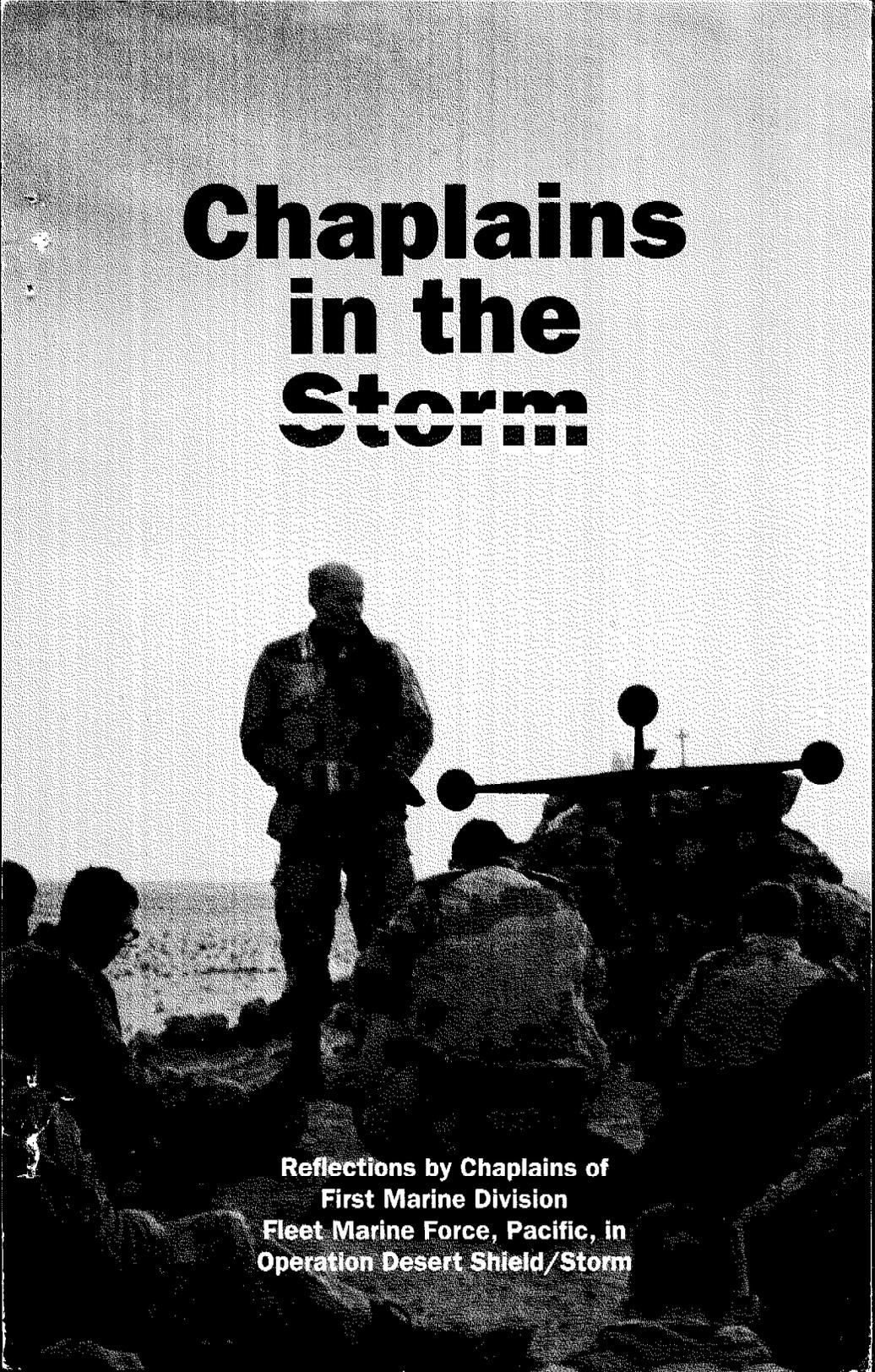


# Chaplains in the Storm



Reflections by Chaplains of  
First Marine Division  
Fleet Marine Force, Pacific, in  
Operation Desert Shield/Storm

# **Chaplains in the Storm**

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**Compiled and Edited  
by  
Chaplain Doyle W. Dunn**

**Headquarters Battalion  
First Marine Division  
Fleet Marine Force, Pacific**

*"We may kill if necessary, but we must not hate and enjoy hating. We may punish if necessary, but we must not enjoy it ... Even while we kill and punish we must try to feel about the enemy as we feel about ourselves – to wish that he were not bad, to hope that he may, in this world or another, be cured: in fact, to wish his good. That is what is meant in the Bible by loving him; wishing his good, not feeling fond of him nor saying he is nice when he is not."*

C. S. Lewis

**Cover Photo:**

*Chaplain Daniel Hall leading Roman Catholic Mass with available materials: rock-pile altar and camouflage net-spreader as a large cross.*

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**COMMANDING GENERAL**  
1ST MARINE DIVISION (REIN) FMF  
CAMP PENDLETON, CALIFORNIA 92055-8501

28 Nov 91

Dear Reader,

The United States Marine Corps has a long and proud tradition of service in the defense of our nation. Marines have fought bravely and have repeatedly made sacrifices of the highest order to preserve freedom both at home and abroad. One key element of every Marine Corps organization has always been the Navy Chaplain. Chaplains provide for a primary human need untouched by any other aspect of the military; the requirement for spiritual support.

In providing that spiritual ministry, Chaplains go wherever we go. They put on our uniform and selflessly endure the hardship, fatigue and physical stress of living with, working with and ministering to warriors. They become "one of us."

Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm again demonstrated the importance of Chaplains. They accompanied the First Marine Division throughout. Chaplains comforted troops, encouraged them, and accompanied them through the smokiest, darkest moments of battle. They tended the needs of their Marines just as their predecessors have always done, from Haiti and Guadalcanal to the Chosin Reservoir and Vietnam.

It is an honor to present this book of reflections by First Marine Division Chaplains during Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm. As you read these accounts, you will gain a keen admiration for these men of great faith and great courage.

J. M. MYATT  
Major General, U. S. Marine Corps  
Commanding General

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# Introduction

On August 2, 1990, Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait. As I listened to the news of the invasion, I had no idea how this act of aggression against a friendly nation, almost halfway around the world, would affect the lives of our Armed Forces personnel and their families.

There was a lot of discussion in the United States about the strength of the Iraqi military and their chemical capability. Many people predicted that thousands of American troops would be killed or seriously injured, should war break out in Southwest Asia. When our personnel embraced their loved ones before departing, they feared that this might be the last time they would see each other alive or healthy.

Although our troops were enthusiastic, well-trained, and charged up to go, they also felt anxieties and uncertainties as they contemplated impending battle. Navy Chaplains experienced whatever the troops felt and encountered. This is the uniqueness of the ministry in the military.

Desert Shield/Storm demonstrated how Navy Chaplains are one with those whom they serve. Chaplains were subject to the same trials, boredom, loneliness, fear, heat, live fire, mine fields, as the courageous warriors. In this environment, thousands of miles from the United States, Chaplains were privileged to share God's word and God's love to individuals before, during, and after the war.

Chaplain Doyle Dunn, the editor and a contributor for *CHAPLAINS IN THE STORM*, has arranged the articles to tell the stories of First Marine Division Chaplains from pre-deployment and arrival in the desert, preparation for battle, the assault, to the return home. This work was not intended to be chronological, but an opportunity for Chaplains to reflect on their own experiences, how God dealt with them, and how they ministered to God's people in uniform in Southwest Asia.

**Captain Leroy Gilbert, CHC, USN**  
Division Chaplain  
First Marine Division  
Fleet Marine Force, Pacific

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

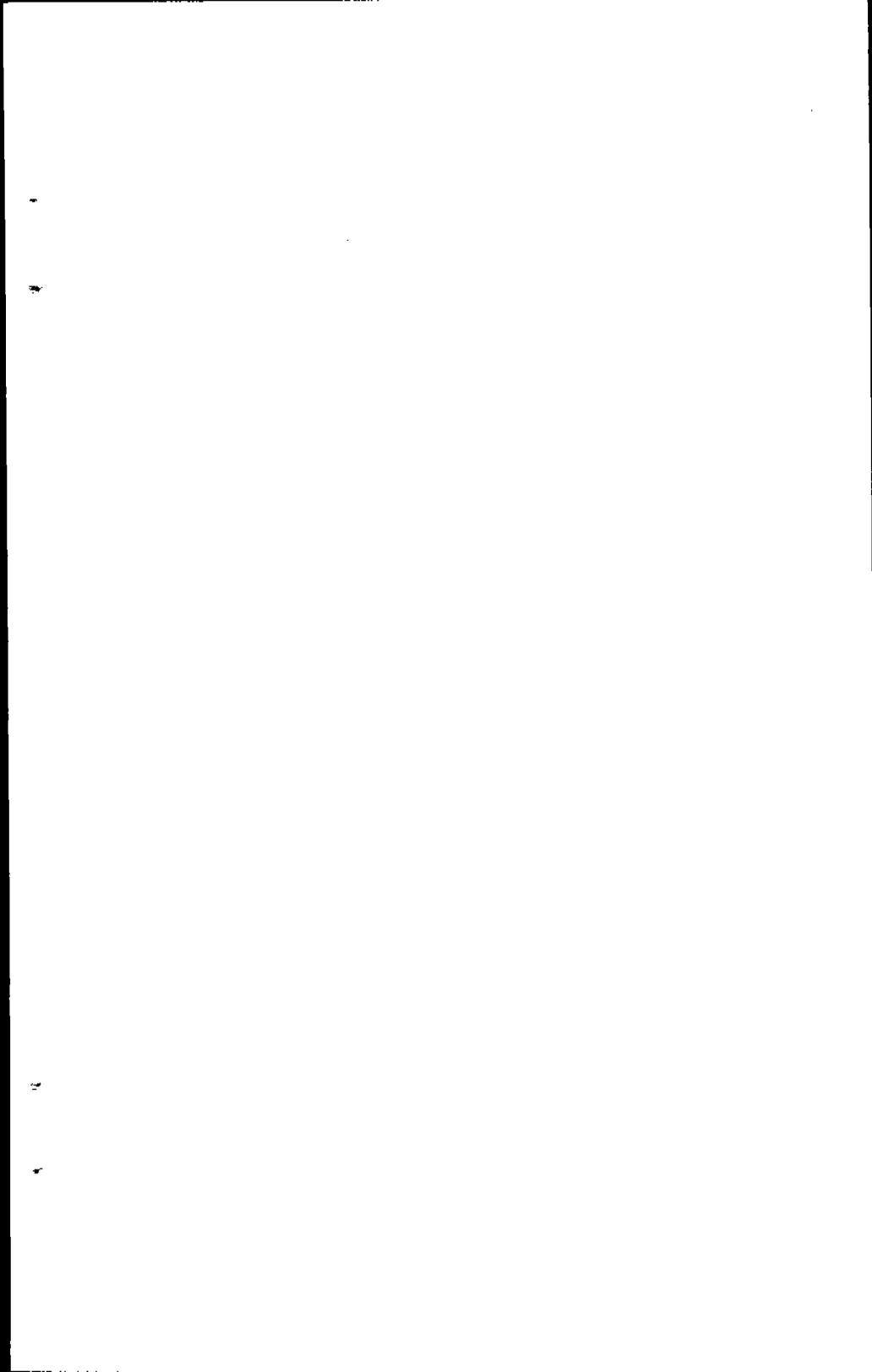
Chaplains who served with First Marine Division in Southwest Asia are now scattered across many states, filling many differing assignments. They are certainly not all at Camp Pendleton, California. Some have already deployed again to Okinawa and the western Pacific. That fact alone is pretty miraculous, considering the small amount of time given to relax and readjust after six to eight months in the desert. There are just some things, however, that never change. One of those things is the fact that the Marine Corps maintains its readiness for defense at all times.

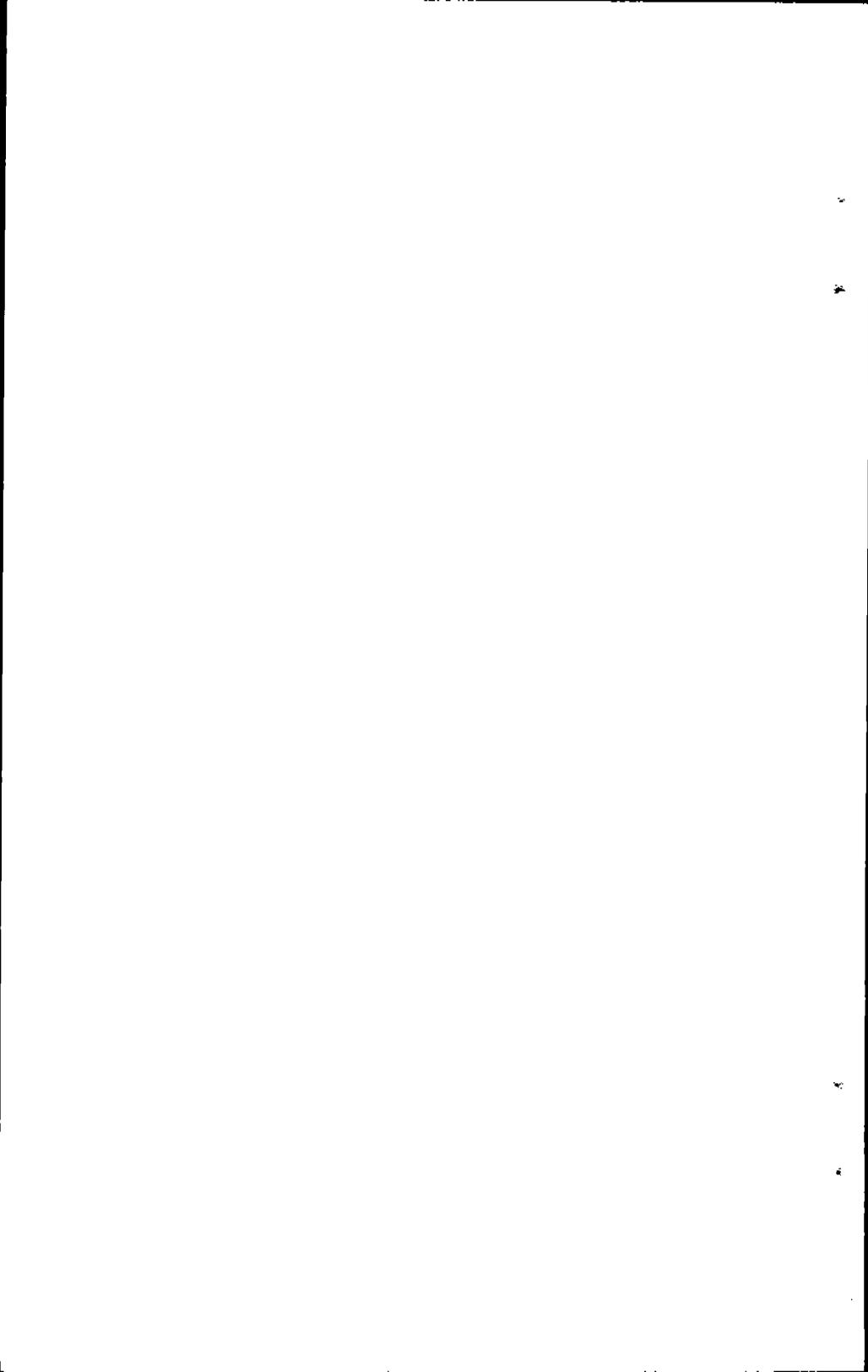
CHAPLAINS IN THE STORM is an effort to highlight some of the spiritual experiences of the Chaplains in Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm. It is not a final, comprehensive story of those days. It simply includes individual reflections, written independently, by chaplains of First Marine Division. Not all of the chaplains who served with First Marine Division in Southwest Asia are represented in these pages. There are many more stories yet to be told about ministry to the brave men and women of the US military in Southwest Asia.

I offer my sincere thanks to each chaplain who did participate in this project. To Chaplain Leroy Gilbert, whose leadership, vision, and constant encouragement made this possible. To Chaplain Blane Hamilton for his uncanny ability to make things happen easily when all other means seem to end at a brick wall, and for his wisdom and insight concerning the minute details involved in this project. Special thanks to Chaplain Bobby Lewis for his enthusiasm and assistance in proofreading, editing, and design. Thanks also to RP3 Johnny McCall for his tireless effort in front of the computer and for his administrative support.

It is our hope that the accounts contained here will, more than anything else, bring glory to God. May it increase our faith in His willingness to reveal Himself to mankind in absolutely any circumstance.

**Editor**





# Arrival in the Desert

You have been a refuge for the poor,  
a refuge for the needy in distress,  
a shelter from the storm  
and a shade from the heat.

Isaiah 25:4

## Welcome Aboard Chaplain Doyle Dunn

"Are you sure you want to serve with the Marine Corps?"

"Yes, sir, I do."

"And you specifically want to go to the FMF?"

"Yes, sir, I do."

"That will be two sea tours in a row for you."

"No problem, sir."

"Alright. I'll see what can be done."

It was a fairly short phone conversation I had with my detailer that day in April, 1990. It seemed to me that serving alongside Marines in the Fleet Marine Force was a glamorous opportunity for a Navy Chaplain. Adventure. Discipline. Courage. I wanted to experience the Marine Corps lifestyle.

In mid-July, I packed the last few things in my car and said goodbye to my shipmates on USS Sylvania. With my wife and our three children, we left Norfolk, Virginia traveling west toward Camp Pendleton Marine Corps Base in Oceanside, California.

It was a wonderful vacation. We visited our parents in Tennessee, then continued, casually drifting from town to town, stopping whenever we felt like it. We explored the Painted Desert. We peered into the vast depths of the Grand Canyon. We stayed overnight at hotels with large swimming pools (the children's only major request).

