



MILITARY RELIGIOUS FREEDOM
f o u n d a t i o n

Monday, October 13, 2014

Admiral Jonathan W. Greenert
Chief of Naval Operations
2000 Navy Pentagon
Washington, DC 20350-2000

Dear Admiral Greenert,

The purpose of this letter is to inform you of an egregious and wholly unconstitutional violation committed by the administrators of the official U.S. Navy weblog. On October 6, 2014, this weblog posted an infographic (see addendum) depicting a POW/MIA remembrance table that prominently included a New Testament Bible. The picture included a wholly erroneous and fraudulent representation of our nation's "Christian heritage," stating "The Bible represents faith in a higher power and the pledge to our country, founded as one nation under God." A clearly sectarian and loathsome message such as that being propagated on a website which proudly calls itself "The Official Blog of the U.S. Navy" indicates a complete and utter disregard and disrespect for the No Establishment clause of the First Amendment of the United States Constitution, which the blog unashamedly violates with astonishingly bold and brazen abandon. The mere fact that this disgustingly bigoted statement was apparently able to easily pass through multiple layers of Navy bureaucracy and official hands and become public fodder on the official Navy blog – under the supposedly watchful eyes of senior Navy leadership, no less – is an absolute disgrace and unbridled slap-in-the-face to all of the men and women in uniform who swore an oath to uphold that revered foundational American document.

This pathetic, constitutionally infirm infographic once again falsely portrays the United States as an exclusivist "Christian nation". Further, it labels our nation's military, by proxy, as a Christian Crusader force. Indeed, it will surely result in continued unconstitutional actions by Navy personnel on bases displaying the POW/MIA table in the degrading and unconstitutional manner portrayed on this official Navy blog. Thus, this scurrilous action of fundamentalist Christian supremacy will eviscerate good order, morale, unit cohesion and discipline in our own ranks whilst concomitantly enraging our Islamic allies and emboldening our Islamic enemies at the most unpropitious time possible, given current geopolitical events of heretofore unseen magnitudes of brutality and violence from the likes of ISIS et al.

MRFF hereby demands forthwith that you retract any and all reference to the erroneous and defamatory statement ("The Bible represents faith in a higher power and the pledge to our country, founded as one nation under God"), as well as issue a clear apologetic statement

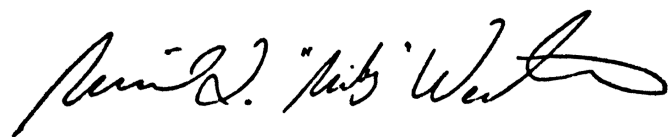
recognizing the fact that the United States was founded upon religious freedom and NOT upon on one specific religious ideology to the exclusion of any and all others or even no faith at all. As it currently stands, a significant percentage (some reliable sources actually cite it as over 31%) of the U.S. Military does not profess a belief in Christianity. While that is a big number indeed, it needn't be. For as former U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor once so sagaciously opined, "In America, we don't count heads before enforcing the First Amendment." Additionally, the noxious web material noted above is a direct affront to 96% of MRFF's almost 39,000 armed forces and military veteran clients who are practicing Christians, both Roman Catholic and Protestant, yet they all profoundly understand the crucial mandate for constitutional compliance regarding church-state separation within the armed forces.

It's all about the time, place and manner of religious expression in the U.S. military and the instant matter viciously violates all three. There is nothing open for debate here. This blog entry is a textbook example of what is NOT allowed under our Constitution and its construing federal and state case law. This matter is the proverbial example of an open and shut case.

Admiral, your continued support for the unlawful promotion of this blatantly sectarian, fundamentalist Christian religious material only serves to further erode the treasured trust and confidence that sailors must be able to hold in their Navy leadership

Remove it immediately. Investigate and aggressively prosecute any and all individuals who are either directly or indirectly responsible for this unconstitutional travesty of prejudice.

Sincerely,



Michael L. "Mikey" Weinstein, Esq.
 Founder and President
 Military Religious Freedom Foundation

CC:

The Honorable Chuck Hagel, Secretary of Defense
 Ray Mabus, Secretary of the Navy
 General Martin E. Dempsey, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff
 Randal G. Mathis, Mathis & Donheiser P.C. - MRFF Lead Trial Counsel

ADDENDUM:

<http://navylive.dodlive.mil/2014/10/06/the-powmia-table-a-place-setting-for-one-a-table-for-all/>

THE POW/MIA TABLE
A Place Setting For One, A Table For All

 www.history.navy.mil

The tradition of setting a separate table in honor of our prisoners of war and missing comrades has been in place since the end of the Vietnam War. The manner in which this table is decorated is full of special symbols to help us remember our brothers and sisters in arms.

The POW/MIA table is separate from the others and can be set for one to four place settings to represent each service participating in the event.

The table is smaller than the others
symbolizing the frailty of one prisoner alone against his or her oppressors.

The white tablecloth
draped over the table represents the purity of their response to our country's call to arms.

The empty chair
depicts an unknown face, representing no specific Soldier, Sailor, Airman, or Marine, but all who are not here with us.

The round table
shows that our concern for them is never ending.

The Bible
represents faith in a higher power and the pledge to our country, founded as one nation under God.

The black napkin
stands for the emptiness these warriors have left in the hearts of their families and friends. A Purple Heart medal can be pinned to the napkin.

The single red rose
reminds us of their families and loved ones. The red ribbon represents the love of our country, which inspired them to answer the nation's call.

The yellow candle and its ribbon
symbolize the everlasting hope for a joyous reunion with those yet accounted for.

The slices of lemon
on the bread plate remind us of their bitter fate.

The salt upon the bread plate
represent the tears of their families.

The inverted wine glass
reminds us that our distinguished comrades cannot be with us to drink a toast or join in the festivities of the evening.

