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## Admiral's Call: Chaplain Darold Bigger

### News From the Front

Master Chief Fryer and I recently returned from visiting Religious Ministry Teams (RMTs) and those they serve in Kuwait, Iraq, Djibouti and Okinawa. Reservists have integrated into their commands and are performing admirably and transparently side by side with their full time counterparts. We were very proud of them all.

In the sandy fields, base tents, and concrete hangers; out of trucks and HMMWVs — RMTs are doing what they are trained and called to do: enhance the moral, ethical, spiritual and religious lives of Sailors and Marines. We saw their chapels in air conditioned tents, under cameo nets and in new plywood and permanent buildings. We witnessed them visiting orphanages and villages, working with local residents in the bazaar, training with their units and learning about diverse cultures in parts of the world they may only have dreamed of visiting.



Chaplain Darold Bigger (far right) and RPCM Fryer (far left) with reserve Chaplain Rodriguez and RP3 Correa in Kuwait.

Some were where they expected to be, doing what they expected to do. Many were adjusting to changes in plans and adapting to emerging needs. Others seemed to be forever preparing or supporting the rear. All play an essential role in carrying out a crucial mission.

Our overall impression is summed up by two sentences in Chaplain Iasiello's initial letter to the Corps: "Throughout the Corps, chaplains and RPs report their enthusiasm for being part of our Corps. Despite the challenges of war, deployment, change and stress, the Chaplain Corps is healthy and eagerly looks toward the future."

Thanks to you all for being an important part of our team — from the sands of Iraq to the reserve centers of each Hometown, USA.

Cordially,

Darold Bigger

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The Religious Ministries Newsletter is published for Naval Reserve chaplains and RPs who serve with Naval Reserve Forces Command, the Marine Forces Reserve, and the US Coast Guard.

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## For Your Information

Congratulations to **Chaplain Michael Inouye**. As a Naval Reserve chaplain, he has been asked to serve as Acting PACFLT and PACOM chaplain.

Congratulations to **Chaplain Steve Gammon** upon his appointment as the Conference Minister of the Conservative Congregational Christian Church. He is now the Chief Executive of his denomination.

# FYI

Just a reminder: **the Basic Course** conducted at the Naval Chaplain School in Newport, Rhode Island does not need to be taken in one eight-week section. Chaplain Bert Moore, Director of the Naval Chaplains School, reports that it may be split. This is good news for reservists!

**Rear Admiral John G. Cotton** has been selected to the rank of Vice Admiral and has been appointed as the Chief of Naval Reserve.

Thank you for your prayers for **Chaplain Paul Smith**. Tests revealed the growth was benign. Please continue to remember our colleague in prayer that there would be no further problem in this area.

The **U.S. Naval Register** is now available online. This resource includes lineal listings for all officers, including active, reserve, and retired. Go to: [https://buperscd.technology.navy.mil/bup\\_updt/upd\\_CD/BUPERS/Register/RegOpenMenu.html](https://buperscd.technology.navy.mil/bup_updt/upd_CD/BUPERS/Register/RegOpenMenu.html).

**Telecommuting** is now an option for some reservists. The pertinent message is ALNAVRESFOR 028/03. A page 13 is required and is available for download at the CNRFC website under the Manpower/Community Management tab.

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## No More Microfiche Records

Beginning September 1, 2003, all Active and Reserve USN/USNR copies of the Official Military Personnel File (OMPF) in the Electronic Military Personnel Records System (EMPRS) will be provided on Compact Disk (CD).

New CD features include:

- Auto load feature from any PC with Microsoft Windows 95 or higher
  - Document list for easy navigating through CD
  - Procedures for record correction process
  - Hyperlinks to frequently asked questions and other resources
  - Documents secured by an "Official Record Copy" watermark and may be printed if desired
- (cont'd on page 3)*

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## No More Microfiche (Cont.)

- Print copies from your personal computer if desired
- No more trying to find a microfiche reader
- No more out-of-pocket expense (\$4.00) for Microfiche Viewer
- No more “How can I print a paper copy?”

