History of the Chaplain Corps, Part 4
NAVEDTRA 14284
Although the words "he," "him," and "his" are used sparingly in this course to enhance communication, they are not intended to be gender driven or to affront or discriminate against anyone.
ERRATA #2

25 Jan 02

Specific Instructions and Errata for Nonresident Training Course

HISTORY OF THE CHAPLAIN CORPS, PART 4
NAVEDTRA 14284

This errata supersedes all previous erratas.

No attempt has been made to issue corrections for errors in typing, punctuation, etc., that do not affect your ability to answer the questions.

1. Make the following changes:

   **Question**  |  **Change**
   --- | ---
   1-35: | Line 5, change “PHIBGRU 2” to “PHIBGRU 1.”
   2-74: | Alt #2, change “NAVFORV force chaplain” to “Assistant to NAVFORV force chaplain.”

2. Delete the following question and leave the corresponding space blank on the answer sheet:

   **Question**
   5-29
PREFACE

By enrolling in this self-study course, you have demonstrated a desire to improve yourself and the Navy. Remember, however, this self-study course is only one part of the total Navy training program. Practical experience, schools, selected reading, and your desire to succeed are also necessary to successfully round out a fully meaningful training program.

THE COURSE: This self-study course is organized into subject matter areas, each containing learning objectives to help you determine what you should learn along with text and illustrations to help you understand the information. The subject matter reflects day-to-day requirements and experiences of personnel in the rating or skill area. It also reflects guidance provided by Enlisted Community Managers (ECMs) and other senior personnel, technical references, instructions, etc., and either the occupational or naval standards, which are listed in the Manual of Navy Enlisted Manpower Personnel Classifications and Occupational Standards, NAVPERS 18068.

THE QUESTIONS: The questions that appear in this course are designed to help you understand the material in the text.

VALUE: In completing this course, you will improve your military and professional knowledge. Importantly, it can also help you study for the Navy-wide advancement in rate examination. If you are studying and discover a reference in the text to another publication for further information, look it up.

1988 Edition

NAVSUP Logistics Tracking Number
0504-LP-022-4120
Sailor’s Creed

“I am a United States Sailor.

I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States of America and I will obey the orders of those appointed over me.

I represent the fighting spirit of the Navy and those who have gone before me to defend freedom and democracy around the world.

I proudly serve my country’s Navy combat team with honor, courage and commitment.

I am committed to excellence and the fair treatment of all.”
INSTRUCTIONS FOR TAKING THE COURSE

ASSIGNMENTS

The text pages that you are to study are listed at the beginning of each assignment. Study these pages carefully before attempting to answer the questions. Pay close attention to tables and illustrations and read the learning objectives. The learning objectives state what you should be able to do after studying the material. Answering the questions correctly helps you accomplish the objectives.

SELECTING YOUR ANSWERS

Read each question carefully, then select the BEST answer. You may refer freely to the text. The answers must be the result of your own work and decisions. You are prohibited from referring to or copying the answers of others and from giving answers to anyone else taking the course.

SUBMITTING YOUR ASSIGNMENTS

To have your assignments graded, you must be enrolled in the course with the Nonresident Training Course Administration Branch at the Naval Education and Training Professional Development and Technology Center (NETPDTC). Following enrollment, there are two ways of having your assignments graded: (1) use the Internet to submit your assignments as you complete them, or (2) send all the assignments at one time by mail to NETPDTC.

Grading on the Internet: Advantages to Internet grading are:

you may submit your answers as soon as you complete an assignment, and you get your results faster; usually by the next working day (approximately 24 hours).

In addition to receiving grade results for each assignment, you will receive course completion confirmation once you have completed all the assignments. To submit your assignment answers via the Internet, go to:  

https://courses.cnet.navy.mil

COMPLETION TIME

Courses must be completed within 12 months from the date of enrollment. This includes time required to resubmit failed assignments.
PASS/FAIL ASSIGNMENT PROCEDURES

If your overall course score is 3.2 or higher, you will pass the course and will not be required to resubmit assignments. Once your assignments have been graded you will receive course completion confirmation.

If you receive less than a 3.2 on any assignment and your overall course score is below 3.2, you will be given the opportunity to resubmit failed assignments. You may resubmit failed assignments only once. Internet students will receive notification when they have failed an assignment—they may then resubmit failed assignments on the web site. Internet students may view and print results for failed assignments from the web site. Students who submit by mail will receive a failing result letter and a new answer sheet for resubmission of each failed assignment.

COMPLETION CONFIRMATION

After successfully completing this course, you will receive a letter of completion.

NAVAL RESERVE RETIREMENT CREDIT

If you are a member of the Naval Reserve, you will receive retirement points if you are authorized to receive them under current directives governing retirement of Naval Reserve personnel. For Naval Reserve retirement, this course is evaluated at 8 points. (Refer to Administrative Procedures for Naval Reservists on Inactive Duty, BUPERSINST 1001.39, for more information about retirement points.)

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of the course, you will demonstrate an understanding of the course materials by correctly answering questions on the events, activities, and programs that took place during the U.S. Navy Chaplain Corps’ involvement with U.S. naval units in Vietnam from 1954 through 1975.

STUDENT FEEDBACK QUESTIONS

We value your suggestions, questions, and criticisms on our courses. If you would like to communicate with us regarding this course, we encourage you, if possible, to use e-mail. If you write or fax, please use a copy of the Student Comment form that follows this page.
Student Comments

Course Title: History of the Chaplain Corps, Part 4

NAVEDTRA: 14284  Date: ________________

We need some information about you:

Rate/Rank and Name: _______________________ SSN: __________ Command/Unit ______________

Street Address: ___________________________ City: __________ State/FPO: ________ Zip ______

Your comments, suggestions, etc.:

Privacy Act Statement: Under authority of Title 5, USC 301, information regarding your military status is requested in processing your comments and in preparing a reply. This information will not be divulged without written authorization to anyone other than those within DOD for official use in determining performance.

NETPDTC 1550/41 (Rev 4-00)
1. This errata (1) supersedes all previous errata.

2. No attempt has been made to issue corrections for errors in typing, punctuation, etc., which do not affect your ability to answer the questions.

3. **Assignment Booklet**

   Make the following changes:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
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<td>Change PHIBGRU 2 to PHIBGRU 1</td>
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CHAPLAINS
WITH U.S. NAVAL UNITS
IN VIETNAM 1954-1975
SELECTED EXPERIENCES AT SEA AND ASHORE

by
Rear Admiral Withers M. Moore, CHC, USN
(Retired)
Captain Herbert L. Bergsma, CHC, USN
Lieutenant Timothy J. Demy, CHC, USNR

Edited by
Commander H. Lawrence Martin, CHC, USN

Volume IX
in the series on the
History of the Chaplain Corps, U.S. Navy

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History Branch
Office of the Chief of Chaplains
Department of the Navy
Washington, D.C.
1985
CHAPLAINS WITH U.S. NAVAL UNITS IN VIETNAM
1954-1975
PREFACE

The following pages present a broad overview of the ministry of Navy chaplains serving with United States naval units in Vietnam. After kindly reviewing the manuscript, Dr. Dean C. Allard, Head, Operational Archives, Naval Historical Center, commented:

The work will be a worthy addition to the history of the conflict in Southeast Asia. Chaplains Moore, Bergsma, and Demy have written a comprehensive, informative, and readable account of the twenty-year ministry of the Chaplain Corps among naval personnel stationed in the Republic of Vietnam and on board the ships of the Seventh Fleet. The passages on chaplain activities during carrier operations in the Gulf of Tonkin, especially the Oriskany and Forrestal tragedies, are dramatic. At the same time, the work conveys the unique nature of the problems faced by chaplains providing their services to in-country naval personnel . . . . Again, I would like to express our view that this history will be a valuable contribution to an understanding of the Navy’s role in Vietnam.

Since the ministries of these chaplains spanned an era of more than two decades and involved more than four hundred chaplains, not every chaplain who served during this time is mentioned in the narrative; nor is every event recorded. Rather, what is presented is a framework in which these chaplains served and a record of some of the events and experiences which were both common and unique to the ministry of the chaplains.

Although the ministry of Navy chaplains included Marines and Mobile Construction Battalion personnel serving with the Marine Corps, these are not treated in the present volume.

This is the product of a joint authorship, and is a work that has extended over many years of study and research. Chaplain Withers M. Moore, then in the rank of commander, served as Chaplain Corps historian from June 1966 to June 1969. During that time he wrote Navy Chaplains in Vietnam 1954-1964, which was intended as a part of a larger and more complete work to be written at the end of the conflict.

In May 1978 Chaplain Herbert L. Bergsma reported as Head, Chaplain Corps History Project, and served until June 1980. During the latter part of his tour he produced the first draft of a manuscript that was an antecedent to this work, utilizing the work of Chaplain Moore but going beyond it in time.
Chaplain H. Lawrence Martin relieved Chaplain Bergsma and has since served as Head, Chaplain Corps History Branch. With the concurrence of these two authors and the approval of the Chief of Chaplains, he enlisted the services of Chaplain Timothy J. Demy, a member of the U.S. Naval Reserve and a doctoral candidate in historical theology at Dallas Theological Seminary, to continue the work. Under the editorial direction of Chaplain Martin, Chaplain Demy researched the entire period, utilizing the work of his predecessors and taking advantage of more recently published works and other material that had come to light.

It is hoped that this volume will be useful to those who desire to review this portion of the long history of the faithful ministry of chaplains to personnel of the United States Navy.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Appreciation is expressed to Dr. Dean C. Allard, Head, Operational Archives, Naval Historical Center, and Mr. Edward Marolda, Historian, Naval Historical Center, for their encouragement and for their insightful comments.

Appreciation is also expressed to the following chaplains now in the rank of captain, all of whom served in Vietnam, who reviewed the manuscript and made valuable suggestions: Phillip D. Anderson, USN; Wendell R. Begg, USN; Malcolm A. Carpenter, USN (Retired); Leonard W. Dodson, USN (Retired); Don Michael, USN (Retired); T. David Parham, USN (Retired); James E. Seim, USN (Retired); and Jude R. Senieur, USNR (Retired). Captain Warren Newman, CHC, USN, advised in the area of the Personal Response Project.

Special thanks are due to those chiefs of chaplains under whose tenures this history has been produced. It was due to the interest and insight of Chaplain James W. Kelly that the billet of Chaplain Corps historian was created and Chaplain Moore was assigned. Chaplain Francis L. Garrett promoted interest in Chaplain Corps history throughout his tenure. Chaplain John J. O’Connor assigned Chaplain Bergsma as a special projects officer in history. It was during the tenure of Chaplain Ross H. Trower that the historian’s billet, lost after Chaplain Moore’s detachment, was restored; and under his guidance and that of Chaplain Neil M. Stevenson that the work progressed and was brought to completion.

The authors and the editor are grateful that although these chiefs of chaplains provided proper environment and resources, they did not seek to influence the content, style, or emphasis of the work. While they may properly share in whatever strengths the work may have, any weaknesses or shortcomings are those of the authors and the editor.
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INTRODUCTION

This is the ninth volume in a series of works on the history of the Chaplain Corps of the United States Navy. Volumes I and II trace the history of the Chaplain Corps from its beginning in 1775 until the spring of 1949. Volumes III, IV, V, VII, and VIII are biographical and service record sketches of U.S. Navy chaplains who have served on active duty. Volume VI narrates the history of the Chaplain Corps during the Korean Conflict.

Standard naval terms and abbreviations are used. The first time an abbreviation or acronym is used it follows the full title and is found in parentheses. Subsequent appearances give only the abbreviation or acronym. Likewise, the appearance of an individual’s name is preceded by his rank and in the case of chaplains is followed by his denomination. Subsequent references use the title “Chaplain” accompanied by the last name.
CHAPTER ONE

FERRYING TO FREEDOM

Background and Beginnings

The first active involvement of Navy chaplains in Vietnam occurred during the humanitarian effort undertaken by the United States Government in response to the joint appeal by the Governments of France and Vietnam. This effort was known as the Passage to Freedom operation during which more than 300,000 Vietnamese fled aboard U.S. Navy ships from Ho Chi Minh’s communist regime in northern Vietnam to the regions south of the 17th parallel. Upon completion of the operation, official passenger totals for the Passage to Freedom operation included 293,002 civilians and 17,846 military evacuees. The humanitarian aspects of the operation indicated one of the essential motives for American assistance to South Vietnam in the years that followed.

From the beginning, Navy chaplains played a prominent and strategic role in the effort. Eighteen Navy chaplains participated in the Passage to Freedom operation which extended from 8 August 1954 through 18 May 1955. Ships to which they were attached were drawn from the Amphibious Group, Western Pacific (PHIBGRU, WESTPAC), Service Squadron 3 (SERVRON 3) and the Military Sea Transportation Service (MSTS), the commands in the Western Pacific officially involved in the nine-month sealift. The roots of the Passage to Freedom were found in the recent history of the war-ravaged nation of Vietnam and in the spectre of the ministry which these Navy chaplains began in international communism moving south from the mainland of China. The ministry which these Navy chaplains began in Vietnam would continue through the next two decades and eventually involve hundreds of Navy chaplains. Although the beginning of this ministry in 1954 involved only a small number of chaplains, compared to the later ministry, it was significant because its focus was on the chaplains’ purpose: ministry to people.

The State of Vietnam was established on 5 June 1948 when French High Commissioner Emile Bollaert, General Nguyen Van Xuan, and Bao Dai, head of government during the World War II Japanese occupation and former Emperor, signed an agreement which designated Bao Dai as Chief of State to administer the affairs of Vietnam within the French Union. With statehood and a limited degree of internationally recognized sovereignty in the French Union, Vietnam presented a clearly defined and attractive target for international communism. Under the guise of nationalist resistance to French colonial administration, and inspired by Mao Tse-tung’s successes on mainland China, militant Vietnamese communists began to act. By mid-1950 Chiang Kai-shek and his nationalist supporters were in exile on Taiwan, and South Korea was at war and perilously close to what appeared to be ignominious defeat. Veteran Viet Minh troops, well trained in insurgency against Japanese occupation forces and further trained and supported by communist China, increased their pressures upon the French in Vietnam.

For four years the French continued a limited replacement of personnel losses in Vietnam and received an increasing volume of military aid from the United States for use in their struggle against the Viet Minh. In addition to this aid, the presence of American naval forces in the immediate

area protected the seas adjacent to the Southeast Asian nation for international use and effectively shielded coastal areas from amphibious assault by hostile forces. During the last six months of the French-Viet Minh war, units of the United States Seventh Fleet operated continuously in the Tonkin Gulf and South China Sea. The climax of the intensifying struggle between France and the insurgent Viet Minh came in the battle to defend Dien Bien Phu, 200 miles west of Hanoi. After a siege which continued through the spring of 1954 to 7 May, and involved a significant part of France’s military forces in Vietnam, the French were decisively defeated. As a result, Dien Bien Phu provided a significant propaganda victory for Ho Chi Minh’s insurgents and became the symbol of the end of French administration in Indochina.

On 8 May 1954, one day after the fall of Dien Bien Phu, deliberations were begun in Geneva, Switzerland, under joint sponsorship of Great Britain and the Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics to determine the future of Indochina. Delegates from the United States, France, communist China, Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam, and the Viet Minh were present. On 21 July, two weeks after Bao Dai appointed Ngo Dinh Diem to be Premier of Vietnam, the Geneva Agreement was signed. The accords included an immediate cease-fire and a declaration of autonomy for the independent states of Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. The accords also included an agreement to partition Vietnam along the 17th parallel with free elections to be held within two years on the issue of voluntary reunification and placed restrictions on foreign military personnel, equipment, and bases. Dates and geographical zones for progressive French evacuation were fixed. Vietnamese citizens who resided north of the 17th parallel and who desired to relocate in the south were to be permitted to do so. Vietnamese who desired to live under communism were to be permitted to emigrate north. The terminal date for the intra-country emigration was set at 18 May 1955. Supervision of the accords was vested in the International Control Commission of the United Nations.

Although the United States was not a signatory to the Geneva Agreement, her position in the matter of the signed accords was quite clear. Unilaterally the United States Government noted that it would “refrain from the threat or use of force to disturb” the agreements and that it “would view any renewal of the aggression . . . with grave concern and as seriously threatening international peace and security.”

It soon became clear that French naval resources would be inadequate for the evacuation of even official military units and their equipment. North Vietnamese sources indicated that the evacuation would also include 100,000 Vietnamese citizens each month. In response to a joint request by the governments of France and South Vietnam, the United States agreed to provide such naval support as was required to implement the provisions of the Geneva Agreement and to remove former U.S. military aid equipment which was certain to fall under communist control.

On 8 August 1954 the forces for the Passage to Freedom operation began to assemble. Command of the U.S. sea operations was assigned to Rear Admiral Lorenzo S. Sabin who was designated as Commander Task Force 90 (CTF 90). Rear Admiral Roy A. Gano was assigned responsibility for the logistic support of the operation. Initially the operation was to be executed by ships of Rear Admiral Gano’s Service Squadron 3, which would be augmented or replaced as required by MSTS transport and cargo carriers. Rear Admiral Sabin’s task force operated initially with 5 attack transports (APAs), 2 attack cargo ships (AKAs), 2 dock landing ships (LSDs), 2 high-speed transports (APDs), and 4 tank landing ships (LSTs). However, in the first three months of the operations, his task force grew to more than 100 ships and craft.

**Arrival of the First Chaplains**

The first chaplain to arrive for participation in the Passage to Freedom operation, and also the first Navy chaplain ashore in Vietnam, was circuit riding Lieutenant Francis J. Fitzpatrick (Roman Catholic) of Transportation Division 14 (TRANSDIV 14), who was attached for temporary duty to Montague (AKA-98). In the report of
his ministry during the operation, Chaplain Fitzpatrick recalled:

So far as I knew, we were preparing to return to Japan to disembark troops at Yokosuka. The commodore told me under secrecy that the *Montague* was going in a different direction and that I would find out when we were underway what I was expected to do. We made a quick trip to Subic Bay in the Philippines. Captain William R. Cox, USN, of the *Montague* advised me to stock up well on ecclesiastical supplies, acquiring enough to last several months before resupply. I was to acquire all this material without explaining or answering any questions. Fortunately, Father John J. Reardon, the senior chaplain at Subic Bay, gave me full cooperation, and in four days’ time I had everything I needed.¹⁴

After the ship departed from Subic Bay, Captain Cox informed his officers and men that they were headed for Vietnam. He informed them of the provisions of the Geneva Agreement and of the humanitarian operation in which they were to become involved. He stressed also that the crew was to refer to the country as Vietnam rather than by its former name, French Indochina.¹⁵

*Montague* arrived in Tourane Bay, which was later renamed Danang Bay, on 16 August. Captain Cox and several of his officers went ashore to consult French and American authorities. He was advised to proceed to Henriette Pass in the Red River Delta area just below Haiphong. Meanwhile, Captain B. N. Rittenhouse, aboard *Knudson* (APD-101) arrived in Haiphong itself and began the operation. One of the first decisions made was to load the APAs in the Red River Delta area rather than at the dock at Haiphong. This allowed a more rapid turnaround, eliminated the necessity of costly piloting fees, enhanced safety for the ship and crew, and made embarkation more efficient. The French Navy had a number of medium landing ships (LSMs) with large, open well docks, each capable of transporting up to 1,200 people. The ships were simple to load, and several of them could work at the pier in a space that would be tied up by a single larger ship. An additional 3,000 people were to be transported in each APA and 2,000 in each AKA.