We intentionally enjoyed ourselves. No television. No radio. No newspapers. No hurry. Just me and my family on our first excursion together across the U.S.A.

We arrived in Los Angeles sooner than we had expected, so I decided to check in at work early ... you know, save those extra leave days. I drove to Camp Pendleton, found my way to the First Marine Division Chaplain's Office and went in to introduce myself. Immediately I noticed how extremely busy everybody appeared. There was a sort of hushed energy in the air. This was much more than just a busy day in the office. It was August 2, 1990. The day the army of Iraq invaded Kuwait.

Chaplain Alfred Clark, Division Chaplain, explained the events to me. First Marine Division was on stand-by; ready to depart for Saudi Arabia. "It is our policy," he said, "to give chaplains a chance to settle down if they come to us directly from a ship. You just came off a Mediterranean deployment, so I am going to assign you to a unit that will not

deploy during the next twelve months. You will go to 1st Combat Engineer Battalion," he continued. "They haven't deployed as a unit in twenty years. Not since Vietnam. With them, you'll definitely stay close to home."

A few days later, the 5th Marine Regimental Chaplain escorted me to meet my new Commanding Officer. He was out of the office, so I was introduced to my new Executive Officer. He was certainly enthusiastic.

"Welcome, Chaplain!" he started. "We are so glad to have you aboard! Hope you enjoyed your trip from Virginia."

"What a nice guy," I thought.

The XO didn't hesitate long. "I want to suggest that you go on down to the supply office today and check out some personal field gear. Then, pack your sea bag and meet me here at 0500 tomorrow morning. We're going to Saudi Arabia."

So much for glamour and adventure. The real Marine Corps quickly became much more than perfectly pressed uniforms and sharp salutes. From that day on it became, for me, a team of men who would endure any hardship, obey every order, work and fight to their last ounce of strength for the sake of freedom.

I found that my story was not unique. Dozens of Marines and sailors in the desert told of sudden notices and last minute perils that easily



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*Conducting ministry in Saudi Arabia usually meant meager accommodations for worship. This altar is a stack of MRE boxes with items from the Chaplain's Combat Assault Kit on top.*

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dwarfed my own. No, my experience was not a shock to anyone. It was barely even unusual.

During the next seven and one-half months I got exactly what I asked for: a sterling opportunity to see the Marine Corps in action. To see the discipline and the courage for which Leathernecks are famous. More importantly, I got the opportunity to minister the love and peace of God to men in a teachable moment. To show them the value and strength of faith. They responded.

The next time my detailer asks me, "Are you sure you want to serve with the Marine Corps?" my answer will not change.

"Yes, sir, I do."

## Quick and Dirty

Chaplain Paschal Dawson

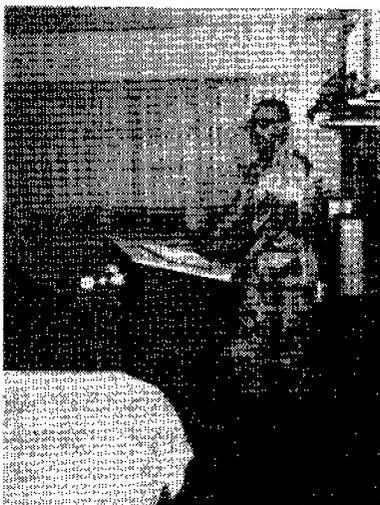
"Quick and dirty" is the expression which seems to best describe our rapid deployment to Saudi Arabia. We had little or no time for deployment preparation. Four days prior to 1st Battalion, 5th Marines' return home from a 25-day jungle warfare training exercise in Panama, Iraqi troops invaded Kuwait.

Two days before returning to the US, our Regimental Commander, Colonel Gangle, met the battalion in Panama to talk to SNCOs and Officers about a secret mission in which the battalion was asked to participate. He didn't give us any detailed information about our mission, he just told us to "have your M16's clean and ready." He also said that "we may be getting off one plane and onto another."

Unaware of what had transpired in the Middle East, we returned home on 6 August 1990 to face an immediate deployment to Saudi Arabia. Our mission: to form a defensive shield against Iraqi forces occupying Kuwait.

What came subsequent to our return to the US was a shocker and it was unlike anything most of the men had experienced before, including me. It had never occurred to me that I would be called upon to serve in a major conflict. For most of the men, this was the case.

On 13 August 1990, via 29 Palms, California, we flew from March AFB to the Al Jubail Airport in Saudi Arabia. It was the shortest eighteen hours of my life.



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*Chaplain Alfred M Clark,  
I Marine Expeditionary  
Force Chaplain address-  
ing Division Chaplains  
during a Day of Reflec-  
tion at the ARAMCO  
(Arab-American Oil  
Company) compound in  
Dhahran.*

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## Underway

Chaplain Darryl Person

I received a phone call on Monday morning from the Regimental Chaplain. His words to me were, "Prepare to deploy." He informed me that I would be leaving 5th Battalion, 11th Marines and that I would report to 1st Battalion, 7th Marines. My heart dropped. I had only ten days to get ready.

I had spent the past year working diligently to insure that 5/11 was up to speed. I had just finished a major inspection and written my Planned Ministry Objectives for the coming year. Now, I was ordered to 1/7 where I had to start all over.

My time spent for those ten days was not only preparation, but *frantic location*. I had to locate mount out boxes and find supplies, as well as get to know a new battalion. It was hectic. I found myself ripping and running trying to get ready to deploy. I felt as if I were sprinting for ten days straight.

Through the help of Almighty God, I was able to get ready and deploy with the battalion right on schedule. In those tense times I truly felt the pressure to perform. The battalion was depending on me. I was reminded in the midst of that chaos, that when God's servant does his best, God will do the rest.

## The Beginning

Chaplain Stanley Scott

We left a tearful group of spouses at Camp Margarita on September 2, as we drove away in the buses. Our eyes were not dry, either. We tried not to show it.

After a long wait to board the plane and an even longer flight we landed in the late afternoon of September 4 at Dhahran International Airport. After a quick formation to pick up our gear, we went to a group of tents alongside the runway to await our bus transportation. We were given our initial bottles of water and 'stood-by to stand-by'.

During this time, in one end of a tent, LCDR Jack Kirk and I conducted a service of worship and communion for about one hundred twenty-five troops who crowded around. This was the beginning of many exciting and diverse opportunities to minister in the land of Saudi Arabia.

## Tough Choices

Chaplain Alfred Clark

Some people think of the deep things of God when they walk along a seashore and pause to sit on a rock and admire the setting sun. Others sense His presence while doing something as simple as flying a kite. Skiers speak of the serenity found as they speed down a snowy slope with their skis slicing and cutting as they go. They refer to these moments as spiritual experiences.

When Chaplains and RPs stepped off the planes with Marines in Saudi Arabia into the desert sand, knowing that Saddam Hussein could send his army south if he chose and no one could stop him, perhaps that moment could be classified as an equally deep spiritual experience.

Those spiritual experiences were intensified by difficult decisions we had to make. As the I Marine Expeditionary Force Chaplain, responsible for every Marine Chaplain in the area of operations, I agonized over many of those choices in early August.

Chaplain Puccio and Chaplain Dunn arrived at Camp Pendleton after serving aboard ships. It is our policy to place Chaplains leaving sea billets in a unit that would not deploy for at least twelve months. Chaplain Dunn reported in and within one week was in Twentynine Palms.

Only a few days later he was in Saudi Arabia. Chaplain Puccio left a short time later. These were difficult decisions.

In another case, I needed to pull the best-trained chaplain available for a special requirement in one deploying unit. That person turned out to be Chaplain Fisher – pulled after only one month with his current battalion. Chaplain Fosback was away in Airborne Jump School and deployed shortly after completing that training.

Wives were frustrated and upset. Schedules were cancelled. Family plans were disrupted. We all had gut-wrenching emotions repeatedly during those days. The one thing that was needed more than anything else was “servant-leaders”. Chaplains who would reach out and comfort each other along with the pained, hurting hearts and minds of the families of hundreds of sailors and Marines who were enduring the same.

## New Answers

Chaplain Drew Tomberlin

Over the years I have asked myself the question, “How does one serve God?” But before I would take the time to honestly answer the question, I would always redirect my energies elsewhere.

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*Mass conducted  
beside empty cargo  
pallets at the port of  
Al-Jubail*

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During the first week of August 1990, when I was notified that I was being deployed to Saudi Arabia, the necessity to find an answer to this question suddenly appeared very important. I was being forced to face the question head on, and I was still wondering how I would serve my God and country with all my perceived short-comings.

During the pre-deployment period I struggled with the issue of serving God. The struggle was painful, yet also rewarding because I was forced to review my life openly and honestly. I recognized that in spite of my foundation, I still had weaknesses. It was through this recognition of my weakness that I was able to experience God's strength and grace. I began to understand that I could do nothing by myself. However, by God's personal guidance I could serve my God and my country in a meaningful and spiritual manner.

By the time we deployed I knew that I would be able to handle the future challenges because God was with me. I was immediately faced with trials. Two days after we arrived in Saudi Arabia we went to the field. Although I had departed with thirty days of supplies in my mount-out box, after the first Sunday my box was empty except for communion supplies. I was forced to face the obstacle of how I would minister to the Marines and Sailors without prepackaged materials.

It was also apparent that the men, by and large, were not attending the worship services I was conducting on Sundays. It seemed that I was running into wall after wall. When I visited the battery positions there were always those around with problems and concerns. Yet, on Sunday they were not to be found. Why? I soon realized that the men's spiritual journeys were at different levels. They did not need to see me at Sunday Worship Service. I realized God's priority was helping those in need, at the time of need. Therefore, I had to readjust what I thought God's priority was to what I actually found his priority to be.

## Bad Timing

Chaplain Robert Lewis

When 3rd Battalion, 5th Marines landed at Norton AFB in California on August 2nd, 1990, the one thing on everyone's mind after spending six months on the rock at Okinawa and Panama was the upcoming year or more at home. That same day Saddam Hussein chose to invade neighboring Kuwait and our hopes were put on standby. A few short months

of hasty preparation later we were on ships and outward bound as part of the 5th Marine Expeditionary Brigade.

During that short period of rapid-fire physical and mental transitioning, both the Marines and their families were challenged to go beyond previously accepted levels of faith and search more deeply for needed comfort and direction. One young couple who had expected to marry and begin a family characterized much of what I witnessed in the battalion as a whole.

Bill and Michelle had both been raised on Christian foundations, but for many years, neither had found the time nor motivation to pursue their own spiritual development. Now with redeployment and impending combat they were faced with more of a challenge than they wanted or expected and they needed somewhere to turn. In a very natural way they realized that they did have a means by which they could see beyond the pain and the inconvenience of the immediate situation and find some peace and stability. In search of renewed faith they often came in for counselling and began to attend services together at the camp chapel. They continued growing individually in relationship with God and in spiritual understanding as the task force got underway. They learned together what it means to *"trust in the Lord and thus have your paths directed."*

Bill and Michelle's sincere turning to their Father for help and comfort was answered in very tangible ways. Their young marriage survived the hazards of the deployment. Their first child was born during the separation healthy and whole. The new family was reunited after the war and many long months of transit and is now enjoying the long awaited time together. In every sector of the battalion there were similar turnings to God for help and findings of what He alone has to offer.

## **Answer to Prayer**

Chaplain Franklin Johnson

When the Chaplain Corps historians review and study the involvement that Chaplains and Religious Program Specialists had during this war, one interesting fact will come to light. Chaplains and RPs across the nation from various Marine Corps commands were sent to I Marine Expeditionary Force in Saudi Arabia with very little information about the area they would actually serve. Some found themselves with front line units, others in the rear echelon. In every case there were unique cir-



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*Chaplain James Fisher conducts a worship service for these Marines inside a Command Post (CP) tent.*

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cumstances that warranted this. Chaplains had to be very adept at integrating themselves into their command quickly so that they could hit the ground running and deliver the vital ministry needed in a combat environment.

I was one of those chaplains that found themselves in Southwest Asia on short notice. My invitation to deploy came from the I MEF Chaplain himself, Chaplain H. T. Hiers. After his phone call, it was only a matter of days until I would be winging my way to the "sandbox". To be perfectly honest, I had been asking, no, begging to deploy. So I got what I deserved. I do not regret the decision. You might even say it was an answer to prayer, although my wife might take issue with that.

My embarkation and flight were pretty normal and uneventful. Normal and uneventful being that we were delayed twenty-four hours at Cherry Point and that the in-flight movie was *Ghost*. Not a particularly good movie to show to people going to war.

A couple of important things happened as I flew through the friendly skies. I had an opportunity to meet and talk with a Lieutenant Colonel who had been the military liaison officer at the embassy in Kuwait prior to the invasion. We discussed the Muslim mind and theology as well as his perceptions of Iraq and their intentions. Second, I also met the assistant I MEF surgeon from Camp Lejeune. We talked about combat and the casualties that would occur. He had some significant insights into

combat stress and how chaplains, as part of the healing team, could minister to those casualties. I found these conversations to be providential. Later, circumstances would find me recalling those conversations and using the information to minister and educate Marines and sailors.

## Saying Goodbye Chaplain Daniel Hauschild

The days immediately following the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait were hectic for everyone in 1st Tank Battalion. Families were flooded with fears that their husbands and fathers would soon be at war. This fact left everyone uneasy and anxious. Many worried whether they could manage with their Marine and Sailor deployed. The unusual nature of this particular deployment made matters even more traumatic. There were even those who wondered if they could survive alone.

Our Family Readiness Ministry had been fine tuned during the prior year in anticipation of any deployment. The Contact Wives' phone tree was in place and a Unit Readiness Handbook was prepared for distribution at the pre-deployment brief. I am thankful that our Battalion Family Readiness Program was prepared and ready to implement.

It was also fortunate that I had been with the battalion a year prior to our deployment to Saudi Arabia. That time enabled me to build great rapport with the men and their families. My wife and the XO's wife were serving as coordinators. This fact assured me that someone was in place back home to monitor the Readiness Ministry after I left with the battalion for Saudi Arabia.

The Unit Handbook proved to be a tremendous guide for families during our seven months away. The Company Contact Wives had met in a session months before anyone ever realized that we would be deployed overseas. Because these ladies had given many of their ideas and inputs in the design of the handbook, they knew how to make the best use of it during the Battalion's absence. I believe it was providential that God guided our preparation in the Family Readiness area. To God alone be the glory.

One of the great moments during the preparation for deployment took place the last night at Twentynine Palms. I had said farewell to my family earlier in the evening. We all agreed that if I could say good-bye to them early I would be free to minister to others saying their final good-byes. The men were prepared to encounter war as soon as they

arrived in Saudi Arabia. Many families and friends were spending every last moment with their loved ones. The thought on their minds seemed to be, "Could this be our last moment together?" Surprisingly, the families and their Marines and Sailors were quite calm. I felt God had given everyone a sense that He was in charge and that He would manage everything.

After the families and friends departed, I mingled with everyone who seemed to be having a rough time coping with the situation. Their needs were so very great, I was thankful that I had the opportunity to spend time with them.

Throughout the night I rendered one-on-one ministry to anyone who seemed anxious or distraught. Many men asked for spiritual support such as Bibles, rosaries and tracts. My assistant walked at my side and passed out religious items. Some men broke down and cried in the dark of the night. Strangely, even in the midst of those emotions the men seemed at peace.

## Mission Field Chaplain Kim Evans

As a civilian pastor of churches in Georgia, Kentucky, and Indiana, I was blessed with the responsibility of providing pastoral care to congregations ranging in size from thirty to two hundred members. At my present assignment, there are over one thousand service members for which I am responsible. Which doesn't include spouses, children, Moms and Dads, whom I also assist. It is certainly the largest congregation I have ever had. The possibilities are also the most exciting I have ever encountered. Even so, some ask, "Can the battlefield be a mission field?"

As I reflect on the events which took place during our deployment to Southwest Asia, I remember it as a time of great stress, anxiety, and change. It was also a time of growth, faith, and expectation. Many of us experienced both sides of this emotional/spiritual double-edged sword. There are, obviously, many sad stories. Yet, there are also some very positive stories to tell.

Much of the stress, I think, was brought on by the rigors of the endless training in the desert. There was stress from the demands placed on us and, more importantly, by the demands we placed on ourselves. We all sensed a compelling need to be better prepared and more professional than we had ever been in our lives ... chaplains included.

Perhaps the stress was also a result of the needs and unresolved issues left behind at home with family and friends. Between the training evolutions, there was boredom and plenty of time to think. We remembered those things we always wished we had done or said, but had somehow never found the time. There were also those things we regretted doing or saying and now could not change.

The anxiety, coupled with fear, bred doubt and sometimes threatened to overtake us. I remember numerous occasions on which I was approached by young sailors and Marines and sincerely asked the hardest questions of life. "Is there ever really a time when it's okay to take another human life?", "What about the sixth commandment, 'Thou shalt not kill', Chaplain?" "What will happen to me if I die?", and, "What will happen to my family?". We talked about the differences between murder and the defense of freedom. We talked about death and the saving grace of Jesus Christ which brings eternal life and hope. We talked about losses, grief, and the comforting peace of a loving Savior. We struggled through these questions together.

The most distressing thing for many was the factor of change. Everything was constantly in a state of flux. The 'word' changed daily, sometimes hourly. There were sometimes three or four staff meetings in the same day to pass 'new scoop'. Flexibility was the name of the game, or as the Marines defined it - Semper Gumby (Always Flexible). We often felt



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*Cammie-net overhead provides some protection against the intense desert sun and heat as Chaplain Stanley Scott leads worship.*

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helpless and out of control. These feelings only served to add to our fears, our anxieties about the unknown, and the grief that all change brings.

