



# DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY STRATEGIC PLAN FOR RELIGIOUS MINISTRY

VERSION 1.0  
JANUARY 2019

## Table of Contents

Foreword .....	1
Introduction, Vision and Mission Statements, Strategic Environment.....	2
USN Core Themes, Religious Ministry-Aligned Goals.....	3
Goal 1: Operationalize Ministry Support in Combat .....	4
Strategic Approach	
Lines of Effort	
Goal 2: Sharpen Core Capabilities .....	5
Strategic Approach	
Lines of Effort	
Goal 3: Develop Chaplain Corps Leaders with Intentionality .....	6
Strategic Approach	
Lines of Effort	
Goal 4: Champion the Spiritual Readiness of Sailors and Marines .....	7
Strategic Approach	
Lines of Effort	
Conclusion .....	8

## FOREWORD FROM THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY AND THE CHIEF OF CHAPLAINS OF THE NAVY

Our Chaplain Corps is vital to the Navy and Marine Corps team. While Chaplains are noncombatants, they support the warfighting mission by supporting our greatest resource, our people. We could have the best processes in the world. We could have the best ships, airplanes, rifles, and tanks – but they are nothing without the Marines, Sailors, and civilian teammates who operate and maintain them. The Chaplain Corps maintains our spirit.

Religious Ministry Teams are agents of individual spiritual readiness and unit cohesion. They encourage communication, help to resolve inner struggles, highlight strategies for personal and family harmony, and contribute to a ready spirit. Religious Ministry Teams are concerned with the whole person and the readiness to do one's duty. They promote the character qualities that empower individuals to overcome adversity and help build the *esprit* of our Navy and Marine Corps team.

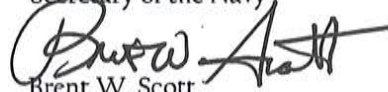
Success in modern military conflict depends on agility, both on the part of warfighters and those who support them. The Department of the Navy Strategic Plan for Religious Ministry, Version 1.0, enables agility, focusing attention on supporting ministry in combat at and from the sea, achieving excellence in the tasks associated with the Chaplain Corps' core capabilities, intentionally developing leaders, and effectively championing the spiritual readiness of Sailors and Marines.

This is not a plan written in a vacuum, but one that was shared broadly for both input and critique. It reflects the Department's intention that we continue to mature the profession of naval chaplaincy so as to best serve the men and women of the Sea Services. As leaders, whether officer or enlisted, and for every member of our Religious Ministry Teams, we must ask ourselves, "Are my daily, individual efforts building readiness?"

Every iteration of a strategic plan is an opportunity to remain faithful to the service of those who have gone before and mindful of our obligation to those yet to come. This strategic plan propels the Chaplain Corps towards excellence in the support of our warfighters, building and preserving the highest level of spiritual readiness across the Navy and Marine Corps team.



Richard V. Spencer  
Secretary of the Navy



Brent W. Scott  
Chief of Chaplains of the Navy

## EVOLUTION OF RELIGIOUS MINISTRY STRATEGIC PLANNING

This strategic plan lays out the vision, mission, goals, and lines of effort for religious ministry in the coming years. This strategic plan is a living document, responsive to changing circumstances and insights gained in execution, which will be reflected in progressive version numbers. Previous strategic plans identified enduring priorities essential to the Department of the Navy (DoN): support the free exercise of religion in war and peace, sustain capable active-duty and reserve component chaplain and Religious Program Specialists (RP) communities, collect and analyze relevant data, and communicate effectively to all stakeholders. Although the language is evolving, the goals of this strategic plan continue in that tradition.

The intent of the plan is to strengthen Professional Naval Chaplaincy (PNC) to empower every Religious Ministry Team (RMT) to offer quality ministry, pursue excellence, capture synergies, improve effectiveness, align efforts, share best practices, and mature the professionalism of naval chaplains and RPs for the benefit of all those who are served.

**Vision:** Sea Services supported in the free exercise of religion for the well-being of all, encouraged, and equipped to fulfill their honorable commitments in war and peace.

**Mission:** Minister in every echelon of command across the Sea Services and domains to build personal, unit, and family readiness and strengthen spirit, moral character, and toughness.

