



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

1730 IN REPLY REFER TO
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Dear Colleagues:

The first stanza of Rudyard Kipling's poem, *Recessional*, reminds me of what our Corps represents to Sea Services people:

God of our fathers, known of old --
Lord of our far-flung battle line --
Beneath whose awful hand we hold
Dominion over palm and pine --
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget -- lest we forget!

Our community of chaplains signifies God's presence in the midst of men and women who go into harm's way. All of our energy, innovation, and initiative must focus on the people we are called to serve. As the Chief of Chaplains, I represent our Corps and inform the Navy's senior leadership about the difference your ministry makes in the lives of the people you serve.

During a recent status report to the Chief of Naval Operations (CNO), I emphasized three basic areas: training, presence, and devotional life. I want our senior leaders to understand how these three elements are interrelated and complement each other. While training enhances our presence, our devotional life envelops our presence.

With regard to training, I described to the CNO how our PDTW on "Preaching to the Institution" prepares chaplains to be more effective communicators in the institutional milieu. Additionally, the Norfolk Chaplain Conference on "Institutional Ministry" was designed to assist chaplains in making an impact on the total institution of the Sea Services. I gave examples of our presence in recruiting, internal communications, public relations, and inter-service contacts. We have intensified our efforts to recruit at the seminary level, which has contributed to achieving 60% of our recruiting goal. I enjoyed exchanging insights with several of our chaplains engaged in a wide variety of ministry settings. In recent media interviews, I accentuated how our chaplains are continuing to respond in the aftermath of Nine-Eleven. The Armed Forces Chaplain Board continues to serve as an indispensable platform for promoting cooperative ministry efforts with our sister services.

Yet, our devotional life remains one of the most distinctive marks of our identity. A senior line officer, who served as a member of one of our selection boards, commented to a fellow chaplain on my custom of praying during the selection board process. He stated, "I wish we prayed at all of our boards." Similar remarks were shared with me on Monday after I delivered the invocation at the annual Goddard Memorial Dinner. The bedrock of our identity as chaplains is our devotional life. Please know that the chaplains on my staff regularly meet to pray for our Corps, our RPs, our leadership, and those we serve. I ask you to do likewise in your personal devotions.

A recurring phrase in Kipling's poem is "Lest we forget". Lest we forget, we serve God and we point the men and women of the Sea Services to God. As a Corps, we remind the Department of the Navy of its responsibility to ensure the free exercise of religion. As a Corps, we train to enhance our ministry of presence, as we ask God to envelop us with His presence.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Barry C. Black". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name and title.

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