



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

IN REPLY REFER TO
1300
Ser N097/00212
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Greetings Chaplains:

A matter of great importance to the Navy Chaplain Corps is the fact of our sea-shore billet imbalance. This imbalance impedes our service to the Navy.

Currently, of the 911 CHC billets only 28 percent (257) are Sea Duty assignments. Understandably, it follows that the fleet will be underserved unless corrective action is taken. On any given day, more than 30 percent of our operational forces are away from homeport without an embarked Religious Ministry Support Team aboard. This challenge must be met.

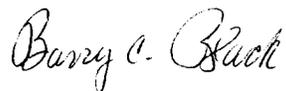
The Vice Chief of Naval Operations shares my concern on this matter. Accordingly, he has directed the Chaplain Corps to develop a methodology by which to identify fleet and shore requirements, in order to realign a selected number of shore billets to support USN operational units. The number of billets targeted for realignment will range from 80 to 90. This small number of realigned billets constitutes an exceedingly reasonable step by a Chaplain Corps with 911 billets.

These are exciting times for our Corps, but I have been disappointed by a recent development. In my travels, I have encountered chaplains who have received misinformation. There are reports of chaplains making rash claims that current realignment initiatives are a ploy to close shore chapels, blur faith group distinctives, or refashion chaplains into non-ministerial personas such as "Counselor Troy" on Star Trek. These are erroneous and destructive kinds of rumors--and all in response to an increase in our Sea Duty billets of less than ten percent! The truth is, we are committed to serving Sailors at Sea, and we are going to demonstrate that commitment by expanding the sacred ministry of Navy chaplains afloat, while continuing to meet the free exercise needs of those ashore. I am sharing this with you so that you will understand the moves afoot, and so that you will counter misinformation with the truth.

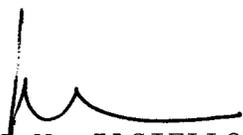
We are a Corps with a proud heritage. Our history was built on a commitment to serve those who answered the Nation's call to serve at sea. The CNO, VCNO, and Fleet Commanders support our

efforts. Now is the time for us to act in good faith in order to care for those who go down to the sea in ships. In testimony of our shared vision, I have asked Chaplains Iasiello and Bigger to join me in signing this letter. Thank you for your good work. God bless you.

Sincerely,



BARRY C. BLACK
Rear Admiral, CHC, U.S. Navy
Chief of Chaplains



LOUIS V. IASIELLO
Rear Admiral, CHC, U.S. Navy
Chaplain Of the Marine Corps
Deputy Chief of Chaplains



DAROLD F. BIGGER
Rear Admiral, CHC,
U.S. Naval Reserve
Deputy Chief of Chaplains
for Total Force

THE NAVY CHAPLAIN CORPS' VISION STATEMENT: "WE WILL UNITE AND DELIVER INNOVATIVE, LIFE TRANSFORMING SERVICE THROUGHOUT AND BEYOND THE SEA SERVICES."