The language barrier immediately proved to be an enormous problem. Chaplain Fitzpatrick remembered:

None of the Vietnamese, and a very few of the French, could speak English at all. To our surprise we found that even educated Vietnamese could not speak fluent French. We had no American who could speak Vietnamese. The single exception to our language hardship was LTJG Thomas Dooley, MC, USN, who spoke perfect French. From the beginning he was used as an interpreter. He later gained fame as a medical missionary in the area, but his usefulness at this early stage was his ability to communicate with both French and American officials.¹⁶

The first ship to load and move Vietnamese evacuees was *Menard* (APA-201). It was difficult to get people to go below decks to the troop compartments; they wanted to stay on the open decks of the ship. When the commanding officer noticed the several Vietnamese Catholic priests were among the passengers, he suggested that Chaplain Fitzpatrick board the ship and talk with the priests in Latin. Then perhaps the priests could explain to the people what the commanding officer wanted them to do. Chaplain Fitzpatrick was able to convince the Vietnamese priests that the Navy could not get everyone aboard unless the people went below. He reported, “I stationed the priests at the various ladders and they proved indispensable to our efforts. The people had faith in them and accepted their leadership.”¹⁷

Although it was not clear at this early date in the operation precisely what caused the hesitation among the evacuees, it became clear when the language barrier was partially lifted that they were very fearful of the great grey ships and of the Americans who manned them. Reports of communist propaganda that the ships would take the refugees and somehow disgorge them into the sea became common as the operation continued. Lieutenant Thomas J. Wooten (Roman Catholic) reported later that in Haiphong he had seen a drawing of an LST with the bow open and American sailors pushing Vietnamese into the sea.¹⁸ The various types of amphibious landing craft employed, with their gaping forward ramps, were
so constructed that they may have reinforced the claim of malicious intent. Chaplains noted that the Viet Minh often used violence to prevent people from leaving. Children were abducted, many individuals were wounded by snipers, and roads leading to the embarkation areas were mined. American personnel were never safe ashore. Swimming parties called for the use of armed beach guards and were restricted to a single, small segment of carefully guarded coastline.

Through the Vietnamese priests, Chaplain Fitzpatrick was able to convince the refugees in his ships that their fears were groundless. He noted that he had difficulty establishing himself with the refugees as a Catholic priest. The uniform for American naval officers was tropical khaki with short trousers, and the evacuees had never seen a priest so dressed. However, Chaplain Fitzpatrick was soon accepted and his reputation firmly established when he celebrated mass.

When his own ship lay at anchor off Haiphong, Chaplain Fitzpatrick assisted with the loading of several others. When Montague was prepared for embarking evacuees and heavily laden French LSMs began to arrive with passengers, the chaplain received authorization orders permitting him to move among the ships of Task Force 90 (TF 90) as he saw the need. For the next week he visited two or three ships a day, carrying his mass kit and a small suitcase. On each visit he met first with ship’s officers in the wardroom to brief them on his experience with the refugees and with loading procedures and problems that they were certain to encounter; he then proceeded to celebrate mass for the ship’s personnel and passengers. The pace was hectic, and there was little opportunity for rest. Chaplain Fitzpatrick noted that in little more than a month he had lost twenty pounds. The seven-day schedule with frequent daily masses was firmly established. It was a pattern of activity to be followed throughout the operation and continued by subsequent Navy chaplains in Vietnam.

On 5 September Chaplain Fitzpatrick was ordered to rejoin TRANSDIV 14’s flagship Bayfield (APA-33) as she loaded passengers. Following the trip to Saigon for debarkation of evacuees he was scheduled to return to Japan. He indicated his desire to remain in Vietnam until another Latin-speaking chaplain arrived to relieve him, since Latin had become an important medium of communication during the operation. However, he learned that Lieutenant Vincent M. Smith (Roman Catholic), then in Tourane Bay aboard Ajax (AR-6), was ordered to Haiphong and would arrive the day following TRANSDIV 14’s departure. Also, other personnel with a facility in the French language had been located, and several Vietnamese who had made the trip previously were airlifted back to Haiphong to assist in embarkation and debarkation procedures. Amphibious ships employed in Passage to Freedom by now had each made two or three trips to Saigon and the crews knew their jobs well.

Rear Admiral Sabin’s flagship, Estes (AGC-12), with Lieutenant Commander Jackson D. Hunter (United Methodist) aboard, arrived in the Tonkin Gulf on 18 August. She anchored off the rugged basalt islands separating the Tonkin Gulf from
Baie d’Along off the mouth of the Red River. Because of the danger from communist saboteurs in the waters off North Vietnam, the crew remained on alert with an armed landing craft slowly circling the ship during hours of darkness.

In preparation for the operation, a Marine helicopter detachment from Oppama, Japan, had been assigned to Estes. Helicopters shuttled staff officers, U.S. mail, and guardmail from ship to ship during the week, and on Sunday the shuttle became a "holy helo." The helicopter hop from ship to ship took the chaplain about ten minutes, whereas a trip by small boat would have taken nearly two hours.

Upon reporting to Estes, Chaplain Hunter had learned that one of the chaplain’s collateral duties was publication of the daily Press News. When ships of the Passage to Freedom converged on Baie d’Along, it became the practice for Estes to send copies to all ships present, including the station ship in the harbor at Haiphong. With Estes’ capability in radio-teletype services, and with the chaplain prodding for almost continuous monitoring, a paper covering world events was soon being printed. Daily Public Information Office releases could be run the day before they were released, instead of waiting for them to be fed back on wire service newscasts. The task force was thereby afforded a current bird’s eye view of the massive operation, even though they could see only a small portion of it on any given day.  

Before the month was over, Estes steamed south to Saigon so that the task force commander could consult with Embassy officials. They paused at Cape St. Jacques to take on a river pilot and wait for the tide to change before proceeding up river almost twenty miles to Saigon. The river twisted and turned back repeatedly, and Saigon could be seen a long time before the ship reached its destination. Passing the main waterfront, the ship proceeded upriver to a point where her course could be reversed, then Estes moored midstream, opposite the busy Saigon waterfront.

During the next few months, the trip between North Vietnam and South Vietnam was repeated eight or ten times by Estes. Two additional units of Amphibious Group, Western Pacific were transferred to North Vietnam during the initial phases of Passage to Freedom. They were Landing Ship Dock Squadron 1 (LSDRON 1) and Landing Ship Tank Squadron 3 (LSTRON 3) with Lieutenant Daniel G. Stone (United Methodist) and Lieutenant (j.g.) Kenneth P. Zeller (Evangelical United Brethren) attached.

Embarked in Comstock (LSD-19), Chaplain Stone arrived in Vietnam on 22 August. In a narrative report of his part in the operation he stated:

The LSD was a workhorse, and our part in the operation was not at all glamorous. We saw many ships sailing with a massive load of human cargo. Our crew was kept very busy; nevertheless the days in Haiphong harbor were for the most part long, hot, and uninteresting for the average man. Our people were unable to go ashore because of French restrictions and simple safety precautions. Only authorized personnel were permitted to go.

It was during these days of waiting and working that one of my most interesting ministries developed. One young man voiced a desire to begin an early morning devotional service on board the Comstock. Frankly, I did not believe it would work, since reveille was held at 0400 and the work day began at 0500. It was necessary to complete the devotionals before 0400 so as not to interfere with the plan of the day. I gave my cooperation and promised that I would meet with as many persons as the young man could assemble. To my utter surprise, about one-third of the ship’s company began to get up half an hour early to attend these brief, simple, but meaningful services. Most of them said they did it because it seemed to give meaning to the day and remove much of the boredom and loneliness.

Chaplain Stone’s squadron had a well organized and functioning lay leader program in operation, a program implemented by his predecessor in accordance with the overall Amphibious Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet (PHIBPAC) lay leader program. Chaplain Stone traveled through the squadron from ship to ship conducting divine services, seeing to the needs of the lay leaders, and counseling with individual members of the crews. He said:

I was always treated as a member of ship’s company, and not once did I experience a negative attitude. Whenever I came aboard a particular vessel, it was my
custom to conduct services immediately. The attendance and interest at these services spoke well of PHIB-PAC’s lay leadership emphasis, an important key in LSDRON 1’s Passage to Freedom ministry.23

After divine services, it was Chaplain Stone’s practice to join the officers in the wardroom for coffee and fellowship, and then meet with the crew in the various compartments for the same. Depending upon the amount of time he had aboard each ship, he attempted to systematically work his way through each division in order to become acquainted with the men. More than once informal visits such as these led to an effective in-depth ministry.

LSDRON 1’s commodore, Captain Philip Mothersill, was particularly supportive of athletic events and other activities which enhanced morale. He was an active Episcopal layman and often traveled with Chaplain Stone to assist in conducting worship services. Captain Mothersill played the trumpet well and provided musical accompaniment for congregational singing.24

On 27 August Chaplain Zeller arrived in Hai phong with the slower-moving LSTRON 3. Their limited speed and two encounters with typhoons en route from Japan had seriously hampered their progress. The LSTs were employed primarily in the evacuation from North Vietnam of the 8,135 World War II U.S. military aid jeeps, trucks, and armored vehicles. Chaplain Zeller recalled, however, that with every piece of rolling stock to be loaded, two or more drivers came along. French Union and Foreign Legion troops and indigenous Vietnamese personnel accompanied the equipment and, with few exceptions, every Vietnamese driver was accompanied by his entire family and all their portable possessions. In addition, unused space on each trip south, either to Tourane or to Saigon, was filled to capacity with refugees.25

Once they overcame their initial fear, the Vietnamese refugees made themselves at home. Most of the passengers were rice farmers, since the more wealthy urban families had either taken advantage of the French airlift which transported 17,000 persons to South Vietnam or had acquired passage on foreign flag merchant ships in Haiphong. To have expected rural farmers to accommodate themselves without difficulty to the intricacies of shipboard living would have been expecting too much, therefore the simplest arrangements were provided and careful explanation was made of routine naval evolutions and minimum safety standards.

Hazardous situations arose. Chaplain Zeller recalled that on one nighttime trip to Tourane Bay, he and the captain were standing on the bridge when the captain asked the chaplain to investigate a small red glow forward on the main deck. Chaplain Zeller went forward and found a Vietnamese family happily situated about their charcoal burner atop a cluster of high octane gasoline drums. Charcoal, burner, and all went over the side, and promises of replacement were hardly sufficient to calm the startled family.26

Both births and deaths were common aboard U.S. ships during the operation. Nearly every person required some kind of medical treatment. Occasionally an elderly person or an infant, suffering from the terminal stages of malnutrition, embarked in such condition that death was inevitable. On one trip south, Chaplain Zeller recalled, the infant son of a Vietnamese farmer died during the night. The senior Vietnamese aboard, an army non-commissioned officer, suggested that the infant be turned over to a Buddhist priest in Tourane upon arrival. By dispatch, Chaplain Zeller requested that Chaplain Hunter in Estes at Tourane Bay acquire Buddhist assistance. A priest was waiting when the ship beached at Tourane the following morning and accompanied the bereaved parents into the city.27

Because of the rigorous schedule required to evacuate as many persons and as much equipment as quickly as possible from Haiphong, turnarounds were rapid and crew liberty was necessarily restricted. Although chaplains routinely reported high morale and little grumbling about the rigorous schedule, crews of the amphibious ships were always pleased to hear that they were slated for a brief period of rest and relaxation. Chaplain Stone reported:

Finally we got a break and were ordered to lift a load of military equipment to Saigon. Saigon promised liberty, a chance to put our feet on mother earth, and to eat
in a real restaurant, or go to the movie, or just walk about among civilian populace. Although Saigon was not so dangerous then, one incident stands out in my mind. One afternoon I decided to go to a French movie, which incidentally had dubbed-in Vietnamese. It was a nice theater and I enjoyed it, but immediately after I returned to the ship, I learned that terrorists had thrown hand grenades and shot up the place after I left. I considered myself fortunate, and thereafter avoided the main thoroughfares, and contented myself remaining mostly on board.  

Chaplain Hunter spoke at length about Saigon in late 1954. He corroborated what other chaplains had said about terrorist activities and the inherent dangers of shore leave and liberty in the capital city. Further evidence of this can be seen in Rear Admiral Sabin's official report which stated, "On 29 Sept 1954, the French arrested twelve civilians in Saigon for possessing concussion-type hand grenades in the downtown area most frequented by Americans." A strict curfew was in effect in Saigon, and liberty and shore leave might be suddenly cancelled when gunfire or grenades interrupted the normal commercial and military bustle of the city's life.

When chaplains were present in Saigon, the coordination of worship services proved necessary. To facilitate this, a message was sent to all ships present with the schedule of all divine services. Religious publicity was further disseminated by means of Estes' Press News when the ship was in the city. When no shipboard masses were available to naval personnel, Catholic church parties were transported to the Saigon Cathedral which overlooked the city at the end of the main avenue, Rue Catinat. This same cathedral often served the needs of American Catholics during the 1960's. Chaplain Hunter noted:

Many Roman Catholics, including Vietnamese priests, were among the refugees. It surprised many to learn of practically no Protestant mission activity in North Vietnam prior to 1954. In the South, and specifically in the Saigon area, Christian and Missionary Alliance and Seventh Day Adventist missionaries were known to Navy chaplains. The Christian and Missionary Alliance mission was located near the waterfront. The U.S. personnel were always extended home hospitality there when Passage to Freedom ships were in Saigon.  

American diplomatic personnel made use of Navy chaplains as well. They were often invited for worship aboard ship and on occasion presented children for baptism. Thus, while the ministry of chaplains was primarily to the evacuees and military personnel, the ministry was by no means limited to them.

During the first half of Passage to Freedom, the Force Chaplain from San Diego, Commander E. Richard Barnes (United Methodist) was flown to Vietnam to join the operation. His mission was to augment the chaplain's ministry among the Vietnamese and to observe the force-wide lay leadership program in operation. Chaplain Barnes rode several of the amphibious transports as they carried Vietnamese civilians from Haiphong to Saigon and was impressed with the excellent work being done by lay leaders in ships without chaplains. With him on one of the trips south was PHIBPAC's staff medical officer, himself a Catholic lay leader. Chaplain Barnes reported that the medical officer arranged and assisted in Catholic masses led by a Vietnamese passenger priest. The Catholic lay leader also played the organ for Chaplain Barnes' Protestant worship services.

PHIBPAC lay leaders played a key role in providing religious coverage for ship's company personnel of the amphibious craft throughout Amphibious Group 1's (PHIBGRU 1) part in the operation. Chaplains in Vietnamese waters during the period consistently praised the dedicated efforts of energetic and enthusiastic laymen who contributed to the spiritual health of American personnel and assisted in humanitarian and religious activities among the Vietnamese.

Chaplains with the Service Force

Tourane Bay became the support base for Service Force ships participating in the operation because it was strategically located halfway between Hanoi and Saigon. Shuttling ships conveniently resupplied from the store ships and refrigerator ships, refueled from the tankers, disembarked
their injured and ill for care in the hospital ship, and tied up alongside repair ships as required.

Chaplains were attached to the repair ship *Ajax* and to the hospital ship *Consolation* (AH-15). Commander Arthur M. Kulinski (Roman Catholic) and Lieutenant (junior grade) William R. Howard (Southern Baptist), who had been in Tourane Bay since 4 September aboard *Consolation*, provided a ministry for American personnel who were injured or fell seriously ill during the operation and for emergency cases among French Army, Foreign Legion, and Vietnamese civilian evacuees.

The *Consolation* was equipped to handle 1,000 patients. There were three surgical suites with a staff of sixteen Navy nurses and thirty-three medical officers. While the facilities were never employed to capacity during the operation and the nine-month deployment seemed for the most part a routine one, the number of patients treated was impressive. It was to the credit of U.S. Navy preventive medicine units at Haiphong and Saigon and skilled medical personnel aboard participating ships that there were no epidemics among evacuees and no threatening diseases reported among American seamen. This was remarkable indeed in view of the fact that diseases were rampant among the rural population of Vietnam.

While chaplains aboard the hospital ships traditionally remained on call twenty-four hours a day and seven days a week, Chaplains Kulinski and Howard arranged to conduct religious services aboard other Service Force ships in the harbor and for visiting ships without chaplains. In addition, church parties from nearby ships were invited aboard *Consolation*.

A second hospital ship also participated in the evacuation effort. Commander Roy L. Bonner (Southern Baptist) and Lieutenant Commander Joseph D. O’Leary (Roman Catholic) were aboard *Haven* (AH-12). *Haven* had been deployed off Korea from January through August and was due to return to the United States. At the request of the French Government for a hospital ship to deploy on a special mission, *Haven’s* orders were changed. She was diverted to Saigon to embark French Army, Navy, and Foreign Legion patients, most of whom had been long-term prisoners of the Viet Minh who were being repatriated. While imprisoned, most of the patients had been provided only the most superficial care, being treated by fellow prisoners and often providing their own care. Some of them had been in Vietnam as long as four years and had contracted many of the tropical diseases affecting the general populace.

A week out of Japan, *Haven* moored in Saigon on 8 September and began loading patients day and night. Forty-eight hours later, 721 patients, most of whom were bedridden, were embarked. The ship left Saigon on 10 September and set a course through the Suez Canal for Oran, Algeria in North Africa. This first port of call was to be the destination for the Legionnaires aboard. The second port in the Mediterranean was to be Marseilles in southern France where French Army and Navy patients were to be unloaded.

Before leaving Japan for Vietnam, Chaplain Bonner had moved about central Honshu attempting to locate a supply of French New Testaments while Chaplain O’Leary was busy restocking Roman Catholic supplies. With the help of the Japan Bible Society, Chaplain Bonner was able to acquire 100 New Testaments to distribute among his French patients. The Bibles did not last long when it became widely known that he had them aboard. At the same time, most of the patients went out on deck when the ship reached the Red Sea and the closest point to Mecca to pay homage to their holy city. Interestingly, a large number of the Moslem passengers were in regular attendance at both Protestant and Roman Catholic worship services. Some had no doubt become accustomed to attending Legion masses both in North Africa and in Indochina. The explanation for this unusual phenomenon, so far as Protestant worship was concerned, seemed to be related to their appreciation of congregational singing. Chaplain Bonner recalled:

We passed through the Suez Canal on Sunday. The British pilot who came aboard as we entered the canal showed me the [alleged] place where Moses led the children of Israel across the Red Sea. We had just finished church, and I had used the story in my sermon that morning. Now the British pilot described the place over the public address system.
After four days in Marseilles, *Haven* sailed for the Panama Canal and to Long Beach, California, arriving at home port on 1 November 1954, becoming the first U.S. hospital ship to circle the globe.

The only Service Force circuit-riding chaplain to be ordered to Vietnam for temporary duty with the Passage to Freedom was Chaplain Wooten. From Sasebo, Japan, he flew to Naval Air Station, Sangley Point, Republic of the Philippines, and on to the air base at Tourane. From Tourane he sailed in *Cimarron* (AO-22) to the mouth of the Red River, where he went up river by small boat to Haiphong, and then by helicopter to Henriette Pass eight miles southeast of Haiphong.

Chaplain Wooten remained at Henriette Pass where the amphibious transports were loaded, relieving Chaplain Smith of *Ajax* who soon thereafter departed for Haiphong where he relieved Chaplain Fitzpatrick. Chaplain Wooten reported that a number of Marines with a knowledge of the French language were ordered to the embarkation area to act as interpreters. If the refugee priests who led their people out of North Vietnam were unable to speak French, the conversation was conducted in Latin. The priest came aboard first, received instructions for his people, and in turn translated the instructions into Vietnamese by means of a bull horn from the gangway. Chaplain Wooten remained in Henriette Pass until mid-November, ministering to Catholic personnel aboard the various ships there, coordinating Protestant services to be conducted by lay leaders, and assisting with the embarkation.\(^{35}\)

**Progress of the Operation**

By 15 November 1954, 173,311 passengers, 5,791 vehicles, and 28,102 tons of cargo had been evacuated from North Vietnam by United States ships.\(^{36}\) In mid-October the Hanoi evacuation zone was closed according to schedule. Only the Haiphong zone, sizable though it was, remained open for evacuation of passengers and cargo. With the closing of Hanoi, the Viet Minh began to employ every device of administrative restraint available to them to prevent the further flow of refugees to the south. Economic and currency restraints and the simple denial of "laissez passer" (a written permit necessary to proceed from one village to another) were freely employed. Such restraints, for the most part non-violent during that period, resulted in a dwindling number of evacuees.