Thanks be to God, the one constant throughout was the hope brought to us through God's presence. That presence of divine peace and security never changed. Furthermore, we, as individuals, were changed. We found ourselves being transformed. In the midst of our fears, anxieties, and rapidly changing environment, we found a common sense of resolve. A great many found a common sense of faith. We grew together, not only as military personnel with a common mission, but as human beings facing their own mortality.

## A Matter of Perspective

Chaplain Mark Gefaller

Sometimes it's all a matter of perspective. 3rd Battalion, 7th Marines had endured a difficult deployment since embarking from Twentynine Palms the first week in May. They had adopted the handle "3/7 - The World Tour" in honor of their redeployment, from extended on-station in Okinawa to Operation Desert Shield/Storm in Southwest Asia. Prior to this their handle had been "3/7 the U.D.P. from Hell", partly due to the fact that anytime they began an exercise or operation it always seemed to rain. Not a light sprinkle, but a miserable, soaking rain. Many had begun to say with tongue in cheek that at least they wouldn't be wet any longer. After all we would be in the desert.

We arrived at Al-Jubail on an early morning of January and were greeted by a cold rain. As a matter of fact the entire month of January was the wettest weather in years. Standing on the tarmac awaiting our transportation, large white buses with bright orange and blue stripes, to take us to the Division Support Area was a miserable experience. Several people came up to me in jest and asked me to do something about this weather. Several who were somewhat downcast by what they perceived to be continued misfortune said to me, "Chaplain, do you think that this is a sign of things to come?"

"Yes, I do!" I responded, "God uses the rain to water the earth and bring forth new life and growth. I'm sure its a sign and a good one, too!" A Gunnery Sergeant next to him screwed up his face and looked at me hard for a moment. "You know, Padre," he said, "I've never thought of it

that way before. I like your way of looking at things. You stick with me and keep that God talk coming!"

Sometimes it's all a matter of perspective.

## The Sopka

Chaplain Marvin McClain

Having been in Saudi Arabia for more than four months, my RP and I were 'old-timers' when a brand new LTJG chaplain, fresh out of Chaplain's School, joined one of the battalions in my regiment. Following a training session on combat ministry in the desert, we gave him a ride to his position at the battalion logistic train.

Just before we got to his camp, the road disappeared into deep muddy ruts in what had been a dry lake bed, no longer dry due to seasonal rains. The new chaplain began directing us around the lake since it was impassable while so wet. Exchanging only a brief glance, the RP shifted our hummer into high-lock and low gear while I zipped up my door window. Then, as the LTJG finished his explanation of why we must drive around the lake, we floored the accelerator and the hummer jumped into the mud. The chaplain's face went white as mud flew over the windshield and he began to recite the "Our Father" aloud.

In less than a minute we were on the other side of the lake demonstrating two valuable lessons. First, hummers can do anything. Second, never underestimate the people you work with. Both lessons will carry him a long way in the Corps.

## Little Miracles

Chaplain Daniel Hauschild

Our arrival at the airport in Saudi Arabia was historic. The moment offered a unique opportunity for ministry. It was early in the morning and everyone was very exhausted. Despite our fatigue we left the airplane in an alert posture because of possible attack. While we waited along the side of the runway I remember thinking about the hot Arabian sun that would greet us all in the morning. God had granted me plenty of rest on the flight over so I was fresh and felt a burst of new energy. This God-given energy enabled me to spend valuable time with the servicemen.

My relationships with the servicemen were deepened during those waiting hours at the airport. Throughout the early morning hours I prayed quietly that God would enable all of us to adjust to the hot Arabian sun. Because the airport terminal doors were locked, we were forced to wait outside with no shade or protection. Just after daybreak the hot desert breeze promised a torrid day ahead. Again I prayed to God and asked that He give us endurance for the heat of the day. Then a miracle happened. The doors to the terminal opened and we were able to wait inside rather than in the sun. Just a little thing like that made me feel that God was watching out for us. Throughout our entire time in Saudi Arabia we would all grow to appreciate the little miracles that God worked to make our lives more tolerable.

The warehouse living conditions were extremely spartan. Saudi Arabian heat and humidity from the Persian Gulf made life unbearable. Throughout the eight day period on the coast we lived in a non-air conditioned building. On top of this the men sensed that they were sitting ducks if Iraq decided to attack with SCUD missiles (we did not know until later how inaccurate those missiles were).

Ministry potential was heightened because the men were left with little to do but wait around. I offered company level Divine Worship Services, (later known as Fellowships so we would not offend the Saudis), and conducted daily Bible studies on pertinent issues the men were dealing with. It is noteworthy that the Old Testament book of Psalms proved to be a favorite with the men (especially Psalm 91).

During those eight days my lay readers were a big help. They brought men with them to service and study fellowships, distributed religious materials and directed those in need to me for one-on-one counseling. The period in the warehouse also gave my lay readers a chance to receive on-the-job training with close daily supervision. The spiritual team building which occurred between me and my lay readers was setting the ground work for effective ministry.

## **Mission to Ninevah**

Chaplain Darryl Person

*"Out of the depths of Sheol I cried,"* were the words of Jonah while he was in the belly of a great fish. Landing at Dhahran International Airport, I thought of these words. For when the cabin door opened and the searing heat greeted me, I thought I was in Hell. I desperately longed to

be back in the environs of the "good ole' USA." Walking a half mile in full battle gear in one hundred twenty degree heat, I looked at the faces of my troops and I saw anxiety yet courage. I saw loneliness yet companionship. I saw discomfort yet endurance. Although we were in a predicament that we wished we were not in, we held firm to our mission, our country and to our God. I have never been to Ninevah, but if Ninevah was like Dhahran then I can certainly understand Jonah's reluctance.

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*Chaplain Joseph Matoush leads worship on location in the sand. A Humvee, a mount-out box and the Chaplain field kit provide the necessary ingredients.*

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## **Marine Morale**

Chaplain Marvin McClain

Much was made of Commandant Al Gray's ill-timed pronouncement that the Marines in Saudi Arabia did not and would not have a morale problem – because *he said they wouldn't*. But in a strange way, his words became a self-fulfilling prophecy. The Marines adopted a "We'll show that \_\_\_!" attitude. This was brought home to me on Christmas Eve out in the desert. I had arranged for the First Marine Division Band to come to our position to give a Christmas concert to the troops. Introducing a particular number, the band leader observed that morale in the desert was exceptionally high. He asked rhetorically, "And do you know why morale is so high?" Before he could continue, the whole battery

shouted in unison, "Because the Commandant said so!" I couldn't have been prouder of those guys.

## **The Tie That Binds** Chaplain Drew Tomberlin

One of the amazing things that occurred during that time was the bonding that took place. We were all thousands of miles from home missing our families, friends and loved ones, yet we were together enduring the same pain and hardships. It was through our daily communion that we began to care for and support each other. It was a wonderful feeling when I realized that a support group had developed. We were no longer lonely because we had each other, but more importantly we were bound together by the 'tie that binds' - God's love.

Another observation that I made was that those who had a relationship with God before the deployment, found their relationship deepened through the deployment. Those who did not experience a new and genuine relationship with God were unable to enjoy His peace and fulfillment. Instead their relationship was marked by frustration. I found it rather sad that some were never able to surrender, therefore they never received the precious gifts of love and peace which God had promised.

Since we have returned from Saudi Arabia I have reflected on my experience. Although there were times when it was a physical hardship, I wouldn't trade the experience for anything. Emotionally and spiritually it was the greatest experience of my life. I have the gifts and abilities to serve God and to minister to God's people. When I put my faith into action and avoid giving lip service, God will give me the strength to endure and overcome my fears and uncertainties. Finally I experienced the joy, strength and comfort that is found in the fellowship of believers, remembering that I am weak but God is strong. Together the members of 3rd Battalion, 11th Marines and I survived and flourished throughout Operation Desert Shield/Storm.

## **Wilderness Temptation** Chaplain James Fisher

As the sun beat down upon the shoulders of the Marines I asked myself a question. Of all the places to be tempted why was Jesus taken

into the desert wilderness? I certainly saw nothing worthy of temptation in the vast wasteland of Saudi Arabia. Alcohol wasn't allowed, women wore black robes and facial veils and liberty was not a policy for Marines. The endless horizon of brown sand, blue sky and an occasional oasis drove home the fact that there was, alas, nothing to tempt us.

I figured that if Jesus walked into a wilderness like ours, his temptation experience couldn't have been too tough. If I were the Holy Spirit, and doing the leading, I would have taken Jesus straight to Olongapo or New York City. Plenty of temptations to be found there!

But as the days passed, a new appreciation for Jesus' temptation began to dawn on me. It's not those things from the outside that tempt us but rather those demons which lurk within. Temptation starts inside our heart and soul and only then gives seed to outward appearances.

This became an interesting phenomenon out in the Saudi wilderness. For the first time in most of our lives there were no outward distractions or temptations. No opportunity for drug-induced hazy escapes, no warm arms to lay in for an evening, no fast cars to make us feel powerful, no secure families in which to envelope ourselves. For the first time in our lives we came face to face with ourselves ... and many didn't much care for the company. Having realized our weaknesses, our pettiness, our need for other people ... we realized our need for God.

Only then did the temptation of Jesus begin to make sense. He, too, had to face his inner demons and desires. And having faced them and overcome them we read in Luke 4:14 that he left the desert in the "power of the Holy Spirit." He overcame. He was the victor. And yet the scriptures show us that the battles continued for Christ.

For many of the Sailors and Marines of First Marine Division, it was not Saddam Hussein, but evil incarnate, that challenged us and changed our lives. The major battles we fought were when we faced the inner demons of turmoil, fear, guilt, inadequacy and a legion of other struggles. We faced ourselves and with God's strength we emerged from Saudi Arabia and Kuwait having discovered his power in our lives. We came forth as victors.

Still, the war is not complete. The lessons we learned were valuable. We now need the skills we learned more than ever. Having failed once, our enemy seeks a new and more opportune time in which to ambush us.

## Spiritual Hunger

Chaplain Franklin Johnson

I arrived at the Al Jubail airfield in the middle of night. It was winter. The first three days brought incessant rain and penetrating cold wind. The picture implanted in my mind by CNN, was that this place was hot and arid. Not in January!

The next day, I found myself in a humvee bouncing down the road to the Division Support Activity. I was to join the 1st Marine Regiment as Regimental Chaplain. My fellow chaplains in Task Force Papa Bear were very capable and professional. They were doing a great job in their battalions. My first task was to unify us into a cooperative team for ministering to each other and our respective units. In a very short time we developed a close comradery.

The ministry was phenomenal. I have been a chaplain for ten years. Eight of those ten have been spent ministering to Marines. I have now served with every Division of the Marine Corps. I realized just how special this ministry would be as I held my first service for 3rd Battalion,



*Chaplain Jerome Dillon celebrates Mass with the crew members of a Light Armored Vehicle*

9th Marines (3/9). Over 150 men showed up in the cold, drizzling rain to worship God. Over the next few weeks it was not unusual for large crowds to gather for worship regardless of the inclement weather. This was a sign that God was at work in their hearts. They were spiritually hungry.

Was there "foxhole religion"? Yes. But there were also many sincere spiritual decisions made. I'm convinced that there was a liberation that occurred in the lives of many of these Marines and sailors that would not have happened otherwise. It changed their perspective on life and the things of eternal value.



# Preparation for Battle

My soul waits for the Lord  
more than watchmen wait for the morning  
more than watchmen wait for the morning.

Psalm 130:6

## Desert Road Musings

Chaplain James Fisher

*"Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, 'Go south to the road, the Desert Road, that goes from Jerusalem to Gaza.' "*

The Desert is cool now. Even the Arabian Peninsula has a winter season. During the evening the temperature can plummet into the 30's. The hottest time of day will still rise into the 90's. But the two dominant colors of the desert remain in contrast. Blue skies and khaki sand.

I am a Covenant chaplain and the eastern province of an ageless land is my parish. My desert road is a major highway that parallels the shores of the Persian Gulf. Beginning in the north, near the Kuwait border it ends at a small island kingdom in the South. I am assigned to the 9th Communication Battalion, the Marine equivalent of AT&T. While other Marine units may be assigned to one general location, 9th Comm units are comprised of 5 to 10 member squads spread throughout the sands providing vital links in the military communication chain.

*"The Spirit told Philip, 'Go to that chariot and stay near it.' "*

I am reminded of the eunuch's chariot every time I rattle along a washboard trail in this empty, desolate land. I wonder if Philip's internal organs were likewise rearranged on that fateful ride. How in the world could they read scripture bouncing along like I am? Instead of a two-wheeled cart, today's modern chariot is called a "humvee" (High Mobility Multi-Wheeled Vehicle or HMMWV) an up-dated, up-powered, up-graded, wide-wheeled version of the familiar Jeep. It is a tough, dependable four-wheel drive machine that can go anywhere. The ride is still first century.

*"So he started out, and on his way he met an Ethiopian eunuch ..."*

It is no longer Philip who is making tracks through the sand. It is someone's child, someone's sibling, a husband or wife, a good friend who trudges across the deep boot-swallowing sands in a Marine uniform as the close of the day develops into the multi-colored glow of the evening. He or she flops tiredly under the semi-privacy of the camou-

flaged netting. These huge nets cover our tents, tanks, and Humvees and break their silhouettes in order to better blend them into the surrounding terrain. Are we really invisible?

The usual rumors are discussed as to when we will return home. I'm invited to join a betting pool regarding the date. I decline, stating that I only bet on sure things, like the California State Lottery.

*"The eunuch asked Philip, 'Tell me, please, who is the prophet talking about, himself or someone else?' Then Philip began with that very passage of scripture and told him the good news about Jesus."*

What exactly does a Navy Chaplain do? My official mission statement calls me to be a special advisor to the Commanding Officer in matters of the spiritual and moral welfare of his troops. Specifically, I visit each occupied site and provide opportunities for worship, bible study, and counseling and act as a command representative. But, ultimately, I am here because I am a representative of Immanuel.

Somebody soon asks the inevitable question, "Chaplain why are you here? You don't have to be in this dust and heat and wind with us!" I smile. I feel like Philip with the eunuch. This is the opportunity of Divine Encounter. I respond with the explanation, "Think about it. If I, your imperfect chaplain, am willing to be here with you, uncomfortable and sweaty, where do you suppose is Jesus?"

I am here because I am a representative of Immanuel, God with us. My simple presence is a visible reminder that the Immanuel, Jesus Christ, is more than willing to be with each Marine or Sailor whatever he is doing. Regardless of desert hardships nothing is so difficult that it can keep Jesus away from those who need His support. Regardless of distance from our loved ones, the Lover of Souls vows to remain by our sides. Although it may be eight days between showers, the blood of the Lamb continues to cleanse the grime of sin. In a world of threat and unknown, our Guide still promises hope and salvation. These are trying times in the desert.

Immanuel.

*"The spirit of the Lord suddenly took Philip away and the eunuch went on his way rejoicing. Philip, however, appeared at Azotus and traveled about, preaching the Gospel in all the towns until he reached Caesarea."*

The sun cracks the horizon. Another routine dawn. Today I will visit the FARP (Forward Air Refueling Point). As I pack my MOPP Suit (Mission Oriented Protective Posture Against Chemicals) and fill up my canteens from the potable water tank I wonder, "who is praying for us? Will they remember today?" I feel secure in the fact that there are many small groups scattered across the states in prayer for us. That knowledge is what keeps me going.

As I swing my "alice pack" into the back of a waiting humvee I smile as I reflect on one final musing. Philip must have had one heck of a group of believers praying for him!

And then we are gone again.



*Some of the Task Force Ripper Chaplains (7th Marines):*

*(L to R) Drew Tomberlin, Darryl Person, Joseph Matoush, Doyle Dunn, Daniel Hauschild*

## More Than What You See

Chaplain Joseph Matoush

Desert Shield was a reality and we were not going to be going home soon. Life in the desert was beginning to fall into place and be accepted by most of us. It was a major effort to move between as many as seven battalions, and several smaller units each week to conduct services and be able to pray and talk together. But there were moments that made me realize that a purpose was being served here bigger than I could understand.

People were being touched individually. The numbers at the services were really not an indicator of the faith that was being nurtured and sustained throughout each unit. The most surprising truth for me was that my own faith and trust in God's ability to uphold me was also tested time and time again. The sin of pride reared its ugly head often, when after an hour or more of bouncing across the trackless desert, I would find only one or two Marines waiting to worship. Why was I here and who really cared?

I was ministered to by many individuals who approached me and lifted my spirits and reaffirmed my faith that God's Word does indeed reveal itself in many different ways. After a week of traveling miles in searing heat, wondering if I accomplished anything at all, a Marine or sailor would stop me or drop by and let me know that he appreciated the time I had taken to stop where he was and share with him the hope and promise of God's love. These men were for me messengers from God,



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*Chaplain Stanley Scott, Division Chaplain, in his office tent at the Division Support Activity (DSA).*

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sustaining me in my work and reminding me that often we do not see God at work in those things that become routine.

## Who Am I?

Chaplain Alfred Clark

There were many discussions early in Operation Desert Shield about the requirements placed on chaplains. These decisions were made originally at the highest levels of leadership with little, if any, input from chaplains themselves. Issues such as having wine in country and wearing the Christian Chaplain collar device were handed to us without discussion.

We made it clear that wine was essential for meeting the religious needs of large numbers of Christians in country. We got wine. Some chaplains were irate at the thought of blackening their gold crosses to avoid offending the Arabs they encountered. Several times when called to meetings in Riyadh or other populated areas with Arab leadership, I wore rank insignia only. I learned something significant about who I am as a result of those requirements.

