



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS
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Dear Colleagues:

The days since the terrorist tragedy move swiftly by, and God's sovereignty and providence continue to sustain us. This update will inform you of chaplain and RP involvement in delivering innovative, life-transforming service in the midst of sadness.

First, in response to calls of concern about my safety, let me assure you that my family and I are well, as is the rest of my staff. Chaplain Phil Wyrick, Master Chief Darnell, and I were submerged in the Pacific Ocean, in a Trident submarine, when the terrorist attacks occurred. We ended up spending more than a week onboard, providing ministry under the sea: conducting training, leading worship, engaging in counseling, and helping sailors deal with our national tragedy. The patriotism, diligence, and sacrifice of these undersea crews are truly exemplary. I felt proud to wear the same uniform as these submariners who give so much.

Second, an outpouring of patriotic support has come from our retired community. Many retired chaplains have expressed a desire to return to active duty. These experienced clerics eagerly desire to do whatever is necessary to keep our nation strong. Though we don't anticipate recalling retirees, I am inspired by their sacrificial spirit.

Third, working with counterparts from our sister services, our active and reserve chaplains and RPs have rendered invaluable support during this tragedy. More than thirty Navy chaplains have been working in D.C., living our vision by providing life-transforming outreach. They have participated with medical and litter bearer teams, visited and prayed with the injured. From a "Chaplain" tent set up at the Pentagon, our people went out to provide ministry to firefighters and other emergency personnel. Chaplains and RPs have been involved from the beginning, touching hurting lives.

And we're not done. My office continues a twenty-four hour watch. Chaplains are still assisting CACOs, laboring at the Joint Family Assistance Center in Crystal City and at Dover Air Force Base where the remains of shipmates and friends are taken.

This crisis demonstrates how you are willing to go beyond the call of duty during times of extremity. You have transformed rhetoric into action.

Almost a dozen of our chaplains labor at Ground Zero in New York. Eight are part of the Coast Guard Emergency Response Team, assisting medical examiners, police, firefighters, and the American Red Cross. The Merchant Marine Academy chaplains and Reserve chaplains with special skills are also there. We have received laudatory reports on all their efforts.

At quarters here at the Navy Annex yesterday, Admiral Fallon, the Vice Chief of Naval Operations, presented SK2 Taitt with the Purple Heart for wounds received while serving aboard USS COLE (DDG 67) on 12 October last year. I was asked to deliver the invocation and prayed the following prayer:

O Lord God of Hosts, in whose hands are life and death, by whose power we're sustained and by whose mercies we are spared, make us remember that every day is your gift. As we engage in a new war, protect us in danger. Give us patience in suffering and moderation in victory. Look with compassion on those injured in the terrorist attacks. Comfort us who mourn. Sanctify us in our trials, and turn our hearts to you. O gracious God, who makes wars to cease in all the world, restore to us speedily the blessing of peace, and grant that our present troubles may be overcome for your glory. Hear O Lord and answer us. Amen.

The future will require our greatest faith and fortitude. Continue to pray that God will continue to "work things together for the good of those who love Him and are called according to His purposes" (Romans 8:28).

Gratefully,



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