



April – June 2015
NEWSLETTER

SO HELP ME GOD

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Of ribbons and RIGHTEOUSNESS

In December, my wife and I saw the World War II film “Unbroken.” It is based on the 2010 nonfiction book by Laura Hillenbrand. The film and book revolves around the life of United States Olympic athlete Louis Zamperini. It is an inspiring story. Zamperini, who died on July 2, 2014, at the age of 97, survived in a raft for 47 days after his bomber, on a search mission, crashed into the ocean following mechanical difficulties. He and another survivor were captured by the Japanese navy in the Marshall Islands and were sent to prisoner of war (POW) camps.

It reminded me of another POW who also died not long ago, Air Force Col. George “Bud” Day, who served



Left: Louis Zamperini in May 2014, after he was announced as the 2015 Grand Marshal for the Tournament of Roses Parade in Pasadena, Calif. He died in July at age 97, six months short of the parade. Right: George “Bud” Day was an Air Force colonel and pilot, who served during World War II, the Korean War and the Vietnam War, including five years and seven months as a prisoner of war in North Vietnam. He was a recipient of the Medal of Honor and the Air Force Cross.



in World War II and the Korean and Vietnam wars. Besides being awarded the Medal of Honor at his retirement in 1977, Day had amassed nearly 8,000 total flying hours, 4,900 in single-engine jets, and had flown the F-80 Shooting Star, F-84 Thunderjet, F-100 Super Sabre, F-101 Voodoo, F-104 Starfighter, F-105 Thunderchief, F-106 Delta Dart, F-4 Phantom II, A-4 Skyhawk, A-7 Corsair II, CF-5 Tiger and F-15 Eagle jet fighters. He was one of the most decorated military officers in modern history with nearly 70 awards.

What I have not stated about these

two men is that both had tremendous faith. Zamperini’s story, though not told in the film, is one of struggle, turmoil, and discovering hope and life in Christ. Day attributed his survival to his trust in God’s enduring love in Christ. It daily gave him strength to endure captivity and prevail when all odds were against him. He was a faithful member of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Shalimar, Fla. Both men knew their righteousness was found in Christ alone ... not in ribbons ... not in awards ... not in

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Coping with moral injury

There's help for military personnel with serious inner conflict because of experiences that are at odds with core moral beliefs

Moral injury occurs when one experiences an act that conflicts with or violates a core moral value or deeply held belief, and leads to an internal moral conflict. It is the betrayal of what you may feel is morally right. It might arise from your own actions or inaction, other people's behaviors or by witnessing the suffering of others. Moral injury can occur either during or at some point after the event, and may be associated with feeling shame or guilt.

Examples can include participation in direct or indirect actions such as:

- ▶ Killing or harming others
- ▶ Witnessing death
- ▶ Failing to prevent immoral acts of others
- ▶ Giving or receiving orders from authority that are against one's moral

values

Who can help?

One key resource for those who suffer moral injury is the chaplain. Military chaplains have long been a source of comfort and inspiration for the men and women of the armed services — perhaps never more so than in times of war. Service members who are deployed experience stress, not only from combat, but also from environmental hardships and separation from family and friends. Having a chaplain to confide in can help



service members better cope with these pressures.

Potential military chaplains must meet high standards for education and experience. Chaplains must have a graduate degree in theology, at least two years of professional experience, be endorsed as a qualified leader by their

church body, and pass a physical exam and security check. In addition, although they are noncombatants, chaplains also undergo military training. Chaplains are also often trained in counseling and crisis intervention. Our Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod chaplains are among the best trained, best equipped and spiritually fit in the military.

The unique thing our chaplains bring “to the fight” is a Gospel-centered spiritual strength rooted in Scripture. The Christian faith sustains us when our human resources are drained. The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper provides nourishment for our soul when we seek forgiveness and hope. “‘Take, eat; this is my body.’ And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, ‘Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins’” (Matt. 26:26-28). May this strengthen and keep you until life eternal. Go in peace. Amen.



Faith

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honors in this life. We are reminded of Paul's words in Romans 8:

“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? As it is written,

‘For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.’