With the main avenues of passage effectively closed to them, fleeing North Vietnamese created new means of escape. The first, although short-lived, was the use of small, dangerously overloaded sampans and bamboo rafts to transport refugees out to sea. French patrol craft made systematic sweeps inside territorial waters to pick these people up before they reached the open sea. For several days a French ship stood by to transfer the refugees from the patrol craft. Later, as the numbers of these desperate people increased, a U.S. transport was directed to anchor outside the three-mile limit to receive refugees directly from the French patrols. These refugees were a determined group, and there was a much higher percentage of males than had previously been encountered. They reported that the Viet Minh had deprived them of all transportation and that escape by sea was the last resort. Many were reported to have drowned when their flimsy rafts broke up on the rough seas. After a few weeks, communist river and beach patrols managed effectively to stem this flow of refugees.\(^{37}\)

The second avenue of escape, employed by evacuees until the end of the operation, consisted
of the thousands of little-used and jungle-camouflaged overland trails. The people made their way overland to the ships awaiting them or to safety below the 17th parallel via Laos and Cambodia. The official report of the Passage to Freedom stated that the technique was amazingly successful, partly because of the close cooperation between French naval forces and the Catholic Church underground. Throughout the remainder of the operation, passenger influx from the countryside remained at 300 to 500 persons daily.38

It had been the plan that amphibious ships attached to PHIBGRU WESTPAC would be augmented or replaced as required by transports and cargo ships of the MSTS. Realization that estimates of shipping requirements by French and Vietnamese sources were exaggerated made it possible as early as the end of September to release some of the amphibious ships for resumption of their normal duties. Estimates had been reduced from 100,000 to 50,000 refugees each month registering for transportation. By mid-October most of those ships initially deployed to Vietnam had been released. Service Force ships, to which chaplains were attached and which were based at Tourane, remained in the area throughout the operation. Chaplains were assigned to six of the MSTS transports deployed to Vietnam for the Passage to Freedom operation.

Vacillating requirements for passenger transportation resulted in varying schedules for the transports. USNS General William M. Black (T-AP-135) and USNS Marine Lynx (T-AP-194), arriving in country on 13 September, were phased out of the operation on 2 and 24 November, respectively. USNS General R. L. Howze (T-AP-134) was the first transport to arrive on 8 September and carried the most passengers of any Passage to Freedom ship before being phased out in January 1955. The two remaining of the five original transports, USNS General A. W. Brewster (T-AP-155) and USNS Marine Adder (T-AP-193), were temporarily phased out on 2 and 14 November, respectively; but returned in 1955 to resume operations. Marine Adder remained from January through the end of the operation on 18 May. Brewster returned to Vietnam in April 1955, remained through 19 May, and had the distinction of being the last refugee ship out of Haiphong when the Bamboo Curtain fell over North Vietnam.39

Seven MSTS chaplains served in the transports. Lieutenant (j.g.) Donald A. Weir (United Presbyterian) was aboard USNS Marine Serpent (T-AP-202). Lieutenant (j.g.) Frederick E. Still (United Methodist) was aboard Marine Lynx for approximately six weeks of the operation and until relieved by Lieutenant Robert D. Aldrich (United Church of Christ). Chaplain Aldrich returned with his ship to the United States in late November and resumed his Vietnam duty after the first of the year in Marine Adder. Lieutenant Commander Harry A. Porter (American Baptist) also served aboard Marine Adder. Lieutenant Dennis C. Kane (Roman Catholic) was aboard Brewster during its two deployments with Passage to Freedom. Lieutenant Joseph L. Remias (Roman Catholic) was aboard Howze during the ship’s entire deployment. Coverage was also provided for General William M. Black.

Refugee worship services were well attended on board the transports. Thousands of Catholic peasants would chant their prayers together on deck during mass, weekdays and Sundays alike. In compartments below decks, they gathered in groups, by parishes or families, to say the rosary. Memories of the MSTS chaplains were often poignant. In an article published in a Roman Catholic foreign news service magazine, Chaplain Kane reported:

It was wonderful in the evenings to hear the prayers and hymns wafted up the ladder wells. . . . When the refugees prayed aloud at mass on the open deck, you’d see the crew standing on the bridges watching them. Our men admired them for their great faith. . . . For mass, the refugees would pack the deck so tightly that I could hardly stir at the altar. . . . Their reverence at mass was very remarkable.40

The same article touched on Chaplain Kane’s impact on the refugees:

A priest in Navy khaki was a novelty to the people. But when Father Kane donned his white Dominican habit and the mass vestments, they knew him as a real "Cha" (Father). Many of them came from provinces
evangelized by the Dominicans in North Vietnam. Father Kane, former professor in Villa Madonna College, Covington, Ky., one of four brothers, all Dominican priests, felt that these refugees had a special claim on him.

The majority of the refugees aboard were poorly dressed; some were dirty and bedraggled. "I reminded the crew that these people were not tramps," the priest said. "They never begged from me. Some of them had given up comfortable homes. But they had to struggle through muddy rice paddies and wade across rivers to escape the Viet Minh. When they got a chance to wash aboard ship, they ran for it. I told our guys that the refugees were like GI's after combat, muddy, dirty and exhausted."41

In addition to military personnel, a Vietnamese team comprised of a priest, interpreters, nurses, and social workers was assigned to each U.S. ship. Brewster also carried a Buddhist priest. However, since the refugees were 80 to 95 percent Catholic and Buddhists rarely held services outside their temples, the priest had few formal activities.

One of the chaplains on the operation was Chaplain Remias of Howze. Throughout the five months Howze transported evacuees, Chaplain Remias wrote article after article for the ship's newspaper and lengthy letters for friends at home. In one piece describing the debarkation of refugees in Tourane, he wrote:

They were awake at 0400. The refrain of chanting prayers swept through the ship like a refreshing breeze. They were reciting the rosary. Seems as though the first glint of breaking day was a signal for thanksgiving.

About 0500 the line was forming for the last breakfast on board. Men, women and children milled about the passageways and filled the stairwells. From all compartments they came with rusty pots, tin cans, buckets, bowls, and conical coolie caps. Crowding outside the galley, the eyes of want, seeing the plentiful abundance, widened with unbelievable expression. The first steward was dishing out scrambled eggs with diced ham and chipped beef. His assistants were serving up the boiled rice, along with milk for the babies and hot tea for the men and women. They knew a good meal and helped themselves.

On deck they found a place in the sun, spread their colorful mats, and ate leisurely. They sensed tomorrow’s uncertainty. As you walked among them and mingled with the playful children, you saw them raise their rice bowls to hungry lips with cupped hands and you knew that their hearts were raised even higher to the Americans who fed them. Hunger satisfied, they reached for the feather duster and swept clean the rice mat. There was no waste. What was left over they squirreled away in scraps of paper. They gathered up the few personal items that was their baggage and neatly stowed them.42

These people were fleeing from what they viewed as a hostile environment. Everything had been taken from them—home, land, associations of a lifetime—but they were not defeated. Hoping to begin life again in the south, they were a study in courage and determination.

On 8 January 1955, during one of his Christmas visits to American military personnel in Korea and Japan, Francis Cardinal Spellman, Military Ordinariate of the Roman Catholic Church, arrived in Saigon to visit Passage to Freedom refugees and the ships which transported them. Together with President Diem, Vietnamese Church dignitaries, representatives of the Vietnamese Refugee Evacuation Committee, American Embassy personnel, and U.S. Agency for International Development (AID) personnel, he paid a visit to Howze to greet 4,300 refugees arriving from Haiphong. He was
led about the decks by Chaplain Remias so that he could meet, touch, and bless the thousands of freedom-seeking Vietnamese Catholics.

The Navy news account of the event, released by Commander Amphibious Group 1 reported:

It was a touching scene as His Eminence slowly threaded his way through the kneeling refugees of his faith as with rapt, joyfilled eyes they looked up at the Cardinal and then bowed to kiss his ring. Mothers presented newborn babies to be blessed; small children tagged after him to tug at his frock so that their rosary could be blessed.

As the Cardinal progressed up one side of the deck and down the other, he was greeted with cheers that grew in volume as the word spread that the person with him was President Diem.

When the Cardinal left the ship he mounted an improvised pulpit on the dock where he extended praise to all nationalities engaged in this great cooperative undertaking, then gave his blessing on the assembled people, the refugees and the officers and men of the Howze. In an article written for his ship’s newspaper after its five-month participation in the operation was completed, Chaplain Remias noted several other highlights. Howze recorded the 100th birth aboard an American vessel and transported the 200,000th refugee to freedom. Howze recorded the only birth of twins on board a ship and the largest number of births en route, fifty. Howze reportedly transported the most refugees, was the first U.S. ship to receive the Vietnamese Presidential Citation, and, according to the article, gave more gifts to the refugees than any other ship.

On Howze’s last trip before returning to the United States for repairs, the ship’s 50,000th refugee was transported aboard. Sixty-two year old Do Van Thuc was so honored. After docking in Saigon, Do Van Thuc and his family were guests of the officers and men of the ship at a dinner in their behalf. The family was honored with a twenty-pound cake commemorating the event. Do Van Thuc, who had lost a son in the fighting with the Viet Minh in 1950, said that he would like his other son, Do Van Tuyen, then twenty years of age, to enter government service in South Vietnam and serve the people of his country, and expressed his confidence that the Vietnamese would emerge victorious over the Viet Minh.

**Final Days of the Operation**

In April and May 1955, only three MSTS ships remained in Vietnam. They were Brewster, Marine Adder, and Marine Serpent. Each of the ships maintained an eight-day turnaround between Haiphong and Saigon during April; but the numbers of refugees steadily dwindled. On the first of May there were less than 10,000 people registered for future evacuation.

On 13 May Haiphong was officially closed as the last remnants of French Army and evacuation units were moved to the beaches of Do Son. Witnessing the communist takeover of Haiphong was a sad experience for Chaplain Kane and the crew of Brewster. A late dispatch from Brewster as she departed the area described the event:

In all of Haiphong tonight, starting at 2000 and continuing until the same hour Friday night, a rigid curfew
is being enforced to prevent rioting or pillaging as the Viet Minh complete their occupation. All people have been warned to keep off the streets and stay behind the shuttered entrances and windows of their homes. The main body of Viet Minh troops enter the heart of the city at dawn Friday. On Saturday the people will be routed out to cheer the Viet Minh "Victory Parade.

Only about one thousand French troops are still in Haiphong. As the Viet Minh take over block by block replacing French sentries with their own, the French will speed eighteen miles southeastward to the tip of Do Son Peninsula. There they will join about four thousand of the French expeditionary corps in the final evacuation from northern Indochina, writing the end to French political, military, economic, social and cultural domination that has existed since 1863. Over twelve thousand troops have left by troopships and planes for Saigon and France. None will be left anywhere in northern Indochina by Monday. Their disappearance marks the end of a chapter in French colonialism that will never be repeated. For thirteen million Vietnamese it is the beginning of a new chapter — the drowning of their freedom and liberties in the riptide of communism.

On 14 May Commander Task Group, 50.1 (CTG 50.1), redesignated from CTG 90 in April, arrived at the final embarkation point at Do Son. During the embarkation of French security forces and equipment, ten refugees, including a man and his infant daughter, arrived for evacuation. Barefoot, hungry, and with the clothes on their backs as their only worldly possessions, these refugees had fled the city of Hanoi at the last possible moment. The father with his baby daughter had chosen freedom despite the fact his wife refused to accompany him. They were embarked in Brewster, the last official refugees of the Passage to Freedom.

On 15 May Marine Serpent was released from the operation. Marine Adder remained through 18 May, taking station outside the territorial limits, in international waters, hopefully awaiting other late comers, but none appeared. The Geneva Agreement had scheduled the end of the operation for 19 May 1955. In accordance with this, U.S. ships departed on the 18th and sailed for Sangley Point in the Philippines, where the Passage to Freedom task force was disestablished on 20 May 1955.

Final statistics for the ten-month operation showed that 293,002 civilian passengers, 17,846 military passengers, 68,757 tons of cargo, 8,135 vehicles, and 36 barges had been transported.

The significance of the operation lay in its humanitarian aspects in which Navy chaplains played key roles from beginning to end. The entire operation stands as a symbol of the person to person and nation to nation humanitarianism for which the United States Navy and its chaplains strive. In his report of the operation Rear Admiral Sabin wrote:

As a result of this operation, tens of thousands of Vietnamese came to know America through the genuine kindness displayed by U.S. Navy, MSTS, Civil Service, and Merchant Marine crews. During the three or four days spent on board our ships a great many people became our friends. Gifts of rice, chopsticks, cigarettes, candy, and soap were presented to the refugees. Frightened, hungry, weary children were washed, fed, and entertained by our bluejackets. . . . . These natural expressions of good will on the part of American sailors toward the Vietnamese people may well be one of the most significant and rewarding results of our aid and assistance to a beleaguered people. Certainly the operation has been spiritually rewarding to those who participated in it. Passage to Freedom exemplifies the Christian spirit that motivates the actions of our country toward all oppressed peoples of the world.

The Interim Years

Between mid-1955 and the end of 1961 there were no Navy chaplains assigned to duty ashore in Vietnam. Small numbers of naval personnel were attached to the Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG) staff and to subordinate advisory billets assisting in the training of personnel of the small South Vietnamese Navy. From time to time, construction battalions were temporarily deployed in country for special construction projects, but these were generally small detached units of Seabees with no chaplains accompanying them.

Units of the Seventh Fleet occasionally operated offshore, the flagship itself being deployed to the South China Sea during the Laotian crises in September 1959 and December 1960. On such operations, each major combat ship and squadron of destroyers had a chaplain assigned to it. Service Force support ships accompanying them for extended periods to replenish, refuel, and rearm the
ships of line carried a circuit riding chaplain from SERVRON 3 who moved from ship to ship pur-
suing a routine seagoing ministry. During these interim years, naval units were
employed to maintain the security of the seas adja-
cent to the struggling young nation of South Viet-
nam; to protect and, if need be, to evacuate American civilian and military personnel in Saigon; and
to demonstrate American objection to Southeast Asian communist encroachment.

During this period three fleet units with chap-
lains visited South Vietnam to display American friendship. The first of these, the cruiser Los Angeles (CA-135), visited Saigon in October 1956 with Commander Henry E. Austin, known as "Ham-
mering Hank," (American Baptist) aboard. The
occasion was the first anniversary of South Viet-
nam's existence as an independent republic under
President Diem.

In July 1957, the seaplane tender Pine Island (AV-12) with Lieutenant Commander Donald W.
Jolly (United Presbyterian) aboard paid an official
call to Nha Trang. To avoid any appearance of
military buildup, a violation of the Geneva Agree-
ment, members of the crew were allowed ashore for liberty only in carefully limited numbers. Those
going on liberty were instructed in the customs and
mores of the people and in the political situation in South Vietnam. Events of the weekend, 27-30 July
1957, included a reception for ship's officers ashore on Saturday; divine services aboard the ship on
Sunday to which American Marines, French of-
ficers, and English-speaking indigenous Christians
of Nha Trang were invited; and two events on
Monday: an orphans' party on board in the after-
noon and a fireworks display ashore that evening.

On a recent visit to Hong Kong, Chaplain Jolly
had purchased a large supply of fireworks and was
prepared with cartoons, refreshments, and a cadre
of ship's personnel to act as hosts. Each host
assumed responsibility for the safety and entertain-
ment of a child. Chaplain Jolly noted that all
events of the three-day visit were both enjoyable
and successful.

In September–October 1959, Commander Ker-
mot R. Cassady (Evangelical United, Brethren) was
aboard the Thetis Bay, Assault Helicopter Aircraft
Carrier 1 (CVHA-1), as it cruised off Vietnam. During one of the frequent Laotian crises occur-
ring between 1959 and 1963, his ship, loaded with
U.S. Marines, bolstered the confidence of the
South Vietnamese Government that the armed
insurgency of Laotian communists would be con-
fined to the borders of their own country.

Late in 1961, following minesweeping exercises
with units of the Royal Thai Navy, Mine Division
71 (MINDIV 71) of Mine Flotilla 1, with Lieuten-
ant James E. Seim (American Lutheran) aboard, arrived in Saigon to make final preparations for an
anti-infiltration operation near the 17th parallel.
Three of the ships remained on a sweeping exercise of the mouth of the Saigon River while five moved
upriver to the capital city. The detachment re-
mained in Saigon from 13 to 18 December. On
Sunday Catholic church parties were sent to the
Saigon Cathedral. Chaplain Seim conducted
divine services on each of the "sweeps."

While sandbag barricades and barbed wire were
very much in evidence, the city was considered safe
enough for daylight sightseeing. However, most of
the personnel remained close to the main thor-
oughfare and were back aboard their ships some
time before liberty secured at 2200.

Much of Chaplain Seim’s time in Saigon was
spent in making preparations for Christmas. He
taped Christmas music for the five ships scheduled
for the operations north of Danang and acquired
makeshift decorations to enhance the festive mood
of the season. Since the return trip from Bangkok
to their base in Sasebo was interrupted for the
Saigon visit and the following six-week operation
north of Danang, it was anticipated that mail
delivery from Subic Bay would be delayed and that
Christmas packages from home would not arrive
before the end of December. They arrived on 2
January 1962.

During the several weeks in Danang, with two
"sweeps" in the bay for maintenance and chart-
ing, and three constantly on surveillance duty look-
ing for North Vietnamese junks which might try to
infiltrate South Vietnamese coastal areas for logis-
tic resupply of the Viet Cong, Chaplain Seim spent
much of the time at sea. Ashore in Danang he
made arrangements for Catholic ministry aboard
ships in Tourane Bay with the Roman Catholic Bishop of the diocese. There being no Protestant chaplains in the area, the minesweepers’ lay leaders, trained, supplied, and supervised by Chaplain Seim, conducted religious services.\textsuperscript{58}

Chaplain Seim organized tours for personnel of the division to Marble Mountain, where stone-cutters quarried materials and sculpted impressive figures; and to the cathedral and the orphanage, where attractive embroideries were sold. Chaplain Seim recalled, "I managed to reserve a beach for swimming and beach parties. Before the end of the first week in January I arranged for our crews to furnish a small building there for an enlisted men’s club.”\textsuperscript{59}

While Chaplain Seim was in Danang, a small unit of the United States Air Force moved into the Danang Air Base. Since no chaplain was with the detachment, Chaplain Seim provided temporary religious coverage until the first Air Force chaplain arrived later that month.

Chaplain Seim’s temporary duty with MINDIV 71 was concluded on 22 January. He departed for his home port, Sasebo, Japan, in the flagship Epping Forest (LSD-4). Prior to his departure from the area, since ‘the five minesweepers were to remain behind. to complete the operation, he arranged for local Protestant missionaries to board the ships, on invitation of commanding officers and lay leaders, to conduct divine services and to provide a religious ministry for the crews.\textsuperscript{60}

The internal situation in South Vietnam between mid-1955 and the end of 1961, especially after 1959, was characterized by three important developments. These were growing political instability, more sophisticated and widespread communist insurgency, and increasing American military and economic aid, all of which were intimately linked, each condition influencing the other two throughout the period.

In February 1955 the U.S. MAAG assumed responsibility for training the South Vietnamese armed forces. On 23 October 1955, by national referendum, Premier Ngo Dinh Diem replaced former Emperor Bao Dai and became the first President of the Republic of Vietnam. Communist insurgents, many of whom had remained in South Vietnam as they relocated their families north of the 17th parallel in order to preclude reprisals for future guerrilla activity, began to consolidate their positions.

The overriding development between 1959 and 1961, and the one which in large measure determined the development of the other two, was increasing terrorism and organized guerrilla activity among the people of South Vietnam. Infiltration of trained guerrillas from North Vietnam increased and murders of district, village, and hamlet officials became commonplace.\textsuperscript{61}

More and more territory was lost to Viet Cong control and the political integrity of the provinces was shaken. Many lines of political communication between outlying provinces and the national capital were severed, with a consequent deterioration of Saigon’s national economic and military policy. Popular morale became increasingly shaky as the mounting loss of local leadership produced a threat of anarchy.\textsuperscript{62} As terrorist activity continued to mount in 1960, popular confidence in the Diem government’s ability to save the country from communism was badly shaken. The first of a succession of unsuccessful coups d’etat aimed at Diem occurred on 11 November 1960. Some reform programs followed, as did requests for increased American aid.

