



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

MRFF CONDEMNS "SOLDIER SANTA" AND MILITARY BASE HOLIDAY CALENDAR GETTING HANUKKAH DATE WRONG

(... but getting National Maple Syrup Day
and Bacon Day right!)

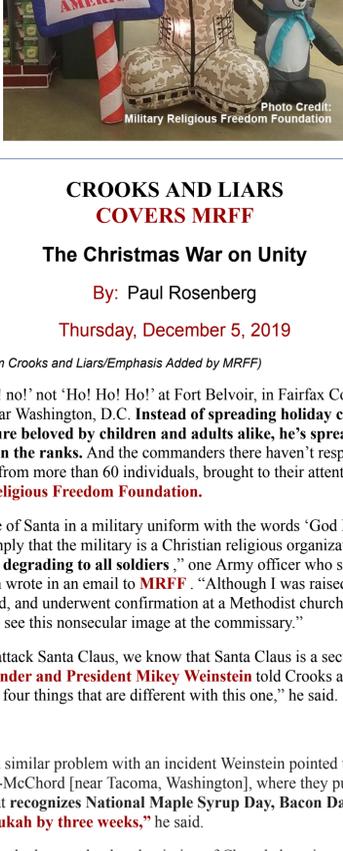


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Military Religious Freedom Foundation

CROOKS AND LIARS COVERS MRFF

The Christmas War on Unity

By: Paul Rosenberg

Thursday, December 5, 2019

(Excerpts from Crooks and Liars/Emphasis Added by MRFF)

It's 'Oh, no! no!' not 'Ho! Ho! Ho!' at Fort Belvoir, in Fairfax County, Virginia, near Washington, D.C. **Instead of spreading holiday cheer, as a secular figure beloved by children and adults alike, he's spreading dissent in the ranks.** And the commanders there haven't responded to complaints from more than 60 individuals, brought to their attention by the **Military Religious Freedom Foundation.**

"This image of Santa in a military uniform with the words 'God Bless America' imply that the military is a Christian religious organization, **which is false and degrading to all soldiers.**" one Army officer who served in Afghanistan wrote in an email to **MRFF**. "Although I was raised a Christian, was baptized, and underwent confirmation at a Methodist church, I was disgusted to see this nonsecular image at the commissary."

"We never attack Santa Claus, we know that Santa Claus is a secular figure," **MRFF Founder and President Mikey Weinstein** told Crooks and Liars, "But there's four things that are different with this one," he said.

[...]

There was a similar problem with an incident Weinstein pointed to: "At Joint Base Lewis-McChord [near Tacoma, Washington], where they put out a calendar that **recognizes National Maple Syrup Day, Bacon Day, but they f-up Chanukah by three weeks,**" he said.

Being tied to the lunar calendar, the timing of Chanukah varies every year, this year **starting on December 22.** But the calendar at Lewis-McChord marked it down on **December 2.**

[...]

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THE WASHINGTON TIMES COVERS MRFF

(Featured on front page of the print edition)

Shields of Strength defends replica dog tags with Bible verses, calls ban unconstitutional

By: Christopher Vondracek

Wednesday, December 4, 2019

(Excerpts from The Washington Times/Emphasis Added by MRFF)

A Texas-based Christian jeweler is challenging the Army's trademark office, **which told the company this summer that it no longer can display military insignia and Bible verses on the replica dog tags it has sold to service members since the 9/11 attacks.**

Shields of Strength has manufactured imitation dog tags and other religious-themed military memorabilia for nearly 20 years under a licensing agreement with the Army Trademark Licensing Program. In a letter Tuesday to the program's director, **the company accused the military agency of violating its speech rights under the Religious Freedom Restoration Act.**

[...]

The Army trademark office's directive was prompted by the **Military Religious Freedom Foundation**, a church-and-state separation watchdog group whose airing of grievances over the replica dog tags ignited the dispute this summer.

"These dog tags are not the ones given out by the military," **foundation founder Mikey Weinstein** said Wednesday. "These are souvenir ones they can buy from Shields of Strength, a for-profit company."