What happens to me when major things change in my life? Who am I if my wife dies and I am left alone? Who is Fred Clark without his companion? Who am I if my sons were taken suddenly? Who or what would I be if I lost my home, or my car, or the identity of a military uniform to wear? I'll tell you. I would still be Fred Clark.

When I take off my cross, I do not cease to be a minister. When I hang up my uniform I am still called to ministry. To blacken my collar device or remove it does not change who I am or what I do. I am a chaplain. I am that on the inside. My conduct does not change. People still recognize me by my actions and attitudes whether I have a cross on my collar or not.

We are servant-leaders. Committed to one call, faithful to our God, servants to his people, and leaders of the flock.

## Foot Washing

Chaplain Doyle Dunn

Jesus Christ, during an evening with his disciples, insisted that he would wash their feet. At first, Simon Peter, one of those disciples,

refused to allow it. Washing feet was a duty of the servant. The Son of God was much too important to do a servant's job. Jesus washed Peter's feet anyway. It was a wonderful demonstration of humility, equality, and leadership through service.

I decided to tackle the subject of servanthood one night during our Bible study. The story of Jesus washing the disciples' feet would be my central focus. The background was easy to relate. We, too, were living every day in the raw desert. Our uniforms were filled with dust and sand. Our feet were usually hot, dirty, and (honestly) stunk. Even our boots were stripped down to plain leather by the blasting effect of the sand.

My idea was to get the men gathered in a circle, discuss the story of Jesus washing the disciples' feet, then choose the most junior-ranking man present and act out this event. One simple twist. Rather than wash his feet, I would polish his boots. Shiny black boots are important to Marines. It would be a living illustration. Little did I suspect the surprise awaiting me.

As Bible study began, we had about an equal number of enlisted Marines and officers present, including the Commanding Officer, LtCol Frank Kebelman. I wasn't sure how they would react to my actions.

After reading and discussing the scripture story I looked around the circle. I found my unsuspecting "volunteer". A Lance Corporal. The only one in the group. I asked him to sit on a chair in the center of our circle. Hesitantly, he moved.

I pulled out my can of boot polish, a couple of cloths, and a shoe brush. Explaining what I was about to do, I had him place his feet, boots still laced, on an MRE box. As I knelt down in front of him and opened the polish, I heard some movement. I looked over and found LtCol Kebelman kneeling beside me. He quietly took one of the cloths and began polishing that Marines' boots.

Our Battalion Commander – polishing the boots of a young Lance Corporal? Unheard of! That Lance Corporal was speechless. His eyes were wide as saucers with surprise.

I know that the polish we put on his boots didn't last long in the sand. I guarantee, though, that if you ask Lance Corporal Aroyo, he can give you every detail about that lesson. He understands, as do the other Marines and officers in the tent that night, what Jesus meant when he said, "*The least shall be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.*"



*Marines take time out for physical exercise and a bit of "beach volleyball".*

## Home Support

Chaplain Daniel Hauschild

The conditions found upon arrival in the desert sands of Northeastern Saudi Arabia included dust storms, heat and barren wasteland. Not exactly a place where anyone would desire to live. Coupled with these terrible conditions was the threat of an Iraqi invasion. The invasion was thought to be eminent. The first thing that everyone did when they arrived in the desert was dig a fighting position (fox hole). Digging had to be done in the early morning and evening to avoid the sun and darkness. Until fighting holes were in place everyone was anxious. While the men had been well trained in the Mohave Desert near Twentynine Palms, the Saudi Arabian Desert was unique and much more bleak.

The line companies of our battalion were located several miles away from my location. I made visitation a top priority during this period. I distinctly remember the heat rashes I acquired as I was walking from tank to tank visiting with each tank crew. Many times at the close of a

visit the crew would request a prayer service. These smaller services provided a more intimate setting for the crew members. The men requested special prayers for courage and strength to face the grave situation at hand. It was an inspiration to be in the role of Chaplain during those early days in the desert sands. The fact that the spiritual needs of the men were so very great enabled me to be energized for action.

My first experience in the desert was inside a stone quarry south of a cement factory, referred to by everyone as the "Emerald City" (from the movie "The Wizard of Oz"). The following excerpts are from a letter I wrote to a church friend in Colorado summarizing how I felt:

"Life over here in Saudi Arabia is strenuous; this is the hardest physical test of my life."

"Can't go into much detail but I may be here a long time."

"Ministry is great and I have been able to lead many Marines and sailors in spiritual growth." What joy this has brought me.

"Living conditions are spartan and life in the field is heat, humidity, snakes and scorpions. Dug my own fox hole for shelter in case of Iraqi attack. I pray each night, "Now I lay me in this pit (fox hole); I pray the Lord I don't get bit".

"Please pray for all of us over here. The men love to know that people back home are praying for them. Please write letters to 'any Marine or Sailor'. Holiday cards would give everyone a big boost."

This letter proved to be a great blessing for the entire battalion. Hundreds of Holiday greeting cards and letters were sent to our Marines and Sailors in response. I am thankful for the beautiful support our battalion received from the people in the US.

## **Gulf Immersion**

Chaplain Stanley Scott

Soon after our arrival, there came a flood of requests for Christian baptisms. These resulted primarily from the weekly worship and the evening gospel fellowships.

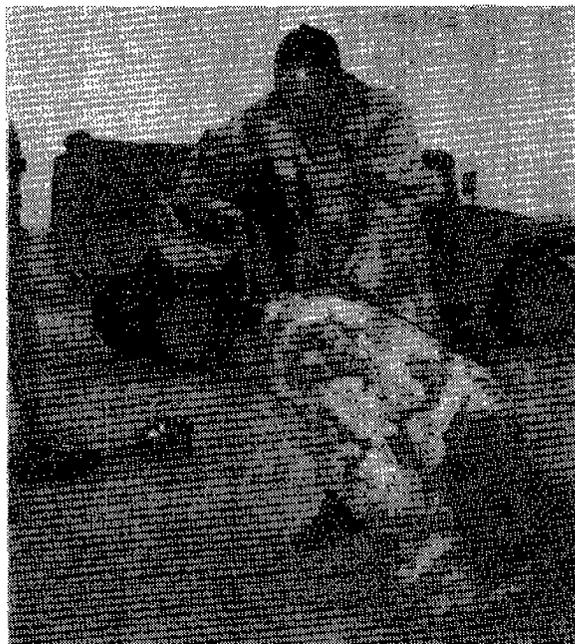
We identified a location at Manifah Bay near the Light Armored Infantry Battalion logistic train. There was certainly sufficient security for the event. A bus was obtained through the Division Motor Transport

office and we headed north on the Pipeline Road. It was a long drive. We picked up the candidates, friends and other worshippers along the way.

Having gone up earlier to examine the area, I knew that I would need the help of another chaplain. Chaplain Paschal Dawson and I escorted the candidates into the water. It was shallow (hip deep) for up to one hundred yards into the Gulf. That day we baptized thirteen people in a most meaningful worship experience in the heart of Southwest Asia.

A couple of months later, I was traveling around the area of operation on the south side of the Kuwait border. At the Division Support Area, there was a small contingency of logistics and supply personnel. Their job was to keep the flow of daily hot chow going to the troops on the front line. Since there were only about two hundred people working there, there was no chaplain assigned for this unit.

When I entered the dining tent, much to my surprise, there were signs up everywhere for church services, Bible studies, and even choir rehearsal. It seems that one of the Marines that had been baptized earlier had seen the need and had been holding lay reader services in the absence of a chaplain.



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*Chaplain James  
Fisher baptizes in an  
arid desert environ-  
ment with water  
from his helmet.*

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Any chaplain would have been proud to have a program so well done and with such a great response. It did my heart good to see this young Christian take hold and be God's man where he had been placed.

## Divine Services

Chaplain Kim Evans

In the two months that preceded the ground assault, attendance in divine services, Protestant and Catholic alike, exceeded anything I anticipated. Some viewed this phenomena with incredulity, making statements such as, "They don't really mean it, Chaplain. They're just scared to die!" These skeptics were encouraged to recall Jesus' parable about the workers in the vineyard, in which he concluded, "... those who are last shall be first, and those who are first shall be last." If you'll allow my paraphrase, "It's not nearly so important *when* you come. It's the fact that you come at all."

Nonetheless, attendance was high. Some who were spiritually faithful came to affirm their faith and continue to walk as examples of the Christian witness. Some who had been spiritually inactive came to renew their faith. Others simply came seeking, and through their seeking, embraced a personal relationship with Jesus Christ for the first time in their lives.

It had become our practice to take a little time at the end of each service to allow those who wished to share their feelings. During this 'sharing time', an invitation to place their faith in Christ was extended. Many in our battalion made public professions of faith in Christ and were baptized, others made recommitments of their lives to Christ. God was blessing us with good old-fashioned revival.

## Singing Corpsmen

Chaplain Mark Gefaller

For many of the Marines and Sailors from Twentynine Palms, the desert was a familiar environment. The challenge came not from being in the desert but from living in this hostile environment twenty four hours a day, month after month without relief.

In meeting this challenge many options presented themselves. Some turned their attention to the capture and domestication of small desert

life. Others preferred to sit in their fighting holes and read novels. Most gathered in the evenings to watch the light show from the bombing runs and discuss the news or speculate on the approaching ground offensive. Many enjoyed regular Scripture study and Worship.

One unexpected and particularly appealing means of meeting the difficulties of life in the Arabian desert, was a small group of men who spent their evenings laughing and singing together. It was not until they had been singing for nearly two weeks that I became aware of them. This group of twelve men, mostly corpsmen, called themselves the BAS Gospel Choir. They began by singing the "Star Spangled Banner" together each morning and evening at a small daily colors ceremony, which utilized a miniature American Flag attached to a tent pole by a string and was raised and lowered by the BAS Mascot – a small Homer Simpson doll. To encourage this warm and spontaneous group, I was able to provide several soft cover songbooks filled with beautiful worship hymns from which they could sing. Every evening beneath God's beautiful starry canvas the choir would sit and sing until they fell asleep. I would often try to find myself in the area several nights each week. What a message of joy they shared.

How beautiful it was to sit beneath the shining sky watching camels and sheep graze nearby, silhouetted against the stars and listen to the music of faith. It was not hard to imagine Abraham, Joseph, Moses, the magi, or Jesus beneath the same star sprinkled heaven and know there is a God.

The anthem which marks this group in my mind more than any other, and which this ecumenical group loved to sing night after night, was the spiritual "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot." It was the one everyone knew and could sing together, choir and community, for it was the song which built a true sense of community among all the Marines and Sailors assembled. A community of faith in the wilderness. A sincere expression of unity which was shared, strengthened, and solidified beneath the blackened skies and oil rain of Kuwait. A unity which was attested in memory of a fallen comrade, well loved, whom our Lord welcomed home upon the blazing oil fields of Kuwait.

How rich and healing is the music of faith. How beautiful the music of hope and love. "*Swing low, sweet chariot, comin' for to carry me home.*"

## R. U. T. H.

Chaplain Marvin McClain

I never really understood the feelings old soldiers exhibited for the now obsolete 'Jeep' until I lived a while in the Saudi desert. We had sand colored cammies, extra canteens, and satellite navigation readers, but our best friend in the desert was the HMMWV (Hummer).

It didn't take long to find it necessary to give our hummer an appropriate name. In true military spirit, I devised the acronym RUTH for our hummer. RUTH stands for Religious Utilization Transport Hummer. Ruth fits the HMMWV well because, in truth, she went where we went, our people were her people, and our God was her God.

RP1 Mike Hutchins and I tended to baby RUTH, a practice that was encouraged by the mechanics in our motor pool. They liked the fact that we appreciated an outstanding vehicle, evidenced by their turning a blind eye to the letters 'R.U.T.H.' stenciled on her dash.

We learned how much they appreciated our care of RUTH when her power steering unit developed a leak. It would take weeks to order and receive another unit. That meant RUTH would be dead-lined and our Command Religious Program (CRP) would be severely hampered. How-



*The "Chapel of the Shifting Sand" at 1st CEB with worship led by Chaplain Tom Hiers (I MEF Chaplain) and Battalion Chaplain, Doyle Dunn.*

ever, there was another hummer in the shop with repairs needed due to neglected maintenance. By evening, RUTH was resurrected with a new power steering unit. I wasn't sure how they had found one so quickly until later at the evening staff meeting.

The Motor Transport Officer reported that the other dead-lined vehicle had been repaired but in doing a final inspection, the mechanics had discovered that it had 'a leaky power steering unit' and would be dead for another week or so until a replacement part could be shipped from the states. One can't stress enough the importance of good first-echelon maintenance to the CRP

## Multiplication

Chaplain Kim Evans

Just before the ground war, I arranged for coverage in my battalion by the Roman Catholic chaplain from 3rd Battalion, 9th Marines. I agreed to provide Protestant services for his unit while he conducted Mass at mine.

My first Protestant service at 3/9 took place on Ash Wednesday, the beginning of the Lenten season. Southern Baptists usually don't observe Lent, the season based on the principles of penitence and self-sacrifice, but many Protestant faith groups do. When I arrived for the service, there was already a large crowd gathered. As we worshiped together, we sang praises, prayed, and shared from the Bible. In keeping with the seasonal theme, we talked about repentance and God's redeeming grace. At the conclusion of the service, six men made professions of faith. Not being prepared for a baptismal service and needing to get back to my own battalion for another scheduled service, I promised I would baptize them when I returned the next Sunday.

The next week, at the end of the service, I asked the candidates to come forward for baptism. To my amazement, not six, but twelve men came forward. After giving them a chance to describe their decision to trust Christ and publicly state their faith, all twelve were baptized into the family of God.

## Worship in the Marketplace

Chaplain Doyle Dunn

Worship services were held virtually anywhere we could find a place to sit or stand. My first worship service in the Marine Corps took place two days after we arrived in Saudi Arabia. We stood in the shade of a warehouse at 0800 in the morning by the seaport of Al Jubail. The temperature was already nearing 100 degrees. There were no chairs, or even boxes, on which to sit. So we stood on the blacktop pavement, as close to the shade of the building as possible, and worshiped.

When we moved to the sand a week later, I found myself holding services in dug-out revetments beside bulldozers with two or three Marines at a time. Sometimes it would be in front of a Hummer under a small cammie net, with the hood or tailgate of the vehicle serving as an altar.

Within a month or so, my Commanding Officer directed that a cammie net be stretched in the center of camp for use strictly as our battalion chapel. Our carpenters got their hands on some two-by-four lumber and made a few rugged benches for seats and a simple wood altar for me. We dubbed that area the, "Chapel of the Shifting Sand."

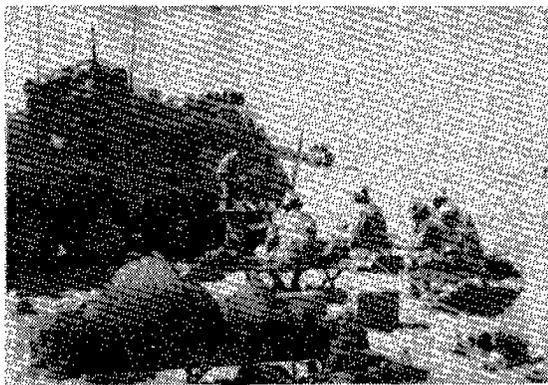
From that day on, we were never without the Chapel of the Shifting Sand. We always found a way to carry the benches and altar on a five-ton truck or CUC-V pickup. In November, it was inside a General Purpose tent with a plywood floor and electric lights powered by a diesel generator. In January it was in the mess tent. In February, inside the Combat Operations Center tent. Days before the ground assault, the Chapel of the Shifting Sand was the tailgate of my Hummer again. On our last Sunday in country, the last week before Easter, it was a large (former) hand grenade pit, which had been cleared and deserted as all our gear was packed and shipped home.

The Chapel of the Shifting Sand was, I suppose, no comparison to Moses' Tabernacle with the Holy of Holies and the Ark of the Covenant. For us, though, it became a special place where men facing war put their faith in Jesus Christ as their Savior. A place where men prayed and received peace of mind and solace. A place where fears were forgotten for a while and joy bubbled up from dry ground. It was a place where my own faith was deepened, reaffirmed, and in some ways, redefined.

It was in the Chapel of the Shifting Sand that I remembered a statement by George McLeod of Iona Community Church of Scotland:

*I simply argue that the cross be raised again  
at the center of the marketplace  
as well as on the steeple of the church.  
I am rediscovering the claim that  
Jesus was not crucified in a cathedral between two candles  
but on a cross between two thieves;  
on the town garbage heap  
at a crossroad so cosmopolitan that they had to write his title  
in Latin and Hebrew and in Greek;  
at the kind of place where cynics talk smut  
and thieves curse and soldiers gamble.  
Because that is where he died  
and what he died about,  
that is where Christians ought to be  
and Christianity ought to be about.*

Today I am glad that I don't have to worship in the desert of Southwest Asia, but I pray that God will never let me lose the impact of the Chapel of the Shifting Sand and worshipping at ground level wherever I happen to be.



*Worship in the Marine's marketplace: where they live.*

## Women Marines

### Chaplain Stanley Scott

Among the women Marines who arrived in Southwest Asia, one active Christian, Lance Corporal Lisa Prather, was assigned to my staff section. Normally a playing member of the Division Band, she was tasked to support our Leading Petty Officer in administrative duties. Within two weeks she had read all the manuals and directives, recognized the Chaplain's supply issue point, and developed a system of resupply. Basically she took over the entire logistics section of the Division Chaplain's Office.

Later, during the Desert Storm phase, she was assigned to the perimeter security force where she stood twelve hour watches in the fighting positions. During her off-duty hours, she continued to run the field resupply point for us and did an outstanding job.

