

Thursday Evening, May 16, 2019



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

**BREAKING UPDATE:  
ICONIC AND INFLUENTIAL  
NEW HAMPSHIRE UNION LEADER  
COVERS MRFF**

*"As expected, the VA is unconstitutionally doubling down on its **illicit promotion of fundamentalist Christian ideology** at the total expense of the United States Constitution and the religious and non-religious beliefs of all veterans who do not subscribe to such an illegal and oppressive religious viewpoint."*

*-Mikey Weinstein, covered by NH Union Leader Mike Cousineau*

**VA REMOVES FAITH & NON-FAITH  
TEXTS PLACED NEXT TO BIBLE  
ON POW/MIA DISPLAY TABLE BY  
COURAGEOUS MRFF CLIENT  
AT MANCHESTER, NH VA**

**VA orders Wiccan, Muslim texts removed from  
MIA/POW display that includes Bible**

**By: Michael Cousineau, Thursday, May 16, 2019**

*(Excerpts from Union Leader/Emphasis Added by MRFF)*

MANCHESTER -- The Veterans Administration said it will remove items representing different religious faiths placed Thursday next to a Bible on a POW/MIA table at the Veterans Affairs Medical Center.

[...]

**The Military Religious Freedom Foundation, which was involved in the recently filed lawsuit, "welcomes the opportunity to challenge this flagrant violation of the constitutionally mandated separation of church and state in federal court," said founder Michael Weinstein.**

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*"As expected, the VA is unconstitutionally doubling down on its illicit promotion of fundamentalist Christian ideology at the total expense of the United States Constitution and the religious and non-religious beliefs of all veterans who do not subscribe to such an illegal and oppressive religious viewpoint. MRFF welcomes the opportunity to challenge this flagrant violation of the constitutionally-mandated separation of church and state in Federal Court."*

*-MRFF Founder and President Mikey Weinstein*

## **COURAGEOUS MRFF CLIENT PLACES FAITH & NON-FAITH TEXTS NEXT TO BIBLE ON POW/MIA DISPLAY TABLE AT MANCHESTER, NH VA**

### **THE VAMC WAY: RELIGIOUS BIGOTRY UNCONSTITUTIONAL CHRISTIAN PRIVILEGE BY HAVING ONLY A CHRISTIAN BIBLE!**



Photo credit:  
Military Religious Freedom Foundation

**Only a Christian Bible Encased in Plexiglass and Bolted to a  
POW/MIA Display Table at VA Manchester, NH**

**THE MRFF WAY: ALL OR NOTHING AT ALL  
REMOVE THE BIBLE, OR PROVIDE  
CONSTITUTIONAL EQUAL REPRESENTATION!**



**MRFF Client Supported by 15 Other MRFF Clients at  
VAMC Places Faith and Non-Faith Texts  
On POW/MIA Display Table:**

**Wicca, Jewish Prayer Book for Armed Forces Personnel,  
White Blank Notebook for Atheist, Agnostic, Secularist and  
Humanist, The Book of Mormon and the Koran**

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**Op-ed from MRFF Veteran Client  
Regarding Bible on POW/MIA Display**

**By: Sandra Bell, Thursday, May 16, 2019**

As a former USAF Airman Intelligence Analyst and ex-practicing Christian, who was baptized as recently as 2010, I am now a devout non-believing humanist. I receive my medical care at the Manchester VA Medical Center. I used to feel good about going there. I'd take in the flags and symbols of service and feel honor for having served. Now I experience disgust, knowing that as soon as I enter, there will be a Catholic bible in my face, displayed by the government I've entrusted with my medical care. Each visit I'm reminded of people telling me to ignore the bible, find another medical center, or even leave the country since I'm not Christian.

The POW/MIA table where a Catholic bible now sits was religiously neutral for years. A sign explained: "The table is round to show everlasting concern, the cloth is white for purity of motives, a shaker of salt for tears...." Now, there's also a POW's personal bible, which supposedly "represents the strength through faith necessary for American service members to survive."

But not all service members need faith to survive. Some draw strength from the bible, but for others, like me, the bible drains. As a humanist with a strong moral compass, I derive strength from compassion, kindness, and freedom. I derive strength from within, knowing that I am worthy of fighting for. For

me, morality means constantly seeking to lessen the suffering of others. Morality precedes religion. It certainly doesn't come from it.

