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

IN REPLY REFER TO
1730
Ser N097/02381
25 Oct 02

Dear Colleagues,

Recently, the crew of the USS HARRY S. TRUMAN (CVN 75) hosted me for an exhilarating visit. I was accompanied by Chaplain Jay Magness, the Atlantic Fleet Chaplain, Chaplain Bob Williams, his deputy, Master Chief Person, my Senior Enlisted Advisor and RP3 Mohr, N097 Admin Assistant. The indomitable spirit of the carrier's namesake lives in every passageway and department of the ship. The guests aboard this ship were caught up in the contagious patriotism of the Sailors who anticipate going into harm's way to support and defend our national interests. After witnessing the comprehensive nature of the Command Religious Program and how it permeated shipboard life, I spent the remainder of my visit rejoicing in the crew's spiritual strength.

The ship's spiritual pulse reflected a depth of faith on the part of officers, enlisted, and family members. Families rallied behind their Sailors. As a direct result of this family support and of every Sailor pulling his or her weight, the work ethic and productivity of crewmembers were high. The TRUMAN ethos of "The Buck Stops Here," was further demonstrated in the flawless coordination of flight operations. Each crewmember knows, regardless of rating, rank, position or paygrade, his or her specialty contributes to the ship's overall mission. What chaplains know intuitively regarding the triad of faith, family, and fraternity, is readily apparent on the TRUMAN. This sends an unmistakable message to our senior leadership concerning the tangible and intangible benefits of a Command Religious Program.

Many guests recognized and commented on the wellness of the ship—a wellness revolving around a spiritual hub. An energetic group of retired Sailors, among them Vice Admiral Allen, bore testimony to the solidarity of the crew and its commitment to the highest standards of excellence. These retirees also observed a spirit of wholeness, which was punctuated by the vibrancy and spontaneity of the worship services. You know your ship is well when retirees are saying, "Sign me up! I am ready to go back to sea!" As they recessed from the worship services, you could tell they were in seventh heaven.

I am grateful to the crew of the USS HARRY S. TRUMAN, who made my visit a truly memorable experience. More importantly, I am thankful to the chaplains and Religious Program Specialists of the TRUMAN for demonstrating the dynamic impact of religious ministry. Every Sailor, Marine, and Coast Guardsman we reach with the Command Religious Program is a Sailor, Marine, or Coast Guardsmen who knows he or she has someone ensuring the free exercise of religion. How blessed we are to be a part of such a professional community. How blessed we are to be in a position to bless others.

Barry Black

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