



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on May 10, 2019

Veterans Fight Efforts to Remove Bible From POW/MIA Memorial

The conservative legal advocacy group First Liberty Institute has come to the defense of a POW group fighting to keep a World War II POW's Bible on display at a Vermont veterans center.



[Fox News](#) reported that an "atheist group" supposedly representing a veteran unhappy over the presence of the Bible on government property filed a lawsuit demanding that the Bible be removed from a memorial dedicated to POWs and missing veterans. The group argued that the Bible's presence in the memorial was unconstitutional and an "outrage."

The Bible was donated to the Manchester, Vermont, Veterans Medical Center by Herman "Herk" Streitburger, a Vermont resident held captive in a German prisoner of war camp during World War II.

A spokesman for the reportedly atheist group filing the lawsuit argued that the presence of the Bible in the memorial amounted to "raising one faith over all the others. From our perspective, it's a repugnant example of fundamentalist Christian triumphalism, exceptionalism, superiority, and domination, and it cannot stand."

The Manchester Veterans Center initially caved in to the complaint and removed the Bible, but put it back on display following an outpouring of support for the Christian symbol by veterans and military groups across the nation.

"Everybody's entitled to their opinion, but I think it's a shame," one veteran, Paul Martin, said of efforts to remove the Bible from the display. "It would be a shame that that Bible be taken from that table."

Another veteran, Marine Guy Emerson, said that the Bible is "a spiritual item that many of us veterans look to for support. I think it would be a shame and a sin to remove it."

And Air Force veteran John Fee insisted that the memorial represented a "sacred place, and it should be respected. The Bible is part of the reckoning that there are people left behind."

Curt Cashour, press secretary for the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Press, confirmed that the Bible would retain its place of prominence in the POW memorial, telling Fox News that the frivolous lawsuit, "backed by a group known for questionable practices and unsuccessful lawsuits, is nothing more than an attempt to force the VA into censoring a show of respect for America's POW/MIA community."

First Liberty Institute, which is representing the Northeast POW/MIA Network, the group that had originally placed the Bible in the memorial, sent a letter to officials at the Manchester VA Medical Center affirming their decision to display the Bible. "The VA is absolutely within the law in its decision to allow the display of a donated Bible," read the letter, written by attorney Michael Berry, director of military affairs for First Liberty Institute. "Government officials are right to ignore outside activists and their dubious legal claims. The fact that an outside activist group more than 2,000 miles away claims to be offended is not a legitimate reason to dishonor our veterans. If those activists want to desecrate this POW/MIA display, they're going to have to come through us."



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In an additional statement, Berry noted that “POW/MIA Remembrance displays have a long, cherished history in our nation. Veterans organizations like the Northeast POW/MIA Network should be able to honor and remember those killed, captured, or missing with a display that includes a Bible donated by a WWII veteran that represents the strength through faith necessary for American service members to survive.”



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