Not only were women an intricate part of the combat team, but our female chaplains also demonstrated a superior level of excellence in Southwest Asia. In the pre-ground assault phase, Task Force Troy, a small diversionary force, was located just south of the Kuwait border trying to give the impression that they were a big threat to the Iraqis. The size of their unit did not warrant an assigned chaplain and they were too far from other Division units to permit cross coverage by other chaplains.

I made arrangements for the nearby logistic support unit to provide a chaplain for them just prior to the ground offensive. The time, place, transportation, and other arrangements were completed.

Finally, the chaplain arrived at Task Force Troy. With a shout to the First Sergeant, "The Chaplain's here!" out stepped Chaplain Helen Spalding with flack jacket, gas mask, helmet, and 782 gear. She was well received during her time of ministry there. So well, in fact, they wanted to keep her with them during the ground assault. We were glad she was there to cover and take care of all God's people when and where there was a need.

## Remembrance

### Chaplain Jerome Dillon

In January, the 1st Light Armored Infantry Battalion (LAI) was on its way to the western border of Kuwait when the air war started. The

Marines were relieved that it had finally commenced. Now they would be going home soon. They were confident it would be short but quite possibly bloody. It was during this phase that 1st LAI Battalion received its combat casualties.

Three Marines were killed in a tragic LAV accident in the very early hours of January 25th. One LAV-25 ran into the rear of another. A very successful artillery raid of the previous night had ended on a very sad note.

I conducted a brief memorial service for the three Marines at the base site of the LAI Battalion, "B" Co. Later, I was able to speak with the Corpsmen who had worked at reviving the Marines.

On January 29-30, "D" Co of 1st LAI Battalion engaged in a battle with Iraqi forces in Khafji. During this battle, two LAVs were destroyed by missiles. Eleven Marines were killed. It was at a later time, during a Battalion stand-down that I conducted a memorial service for all fourteen Marines killed up till that point.

The theme of my reflection was twofold. First, these fourteen are new heroes of the United States Marine Corps. They helped to write a new chapter in Marine Corps history. These fourteen have, by shedding their blood, truly made Saudi Arabia a "holy land", and a "sacred place".

Second, and more pointedly toward the Marines gathered, we must all be ready to face the possibility of our own death. Like a pilot who constantly watches the ground to see a good place to set down if there is trouble, so too must we face difficulty. We have only a split second to react. Until then we must constantly train and be ready to react. The question then is, where will you light in time of trial?

## Truly Thankful Chaplain Darryl Person

Thanksgiving was a most difficult holiday. The men had hoped and prayed for a miracle to get home soon, but, alas, it had not come. We had a service on this day that was enhanced due to the presence of the Chaplain of the Marine Corps, Chaplain Krabbe. We were honored to have him in our midst on this holiday. By sharing his Vietnam experiences as a chaplain, he provided insight and wisdom as well as inspiration.

We rotated back to Camp 15 and had dinner. The men in our battalion felt very fortunate to be able to shower and sleep in a bed for a couple of days. It really helped to improve morale during the Thanksgiving

Holiday. It was also the best meal that we had eaten since being in country. We had read all of the reports from the news. Although we were spending this holiday away from home, we were thankful. Thankful for health, strength and life. Christians need not look very hard for things to be thankful for because God's blessings are abundant!

## **Pilgrims in the Sand**

**Chaplain Daniel Hauschild**

Thanksgiving was a time when our battalion saw it's hopes of returning home for Christmas shattered by our President's January 15th ultimatum to Iraq. This development caused most everyone to accept the fact that we would be in Saudi Arabia at least through the holidays.

When Thanksgiving arrived the men were off the emotional roller coaster at least. The announcement from the President left everyone with clear guidance. Thanksgiving dinner was prepared for delivery to our positions in the field.

I was asked by the CO to deliver a Thanksgiving prayer at the Battalion formation and several company level CO's requested company level Thanksgiving Day worship services. The spiritual opportunities afforded me a chance to offer reflections based on that first Thanksgiving gather-



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*President George Bush and First Lady, Barbara, visit First Marine Division Troops in Saudi at Thanksgiving. The most obvious question of the day: "When are we going home?"*

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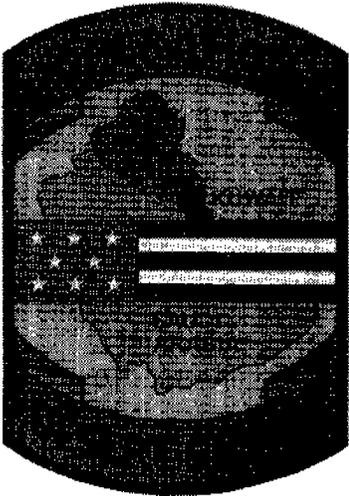




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*Americans showed their support for troops in Operation Desert Shield/Storm by tying yellow ribbons (above) throughout communities and businesses, and with bumper stickers and posters (opposite: bottom left). With this strong public support, Navy Chaplains carried on their ministry aboard ship (opposite: above) and in the desert (opposite: bottom right) without a break.*

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ing. Many commented that they found these reflections particularly meaningful because, like the Pilgrims, they also were challenged with being thankful for the necessities of life despite the obvious hardships and dangers. Several shared that it was a special Thanksgiving for them because they would never again take their lifestyle in America for granted.

The men in the field that day were exemplary. I do not remember one man complaining about anything. I know that many were sad over the separation from their families and the cloud of gloom hovering over the future, yet they were ready to face it with courage and faith. I will never forget the raw courage those men demonstrated that day on the sands of Saudi Arabia by showing a grateful attitude in spite of everything.

## The Warrior Psalm

Chaplain Franklin Johnson

One of the ways chaplains of Task Force Papa Bear helped prepare the troops for combat was by distributing cards called The Desert Shield 91. It was a small yellow card containing the 91st Psalm. It had an amazing effect on many people.

In World War I, the 91st Brigade faithfully recited, memorized, and prayed Psalm 91 every day. The astonishing result was the command did not suffer one single combat casualty, in spite of fighting in three of the bloodiest battles of that war. The cards we passed out became a symbol of God's presence and protection for us. As a result of the story of the 91st Brigade and the exhortation to follow their example, we experienced virtually the same protection.

These cards were 'spread loaded' throughout the Task Force. They could be seen everywhere; tucked in helmet bands, almost every vehicle had a card stuck in the windshield. I often heard Marines ask, "have you read your yellow card today?" They were a big hit and brought much comfort to the fighting men of Papa Bear.

And what of our casualties? Papa Bear lost only one Marine during the ground campaign in spite of several intense firefights and an Iraqi Armored Brigade counterattack (described as the largest tank battle the Marine Corps has ever participated in).

Please don't misunderstand the statement, "only one casualty." One was too many! General Schwartzkopf said, "... even though the casual-

ties were mercifully low, it is not a miracle to the grieving families who lost a loved one during the war." For them, we continue to pray that God will intervene in their lives with his grace, peace, and comfort.

## **Rocks and Flowers**

Chaplain Doyle Dunn

November was a difficult month for many Marines. The hope that tomorrow would bring good news of going



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*Chaplain Franklin Johnson offers communion at 1st Marine Regiment.*

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home to America in time for the holidays gradually began to dim. The possibility of war grew increasingly stronger. The thoughts of sitting around the table at home carving turkey on Thanksgiving seemed more and more a fantasy, at best.

Americans responded to many of our needs. "Any service member" mail arrived by the truckloads. "Care packages" filled with toiletries, food, and stationery were everywhere. One day I found a bouquet of dried flowers laying beside the road. It was a gift from a supportive florist in California. I suppose the Marine who opened the package was too "macho" to keep dried flowers. I kept them.

As Thanksgiving neared, it was obvious we would be eating turkey in the desert, so I began planning a Thanksgiving worship service. Giv-

ing thanks under these conditions would not be easy. We had little besides the clothes on our backs and the mail from home. The Commandant of the Marine Corps told us, "you will have good morale!" and even though the Marines tried to obey that command, in the quiet moments, despair and sadness touched everyone the same.

On Thanksgiving evening, after a good meal of turkey and dressing, vegetables, pie and cool sodas (prepared at the Division Chow Hall and transported to us), we gathered around inside the chow tent.

In front of the Marines I placed a small wood table on which was a large mound of rocks picked up from around the camp. The arrangement looked as plain and barren as the rest of the desert around us. We read scripture:

*"How good it is to give thanks to you, O, Lord, to sing in your honor, O most High God, to proclaim your constant love every morning and your faithfulness every night."*

We sang familiar songs. We talked about home and our best memories. Then I pulled out that bundle of dried flowers I had found (and kept) and passed one flower to each man. We walked to the front, paused at the table, gave thanks for our family, friends, and good things we did have, placing our flowers into the rock pile as we passed.

When we finished, that little desolate pile of rocks looked like a hillside in full bloom. We sang a final song:

*O beautiful, for spacious skies, for amber waves of grain,  
For purple mountain majesties above the fruited plain!  
America! America! God shed his grace on thee,  
and crown thy good with brotherhood from sea to shining sea!*

More than one of those "macho" Marines came by later, some with tears still in their eyes, and confided, "Chaplain, I may not like being here, but I do have a lot to be thankful for. Best of all, God is here with us. It's good to know that he puts a little beauty into this world no matter where we are."

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Around the holidays, there were occasional treats like grilled hamburgers cooked and served in camp on "home-made" grills

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## The Unarmed Chaplain

Chaplain Marvin McClain

Once we have been in the military a tour or two, we tend to forget that not everyone understands how the military works. I was reminded of this while in Saudi Arabia for Operation Desert Shield.

In October, RP1 Mike Hutchin's wife, Genny, in the course of a phone call, asked him if he would be likely to have to fight if Desert Shield turned into a shooting war. He explained that part of his duties as an RP would be to protect me, the chaplain, in combat. Genny asked why I couldn't protect myself. RP1 explained that I didn't carry a gun since I was a chaplain. Not understanding the principle of the non-combatant chaplain, Genny exclaimed into the phone, "Well, get him a gun! Don't they have enough to go around?"

At the time, I thought it was funny. At least once before we got to Kuwait City I wasn't so sure I didn't agree with her. There's nothing funny about lying behind a hastily dug berm of sand with nothing to hold onto except your helmet.

## Christmas on Ship

Chaplain Robert Lewis

The transit across the Pacific was both long in time and long in faces as the Christmas season arrived. Coupled with the understandably somber attitude of the men was a deep underlying current of spiritual renewal and revival. As a chaplain, it was an active and exciting time because the men were earnestly seeking for answers to serious life questions.

As Christmas day approached, many troops were looking beyond the gifts, tinsel, and traditional holiday hoopla to the real significance of the birth of Jesus Christ. They were looking for reassurance, hope, and life. They were finding it. For many, however, this spiritual search was being chained back by a feeling of hypocrisy. Evil's whispering of "Oh sure, NOW you're going to turn to God ... well, He's not going to hear you!" was heard by many. To counter those feelings of hypocrisy we spent a lot of time during those weeks in services, devotions, and studies, looking at how difficult situations brought many biblical characters closer to God and how, rather than feeling hypocritical, they gloried in the fact that they were being led to Him. A sermon on the parable of the Prodigal was a particularly potent reminder of God's loving forgiveness and welcoming arms.

On Christmas Eve the Ship's Captain graciously opened the flight deck to us. Under bright stars, as the ship continued to surge westward, we set up two fully lit Christmas trees and gathered around them to read scripture, pray together and sing hymns and carols. About 400 people joined us that inspiring evening. We were separated from some of the trappings of Christmas, and certainly we missed our families, but there was no doubt that the meaning of the birth of Jesus Christ, Immanuel, God with us, was fully present and received.

## Christmas Carols

Chaplain Paschal Dawson

In December we hoped we would be home sitting in our living rooms, singing Christmas songs and opening gifts under the Christmas tree. Needless to say, that isn't what happened. Most everyone accepted the fact we would be celebrating Christmas in Saudi Arabia. Only a few waited patiently for a miracle to happen so that we could go home.

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*Chaplains were sometimes referred to as 'Morale Officers' to avoid offending the Arabs. They did, in fact, play a strategic role in the morale of the troops.*

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Nothing did. So we proceeded to make the best of a bad situation during the Christmas season.

Family members, friends, and supporters were very instrumental in helping the men feel the Spirit of Christmas. Hundreds of letters, cards, and packages arrived almost daily, bringing joy into our lives while we were there in the desert.

As Christmas Day approached, I can remember how sad the men were. Then, the night before Christmas, we had a Candlelight Christmas Program. (The Battalion CO lifted the light-discipline restrictions for that one night). It was a beautiful evening. It began with a Battalion formation where I led the battalion in prayer. Then we were dismissed for the evening's Candlelight Service. A blanket of stars covered the crystal clear sky, as Marines and Sailors joined together around a host of lit candles, lighting the way for the advent of Emmanuel. We sang Christmas carols while each man lit his candle and offered a special prayer.

On Christmas morning, I took the gifts that the supporters had sent to us from America. I also arranged a group of carolers, "SAVE LIVE CREW", to perform Christmas favorites on Christmas Day. That morning the carolers loaded aboard the five-ton truck with a load of Christmas gifts and traveled from company to company singing Christmas

favorites from "12 Days of Christmas" to Bing Crosby's classic "White Christmas." After each performance, the carolers would hand out the gifts to the men. If the Iraqi forces had seen us that day they would have seen men of illuminating appearances as the Marines and Sailors laughed, yelled, and sung with joy on Christmas Day.

Later that same day, we all gathered together for Protestant, Latter Day Saint, and Catholic Worship Services at the Battalion Aid Station. My heart, as well as that of the others, was touched by these series of events; I will never forget the joy on their faces those two days in the desert of Southwest Asia.

## Vision and Courage

Chaplain Robert Lewis

In December, an anonymous quote in our Chaplain Corps calendar leapt off the page at me and spoke directly to what I was trying to convey to the men about practical spiritual preparation for combat. It said, "Vision is the ability to see through the problem; Courage is the ability to see it through."

The night I read that quote, our ship was sitting in Pearl Harbor and a number of the men, myself included, were considering getting up early the next morning and running the Honolulu Marathon. Having spent the previous months swamped in preparation for deployment and possible combat rather than running, none of us felt particularly prepared. Of course, whether or not we ran a marathon was less important than what it came to symbolize for us.



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*Christmas decorations mailed from home give even this altar of rocks and MRE boxes a touch of the Christmas spirit.*

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That night I shared the quote with the other runners. We prepared ourselves by holding to the vision that only through God do we find the ability to face any challenge, to see through any problem whether physical, mental or spiritual. Knowing the qualities he has given us to express, and bring to light, instills the confidence to overcome. Believing that was not enough, however. It took getting up the next morning and running the race to actually make the lesson a valuable one. That is what we did. Every runner completed the distance. Having done this served as a foundation for us. Those that witnessed this accomplishment saw that we could expect God's help in very practical ways in combat, if we had the vision to turn to Him and the courage to follow His direction.

Faith in God is vision. It is vision which goes beyond the human and the immediate physical environment to the spiritual truths from God about life. This faith, this vision of His armor and protection for all those who sought to serve him and follow Him, was firmly established in many newly receptive hearts by the time we stepped onto the beach on 14 February. During those months of diligent, prayerful preparation, reliance on God transcended from something which was a good hypothetical idea, to a powerful truth of being.

## **Peace on Earth**

Chaplain Daniel Hauschild

Christmas was just around the corner. Americans had written and sent hundreds of cards and letters. In response to my request, many people had personalized their correspondence in order to give the men a special feeling of closeness with them. Many friendships developed as a result of this special outreach to my men.

Many of my church friends had sent care packages with specially wrapped gifts which I distributed on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. As I distributed these gifts, I witnessed the beautiful manner in which they filled the void of the empty hearts of the Marines and Sailors who received them.

Attendance at the Christmas Eve worship was outstanding. Candles used during the candlelight services brought a special glow to the eyes of those who held them. Somehow the simple setting of that bleak desert captured the spirit of that first Christmas.

I'll always remember the bedouins, sheep and camels that etched the skyline, giving a realistic backdrop to the season. The men seemed at

peace despite the fact that the Christmas theme of Peace On Earth Goodwill Toward Men seemed a fleeting hope. The simple Christmas worship setting and sharing of gifts sent from people back home, had worked together to create a sense of peace and goodwill in our desert camp.

## **Christmas Spirit**

**Chaplain Darryl Person**

Christmas finally arrived. My Colonel and I agreed that this holiday would be the most memorable (if not the best) for the men.

Our country was very responsive during this time. The cards, packages, candy, letters that were sent truly lifted the spirits of our men. Day in and day out we received care packages from home. It had grown colder so the climate was just right for Christmas.

I went to work on the Battalion Christmas Program. Volunteers from the battalion provided a choir of 50 voices. We rehearsed nightly for our program. We refused to allow our situation to dampen our spirits. A few Marines from Communications Company erected a Christmas tree out of cammie net with lights donated from people back home. Everyone was in the Christmas spirit.

The night before the Christmas program I was tasked with the responsibility of setting up the tree. During the process, I became involved in a heated argument with a Staff Sergeant. It really dampened my spirits because I was trying so hard to have a service that touched the heart, mind, and soul. Although I was frustrated I was determined to succeed.

The night of the program was a memorable one. The entire battalion was gathered around the choir and the tree in a semicircle. We sang carols and retold the story of the birth of Christ. The emotion and enthusiasm of the crowd was almost like a rock concert. The response of the Marines and Sailors that night affirmed the success of the program. One Marine said, "This may not be the best Christmas, but it was certainly the most memorable." After the service ended, we cleaned up the area and went back to our holes and hooches.

The Staff Sergeant that I had previously argued with came to me and apologized, wishing me a Merry Christmas. We made things right. At that moment I felt the goodwill which Christ brought into the world. The Marine was right, it was the most memorable Christmas ever!