During 1960 and 1961 the gravity of the political and military crisis in South Vietnam prompted the government of the United States to increase its involvement, both militarily and economically. Any feasible measure, within the scope of the Geneva Agreement, was explored to bolster the wavering government and to improve the effectiveness of the South Vietnamese armed forces. In response to White House direction, the scope and effectiveness of the American aid program was studied and restudied, with the result that an even broader involvement was seen as essential to saving South Vietnam from communism.\textsuperscript{63}

The deepening crisis and broader American involvement resulted in the United States Navy’s being called upon at the end of 1961 to play a more prominent role in the implementation of American policy in Southeast Asia. In this regard, Navy chaplains returned to Vietnam for duty both ashore and afloat.
CHAPTER TWO
DEVELOPING PRESENCE ASHORE

The Early Years in Saigon

On 12 February 1955 when the French government relinquished command of the Vietnamese Army, the United States agreed to help train the new South Vietnamese Army and Navy and to provide technical assistance in the proper utilization of military supplies and equipment. This training was accomplished through the endeavors of the U.S. MAAG. This advisory group had existed before the Geneva Conference of 1954 and, under the Geneva Agreement, could therefore continue operation after the withdrawal of French forces. In 1961, a review of United States assistance to South Vietnam was followed by an expanded Navy training and advisory effort with special attention given to building up the South Vietnamese Navy patrol force. In a related move, on 8 February 1962, as a result of extensive reorganization, the U.S. Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV) was established. 1

The first Navy chaplain to be assigned to a full tour of duty in Vietnam arrived in September 1962. Lieutenant Commander Harry R. Miller (United Presbyterian) reported to the newly established Headquarters Support Activity (HEDSUP-PACT), Saigon on 9 September 1962 to begin the organization and implementation of a religious program in the Saigon-Cholon area. HEDSUP-PACT was responsible for the logistic support of all U.S. Armed Forces and U.S. State Department activities in the Saigon metropolitan area. The activity’s mission included municipal functions such as public works, industrial relations, and the provision of such services as would normally be required by a large community of American government employees and their dependents. 2
responsibilities for providing a full religious program, personal counseling, and other services usually included within the scope of a Navy chaplain’s ministry were assigned to the HEDSUPPACT chaplain. Officially, Chaplain Miller’s ministry extended to the 2,500 Navy personnel and dependents living in the Saigon-Cholon area. As a practical matter, however, his religious ministry was extended without reservation to Embassy, United States Information Service (USIS), and AID personnel and to English-speaking civilian Christians.

When he arrived in Saigon, Chaplain Miller found a busy but apprehensive metropolitan center. Often called the “Paris of the Orient,” the city boasted tree-lined boulevards and beautiful parks. Much new construction was in evidence, given impetus both by the increasing availability of the American dollar and by the increasing need for refugee and foreign employee housing. The city was already crowded with homeless Vietnamese refugees who sought to escape the mounting terrorism of the Viet Cong in the inland provinces and with those who, because of their loyalty to the government, felt more secure in the relative safety of the capital. The foreign community, made up principally of Americans and a few Frenchmen, was also growing rapidly. American military personnel alone grew from 327 in May 1960 to more than 4,000 by February 1962. Before Chaplain Miller’s tour of duty was completed in August 1964, American forces numbered in excess of 20,000, many of whom had their families with them and were quartered in Saigon.

To the casual observer, duty in Saigon from September 1962 until August 1964 was very much like most other tours of duty ashore in the Far East for the Navy chaplain. But there was one very important exception. The chaplain was challenged to provide a ministry within a context of successive military, political and often personal crises. During this two-year period, South Vietnam was a place of confusion and uncertainty about the future and a place of imminent peril where a Vietnamese person’s life could be taken at any moment. During this period, Chaplain Miller lived with riots and martial law, was present when a serious military coup d’état occurred, and experienced the anguish which the assassination of President John F. Kennedy produced throughout the entire American overseas community. He witnessed the mounting Viet Cong terrorism in the surrounding countryside and in Saigon. He also experienced the growing religious-political factionalism. The general assessment was that the situation of the South Vietnamese government was grave.

From 1962 through 1964, Viet Cong harassment and terrorism in the outlying provinces increased significantly. Literally thousands of village officials, teachers, physicians, and prosperous farmers were murdered or kidnapped. During this period, the government of South Vietnam implemented a program of strategic hamlet construction designed to defend the people from terrorist attacks. A total of 11,182 hamlets were to be built in the hope that Viet Cong terrorism would be minimized. In spite of government efforts to support the project, the strategic hamlet project failed to reduce the terrorism. A reported 4,077 hamlets were built to house 39 percent of South Vietnam’s population. Nevertheless, the Viet Cong were so successful in spreading terror and confusion that they entered into the capital itself in increasingly large numbers to kill and kidnap leaders, attack military personnel, and destroy buildings in an attempt to sabotage South Vietnamese confidence in the presence of American military forces.3

In Saigon, therefore, space itself was not the sole criterion for suitable living, working and worshiping accommodations to be assigned by HEDSUPPACT. Security was the single most important factor to be considered within the obvious limitations of available space. HEDSUPPACT leased housing for official use and living accommodations for American personnel, but finding a permanent building in which to conduct divine services presented an urgent and continuing problem for Chaplain Miller. He reported:

My first chapel was in the theater rented by U.S. forces in Saigon to show American films. The lease ran out six months after I arrived and I moved the chapel services to the USIS auditorium which was centrally located and more adaptable to a religious service than the new theater HEDSUPPACT rented for films. This was a fortunate choice in that the new theater was
bombed out, but the USIS auditorium continued to stand intact. The Easter Sunrise service of 1964 had to be held on the roof of the Bachelor Officers Quarters because of increased terrorist activities. The ball field we used the previous year had been bombed as had the theater we used for the Christmas service just three months before.  

An active missionary community had assisted MACV for some time in caring for the spiritual needs of Saigon’s foreign military community and continued to assist Chaplain Miller. Christian and Missionary Alliance, Episcopal, and Southern Baptist missionaries joined the small cadre of military clergymen in providing for the needs of the Protestant community. Of his experience with leaders of the missionary community, Chaplain Miller said:

My association with the Christian and Missionary Alliance Vietnam Mission was the high point of my tour. These men and women are as a group the most devoted, sincere, energetic and unselfish representatives of Christ’s Church I have known. Like most of the realistic observers of the missionary church, they are not aiming at a denominational structure as such but rather at a strong indigenous church which will be able to witness to the Vietnamese people without outside help.  

Religious coverage for Roman Catholic personnel was provided by Father Robert Crawford, a civilian priest employed by MACV as an auxiliary chaplain who had been in Saigon for eight years. He provided several masses each Sunday, religious and marital instructions, choir rehearsals, and other activities necessary to the religious program in his congregation. All of his masses were available to military personnel and their dependents as well as to personnel of the foreign civilian community, and all were well attended. There were also two Roman Catholic U.S. Army chaplains then in Vietnam who were in and out of Saigon ministering to the needs of MACV personnel, though their presence in Saigon on a weekend often was not possible.  

The chapel program became a vital part of American community life in Saigon. The laymen’s organizations, both Protestant and Roman Catholic, planned religious retreats for their members, and other program activities consisted of Sunday evening worship services, Bible study groups, fellowship breakfasts and dinners, communicant classes, and a number of special seasonal observances. During Chaplain Miller’s tour of duty, seasonal commemorations included special Advent activities, candlelight communion services and carol tours of Saigon on Christmas Eve, a full schedule of Lenten activities, sunrise worship services on Easter, and special Thanksgiving worship held jointly with missionary and military communities. Chaplain Miller remembered:

There was an outstanding choir which numbered thirty members. Although very few of them had prior musical training, they were able to present Stainer’s "Crucifixion" at a special Easter program and fine anthems throughout the year. The Protestant Men of the Chapel did a wonderful job assisting the chaplain in providing a varied religious program. Army Brigadier General Oden was the first president of the Protestant Men of the Chapel just prior to his promotion to Major General and his taking command of the Army Support Activity. Colonel Anderson, the MAAG Chief of Staff, was the second president of the group. From top to bottom, support for the religious program was outstanding. It was a joy to work with these people. Two morning services consistently resulted in standing room only.  

Missionary projects sponsored by the chapel were both widespread and varied. In Chaplain Miller’s two years in Saigon, his chapel members donated countless man hours of labor and over $10,000 to missions projects. Churches were restored, orphanages were renovated and enlarged, Christmas parties were held, and printing costs for Scripture portions and general religious literature in Vietnamese and tribal language translations were underwritten.

Without his fully realizing it, Chaplain Miller’s work presaged both the mood and the tone of the Navy chaplains’ ministry in Vietnam. On the conclusion of his tour he reported:

Although coups, martial law, curfews, barricades, terrorist bombs and the like were ever present, this was the most challenging and interesting part of my ministry to date. The people responded readily to the call of Christ with the war such a present reality.
This was to become a common response of Navy chaplains to ministry in Vietnam. First to last, and almost without exception, each one was to say great things about his ministry and its relevance and timely application of the power of God to urgent needs in crisis situations. Each was to speak of spiritual rewards derived from a dynamic religious ministry enthusiastically and energetically applied to the critical needs of young Americans in combat and in support of combat. The Navy chaplain’s ministry in Vietnam began on this level of selfless service and aspired to even higher levels of devotion and valor as each new day presented its own peculiar opportunities and challenges.

Chaplain Miller remained in Saigon until he was relieved by Commander Calvin J. Croston (Episcopal) who reported for a one-year tour in September 1964. Chaplain Croston continued a ministry directed toward both military and civilian personnel of the Saigon-Cholon area. A priest from the Saigon Cathedral served the members of the Roman Catholic Church.

With the addition of extra folding chairs, the seating capacity of 125 in the USIS auditorium was adequate for Chaplain Croston’s Protestant program. Since large assemblies of people provided attractive targets for terrorist saboteurs, security was as important as space itself, and the USIS auditorium was at least secure. However, the auditorium was scheduled for redecoration on 1, November 1964 and would no longer be available for religious services. HEDSUPPACT had been unable to provide a permanent and secure alternative location. A military briefing room was utilized until the scheduling of Sunday briefings necessitated another move. Chaplain Croston and his congregation then began meeting in a house with a large living room capable of holding a maximum of 140 folding chairs. In four months they had held divine services in three different locations. Orientation pamphlets, newspapers, and Embassy Bulletin schedules were all changed with each move. In spite of all the moving, no suitable and permanent place of worship was found, and the result was a long and frustrating effort to acquire such a space for divine services in Saigon. Although the effort was not successful during Chaplain Croston’s tour of duty, his successor, Commander Robert E. Osman (United Presbyterian), praised Chaplain Croston’s efforts by saying, “The hard work of Chaplain Croston is evident here. Although he was unable to see his efforts for chapel areas accomplished, he laid the ground work for such. The officers and men speak very highly of him.”

Early during the Navy’s presence in South Vietnam, civilian aid requests began to pour in from throughout the country. In 1962, the Navy began a program for the distribution of humanitarian and educational materials among the Vietnamese people. In addition to supplying physical aid, the program helped to increase the involvement of service personnel with the Vietnamese people through an atmosphere of benevolence and friendship. During its operation, Project Handclasp distributed an annual average in excess of one million pounds of humanitarian materials in Vietnam.

From its office in the HEDSUPPACT administration building, Chaplain Croston administered the growing humanitarian assistance program. Increasing amounts of Project Handclasp materials arrived aboard U.S. Navy ships from the Project Handclasp central warehouse at Naval Station, San Diego, California. By the end of 1964, Project Handclasp materials were being distributed all over the country to schools, orphanages, leper colonies, military and civilian hospitals, missions, and district penal confinement centers. Distributed items included toys, sports equipment, clothes, educational materials, food, soap and antiseptic liquids, tools, and construction materials. Chaplain Croston saw in the massive and growing humanitarian efforts among the people of South Vietnam a strategic medium for helping them to help themselves. Until the spring of 1965, Project Handclasp was directed exclusively by the HEDSUPPACT chaplain.

Additional Strength

At the end of 1963, there were 16,263 U.S. military personnel in South Vietnam, and by the end of 1964 this number had increased to 23,310. The
need for additional Navy chaplains was desperate. Describing the needs of the command with regard to additional chaplains, Chaplain Croston reported to Chief of Chaplains, Rear Admiral J. Floyd Dreith (Lutheran):

We need one or two more chaplains here ... It is imperative that we have a Roman Catholic chaplain. There are about 600 Navy in the HSA [HEDSUPPACT]. I actually have more than I can do with my collateral duties alone. For example, in four months I have been involved in four fund campaigns, and I am in charge of Project Handclasp which could almost be a full-time job. Besides being HSA chaplain, which simply means that I am responsible for all the religious activities in Saigon for 2,000 men, maybe more. I don't know the official figures. That doesn't count dependents, or USO, Embassy, USIS civilians, etc., who attend military services. The MACV command chaplain and his assistant, a Jewish chaplain, are occupied full time with work in MACV and for all practical purposes are not able to assist much with the religious program in Saigon.

We need a Roman Catholic chaplain desperately. All our military personnel in Saigon attend civilian services, and Father Crawford is their chaplain, in practice at least ... He should not be expected to do the military's work. It is our job to provide necessary religious support for our personnel. An Army Roman Catholic chaplain from Tan Son Nhat assists as much as he can, but he has his own command to cover.

During Chaplain Croston's tenure, HEDSUPPACT was under the administrative control of Commander U.S. Naval Forces, Philippines (COMNAVFORPHIL) and under operational control of MACV. The Naval Advisory Group had no chaplain assigned. The staff chaplain of COMNAVFORPHIL, who exercised area supervision of chaplains attached to U.S. naval units in Southeast Asia, was Commander Edmund W. Pipho (Lutheran). In early April 1965, Chaplain Pipho visited Navy chaplains in South Vietnam at the commands to which they were attached. He visited the HEDSUPPACT, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, and the 9th Marine Expeditionary Brigade commands.

Chaplain Pipho's report of the visit, which he forwarded to the Fleet Chaplain, U.S. Pacific Fleet, pointed out that the religious program in Saigon suffered from certain problems which defied any easy solutions. Although an adequate space for conducting Protestant divine services was available in Saigon, the dispersion of military quarters and work spaces throughout the city did not lend itself to satisfactory church attendance. This condition existed although numerous Protestant religious services were conducted on Sundays and other days in several different areas through the city. The HEDSUPPACT chaplain was assisted by U.S. Army chaplains who were assigned to him by MACV. With the help of these two additional chaplains, the HEDSUPPACT command was able to promote a better religious program than existed previously. The religious needs of Catholic military personnel were adequately met by the large civilian Catholic cathedral centrally located in Saigon. Chaplain Pipho concluded: "A need for another Catholic chaplain still exists, however, for adequate personal counseling of Catholic personnel. One Jewish chaplain, U.S. Army, is available to minister to all Jewish personnel in Vietnam. This arrangement is about as good as can be expected."

Chaplain Croston's request for an additional Navy chaplain billet was approved by the Chief of Naval Operations; and the Chief of Chaplains, J. Floyd Dreith, assigned Lieutenant Commander Thomas R. Hilferty (Roman Catholic) to fill the billet. Chaplain Hilferty arrived in June 1965; his responsibilities included supervision of religious services, counseling, and MACV indoctrination in religious matters for all personnel in the Saigon-Cholon area. One of Chaplain Hilferty's duties was membership on the Community Relations Committee of MACV which was composed of twenty officer-members from the U.S. Armed Forces. The committee functioned as an advisory body, recommending policy for MACV approval on matters concerning American-Vietnamese relations. They were responsible for formulating solutions to problems which arose out of the concentration of U.S. personnel in the Saigon-Cholon area and in their deliberations worked closely with AID and Joint United States Public Affairs Office. The areas of concern which stimulated the most
discussion were overcrowding, traffic, excessive use of alcohol, and suppression of prostitution within the city.

Overcrowding had been a serious problem in Saigon for more than two years before Chaplain Hilferty arrived, and the quartering situation continued to be acute during his first months in Saigon. Necessary precautions against Viet Cong terrorist attacks required that American personnel be housed in secure compounds where possible. Increasing terrorist activity resulted in the evacuation of dependents in February 1965. This relieved the congestion somewhat, but increasing numbers of new arrivals soon aggravated the problem once again. With few exceptions, every large hotel and apartment house, as well as many of the larger villas, was used for U.S. personnel. This deprived the Vietnamese nationals of many rooms and apartments and increased the housing problem caused by the influx into Saigon-Cholon of workers and refugees. Because of this situation, MACV undertook a program to move as many personnel as feasible, including its own staff, out of the metropolitan area. Adding to the problem, however, was the practice by American personnel of taking rooms and apartments not leased by MACV. This resulted from the desire on the part of American servicemen to live more privately, comfortably, and even luxuriously, and induced landlords to prefer Americans with their buying power to Vietnamese nationals who generally could not compete financially. The Vietnamese had to settle for substandard housing while Americans had two quarters: the authorized one and the one on the economy. Chaplain Hilferty reported: "Despite the fact that MACV directives prohibit living outside authorized BOQ/BEQs, many supervisors prefer to take no action. It is understandable that this situation is offensive to many Vietnamese who are not in the real estate business."17

In September 1965, Chaplain Croston's tour was completed. He was relieved by Commander Robert E. Osman (United Presbyterian) who arrived on 13 September to assume his duties as Senior Chaplain, HEDSUPPACT. At the time of his arrival, Chaplain Hilferty and an Army chaplain were assigned to HEDSUPPACT. There were five Protestant services, nine Catholic masses, and one Jewish service being held weekly. Also assigned to Chaplain Osman's office were a Navy yeoman, an Army chaplain's assistant, and an Air Force sergeant who assisted with Project Handclasp. The expanding nature of the support activity resulted in the need for more services, and by the end of the year a total of eleven Protestant services, eighteen Catholic masses, and one Jewish service were being held each week. In order to accomplish this, three other Army chaplains were brought into the program.

Another phase of Chaplain Osman's work was cooperation with area missionaries. Soon after his arrival in Saigon, he visited the offices of the Christian and Missionary Alliance, Wycliffe Bible Translators, American Bible Society, Mennonite Committee. At each of these headquarters, he requested a list of special items which were needed in the mission's work but which were not covered by regular receipts. These lists were then used for special projects in offerings in Protestant services. At the same time, the mission representatives were in constant touch with Chaplain Osman's office and provided needed assistance such as in-country transportation, moving of items in the field, contact with others at the small mission stations located near military advisors, and distribution of Project Handclasp items in areas he could not reach.18

One of the more time-consuming duties which Chaplain Osman had was the distribution of Project Handclasp food, medicine, clothing, sewing materials, soap, toys, and building supplies throughout South Vietnam. Between the fall of 1963 and February 1966, HEDSUPPACT chaplains distributed over 200 tons of supplies and materials to needy persons in South Vietnam. Deliveries were made from the 17th parallel south to the island of Phu Quoc off the southern tip of Cambodia.19

Almost from the beginning of Chaplain Osman's tour of Saigon, HEDSUPPACT was in a state of organizational transition, preparing for a gradual phase-out. A tentative schedule was drawn up for the transfer of the Saigon chaplains' functions to the Saigon Logistics Activity of the U.S.
Army. This was part of a larger plan of reorganization which was implemented as a result of the buildup of forces which was occurring in all branches of the U.S. military in Vietnam. American involvement had proceeded beyond an advisory function and now involved offensive combat activity against the Viet Cong and units of the North Vietnamese Army.

