As tradition, we set aside the first full week of May every year to recognize the work of our nation’s correctional officers and employees. This year, please take time from May 4-10 to acknowledge them, recognize them and praise them for their heroic efforts day in and day out throughout the year.

Whether they serve in a military correctional unit, the federal government’s Bureau of Prisons, a state prison, a county jail, a local lock-up, or community corrections – adult or juvenile, a publicly or privately-run facility – the brave men and women in corrections serve our public admirably and with distinction. They often do so in difficult and stressful conditions. Yet they serve with pride, honor and a dignity like few others.

Correctional officers and staff are well-trained professionals dedicated to maintaining secure correctional facilities safe for inmates and fellow staff members, all while ensuring public safety.

As former President Ronald Reagan said: “The professionalism, dedication and courage exhibited by these officers throughout the performance of these demanding and often conflicting roles deserve our utmost respect. The important work of correctional officers often does not receive the recognition from the public it deserves. It is appropriate that we honor the many contributions and accomplishments of these men and women who are a vital component of the field of corrections.”

Never a day goes by when our nation’s correctional officers and staffs aren’t faced with incredible challenges and/or difficulties. They are tasked with securing and attempting to correct our nation’s errant few, some of whom may be high-profile and/or highly dangerous.

Correctional facilities are designed and constructed by competent and respected architectural, engineering and contracting firms with the greatest degree of safety and security in mind. Security personnel watch over special housing units with some of the most dangerous offenders. Clinicians and healthcare staff are sometimes forced to diagnose and treat patients who can be untrustworthy and uncooperative.

Regardless of their duty assignment, all corrections professionals fully understand the risks, dangers and stresses inherent in their jobs, but they accept them as part of doing their duty to the agency and to the public. They accept them and they serve – honorably, bravely and professionally!

On behalf of the elected leaders and the staff of the American Correctional Association, we give praise to all the men and women serving in corrections across the country. You are all heroes! And we honor you!

Please send us photos or publications of how your agency celebrated National Correctional Officers and Employees Week, and we will include them in one of our publications. Send your information to Vincent Ryan at vincentr@aca.org. We look forward to receiving your pictures!

Gary C. Mohr, President
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