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News, commentary, audio, transcripts, prayers (with a focus on the North Georgia Conference and the Southeastern Jurisdiction)

North Georgia UM pastor is 'Chaplain of the Year'

February 5, 2009 by [Joseph](#)

The Reserve Officers Association this week recognized Chaplain (Major) James B. (Jim) Higgins of the U.S. Army Reserve as Chaplain of the Year. The award is given for "extraordinary contribution to the welfare, morale and effectiveness of the military reserve services."

Major Higgins is also the senior pastor of [McEachern Memorial UMC](#) in the North Georgia Conference.

Mike Selleck, head of North Georgia's office of Connectional Ministries, profiled [Jim Higgins](#) in a recent issue of the *Wesleyan Christian Advocate*, the newspaper of the North and South Georgia Conferences.

In November of 1994, the Rev. James B. Higgins chose the Army reserves as an expression of his belief that Christ must be available to all who may need Him, wherever that may be....



Chaplain (and pastor) Jim Higgins

After earning his current rank of Major, Jim left his family in March of 2007 for a 17-month deployment ministering to American troops, first at Ft. Hood, Texas, then in Balad, Iraq. While [in Iraq,] Jim earned the **Bronze Star**.

Currently, Dr. Higgins is the Brigade Chaplain of the 415th Chemical Brigade, out of Greenville, South Carolina, with units throughout the Eastern United States. His responsibilities are focused on counseling, with emphasis in suicide prevention and marriage enrichment, while [also] providing worship and sacraments.

Jim recently commented on his tour in Iraq...:

"It was pure ministry, 24-7, without distraction or interruption. Every moment was given to being the hands and feet, the heart and soul of Christ in situations that cannot be described or understood unless you were there.

"It was all consuming and so totally vital and real, I could do nothing but marvel at the power of Christ to touch and transform, to heal and bring hope.

"My time in Iraq will be one of the lasting memories of my life, and one of the proudest parts of my ministry, bar none."

Jim Higgins... has brought honor and distinction to himself, his family, his unit, the United Methodist Church generally, and especially to the North Georgia Conference.

Major Higgins received the **Vincent Robert Capodanno** Chaplain of the Year award Monday during the Reserve Officers Association Mid-Winter Conference in Washington, D.C.

From a [news release](#) (PDF) issued by the ROA:

Chaplain Higgins served with the 36th Combat Aviation Brigade from the Texas National Guard from March 2006

to August 2007. As the brigade chaplain, he served with distinction during the loss of Easy 40, a helicopter mission that crashed on one of the deadliest days in Iraq.

His stellar care while helping the 2,800 personnel of the brigade work through the sorrow of that tragic event contributed to his selection for this award.

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Yesterday (Feb. 4), Major Jim Higgins was further honored as Chaplain of the Day by the U.S. House of Representatives. He led the House in its opening prayer (video below).



After the prayer, two members of Georgia's House delegation, [Rep. David Scott](#) (D-13th District) and [Rep. Phil Gingrey](#) (R-11th District), gave brief addresses focusing on Chaplain Higgins' accomplishments.

Use the audio player below to listen to their comments (5 min.).



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Prayer of the Week

'LORD God, keep me from presumption. But may the scoffing opinions of others never keep me from obedience, even when obedience appears to be presumption to those who have not heard You speak.'

'Seek God for the City'