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

IN REPLY REFER TO
11 May 01

Dear Colleagues in Ministry,

I am pleased to announce the official unveiling of the new United States Navy Chaplain Corps seal. At our Senior Leadership Conference in March, I briefed the leaders of our Corps. Specifically I said,

> Currently, we are the only Navy staff corps represented by three separate collar devices: the cross, tablets and crescent. A forth device, the eight spoke wheel has already been approved by the Navy for use when we commission our first Buddhist chaplain. Right now, the CHC seal does not bear the wheel and, in fact, we are the only military Service branch with a CHC crest bearing faith-specific imagery.
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> Well, we're not waiting for our seal to be defunct. We are embracing the fact that a CHC seal is more than a representation of chaplain demographics, the seal of the Chaplain Corps should offer a beckoning to Sea Services personnel who wear 900 different religions on their dog tags. And make no mistake that number will continue to grow. Accordingly, like the Army and the Air Force before us, I have directed the design of an inclusive CHC seal that will reflect the commitment to pluralism that you and I live each day.

A seal for the Navy Chaplain Corps was first designed in 1962 and subsequently modified in 1981 and 1996. Our new seal is the culmination of over two years of effort. The lead design agent for our crest was the US Army Institute of Heraldry--the designated agency in Department of Defense for the design of military crests. After extensive and ongoing dialog with the Chaplain Corps, they produced the new seal which is reflective of our divine calling and the people we serve.

I hope you are as pleased and proud of the new seal as I am. As with any well-designed crest, the symbology runs deep. It is important that you know the underpinnings of your Corps' seal. Accordingly, I am including the official descriptive narrative in this letter. Please ensure you share it with all hands.

"VOCATI AD SERVITIUM," inscribed on a flowing, scarlet scroll, garnished in gold, evokes the thematic underpinnings of the emblem. The words, written in heraldic Latin, read "Called to Serve." The bronze eagle, clasping in its talons the ring of a golden anchor, maintains vigilance; it is stationed as a sentinel to guard the free exercise of religion for Sea Services personnel. The open book, placed upon a blue polestar compass, suggests the doctrines, scriptures and guiding principles of religious tradition and wisdom. Additionally, it is reflective of ship's log and a chronicle of Chaplain Corps service. The date, 1775, marks the founding of the Chaplain Corps. A line, associated with mooring and rigging, encircles the emblem representing the most basic elements of seamanship. A chain, essential to anchorage, signifies security and unity. The words, "United States Navy" above the eagle identify the source of our Nation's maritime strength. The words, "Chaplain Corps" positioned at the crown of the anchor reinforce our Nation's commitment to support the faith traditions of our Service men and women. The stars, separating the words, exemplify celestial navigation and safe passage. The Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard and Merchant Service are represented through the colors of red, white, blue and gold.

Our legacy of faithfulness on raging seas, hot landing zones and in times of peace is unmatched. No ministry on earth is more important than the life of a faithful Navy chaplain. That is why I am exceedingly proud of our new crest for it reflects what we do and who we are. Display it proudly as you forge into the twenty-first century.

Sincerely,

Barry C. Black

BARRY C. BLACK
Rear Admiral, CHC, U.S. Navy