



AMEN NEWS

Volume 20, Issue 2

American Military Evangelizing Nations

Spring 2022

MINISTRY OF HOPE

When AMEN first began in 1976 by founders Don and Harriet Yelton the central effort of this ministry was the Locator Service helping military Christians connect with local congregations wherever they were stationed. It was important then, as now, for Christians to stay connected with a spiritual family to keep their faith strong and growing. Back in the Cold War days this was not easy to do especially in the overseas bases, remote locations and in war zones like Vietnam. Back then to find out where a church was meeting you had to rely on snail mail, the telephone information operator (yes it was real person then) and word of mouth. Trying to find a church in places like Vietnam, Greenland or Korea was a real challenge. For the most part the servicemember was on his or her own. AMEN sought to change that and for over four decades was a valuable tool for thousands in their efforts to find a church home.

As I reflect back on AMEN's history I have noticed that churches as well as our own Key Men and Women have often underestimated the need and opportunity for ministry to the military. That is not surprising to me for even the medical and governmental agencies working with warfighters have misunderstood the challenges brought on by military service. Notably is the issue of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder or PTSD. In the great conflicts of World Wars I & II reactions to trauma were called Shell Shock or Battle Fatigue. In Vietnam soldiers were diagnosed with Combat Fatigue. Often military leaders, medical providers and outsiders considered PTSD symptoms as cowardice or laziness. Treatment for this condition was basically focused on returning the patient back to duty. But recent research has revealed that PTSD is more complicated due to a number of different variables and experiences requiring more varied and intensive care.

One of the articles I have used in the *Faith and Transition* class for veterans highlights the critical

role communities of faith have in ministering to servicemembers. In the article entitled *Recovering from Moral Injury* authors Keith Meador, William Cantrell and Jason Nieuwsma state,

Faith communities should be looked to as places of comfort and trust, of hope in the midst of darkness. They should be sought out as places that can witness the growth that is often an outcome of struggle, where one's story (however challenging) can be told with courage and truthfulness, and where the reminder is constant that we need not face our trials alone.

Churches as grace filled communities offer what the VA, government agencies and many veterans organization do not and that is a spiritual healing crucial to one's well-being. Warfighters need to tell their story, their experiences, their doubts, struggles and hopes to someone able in to listen. Often it is the church where they begin their search. Are we ready to listen? More than that are we able to live out the message of the Lord's Table

which invites the broken to come to the Savior whose blood makes us whole. For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. 1 Corinthians 11:26

AMEN's Locator Service has long been an important first step for a congregation to provide military ministry. Spiritual resiliency grows out of a sense of belonging and feeling safe within a faith community where the individual can share their struggles. But it takes more than just advertising our services or sending an email invitation to a transient serviceman or woman. Key Men and Women need to prepare to offer intentional, proactive efforts to enter a spiritual journey with the military member and their family. Tools are available to help in this effort both in guidance from AMEN, the courses offered by God's Word for Warriors, teachers from Military Outreach and the services of Military Outreach and Encouragement M.O.R.E.

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AMEN TEAM NEWS

AMEN congratulates the graduates of our Military Service Academies who have received their commissions and will serve as our military leaders.

U.S. Military Academy

- 2LT Joseph Cilenti from FL to Infantry
- 2LT Clayton Leonard from AZ to Aviation
- 2LT Joseph Dawson NY to Armor

U.S. Naval Academy

- Ensign Tatiyana Richardson to San Diego CA

U.S. Air Force Academy

- None to report

U.S. Coast Guard Academy

- None to report

RESOURCES

Military members and veterans will greatly benefit from Small Group Ministries that are sensitive to and address the experiences of warfighters regarding overseas deployments, combat trauma, maintain family relationships in high stress environment, and maintaining godliness as a warrior. God's Word for Warriors is offering two important courses for churches to care for their military families. One course is the **Intersection of Military and Civilian Culture** designed to give insights into the lifestyle and worldview of military life. Another course is the Leadership Development for the **Faith and Transition Course**. The program will teach a member of your church how to lead a 10-week training helping military members navigate transition from deployments back to home life. Email them at contactus@godswordforwarriors.com

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UPCOMING EVENTS

- 19-23 Nov: Euro-American Family Retreat
Rothenburg od Tauber
Germany
- Pending Faith and Transition Course
God' Word for Warriors
Via Zoom On-line

NEW KEY MEN & WOMEN

The heart of AMEN are the Key Men/Women who provide the Locator Service benefitting numerous military Christians. Many rely on this network of saints to find opportunities for worship, fellowship and learning. Welcome to our newest Key Men

Dave May Columbus AFB MS

There is a great need for Key Men & Women for:

Fairchild AFB WA

McConnell AFB KS

Williams AFB AZ

Dyess AFB TX

Fort Polk LA

Whiteman AFB MO

Eielson AFB AK

All U.S. Naval vessels

Recruit Training Command, Naval Station Great Lakes IL

Need information on the Chibana Church at Kadena Okinawa; and contacts for deployed location in Poland, Romania, Baltic States