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Pastoral Support for Jewish Troops in the Field—Reports from Jewish and military personnel and from families have highlighted the need for a stronger Jewish pastoral presence for the Jewish men and women in the military, at home, and abroad. The Jewish War Veterans of the USA claims that Jewish participation in the military is higher than the two percent of Jews in the American population at large. Currently in the three branches of the military there are only twenty-nine active duty Jewish chaplains, about one percent of the total number of chaplains from all religions. For example, at the present time there are neither rabbis nor rabbinic students among the 120 new members of the Army’s chaplain training program. There is also a need of resources for celebrating Jewish holidays. Some sisterhoods and congregations have sent items but there is need for greater support.

Veterans’ Needs—Reports indicate that veterans are increasingly losing benefits because the Veterans Administration (VA) is under-funded and they must fight dispiriting bureaucratic battles to get their care and benefits. The VA is being challenged to improve access to health care to its enrolled populations, including a growing elderly veteran population and a population of new veterans. The VA needs to ensure that its enrolled veteran population has access to quality health care that is both timely and convenient. There is also a need to make rehabilitation of the visually impaired and services for those needing mental health care more widely available.

Resolution
In response to the call for assistance by the members of the Armed Forces and their families, Women of Reform Judaism calls on its United States and Canadian affiliates to:

1. Urge their senators and representatives or members of Parliament to support efforts to ensure that the men and women in the US Armed Forces, including the National Guard and Reserves, or Canadian military and reserves have adequate training and the proper equipment for their deployment in all war and peacekeeping zones; job security or pension benefits upon completion of their service; and death gratuity and life insurance benefits at least at current levels;
2. Alert their members and congregants to military noncompliance with congressional orders and military regulations regarding recruitment, screening and treatment of military personnel with mental illness. Urge Congress and Pentagon leaders to monitor United States military practices and require compliance with existing orders and regulations;
3. Alert their members and their congregations and communities to the shortage of Jewish chaplains in the US Armed Forces and the special needs of Jewish service members at home and abroad and encourage them to undertake programs of personal connections through letter writing, Uniongrams, and emails; sending individual packages overseas through the Jewish Community Centers Association of North America Jewish Chaplains Council; and even the adoption of a base or unit so Jewish servicemen and servicewomen receive packages and greetings throughout the year, but particularly during the Jewish holidays wherever in the world they may be;
4. Encourage Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion and the Central Conference of American Rabbis to inform students and clergy of the need for more Jewish military chaplains;
5. Encourage rabbis, cantors and educators to explore the pastoral needs of Jewish military personnel and their families located in the vicinity of the congregation and to follow the protocol to provide the necessary assistance; and
6. Advocate with their elected officials at the local, state, provincial and federal levels to ensure the availability of adequate funding and health services for all servicemen, servicewomen and veterans, to provide:- acute care and rehabilitative services, including services for mental disabilities, such as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder for returnees from all conflicts;
- testing and tracking of veterans for physical and mental health problems, including those related to

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their exposure to depleted uranium;
- long term care, both institutional and non-institutional;
- meaningful, timely and continuing support for veterans with disabilities; and
- sufficient numbers of health care providers at all levels to insure acceptable standards of care.

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