



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

IN REPLY REFER TO

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15 Jun 01

Dear Colleagues:

I am headed for the USS PELELIU (LHA-5) in a helicopter flying a few thousand feet over the Pacific Ocean accompanied by Chaplain Steve Hicks and Master Chief Larry Darnell. I get underway each quarter to take the pulse of operational ministry—to listen and to learn. These visits enable me to better advise Sea Services leaders on current concerns and to educate people regarding your great work. It is invigorating to participate in military training with Sailors, to walk the decks, eat with the crew and to be gently rocked to sleep after offering evening prayer.

Before heading for the ship, I spent a profitable few days at the Professional Development Training Course at MCB, Camp Pendleton. This training enabled me to meet with chaplains, RPs, and facilitators to give them an overview of our Corps' strategic direction. I shared two meals with Dr. Shriver, Dr. Montville, and area chaplains, exploring ways to build on the wonderful momentum of this year's training.

We've landed. Hearing the LMC announcement, "Chaplain Corps, arriving," still humbles me. What an awesome responsibility! Yet, in a sense, the Chaplain Corps arrives when any chaplain comes aboard a ship, base or station. Each of us represents our Corps. The only Chaplain Corps many will know is the one they see in you.

The spirit on this ship is high. I engage in worship preparation and pay courtesy calls on the Commodore, CO, and MEU (SOC) Commander. I interact with ship's company—what an awesome crew! They're excited about going to sea and eager to make a difference. With all of their sacrifices, the crewmembers appear genuinely grateful for the opportunity to serve. I feel fortunate to spend a few days at sea with these great Americans.

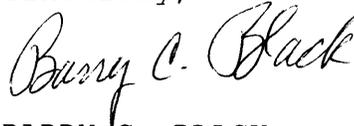
PELELIU pulls into San Diego and Master Chief and I depart the ship to visit bases on North Island and Coronado. After paying a courtesy call on COMNAVSURFPAC, we visit MCRD San Diego, and enjoy lunch with MCAS Miramar chaplains. We drop by the 32nd Street Chaplains' Office and later attend a regional chaplains

meeting at Murphy Canyon Chapel. We spend quality time engaging chaplains and RPs in conversation and responding to their questions.

As Master Chief and I head back to DC, I feel like a college student. I've learned about issues I need to address and I have received inspiration from many unsung heroes and heroines who quietly deliver innovative, life-transforming service to God's people.

I am proud of you and all you do, everyday, to serve God and our great Nation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Barry C. Black". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial "B".

BARRY C. BLACK
Rear Admiral, CHC, U.S. Navy