Mr. Weinstein sent letters in July to the Navy, Army, Air Force and Marines demanding that they end their licensing agreements with Shields of Strength of Beaumont, Texas. **Mr. Weinstein** said he was approached by 50 service members in May and **June who said Shields of Strength was illegally profiting from and proselytizing with military logos.**

[...]

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THE FRIENDLY ATHEIST ON PATHEOS COVERS MRFF

(Hemant Mehta nails it; gets to the real issue –
that this is just about using the official military
emblems on blatantly religious jewelry.)

The Army Isn't Blocking a Christian Company From Selling Religious Dog Tags

By: Hemant Mehta

Thursday, December 5, 2019

(Excerpts from Patheos/Emphasis Added by MRFF)

As I posted back in July, an **online Christian jewelry store stopped selling dog tags featuring emblems of the Marine Corps and Navy** after the military branches demanded they end the unauthorized usage.

The company, **Shields of Strength**, didn't seem to care that using the official logos of the military suggested an **endorsement of religion** that the military wasn't making. In fact, the Department of Defense's own rules prohibit the designs on any items that promote certain ideologies or religious beliefs.

The Military Religious Freedom Foundation's founder Mikey Weinstein sent letters to all of the military branches urging them to put a stop to what the Christian company was doing, and it worked. The U.S. Marine Corps Trademark Licensing Office was able to get the store to take down the Marine Corps and Navy dog tags, though the Army and Air Force dog tags were still available for purchase.

Now it seems the Army has followed suit, sending the same message to the company to cease and desist with the logo usage.

[...]

But, as expected, First Liberty, a right-wing legal group that doesn't care about the law, is telling the Army this move is unnecessary. In a letter to the Jensen, one of their attorneys says telling an outside company not to put the Army logo on a Bible product is "unconstitutional."

[...]

The **FOX News** headline for their story about this is "Army says faith-based group can no longer put Bible verses on dog tags after complaint." **That's also a lie. They can sell dog tags with Bible verses. They just can't use the logo.**

[...]

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PREMIER COVERS MRFF

(Premier is a London-based media outlet,
giving this story international attention.)

American army bans scriptures on dog tags

By: Heather Preston

Thursday, December 5, 2019

(Excerpts from Premier/Emphasis Added by MRFF)

Dog tags containing bible verses have been banned by American military forces following complaints they are unconstitutional.

Faith-based company **Shields of Strength (SoS)**, has been instructed it is **no longer permitted to print scriptures on its army products following concerns raised by the president of the Military Religious Freedom Foundation (MRFF).**

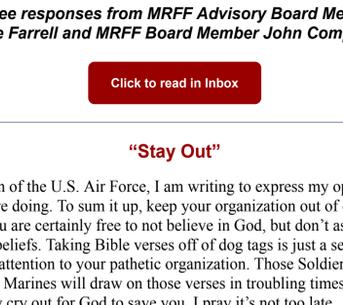
According to Fox News, **Mikey Weinstein said the use of the military emblem on its products was "poison" to the "constitutionally-mandated separation of Church and State"**.

Following Weinstein's comments, military branches have threatened to revoke trademark licenses issued to Shields of Strength.

[...]

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CLICK TO READ BACKGROUND ON MRFF'S DEMAND THAT MILITARY CEASE ALLOWING OFFICIAL EMBLEMS ON BIBLE VERSE DOG TAGS



MRFF Founder and President Mikey Weinstein's personal responses to hate emails change the minds of two detractors, one of them a Gold Star Mother.

Original email from detractor:

Mikey "Godless" Weinstein,

As a Gold Star mother I am disgusted to think that you would actually complain about and that the Department of Defense would then even consider not allowing Bible verses on our military's dog tags.

My son gave his life for his country. He believed in freedom...including religious freedom.

How dare you demand anything you worthless piece of shit.