## EXECUTION

The Chief of Chaplains' Annual Guidance will prioritize the efforts of the professional community for each strategic goal. Echelon II RMTs will lead echelon III and IV RMTs in the formulation of annual execution plans to achieve the goals. By aligning efforts, Chaplain Corps leaders will enhance the quality of ministry delivered throughout the DoN, capturing and sharing best practices and efficiencies. The goals will focus on engagement with stakeholders across the DoN.

## STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT

The current National Defense Strategy identifies current and future threats and actors in varied battlespaces and indicates that anticipated conflicts may differ drastically from what the Sea Services have known in recent years.

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*“As directed by the 2018 National Defense Strategy, we are building a more lethal, resilient and agile force capable of deterring and defeating any enemy in this age of renewed great power competition. We are determined to increase our competitive advantages over our adversaries by focusing on our people, capabilities, and processes. The ability to accomplish our mission relies on our people – the over 800,000 Sailors and Marines, both active duty and reserve, and our civilian teammates and their families. We will continue to build a more lethal, agile, talented, and innovative workforce. We will recruit, train, and retain the best America has to offer. Our people are foundational to everything we do, so we are committed to building the strongest foundation possible.”*

*- Secretary of the Navy Richard V. Spencer*

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**NAVY CORE THEMES**

- Restore Readiness
- Increase Capabilities
- Build Capacity

**RELIGIOUS MINISTRY-ALIGNED GOALS**

- Goal 1: Operationalize Ministry Support in Combat
- Goal 2: Sharpen Core Capabilities
- Goal 3: Develop Chaplain Corps Leaders with Intentionality
- Goal 4: Champion the Spiritual Readiness of Sailors and Marines

Action	Readiness	Capabilities	Capacity
Goal 1	✓		
Goal 2		✓	
Goal 3			✓
Goal 4	✓	✓	✓



## GOAL 1: OPERATIONALIZE MINISTRY SUPPORT IN COMBAT

The Department's strategy for religious ministry must align with emerging operational requirements and concepts. The preparation for, and delivery of, religious ministry (RM) must adapt to warfighters' plans and include properly aligned RMT planning and activity from sea and shore.

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*"Our primary mission is warfighting. All our efforts to improve capabilities, develop people, and structure our organizations should be grounded in this fundamental responsibility."*

*- Admiral John M. Richardson, Chief of Naval Operations*

*"I continually stress that our core mission is the requirement to be ready to fight tonight, and to win. To that end, I established priorities to enhance our readiness and improve our lethality. Our priorities center on People, Capabilities, and Processes, and will be achieved by our focus on speed, value, results, and partnerships. Readiness, lethality, and modernization are the requirements driving these priorities." - Secretary of the Navy Richard V. Spencer*

*"In combat, we will be tested in ways we cannot imagine. Yet, if we focus on our preparedness, readiness, agility, and lethality; we will prevail on the battlefield."*

*- General Robert B. Neller, Commandant of the Marine Corps*

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### LINES OF EFFORT

- **Develop the Operational Mindset:** Focus on the skills and toughness required by RMTs to transition seamlessly to a war-footing at and from the sea. Assume an agile posture, ready for rapid deployment and support of combat operations. Be prepared to operate independently, as well as in conjunction with other RMTs, or in joint/combined/coalition environments for extended periods of ministry in expeditionary and afloat environments.
- **Improve Agility of RM Delivery:** Organize for ministry at and from the sea. Make necessary adjustments to RM delivery models, working with Budget Submission Offices and Resource Sponsors to position RMTs. Establish authorities for RM support of operations in all phases.
- **Operationalize Training and Education:** Throughout the enterprise, teach and train to the unique ministry activities from sea and shore, and within each phase of war, to include the transition between phases.
- **Delineate Scope and Levels of Responsibility:** Emphasize operational control, administrative control, and tactical control relationships and responsibilities in various echelons and command and control structures.



