



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY  
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS  
2000 NAVY PENTAGON  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20350-2000

IN REPLY REFER TO

JUL 23 1999

MEMORANDUM FOR MAJOR CLAIMANT STAFF CHAPLAINS

Subj: FOCUS 11/99 (RESPONSES TO BURIAL AT SEA INQUIRIES)

1. Recent national attention on burials at sea has cast a most favorable light on one of our most sacred practices. It is likely that local chaplains' offices will receive inquiries as to how burials at sea are requested, and how eligibility is determined. The purpose of this Focus is to provide initial information to chaplains in the field and fleet.
2. All questions regarding burials at sea should be referred to Decedent Affairs at the nearest Medical Treatment Facility (MTF). Additionally, the Navy has appointed Burial at Sea Coordinators at major points of embarkation to include: Naval MTFs in Portsmouth, VA; Jacksonville, FL; Corpus Christi, TX; San Diego, CA; and Bremerton, WA. A Burial at Sea Coordinator has also been assigned to Tripler Army Medical Center in Hawaii.
3. Local MTFs will task Naval commands with burials at sea in accordance with predetermined protocols. When a tasking is made, the chaplain serving the tasked command will provide appropriate support through the Command Religious Program. Prior to MTF tasking, chaplains should be careful not to make promises about local command involvement. Should relatives or veterans inquire about the availability of specific vessels, they should be advised to make such requests through the MTF point of contact.
4. If you have any further questions, the point of contact in the Chief of Chaplains office is LCDR J. W. Poole, CHC, USN: (703) 614-4720; DSN 224-4720.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. R. Ferguson".

M. R. FERGUSON  
Executive Assistant to the  
Chief of Chaplains