Record ordering procedures are the same as for requesting a microfiche copy:

1. The CD can be requested via Mail, FAX, or in person at the Tennessee Record Review Room at Wood Hall, (Bldg 769), User Services, BUPERS, Millington and on BUPERS Online. Your CD will be sent to your official command address. If you would like to have your CD sent to other than your command address, mail or fax your written request.

2. CDs may be requested for individual servicemembers. Additionally, multi-member requests may be made when deployed/disconnected commands desire the records for members within their command. The records may be placed on single CDs by member or multiple members on a single CD, depending on intended use.

3. When a member requests his or her record, the entire record is available for viewing on the CD. When a command authority makes a request for multiple member records, record documents will be provided in accordance with current policy (for example, fitness reports will be excluded from an officer's record).

4. A request management system will assist NPC throughout the fulfillment process to ensure requests are fulfilled in a timely manner.

Contact point for specific additional information is Jim Laudermilk at (901) 874-3406.



*Servicemembers' Official Military Personnel file is now available on CD from BUPERS*

## Ministry in Southwest Asia



This past summer, Admiral Darold Bigger and RPCM William Fryer visited chaplains and RPs, active and reserve, in Southwest Asia. The following photos are descriptive of their ministry to our deployed colleagues.

*Naval Reserve Chaplain David Glassmire shares photos with Marines while waiting for a C-130 transport. Chaplain Glassmire recently returned from deployment in the Southwest Asia*

*cont'd on page 4*

## *Ministry in South West Asia (Cont.)*



*MEF and Air Force RMTs gathered at the Babylon, Iraq Chapel.*

*RPs Link and Gilbert standing with Chaplain Bigger and RPCM Fryer.*



*Left to Right: RP3 Sherard, Chaplain Lavastida, Chaplain Bigger, RPCM Fryer.*



*Chaplain Bigger with coalition officers from Korea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Saudi Arabia and France in Djibouti, Africa. (Photo by Combat Camera Djibouti)*



## Ministry in South West Asia (Cont.)



*Chaplains Darold Bigger and Chuck Roots, along with an Army civil affairs officer, visit with a village chief in Africa. (Photo by Combat Camera, Djibouti)*



*Chaplain Darold Bigger (left) and RPCM William Fryer (right), with babies from an orphanage in Djibouti, Africa. (Photo by Combat Camera Djibouti)*



*Chaplain Inman and RP3 McGuire at Division HQ in Babylon*



## A Reserve Chaplain's Letter Home

*Chaplain David Glassmire, a Roman Catholic priest, was recalled to active duty and sent the Gulf. After a lengthy tour, he and his unit were anticipating the trip home that would come any day... but the General brought some disappointing news. Chaplain Glassmire provides a candid, revealing window into the life of a deployed Naval Reserve chaplain.*

Hi Everyone:

Some of you might have heard by now that there has been a slight hiccup in the system. Just another time to pause and reflect and spin this in a positive light, seeing the glass half full — but my cup does not runneth over with joy! Thank God for the support of friends and family. Perhaps I turned off the care package log train a bit pre-maturely. As Steinbeck writes, "...the best laid plans of mice and men often go astray." I want you to know that inbetween these slight distractions and personnel issues, I am gaining in wisdom, age, and grace, especially the virtue of patience. As Paul says, "Bear with one another lovingly!" I just hope we are not here long enough for me to begin uttering, *bah humbug!* I am glad I kept my winter outer wear with me before returning to Buffalo. Addie, you can count on another trip to the Dominican Republic in January!

The commanding general (CG) for 1 MEF, our immediate senior in the chain of command, was here on Friday to rally the troops. Imagine the

scene: 110+ ° and hundreds of Marines gathered around the flagpole awaiting the news. Although the general put a positive spin on his delivery, it was not good news. So, there you have it — extended without a timeline. The only saving grace is that the situation is being reassessed today. I guess we were spared, in that this news wasn't delivered on the Feast of the Triumph of the Holy Cross, or much less on the Feast of Our Lady of Sorrows. That would have been just too much to bear.

We had a large gathering last night for dinner, with the assistant wing commander, our "one star," as a guest. My stomach was too knotted up to eat, so I resorted to comfort food in my hooch. I must say that I am getting caught up on my reading. I have read more in the last six months than in two years previous. It is a diversion from the tedium that begets stress out here all too easily.

