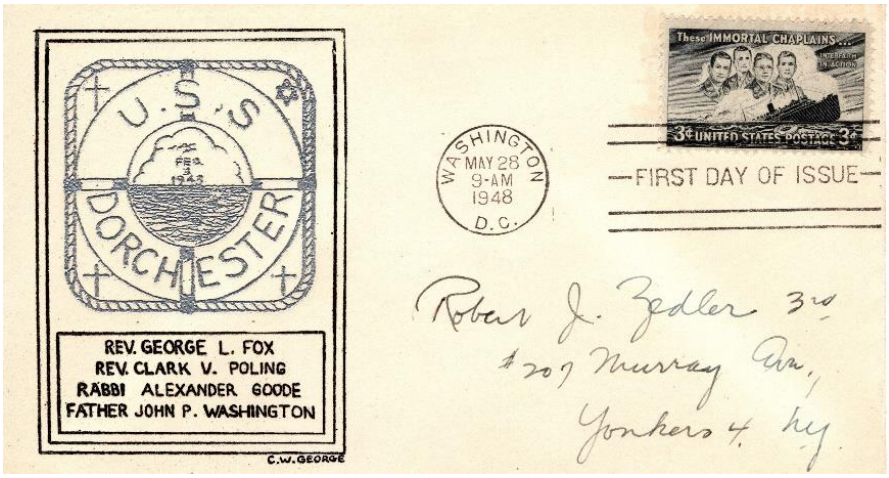
THE FOUR CHAPLAINS

by Terry Towns

Have you ever heard of the 4 Chaplains? I recently attended an American Legion meeting and a special program was given in recognition of The Four Chaplains. Four Chaplains Day is celebrated on February 3 every year in recognition of four Army chaplains who acted in the spirit of heroic sacrifice and humanitarianism onboard a sinking ship during WW2.



It was 1943 and the U.S.A.T.(United States Army Transport) Dorchester was sailing across the Atlantic Ocean, packed to capacity. Tragedy struck when a German submarine fired a torpedo at the ship, sinking it and killing the hundreds who were onboard. The Four Chaplains on board the ship were Reverend **George L. Fox** of the Methodist faith, Jewish Rabbi **Alexander D. Goode**, Father **John P. Washington** of the Catholic faith, and Reverend **Clark V. Poling** from the Dutch Reformed Church. Many witnesses remember their courage, support, and prayers for the many distressed people onboard. They offered their life jackets to four people in need and as a consequence had to remain on the sinking ship, comforted only by the thought of their actions and the fact that they were going to meet their Maker soon.

The U.S. government awarded them the Purple Heart and Distinguished Service Cross medals in 1944. The medal referred to as the "Ruptured Duck" was awarded to all the military people who served in WWII.

Veterans and others say, "You will never be forgotten, if someone speaks your name." So many Veterans Organizations make it a point to recognize them yearly.