



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on December 7, 2011

## Following Flak, Walter Reed Military Hospital Overturns Bible Ban

Officials at the Walter Reed military hospital have found themselves publicly backpeddling on a recently implemented policy that banned those visiting patients at the medical center from bringing with them such religious resources as the Bible.

An [official memo](#) sent out by the hospital's chief of staff was meant to provide guidelines for those visiting wounded and ill military personnel at the hospital. But buried at the tail end of the document is the following prohibition: "No religious items (i.e. Bibles, reading materials, and/or artifacts) are allowed to be given away or used during a visit."



The [Family Research Council](#), which discovered the memo, passed it on to U.S. Representative Steve King (R-Iowa, above), who quickly took the matter to the floor of the House, where he blasted the policy.

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"Mr. Speaker, these military men and women who are recovering at Walter Reed and Bethesda have given their all for America," declared the angry King. "... They've defended and taken an oath to the Constitution, and here they are. The people that come to visit them can't bring a religious artifact? They can't bring a Bible?"

King pointed out that under the unreasonable policy a priest could not even walk in "with the Eucharist and offer communion to a patient who might be on his deathbed because it's prohibited in this memo from the Department of the Navy."

Following King's withering indictment of the ill-advised policy, Walter Reed officials quickly went into PR mode, dropping the no-Bible gaffe and assuring the public that their intent was not to deny wounded warriors of needed spiritual comfort.

"The instructions about the Bibles and reading material have been rescinded," Sandy Dean, a public affairs officer for Walter Reed, told [Fox News](#). "It will be written to articulate our initial intention, which was to respect religious and cultural practices of our patients." She added that the policy was "in no way meant to prohibit family members from providing religious items to their loved ones at all."

Nonetheless, the Navy and Walter Reed were faced with a volley of angry reactions from conservative and religious organizations. [Ken Klukowski](#), director of the FRC's Center for Religious Liberty, said the attempt to slide such a policy through "flies in the face of not only the Bill of Rights, but 200 years of federal law." He added that the effort reveals a rising "militantly secular attitude of trying to sterilize the Defense Department of all references to faith."



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Richard Land, president of the Southern Baptist Convention's [Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission](#), told Fox that the policy "shows the ugly face of the pseudo-tolerance of secularism.... They claim to be tolerant but this is as intolerant as you can be — to not allow wounded soldiers to have religious artifacts."

Representative King told Fox that the "President of the United States should address this and should excoriate the people who brought about this policy and the individual who brought it about should be dismissed from the United States Military."

Unfortunately, noted the FRC's Tony Perkins, a long trail of demoralizing and destructive military policy leads straight back to the Obama White House. "This is Obama's military," wrote Perkins as news of the incident went viral, "where [homosexuality is celebrated](#) and [Christianity is censored](#); where [witches are financed](#) and [crosses are scorned](#); where [bestiality is embraced](#) and [Bibles are banned](#); where [same-sex 'weddings' are encouraged](#) but [international charity is not](#)."

Perkins observed that in addition to all the other assaults the troops have faced from the Obama White House, it is clear that one of the administration's goals is "to disarm the military of its biggest weapon: faith." He added that there is, quite obviously, "nothing in the Constitution that empowers the government to stop family members from giving Bibles or crosses to their loved ones."

And from a purely military PR standpoint, Perkins suggested, "I'm not sure the best way to boost approval ratings is by denying comfort to wounded warriors. Unfortunately for our troops, who have endured so much turmoil under the Obama administration, this is another blow."

*Photo: Rep. Steve King*



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