

111TH CONGRESS
2^D SESSION

S. RES. 577

Commemorating the remarkable life of patriotism, conviction, and compassion
led by Chaplain Henry Vinton Plummer.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JUNE 30, 2010

Ms. MIKULSKI (for herself and Mr. CARDIN) submitted the following
resolution; which was considered and agreed to

RESOLUTION

Commemorating the remarkable life of patriotism, conviction,
and compassion led by Chaplain Henry Vinton Plummer.

Whereas Henry Vinton Plummer was born into slavery on
July 31, 1844, in Prince George's County, Maryland and
escaped from slavery to serve honorably in the U.S. Navy
during the Civil War;

Whereas Henry Plummer was assigned in 1864 to the Union
gunboat U.S.S. Coeur de Lion, which engaged numerous
Confederate ships trying to run Union blockades in the
Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries during the Civil War;

Whereas after being honorably discharged from the Navy in
1865, Henry Plummer studied to become a minister, and
felt called to serve again in the United States military;

Whereas in 1866, the 39th Congress passed legislation to establish African-American military units and stipulated that a chaplain be assigned to each regiment;

Whereas in July 1884, Henry Plummer was appointed the first African-American chaplain in the United States Regular Army with a military rank equivalent of Captain;

Whereas Chaplain Plummer served for more than 10 years with the Ninth Cavalry and was stationed at Army forts in Kansas, Wyoming, and Nebraska;

Whereas during his time in uniform, Chaplain Plummer worked to improve education and voter participation and reduce the temptation of gambling, drunkenness, and prostitution among soldiers under his ministry;

Whereas Chaplain Plummer fought racism and other injustices of the time while serving his country with the Ninth Cavalry;

Whereas Chaplain Plummer's records in Fort Riley and Fort Robinson noted that he performed admirably in his work among soldiers and in his efforts on behalf of their spiritual well-being;

Whereas Chaplain Plummer endured racial bias and animosity throughout his time in uniform, including being denied officer housing and being forced to live among enlisted personnel despite holding the Army officer rank equivalent of Captain;

Whereas in 1894, Chaplain Plummer was court-martialed, convicted, and dismissed from the Army under circumstances tainted by racial and personal animus;

Whereas the Army Board for Correction of Military Records concluded that personal grudges and racial bias were

driving factors that led to Chaplain Plummer’s court-martial;

Whereas the Army Board for Correction of Military Records noted evidence that shows Chaplain Plummer served his country well and was a highly respected and admired officer;

Whereas in 2005, the Army Board for Correction of Military Records changed the status of Chaplain Plummer’s military discharge to “honorable”;

Whereas despite the unfair and racially charged atmosphere that led to Chaplain Plummer’s conviction and discharge, he continued to ask for reinstatement in the military out of a desire to serve his country;

Whereas Chaplain Plummer was a devoted family man, minister, veteran, and community leader committed to the principles of liberty and opportunity for which the United States stands; and

Whereas Chaplain Plummer rose from the depths of slavery to remarkable heights, and led a life of selfless contributions to his country: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the Senate—

2 (1) celebrates the life and patriotism of Chap-
3 lain Henry Vinton Plummer;

4 (2) expresses its admiration for Chaplain Plum-
5 mer for his perseverance and resolve in the face of
6 racial oppression in the military history of the
7 United States; and

8 (3) congratulates Chaplain Plummer’s extended
9 family for their work to commemorate his life of de-

- 1 votion to helping others while overcoming tremen-
- 2 dous adversity.