MRFF Founder and President Mikey Weinstein responded:

Before you start calling people "worthless piece(s) of shit", ma'am, you may want to actually check out the facts first... We are not talking about genuine government issue dogtags here... These are souvenir dog tags manufactured by a for-profit Christian company that has violated its DOD license by advocating On behalf of a particular religious faith (christianity) thereby breaking its contract with the Pentagon not to use their military department logos in the furtherance of their sectarian and Partisan religious perspective... I am happy to accept an apology now... I'm sorry for the loss of your son and thank you for the sacrifice for this great nation... Respectfully, Mikey Weinstein... Founder and president, Military Religious Freedom Foundation.

The original email's author responded:

You are right. The article I read did not mention all the facts. Although I would like to see the company to be able continue to use military emblems, I understand your point. Sorry to have made you so angry. I am just so tired of people trying to remove religion from everything such as Christmas. And your not a worthless piece of s...

Original email from detractor:

Dear Mr. Weinstein:

You do understand the meaning of religious freedom or let's keep it simple, freedom? If soldiers wearing dog tags want to put a piece of scripture on their dog tags it's none of your damn business and it's their freedom to do so. You're acting like a Nazi and you wouldn't want to be perceived that way right? You are a complete hypocrite!

MRFF Founder and President Mikey Weinstein responded:

Don't ever call me a Nazi, ma'am!!!! I lost a lot of members of my family in the holocaust... That was disgusting of you to do that!!!...How DARE you!... you have essentially zero understanding of what is going on in this matter... These are not government issued dog tags they are merely souvenir dog tags which members of the military or anyone else can buy from a for-profit company that is BLATANTLY violating their license agreement with the department of defense NOT to advance a Partisan/sectarian religious agenda with the use of the military logos... I am now prepared to accept your apology...

The original email's author responded:

Mr. Weinstein:

I do apologize and hope that you will continue fighting for religious freedom and freedom of speech for all members of the global planet community. There have been so many attacks on christians that I have become overly sensitive to this.

INCOMING HATE MRFF'S INBOX

"Church and state"

You want a war?

You've got one!

Your contributions will dry up... It's coming...

<https://www.foxnews.com/faith-values/army-bible-verse-dog-tags-complaint?fbclid=IwAR0vonMLibGsZlwtJWdzjbjMjy7boC9jI-N2ZphYkizX23j0NyXqET9iBZ4>

This has nothing to do with the separation of church and state which you completely do not understand!

(name withheld)

To see response from
MRFF Board Member John Compere:

[Click to read in Inbox](#)

"Freedom"

Dear Mr. Weinstein:

You do understand the meaning of religious freedom or let's keep it simple, freedom? If soldiers wearing dog tags want to put a piece of scripture on their dog tags it's none of your damn business and it's their freedom to do so. You're acting like a Nazi and you wouldn't want to be perceived that way right? You are a complete hypocrite!

(name withheld)

To see responses from MRFF Founder and President Mikey Weinstein and MRFF Board Member John Compere:

[Click to read in Inbox](#)

"Bible verses on their dog tags"

My guess your the idiot who complained about service members having bible verses on their dog tags? Please tell me how this affects your life and if it offends you that much, oh well. Suck it up. My hope is service members do it anyway or Trump says they can by changing the Law. Remember laws are man mad and mean little to nothing to GOD.

(name withheld)

To see response from
MRFF Advisory Board Member Mike Farrell:

[Click to read in Inbox](#)

"Dog Tags"

Shame on you for insisting the DoD stop allowing bible versus to be used on Dog Tags. I am a veteran and though not a church goer I do believe that a lot of service women and men find those versus comforting. You must reconsider your demands!!

God Bless America

(name withheld)

To see response from
MRFF Advisory Board Member Mike Farrell:

[Click to read in Inbox](#)

"You Don't Have A Clue..."

What is in the Constitution. There is no constitutionally-mandated separation of church and state. I suggest you all return to grade school, and start your education over.

Separation of church and state was a personal letter between two persons; and to avoid Situations like the Church of England and the Roman Catholic Church. Not to keep individuals from expressing their personal beliefs. For example Personalized Dogtags.

