



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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Dear Colleagues:

January 15, 2003, marks the 24th anniversary of the Religious Program Specialist (RP) rating. As we approach that milestone, RPs serve faithfully all over the globe in support of Sea Services men, women, and families. Even now, Religious Ministry Teams (RMTs) sail directly into harm's way (with others preparing to join them).

Surely God blessed our Chaplain Corps and the Sea Services in 1979 when the RP rating was born. On that special day, the Navy established a rating dedicated to supporting chaplains in providing for the Constitutionally guaranteed right of all Sea Services personnel to the free exercise of religion.

In preparation for the celebration of the RP rating's 24th birthday, we announce the establishment of the Outstanding RP of the Year Program. The recently signed *OPNAV Instruction 1650.27* officially authorizes the program. This program will acknowledge the outstanding contributions RPs make in our Navy and Marine Corps. RPs in pay grades E-1 through E-6 will compete in four categories: sea and shore, Junior and Senior RP of the Year. You can read the directive on the Chaplain Corps website.

The Outstanding RP of the Year Program is another way to recognize and reward the hard work and the dedication of our Navy/Marine Corps team RPs. As you celebrate the RP birthday, remember that each of you is a vital member of the RMT.

We feel proud of you and the rich history we share. Happy Birthday RPs! God bless you all.

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