## GOAL 2: SHARPEN CORE CAPABILITIES

Naval chaplaincy exists to support the free exercise of religion in the unique environment of the military. RMTs use all four core capabilities of naval chaplaincy (provide, facilitate, care, and advise) to do so. Commanders often say, “Chaplain, take care of my people.” Chaplains should understand that to do so properly, they must apply all the core capabilities. Maximizing competence in the core capabilities requires intentional effort. Chaplains and RPs must continually sharpen their skills through study, use, self and peer assessment, and cooperative ministry.

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*“The foundation for restoring readiness and increasing lethality has been set. Now we must build on that foundation. We must continually think how to improve the delivery of the Navy the Nation Needs and do so with a sense of urgency.” - Secretary of the Navy Richard V. Spencer*

*“Excellence, achieved through competence and character, is the glue that binds us together, that gives us confidence in one another....” - Admiral John M. Richardson, Chief of Naval Operations*

*“Our Corps performs two important functions for our Nation – we Make Marines and we Win Battles. Every action we take must make us better at those two functions. This requires Marines who are brilliant in the fundamentals of warfighting, and physically, mentally, and spiritually prepared for the violence of combat.” - General Robert B. Neller, Commandant of the Marine Corps*

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### LINES OF EFFORT

- **Demonstrate Consistent Support of Divine Services:** Seek personal opportunities to support divine services in a chapel on a regular basis. Chaplains lead in worship by the manner and forms of their religious organization and look for opportunities to encourage subordinates in that environment.
- **Deliver Tailored and Relevant Religious Ministry:** Equip and encourage RMTs to be explicit and specific in addressing the circumstances and contexts of their people when providing worship or rendering individual advice.
- **Explore the Administrative and Management Functions of RMTs as a Core Capability:** Evaluate current capabilities and study how best to capture and standardize processes.
- **Identify and Disseminate Ministry Best Practices:** Assess the need and options for organized collection, storage, and dissemination of best practices to sharpen delivery of religious ministry. Collect and analyze templates for Command Religious Programs (CRP) ashore and at sea. Create robust, standardized inspection regimes.
- **Deepen Professional Understanding and Application of Command Advisement:** Articulate the parameters, and develop training, regarding the role of chaplains as advisors to their commanders, particularly at higher echelons.
- **Improve the Process for Identifying Religious Requirements:** Assess the process, and develop a representative, comprehensive, consistent, standardized religious needs assessment.

### GOAL 3: DEVELOP CHAPLAIN CORPS LEADERS WITH INTENTIONALITY

The effective delivery of religious ministry requires professionally competent chaplains and RPs of good moral character. As religious ministry personnel move up in rank and are assigned to greater levels of responsibility, they must be able to handle the increasing complexity of leadership. It is essential for chaplains and RPs to continue to develop their knowledge, skills, and abilities to deliver religious ministry that is responsive to domain requirements and operational realities.

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*“We need all hands on deck to effect the changes we need to stay ahead of the challenges we face. When we all move forward, think differently and empower change with a sense of urgency and personal accountability, we will come out stronger on the other side. When the public looks at us, they need to have confidence that we are professional, competent, and ready. When the enemy eyes us, it should make them think twice.” - Secretary of the Navy Richard V. Spencer*

*“People are the Navy’s foundation. We have a professional and moral obligation to uphold a covenant with Sailors, Civilians, and their families – to ably lead, equip, train, and motivate.” - Admiral John M. Richardson, Chief of Naval Operations*

*“Navy leaders commit to improving the competence and the character of themselves and their teams. They inspire their teams to learn to achieve their best possible performance. These principles are being reinforced for leaders at all levels, through a rich combination of formal schools, structured on-the-job training and experience, and self-guided education, both at the general leadership level and with tailored specifics for each community. Developing leaders will remain a principal focus of our Navy.” - Vice Admiral Robert P. Burke, Chief of Naval Personnel*

