



RHUMB LINES

Straight Lines to Navigate By



November 24, 2010

Navy Chaplains – Called to Serve

“Chaplains provide an invaluable service to our Sailors, their family members, our commands and the Navy overall. Like the mortar between the bricks, chaplains support the commander’s objectives, build morale and enhance mission accomplishment. The chaplain is key to helping our people maintain Navy standards of conduct.”

– Vice Adm. Al Myers, Commander, Naval Air Forces/Commander, Naval Air Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet

Nov. 28 marks the 235th birthday of the Navy Chaplain Corps. This day commemorates the Continental Congress’ adoption of the Rules for the Regulation of the Navy of the United Colonies of North America. Article 2 of these rules stated: “The commanders of the ships of the 13 United Colonies are to take care that [divine service](#) be performed twice a day on board, and a sermon preached on Sundays, unless bad weather or other extraordinary accidents prevent it.” Today, Navy chaplains serve throughout the maritime services – Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard – and in every environment, taking care of the nation’s most valuable resource: Sailors, Marines, Coast Guardsmen, and their devoted families.

Readiness Programs

- Chaplains deliver a variety of programs and services vital to the readiness and resiliency of naval service personnel and their families, ranging from worship services to pastoral counseling to crisis intervention.
- A re-Sailorization program called “About Face” started on board USS Ronald Reagan (CVN 76) and expanded to USS Nimitz (CVN 68) and [USS George H. W. Bush](#) (CVN 77). This program provides commanding officers with an alternative form of extra military instruction at non judicial punishment (NJP). Working with the chaplain, Sailors who complete the program have shown a marked improvement in performance and dramatically reduced recidivism for NJP.
- Chaplain Religious Enrichment Development Operation provides transformational retreat-based programs designed to assist participants in developing spiritual resources necessary to excel in the military.

Partnerships

- Chaplains help military and civilian personnel by building partnerships with command and local human service providers such as ombudsmen, family readiness groups, Fleet and Family Support Centers, the Red Cross, food banks, and clergy associations.
- Afloat and abroad, Navy chaplains coordinate community building events. From Operation Handclasp to [regional partnership missions](#), chaplains and religious program specialists coordinate events including the distribution of medical and school supplies, painting and renovating community buildings, and [sporting events](#).

Key Messages

- The strength of the naval service comes from its people. Navy chaplains are key to ensuring the resiliency of Sailors, Marines, and Coast Guardsmen.
- Navy chaplains represent nearly 100 faith groups and tend to the spiritual, physical and emotional welfare of Sailors, regardless of faith or creed.
- Chaplains are available to service members 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, helping enhance readiness and strengthen the personal and professional lives of those in need.
- Chaplain Care resources including prayers, self-help studies, and devotionals are available online at <http://www.chaplaincare.navy.mil>

Facts & Figures

- The Navy Chaplain Corps includes 1,070 active and reserve component chaplains serving at Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard commands. Eighty percent are preparing for, are currently on, or recently returned from either a deployment, or an Individual Augmentee assignment.
- On average, Carrier Strike Groups have 5-7 chaplains assigned; [Amphibious](#) Readiness Groups have 4-6 chaplains embarked; and most Marine units have one chaplain embedded.
- 1,000 Religious Program Specialists assist chaplains with logistical, administrative and combatant security duties.