Manchester VAMC says it hopes all who enter will take notice of the POW/MIA table and "pause to reflect and offer gratitude for the service, sacrifice and valor of our prisoners of wars...." Because of the Catholic bible on the table, I can't do that any more. Instead, I rush past, reflecting on the dishonorable actions of Catholic clergy who sacrificed children's innocence for their pleasure.

In 2018, a grand jury investigation revealed decades of child sexual abuse by over 300 priests against more than 1,000 victims. Priests protected by the Vatican. Where is the honor in that?

I reflect on a man who described the abuse he endured at the hands of a priest, involving anal and oral sex. Through tears, he cried out, "No Father," as the priest held the child's hand firm around the priest's genitals. He suffered inescapable episodic flashbacks until he eventually committed suicide.

As I wait to see my psychiatrist, I think of the veterans with PTSD that decide suicide is their only way out. To have the VAMC protect that "holy" book under lock and key mirrors how the Church has protected their predator priests for centuries. How can the VAMC endorse this organization? There is no honor in that.

To those who tell me to look the other way when walking by the bible, I tell them this: don't look the other way when children are being raped. I deal in reality, not in the supernatural. If you don't agree, that's your choice. But let's keep the government out of the debate.

It's not the government's place to promote the Catholic Church or any church to veterans seeking medical care. I hope we can agree that a book so steeped in controversy and charged with complicated symbolism isn't an appropriate addition to a table meant to honor all POW/MIA soldiers. The bible doesn't represent many of them, just as it doesn't represent me.

As their newest client on this matter at the Manchester VAMC, I am grateful for Mikey Weinstein, President and Founder of Military Religious Freedom Foundation (MRFF), for his emotional and practical support through this difficult time. It is a comfort to know that as an atheist, I have a platform for my voice to be heard. I am also grateful to attorney Sam Grover for guidance on this piece.

*Sandra Bell is an Air Force veteran and the newest client of the Military Religious Freedom Foundation (MRFF) due to the issue of a Catholic bible being placed on the POW/MIA display at the Veterans Affairs Medical Center (VAMC) in Manchester, New Hampshire. She believes in the progression of the human species through science and reason.*

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# **MRFF Founder and President Mikey Weinstein's Statement On Faith and Non-Faith Texts Placed By Courageous MRFF Client On Manchester, NH VA POW/MIA Display Table**



*Earlier today, with the full support of MRFF's other 14 Manchester VA client/patients, a courageous Military Religious Freedom Foundation (MRFF) client/patient placed a number of other faith and non-faith texts on the POW/MIA table at the Veterans Administration Medical Center (VAMC) in Manchester, New Hampshire. The Manchester VAMC is currently the subject defendant of Federal litigation sponsored by the Military*

*Religious Freedom Foundation via its named plaintiff, MRFF client/patient, Mr. James Chamberlain.*

*The books placed on the table include texts from the Jewish, Muslim, Mormon & Wiccan faiths as well as a blank tablet on behalf of non-faith traditions such as atheism, agnosticism, humanism and secularism. Of course, as a matter of Constitutional law, NO texts espousing faith or non-faith beliefs should be on that POW/MIA table as the VA is a "State Actor" and, therefore, is completely under the constraints imposed by the No Establishment Clause of the First Amendment of the United States Constitution.*

*If the Veterans Administration insists on unconstitutionally establishing Christianity as the sole official faith of the VA by leaving that sectarian bible, imprisoned in a transparent plexiglass case bolted to the POW/MIA table which is meant for all, let us see how the VA will deal with the other faith and non-faith texts which have just been placed there. Indeed, it would take a POW/MIA table the size of a football field to hold all of the religious and nonreligious texts of all such myriad traditions practiced by the millions of honorable American military veterans.*

*And THAT is precisely the point; NO religious nor nonreligious texts should be there at ALL; especially not the Christian bible which is merely the religious text of the majority of veterans and has no other claims to supremacy other than that meaningless fact. America is a secular democratic republic which relishes its substantial diversity and broad pluralism especially within the ranks of its veterans and active duty military.*

*As former U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor opined from the bench of the highest Court in the land, "In America, we do NOT count heads before enforcing the First Amendment".*

*Honor ALL American veterans; VAMC remove that Christian bible now!*

*In light of the foregoing, MRFF's intrepid client-litigant in the subject matter Federal court case, Mr. James Chamberlain, a devout Christian himself, felt it was a propitious time to release his very first statement on this matter now that the additional religious and nonreligious texts have been placed on that POW/MIA table meant for all and not just Christian POW/MIAs, veterans and active duty military personnel.*

