



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

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IN REPLY REFER TO

Ser N097/02194

JUL 11 2002

Dear Colleagues:

Recently, Congress passed the FY 03 Defense Authorization Bill. Included in the Bill (SEC. 1069. COMMENDATION OF MILITARY CHAPLAINS) is a commendation of military chaplains. Here's what Congress said:

(1) Military chaplains have served with those who fought for the cause of freedom since the founding of the Nation.

(2) Military chaplains and religious support personnel of the Armed Forces have served with distinction as uniformed members of the Armed Forces in support of the Nation's defense missions during every conflict in the history of the United States.

(3) 400 United States military chaplains have died in combat, some as a result of direct fire while ministering to fallen Americans, while others made the ultimate sacrifice as a prisoner of war.

(4) Military chaplains currently serve in humanitarian operations, rotational deployments, and in the war on terrorism.

(5) Religious organizations make up the very fabric of religious diversity and represent unparalleled levels of freedom of conscience, speech, and worship that set the United States apart from any other nation on Earth.

(6) Religious organizations have richly blessed the uniformed services by sending clergy to comfort and encourage all persons of faith in the Armed Forces.

(7) During the sinking of the USS Dorchester in February 1943 during World War II, four chaplains (Reverend Fox, Reverend Poling, Father Washington, and Rabbi Goode) gave their lives so that others might live.

(8) All military chaplains aid and assist members of the Armed Forces and their family members with the challenging issues of today's world.

(9) The current war against terrorism has brought to the shores of the United States new threats and concerns that strike at the beliefs and emotions of Americans.

(10) Military chaplains must, as never before, deal with the spiritual well-being of the members of the Armed Forces and their families.

(b) COMMENDATION- Congress, on behalf of the Nation, expresses its appreciation for the outstanding contribution that all military chaplains make to the members of the Armed Forces and their families.

(c) PRESIDENTIAL PROCLAMATION- The President is authorized and requested to issue a proclamation calling on the people of the United States to recognize the distinguished service of the Nation's military chaplains.

Your service to our Nation in peace and war has positively impacted the lives of countless Sea Services personnel and their family members. I add my thanks to that above for all you do every day to serve God and Country.

Sincerely,



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