Offshore, two important naval evolutions occurred in February and March of 1965 which changed the United States Navy’s function from an advisory one to one of active participation in combat activity. The first was the employment of U.S. Seventh Fleet aircraft in operations against North Vietnamese military targets which had begun by Presidential Order in February. The second was the establishment of the Coastal Surveillance Force (TF 115) under operational control of the U.S. Seventh Fleet. The patrol force, in Operation Market Time, initiated the Navy’s effort to prevent the influx of men and war materials by sea to enemy forces in Vietnam. \(^{20}\) Employed in this effort were radar picket escort ships (DERs), U.S. Coast Guard patrol craft (WPBs), ocean and coastal minesweepers (MSOs and MSCs), and, after 31 October 1965, a fleet of fast patrol craft (PCFs). Also attached to TF 115 and involved in Operations Market Time were Navy SP-2H Neptune patrol aircraft based at Tan Son Nhut airport in Saigon and later at the developing Naval Air Facility at Cam Ranh Bay. \(^{21}\)

**New Organizational Structures**

It was determined that organizational structures as existed in 1964-65 were not adequate to administer the growing contingent of naval forces in Vietnam. From June 1965, when the 3rd Marine Amphibious Force (III MAF) moved into the I Corps area, all naval forces and personnel in I Corps were under command of the Commanding General, III MAF, who acted as MACV’s Naval Component Commander. Seabee chaplains and Naval Support Activity, Danang (NAVSUPPACT) chaplains arriving in the summer and fall of 1965 were under the direct supervision of the III MAF Chaplain. \(^{22}\) Saigon’s Navy chaplains remained under the administrative control of the COMNAVFORPHIL Staff Chaplain.
For a time in the fall of 1965, Chaplains Osman and Hilferty were uncertain about organizational structures which were to evolve in early 1966. It was certain that HEDSUPPACT was to be phased out. A "Memorandum of Understanding" was negotiated with U.S. Army, Vietnam (USARV) for a transfer of HEDSUPPACT chaplains' functions to Army control. Chaplains Osman and Hilferty requested that they be ordered to new duty in Vietnam in order to make the best use of the experience they had acquired in their work with HEDSUPPACT. The decision was made to establish a new command, U.S. Naval Forces, Vietnam (NAVFORV), which would become one of the four major commands within the structure of the unified MACV command. USARV, NAVFORV, 7th AIR FORCE, and III MAF were to become the four operational commands in MACV. The Naval Advisory Group would continue as in the past as one of the major components within the MACV Advisory Group, but would remain operationally separate from the major line commands. For a time during these months of transition, it appeared as if Chaplain Hilferty would be assigned to the recently established NAVSUPPACT and that Chaplain Osman would be reassigned to the Marine Corps 3rd Force Service Regiment on Okinawa. However, the decision was made to reassign Chaplain Hilferty to the Naval Advisory Group because of the continuing need for Roman Catholic coverage. Chaplain Osman subsequently reported:

The final phase of the work was centered in the transfer of the chaplaincy functions to the U.S. Army, Vietnam. Preliminary discussions had been held with the Army chaplains in October. Gradually plans were worked out for an orderly transfer of the work. Chaplain Hilferty was transferred to the Naval Advisory Group in 15 January. The second week in February all Navy chapel gear was packed and flown to Danang for use by the Naval Support Activity. On 15 February the Navy yeoman was reassigned to another office; I officially turned the functions over to the Army, and then departed for Okinawa and duty with the Marines. From February to May 1966, Chaplain Hilferty was the only Navy chaplain ashore in II, III, and IV Corps Tactical Zones in Vietnam. While his retention in Saigon for duty with the Naval Advisory Group had been for the provision of Roman Catholic coverage for U.S. Armed Forces personnel in the metropolitan area, his new duties placed him in contact with a number of American naval advisors to small Vietnamese units. Feeling a responsibility to provide religious coverage for these Navy officers and men, Chaplain Hilferty traveled up and down the coastline and along the rivers establishing contact with small, widely scattered units to which American personnel were attached. He contacted Army chaplains in each zone and arranged for religious coverage to be given to Navy and Coast Guard personnel. His efforts to establish contact and provide religious coverage for personnel of sixteen widely scattered bases represented the beginning of what was to become the Saigon-based chaplains' circuit riding ministry.

On 1 April 1966, one month before HEDSUPPACT, Saigon was phased out, U.S. Naval Forces, Vietnam came into being. Rear Admiral Norvell G. Ward became both Commander Naval Forces, Vietnam (COMNAVFORV) and Chief, Naval Advisory Group (CHNAVADVGRU). He assumed operational control of the river patrol operation. The River Patrol Force (TF 116), in Operation Game Warden, was responsible for preventing the use of the rivers of the Mekong Delta and the Rung Sat Special Zone, an area of swamp southeast of Saigon, by the Viet Cong. The shipping channel from the South China Sea to Saigon had been threatened repeatedly. So extensive was enemy activity in the Rung Sat Special Zone that a combined Navy-Marine Corps amphibious operation was ordered to clear the area of Viet Cong. The resulting twelve-day Operation Jackstay was conducted in late March and early April of 1966. It was one of the few U.S. Navy assaults upon an inland waterway since the American Civil War and was conducted as an initial search and destroy operation in connection with the arrival of the first river patrol boats (PBRs) employed on Operation Game Warden. The PBRs arrived on 21 March 1966 and became operational on 10 April. On 5 May 1966, Lieutenant Commander
William C. League (Southern Baptist) arrived in Saigon to become the first staff chaplain of COMNAVFORV after the billet had been approved by the Chief of Naval Operations. His first four days in the country were spent in attendance at the standard in-processing briefing conducted by MACV, and he reached NAVFORV headquarters on 9 May. At this time, Chaplain Hilferty was attached to the Naval Advisory Group and Chaplain League was reporting to NAVFORV, two separate commands. Inasmuch as Admiral Ward commanded both groups and most of the chaplains’ functions were related to scattered Naval Advisory Group units, it was a very easy matter for the chaplains to cross command lines. The overlapping of functions between Naval Advisory Group and NAVFORV chaplains was to continue through the summer of 1966. Shortly after the arrival of Chaplain League, plans were laid to begin Protestant coverage of the various units attached to COMNAVFORV within the II, III, and IV Corps zones. Chaplain Hilferty was already serving, as best he could, all Catholic personnel.

Chaplain League's duties on the circuit began immediately. On the weekend of 14-16 May, he flew to Phu Quoc Island in the Gulf of Siam to conduct Protestant divine services for the coastal advisory group at An Thoi. While there, he learned that *Krishna* (ARL-38) was there and conducted services aboard her. During the same weekend, Chaplain Hilferty went north to Cam Ranh Bay, and thereafter the two chaplains continued in, an alternating pattern with one going north and the other going south. Chaplain League's account of his final week with NAVFORV reflects on the challenges and fulfillments of the circuit-riding ministry:

On Saturday morning, 18 June, I flew from Saigon to An Thoi in an Army plane, only to find on arrival that the field was closed due to weather. We diverted to Rach Gia, hoping to catch the regular Market Time flight which had departed Saigon just ahead of us. Unfortunately it was gone. As no other planes were due, and our plane had to return to Saigon for another mission, I chose to try to make the trip by Swiftboat. Due to the very shallow water off Rach Gia, I had to be ferried out to the waiting Swiftboat in the Coastal Command Junk and transferred at sea. Then we were off on the 50-60 mile trip to An Thoi which took about five hours. The Swiftboat was returning from patrol so their pausing to pick me up caused no inconvenience. On this trip I learned of the rough life that these young men face on each patrol during the monsoon season. We were moving into ten-foot seas for the entire trip, and in the fifty-foot boat this did not produce the smoothest ride. The weekend was marvelous, and on Monday morning I said goodbye to the friends that I had made there in the few short weeks of ministering to them. On the morning of 24 June, I departed Saigon for Danang and the second phase of my Vietnam tour.

Upon establishment of NAVFORV as a major command, an official letter was forwarded via the Chief of Chaplains and Chief of Naval Personnel to the Chief of Naval Operations requesting approval of a new billet for a NAVFORV staff chaplain. Upon approval of the billet, Chief of Chaplains Rear Admiral James W. Kelly (Southern Baptist) wrote to Rear Admiral Ward and indicated his desire to assign a chaplain with the rank of captain. Captain Robert E. Elliott (United Methodist) was ordered to Saigon and arrived shortly after Chaplain Hilferty was detached.

Chaplain Hilferty reported that when he left Vietnam, fifteen chaplain billets had been assigned to NAVFORV. They included one staff chaplain, one chaplain with the Naval Advisory Group, one chaplain with NAVSUPPACT, Danang, which had been established in October 1965, and eight chaplains with Seabee units. As of June 1966, no preparation had yet been made for the establishment of chaplain billets for NAVSUPPACT, Saigon, which was soon to be established. Apparently the thinking was that the circuit-riding ministry initiated by Chaplain Hilferty would continue to be provided by the single Naval Advisory Group chaplain.

Upon reporting to the staff of NAVFORV on 16 June, one of Chaplain Elliott's first tasks was to travel through South Vietnam, compare chaplain requirements against current manning levels, survey areas of additional need, and propose a comprehensive structure of chaplain billets which would provide adequate religious coverage for personnel of NAVFORV. The chaplains functioning
as unit chaplains for naval personnel in Vietnam were performing in an outstanding manner as individuals but were limited in scope and effectiveness by the lack of coordinated organization, operating procedures, a firm grasp of inter-command relationships and responsibilities, and comprehensive instructions. After a familiarization trip to naval installations under the operational control of COMNAVFORV, Chaplain Elliott studied projected naval personnel quotas and installations. With the information he gathered, he made an analysis of the need for chaplain coverage. He then prepared requests for the required billets and submitted them to the respective commands for forwarding through command channels.

In function, the COMNAVFORV chaplain was responsible for the following:

1. To provide religious services and a spiritual ministry with related services for personnel of the Naval Advisory Group, MACV, and NAVFORV.
2. To serve as advisor to COMNAVFORV on the moral, spiritual, and religious welfare of personnel.
3. To act as the single point of contact for naval component commanders to Commander, United States Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (COMUSMACV) in religious and related matters.
4. To advise and recommend concerning the Chaplain Corps allowance and distribution within the command and supervise the chaplains in the effective performance of their duties and responsibilities.
5. To maintain liaison with civilian religious groups and component commands, welfare and morale organizations, community and civic organizations having a bearing on the morale of service personnel and/or for the accomplishment of its mission in Vietnam.
6. To assist in the administration of the character education and Vietnamese familiarization program.
7. To supervise the training, reporting, equipping, and functioning of the chaplains under operational control of COMNAVFORV.

One of Chaplain Elliott's first moves toward comprehensive chaplain organization for NAVFORV was the consolidation of the Naval Advisory Group and NAVFORV staff chaplain billets into one billet. He was unable to immediately accomplish the official consolidation because Lieutenant Commander Eugene C. O'Brien (Roman Catholic) had already been ordered to the Naval Advisory Group billet as a numerical and denominational relief for Chaplain Hilferty. Unofficially, however, Chaplain Elliott assumed responsibilities as staff chaplain to Rear Admiral Ward in both of his major commands. The matter of confused organizational lines was finally and officially resolved in September when Chaplain O'Brien was reassigned to duty as Senior Chaplain, NAVSUPPACT, Saigon.

When Chaplain O'Brien arrived in July, he reported to duty on the staff of the Naval Advisory Group. His congregation consisted of Navy and Coast Guard personnel assigned in the II, III, and IV Corps zones of South Vietnam. Within three months, he had logged over fifty air hours as a circuit rider. Definite impressions were gathered during this "breaking in" period that sketched an image of what obstacles and challenges Chaplain O'Brien would face during a year of ministry in Vietnam. He reported:

The necessity and difficulty of transportation must rank as the basic problem I faced. Ordinary travel by road is almost non-existent due to the ever-present possibility of ambush by the Viet Cong. Traveling by convoy is a must, and my particular bases were not on the routes traveled by the convoys. Fortunately, air travel came to my rescue. NAVSUPPACT, Saigon had its own airlines consisting of three C-473 and a C-46. These planes made scheduled runs to many of the naval detachments in my area of responsibility. This padre became a familiar and welcome sight to the crewman of AIR COFAT. As one of the pilots once said, "Padre, it's always good to see you aboard. We feel you're like a third engine. Start praying." Unscheduled hops on Army choppers, Air Force planes, and water transport were part of the routine. To make a one-day visit to a detachment usually involved at least a full day spent in traveling to and from the unit. I learned that distance is truly relative. Thirty miles in Vietnam are equal, in dif-
difficulty and time consumed, to 600 miles or more in the United States.32

Chaplain O'Brien reflected on several problem areas in his first report. One such major problem was with communication. The phone service was rarely prompt and satisfactory. It was often a major operation to get in touch with a person only a few miles away. Additional concerns that he cited involved psychological and physiological considerations. The chaplain was a normal man and subject to common limitations and desires. He needed a sense of accomplishment, and he had to find this in his ministry but often in quality rather than in quantity. Numbers at divine services were rarely large, and chaplains continually needed to guard themselves against discouragement and decreased effort. Chaplain O'Brien wrote: "It is well to remember that our Master judges by the yardstick of effort rather than that of results."33 A tour in Vietnam took its toll on a chaplain physically, so that the physical effectiveness of a chaplain was noticeably lower toward the end of his tour; but the psychological drain was the greatest. Chaplain O'Brien recounted one incident which had a considerable and forceful impact upon him. He wrote:

The monsoon rains were upon us in full force. A call came in to my office in Saigon. "Padre, there's been a gun fight at Nha Be. The chopper is bringing in one KIA and three WIA." Chaplain Elliott and I boarded the plane. I gave the last rites and Chaplain Elliott prayed over the man. No one could positively identify his church affiliation. Later we found that the lad was a Lutheran and Chaplain Elliott conducted the memorial service. This was my initial experience with death in Vietnam. It has since been repeated, but never with such force.34

Chaplains had to experience death many times over in Vietnam, and hundreds of reflections in End of Tour Reports indicate that the impact of each experience drove the pain deeper.

The first several Navy chaplains assigned to HEDSUPPACT worked very closely with U.S. Army chaplains in meeting the spiritual needs of American military personnel in Saigon. Two Army chaplains had actually been assigned duty with the Navy command, HEDSUPPACT, before that command was phased out. In August, the first Navy chaplain to be assigned directly to a military command other than Navy and Marine Corps units in Vietnam was ordered to report for duty on the staff of COMUSMACV. Commander Benjamin C. Fairchild (United Presbyterian) reported to MACV on 6 August 1966 to fill a newly established billet on the joint staff of General William Westmoreland. The new command chaplain, to whom Chaplain Fairchild was directly responsible, was Army Chaplain Harold O. Prudell who arrived in the country on 11 August.

Chaplain Fairchild felt a responsibility to the corps chaplains who were assigned to MACV. These were Army chaplains assigned advisory groups in each of the four corps tactical zones. Within the first month, he made a tour to each of the corps areas, visiting all of the chaplains in the country. An additional effort was in the direction of establishing rapport with the staff-force chaplains representing all branches of our armed forces. This proved to be a very delicate operation. Each of the services was autonomous administratively, but it was the responsibility of the MACV Command Chaplain to provide coordination of some of the activities which would cross service lines. There was some concern that the MACV Command Chaplain would be established as the supervisory chaplain for the activities of chaplains of all services in the country. The MACV Directive 165-1, under which the office operated, implied that this may have been the thinking of previous command chaplains; however, this was in contrast to Chaplain Fairchild's understanding of the mission of the office, so he made every effort to allay the concerns. There were a few anxious moments, but he was essentially successful. He reported, "We made no attempt to make any changes in the directive. We felt it would be more acceptable to the staff if we proposed the change toward the end of our tour. In this way we would be making our recommendations on the basis of experience rather than simply the principle of the thing."35

In order to prevent confusion, it was necessary that Chaplain Elliott, the NAVFORV Force Chaplain, and Chaplain Fairchild, the MACV
Assistant Chaplain, set forth their respective areas of responsibility and worked out their relationship in careful detail. Chaplain Elliott established the NAVFORV force chaplain as the single point of contact for NAVFORV and MACV in religious and related matters. It was apparent that religious coverage of Saigon-based military personnel could be construed to cross organizational lines and that coordination of such coverage could indeed divide NAVFORV chaplains' time and energy between the metropolitan area and the recently acquired duties in II, III, and IV Corps areas. For instance, it was determined that within a very few weeks Saigon could anticipate an avalanche of distinguished visitors representing a plethora of churches, denominations, and other religious bodies.

During this time, the primary responsibility of the MACV chaplains was to escort these official visitors. Chaplain Fairchild's first step was to establish a working policy on visitors. This was accomplished with the assistance of Captain Samuel Sobel (Jewish), Executive Director of the Armed Forces Chaplains Board (AFCB) in Washington. Before a "religious" visitor could be granted theater clearance, he was required to process his request through the office of the Executive Director, AFCB. Theater clearance, which was sometimes referred to as area clearance, was granted by Commander in Chief, Pacific (CINC-PAC) with the concurrence of COMUSMACV. Once the visitor was granted clearance, the long process was begun of planning the itinerary and contacting the senior chaplains and the denominational chaplains who would be concerned with the visit.

The primary concern of the denominational representatives was to see as many of their chaplains as possible. The senior chaplains were responsible for planning an itinerary which would take the visitors to the areas in which their chaplains were serving and making the necessary arrangements for their visits.

The goal of MACV for these visitors was to give them a broad exposure to what was actually happening in Vietnam. The visitors were briefed on the military situation and the efforts being made to combat the threat of the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese troops. They were also briefed on civic action projects and were given opportunity to discuss the situation with chaplains and any of the men they might meet along the way. A typical itinerary would include visits to Danang, Pleiku, An Khe, Qui Nhon, Nha Trang, Cam Ranh, Long Binh, Bien Hoa, Cu Chi, Di An, Phu Loi, and some of the naval facilities in the Mekong Delta. These were in addition to calls in the Saigon area. Visits aboard carriers offshore helped the visitors to appreciate the demanding flight schedules confronting the pilots who flew missions over North Vietnam as well as the exhausting workload of shipboard personnel. Visitors often had the unusual opportunity of sitting in on the briefing prior to a mission and then the debriefing following the completion of the mission. Chaplain Fairchild reported that the comments of departing visitors were very revealing. He wrote:

In general, their comments may be summarized: "I really did not understand what was happening over here. I had no idea the situation was this complex. Within a very short time after my arrival in Vietnam, it became quite obvious that the situation was much more complex than I had imagined. This conflict does not follow the patterns of any previous war, except, perhaps, for the Indian Wars fought in the opening of the West. Perhaps this is why the Marines in I Corps refer to anything outside of the TAOR [Tactical Area of Responsibility] as "Indian Country." It certainly does not lend itself to any classic solution."

Apart from his work with distinguished visitors, one of Chaplain Fairchild's most time-consuming tasks was responding to the volume of correspondence which individuals, groups, and organizations addressed to General Westmoreland indicating a desire to come to Vietnam to minister to the spiritual needs of the combat troops. Prominent pastors of a number of large congregations expressed a desire to preach to the troops in the major areas of troop concentrations. However, MACV guidelines for approving theater clearances were rather restrictive, and additional guidelines were provided by the Department of Defense in January 1967 which were even more restrictive. The list of
distinguished ecclesiastical visitors to whom Chaplain Fairchild and other Vietnam-based Navy chaplains provided assistance during Chaplain Fairchild’s tour of duty with COMUSMACV included the Reverend Calvin Thielman, Montreat Presbyterian Church, North Carolina; Rabbi Selwyn D. Ruslander, Jewish Welfare Board; the Right Reverend Arnold M. Lewis, Episcopal Bishop of the Armed Forces; Richard M. Chase, Christian Science Activities for the Armed Forces; the Most Reverend William J. Moran, Military Ordinariate, Roman Catholic Church in the United States; Dr. Billy Graham, Evangelist; Archbishop Ivakos, Primate, Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of North and South America; and Francis Cardinal Spellman, Archbishop of New York and Military Vicar of the Roman Catholic Church. As the military population and need for ministry increased, so did the administrative requirements. Apart from these efforts, the difficulty of pastoral ministry of the chaplains would have been greatly increased.

**Naval Support Activities, Saigon and Danang**

Two of the major forces under the COMNAVFORV command were NAVSUPPACT, Saigon, which provided logistic support for naval operations in the II, III, and IV Corps areas, and NAVSUPPACT, Danang, which provided logistic support for all U.S. forces in the I Corps area. It was from these two activities that much of the ministry of chaplains stemmed.

