

COMSCINST <b>1730.4A</b>	COG CODE <b>N00C</b>	DATE <b>24 FEB 95</b>
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**DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY**  
COMMANDER MILITARY SEALIFT COMMAND  
WASHINGTON NAVY YARD BLDG 210  
901 M STREET SE  
WASHINGTON DC 20398-5540

COMSCINST 1730.4A  
N00C  
24 February 1995

COMSC INSTRUCTION 1730.4A

Subj: COMMAND RELIGIOUS PROGRAM

Ref: (a) U.S. Navy Regulations, 1990 (Art. 0820a, 1002 and 1005)  
(b) NAVMILPERSMAN 5810150 (NOTAL)  
(c) BUPERSINST 1001.39A (NOTAL)  
(d) OPNAVINST 1730.1B (NOTAL)  
(e) COMSCINST 3500.8A  
(f) SECNAVINST 1730.7A (NOTAL)  
(g) SECNAVINST 1730.8 (NOTAL)

1. Purpose. To provide procedures for conducting the MSC Command Religious Program (CRP). This is a complete revision and should be read in its entirety.
2. Cancellation. COMSCINST 1730.4.
3. Scope. This manual discusses the mission, organization, and administrative and logistical support of MSC CRP as prescribed by references (a) through (g).
4. Action. Commanders/Commanding Officers are to ensure that appropriate action is taken to implement the CRP as prescribed by this instruction.
5. Recommendations. Recommendations for improving this manual are invited from commands as well as directly from individuals. Recommendations should be forwarded to COMSC (N00C).
6. Reports. The reporting requirements prescribed by this instruction are exempt from report control in accordance with SECNAVINST 5214.2B.

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Distribution:

COMSCINST 5000.19

List I (Case A)

SNDL 41B (MSC Area Commanders)

41C (MSC Subarea Commanders)

41D3 (MSC Offices)

41J (OICMILDEPTs)

41K (MSC Units)

T-100 (Masters, civil service manned ships)

## **CHAPTER 1**

### ***MISSION AND PLACEMENT***

#### **1-1 GENERAL**

a. As described in SECNAVINST 1730.7A, the establishment and sponsorship of religious ministries in the Military Sealift Command (MSC) are the responsibility of all MSC Masters and Commanding Officers. Chaplains, as the staff officers for religious ministries, are assigned to assist Masters/Commanding Officers in the development and implementation of religious ministries and for professional advice and counsel on religious, spiritual, moral and ethical issues.

b. Chaplains are organizationally placed under the Chief of Staff/Executive Officer. Chaplains are assisted by assigned Navy enlisted personnel, religious program specialists (RPs) or assigned personnel in the development and implementation of religious ministries.

#### **1-2 MISSION STATEMENT**

The mission of the MSC Command Religious Program (CRP) is to provide for the free exercise of religion, ensure adequate pastoral care and counseling and to promote the ethical and moral welfare of all MSC personnel and their dependents.

#### **1-3 ASSIGNMENT OF CHAPLAINS AND RELIGIOUS PROGRAM SPECIALISTS**

a. Assignment of Chaplains and Religious Program Specialists. Chaplains and RPs are assigned to MSC commands from MSC Selected Reserve (SELRES) units.

b. Placement of Chaplains and Religious Program Specialists. When chaplains and RPs are assigned to MSC commands, the Force Chaplain will place chaplains and RPs with appropriate commands to ensure the widest possible pastoral coverage to MSC personnel, with special attention given to deploying and prepositioned personnel.

#### **1-4 CHAPLAINS IN MSC**

a. SELRES chaplains are assigned within MSC commands to assist Masters/Commanding Officers in carrying out the responsibility of the CRP.