## Christmas Eve

Chaplain Joseph Matoush

Christmas Eve 1990. It's cold and getting dark. A group of Marines at 3rd Battalion, 9th Marines are singing carols as I arrive. Someone has placed a manger scene with all the familiar Christmas characters in front of the MRE-case altar and the service begins. Candles are lit. Hymns are sung. The stars shine brightly.

It is later now and I arrive at Rippertown, home of Headquarters, 7th Marine Regiment. The benches are under a net next to a deserted sheep stall. The wind is blowing. It's getting colder. We sing a carol and hear the Christmas Gospel. I look over and peek in the stall. It is empty. Or is it? The men depart in peace, quietly looking around to see.

Yet another drive and I arrive at 2nd Battalion, 7th Marines. It's approaching midnight and we wait for the priest. From different sides of the camp we hear each other's congregation sing the familiar tunes. As the stubs of candles are once again lit in the cold, dark night, we look into each others eyes and see reflected the joy that only God can create. For a moment we are warm and close to friends and have hope.

Back at my hootch, I pause for a moment of reflection. Surely this was the way the world received the Christ Child. Surely for a moment in time there was warmth and joy and the closeness of friends. As I looked at the stars that clear cold night I prayed a prayer for my family, a prayer for my friends and a prayer for my enemies. The future was clouded, but on that extra clear night, I knew beyond doubt that God would be ever present, lifting up all those who trust in him.





# Assault into Kuwait

His faithfulness will be your shield and rampart.  
You will not fear the terror of night,  
nor the arrow that flies by day,  
nor the pestilence that stalks in the darkness ...  
A thousand may fall at your side,  
ten thousand at your right hand,  
but it will not come near you.  
You will only observe with your eyes  
and see the punishment of the wicked.

Psalm 91:4-8

## Stereotypes

Chaplain Daniel Hall

It really takes some effort and time not to buy into the myriad of stereotypes which exist in the military. Indeed, our young Marines are encouraged to be hard chargers and aggressive, as well as professional. The more "grungy" one is, the better Marine one is considered to be. Peer pressure is probably never going to be as great an influence as it is in a small combat unit. So it is easy to see why many young Marines slip into the role of playing the stereotype.

When the air war began in Kuwait and Iraq, we moved up to the border to wait for "G Day". In situations like that, waiting is always hard, but it does allow the opportunity for reflection. Needless to say I stayed busy. Perhaps as a nervous reaction, perhaps out of fear, perhaps merely the rhetoric of training, but there was lots of talk of "wasting some ragheads." That aggression, based upon the talk, was paramount and accomplishing the mission seemed secondary. Indeed, some said they would feel cheated if we had no contact. I even heard Staff NCO's say that since they had missed Vietnam, they weren't going to allow this opportunity to slip away. Having been in Vietnam as an infantry officer, I knew that it was the lack of experience that was talking. I knew that once "G Day" began, attitudes and priorities would radically shift. Rhetoric would fall by the wayside and training and humanity would take over.

On "Day One", as we were moving through the second breach, we began taking prisoners. Unfortunately, it was at this same time that we also took ten casualties of our own from enemy mortar fire. Our men were wounded while rounding up Iraqi soldiers who were surrendering. I think that all of us were angry at this blatant violation of the Laws of Warfare. In spite of the anger, our young Marines, the very same ones who just days before were talking of "popping a few ragheads," were there in the middle of them, calming them down and trying to assure them that everything would be OK. Some were giving them MREs, others seeing to it that they had water. When we saw how well our young men reacted and the care and compassion they showed the enemy, all of our chests got a bit larger and our heads were held a little higher.

Stereotypes of rock-hard, unfeeling Marines are, for me, just that: Stereotypes. I've seen humanity and compassion on the battlefield. I believe, from the depths of my being, that it is precisely this humanity

and compassion which makes our troops far superior to their counterparts on the other side of any conflict.

We began this conflict on the moral high ground, and because of countless displays of humanity and compassion, we remained there. Our Marines certainly did themselves a tremendous service and can hold their heads high.



*Near the beginning of the air offensive, Marines moved out of their tents and began living in their fighting positions and SCUD trenches. These positions were reinforced with sandbags and covered with ponchos. No matter where the troops went, Chaplains were right there with them.*

## Sniper Fire

Chaplain Kim Evans

As long as I live, I'll never forget sharing a foxhole with a young Marine 1st Lieutenant while under sniper fire. As we sat there talking, it was oddly reminiscent of a scene from a bad World War II movie.

We talked about how the war seemed to be going. We talked about how we would prepare for an all-out enemy attack that night. We talked about our lives. We talked about our families and how they would manage if we were killed.

We had been, up until that point, not much more than casual acquaintances. As we sat in that hole together, the experience took a casual friendship and transformed it into a true, lifelong friendship. It

was a Christian brotherhood, based on common trust, faith, and experience. One that continues even today.

## Facing the Enemy

Chaplain Franklin Johnson

Ministry during the ground assault was primarily a ministry of presence. There was no communication with the battalion chaplains and certainly no opportunity to visit their areas. Because we were under fire at various times, there were some pertinent times of encouragement and prayers to be offered.

One truly miraculous event occurred on "Day One". After breaching the second minefield obstacle on the previous night, we consolidated the Combat Operations Center and awaited the order to move. We awoke to a very smoky, foggy day. Visibility was practically zero.

About 0800, an Iraqi tank and two BMPs (personnel carriers) rolled into our perimeter. They had somehow passed right through the bulk of our task force. Now they were only seventy-five meters from our alpha command track.

Two things could have occurred at this point. The Iraqis could have opened fire, taking out our Commander and the bulk of his warfighting



staff, wreaking havoc with our command element. Or, our Marines could have precipitated a firefight with these "bad guys" destroying them in short notice.

Because of good fire discipline and the grace of the good Lord, neither happened. In fact, the Iraqis came to us with the intention to surrender! In doing so, they gave up an Iraqi Armored Brigade Commander and part of his staff. Very strategic intelligence was gathered as a result of their action.

Was this luck or coincidence? Neither. It was God's divine intervention and protection as we faced the enemy.

## Where's The Chaplain?

Chaplain Mark Gefaller

On Thursday, 21 February, at 1900 our battalion crossed the line of departure on foot into Kuwait. On the evening of the 23rd, we began an infiltration operation, which culminated in an assault on Iraqi bunkers, on the far side of the first mine belt. Casualties were light. By 0500, our logistics train, the rear element of the battalion's advance, was moving with good progress through the minefield. The men were tired, yet intensely alert as the sound of the approaching task force, an undeniable and growing roar, spurred us on, half in awe and half in fear.

Just after 0600 near the center of the minefield, the logistics train was assaulted by misdirected lethal fire. Mark-19 and sabo rounds began to slice into our positions, and brilliant red tracers hissed and cracked as they walked their way along our column. A Marine wearing a grenade vest received a tank round in the chest. In a moment everyone was face down seeking out small depressions on the flat landscape and the miniscule protection they might afford. From above, a vision of fighters screaming down upon our position armed with napalm and missiles greeted us. We were prevented from returning fire on our comrades in arms and could only lay submissively on the desert floor, face our own deaths and hear our men shout into radios.

On foot in a featureless desert battlefield, surrounded by mines, there is a particularly keen sense of apprehension and danger which generates a gripping atmosphere of brotherhood and sacrificial love. Each man depends upon and cares for the others beside him. The heart of faith clings to God for strength and protection. There is no place of safety, no cover. The Lord alone is one's defense.

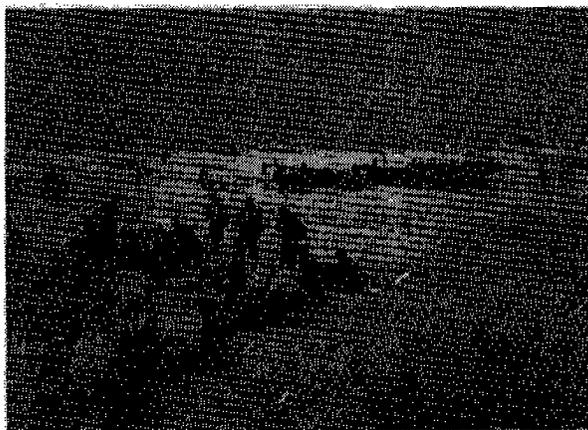
"Where is the chaplain?" a familiar voice called out. I propped myself on my elbows to see the battlefield about. "Put your head down chaplain, you could get hurt," said a Marine beside me. I waved at the caller and yelled, "Over here Senior Chief!" Noticeably all eyes turn towards me. It was not hard to read the faces of the men around me. Naked emotion showed a blend of anger, frustration, and fear. Mostly I saw fear. They sought reassurance. I was their immediate connection with God. How can I minister pinned down by fire? My mind raced.

My heart, which had been in prayer all day, now cried to the Lord, "Dear Lord, protect us and give us strength." Several things happened at once. My mind filled with Scripture passages such as Psalm 46:10, "Be still and know that I am God." Then I yelled to my concerned friend, "God's protection will surround us like a blanket and cover us like an umbrella. We'll be alright!" At that moment the jets arrived to drop their ordinance.

The aircraft came in low and screaming over our heads. The ground shook. Our ears rang. But the ordinance did not drop. Instead, a most singular thing happened, they turned and dropped the napalm in front of our attackers, breaking off the attack. My mind rejoiced and my spirit sang. I smiled. I could not help it. Everyone I smiled at, smiled back. Much of the tension visibly melted away. We were alright. God was with us. His protection would keep us safe.

In that brief encounter I knew the full value and meaning of a chaplain in combat. The ministry that God provided throughout those days was richer and deeper than any I've ever experienced. I thank God for having allowed me to experience them and bringing me home again.

*Oil field fires burn off heavy black smoke in the distance while enemy prisoners of war are kept in tight groups (center). In the foreground, doctors and corpsmen attend to the injured and dying.*



## Conflict or Awakening?

Chaplain Theofanis Degaitas

One of the eeriest feelings I had occurred shortly before the ground war. I made a point to go and visit all our troops. I thought for some it might be the last time I would see them and maybe the last time they would see a chaplain. Every Marine and Sailor had a special look about him. To this day, I am incapable of describing what I saw in their eyes and their faces.

All our troops knew what was to happen, our Engineering companies especially, were aware that we were expecting 80% casualties. The look in their eyes seemed as if each man had become part of the "Single Fighting Unit". There were no more individuals. Only one fighting machine. Everyone knew the waiting was over. They were ready. Their faces had a shine of determination. Their somber gaze was one of self sacrifice. Perhaps it was the same look our Lord Jesus had when he willingly gave up his life for our salvation.

As Marines, they had taken training seriously and realized that they may never return from the sand. In the desert of Saudi Arabia these men were making their own personal peace with God. Most of them made it through silent and serious contemplation. The looks on their faces were not only of strong determination, but also of innocence. As Marines they



have been trained to do battle. As men, they have had the opportunity to put this to the test of deadly war.

When our troops were committed to battle, war, in all its ugly faces, reared its head. The sounds, smells, and feelings of the battle in the desert of Khafji, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait made me feel as if I were in hell itself. The smoke of burning equipment and the morbid images of the dying and wounded can only be experienced first hand.

As the Marines returned from the front lines they had a new expression on their faces. It was no longer somber and determinate but had a rough quality to it. They were the ones who stared Death itself in the face and with the Grace and Love of God, they were the ones who survived as victors. Instead of boyish innocence, their faces were etched with the maturity of manhood. Theirs was not only the victory of the battlefield but also a victory over their own fears of death.



*Chaplain Daniel Hall (left) stands ready as the mobile BAS works to save the life of an injured Iraqi.*

## Only Sixteen Chaplain Daniel Hall

As 3/9 moved toward Kuwait City through the Al-Burgan oil fields, we became involved in a small arms, armor, and tactical aircraft battle early in the morning. Fortunately, we took no wounded, but soon the Battalion Aid Station was rapidly filling up with wounded Iraqi soldiers. Our doctors and corpsmen did a fantastic job working hour after hour providing health care to wounded enemy soldiers.

Two Iraqi soldiers stick out in my memory. The first was one of the walking wounded. He was badly burned on the face and arms. What is most memorable, however, were his shoes. He was in the plain green uniform of an Iraqi soldier, but wore civilian black loafers. He had obviously been snatched off the street, handed a gun, and thrown into the line. Not even given a decent pair of boots.

The second Iraqi, and for me the more memorable, came in on a stretcher. He had a bullet wound through the left eye and the exit wound at the back of his head. There was really nothing that could be done for him except to ease his pain. When we pulled out his ID card, we learned that he was only sixteen years old.

News of this spread very quickly. Our Marines were irate! "How could Saddam do this to his children?" they asked. Many people came by the BAS, not to gloat, nor to satisfy any ghoulish curiosity, but to try to understand the horror. I ran into one of our Lieutenants later that morning. He broke down in tears when I told him the story. He said, "I have a little brother that age."

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*Enemy Prisoners of War willingly surrender in large groups to US Marines.*

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## Dark as Night

Chaplain Daniel Hauschild

The morning of February 24th was one I will never forget. We crossed the border at 0700 and drove through our first mine breach. I traveled with the Battalion Medical Officer. The plan was to crossover into Kuwait and set up the BAS and be ready to receive any casualties from the battle, which was raging just to the north of our position. Just after setting up the tent it began to rain, and about the same time American artillery fire opened up on the enemy position which was to the left of our position. The combined sound of rain and artillery created an uncomfortable feeling for everyone. Several hours later we were told we were moving north ahead of schedule. We did not realize then that we were winning a decisive victory.

Traveling north we went through another mine field and soon after encountered our first visible enemy artillery fire. We entered into MOPP Level Four for the first time. I remember praying to God that all my MOPP gear was on properly and working effectively. That evening we arrived at the police station (a chosen landmark for reference purposes). Fires from the sabotaged oil wells were lighting up the night sky. We held a Sunday evening Vesper service and gave thanks to God for His protection throughout that day. Everyone at the service was grateful.

After the service, our first Iraqi wounded arrived from the combat train. They were dehydrated and shivering from exhaustion and pain. The medical officer and his team of Corpsmen gave our men compassionate treatment and professional medical assistance as well as to the Iraqi prisoners who were wounded.

I gave two prisoners a bottle of fruit punch which I had been saving for myself. They needed it and so I gave them the entire bottle. When I saw them drink it I remembered Christ's Words, "*Whatsoever you have done unto the least of these my brothers, you have done it unto me.*"

After a long day we approached the Al Jaber Airport. It was the second day of the assault and we could see fire fights on either side of the road. When we drove toward our camp site we noticed that Iraqi prisoners were everywhere. Soon after we arrived at our site the first gas alarm was sounded. These alarms continued to go off throughout the night. Later, we were told that the alarm went off because it was triggered by the smoke from the oil well fires. The sky was darker than anything I have ever seen. Some of the men got lost trying to move from vehicle to



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*Chaplain Joseph Matoush administers communion. There is no time nor place where ministry ceases to be possible.*

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vehicle throughout the night. Once during the night I was lost for a short time. Providentially, my Muslim Lay Reader heard me call for directions and guided me back to my vehicle.

The next morning it was still as dark as night. I wrote in my diary that two nights before it had been like daylight at night, and now it was like night in the daytime.

Later in the day a number of Marines from 3rd Battalion, 7th Marines came to our position looking for the Chaplain. They had lost a buddy in the assault and had been present when he was cut in two by a projectile. Because they had been carrying a large amount of ammunition in their vehicle, they considered it miraculous that the projectile that killed their friend did not cause an explosion and kill the rest of them. They were thankful to be alive and requested that I conduct a service of thanksgiving with them. Several of the Marines requested that I give an instructional message on Psalm 91. This was a moving moment for all who gathered there on that dark-as-night afternoon.

## Seeing Miracles

Chaplain Darryl Person

The night before the ground attack we were gathered around the radio hoping for a peaceful conclusion. We had held our final Divine Worship Services. I offered prayer for each company and all the officers at a staff meeting. The realization of combat did not hit until we had to don our chemical suits. War was imminent. When we did not get any change of plan, we got into our vehicles and headed for the border.

We arrived at our final staging area at 0500. We had an hour before the attack. During that hour, I meditated and prayed privately. During those moments, I found the strength to endure and continue. At 0600, the shooting started. It was the most violent event that I had ever witnessed. We went through the first breach with very little problems. As we moved to the next obstacle we began to see from a distance the white flags of surrender from Iraqi soldiers. This was uplifting because we felt that it would not be as difficult as we had anticipated.

We traveled on to a quarry. It was there where I was faced with combat first hand. The battalion had gone ahead of the logistics train. Two enemy BMPs and a company of Iraqi troops fired upon us. Immediately we jumped out of our vehicles and hit the ground. Bullets flew all around us. Then, I saw the muzzle flashes of machine guns, and more Marines ducking for cover. To say the least, we were afraid. But in those moments of fear, I felt a powerful presence that I attributed totally to God. At that moment, I knew that no harm would come of me. This was a moving moment because I had witnessed bullets flying over the heads of men in the battalion, but yet, no one was injured or killed. It was a miracle. It was the Hand of God. We live a lifetime wondering if we will ever see a miracle. That day I was part of one.

## "Father Kenny"

Chaplain Joseph Matoush

Ken was a corpsman with a Regimental Aid Station during the assault on Kuwait. He had been through Vietnam and was well aware of the suffering that people endure, especially in war. Ken taught us a lesson none will forget.

As soon as we made contact with the enemy, we began to collect prisoners. These men were sick, hungry and scared. Most had been left

to fend for themselves and were suffering in the true sense of the word. They had little hope and a lot of suspicion.

