



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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10 Jun 03

Dear Colleagues:

Last week I met with Doctor David Chu, the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness. Dr. Chu asked me questions that have long-range implications for Chaplain Corps' ministry and the Sea Services family. We began our discussion with return and reunion matters. How are Navy Chaplains providing ministry to those who will face inevitable re-entry challenges? Are we supporting our people after the media and the cameras have gone away? When the flowers and banners are discarded, are we still a critical link in the wellness chain? Are we building alliances with Family Service Center staff members to ensure we continue to make positive contributions to the intervention process?

I answered "Yes" to these questions, knowing that you are keenly aware that military people returning home face mammoth challenges, particularly those who were unexpectedly extended at sea or overseas. These challenges come in many forms, but a critical challenge is adjusting to redefined roles of husband, wife, or parent and the inevitable stress involved. Some patriotic Americans also come back to face new roles as first-time fathers, or to weather the storms of infidelity or divorce. They re-enter a home where their cherished dreams and high expectations can meet a shocking reality. This reality can wreak personal and relational havoc.

Dr. Chu was also interested in the impact of combat stress on our personnel. Combat often exacts a deep emotional toll, sometimes permanently affecting individuals who have taken a life, been wounded, or experienced combat stress. Dr. Chu asked me if chaplains have helped people feel safe to express their emotional turmoil. Have we given them an opportunity to air their misgivings in a safe environment of confidentiality? Have we initiated programs and training opportunities to constructively meet these difficulties?

I told him the Chaplain Corps was the first line of defense in dealing with combat stress. The Warrior Transition initiative spearheaded by CREDO personnel and many other contributors are

receiving high marks from participants and their leaders. Your efforts make a significant difference in minimizing the negative impact of combat stress and extended separation. I am proud of all of you and pray that the One we serve will continue to anoint your efforts in delivering life-transforming service throughout and beyond the Sea Services. God bless you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Barry Black". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned centrally below the word "Sincerely,".

Barry C. Black
Rear Admiral, U.S. Navy
Chief of Chaplains