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#### LINES OF EFFORT

- **Assess PNC Structures and Processes:** Assess the processes, procedures, and administrative structures of PNC to determine how well they align to each other, to the strategic plan, and to the Navy’s Leader Development Strategy. Structures include: The Chief of Chaplains staff, PNC Executive Board, Senior Leader Symposium, and RP Enlisted Leaders Mess. Processes include: detailing, community management, recruiting, accessions, continuation, promotion plans, milestones, and program authorizations.
- **Expand the Circle of Leadership:** Expand, organize, and develop the Chaplain Corps leadership team through working groups, councils, Communities of Interest, advisory groups, Professional Development Training Workshops, Professional Development Training Courses, Chaplain Corps anniversary observances, and other mechanisms. Emphasize further development of lieutenant commanders, commanders, first class petty officers, and chiefs to enhance their participation in community leadership by offering opportunities to contribute at their present ranks.
- **Enhance Skill Development:** Further identify and develop necessary technical skills across the Chaplain Corps and RP rating. Identify opportunities for staff skills development. Encourage personal initiative in skills development.
- **Increase Continuity in Leader On-the-Job Training:** Identify and train to the added responsibilities of rank and the unique requirements of ministry in particular domains.
- **Utilize Data Analytics:** Improve leaders’ understanding and use of metrics. Fully utilize the CRP - Analytics Tool to better understand and address the needs of Sea Service personnel through responsive CRPs. Contribute to the data analytics efforts of the DoN.
- **Strengthen the Individual and Collective Character of the Profession:** Supervise, coach, and mentor chaplains and RPs in character development, collaboration and support across command lines. Articulate in policy, doctrine, training, and practice the importance of character in ministry. Communicate how PNC establishes and upholds the professional standards necessary for the delivery of religious ministry.



## GOAL 4: CHAMPION THE SPIRITUAL READINESS OF SAILORS AND MARINES

Religion is integral to the identity of the majority of Sea Service personnel. For many service and family members, faith and religious practice are indispensable to readiness, being unique and crucial sources of strength and stability. The Navy Chaplain Corps exists to promote religious freedom in the unique environment of the Sea Services and to strengthen the spirit of all who defend our freedoms at and from the sea.

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*“Ready Sailors, Civilians, and Families remain the foundation of the Navy’s warfighting capability. Our people must be prepared, confident, and proficient.”*

*“We can take a hit and keep going; tapping all sources of strength and resilience. Through rigorous training for operations and combat, the fighting spirit of our people, and the steadfast support of our families, we maintain a culture of warfighting excellence and hone our warfighting ethos. We don’t give up the ship, we never give up on our shipmates, and we never give up on ourselves.”*

*- Admiral John M. Richardson, Chief of Naval Operations*

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### LINES OF EFFORT

- **Foster Spiritual Toughness and Resilience:** Identify, preach, teach, and model the virtues that contribute to motivation, toughness, and resilience.
- **Improve the Language of Spiritual Toughness, Readiness, Fitness, and Resilience:** Articulate the concept of spiritual fitness in the Services. Develop a lexicon for communicating spiritual fitness. Translate religious language to communicate the relevance of human factors.
- **Respond to Cultural Trends:** Understand the changing culture out of which Service members come to better communicate how the CRP can serve not only religious members, but also those of no specific religious tradition.
- **Communicate the Importance of Religion and Faith in the Lives of Service Members:** Use institutional knowledge and experience to advise leaders on the importance of religion and faith.
- **Develop Closer Relationships with Religious Organizations and Other Stakeholders:** Improve integration of PNC with other services to reflect better the reality that faith and religious practice are not isolated from the rest of one’s life.



## CONCLUSION

Naval chaplaincy exists to serve the men and women who faithfully serve the nation as a part of the Sea Services. The presence of RMTs in the midst of Sailors and Marines safeguards and demonstrates the exercise of religion as free and valuable. Religious Freedom connects constitutional liberty with public good, a necessity in meeting the intent of the National Defense Strategy. The defense of our nation is dependent upon both the readiness and resilience of the force.

Warfighting readiness rests on the personal readiness of the individual. RMTs are positioned to invest in readiness and equipped to support the nation's warriors through every manner of strain associated with combat, and all that combat brings to bear on body, mind, and spirit. RMTs uniquely strengthen, heal, bring hope, encourage, guide, teach, and bear the presence of God and the transcendent element of faith and religion in times of peace and war.

As the Department of the Navy invests in its Sailors and Marines, preparing them for the next fight, the Chaplain Corps will support Commanders by operationalizing ministry support in combat, sharpening its core capabilities, intentionally developing leaders, and always championing religion and spiritual readiness.