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b. In years prior to 1970, the command had a large staff of Navy chaplains, due primarily to MSC's operation of troop transport ships. With deactivation of these ships, all staff chaplains' billets were terminated. Currently, there are no active duty chaplains serving MSC. Reserve chaplain assignments within the MSC organization are as follows:

(1) MSC Claimancy Chaplain

(2) MSC Headquarters. Washington Det 206 - 0-5

(3) MSC Area Commands

(a) COMSCLANT Det 202, Bayonne - 0-5

(b) COMSCPAC Det 120, Alameda - 0-5

(c) COMSCFE Det 118, Bridgeton - 0-5

(d) COMSCEUR Det 101, Lawrence - 0-5

(4) MSC Ships. MSC Force ships are served by volunteer Lay Readers appointed by each ship's Master to provide for crew's religious needs as outlined in COMSCINST 1730.3. Whether in port or deployed, chaplaincy coverage can be arranged through local MSC representatives/reserve units or theater/group coordinators.

(5) MSC Reserve Units. MSC SELRES chaplains fill the chaplain billets for the active duty command billets. The reserve chaplains will drill 1 to 2 day(s) per quarter with their parent SELRES unit to meet mobilization readiness and administrative requirements. A minimum of 4 drill days per quarter will be performed at sites where MSC ships/personnel are regularly assigned as follows:

(a) MSCHQ Det 206 - MSCHQ, Washington DC

(b) MSCLANT Det 202 - Navy Base, Norfolk VA

(c) MSCPAC Det 120 - Navy Base, Oakland CA

(d) MSCFE Det 118 - Navy Base, Norfolk VA

(e) MSCEUR Det 101 - Navy Base, Oakland CA

## **CHAPTER 2**

### ***MINISTRIES***

#### **2-1 GENERAL**

a. Masters/Commanding Officers, while responsible for programs of religious ministries, are mindful that voluntary participation by all personnel and their dependents is a basic constitutional right inherent in our democracy which guarantees religious, spiritual, moral and ethical well-being of personnel in their command.

b. A comprehensive command program of religious ministries includes but is not limited to worship services and religious education that provides for spiritual growth. The Command Religious Program (CRP) may also address social awareness concerns of the command. These concerns may include the ability of personnel to address life issues such as drug and alcohol abuse, interpersonal relationships and religious/cultural concerns. The CRP is coordinated with other command resources to enhance the morale and welfare of the command.

c. Chaplains, as representatives of the religious faith groups which ordained and endorsed them, are special staff officers assigned to commands to give leadership to develop and implement programs of religious ministries described in this chapter. Due to the lack of Active Duty chaplains to serve the MSC, ministries of the CRP will generally be designed around the unique needs of the MSC which can be easily carried out by the Masters/Commanding Officers and Lay Readers.

#### **2-2 DIVINE SERVICES AND RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES**

a. Worship Services. Worship services shall be conducted aboard MSC ships and shore facilities on a weekly basis. The Master/Commanding Officer will ensure adequate time and space for services. Generally, the worship service will be conducted by the Lay Reader. When chaplains are available, they will conduct worship according to the dictates of their own faith group. All DOD recognized faith groups will be facilitated in worship within the limits of the command.

b. Rites and Sacramental Acts. To the degree possible, religious rites and sacramental acts will be made available for all personnel. They will be conducted by authorized persons and in keeping with ecclesiastical requirements. The Master/Commanding Officer will request the services of chaplains or clergy of other religious faiths to meet specific needs of rites and sacraments.

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c. Observance of Sunday/Sabbath. Navy Regulations direct that divine services will be held on Sunday (or the Sabbath) whenever circumstances permit. Exercises will not normally begin on Sundays/Sabbaths. When necessity dictates that an exercise begin on Sunday, Commanding Officers will ensure that appropriate time is made available for religious services during the exercise.

d. Observance of Holy Days other than Sunday. All MSC personnel whose religious faith requires them to observe some day other than Sunday as their Sabbath are entitled to respect for their religious customs. To the extent that military conditions permit, personnel who celebrate the Sabbath on a day other than Sunday shall be given every possible consideration to be excused from duty on that day. Persons so excused may be required to perform duty on Sunday.

