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

IN REPLY REFER TO
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Ser N097/00214
20 Oct 00

Dear Colleagues:

This has been a sad, grief-filled week for our Navy. Death is never easy but, the loss of our shipmates aboard USS COLE imposes a particularly heavy burden. This senseless act of terrorism reminds us that tomorrow is not guaranteed. The events of October 12, 2000 will be etched upon our memories for years to come.

In the midst of this suffering, our Navy Chaplains and RPs provided the highest quality of ministry. While individual names are too numerous to mention, your collective team effort is apparent. NAVCENT was timely in its immediate response, helping us get chaplains to the ship. Our Total Force has had numerous active and reserve chaplains assisting in the notification, care, and comfort of families. Atlantic Fleet/Norfolk area chaplains and RPs maintained a 24 hour Chaplain Command Center coordinating and providing myriad ministries to families and Servicemembers. They also put together a superb memorial service honoring those lost aboard USS COLE. These are but a representative sampling of our chaplains and RPs who answered the call to provide life-transforming service.

I am proud of the entire chaplain/RP team—and our extended family which supports and stands behind us when we are called to help and to provide hope to others, not only during times of crisis, but day after day. Times such as this past week highlight the importance of what you do each day of the year. Such times also remind us that when the challenge is greatest, we unite to serve.

I am proud to serve with such dedicated men and women. Your service is a tribute to our Nation and the God we serve.

Sincerely,

Barry C. Black

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