two Protestant, one Catholic – had given up their life jackets to panicked soldiers and sailors and gone to their deaths praying together as the ship went down. "They had no chance without life jackets" marveled a young engineer pulled from the sea hours later. "The bow came up high and she slid under....I did not see them again". The last thing any of the 230 survivors reported hearing before the ship went under was a recitation of the Lord's Prayer. It was the finest thing I have ever seen or hope to see this side of heaven", said John Ladd, another survivor.*

The Four Chaplains were: **Rabbi Alexander Goode, the Rev. George Fox, the Reverend Clark V. Poling and the Rev. John P. Washington, a Roman Catholic priest.**

**On February 3rd, 2013, the Yorktown American Legion Post #1009 will commemorate this great event at its Post Hall at 435 Veterans Road, Yorktown Heights, NY 10598. We will begin the 1 hour ceremony at 2 pm followed by light refreshments. We are very fortunate to have 4 members of the Yorktown Clergy assisting us in this celebration. They include:**

- **Rev. Dan O'Brien, Calvary Bible Church**
- **Msgr. Thomas Sandi, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton**
- **Rabbi Robert Weiner, Temple Beth Am**
- **Mother Claire Woodley Aitchison, St. Mary's Episcopal Church**

**This event is open to the Public. Please come and join us.**