

Christmas Ornament Adoption Appeal



2021

This is the 8th year of our Christmas Ornament Adoption Appeal. Support of LMVFM's Appeal has over recent years helped to raise nearly half of the funds needed to cover the programs, services that LMVFM provides free of charge to our Veterans, Contractors and their family members. This is a fun way to support LMVFM and our programs and services, as well as honor someone you love or want remembered.

Here's how it works:

Beginning November 1st and ending on the 31st of January your donation to LMVFM will be recognized with a one-of-a-kind, handcrafted Christmas ornament, made by a veteran or their family member, like the ones pictured above, that will hang on the Christmas tree here at LMVFM in Fort Wayne. When your donation is received we will select an ornament and name it for you or whomever you select. It will then be hung on our tree, photographed, and put on both our Website and Facebook pages where it can be viewed.

You and those you honor will be able to see your ornament on LMVFM's Facebook Page, and website. You will have the joy of knowing that your gift gives hope to those who have sacrificed for the freedom to worship and celebrate the freedoms that we enjoy.



October

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Lutheran Military Veterans and Families Ministries, Inc.

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"Serving with Christ's Love Those Who Serve"



2021

UNCONDITIONAL LOVE

Recently during a church wide event I met "Bill" a Marine Veteran who had served in Vietnam. After a playful back and forth Army vs Marines ribbing between us, he looked at Dooly and said "I don't get it"? Not quite knowing what he didn't get I asked him what it was he didn't get.

He looked at me, sighed and went on to tell me about his time in Vietnam. By all accounts it sounded pretty tough. Then he said "What I don't get is why all these "soldiers" today need a service dog. He understood why those who were blind or physically injured would need one, but not those who were dealing with things like post-traumatic stress.

At that point I began to explain how in general dogs are basically "non-judgmental". Dogs don't care about the mean things we've said or done, or the hurt we've caused. As I started to tell him the ways we use our two (2) service dogs in counselling, Dooly got up, walked between us and went across the hallway to a woman and leaned up against her. As Bill and I watched the interaction between Dooly and the woman who was now on one knee stroking Dooly's head and ears, I explained what had prompted Dooly to go to the woman.

"Dooly sensed an emotional need in the woman. For whatever was bothering her, she wanted something, someone who asked nothing from her, to simply show her unconditional love. A few moments later the woman stood up and she and Dooly parted. As Dooly came back towards our table he stopped just short of his blankie, sat and leaned up against Bill. At that point you could see in Bill's face the "Ah Hah" moment followed by him bending down to scratch Dooly's head. As he got up, he looked again at Dooly and said "Thank you".

This Christmas and every day we thank God for the unconditional love He has given us though His Son, Jesus Christ.



Merry Christmas

Leslie

2021: Joys, Challenges and Missions Accomplished

A celebration of Joy! By mid-year, the LMVFM team was more than ready to resume our travels to congregations in response to requests for ministry visits and programs. With no rhyme or reason as to what restrictions politicians would mandate for their communities, it was anyone's guess as to when our travel would resume. Finally, as we approached the fall months requests for programs and seminars began rolling in, and not a moment too soon as we had been tracking a serious uptick in military suicides.



It was truly a blessing when churches were able to safely resume their services and invite us to visit and provide them with much needed and timely training programs.

From August through November, the LMVFM team provided training and attended conferences in Texas, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Ohio, Indiana, and North Carolina.



LMVFM's 14th year: Serving *with Christ's Love* those who serve

During October, LMVFM celebrated our 14th year of ministry and service at Granite City Food and Brewery. Nothing quite beats being able to reflect and enjoy the crossing of such a milestone than being able to do so surrounded by the family, friends and ministry partners who have supported you!



MAIL CALL

Dear Chaplain Leslie,

I think your annual Christmas Ornament Adoption Appeal is great. I get an ornament every year in honor of my dad-who is in the Army. I was wondering if you would tell me where the idea for the appeal came from.. Thank you, Brandon



Dear Brandon,

Thank you for your question. We get asked this a lot, so one of these days I need to write the whole story down. In a nutshell, about eight Christmases ago we were putting up our ministry Christmas tree. We didn't have a lot of ornaments, but the number was growing. I was really looking forward to putting up a new ornament, a really cool pair of miniature desert combat boots, that a friend had given me as a gift. As I started to hang them on our tree I suddenly noticed a tag on them that read "Made in China." I couldn't escape the irony that the ornament had come from a country where Christians are persecuted, and can be put to death for their love of Jesus. As I looked at the other ornaments, all but the few that were hand-made, had also been made in China. Something had to be done, and we decided to remove the made in China ornaments from our tree. It was then that the seed was planted that has become a wonderful tradition for our ministry, our Christmas Ornament Adoption Appeal. Since then every ornament on our tree has been made by a veteran, or a military contractor or a family member. The adoption of those ornaments helps pay for the programs and services we provide for free to those who have served. Thank you Brandon for your question, and for honoring you dad in a special way each year!

Chaplain Leslie Haines