Most of the US troops were leery of the prisoners, not quite sure how to deal with them. War brings out the basic survival instinct, and thoughts of giving up any of your own resources takes back seat. But Ken acted on a higher instinct. He started collecting MREs that Marines were not using and began to open them up and pass the content out to the POWs. Time after time he would come back and ask around for more. And he would find them. Soon, others pushed back their fears or doubts or greed and began to help as well. Men looked into each other's faces and saw not an enemy, but a fellow human in need. It is questionable who received the greater comfort, the Marines following behind Ken, or the POWs they were helping.

Ken became a regular whenever a new group of prisoners would be brought in. We started to call him "Father Kenny" as we watched him reach out to others. His simple act of compassion, repeated over and over again, was the very example of God's concrete love present even in the midst of war, that often goes unnoticed, but not unappreciated.



*Navy Corpsmen and doctors provide medical care to a wounded Marine inside the Battalion Aid Station (BAS) tent. Chaplain Daniel Hall (far right) provides a ministry of comfort during the ordeal.*

## Popular Person

Chaplain Darryl Person

Day Three of the ground battle was a day of complete darkness. The smoke from the oil fields had turned the sky black. We literally could not see our hands in front of our faces. We traveled in that darkness for thirteen hours. We pulled into an open field where we camped. We could see the fires burning from the oil and could see the sporadic gunfire.

The next morning brought an exhilarating experience. Our flags were flying high over a liberated Kuwait. We had kept the faith and stayed the course. We were victorious. Many men personally sought me out to offer thanks to God for seeing us through. There was a thanksgiving service held by our battalion in Kuwait City. All joyously praised God for bringing the entire battalion to that point without any fatalities. I found that the chaplain was the most popular person that day, for in a sense Marines felt that the chaplain delivered them. It was actually, of course, God who had seen them through!

## Private Journal

Chaplain Robert Lewis

Journal selections from 24 February – 4 March 1991: Operation "Desert Storm"

"G-Day" 24 Feb.

The ground war began today against Iraq. We land from the USS Vancouver in the next few hours to take our part in this action.

There is no personal glory in being involved. Glory and honor belong to God and are found in moments when He is present and we receive His directing Love and comforting peace. *"For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever."*

Father, help me to be steadfast in continuing in the spiritual things which I have been taught and given. This is a day for total abstinence, rather than letting my thought be indulged in the testimony of the carnal senses. "Spirit is the real and eternal." It is there that my focus must remain fixed and sure if I am to do any good.

Father, you are my shepherd. In following you, listening to you, letting you guide my way, I am confident that I will be able not only to see the way through the valley for myself, but will also be able to comfort

others with the Truth and Love which heals. I can love unselfishly, work patiently, conquer all that is unlike good.

My life is not in matter, therefore my life is not in danger. I can take up the cross of demonstrating that this day. All that crosses my path which is unlike God can be healed.

26 February

On the road to Kuwait City. Flat, featureless sand stretching to the horizon line. A sand highway travelled by our Battalion, snaking along at an impossibly slow pace. Cold, wet night. Broken and destroyed vehicles scattered along the roadside, wheels, trailers, shells, crates, wrecks, the only landmarks. Busloads of POWs, some blindfolded, passing us going the other way. Shortwaves crackle in the vehicles bringing us word of a possible pull-out, minimal casualties and hope. Sand filled wind whips along pushing us northward. The sky at mid-day is gray and darkening from the oil smoke. The oil fouled the coast where we landed. I made one friend of a little grebe I was able to pick up and wash off in some soapy water. A small gesture in relation to the helpless feeling the environmental terrorism has left me with.

To not be "offended" in Christ, but to honor him in true thought and action is the call out here. It sounds crazy to be "offended" considering how much I love Him, however, that's exactly what it feels like in some situations. Sometimes all the human evidence lines up against the truth you believe in. It's backed up by aggressive personalities, and error says to be embarrassed or afraid to truly be Christian, to be afraid to heal. I can't fall for that here. I am here to follow Him and honor you, Father.

28 February 0800, CEASE FIRE!

Thank you, Father, for the rapid end to this war, this violence, and this destruction. It certainly was not without cost. Many Allied lives were lost; many innocent Kuwaitis were killed; many Iraqis were killed; Your earth was devastated in so many ways. War is not an answer. I'm glad this one is over. True peace is yet to come.

As the "lesser of two evils" I respect the way this has been carried out. I respect the leadership and unity worldwide which supported the actions opposing the aggression. I am grateful for all the support from those at home for us serving here, and the brotherly love which has been kindled and established.

Spiritual peace, one God, one Mind, true world brotherly love have yet to be established. Father, that must come. At some point our world must recognize the possibility and reality of your peace.

1 March

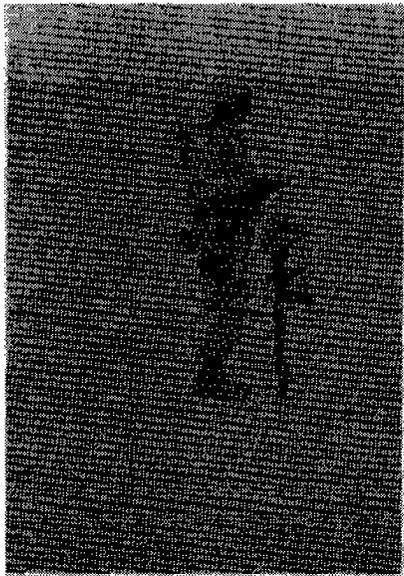
Operations continue unexpectedly for us. Some Iraqi special forces are continuing to fight and we are beginning an extensive sweep south-east through an unaddressed zone. My gratitude for the safety of this battalion in the fighting is immense and there is no reason we should stop listening to the divine direction and protection Providence gives now. It is "Life divine which owns each waiting hour."

4 March

Who would have thought that two days after cease fire we would go into three days of the most serious combat operations we saw? With that now behind us it's time to reflect and put all this in perspective. I wonder in years to come what kind of importance this time will hold for me and how it will shape future directions?

Now back across the Kuwait border into Saudi Arabia the mood has lost its intensity and is one of celebration and comradery. It's 0200 and I'm sitting here leaning back on an old truck tire. The camp is glowing with fires circled by Marines telling their stories of the past few days. Stories which will probably be told many times again.

The emotions I feel about the fact that we are back here with the same number of people we left with are hard to put the parameters of language on. Father, that was your protection and direction manifesting itself.



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*A Marine reads scripture during a memorial service in the desert. Note the M-16 rifle, bayonet in the sand with helmet on top; the traditional "Fallen Comrade" symbol.*

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## Hearts Courageous

Chaplain Doyle Dunn

When the early nation of Israel waited to cross the Jordan River after years of desert wandering, they faced an unknown enemy. Their fears peaked. Doubts appeared. The future was uncertain. The battles ahead could have been disastrous. Their concerns were identical to those faced by Marines in Operation Desert Storm.

First Combat Engineer Battalion, tasked to approach and clear two minefield belts to begin the massive assault into Kuwait, knew the risk of high numbers of casualties. Speculation often pointed to fifty percent loss of personnel through the minefields. Everyone was aware of the danger. Tension was high.

When 'G' Day arrived, the Marines did a most astonishing thing. Dressed in heavy and uncomfortable chemical warfare suits, hearing the exploding shells fired from artillery, tanks, and dropped by air, these men put aside their fears and faced the enemy.

Not one single Marine came begging for the Chaplain's help to avoid going into battle. Not one.

Rather, they climbed into their Amtracks, D-7 bulldozers, five-ton trucks, CUC-Vs, HMMWV's, tanks, and Light Armored Vehicles, and turned North toward the enemy. They might die. They might return mutilated and burned by chemicals. Yet, they faced the enemy and solemnly moved forward.

The order was given and they moved full speed into dangerous territory. In rain, smoke, and sand, they pressed on. Under fire, they pressed on. With little rest and small amounts of food, they pressed on. They pressed all the way to Kuwait International Airport at Kuwait City. They were ready to press further. Just give the order!

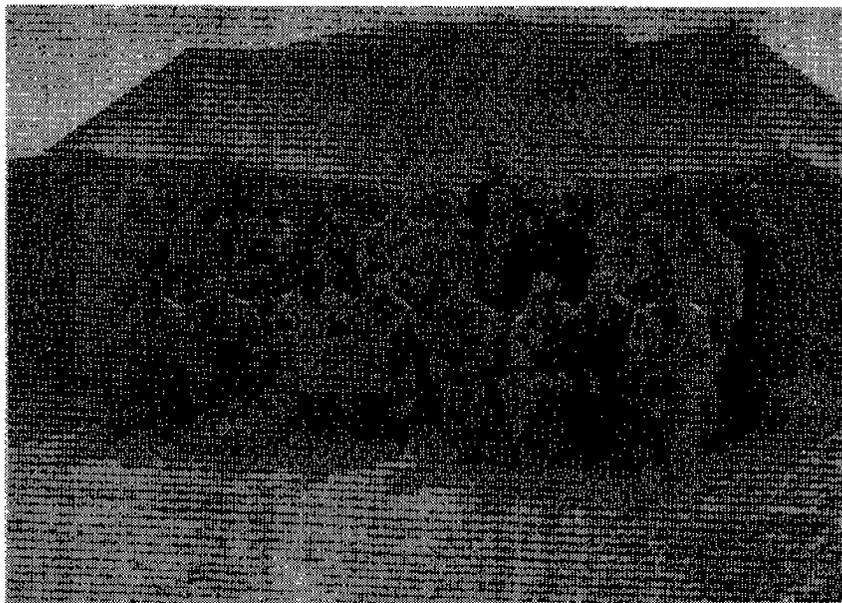
What overcame their fears? Simple. It was what was in front of these men. Officers.

The officers led the way into Kuwait just as Joshua led the Israelites across the Jordan River. I believe the real bravery of our war was not the pulling of a trigger or a lanyard, but the willingness to confront the unknown. The greatest acts of courage were around those leaders who moved to the front and stayed there.

I am convinced that mankind would see an overwhelming improvement if only the people of faith would move to the front and start into

enemy territory instead of sitting behind the lines worrying about what might happen. We need Warriors of Light.

Moses' words at Joshua's commission might well have been spoken directly to us, "*Be strong and courageous, for you must go with this people into the land ... the Lord swore to give them. The Lord himself goes before you; he will never leave nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged.*"



*Chaplains of First Marine Division just after their return from Kuwait. (left to right)*

*Front row: Drew Tomberlin, Grady Pennell, Darryl Person, Mark Gefaller, Arthur Brown, James Fisher, Jerome Dillon, Paschal Dawson.*

*Back row: Jack Kirk, Theodore Borger, Doyle Dunn, Franklin Johnson, Kim Evans, Walter Johnston, Stanley Scott, Theofanis Degaitas, Marvin McClain (in back), Norman Drummond, Gordon Scheible, Joseph Matoush, Daniel Hauschild, Chris Buck, Martin Field, Marc Boisvert.*

# The Return Home

He stilled the storm to a whisper;  
the waves of the sea were hushed.  
They were glad when it grew calm,  
and He guided them to their desired haven.

Psalm 107:29-30

## Prayer for Rediscovery

Chaplain Franklin Johnson

In Operation Desert Storm a miraculous event has occurred in history. I feel extremely privileged and humbled for having participated in it. Many across our country have been searching for a way to understand and articulate the events of Desert Storm. It is obvious to all that an extraordinary phenomenon took place. Many of our leaders, including the President and General Schwartzkopf, have used the words 'miracle' and 'divine providence' to describe what took place.

I heartily endorse that opinion. I saw it and experienced it along with all the others. Crediting God's intervention with us does not detract from the arduous preparation, training, and professionalism of our Marines and Sailors.

May God's intervention in our lives not stop with the end of Operation Desert Storm. We need to know Him now more than ever, and to make Him known more than ever. Our prayers must begin for the grieving families whose loved ones did not return from Southwest Asia. May they experience God's peace and protection from the bitterness and despair that could possibly envelop them. This was the message I wrote to the young wife of the Marine killed in action in our task force.

Let us also hope and pray that many of those who have returned will turn from an apathetic or cynical view of religion and become new men and women who have rediscovered God in their time of need. May we see thousands of Americans and Europeans strengthened in character, detoxified from materialism, and full of the Spirit of God to impact this generation for Him.



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*Chaplain  
Doyle Dunn  
ministers  
using the tail-  
gate of the  
Humvee as an  
altar.*

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## The Gospel Tent

Chaplain Julius Thomas

Approximately 225 kilometers southeast of the Kuwait border was a tabernacle called the "Canvas Cathedral". It was constructed of two General Purpose tents, worn, torn, and battered by the harsh rain and winds of the Saudi Arabian winter desert. The Canvas Cathedral was also affectionately known as the Gospel Tent, located at Manifah Bay. The Gospel Tent became the spiritual oasis and watering hole for those who hungered and thirsted for God.

Many would faithfully make their weekly pilgrimage to the Gospel Tent. They came from diverse backgrounds and creeds. After the ground offensive particularly, word had spread like wild locusts that the place to go for spiritual feeding was the Gospel Tent.

I have never experienced Bible study the way I experienced it in the Gospel Tent. We could feel the power of God's presence as we studied God's Word. We were more than just Marines, Sailors, men and women, Protestant and Catholic, but for a brief moment we were children of God. God was truly Father of us all.

Life and death issues have a way of cutting through the pretense of living, allowing for expression of the raw material of the human spirit. When this happens, the complex becomes simple and survival takes on a transcendent quality. There is a heightened sense of spiritual insight and self discovery. Our biweekly Bible studies and prayer made all this happen. Additionally, because we were removed from the theological trappings, it gave fledgling Christians the opportunity to grow unfettered. I watched macho Marines embrace and hold hands in prayer. Unfortunately it takes life and death experiences to get our attention; to realize life's priorities and ultimate value of the human spirit. But this is God's divine scheme of things. C. S. Lewis put it best: "God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pains: it is His megaphone to rouse a deaf world."

Worship in the Gospel Tent was quite spirited and always antiphonal. One could not help but get caught up in the contagion of give and take. The period of testimony was the most cathartic. Worshipers sharing how God blessed them and sustained them during Desert Shield/Storm. Marines and Sailors finding the courage to share their inner most feeling.

Easter was the culmination of months of divine services, prayer and Bible study in the Gospel Tent. Again we felt God's presence at a crescendo pitch. Some read poetry, recitations, sang in quartets, had good ole' fashion singing, praying and preaching. The Gospel tent was indeed an experience. An experience that will never be recaptured or frozen in time. You can recapture an event but not an experience. There was a strong sense of oneness, fellowship and togetherness.

The need and challenge for most of us, before going home was the overwhelming need to pay homage somehow to God's miracles, unfolded in our midst. How does one then come down from the mountain and share such an experience? It defies language, really. How do you articulate the experience of going through the valley of shadow of death and emerging on the other side of the valley? We all agreed, however, that God would be disappointed if there wasn't some symbolic observance of the deliverance of not only Kuwait, but the liberation of all of us. We realized that we couldn't duplicate or clone what we experienced but we could rekindle God's gift of spirit.



*Religious Program Specialists First Class R. Holdren (left) and E. Jernigan pose for a quick photo outside the "Canvas Cathedral" at the Division Support Activity.*

## Marine Testimony

Chaplain Franklin Johnson

Following the cease fire we were located near the Kuwait International Airport, which we had seized as our final objective. As I moved from unit to unit, we held "services of thanksgiving." Hundreds of men attended, with dozens offering testimonies of praise and gratitude for God's protection.

As one particular Marine stood to share, everyone listened with rapt attention. This man first talked about his relationship with God as being somewhat eclectic and superficial. He was convinced, however, that God had intervened in this conflict and protected many. He shared his own observation that prior to the beginning of the ground campaign, the wind blew predominantly from the North. This was a chemical threat. It also blew all the smoke from the burning oil fields into our faces, limiting visibility and our ability to do the things necessary to win the battle.

The day the ground campaign started, the wind changed direction and blew from the south for the next three days; therefore limiting the Iraqi's chemical threat (which they never used) and their ability, because of smoke, to see and target the battlefield. He knew that God had been at work.

This Marine was not just any warrior. He was the Regimental Commander. Leader of Task Force Papa Bear.

## Prayer

Chaplain James Fisher

Are prayers really answered or is it simply a matter of coincidence when things go our way? Is there really such a thing as battlefield miracles or is it only flukes of nature that save lives in combat?

Immediately prior to our attack on the minefield belts, Saddam Hussein's Army blew the wells in the Al Wafra oil field. I was trudging across the open sands to a line company's position in order to provide worship services and prayers to individual fighting holes. From the northeast my Marine clerk and I saw an ominous thick black cloud slowly moving toward us. It reminded me of the Angel of Death descending upon the Egyptians from the old movie "The Ten Commandments." With that cloud over us, primary air support would not be able to see us and protect our battalion as we mass our attack. We

would be left vulnerable, facing a well fortified enemy. I uttered a prayer for a miracle. Marines up and down the lines began uttering prayers. A feeling of eeriness and dread began to descend on our troops in proportion to the darkness of the cloud. And then the unexpected happened.

For one brief moment at 1730, as the cloud hovered directly over our position, the Northeast wind faltered, then, died. For one brief moment, in the entire seven and one-half months in the gulf, the wind completely stopped. Gently, almost imperceptibly, I felt a soft breeze against my face. But now it was from a different direction. The winds shifted 180 degrees and continued that way for four days.

Coincidence? Or an answer to a prayer? You be the Judge. But in your judgement consider how many letters were sent from the US with the simple words enclosed "I'm praying for you", "Our prayers go with you", "You're in our thoughts and prayers", "God Bless You." How many Marines and Sailors in the Gulf discovered or rediscovered the inner peace and power which only prayers and provides? For a brief moment in time our nation truly was united in prayer.

