

**Dorchester Chaplains: Lieutenants George Fox, Alexander D. Goode,
Clark V. Poling, and John P. Washington, 1943**

Observed February 3rd



George L. Fox



Alexander D. Goode



Clark V. Poling



John P. Washington

The *Dorchester* was a troop transport in World War Two. There were 904 people aboard the ship when it was struck by German torpedoes in the frigid North Atlantic on February 3,

1943. There were insufficient lifeboats and life jackets for all of them. The four chaplains, one a Rabbi, one a Roman Catholic priest, one a Methodist minister, and the fourth a minister of the Reformed Church in America, gave their own life jackets to other soldiers and spent their time helping others into the lifeboats. Only 204 of the men survived to be rescued. Some of them recalled seeing the four chaplains together on deck praying for the safety of the men in the water as the ship sank out of sight in the freezing waters. The men who survived remembered the courage and compassion of the chaplains as they offered comfort and encouragement to the men as they waited to leave the ship. They were awarded posthumous purple hearts and Distinguished Service Crosses. They truly lived out Jesus' words, "Greater love hath no man than that he lay down his life for his friends." In their sacrifice we can see true devotion and faithful service transcending differences of creed.

Lessons Joel 2:28-32; Psalm 46; Romans 8:15b-19,38-9; John 15:9-14

Collect Holy God, you inspired the Dorchester chaplains to be models of steadfast sacrificial love in a tragic and terrifying time: Help us to follow their example, that their courageous ministry may inspire chaplains and all who serve, to recognize your presence in the midst of peril; through Jesus Christ our Savior, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.