## **2-3 RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

a. Scripture Studies. Scripture studies should be provided for interested personnel. The Area Command chaplain shall ensure that scriptures and religious materials are made available for these studies.

b. Devotional Life. Masters/Commanding Officers will provide for the continual enhancement and growth of the religious and spiritual lives of personnel. This may include, but is not limited to, religious services, religious education, provision of literature and scriptures, recognition of the need for privacy and opportunity to practice a devotional life and easy accessibility to chaplains or appropriate civilian clergy.

## **2-4 OTHER FAITH GROUPS**

a. A valid function of carrying out the CRP is to provide information concerning chaplains or civilian clergy of other faith groups, as well as arranging their services when needed.

b. During deployments and exercises or in isolated areas or where there are no MSC billets, accessibility to chaplains and clergy of other faiths may be extremely limited. In such situations, the command will offer encouragement and support to other faith groups. This may include providing devotional literature, scripture or holy writings and assistance in acquiring needs for holy days and other religious services.

## **2-5 MORALS AND ETHICS**

On issues that may have an adverse affect upon personnel, Masters/Commanding Officers are expected to provide a variety of command programs to educate or train personnel in human affairs or quality of life areas such as religious/cultural concerns, drug and alcohol abuse, ethics and morals, sexual harassment and interpersonal relationships.

## **2-6 SPECIAL MINISTRIES**

a. Special ministries of the CRP include:

- (1) Funeral and Memorial services
- (2) Premarital instruction
- (3) Pastoral care and counseling
- (4) Casualty care

b. Special ministries will be coordinated by the chaplain. Where no chaplain is available, the Master/Commanding Officer will contact the MSC Area Command chaplain to facilitate these ministries.

## **2-7 COORDINATION OF MINISTRIES**

a. Internal Chaplain Resources

(1) Recognizing the religious pluralism and diversity of spiritual needs within an activity, no single chaplain is skilled enough or adequately trained to accomplish what a team of chaplains with a variety of skills and specialists can offer a Master/Commanding Officer.

(2) Masters/Commanding Officers gain additional resources for their programs of religious ministries when their respective Area Command chaplains work as a team with the Force Chaplain and other chaplains to provide comprehensive ministries to meet the maximum religious needs possible.

b. Masters/Commanding Officers shall designate a CRP bulletin board upon which will be posted such items as:

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(1) Times and places of worship services, Bible studies, study groups and other programs related to the CRP.

(2) Location of available CRP supplies such as video tapes, cassette tapes, Bibles, etc.

(3) Names, locations and points of contact for CRP support facilities in any planned port of entry. Such facilities will include military chapels, private worship centers, USO and USS facilities and other religious organizations.

(4) Name, address and phone contact of the respective Area Command chaplain.

c. Masters/Commanding Officers shall supply and maintain CRP mountout boxes which will be supplied with those items designated by the Area Command chaplain.



## CHAPTER 3

### *DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES*

#### **3-1 GENERAL**

##### a. MSC Chaplains

(1) Chaplains serving in MSC carry the dual role of professional representatives, who are responsible to their faith group, and as commissioned officers, responsible to their Commanding Officer. Chaplains are dependent upon their faith group for their ecclesiastical credentials and continuing endorsement to provide ministries of religion in accordance with the provisions of their faith groups. The substantive nature of all chaplains' religious ministries is determined by their faith group.

(2) Chaplains perform the duties of special staff officers. The Force Chaplain is designated as a special assistant for religious ministries with respect to providing religious ministry, pastoral care and the moral well-being and quality of life of all MSC personnel and their dependents.

(3) MSC chaplains serve under the cognizance of the Chief of Staff/Executive Officer, and retain direct access to their Commanding Officer on matters that in their judgement should be directed to the commander's attention; however, they will keep the Chief of Staff/Executive Officer informed of all direct communications.

(4) Chaplains in MSC are not assigned collateral duties, due to the nature of their work and the uncertainty of crisis responsibilities. Chaplains are expected to participate fully in the life and activities of their command, providing professional expertise where appropriate.

##### (5) Reports

(a) After-Action Reports. After-action reports will be submitted to the Master/Commanding Officer after each period of extended Active Duty. The report will consist of a background, a narrative summary, lessons learned, recommendations concerning future religious ministries in similar situations and a summary.