How are many of you? This e-mail thing sure beats snail mail. (By the way, the turn-around time is now about 7-10 days for regular mail, although I have seen things delayed over a month.) We are nearly through our powdered beverage drinks and all out of cookies. I have one more can of sardines left and then it is off to the market. The question is, how long will the PX/BX operate?

Everyone is on hold. Units are leaving — albeit slower than previously scheduled. I anticipate a bottleneck here within the next few days. Meanwhile, I am occupied with a variety of activities.

I have my weekly staff meeting today and the commander's brief tomorrow. I have learned to play Parcheesi, the royal game of India (similar to our American game of "Sorry").

I look forward to returning to San Diego to complete some loose odds and ends and, of course, the good food. Even greater will be getting in touch with old friends. As autumn sets in and the children go back for yet another school year — as I grow older and begin to put my life into perspective I appreciate the simple and ordinary things of life often taken for granted.

You are all in my thoughts and prayers. Take time to write — it keeps my disposition favorable and, as you know, this has a ripple effect. Once again, for everything you all have done for me and for our Marines and Sailors, thank you. Keep up the prayers and letters. Take care of yourselves. I hope to have an update to you soon with some positive news. We will be coming home, just when remains to be seen.

Cheers!  
Dave

*Chaplain Glassmire returned to San Diego in late September.*



*Chaplain David Glassmire shares a photo on his digital camera with a Marine while they await transportation in the Gulf.*

## Welcome Home!

Chaplain Gregory Horn served with the Third Marine Aircraft Wing at Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) Miramar, California. In this letter he speaks of the return from Iraq of the first squadron of the 3rd MAW.

Dear Friends:

I cannot tell you what an exceptionally emotional experience it was to be present when our first squadron (VMFA 225-AW) flew back into MCAS Miramar from their Operation Iraqi Freedom deployment. The flight line was jammed with expectant family members, friends and wing-mates! Yellow ribbons and flags and cheers; the U.S. Marine Corps band stirring up the air — then finally ear-splitting thunder as the 12 F/A-18 fighter jets shot overhead. The three sections of four planes each flew at tree top level, then banked hard left for a “top gun” pass before landing. As they taxied onto the tarmac and pulled up in formation, the engines and crowd screamed in unison. Then complete silence — the crowd stilled as the engines wound down. But when the canopies on the 12 planes started to rise, a roaring cheer arose. Attached to each was the flag we so dearly love and that our crews had risked their lives to protect. WOW!

Tears of joy now replaced what had been, for many months, tears of fear. You have all been so supportive of our military men and women, and especially of me and the Marines and Sailors of the Third Marine Aircraft Wing. Please enjoy these photos and put yourself on that flight line as this scene is repeated over the next 3 or 4 months until all are home safe. Continue to pray for their safety in this retrograde, as it is still a dangerous business.

Once home, the chaplains are working with our warriors to help them ease the transition to home and family. We are also working with the spouses and families to prepare them for their reunions and assist them in understanding how their Marine or Sailor might respond to their war experience. It is a wonderful change of “mission” from our previous duties in casualty notification and support.

God bless you for your support and prayers for our warriors and their families, and for us who are honored to take care of them.

*SEMPER FI!*



*The Vikings of VMFA 225-AW return home to MCAS Miramar after service in Iraq*

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MINISTRIES NEWSLETTER ARE  
AVAILABLE AT:  
[HTTP://WWW.CHAPLAIN.NAVY.MIL](http://www.chaplain.navy.mil)

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*"Support the Navy-Marine Corps team  
with mission ready units, equipment, and individuals  
throughout the full range of operations from peace to war."*

*United States Naval Reserve chaplains and Religious Program Specialists serve the needs of the men and women of the United States Navy, United States Marine Corps and the United States Coast Guard by providing for the free exercise of religion and spiritual ministry around the world. Actively serving during peacetime, Naval Reserve chaplains and RPs are also available for mobilization in time of war to meet the needs of sea service personnel whenever and wherever they are called upon.*

