



## APR Chaplain's Corner



**A**pril has a way of awakening the world around us. After a long winter, there is a sense that life is beginning again. Trees begin to bud, the grass grows a little greener, and the air carries a quiet reminder that change is taking place.

It is a season that brings to mind the quiet strength of hope. Not the kind that demands attention, but the kind that settles into the heart and gently reminds us that no season lasts forever.

As chaplains, we walk alongside individuals in many different seasons of life. Some are experiencing renewal and joy, while others are still carrying the weight of winter. That weight may come in the form of grief, loneliness, or burdens that are not easily seen. Our role is not to have all the answers, but to be present. To listen. To remind others that they are not alone.

April offers us several meaningful observances that speak directly to service and sacrifice. It is the **Month of the Military Child**, a time to recognize that service does not end with the individual in uniform. Families serve as well, and children often carry unique challenges with quiet strength. A moment of recognition can go a long way.

We also observe **Gold Star Spouses Day on April 5th**, a solemn reminder of those who continue to carry the loss of a loved one who gave everything in service to our nation. For many, that moment is forever marked by the presentation of a carefully folded flag, placed into their hands with words that can never fully carry the weight of the sacrifice made. Their loss does not end in that moment—it continues each day thereafter. As chaplains, we are called to remember them and, when possible, reach out with care and compassion.

As we move further into the spring season, many of our Posts are preparing for community activities and looking ahead to Memorial Day. It can be a busy time. Even so, it is important that we do not allow busyness to replace connection.

I encourage you this month to take a simple but meaningful step—reach out to someone. Make a phone call. Send a card. Take time to sit and listen. These small acts often carry more weight than we realize.

It is also important to care for yourself. Take a moment to step outside, to feel the warmth of the sun, and to be reminded that renewal is part of life's design.

April teaches us that growth does not always happen where it can be seen, but it is happening nonetheless.

Until next time, continue to care for one another and carry that steady presence wherever you are called to serve.

Yours in service,

*Darren Atkins*

**Darren Atkins**  
VFW National Chaplain  
2025-2026