**MANCHESTER INK LINK  
OP-ED IN SOAPBOX SECTION  
BY MRFF CLIENT JAMES CHAMBERLAIN**

**All or nothing: Veteran suing VA over  
Bible display applauds anonymous  
addition of other religious texts**

**Thursday, May 16, 2019**

*(Excerpts from Manchester Ink Link/Emphasis Added by MRFF)*

This country is the greatest country in the world because of the freedoms we have. These freedoms are protected by our Constitution. One of these freedoms is the freedom to believe in any faith or no faith. This Constitution is protected by the mightiest military in the world and contains personnel which exercise all of these same freedoms.

[...]

I am very grateful that the **Nixon Vogelman law firm**, and especially **trial attorney Larry Vogelman**, have taken this case to Federal Court on my behalf and **on behalf of the Military Religious Freedom Foundation (MRFF)** and American military veterans everywhere.

I am also very appreciative that the **MRFF has been the civil rights advocacy voice in this matter for not only me but 14 of my fellow military veterans who, like me, are patients at the Manchester Veterans Medical Center**. Nine of those veterans, like me, are practicing, believing Christians.

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**ADDITIONAL MEDIA OUTLETS THAT COVERED  
MRFF's MANCHESTER, NH  
VA MEDICAL CENTER (VAMC)  
BIBLE REMOVAL ISSUE:**

**WASHINGTON EXAMINER  
Thursday, May 16, 2019**

**[Vietnam veteran files federal lawsuit to remove Bible  
on display at VA hospital](#)**

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**THE NEW AMERICAN**

Friday, May 10, 2019

**Veterans Fight Efforts to  
Remove Bible From POW/MIA Memorial**

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**CHRISTIAN ACTION NETWORK  
Thursday, May 9, 2019**

**Display Bible Target of Censorship at  
VA Hospital in New Hampshire**

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**CONNECTICUT HOME NAVIGATOR  
Thursday, May 9, 2019**

**CHRISTIAN VIETNAM VET FIGHTS TO HAVE  
BIBLE REMOVED FROM VA**

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**NBC 10 BOSTON  
Wednesday, May 8, 2019**

**Devout Christian Vietnam Veteran Fights  
to Have Bible Removed From VA**

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**NEW HAMPSHIRE PUBLIC RADIO  
Tuesday, May 7, 2019**

**Lawsuit Filed Over Display of Bible at  
Manchester VA Medical Center**

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**THE WICHITA EAGLE  
Tuesday, May 7, 2019**

**'Devout Christian' sues to remove Bible display  
from veteran center in New Hampshire**

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**STAMFORD ADVOCATE  
Tuesday, May 7, 2019**

**Bible on display at Veterans Affair center in  
New Hampshire sparks controversy**

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**ABC NEWS**  
**Tuesday, May 7, 2019**

**Law suit filed over display of Bible**  
**at veterans hospital**

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**AP NEWS**  
**Tuesday, May 7, 2019**

**Law suit filed over display of Bible**  
**at veterans hospital**

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**MAY 7, 2019**

**MRFF FILED A FEDERAL LAWSUIT**  
**AGAINST MANCHESTER VA OVER**  
**UNCONSTITUTIONAL CHRISTIAN BIBLE**

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE DISTRICT OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

JAMES CHAMBERLAIN, )  
Plaintiff, )  
 )  
v. ) **COMPLAINT**  
 )  
ALFRED MONTOYA, MD, DIRECTOR, )  
MANCHESTER VA MEDICAL CENTER, )  
Defendant. )

PRELIMINARY STATEMENT

This is an action requesting injunctive relief pursuant to the first amendment of the Constitution of the United States of America. The plaintiff, JAMES CHAMBERLAIN, and others are seeking the removal of a Christian Bible from the POW/MIA table in the entrance way of the Manchester VA Medical Center.

JURISDICTION

Jurisdiction is invoked pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §§ 1346(b).

VENUE

Venue is proper for the United States District Court for the District of New Hampshire pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1391(e).