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor

things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord” (verses 35-39).

As we face trials, crises and challenges in this life, we know God's promises never fail.

Prayer: Eternal God, we know our righteousness is found only in Christ. Grant us your strength when ours fails. Grant us humility in our serving. Grant us courage when surrounded by danger. Grant us ears to hear Your call. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Chaplain (LTC) Eric Erkkinen

Reaching out to single service members, parents

In most of these issues of *So Help Me God*, we have listed “Family Helps” for married couples. In this issue, we offer help for unmarried service members and single parents.

Reuniting with parents, extended family members and friends:

- ▶ You have certainly missed your family and friends, and they have missed you. Let them be a part of the reunion, but balance your needs with those you love and care about. You will have a period of readjustment when you return home.
- ▶ If you are single or live with your parent(s), family or a friend, many of the above tips for reuniting with spouses and children may apply. Changes in the house or routine may be stressful. Go slowly in trying to make the adjustment to being home again.
- ▶ Some things will have changed at home while you were gone — marriage in your family or with friends, new babies born, new neighbors, changes in relationships.
- ▶ Some things will change with the people you’ve lived and worked with prior to deployment. Married friends will be involved with their families. Others may return to their old friends and you may feel left out.
- ▶ Your parents and family have been

very worried about you over the past months. Give them time and special attention.

- ▶ You may face a change in job assignment, a move, or in trying to meet new people or looking for a new relationship. All these things cause stress.

Take time for yourself:

- ▶ You may have seen or experienced some things that were very upsetting. Some normal reactions to these abnormal situations are fear, nervousness, irritability, fatigue, sleep disturbances, startle reactions, moodiness, trouble concentrating, feelings of numbness and frequent thoughts of the event. Talking with others who were there and/or counselors trained in crisis stress reactions is very important.
- ▶ Look into ways to manage stress — diet, exercise, recreation — and definitely take care of yourself!
- ▶ Make time to rest. Negotiate the number of social events to attend.
- ▶ Limit your use of alcohol. Remember, alcohol was restricted during your deployment and your tolerance is lowered.
- ▶ Depend on family, your unit and friends for support.

Taken from www.militaryonesource.mil





quips, quotes & pithy sayings

spiritual and otherwise ...

- ▶ Experience enables you to recognize a mistake every time you repeat it.
- ▶ To write with a broken pencil is pointless.
- ▶ Profanity is the effort of a feeble mind to express itself forcefully.
- ▶ America is one of the few places you can say what you speak without thinking.
- ▶ Unless you have never been tempted, don't pass judgment on someone who has yielded.



- ▶ Don't mistake activity for achievement.
- ▶ It's a great pity the right of free speech isn't based on the obligation to say something sensible.
- ▶ "You can't make anything idiot proof because idiots are so ingenious." ~ Ron Burns
- ▶ "Many would be scantily clad if clothed in their humility." ~ Anonymous
- ▶ "It's great to be great, but it's greater to be human." ~ Will Rogers

- ▶ Some folks get lost in thought because it is unfamiliar territory
- ▶ If quitters never win and winners never quit, then who is the fool who said, "Quit while you're ahead?"
- ▶ You can never make your dreams come true by oversleeping.
- ▶ Never have a battle of wits with an unarmed man.
- ▶ "If you're ridin' ahead of the herd, take a look back every now and then to make sure it's still there." ~ Texas Bix Bender, *Don't Squat With Yer Spurs On*
- ▶ "When you give a lesson in meanness to a critter or a person, don't be surprised if they learn their lesson." ~ Texas Bix Bender, *Don't Squat With Yer Spurs On*
- ▶ Pride is the only poison that is good for you when swallowed.
- ▶ An egotist is a person who thinks that if he or she had not been born people would have asked why not.
- ▶ The only fool bigger than the person who knows it all is the person who argues with him.
- ▶ Never argue with a fool — people may not notice the difference
- ▶ "Life's tough, it's even tougher if you're stupid." ~ John Wayne
- ▶ "People demand freedom of speech to make up for the freedom of thought which they avoid." ~ Soren Aabye Kierkegaard (1813-55)