One of the first matters to which Force Chaplain Elliott turned his attention in the summer of 1966 was that of establishing an organizational structure which would provide the finest ministry possible for NAVFORV personnel. His first step in that direction was to request that Chaplain O’Brien be reassigned to NAVSUPPACT, Saigon as senior chaplain with responsibility for establishing a chaplains department. He also requested that three additional chaplains be assigned directly to NAVSUPPACT, Saigon.

In September, Chaplain Elliott’s plan was implemented by the reassignment of Chaplain O’Brien and the arrival of two chaplains for duty with the support activity. Lieutenant Marvin L. Chamberlin (Southern Baptist) and Lieutenant John M. Collins III (Episcopal) reported in September, and Lieutenant Kenneth C. Bealo (United Presbyterian) was expected to arrive in November.

The most pressing need was for religious coverage of Navy men who were spread thinly throughout II, III, and IV Corps Tactical Zones. An area coverage concept was implemented by Chaplain O’Brien, and he placed a chaplain at Cam Ranh Bay with responsibility for Qui Nhon and Nha Trang. A second chaplain was home ported at An Thoi on Phu Quoc Island with a circuit of Rach Gia, Can Tho, and Tan Chau. The third chaplain was stationed at Cat Lo with coverage responsibility for the many ships in Vung Tau and NAVSUPPACT detachments at My Tho and Dong Tam. The fourth chaplain worked out of Saigon and covered Nha Be, Vinh Long, and Sa Dec. Chaplain O’Brien maintained an office at Saigon and made periodic trips to all the units.

Chaplain Chamberlin reported for duty on 29 September 1966 before the circuits were formally manned. Working out of Saigon, he and Chaplain Collins, who reported in the same month, covered the various NAVSUPPACT detachments. Over the period of the following month, they each covered the four main areas in which NAVSUPPACT detachments were located. Following this period of familiarization, Chaplain Chamberlin was assigned to the first circuit, and Chaplain Collins was assigned to the second circuit. Until Chaplain Bealo arrived, Chaplain O’Brien covered all III Corps detachments in what were later to be designated the third and fourth circuits. When Chaplain Bealo arrived and had become familiar with the areas involved, he was assigned to those areas covered by Chaplain O’Brien with the NAVSUPPACT Senior Chaplain responsible for overseeing all of the areas.

Chaplains Chamberlin, Collins, and Bealo reported a genuine and warm welcome extended to them each time they visited one of the bases or tenant activities along their respective circuits. During the remainder of 1966, each one saw the value of a
Logistic Support Base, Binh Thuy. (Official photograph, U.S. Navy.)

Cat Lo (Official photograph, U.S. Navy.)
Qui Nhon. (Official photograph, U.S. Navy.)

Logistic Support Basc, Nha He. (Official photograph, U.S. Navy.)
strong lay leadership program and enthusiastically supported Chaplain O'Brien’s decision to strengthen the NAVFORV ministry by selection and training of key laymen at each of the small activities. The program remained in the initial stages of implementation and early development through 1966 but gave great promise for 1967.

When Chaplain League was reassigned from NAVFORV in Saigon to NAVSUPPACT, Danang in June 1966, six chaplains already had been or were in Danang. They were Commander Martin F. Gibbons (Roman Catholic), Lieutenant Commander Harold L. Christmann (Assemblies of God), Lieutenant Commander Gordon E. Paulson (American Baptist), Lieutenant Commander Herman F. Wendler (United Methodist), Lieutenant Alfred S. Pepera (Roman Catholic) and Lieutenant David S. Hunsicker (Southern Baptist). With personnel levels continuing to spiral with each passing month, pressures to provide a broader and more comprehensive ministry continued to mount. As a result of this increasing need, Chaplain League had been reassigned and was placed at the command’s permanent berthing facility at Camp Tien Sha. He wrote:

The camp is set very beautifully at the ‘foot of Monkey Mountain and has many trees of an average variety lining the streets. At this time of the year, however, they were covered with the same kind of dust that was everywhere. I soon learned that this was the common thing, dust all day and all night, covering your clothes, your bed, everything. A shower at night, in cold water at that, would result only in the need for another shower in the morning. It didn’t take too long to accept it for what it was and go on about your business.”

The chapel and chaplain’s office were located in a very small building just inside the main gate at Camp Tien Sha. The chapel would seat a maximum of sixty people, and soon additional services were necessary to accommodate the steadily increasing numbers at both Protestant and Catholic
divine services. This was not the best place for a chapel as it was located in a "V" formed by the road leading into the camp and the main service road from the pier areas. It was, therefore, extremely dusty and more than a little noisy. Trucks moving up the main service road often made so much noise that during a service all one could do was stop and wait until they had passed. Trucks coming through the main gate had to stop for identification and went through all of the lower gears when starting again, causing more noise and confusion. As the rainy season approached and more and more rain fell, another distressing fact learned was that the roof leaked like a sieve. In spite of the best efforts to stop the flood, many a morning the chaplain and his assistants practically had to bail out the chapel before services could begin.41

It was with great anticipation that construction was finally started on the permanent chapel on 1 August 1966. The new chapel was to be a standard 40-foot by 100-foot Butler Building which was to be modified to incorporate office spaces for the chaplain and his yeoman, a small chapel for daily use, confessional, and sacristy, as well as having a sanctuary seating capacity for 250 worshippers. With the Seabees working day and night in some cases, enough work was completed on the chapel for services to be held there on 20 November 1966. Completion was accomplished in time for formal dedication on 23 December 1966. Chief of Chaplains Rear Admiral Kelly preached the dedicatory sermon; Rear Admiral Thomas R. Weschler, Commander, U.S. Naval Support Activity, Danang, led the dedication litany; and Captain Edward A. Slattery (Roman Catholic) offered the dedicatory prayer. The congregation was dry at last, even though the monsoons had started in full force, and there was sufficient room to accommodate all worshippers without having half of them standing outside the building.42

As the summer progressed, the chaplains were kept busy with a constant stream of counseling interviews along with the regular religious program and lectures to all newly arrived personnel. The war was never far away, and sporadic disturbances interrupted everyday routines. Chaplain League remembered one such event which happened on 4 August 1966:

As I was sitting in my room that evening writing a letter, I heard what I thought was small-arms fire from the perimeter and went out to check. Just as I stepped out on the porch, the more familiar sounds of the M-14 came to my ears as our guard force replied. The firing was hot and heavy for awhile and then the siren soundedsignifying a “Red Alert.” My station was at the camp dispensary, so I jumped into my truck and drove slowly down, the whole camp being blacked-out by this time. As I stopped between the post office and the dispensary, a voice hollered out of the darkness, “Cut off those blankety-blank lights!” Without realizing it, my foot was on the brake pedal and the red brake lights were shining towards Monkey Mountain from where the firing was originating. I hustled out of the truck and on into the dispensary to assist the corpsmen with any casualties that might come in. About 2330 the “all clear” sounded and I started back to my quarters in the BOQ When I got back to the point where I had left my truck, I noticed two men sitting on the bunker from which had come the voice giving the advice about the lights sometime earlier. I recognized the men so I stopped to chat for a few minutes. Then as I started to get into the truck, one of them looked at me in a rather funny way and said, “Is that your truck, Chaplain?” When I replied in the affirmative, all he could say was, Oh, my God!”43

As October approached and Chaplain Gibbons’ tour of duty was drawing to a close, Chaplain League was designated his relief as senior chaplain. On 20 October, the turnover was completed, and Chaplain League moved to the headquarters building, known as the “White Elephant,” and Chaplain Gibbons was detached. Lieutenant Sebastian L. Muccilli (Roman Catholic) was the denominational relief for Chaplain Gibbons. Chaplain Muccilli was assigned to the hospital as a relief for Chaplain Pepera who was being reassigned to Camp Tien Sha. Religious coverage of the more than 8,000 NAVSUPPACT, Danang personnel was accomplished by the five chaplains in their respective assignments through the end of 1966. Chaplain League reported that throughout his entire tour of duty there was the closest kind of cooperation between the chaplains with each cov-
ering for the others as needed. On the average, twenty services per Sunday were conducted by the
five of them, plus daily masses and weekday Protestant services. During the week, there were also
various Bible study groups, choir practices, and other religious functions. The services of chaplains
or lay readers for Latter Day Saints, Eastern Orthodox, and Jewish services were secured to
provide the best possible coverage for all members of the command. 44

During the last eight months of 1966, the ministry of Navy chaplains to naval personnel
ashore in Vietnam had definitely increased. The number of chaplains at NAVSUPPACT, Danang
and with Seabees remained relatively constant. However, the number of chaplains in Saigon in-
creased from two to six, and a comprehensive and sophisticated system of religious coverage was
developed to meet the needs of scattered units throughout II, III, and IV Corps Tactical Zones.
These developments, coupled with administrative refinements and a new sense of teamwork, had
come about under the leadership of NAVFORV Chaplain Elliott. Even as 1966 was drawing to a
close, Chaplain Elliott could anticipate that the buildup of chaplains in NAVFORV would con-
tinue during the first half of 1967. He anticipated an increase of seven additional chaplains before the
end of his one-year tour of duty, bringing the number of chaplains under his supervision to a
total of twenty-five. 45

Much of the ministry of NAVSUPPACT chaplains was similar to the circuit riding concept of
destroyer chaplains. Not at all unlike John Wesley’s frontier circuit riders, the NAVSUP-
PACT chaplains covered vast amounts of territory, providing religious coverage to naval personnel
throughout South Vietnam. For the circuit-riding chaplain, every day was Sunday. Information pub-
hlished by NAVSUPPACT, Saigon succinctly described their ministry by stating:

It may be down in the Mekong Delta, aboard a ship off the coast, on a PBR guarding the Rung Sat Special
Zone near Saigon, or up along the coast at Qui Nhon or Nha Trang. But wherever a Navy man is found some-
day he may look up to see a Navy chaplain with combat kit over his shoulder, tape recorder at his side, and Bible
in hand coming to share the ministry of Christ. He is a “Circuit Rider of NAVSUPPACT.” His modem mot-
to: “HAVE ALTAR KIT WILL TRAVEL.” 46
CHAPTER THREE

STEAMING OFFSHORE

Early Offshore Activities

Although the major naval presence ashore did not occur until 1965, the number of United States naval vessels in the seas surrounding Vietnam increased steadily from 1962-64. During 1962-63, at least nineteen Navy chaplains served in Vietnamese waters with carrier attack groups and amphibious force units of the Seventh Fleet. In these months prior to the Tonkin Gulf crisis of August 1964, three major naval activities occurred which involved Seventh Fleet forces. The first activity, in mid-1962, was directed at communist Laotian forces threatening Thailand. Laotian communists were being supported by the Hanoi regime, and military pressures upon Thailand were a part of the large plan of subversion by force. At the request of the government of Thailand, President Kennedy ordered American forces into Thailand, and a total of 5,000 Marines were deployed. Lieutenant Commander Benson C. Barrett (United Methodist) was aboard Valley Forge (LPH-8) and Lieutenant Jack D. Graham (American Baptist) was aboard Seminole (AKA 104) during the operation which extended from 15 May through 30 July 1962.1

The second activity was in response to increasing communist pressures on the government of Laos. During April and May 1963, an attack carrier group led by Ticonderoga (CVA-14) and an amphibious assault group organized around Princeton (LPH-5) conducted operations in the Gulf of Tonkin. Commander David E. Spradling (United Methodist) and Lieutenant Commander John T. Moore (Roman Catholic) were aboard Ticonderoga, and Lieutenant Commander John R. Hershberger (Lutheran) was aboard Princeton. The presence and normal flight operations of the carrier, combined with internal Laotian developments, produced the desired effect, and subversive pressures subsided in Laos. The ships were withdrawn after only two weeks on station.

The third activity, during 1963, occurred as political instability within South Vietnam became an increasingly serious threat to the military effort against hostile forces. There was concern that communist insurgents would attempt to capitalize on the political unrest. Ships of the Seventh Fleet were ordered to the area to assure the safety of American advisory personnel. In August, Iwo Jima (LPH-2), with Lieutenant Commander Carl E. Ruud (Lutheran) aboard, was ordered to lay offshore near Saigon for possible evacuation of American personnel and dependents. Also in the area were the carriers Hancock (CVA-19) with Commander William F. Doyle (Roman Catholic) and Lieutenant Roy A. Baxter (Southern Baptist) and Oriskany (CVA-34) with Lieutenant Commander Carl Elwood (Lutheran) and Lieutenant Commander James T. Callahan (Roman Catholic) aboard. By early November, once the situation had stabilized following the fall of the Diem government, the forces were withdrawn.

The Tonkin Gulf Incident and the Pleiku Bombings

Two international crises occurred in August 1964 and February 1965, the Tonkin Gulf incident
and the bombing of the American military barracks at Pleiku, respectively. Each was a direct attack upon American personnel and, coupled with the bombing in Saigon on Christmas Eve of the Brink BEQ and the sabotage of the American Embassy building in March 1964, highlighted the growing seriousness of the Southeast Asian Conflict.

The Tonkin Gulf incident occurred over a period of four days. On 2 August, the destroyer Maddox (DD-731) was attacked by three North Vietnamese torpedo boats while on patrol duty about twenty-five miles from the North Vietnamese coast. Maddox returned fire, hitting a boat which eventually sank, and planes from the aircraft carrier Ticonderoga joined the battle and succeeded in damaging the other two craft. The battle lasted less than half an hour. A strong protest and warning from the American government was issued afterward. Just two days later, Maddox and the destroyer Turner Joy (DD-951), which had joined the Maddox, were attacked at night sixty-five miles off the coast of North Vietnam. Neither was hit by enemy fire, and both returned fire, sinking at least two of the attacking boats. On 5 August, limited, retaliatory, carrier air strikes were directed against the torpedo boats at their supporting facilities at Quang Khe, Ben Thuy, Hon Gai, and the Lach Chao Estuary and against the fuel storage depot at Vinh. President Johnson asked for Congressional confirmation of his actions and received it in the form of the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution of 7 August 1964.

Aboard Ticonderoga during that event were Lieutenant Commander George E. Haroldsen (Conservative Baptist) and Chaplain Moore. Chaplain Haroldsen described the activities as seen from his perspective:

On Sunday, 2 August 1964, I was aboard the USS Berkeley (DLG-15) for a service, after having conducted a worship service aboard the carrier earlier that morning. I was up in the ‘ ‘bridge awaiting the return of the helicopter at 1300 to pick me up when voice radio mentioned, “Craft attacking!” There was uncertainty whether it was aircraft or surface craft that were involved, but it was soon determined that the surface craft were the attackers. The two destroyers, USS Maddox and USS Turner Joy, had been patrolling off the coast of North Vietnam in the Gulf of Tonkin, and on this day the USS Maddox came under direct fire from North Vietnamese boats. Because of the sudden increase in activity aboard the carrier, and the change in course of the task force, the helicopter was three hours late in returning for me. There were times when I felt that I might be a guest aboard the destroyer for a few days.

On Sunday, 9 August 1964, I conducted a worship service in the USS Maddox. Personnel aboard were quite shaken and tired from their experience all the prior week. Conversations with the medical officer indicated, however, that morale was high. Because of the nature of the incident and the concern of higher authority for accuracy in reporting information to the world, security measures had top priority. No one was talking to anybody.

On Sunday, 16 August, I conducted a service aboard the USS Turner Joy. Events by this time had progressed to a point where the United States was more involved with North Vietnam and, therefore, much of the uncertainty had dissipated. The men aboard seemed to have a feeling of confidence and direction.

By this time, Ticonderoga had spent quite a few days at sea and at one time was on the line fifty-eight days straight. In spite of the heat, long hours, increased tempo of operations, perpetually changing schedule, and the uncertainty of the time of their return to the United States, the morale of the men remained high. The workload kept the men tied to their jobs, and “holiday routine” on Sunday was only an-expression in the Plan of the Day. Still, destroyers accompanying the carrier never failed to request the services of the two chaplains, and a cordial welcome and good attendance were consistently reported. The arrival of Ticonderoga’s relief from Hong Kong, Constellation (CVA-64), was most welcome.

The Tonkin Gulf crisis affected all the ships in Vietnamese waters. Aboard Valley Forge, Commander Thomas D. Parham (United Presbyterian) reported that the 1964 deployment was a very busy one from beginning to end. Valley Forge accompanied the flagship of the amphibious task group deployed off Vietnam, and as the only ship of its kind in the area, carried two Marine helicopter groups and a battalion landing team. One weekend twenty-one services were held throughout the
task group. Remembering the period, Chaplain Parham reported: “I preached in one of the destroyers involved in the Gulf of Tonkin incident the Sunday after it happened. I remember the feeling of exhilaration on board and the hope of getting back into action again. This was my closest involvement with the war.”

In the month following the Tonkin Gulf incident, Lieutenant Commander Andrew F. Jensen (American Baptist), aboard Pine Island, had a personal encounter with the growing political unrest and religious factionalism in the northern provinces of South Vietnam. Pine Island carried the flag of Commander Patrol Force, Seventh Fleet and gave support to the seaplane squadrons deployed to the area. As such the ship set up the first seaplane base in Danang Bay in August 1965. For several weeks, the crew had gone on liberty in Danang and moved quite freely about the city. Chaplain Jensen remembered:

One morning the supply officer, some enlisted personnel and I went into Danang, which was about a one-hour ride from the anchorage. After we moved a short distance from the landing, we noticed a large group of Vietnamese marching toward us. It was a large demonstration and ultimately led to some difficulties. I doubt that this group, estimated at over six thousand, would have harmed us, but we were able to make our way to a U.S. Government compound near the landing shortly before we encountered them. After the group passed the compound, we returned to the boat and watched the demonstration from the Danang River. Following that, all liberty was cancelled. Freedom of movement in the city seemed very limited and the members of the crew seemed to take on a more serious attitude or recognized the seriousness of the situation in Vietnam. From that point on, all of our time was spent aboard ship while we were in Vietnamese waters.

Constellation had been on station in Vietnamese waters for fifty-one days during June and July 1964. After a five-day port call in Subic Bay, Philippines, she returned to Vietnam for forty-nine more days. Air operations were almost continuous during these periods and personnel were called upon to spend many extra days on duty. Commander James K. Snelbaker (United Methodist), aboard Constellation, remembered:

The long hours of hard work had its physical effect upon the men and they were generally plagued with fatigue. Most free time was spent in bed getting much-needed rest. During these long periods at sea, I spent much of my time moving about the ship visiting the men. This afforded me the opportunity to meet many men that otherwise I would not have known, presenting many opportunities for counseling.

It was evident that a large number of men were genuinely concerned about their loved ones at home. This meant that I wrote many letters and sent numerous requests for American Red Cross health and welfare reports. Aside from the increased pastoral visitation and liaison with Red Cross, my ministry was expanded in the direction of a more comprehensive religious program. On Sundays I conducted morning and evening services and usually when at sea I made holy helo trips to destroyers for additional worship services. I also conducted a service every weekday at noontime, Bible class once a week, and two choir rehearsals every week.

Since we were officially in enemy waters and suffered casualties in our air wing, some persons for the first time in their lives began to seek answers to some questions such as: “Is God a loving God?” “What about death?” “What is God’s will?” and “Does prayer work?” I tried to answer these and other questions in my sermons, counseling, Bible class, and in evening prayers.

During the retaliatory raids at the North Vietnamese torpedo boat facilities, the Constellation lost one plane, the pilot being taken prisoner. Otherwise, the nine-month deployment, six months of which were spent in the South China Sea off Vietnam, was mostly routine; the exception being the heavy schedule of flight operations for aerial reconnaissance and photography. Lieutenant Commander Lucian C. Mattiello (Roman Catholic) recalled:

Sunday and daily service attendance was fair; but with the increased time at sea and the incident in the Gulf of Tonkin, I noticed an increase in attendance at mass. Saturday evening confessions increased. The Sunday following the attack I celebrated mass aboard one of the destroyers and the attendance was above average.