FYI: a lot of churches were against state runned churches.. The Baptists particularly.

You need some very fine tuning in your pursuit to fight against GOD, but here is the truth....You lose...

(name withheld)

To see responses from MRFF Advisory Board Member Mike Farrell and MRFF Board Member John Compere:

[Click to read in Inbox](#)

"Assclown"

Why don't you shut your mouth and you and your foundation go crawl in a hole? If you don't like religion, don't look, don't listen. Everyone has a right, including those of us who embrace religion. You're a cult and trying to force your views on all of us. Pull back your complaint on the dog tags. It's not your place as troops voluntarily put that on their tags. Who are you to complain? We have the right to religion, just like you have the right to be an ass.

(name withheld)

To see responses from MRFF Advisory Board Member Mike Farrell and MRFF Board Member John Compere:

[Click to read in Inbox](#)

"Stay Out"

As a Veteran of the U.S. Air Force, I am writing to express my opinion of the work you are doing. To sum it up, keep your organization out of our military. You are certainly free to not believe in God, but don't assume others share your beliefs. Taking Bible verses off of dog tags is just a self serving act to draw attention to your pathetic organization. Those Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines will draw on those verses in troubling times. You too will one day cry out for God to save you, I pray it's not too late.

(name withheld)

To see responses from MRFF Advisory Board Member Mike Farrell and MRFF Board Member John Compere:

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"Another attack on christianity"

Another attack on christianity! Shameful! So, it's not ok to have a bible verse on a dog tag because it's a issue of "separation of church and state"? Yet, Sikh's can wear turbans(part of their religion), Muslim men can have beards(part of their religious beliefs, but goes against military dress code) and Muslim females can wear hijabs(religious belief) or other headress other than a military cap. It's a double standard and your bias shows, disgraceful!! Your non profit should be shut down!

To see response from
MRFF Advisory Board Member Mike Farrell:

[Click to read in Inbox](#)

"Get a real job"

I am fed up with crybabies, like you.

What we really need is relief from the hate for religion, that you spread so casually.

I didn't have a dog tag with bible verses on them, but I certainly wouldn't impose my views on another soldier. I am a fierce patriot, and I would gladly fight for my brothers and sisters whether they are religious or atheistic. The one person I wouldn't desire is a back biter like you, behind me, in battle. You are a coward. You hide behind the freedom afforded to you by reducing and slowly pruning the freedoms allowed to others. There are countries that would love to have you, such as Russia and China. You should at least embrace the words of our founding fathers since you are an American. If not, then move to Havana where you would certainly be welcomed with open arms.

You and your worthless organization are a divisive and dangerous force to diversity and should be ashamed of yourselves. As a New Mexican, I am dismayed that you are officed here in my state.

You are welcome to open a lawsuit against my Xmas lights at anytime. We would pummel you in court.

Whine away you small, petty person.

Regards,

(name withheld)

To see response from
MRFF Board Member John Compere:

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"Dog Tags"

You are terribly wrong going after the religious dog tags. You are not upholding some grand idea you are simply being cruel and petty. The men and women that fight for this country's freedoms have the right to their beliefs and should not be restricted by your beliefs. It is their choice to have the religious reference on their tags because it is important to them and helps them get through their duties. It may be the last thing they see before they die fighting for us all and if that gives them comfort your organization is cruel to deny them that. You have the right to your beliefs due to the blood of these men and women, shame on you for not allowing them the comfort of their beliefs. You know these dogtags do not promote religion, it is only seen by the wearer and unfortunately their family at the time of their death. Get off your misguided high horse and be decent human beings.

DO NOT put me on your email list know that you have my address

(name withheld)

To see response from MRFF Founder and President Mikey Weinstein and MRFF Advisory Board Member Mike Farrell:

[Click to read in Inbox](#)

#1 holiday hack:

When you shop at
[smile.amazon.com](https://www.smile.amazon.com),
Amazon donates.

MRFF Information/Contact:

(505) 250-7727

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Fight in the Courts and in the Media

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