



Do You Know Your Chaplain?

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Each post has a Chaplain, but how many of you really know who your Chaplain is?

Since assuming the role as State Chaplain, I have had the opportunity to visit a number of VFW Posts throughout our State. One of the first questions I ask upon arrival is, “Who is your Post Chaplain?” It is sad to report that more often than not, the individual could not tell me the name of their Post Chaplain.

The person is usually shocked that someone would walk into the Post and ask such a question. I have to admit, it is a bit comical to watch the reactions. After identifying myself as the VFW State Chaplain, my initial inquiry is usually followed by the person calling out to another patron, and the conversation goes something like this: “Hey Bob, who is our Chaplain?” Bob doesn’t hear the question, and so it has to be repeated. This time everyone in the building hears it. If no one in the Post can come up with who their Chaplain is, I am then directed to the Bulletin Board where all Post officers can usually be found.

In addition to the Commander, if there is one person that everyone should know – it is the Chaplain. And when no one in the Post knows who the Chaplain is, the fault lies not with the comrades in the Post, but with the Chaplain. It is the responsibility of the Post Chaplain to get to know the Post members if he is truly going to serve those who served.

Here are a few suggestions that may be helpful:

First, make an effort to get to know your Post members. This is done by showing up regularly and spending time with your fellow comrades, not only at Post meetings, but at various times when members visit the Post.

Second, be friendly and take the initiative to introduce yourself to those you do not know. Remember, there should be no one in your Post who does not know you or how to get in touch with you.

Third, send birthday cards to your comrades. Personally, in addition to sending cards, I try to call each person on their birthday. Over the course of a year you will have talked to everyone at least once.

Fourth, every WWII veteran should be contacted monthly. And who better to do this than the Chaplain. This is a sensitive issue with me because my father-in-law is a WWII vet and a life

time member of a VFW Post which is located just a few miles from his home. No one from that Post has ever given him a call or stopped to check on him. Make sure that doesn't happen in your Post. Remember, as VFW members, we not only honor our dead, but we care for and nurture those who are still with us.

I guarantee, if the Chaplain starts to do some of these things, everyone in the Post will know who their Chaplain is.

At the State Convention (scheduled for June 22-25, 2011, in Gettysburg, PA) I plan to hold another workshop for District and Post Chaplains. Make plans now to attend the Conference and my workshop. Check out my Chaplain's Page <http://www.vfwpahq.org> on the Department Website where you will find the Monthly Chaplain's Report and several other handouts that should help you as you serve those who served.

Blessings as you serve.

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