



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

IN REPLY REFER TO

1730  
SerN097/03025  
24 Jan 03

Dear Colleagues:

Master Chief Person and I recently returned from another trip to Southwest Asia accompanying the Chief of Naval Operations and Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy in visiting Navy United States Naval Forces Central Command units in Bahrain and the Persian Gulf. I was privileged to join MCPON and CNO in speaking to Naval Support Activity staff members; a combined group of Fast Attack Submarines, Coastal Mine Hunters, Mine Counter Measures and Explosive Ordnance Disposal Mobile Unit Sailors; and aboard the CONSTELLATION, MILLIUS, and BUNKER HILL. At every command I was inspired by officers and enlisted members. I saw patriotism and sacrifice manifested in devotion to duty and team work. Some were concerned, but all were optimistic. Many missed loved ones, but told me that they are committed to their mission and are proud to serve their country, even in harm's way.

Navy Central Command chaplains and RPs, ashore and at sea, are doing wonderful work. Worship services, prayer meetings, religious education classes, and discussion groups are vibrant and well attended. Crewmembers know their chaplains and RPs and esteem them as pastors and shipmates. Commanding Officers told me that their chaplains and RPs contribute significantly to spiritual readiness and morale. Command Chaplains are trusted confidants and advisors to command.

Many of you are deployed to other places in the world. Your ministry is also vital to the health and welfare of those you serve. Whether you are at sea on extended deployment, ashore in a distant land, or here in the United States, your commitment to serving Sea Services men and women and their families is a blessing to God and your country. I appreciate your deep faith, and courage to serve God's people in peace and war.

We do not know what the future holds, but we do know *Who* holds the future. Your passion for prayer, worship, sacred study, liturgy, preaching, and the spiritual disciplines will equip you for whatever you may face. My staff and I remember you in prayer every time we meet for morning devotions. You will

remain on our hearts and minds as our forces face the possibility of combat. Let me close with a short passage that I pray gives you blessed assurance in times of tribulation.

"The salvation of the righteous comes from the LORD; he is their stronghold in time of trouble. The LORD helps them and delivers them; he delivers them from the wicked and saves them, because they take refuge in him." (Psalm 37:39-40) God Bless you all.

*Barry C. Black*

BARRY C. BLACK

Rear Admiral, Chaplain Corps  
Chief of Chaplains