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(b) Force Chaplain Report. All Area Command chaplains will submit a quarterly report of their activities to the Force Chaplain via their Area Commander. The Force Chaplain will design report formats and establish due dates. The Force Chaplain will submit a quarterly report of the MSC-wide CRP to COMSC via the claimancy chaplain.

(6) Files, Turnover Procedures. All chaplains will establish and maintain administrative files based upon SECNAVINST 5210.11D. These files shall be reviewed by and turned over to relieving chaplains by those chaplains being relieved.

b. MSC Claimancy Chaplain

(1) Serve as the COMSC's advisor in matters and policies pertaining to religious ministries, chaplains and RPs.

(2) Provide leadership and guidance for all chaplains and RPs serving the MSC.

(3) Write and edit monthly articles for Sealift.

(4) Provide pastoral support for headquarters personnel and their dependents.

(5) Maintain liaison with the claimancy chaplain regarding the assignment, training and coordination requirements of chaplains and RPs within MSC.

(6) Schedule visits and inspections to commands and ships throughout MSC concerning the implementation of the CRP.

(7) Assist Area Command chaplains in identifying resources required to support their particular needs of the CRP.

d. Area Command Chaplains will:

(1) Develop a plan to provide religious ministries for all MSC personnel in their command by assessing the command needs in light of the command mission. Once approved, supervise implementing the plan and regularly provide the Force Chaplain with a status report on the execution of the CRP.

(2) Ensure religious ministries to all commands without a chaplain via the Lay Reader Program and electronic media.

(3) Be responsible for the professional supervision and coordination of all chaplains assigned to the command in areas of religious ministries. Reserve chaplains serving Annual Training will come under the supervision of the Area Command chaplain.

(4) Assist in procuring the services of civilian clergy when needed to meet the needs of MSC personnel in isolated areas or the unique needs of various faith groups.

(5) Keep Masters/Commanding Officers informed as to the various religious ministries, USO and USS facilities, military chapels, etc., that are available where MSC personnel are stationed and/or MSC ships are based or berthed.

(6) Give guidance to all Commanding Officers within the Area Command who have assigned chaplains (e.g., Reserve chaplains serving Annual Training) in preparing Navy officers fitness reports for chaplains.

(7) Recruit and arrange training for Lay Readers within the Area Command.

(8) Create and maintain monthly lines of communication with Lay Readers throughout the Area Command.

(9) Advise the Area Commander of significant issues or events within the command that may impact the CRP and of any operations requiring special chaplain coverage.

(10) Maintain a roster of all chaplains, RPs and command designated Lay Readers or personnel responsible for the CRP. Inform the Force Chaplain and the claimancy chaplain of any SELRES or TAD chaplains serving in their Area Commands.

(11) Conduct visits and inspections of the Area Command religious ministries program, supplies and personnel to ensure that the CRP remains applicable to the real needs of the MSC community.

e. Subordinate Chaplains. Subordinate chaplains are those who are sub-assigned to the MSC from VTU SELRES units or any chaplain serving a period of Active Duty aboard an MSC ship or facility. Subordinate chaplains will come under the direct supervision of, and carry out those duties assigned to them by, their respective Area Command chaplain in fulfillment of the CRP.

f. Religious Program Specialists

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(1) RPs in the MSC are SELRES Petty Officers assigned to the following Reserve units:

(a) COMSCHQ Det 206, Washington DC - RP1

(b) COMSCLANT Det 202, Bayonne - RP1

(c) COMSCPAC Det 120, Alameda - RP1

(d) COMSCFE Det 118, Bridgeton - RP3

(e) COMSCEUR Det 101, Lawrence - RP1

(2) RPs perform general duties in MSC in accordance with established directives for their rating. RPs assigned to the MSC will come under the administrative direction of their unit Commanding Officers and the professional supervision of the respective MSC chaplain if drilling at their assigned training site. Their primary responsibilities shall include:

(a) Meeting all Individual Training Plan (ITP) requirements specified by MSC Headquarters.

