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From: Division Director, Operations and Policy

To: Distribution

Subj: POLICY POINT: CHAPLAINS AND WARFARE PINS

1. **Question.** Should a Navy Chaplain attempt to earn a warfare pin? What are the consequences or ramifications?

2. **Policy Statements.**

a. NWP 1-05, (1.8.2., Appropriate Use and Duties): "Chaplains are noncombatants as prescribed by the Geneva Convention and, therefore, do not bear arms, work for, or obtain professional warfare specialty designations. Though this does not preclude chaplains from gaining experience or knowledge about warfighting, utmost discretion and moral judgment must be used when engaging in these activities."

b. SECNAVINST 1730.7B - para 4.a (b) "Chaplains shall be detailed or permitted to perform only such duties as are related to religious ministry support. Chaplains shall not bear arms."

3. **Policy Shop Discussion.** Chaplains who seek to earn a warfare pin do so in contravention to written policy. A chaplain's desire to pursue a warfare qualification raises a number of issues, including the priority of ministry for that individual and his/her commitment to protecting the status of fellow chaplains as noncombatants. The noncombatant status of chaplains in combat requires that we do more than simply refrain from carrying or using weapons; it requires a *noncombatant state-of-mind*. Programs leading to warfare qualification militate against a noncombatant state-of-mind. While there are variations between the different warfare communities, the paths to obtaining the qualifications involve explicitly combatant requirements such as qualifying with one's assigned weapon, being fully competent in military tactics and weapons systems, and standing watches either under arms or with weapons release authority. Some components of such a program would violate the spirit, if not the letter, of policy that prohibits chaplains from bearing arms and standing watches other than that of duty chaplain.

A chaplain's full time assignment to religious ministry is required by policy and deserved by those to whom we are called to serve. How we choose to utilize our time can make a powerful statement regarding our sense of calling. Who we are and what we do as chaplains is of great value and should be accompanied by a commitment to excellence *as religious leaders*. Sailors, Marines and Coast Guardsmen value our time, ministerial skills and presence for spiritual ends. Each of us need to take the time to pray, reflect, and study so that we can do our part in bringing healing to the wounded, understanding to the confused, hope to the discouraged, and peace in the midst of war.

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