During the nine months of deployment, every Sunday the service of the Catholic chaplain was requested by destroyers in the area. Only on two Sundays was I able to travel by helo, this being due to flight operations
and uncertainty of hostile movements on the part of the North Vietnamese.10

During this same time period, Commander Niles T. Welch (Roman Catholic) and Lieutenant Commander Warren D. Trumbo (United Methodist) were aboard Kitty Hawk (CVA-63). Chaplain Trumbo wrote of the growing conflict:

All hands were particularly reminded of the gravity of the situation when one of our planes came back after being hit by anti-aircraft fire from the ground. Shortly thereafter, the same pilot, Lieutenant Klusmann, was shot down and taken captive. It was comforting to hear, however, that he escaped and was returned to San Diego approximately three months later. Another of our planes was shot down during this period, but fortunately the pilot was safely rescued the next day and returned to the Kitty Hawk.

I believe we all realized that the situation in Southeast Asia had become extremely serious. Although we were near the end of that particular cruise, we were extended and spent even longer periods at sea. From the standpoint of the chaplain’s ministry it meant long hours of counseling, but otherwise the performance of duties was the same as the former portion of the cruise.11

The only other carrier in the area, Bon Homme Richard (CVA-31) had Commander William M. Hunter (Reformed Church in America) and Lieutenant Commander Daniel F. Fogarty (Roman Catholic) aboard. Returning from an extended cruise in the Indian Ocean, the carrier spent two of the last three months of the ten-month deployment in Vietnamese waters.

Commander Malcolm A. Carpenter (United Methodist) noted that his ship, Oklahoma City (CLG-5), the flagship of Commander Seventh Fleet (COM7THFLT), moved into action swiftly when word of the Tonkin Gulf attack arrived. This ship moved far north into the Gulf, scanning electronically for hostile torpedo boats. “Condition three” watches were a part of the daily routine for weeks. Religious services of fifteen minutes’ duration were held in the ship’s library following each daylight watch, for there was no possibility of routine Sunday services being held. After twenty-five days of patrol work, the condition three watches were relaxed and the ship departed for Subic Bay to remain on the standby basis for a few days.12

In mid-July 1964, prior to the Tonkin Gulf crisis, the Oklahoma City had deployed from Yokosuka to Vietnam. The reason for the deployment was to demonstrate the Navy’s resolve after the sinking of the MSTS chartered ship Card on 2 May 1964 by Viet Cong saboteurs in the Saigon River. Chaplain Carpenter reported:

Proceeding up the meandering and extremely narrow Saigon River with Marine detachment personnel behind carefully positioned sand bags, all topside personnel equipped with battle helmets and personal cameras, one couldn’t help but wonder at the contrast of the fourth of July we had celebrated two weeks previously, and ponder the difference between “celebrating” liberty and “involving” oneself in a fight for freedom.13

A week was spent in Saigon, and conferences were held with high-level American and Vietnamese military and diplomatic personnel. By the end of the visit, the flashes of light and recurring thuds of mortar explosions nearby served to season all personnel.

Lieutenant Wayne A. Stewart (Southern Baptist) of the seaplane tender Currituck (AV-7) recalled that his ship traveled the Saigon River immediately following the sinking of Card. Standard precautions were taken, but there was no enemy contact. Upon arrival in Saigon, with the hazards of travel in a confined space and the possibility of attack by Viet Cong mortars behind them, the chaplain and the crew relaxed and prepared for a busy inport period. A large quantity of Project Handclasp material was on board, and Chaplain Stewart contacted HEDSUPPACT Chaplain Miller who arranged for storage and distribution of the cargo. Contact was made with a Catholic orphanage in Saigon where food, clothing, and toys were given to the children, and other materials were distributed at Cam Ranh Bay.14

In company with Valley Forge off Vietnam in 1964, on the first of four amphibious force contingency alerts, were Commander Amphibious Task Force, Seventh Fleet (TF 76) in Eldorado (AGC-11) and ships of Amphibious Group 3
The Marine contingent embarked in the ships of the task force designated the 9th Marine Expeditionary Brigade and was composed of a forward area headquarters detachment and the 1st and 3rd Battalions of the 3rd Marine Regiment from Okinawa. Aboard Valley Forge were Ship’s Chaplain Parham, Marine chaplain Lieutenant Carl T. Healer (Southern Baptist), and the PHIBRON 3 chaplain Lieutenant Anton J. Kollar (Roman Catholic).

During the last week in September, Lieutenant Commander Elbert N. Carpenter (Southern Baptist) in the new flagship Mount McKinley (AGC-7), Chaplain Parham, Chaplain Kollar, Chaplain Healer, and Lieutenant Francis W. McDonnell (Roman Catholic) operated off Cape Vung Tau near the mouth of the river to Saigon. During the first ten days in November, the flagship conducted special exercises in the vicinity of Danang. Again off Cape Vung Tau over Christmas, the PHIBRON 3 flagship, Princeton (LPH-5), and two Marine battalions stood by should political unrest in South Vietnam necessitate the defense or evacuation of American personnel; but all remained relatively quiet through the end of 1964.

In a statement on 7 February 1965, Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara informed the nation of three attacks by Viet Cong guerrillas upon strategically important positions in South Vietnam on the previous day. The first, directed against U.S. military personnel, was a mortar barrage against a military compound and helicopter unit at Pleiku in South Vietnam. The second and third attacks were launched against fuel dumps and defenseless villages at Tuy Hoa and Nha Trang. A decision was made to retaliate with combined Vietnamese-American air attacks against barracks and troop staging areas in southern portions of North Vietnam. The early retaliatory strikes, known as Flaming Dart I and II, were intensified with a joint U.S. Air Force and Navy operation beginning in early March which was designated Rolling Thunder. Three carriers were involved in the air strikes which ensued. Steaming in the South China Sea, the carriers Ranger (CVA-61), Hancock (CVA-19) and Coral Sea (CVA-43) proceeded to strike military targets near Dong Hoi.

Lieutenant Commander Wendell R. Begg (United Methodist), aboard Hancock, reported on the strikes occurring on 7 February 1965. Although only a small percentage of those on board actually participated in the strikes, the entire ship’s company and personnel of the embarked squadrons joined in the common effort. Both before and during the deployment, interest and participation in the religious program had been high. Protestant and Catholic services were scheduled for the morning of 7 February in preparation for the combat flight to be launched that day. The services were well attended, and several squadron commanders, reflecting the excellent religious posture of the ship and squadrons, requested that special prayers be said in the ready rooms. Chaplain Begg stated that he learned an important lesson from the religious dedication of the young pilots and members of the crew and said concerning the ministry, “The Navy chaplain always gains more than he gives.”

To illustrate his point, he spoke of a young pilot, Lieutenant (j.g.) Gerald “Mac” McKinley, who was both an outstanding aviator and a deeply devoted Christian. He was regular in attendance at divine worship, serving in various leadership capacities as the need arose. He was never without a warm, friendly smile and generated genuine goodwill throughout the ship. He spent his shore leave in Hong Kong purchasing gifts for fifty Chinese orphans invited aboard for a Christmas party he had planned and arranged. Frequently, the young pilot and Chaplain Begg met in the evening simply to talk. The conversations covered a wide range of subjects including pilot fears, family, death, the Christian’s faith in the resurrection, and life after death. The chaplain watched as the young man’s faith deepened over the months and as more and more frequently he volunteered to read the scriptures or offer the morning prayer at worship. Chaplain Begg wrote: “Mac was a great inspiration to his shipmates. They loved to see him at the lectum during chapel services. They knew he walked with God, and believe me, he challenged them to do the same.”

Lieutenant (j.g.) McKinley flew the mission on 7 February and returned safely, as did all the pilots from Hancock. However, six weeks later he was shot down while
flying a mission over North Vietnam and was officially listed as killed in action. The incident related by Chaplain Begg was not uncommon to Navy chaplains, and every chaplain ashore or at sea could share similar accounts of his ministry. Once more the seriousness of the war had been reinforced and the necessity of ministry in the midst of it had been justified.

**Religious Coverage for Fleet Units**

By late 1966, there were thirty-five Navy chaplains serving aboard ships in Vietnamese waters. At the end of the year, the number of shipboard chaplains who had served in Vietnam reached 210, 40 percent more than the total for the Korean War. Navy chaplains at this time represented forty-nine denominations. Every major denomination and 80 percent of the total religious population of the United States were represented by clergy-men wearing the Navy uniform. Of the entire Chaplain Corps, 72 percent were Protestant, 26 percent were Roman Catholic, and 2 percent were Jewish. In addition to chaplains of larger denominations, Eastern Orthodox, Christian Science, Latter-Day Saints, Seventh Day Adventist, and chaplains of other relatively small religious groups were present in sufficient numbers to provide a specialized ministry to personnel of their churches.

Since the beginning of the naval buildup in 1965, more comprehensive religious coverage of shipboard personnel had been both a serious objective of Chaplain Corps planning and one of its significant achievements. Religious coverage of fleet units in Vietnam steadily became more comprehensive in 1965 and 1966, so that by the end of 1966 the American sailor in Vietnamese waters had more direct access to the ministry of the Navy chaplain than in any previous war. Illustrative of this early coverage was the work of Lieutenant Daniel E. Finn (Roman Catholic) who was the first chaplain to serve ships in Danang Bay.

There were several factors which contributed to the broader scope of this religious coverage. First, there was a significant increase in the number of sea billets to which Navy chaplains were assigned. Percentages of sea as compared to shore billets were set at 56 percent and 44 percent, respectively, as a result of the war in Vietnam. These figures represented a reversal of billet percentages for standard operations. Secondly, there was an effort to extend ministries both officially and informally to ships without chaplains. Finally, throughout the Navy, lay leadership programs were re-evaluated and strengthened, and dissemination of appropriate resource and training materials was intensified.

The success of these efforts was illustrated in part by statistics drawn from the records of MSTS chaplains at the end of 1966. Sixteen chaplains were attached to MSTS transports. Although all were Protestant, through the services of retired military chaplains and unit chaplains embarked with Army and Marine Corps Troops, some ships enroute to Vietnam during this time had a Roman Catholic chaplain aboard to provide ministry to Catholic troops.

The Vietnamese coastal waters were familiar to the ships of MSTS. Ten years after the Passage to Freedom operation MSTS transports returned to the coastal waters of Vietnam, this time ferrying troops of the U.S. Armed Forces in support of the military buildup. The first transports to be employed in the trooplift were those attached to MSTS, Pacific which arrived in March 1965. In September, when MSTS, Atlantic ships were committed to the trooplift and temporarily shifted to the operational control of MSTS, Pacific, eleven of the sixteen MSTS transports then in operation had already made one or more trips to South Vietnam. During the remainder of 1965 and 1966, all operating transports were employed in the massive trooplift.

In terms of the chaplain’s ministry, the shift to exclusive trooplift employment brought a number of changes. The chaplain’s ministry reverted essentially to that of the trooplift days of World War II when chaplains manned Naval Transportation Service vessels. As of 1 July 1966, transportation of military dependents was terminated in order to meet current and anticipated needs for trooplift capability.

With the termination of the dependent transportation program, changes occurred as a matter of
course. Playrooms and nurseries were converted for use as troop offices and training spaces. Children’s birthday parties and "Queen of the Voyage" contests gave way to shipboard training activities designed to enhance the physical, mental, and spiritual fitness of combat troops soon to be committed to battle. The chaplain found himself free to concentrate his energies upon his primary duty: spiritual ministry to personnel. While the days of the dependent runs tested the MSTS chaplain’s versatility and resourcefulness and provided rewards of many kinds, the transport chaplains were pleased to be able to concentrate their professional energies upon spiritual ministry.

With larger troop loads and a new emphasis upon lifts of entire military units came an increase in the number of passenger chaplains embarked with their units. In 1966, it was not at all uncommon to discover three or four passenger chaplains on board when the transport set out to sea. Each was eager to meet the religious needs the unit to which he was attached and to assist in the broader general coverage of all personnel embarked. The MSTS chaplain’s ministry acquired the added dimension of coordination of a broadly expanded schedule of religious activities. Consistently in 1965 and 1966, MSTS chaplains reported that there was a visible change of mood in Marines and soldiers who were to be committed to combat, and other concerns combined to produce contemplative and spiritually sensitive young men. In the midst of these uncertainties, chaplains noted that the troops generally, tended to gravitate toward the strength, stability, and security of eternal truths. Such tendencies were also reported by Navy chaplains ashore with troops in combat.

The result in MSTS ships, aside from a greatly increased distribution of New Testaments and rosaries, was an awareness on the part of the chaplain of a unique opportunity to apply his pastoral resources to the lives of his men precisely at the point of their deepest need. Chaplains also reported that worship services were ordinarily crowded aboard the transports. Troop response to

The USNS General W. H. Gordon (TAP 117), representative of the troop transports which traveled at about nineteen knots from Oakland, California to the Republic of Vietnam conveying Army and Marine Corps personnel. It was an average sixteen-day trip including an overnight stop-over in Subic Bay, R.P.

A worship service aboard the Gordon while en route to Vietnam from Oakland, California (1967). (Photo courtesy of H. Lawrence Martin.)
personal counseling, religious discussion groups, Bible study sessions, religious films, and to evening prayers over the ship’s intercom system was such that the chaplains found it necessary to limit other programs.

Aboard *Patrick* (T-AP-124), Lieutenant Jesse W. Essinger (Lutheran) reported that its pre-debarkation service of Holy Communion provided a dramatic and spiritually edifying climax to the religious activities of every voyage. Each time, several hundred men gathered for worship and participation in the Sacrament of Holy Communion the day before they were to arrive in Vietnam with passenger chaplains participating in the liturgy.²²

Supervision of the MSTS religious coverage and chaplains’ ministry was provided by staff chaplains at Brooklyn, New York, and Oakland, California. Commander George T. Boyd (Southern Baptist) and Commander David E. Spradling (United Methodist) staffed the transports with chaplains and provided the ecclesiastical supplies and equipment required on each voyage.

A practice which extended the scope of the chaplains’ ministry to fleet personnel was the circuit rider concept. Since World War II, Navy chaplains had been accustomed to serving scattered commands and on their own initiative had sought out ships and stations without chaplains to offer their services. During 1965-66, chaplains of every force and type command, as a matter of routine, extended their ministry officially as well as informally to ships without religious coverage. Lieutenant Commander John D. Brock (National Fellowship of Brethren) reported that his circuit riding ministry in the early months of the Vietnam buildup of 1965 had placed him aboard twenty-two ships, including eight different types of ships;²³ and LCDR Alvin B. Koeneman (American Lutheran Church), serving with SERVRON 3, visited forty-two ships under eighteen sets of orders during 1967-68. Lieutenant Commander John K. Dodge (United Presbyterian), disclaiming any sort of record, reported carrying out twenty-four sets of temporary orders in twenty-one months.²⁴ Circuit-riding chaplain Commander Jude R. Senieur (Roman Catholic) wrote:

The circuit riders were frequently called upon to do additional duty where chaplains were not available or where tragedy had left a void. Thus I spent six weeks with the Swiftboats and the Coast Guard cutters along the southern coast of Vietnam. I spent almost eight weeks in the USS *Repose* (AH-16) when the Catholic chaplain took ill. I was assigned to the USS *Oriskany* (CVA-34) following their tragic fire. I was in a battle with the *Carronade* and spent some time in destroyers during coastal bombardments. Service Force chaplains offer their services whenever and however they may be needed.²⁵

It was not uncommon for each circuit-riding chaplain to provide religious coverage for fifteen to twenty ships during his time at sea.
A final means of providing more comprehensive religious coverage for fleet units was the practice of transporting chaplains from one ship to another by helicopter. This practice, which in all fleets became an operations institution after the first such flight in 1948, became known familiarly as “holy helo hops.”

Reporting on a deployment to Southeast Asia, carrier chaplain Commander Bruce H. Williams (United Presbyterian) stated:

The chaplains did more holy heloing than in the past. I often held four or five services on Sunday off the Yorktown in destroyers in the area. We tried to cover all other ships within 120 miles of us. On one occasion I traveled 425 miles on one Sunday to cover four ships. How the helo has increased the range of the circuit-riding preacher since the days of the horse!26

While traditionally many more chaplain movements at sea were made by highline and by small boat than by helicopter, Commander Willie D. Powell (Southern Baptist), attached to Princeton of the Amphibious Ready Group during 1965 and 1966, made more than 100 helicopter drops during a single deployment to provide worship and religious activities for the smaller ships.27 This became the norm for chaplains deployed in WESTPAC and special training was provided each chaplain in water safety and survival before his leaving the United States.
By November 1967, there were seventeen chaplains assigned to individual ship commands in the Service Force, Pacific, and six assigned to Commander Service Group 3 (COMSERVGRU THREE) as circuit riders for other Service Force ships deployed or homeported in WESTPAC. Of the seventeen chaplains assigned to a ship’s command four were in the hospital ships Repose and Sanctuary. Chaplains assigned to hospital ships were assigned for a one-year tour of duty. All others were assigned for a regular two-year tour of duty. The six circuit-riding chaplains attempted to provide religious services for twenty-one ships homeported in WESTPAC and an average of thirty-eight ships deployed to WESTPAC from SERVRON 5 and SERVRON 7. All circuit-riders were assigned to a Mobile Support Detachment under COMSERVGRU 3. The senior chaplain scheduled ships for circuit-riding chaplains, requisitioned supplies for all chaplains from the force chaplain, prepared performance reports, operated a lay leader program, and kept the force chaplain advised on the effectiveness of the circuit-riding chaplains. The Service Force chaplains had a tremendous responsibility in providing religious services to a fast-moving and hard-working force, although Service Force chaplains permanently assigned to a ship command were not deployed as long as the circuit riders.

Some chaplains were ordered to new type ships such as combat support and stores ships Sacramento (AOE-1) and Mars (AFS-1) and mobile communications ship Annapolis (AGMR-1). These new ships enhanced logistic support at sea. Sacramento deployed to the Western Pacific in November 1965 with a detachment of two UH-46A helicopters aboard for vertical replenishment. It was joined there by another multiproduct ship, Mars, already in the Western Pacific with two UH-46A detachments aboard. Through the use of these fast ships and new replenishment procedures, replenishment at sea was accomplished in much less time than usual. Materials such as aviation fuel, provisions, ammunition, and repair parts were available to operating units without long delays. Annapolis became part of the Pacific Fleet in August 1965 and was deployed to provide mobile communications for the command and control of fleet operations, as the progressive growth in scope and intensity of U.S. military operations in Southeast Asia overloaded Pacific Fleet communications facilities. Annapolis began her role as mobile communicator in late September and assisted not only at sea but also in port. The chaplains assigned to Sacramento, Mars, and Annapolis had the unique experience of serving aboard new ship types in which there were wide opportunities for service and the chaplain was limited only by his ability and resourcefulness.

Just as these ships brought physical replenishment, the mission of the circuit rider was to provide spiritual replenishment for personnel of Service Force ships deployed and homeported in the Western Pacific. This type of ministry was broad and fast paced. Chaplain Senieur wrote concerning it:

Among Navy chaplains, circuit riding is generally thought of in terms of a squadron chaplain who circuits among a group of four to twelve destroyers, or a chaplain who is providing religious services for a group of minesweepers. The chaplains of an aircraft carrier circuit among the destroyers accompanying their ship. Amphibious groups will have a squadron chaplain similar to the destroyer chaplain. These circuit riders have a specific, relatively small group of ships which they can visit and re-visit. The Service Force circuit rider is one of six chaplains attached to COMSERVGRU 3 and is involved with about sixty ships at a time, ships which are constantly being replaced by similar type ships from both the Pacific and Atlantic Fleets. As a result, his is a one-time operation. He has one visit in which to wield an influence that is meant to last through most of the ship’s WESTPAC deployment.

This “one-time operation” made a difference in that the Service Force circuit rider did not have time to let his influence grow until he was known and accepted. He had to effect almost instant acceptability and inspire confidence within a matter of two or three days so that he could minister to the men. There was no time to make up for wrong impressions or to start over, and the Service Force circuit rider did not get another chance.