(b) Assisting the respective unit MSC chaplain in implementing the CRP in accordance with the NAVPERS 18068 series.

g. Lay Readers. The mainstay of the CRP is the Lay Reader. Lay Readers will be volunteers who are appointed and trained to assist or provide leadership in the CRP. They will not be expected to serve contrary to their faith. They will work under the supervision of their respective MSC Area Command chaplain and will be an extension of the programs being provided to the command by chaplains.

(1) Eligibility. Individuals who volunteer to serve as Lay Readers must possess demonstrated faithfulness to their religious tenets, to exemplary moral and military standards and to a genuine motivation for training to become a Lay Reader.

(2) Appointment. Each volunteer for Lay Reader will be interviewed by the activity's chaplain who will, if he/she approves, recommend their appointment to the Master/Commanding Officer. Lay Readers will be appointed in writing for a specific period of time by the Master/Commanding Officer.

(3) Duties. Appointed Lay Readers will:

(a) Publicize and invite participation in approved religious activities available to the activity. Articles of interest should be posted on a CRP bulletin board that has been designated for the CRP.

(b) Attend training opportunities as announced by the activity's chaplain.

(c) Conduct lay worship services, devotions or other religious activities under the supervision of the activity's chaplain.

(d) Participate in religious activities as requested by the activity's chaplain.

(e) Distribute religious literature and supplies approved by the activity's chaplain.

(f) Maintain close liaison with the activity's chaplain, referring personnel who would benefit from pastoral counseling.

(g) Submit reports as directed by the activity's chaplain.

(4) Limitation of Duties. Lay Readers will refrain from preaching, administration of the sacraments, pastoral counseling or exercising any other religious activity usually reserved for ordained clergy. They will not accept offerings. The duties of Lay Reader are in addition to regular duties. As such, the Lay Reader will refrain from allowing Lay Reader responsibilities to interfere with regular duties.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### ***TRAINING***

#### **4-1 GENERAL**

Chaplains and RPs assigned to MSC are Selected Reservists. As such, much of their indoctrination into MSC is derived from meeting the Individual Training Plan (ITP) requirements of their Reserve billet. These ITPs are determined by MSC Headquarters, Washington DC. Training in other areas is gained on Annual Training (AT) and additional Active Duty assignments (ADT/ADSW).

#### **4-2 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

- a. Command Chaplain's Meetings. The Force Chaplain schedules meetings to discuss, plan and act upon professional matters relating to religious ministries and chaplains. This will often be accomplished via PHONCON or cc:Mail.
- b. Professional Development Workshops and Conferences. Annual professional workshops and conferences are scheduled by the Chief of Chaplains. Attendance by chaplains is encouraged.
- c. Denominational Meetings/Retreats. Attending meetings and retreats sponsored by their faith group is a primary way that chaplains maintain liaison with their faith group and is to be encouraged.
- d. Command Sponsored Programs. Commanding Officers may request (and sponsor) their chaplains to attend military workshops, seminars and conferences they believe beneficial and appropriate to enhance the chaplain's professional development and usefulness to the command.

#### **4-3 SPIRITUAL LIFE**

The importance of the chaplain being mentally and physically prepared to carry out religious ministries in MSC is superseded only by the need for spiritual preparedness. The chaplain must not overlook the daily development of his spiritual life, because in combat or duty deployments, his/her effectiveness in delivery of ministries is dictated by his spiritual well-being.

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#### **4-4 TRAINING OF LAY READERS**

a. The Force Chaplain monitors the training of Lay Readers in the command. Lay Readers are to contact the Area Command chaplain for guidance and support for training.

b. COMSCINST 1730.3 is a resource and service guide that will aid Lay Readers in carrying out their responsibilities.

c. MSC appointed Lay Readers shall receive Lay Reader training via SURFLANT and SURFPAC Lay Reader Training Courses. Arrangements to attend these courses will be made through the command at the earliest possible opportunity after an individual has been duly appointed a command Lay Reader.