And I could tell you of the miracles and answers to prayer ... low casualty counts ... Iraqi mortars landing in groups of Marines without any being wounded ... A spirit of surrender that stalked the Iraqi camps ... 16 tank rounds that couldn't seem to hit an ambulance silhouetted against the sky. Coincidence ... or a result of your prayers?

After the battle Marines readily confessed, "God was with us, He heard our prayers." And yet how rapidly our thinking changes. Subtle perceptions begin to creep into our process of rationalization. One of our



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*After the liberation of Kuwait, most battalions had services of thanksgiving and praise similar to this one conducted by Chaplain Doyle Dunn at 1st Combat Engineer Battalion.*

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Marines said, "We are lucky to be on this airplane and heading back." Interesting. We've gone from prayers in battle to luck in our return.

Was it luck or was it prayer? You be the judge.

## New Men

Chaplain Robert Lewis

When our battalion reboarded ships after a relatively few days of combat operations in Kuwait there was great excitement about a possible quick return to the states. The ships, however, did not raise an underway ensign. Instead we sat at anchor in the gulf. Days turned into weeks, weeks lagged into months, morale sank to the ocean floor, and mail entered a period of drought since we were supposed to be "on our way home." Boredom can present a fairly ugly face and this was no easy time in the ministry. The men were bored, they were confused as to why we were still there, and they wanted desperately to be home enjoying the celebrations we knew were taking place.

In the gospel of Mark is the account of Jesus healing blind Bartimaeus. Bartimaeus had called out to Jesus, left his coat and gone to him, received healing, and then when Jesus had told him to go his way he followed Jesus. He left the 'old man' of which Paul speaks and didn't return to it. Instead he held to the vision given to him by Christ. That lesson became a foundation for us enduring the uncertainty of waiting in the gulf. We began to really focus on the idea that nothing could make any of us return to the 'old' way of doing things. But instead, that 'new man' which was found and developed prior to and during the war could continue. New-found atonement does not have to fluctuate. It can be permanent.

As this current grew in strength, worship services which had lost some of their vitality and participation in the post-war weeks began to swell and enliven. Those that realized that the boredom was being caused by having nothing to strive towards also began to realize that they could vigorously focus on developing a purer relationship with God. Rather than there being "nothing to do" there was, in fact, plenty to do, but it was spiritual rather than physical goals that were being strived for.

Easter found us still at the end of an anchor chain, but more free spiritually from the attitude of being 'unwilling captives' on the ships.

The waiting continued, but rather than just waiting for time to pass, many of the men were learning to find freedom by waiting on God, turning to Christ and receiving the richness of His blessings day by day.

## Stirring the Heart

Chaplain Darryl Person

The most touching moment for me was perhaps the most unassuming. The day we left country, we were heading to the airfield and each one of us, on our own, recapped in our minds what we had just gone through. All of the hardships, all of the sacrifices, and all the loneliness and fear was over and we were going home. As we boarded the plane many of us still could not believe that we were really going. The stewardesses made their usual presentations and then as we sat on the runway preparing to leave, a stewardess put in a video tape of Whitney Houston's rendition of the National Anthem. It was the most moving rendition I had ever heard. I looked around the plane and there was literally not a dry eye on the plane. It was a powerful moment. We were at the very peak of happiness. We were going home. The power of that moment surpassed any celebration we would encounter or experience. For that moment, on that night, the very depth of our souls was touched.



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*Chaplain Tom Hiers (near right) and Chaplain Doyle Dunn (right background) observe the Lords supper on Palm Sunday. With religious gear already packed for return to the US, MRE crackers and powdered grape drink were used as the communion elements.*

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## Detour for Help

Chaplain Robert Lewis

After months at anchor we did finally get the ship's boilers going and begin steaming into the rising sun. Calendars were drawn up and days were being marked off – just 35 days from being home. But at the same time we were anticipating reunions, the people of Bangladesh were suffering from the terrible effect of a cyclone which had just devastated the southern coast of their country. The news that we were being diverted to help came as we passed the tip of India. It was only a matter of days before we were on station near the coast of Bangladesh, ready to conduct relief operations.

This detour was difficult news for the men. As much as they were willing to help, it was still a chore to put their personal desires on hold. This hesitation to get involved in another operation of unknown length was compounded by the steady stream of reports that the health threats to relief workers would be extreme – snakes, dogs, mosquitoes, the water, the food, the air – everything posed a threat. How to combat this fear and hesitation?

I began by moving from company to company discussing the nature of being snake bit. I don't mind snakes much myself, but from the beginning to the end of scripture snakes and people are continuously coming into contact and it's the snakes who consistently represent evil. Snakes represent the lies of all that tries to separate mankind from God. Snakes mean the coercion to believe in something false, to buy into temptation, to believe that fear, injury, sickness or even death can separate us from God. When we try to love God with all our heart, mind and soul, and love our neighbor as ourself, it seems like there is always a snake lying in the grass attempting one way or another from keeping us from doing so. That is what was happening in Bangladesh.

We began to collectively understand that it was only fear and self-will which was keeping us from being actively willing to serve God and help those in need. Turning to Him and being willing to follow His will was accompanied by a reminder that when we are serving Him, even in dangerous, threatening, or unwelcome situations, that he is going to be there to direct us and care for our needs. The 'snake' of unwillingness and fear was quickly shaken back into the fire and the battalion effectively engaged in providing major amounts of effective relief to villages along the southern coast.

After two weeks of effort the operation was concluded and the ships again got underway. There were no significant injuries in the battalion and no disabling illnesses contracted. I trust that, as for myself, the experiences there and the rewards from the work will become life-long staffs for the men to lean on.

## Old Glory

Chaplain Mark Gefaller

Following the ground offensive and cessation of the hostilities, thoughts immediately began to turn towards home. Emotions ran high. Anticipation was intense. Lines at the phone center ran long. When would we leave?

Our battalion was selected to be among the first Marine Corps units out of the country. We had not been in Southwest Asia as long as many; only three months. Nevertheless, we had been deployed longer than any other Marine Corps unit in the world at that time, had been the first to enter into Kuwait, and were the "cutting edge" in the ground offensive. We had been on foot and paid our dues. It was time to go.

Equipment was hastily packed. The camp, with all tentage, broken down in only a few short hours. Transportation was on time! By nightfall we were on the flightline ready to depart. All the sand had been scrubbed off our boots and entrenching tools. We were ready!

Two aircraft landed within twenty minutes of each other and the stewardesses stepped off to greet the troops. A cheer rocked the airport. Marines began to clap their hands and stomp their feet in rhythm. All that separated these anxious men from the stewardesses, the aircraft, and home were two thin strands of concertina wire. A moment later, the gates were opened and in a flood of emotion we swept forward (in good military order), to the awaiting aircraft.

Reaching the aircraft door, above the tarmac, there hung the American Flag in all of her red, white, and blue glory. She had never looked so beautiful. The love that I felt for my home, family, country, and God were all embodied at that moment in stars and stripes. I gripped the flag briefly and held it to my face, and breathed a prayer of love and thanks to God from the depths of my soul.

Stepping inside the aircraft I turned to see others grasping Old Glory as they came aboard. To my surprise, they also began to address me. A

clap on the back, a handshake, grasping my arm, a smile. The emotion within me was so overpowering I had to sit down. In their own way they were sharing their thankfulness that God had brought them safely through.

*Solo Deo Gloria!*

## Royal Welcome Chaplain Darryl Person

After having gone through Desert Storm with no deaths and very minor casualties, my battalion was on an emotional high. The reception we received while in route back to base lifted us even higher. Words do little justice to the experience. As a child, I could remember watching old war movies. I recall seeing the celebrations of the French and the English, as our forces rolled into those cities during World War II. I recall seeing the screaming and waving of an elated people who were liberated from oppression. That is the kind of reception we received from our countrymen. People were so proud and happy of our accomplishments and they openly shared that pride and happiness. It moved all of us.

The first place we landed on American soil was Bangor, Maine. The people of this city had organized so that they could meet every plane



that carried returning troops. No matter what the hours, crowds of people showed up to welcome us warmly. I was one of the first off the plane and as I walked down the terminal we were met by a throng of people. Bands played, people cheered, and every Marine was grabbed, kissed, and hugged by someone. We felt like Kings.

People who did not know us displayed a sense of love and kindness that overwhelmed me. I thought for a minute that this is what God wants of His people. Those precious moments made the sacrifice worthwhile. I shall never forget the experience. I felt more a part of this country than I ever had before. Those expressions of support and kindness really made a difference to the young troops. For they felt as if they really made a contribution to making this world a better place.

I am saddened, however, to think that those who served in Vietnam did not get the same sort of treatment. I truly understand the bitterness and pain that a veteran would rightly feel if his or her country did not recognize nor appreciate the risks that a serviceman accepts. I am truly thankful for the celebrations and the support. It demonstrated to me the importance of our efforts and our sacrifices. It made me proud of my commitment to serve.

## Long Memories

Chaplain Kim Evans

Just a few weeks ago, several months after our return home, I was standing in line at a PX aboard Camp Pendleton. As I was waiting to make my purchase, a young Marine walked up to me and enthusiastically asked, "How are you, Chaplain? I bet you're glad to be home again."

"Yes," I answered, "It's great to be back. How about yourself?"

Now I must confess that even after several moments of exchanging pleasantries with this young man, I still didn't recognize him.

"What unit are you with?" I asked.

"Oh, I'm with 1/4 now, but I was in 3/9 in Saudi, sir."

"Ah, now I remember."

"I just wanted to tell you, sir, that the service you conducted for us at 3/9 just before the war ... the one where you baptized all those guys ... you baptized one of my buddies. It was the best service I went to over there. I just wanted you to know that."

What had been for me one more service among many conducted on nearly a daily schedule had been significant in the life of this Marine. A

service that had been a favor for a fellow chaplain in the midst of our hectic schedules, one which I had begun with no specific expectations, had been blessed by the Lord. It was blessed not only with the saving of lost souls, but even now, with the memories of that saving power in the mind of this young man.

A little bit humbled, and with my voice just a little choked, I thanked him for telling me and we said our goodbyes.

## **The Nation's Prayers**

Chaplain Mark Gefaller

Amazing. Unbelievable. Overwhelming. These are the only words that I can use to describe the reception we received upon our return home from combat in Operation Desert Shield/Storm. We had been told of the support at home, but after ten months deployed none of us could imagine to what extent the support had been given.

As we touched down at Norton Air Force Base we could see crowds of people waving flags. A public affairs person briefed us on how to proceed past the crowds and to the waiting buses. Several were chosen to speak at a microphone. Yet, in the back of my mind I could not fully believe that this was not simply staged.

In Morongo Valley the buses slowed to a crawl. In Yucca Valley they completely stopped as the police sought to clear a lane for us to pass. An amazing number of people crowded the roadways all trying to shake our hands and providing us with food, beverages, flags, and souvenirs. Twentynine Palms was an impasse for a short time. In all, our two hour trip took six hours. Four hours of that being the last 40 miles.

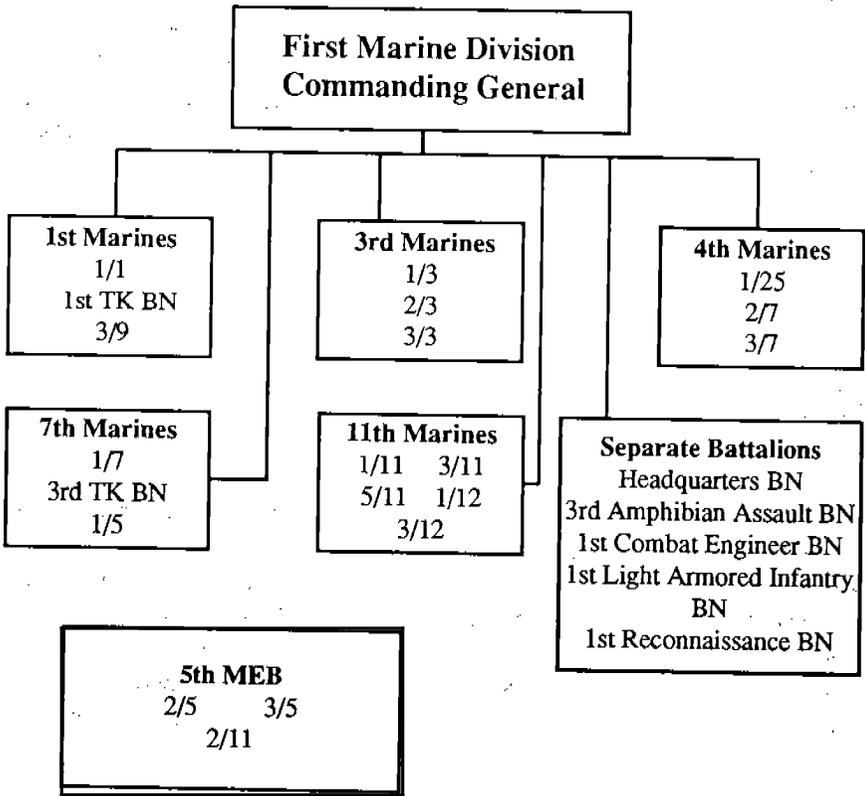
Aboard the base, crowds of families met us as we came to a halt. To the music of the Marine Corps Band and floods of tears, families were finally reunited. The ordeal had come to an end. The pain and sorrow of separation and war was now beginning to be washed away. The joy and love of home and family was again a reality.

The joy of such a homecoming is very affirming. Still, we must never forget that it was the prayers of a nation to our gracious and merciful God which brought us home safely. May we never forget Him and call upon His Name, our Maker, Defender, Redeemer, and Friend.

# First Marine Division Unit Organization in Southwest Asia

<u>Unit</u>	<u>Desert Storm Code Name</u>	<u>Chaplain Assigned</u>
<b>First Marine Division</b> Operations	<i>Pride</i>	CAPT Stanley Scott CDR Julius Thomas
<b>1st Marine Regiment</b> 1/1 3/9 1st Tank BN	<i>Papa Bear</i>	LCDR Franklin Johnson LT Kim Evans LT Daniel Hall LCDR Curtis Schmidtlein
<b>3rd Marine Regiment</b> 1/3 2/3 3/3	<i>Taro</i>	CDR Gordon Scheible LT Theodore Borger LT Arthur Brown LT Martin Field
<b>4th Marine Regiment</b> 1/25 2/7 3/7	<i>Grizzly</i>	LCDR Norman Drummond LCDR Walter Johnston LT James Fisher LT Mark Gefaller
<b>7th Marine Regiment</b> 1/7 1/5 3rd Tank BN	<i>Ripper</i>	LCDR Joseph Matoush LT Darryl Person LT Paschal Dawson LCDR Daniel Hauschild
<b>11th Marine Regiment</b> 1/11 3/11 5/11 1/12 3/12	<i>King</i>	LCDR Marvin McClain LT James Dowd LT Drew Tomberlin LT George Hernandez LT Grady Pennell LTJG Marc Boisvert

<u>Unit</u>	<u>Desert Storm Code Name</u>	<u>Chaplain Assigned</u>
<b>Separate Battalions:</b>		
Headquarters Battalion		LCDR John Kirk
1st Light Armored Infantry Battalion	<i>Shepherd</i>	LT Jerome Dillon
1st Combat Engineer Battalion	<i>Blaster</i>	LT Doyle Dunn
3rd Amphibian Assault Battalion	<i>Speed Bump</i>	LT Theofanis Degaitas
1st Reconnaissance Battalion	<i>Wheels</i>	LT Christ Buck



# First Marine Division Chaplain Roster

<u>Chaplain</u>	<u>Unit served</u>	<u>Faith Group</u>
Boisvert, Marc	3/12	Roman Catholic
Borger, Theodore	1/3	Roman Catholic
Brown, Arthur	2/3	Church of God in Christ
Buck, Chris	1st Recon BN	Presbyterian (USA)
Dawson, Paschal	1/5	Christian Methodist Episcopal
Degaitas, Theofanis	3rd AA BN	Eastern Orthodox
Dillon, Jerome	1st LAI	Roman Catholic
Dowd, James	1/11	Roman Catholic
Drummond, Norman	4th Marines	Southern Baptist
Dunn, Doyle	1st CEB	Southern Baptist
Evans, Kim	1/1	Southern Baptist
Field, Martin	3/3	Church of Christ (Disciples)
Fisher, James	2/7	Evangelical Covenant Church
Gefaller, Mark	3/7	Evangelical Lutheran Church
Hall, Daniel	3/9	Roman Catholic
Hauschild, Daniel	3rd TK BN	Lutheran (Missouri Synod)
Hernandez, George	5/11	United Pentecostal Church
Johnson, Franklin	1st Marines	Southern Baptist
Johnston, Walter	1/25	Southern Baptist
Kirk, John	HQ BN	Lutheran (Missouri Synod)
Klarer, Michael	2/5	Roman Catholic
Lewis, Robert	3/5	Christian Science
Matoush, Joseph	7th Marines	Evangelical Lutheran Church
McClain, Marvin	11th Marines	United Methodist
Pennell, Grady	1/12	Christian Missionary Alliance
Person, Darryl	1/7	National Baptist Church
Puccio, Kenneth	2/11	Evangelical Lutheran Church
Scheible, Gordon	3rd Marines	Episcopal Church
Schmidlein, Curtis	1st TK BN	Latter Day Saints
Scott, Stanley	1st MAR DIV	United Methodist
Thomas, Julius	1st MAR DIV	National Baptist Church
Tomberlin, Drew	3/11	Presbyterian (USA)

**NOTE:** The Chaplains listed in this roster include only those actually attached to 1st Marine Division during Operation Desert Storm. Due to space limitation, Chaplains assigned to 1st MARDIV at other times were not included.

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