PARTIES

1. Plaintiff, JAMES CHAMBERLAIN, is a veteran of the United States Air Force and a resident of New Hampshire. He was raised Catholic but now is a

[Click to Read Lawsuit Filing](#)

**CLICK TO READ BACKGROUND ON  
MANCHESTER VA BIBLE ISSUE, PROTEST  
FLYOVER, AND FILING OF FEDERAL LAWSUIT**



## "Betty Bowers reads hate mail"

From: (name withheld)  
Subject: Betty Bowers reads hate mail  
Date: May 14, 2019 at 9:26:07 PM MDT  
To: mikey@militaryreligiousfreedom.org

Mikey:

I hadn't known your organization existed until i caught a YouTube vid of Betty Bowers reading some of your hatemail. I was aware of the Christian Right's infiltration of the Military (and Government) but holy shit I had no idea the Nutbags who are out there!

" Our Military is sacred to jesus"? WTF?! Scary!

Any organization that can elicit such vitreol from these jebus true believers must be doing something right! Praise the Lowered

(name withheld)

[Click to Read in Inbox](#)

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INCOMING HATE  
MRFF'S INBOX

## "The Bible at VA"

From: (name withheld)  
Subject: The Bible at VA  
Date: May 13, 2019 at 11:51:40 PM MDT  
To: mikey@militaryreligiousfreedom.org

Mickey,

Why do you have an objection to a Bible carried by a POW of World War II being displayed? Are you also happy that many statues in the South of Confederate soldiers that are being destroyed? I look at that Bible as part of World War II history as I look at the status as part of the Southern Civil War history. We can not go back and change anything in the past. The picture I saw of the Bible, it was in a glass (or plastic) case. No one can read it. I don't see where a Bible that was precious to a POW should have to be removed from a display because of narrow minded people like you. You probably don't like the picture of George Washington kneeling and praying by his horse. And if you don't like anything religious, please check your money and

I will gladly accept any of it that has the words "In God we trust" on it. I promise you that this country was founded under the direction of God. It is because of people like you that God is being removed from this country and look at the problems that are happening. One last question, when you die and meet you Maker, will you be able to look Him in the eye and tell Him you fought to remove Him from people? Then maybe you don't believe in God. I do. I proudly served my country to grant all people to have freedom of speech, even if I don't agree with what many say.

(name withheld)

*To Read Responses from  
MRFF Advisory Board Member Mike Farrell:*

[Click to Read in Inbox](#)

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## **"Suing New Hampshire VA hospital"**

From: (name withheld)  
Subject: Suing New Hampshire VA hospital  
Date: May 14, 2019 at 3:36:01 PM MDT  
To: mikey@militaryreligiousfreedom.org

Hi Mikey,

Mikey I'm appalled that you are suing over the very thing that is in your organizations name. "religious Freedom?" See this is all a part of an alarming trend in this country. We all think we can tell everyone what to do, what to say, what to believe, and how to live, or else. It's got to stop. Freedom means Freedom? Doe's it not Mikey? So when you start a frivolous lawsuit telling others what to do and what to believe (at least your not doing that, I hope?) I'm a veteran and I and many other veterans are very up set over this. We feel you are disregarding what this Veteran went through in the name of god, or your lack there of. You have a right to what you believe but don't force others to follow your ways. Leave that to the damn communist Democrats. A bible doesn't stop a person from being atheist. You org needs to let it go.

Thank you  
have a nice day

(name withheld)

*To Read Response from  
MRFF Advisory Board Members  
John Compere and Mike Farrell:*

[Click to Read in Inbox](#)

## "Christ killer Jew Mikie"

From: (name withheld)  
Subject: Christ killer Jew Mikie  
Date: May 14, 2019 at 3:49:43 PM MDT  
To: mikey@militaryreligiousfreedom.org

Hey there jew Mikie.

After seeing the sacrilege you are doing for satan in Manchester VA NH I guess the old saying is true.

You can take the jew out of his scumbag jew family but you can't take the scumbag jew family out of the jew.

All jewish is one family of Christ killing murderers.

You jewish are all just fire fuel for the hellfire Jesus will send you to.

Leave that Bible on that Pow Mia table jew Mikie.

*To Read Response from  
MRFF Advisory Board Member John Compere:*

[Click to Read in Inbox](#)

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**MRFF Information/Contact:**  
(505) 250-7727

## **SUPPORT MRFF!**

**Your Generous Support Allows us to Continue  
our Fight in the Courts and in the Media**

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**[Join MRFF's Constitution Society \(Recurring Donation\)](#)**

**[Help Build the Wall : Donate a "Brick"!](#)**