For much of the time, the circuit rider was on his own as a chaplain. He was, however, supported by
the direct and personal interest of his force chaplain, and he found himself an heir of the goodwill and ready acceptance created by those chaplains who had ridden the circuit before him. In a normal tour, a circuit rider would be aboard more ships and more types of ships than some men are in their entire Navy careers. The circuit-riding chaplain met many commanding officers, and the commitment of the chaplain was revealed countless times in these numerous contacts as the circuit rider moved from wardroom to wardroom, from ship to ship. Of the circuit rider’s routine, Chaplain Senieur wrote:

At least twice a day, I go from stem to stem on every level, saying hello to the men and watching their work. I ask questions (without disturbing them) and express sincere interest in their varied activities. The men are more than delighted to have the opportunity to tell you about their work. If they can tell you something you don’t know, they are much more inclined to let you tell them something they don’t know! Every couple of days, a visit to the engine and fire rooms shows that you are really interested in everyone. I get to the laundry, galley, after-steering, and every other comer as I walk around with a few humorous, non-professional comments. When the men find us cheerful, approachable, and somewhat “shockproof,” they begin to consider sharing their problems.

I often drink enough coffee in one day to keep the ship afloat, not that I am an avid coffee drinker, but “more good is done over a cup of coffee than this world dreams of!” I stop in at the Chiefs Mess, in the First Class Lounge, in the shops, everywhere . . . and they all offer me a cup of coffee. I rarely refuse. Sipping a cup of coffee gives them time to overcome the “newness” of having a chaplain around, and more often than not, someone will start a conversation, “Say, Chaplain, could I ask you a question . . . ?” Pretty soon they are saying, “Can I see you sometime . . . ?”

Statistics demonstrate the broad scope of the work performed by the Service Force circuit riders. During the period of 1 June 1966 to 31 May 1967, SERVPAC ships and units were visited by chaplains 523 times, an average of 87 visits per chaplain per year. During the same period of time, a total of 1,107 church services were conducted by circuit riders. There were 209 leadership and character guidance lectures presented and 3,466 professional counseling interviews. There were 721 additional religious activities and programs under the leadership of the circuit riders including Bible classes, religious instruction classes, daily devotions, and other activities. The three Catholic chaplains were especially busy averaging 238 days at sea.

Chaplain Senieur reviewed his experiences as a circuit rider, experiences which illustrate the work of all the circuit riders:

In these two years, I have had occasion to ride almost every type of ship in the Navy, from the patrol boats to the carriers. Each ship has its own personality, each crew its own spirit. The circuit rider has a never-ending opportunity to develop adaptability to change and approachability for the grand spectrum of human nature. Extraordinary experiences included two months in the hospital ship Repose and three weeks in the patrol boats and Coast Guard cutters out of An Thoi. I was dunked once in the Danang River, worked with the seaplane operation at Cam Ranh Bay, was catapulted off the Ticonderoga, and rode the Carronade during an all-night battle up North. Experiences? . . . endless! Opportunities to do good? . . . countless! All in the tour of duty as a circuit rider with COMSERVGRU 3! And is it worthwhile? It has been for me, and if nothing else, one thing made it so. A few months ago, a ship returned to WESTPAC for its second deployment. I had ridden it last year. During a brief visit aboard while in Subic, I was walking across the cargo deck, and a sailor called out, “Chaplain . . . Chaplain, remember me? You were aboard last year!” That’s good enough for me.

For the circuit riders and many other of the chaplains afloat, the support given by the chaplains who were stationed in Subic Bay and Cubi Point was invaluable. Chaplain M. A. Carpenter wrote:

Subic Bay was “home” to all afloat chaplains in the Pacific. There their ships were resupplied, repaired, and refurbished. Only occasionally did these chaplains have occasion to be in the company of a kindred soul, professionally speaking. The shore-based chaplains provided a milieu of openness, acceptance, warmth, and friendship that has never been equalled – sharing their quarters, their time, their meals, their cars, etc. without question or reticence with those returning from long patrols. Friendships flourished within moments and a sense of interdependence deepened visit after visit.
Mine Flotilla 1 and Market Time

Early in 1965, units of Commander Mine Flotilla 1 (COMINFLOT 1) from Sasebo, Japan, began to deploy to the South China Sea off the coast of South Vietnam. Their primary purpose was involvement in Operation Market Time. Because of increasing infiltration problems, the mission of Operation Market Time was “to conduct surveillance, gunfire support, visit and search, and other operations as directed along the coast of the Republic of Vietnam [RVN] in detection and prevention of communist infiltration from the sea.”

It was assumed that much of the infiltration into South Vietnam was committed by some of the more than 50,000 civilian craft which plied the coastline. Patrol craft from Task Force 115 regularly boarded and searched these civilian craft in an effort to deter infiltration. Market Time craft were responsible for guarding the Mekong River entrances and a sea area extending forty miles out from the coast along the entire 1,500 mile stretch of coast up to the 17th parallel.

Lieutenant James A. Williams (United Methodist) reported to COMINFLOT 1 on 12 June 1965 to learn that he would go aboard Epping Forest and proceed directly to Vietnam to participate in Operation Market Time. On 25 June, the ship commenced her patrol from Danang to An Thoi, covering the entire coastline of the Republic of Vietnam. While on this first forty-day patrol, Chaplain Williams began to learn the expanse of territory which his circuit would cover. While off Con Son, Epping Forest met two MSOs which Chaplain Williams visited briefly. He remembered:

I thought surely they were covered by someone, but the truth was that if I didn’t see them, no one else could. I presented a plan for detached duty as an attempt to minister to as many of these and other units as possible. I discussed the problem with CAPT Savage and LCDR R. H. Moore, the Chief Staff Officer, and they agreed that it would be necessary for me to temporarily detach in order to visit each of those ships on the line.

After Christmas, (Chaplain Williams was temporarily detached and spent pan of January and February riding from ship to ship on Market Time. Of this ministry, he reported:

It grew quite exciting when I transferred in rough seas or by hi-line, but when it was over it all seemed rather amusing. It was enlightening to learn how the loneliness of forty days at sea affects an individual. The eagerness with which I was greeted was amazing, but gratifying. In each case the comment was received, “You’re the first chaplain we’ve seen in WESTPAC.” I learned, too, how miserably rough an MSO can ride through twenty to thirty-foot seas.

The circuit riding chaplains involved in Operation Market time were rarely bored. Chaplain Williams remembered:

For two nights, we sat off An Hoa waiting for a strike at a village near the beach, because we had been interrogating numerous refugees with all their belongings crammed into small sampans. The attack finally came the second night when a VC river group attempted to break out to sea. The RVN Junk Force bore the brunt of the battle which was brief but furious. None of the junks were damaged, and we received no personnel casualties; but only the darkness of the night and poor aim prevented it. We stayed at general quarters during most the night, and it was not unusual to hear a whispered request for prayer from both seamen and captain. The long night passed, and we were able to discover that the threatened break-out had been contained. I hated to miss the holiday routine which prevailed the next day aboard Conflict, but we rendezvoused with Endurance to which I transferred via Swiftboat for my second tour aboard. It was a grand reunion. I was greeted with great cordiality and an abundance of counseling cases. The Captain requested a worship service that evening in the event I should hastily depart. His high evaluation of the value of a crew at worship was a great satisfaction to me.

The circuit-riding chaplains of MINFLOT 1 found themselves being transported in every conceivable way. NAVSUPPACT, Danang often arranged transient quartering for circuit-riding chaplains on board barracks craft (APL). These barge quarters had been moved from the river out into the bay for protection, and the PCF squadron at Danang often provided transportation for chaplains rejoining ships on the line. One morning they
might board a patrol craft Swiftboat and proceed to Chu Lai and the next day fly back to Danang to be retrieved and fed by shipmates, supplied with additional "C" rations and a fresh canteen, and booked on a CV-2 to Qui Nhon. Enroute they might stop at a Montagnard outpost and remain overnight at the Army evacuation hospital in Qui Nhon. The next day they might arrive in Cam Ranh Bay, join another boat overnight, and again be transported south by patrol craft to Phan Rang to join another MINFLOT 1 ship for a return visit. Throughout such travels, the chaplains would often minister to men who had been absent from home port for up to nine months. Always performing a dual task of anti-infiltration patrol and mine countermeasures readiness placed a trying burden on the crews of each ship. For the chaplains ministering under such circumstances, any inconvenience and fatigue were superseded by pastoral caring and concern.

A demanding aspect of the chaplain’s time in port was attempting to prepare men for the return to the danger of extended patrols in RVN waters. This could not be accomplished by lectures, but demanded a close personal ministry. Chaplains reported that such close personal contacts produced great rewards in their pastoral ministries. Chaplain Williams reflected:

My own involvement in the operations of the flotilla was maximum during the twenty months of my tour. This was possible because of the opportunity extended by two very cooperative commodores and twenty-one responsive captains and crews. I was never more certain of my calling than during those repeated encounters with men whose names I’ve forgotten but whose need for an understanding chaplain will always remain in my memory. I was privileged to have served on the aggressive forefront of the Navy’s deterrent force in the South China Sea.39

**Service with the U.S. Coast Guard**

Although the U.S. Coast Guard had been participating in the Southeast Asian build-up as early as April 1965 with the deployment of twenty-six patrol cutters to Vietnam, it was not until the establishment of a squadron of five high-endurance cutters in April 1967 that the full-time services of a chaplain were sought to meet the specific needs of Coast Guardsmen in combat. Coast Guard Squadron 3 initially included the cutters *Barataria* (WHEC 381), *Bering Strait* (WHEC 382), *Gresham* (WHEC 387), *Half Moon* (WHEC 378), and *Yakutat* (WHEC 380) and was commanded by Captain John E. Day, USCG. Until this time, all Navy chaplains serving with the Coast Guard had been in shore assignments. However, because of the length and type of the Vietnam patrols, the deployment of Squadron 3 prompted the request for a seagoing chaplain. The chaplain selected for this new billet was Lieutenant Robert R. Mitchell (General Association of Regular -Baptists). He reported to the squadron for duty on 1 July 1967 and became the first Navy chaplain to be assigned to sea duty with the Coast Guard.40

Chaplain Mitchell’s duties consisted of circuit-riding the ships of the squadron, hopping from cutter to cutter as they patrolled on Operation Market Time. With U.S. Naval Station, Subic Bay as a base of operations, the chaplain rode SERVPAC 3 ships to and from the cutters, ministering in over thirty different Navy ships and Coast Guard cutters during his deployment. Chaplain Mitchell normally spent about a week in each of the five cutters before returning to Subic Bay to begin the next circuit. Religious films, Bible studies, personal counseling, and evening prayers were part of his regular schedule of activities in addition to conducting formal worship services aboard the big white cutters. He later reflected:

My billet as chaplain was unique in several aspects. First, although I was with a squadron of Coast Guard cutters, my tour of duty was classified as “In Country.” My senior chaplain was CAPT James J. Killeen, on the staff of Commander Naval Forces Vietnam in Saigon. I was his only chaplain afloat. Secondly, I was the first seagoing chaplain ever assigned to the Coast Guard. While it was true that Coast Guard ships were active in World War II, they were always integrated into Navy commands. In the case of Squadron 3, in Vietnam, they were an independent unit under Seventh Fleet.41

Chaplain Mitchell was relieved in June 1968 by Lieutenant Charles L. Reiter, Jr. (United Methodist). In June 1969, Chaplain Reiter was relieved
A Coast Guard vessel (WPB) moving out on patrol.

by Lieutenant Commander Robert S. Borden (United Presbyterian) who was the third and last chaplain to serve with the Coast Guard in Vietnam. By December 1971, all of the Coast Guard ships had been turned over to the South Vietnamese Navy for operation, and Coast Guard involvement in Vietnam came to an end.\(^42\) Chaplain Borden wrote:

During the course of my tour, I was aboard eighteen cutters, most of them “big white ones,” but a couple were eighty-two footers. My duties required that I “hitch-hike” from Song On Dak in southwestern Vietnam to Danang at least twice quarterly and return to Subic Bay each time a new cutter inched from the United States. The ministry was somewhat similar to that referred to in the Chaplain Corps as the “circuit” ministry in destroyers. When I detached, the squadron was down to two AVP-types, and they were painted gray, although with the “racing stripe” intact.\(^33\)

**The Carrier Ministry**

In February 1967, eleven chaplains were serving in Naval Air Force, Pacific (NAVAIRPAC) ships on deployment in Vietnamese waters. This brought the total number of NAVAIRPAC chaplains who had had duty in Vietnam to seventy-eight, approximately twenty percent of the total number of Navy chaplains who served with Navy or Marine units in ‘Vietnam. At this time, two chaplains were assigned to each of the five carriers and one to the seaplane tender. These chaplains provided religious coverage to 700 to 900 personnel in the tender and 3,500 to 5,800 personnel in each of the carriers.

For the most part, the ministry of chaplains aboard carriers in the years 1967-70 involved the same things encountered by shipboard chaplains everywhere. The carrier would steam from home port with an attack carrier air wing embarked for a WESTPAC combat deployment. Approximately 5,000 officers and men would make up the ship’s company and air wing. After a brief stop at Pearl Harbor, the ship perhaps weathered high winds and rough seas enroute to Sasebo, Japan. Upon leaving Sasebo, she made her first visit to Cubi Point, Philippines, before launching combat missions from “Yankee Station,” off Vietnam.\(^44\)

Divine services while at sea were conducted in the ship’s chapel and on the forecastle. Mass, preceded by the administration of the Sacrament of Penance, was celebrated daily, and Protestant devotions were often conducted in the evenings.

The chaplain’s ministry included a full schedule of daily activities and several services of divine worship each Sunday for personnel of his own ship and of accompanying small ships which had no chaplain aboard. By highline and “holy helo” flights, each carrier chaplain routinely covered two or more destroyers each Sunday. Carrier chaplains often visited as many as forty to fifty other ships each quarter to provide ministry to ships without chaplains. Lay leaders were utilized extensively in the religious program of the carrier and were a vital part of that ministry. The worship services were usually conducted in the chapel, and anywhere from twenty-five to sixty-five such services might be held during a six-month cruise.

In many carriers, the chaplains joined in presenting the news and special programs on closed circuit television. Commander Don M. Michael (Lutheran) of Enterprise (CVAN-65) reported:

For the first two weeks of televising the news, the chaplains were sole commentators until more men were trained for this work. The only other scheduled live television program shown in Enterprise during this cruise was a program of opinion entitled “What’s It All About?” written and produced by the junior chaplain [Lieutenant] Kenneth M. Loughman (Roman Catholic) and featured every Wednesday evening.
This television work imposed no burden and provided the personnel in the ship with an opportunity to know their chaplains by sight. It also permitted the chaplain the opportunity to get into every corner of the ship many more times than he possibly could without such modern means of communication.\textsuperscript{45}

The chaplain’s ministry in a deployed attack carrier demanded the utmost in terms of his spiritual and physical resources. The schedule of operations was such that careful consideration had to be given to the use of his time. In many instances, it was necessary that the chaplain’s activities be held during the hours of flight operations, even though that schedule might run from midnight to noon.

The chaplain always had a unique opportunity to measure the morale of the officers and men and to serve as an advisor to the commanding officer. In order to accomplish this facet of his ministry, he needed to be thoroughly aware of the physical and psychological stresses which the officers and men were experiencing. This was accomplished by a continuing and systematic visitation program throughout the ship.

On board \textit{Ticonderoga}, Chaplain Jensen and Lieutenant James M. Doyle, who was the Catholic replacement for Commander William B. O’Connor, had many talks about means to a more effective ministry and about their concern for Christian unity. As a result, they each initiated a discussion group and soon combined them. Then

Our counseling times in the office took on the same spirit of unity. It was not unusual for me to be counseling and to call Chaplain Jensen in for consultation because of his wider experience and administrative ability. Soon it was known that both chaplains were open and available always to anyone. Most Catholics still came to me and most Protestants still went to him but quite a few crossed denominational lines probably because of their backgrounds or our personalities or the nature of problem they had.\textsuperscript{46}

In his private ministry, the carrier chaplain’s personal counseling load was usually heavy. The role of the chaplain as a counselor in an attack carrier was of considerable importance because of the nature of the duty. The individual problems of the men were greatly aggravated by the stress of daily activities and the lengthy family separations. American Red Cross and Western Union messages relating to family emergencies at home were delivered in significant numbers to deployed personnel. Family problems occasioned by frequent and lengthy deployments and personal affairs of younger personnel, along with the chaplain’s collateral duty assignments, created a sixteen to eighteen-hour work day. The chaplain’s ministry to pilots and other flight personnel in strike operations against Vietnamese targets also required a great amount of time. In most large ships, each counseling interview was scheduled on an individual basis following the man’s initial request to talk with one of the chaplains. Often during a deployment, 2,500 or more men would be seen in a counseling context.

Lieutenant Commander William L. Jones (Southern Baptist) aboard \textit{Kitty Hawk} described several important phases of his carrier ministry in a narrative report to Chief of Chaplains Kelly. He described the common practice of many carrier chaplains when he wrote:

Combat operations were taking their toll of aviators and others. Tension was ever present but reached a peak before and during large scale air strikes on difficult targets. When clearance was received for a given strike, the briefing of pilots and radar intercept officers took place in the integrated Operational Intelligence Center. Whenever possible, I attended these briefings and heard the frequently made remark, “This must be a rough one—the padre is here.” The comment was made without respect to the frequency of my visits. Neither was it entirely in a light vein. Upon more than one occasion, the commander of the air wing said, “Keep praying for us, Padre,” and there was no doubt of his sincerity. He expressed what many felt and not a few stated.\textsuperscript{47}

The chaplain followed a well-established pattern. His next stop after briefing was usually one of the six ready rooms where commanding officers and others were briefing flight personnel. Here he walked among the pilots as they were preparing to man their planes. He contributed to the light-hearted conversation, and there was usually joking, often about the chaplain seeing them off, and
Chaplain James D. Reid with pilots of Attack Squadron 93. (Official photograph, U.S. Navy by PH1 Donald Grantham.)

Jewish services aboard the USS Ranger (CVA-61). (Official photograph, U.S. Navy.)
offers were made to give up the “back seat” of the two-place aircraft in order that he might go along. But the appreciation of his presence was expressed as some seriously said, “Thanks for being here. Say a prayer.” He always did.

During the strike, the chaplain assembled in the Naval Tactical Data Systems (NTDS) center with the pilots and radar intercept officers who were not flying. There they could follow the progress of the strike, and it was there that the first indications of missing aircraft were received. Chaplain Jones wrote:

On one occasion, a voice over the radio said, “Has anyone seen 504?” Someone said, “Negative.” Someone said, “I saw 504 just before we peeled off.” Then the first voice: “504. 504! Do you read me? Over.” On the ship, several soft prayers and a few under-the-breath curses were heard. Then, finally, someone said, “504 is on my wing. His radio is out.” And then we stopped sweating. A sigh of relief was heard, and some of the tension was gone.

After the strikes, the chaplain would go back to the flight deck to watch for the returning planes. When some did not return, a visit to the squadron room was in order. Here, an expression of consolation was offered to squadron members. The chaplain’s presence helped to absorb the shock of the loss and provided the opportunity for personal ministry to grieving friends. Later, when the pilot was declared killed in action, there was the memorial service with military honors and words of assurance and hope.

Early in the war, the carrier chaplains realized that memorial services for flight personnel lost in action were directly related to pilot morale; therefore they had to be handled wisely and with imagination. One carrier chaplain, Commander Rodger F. Hill (United Church of Christ), wrote:

The first loss of life occurred during our first period on the line when a helicopter was lost. The second casualty, also during the first line period, occurred when one of our arresting wires parted as we were recovering an aircraft. In each case, the chaplains assisted in writing letters of condolence to the next of kin and conducted appropriate memorial services for the deceased. Soon we were on Yankee Station, and the inevitable happened: planes were being shot down over North Vietnam. The chaplains followed the traditional custom of scheduling and conducting memorial services as soon as administratively possible. After the second such service, which was well attended, the participation dwindled to a very few persons limited to members of the squadron concerned. I was getting such comments as “Chaplain, I won’t be at the memorial services today. Not because I don’t honor their memory. Not because I don’t want to come. I just can’t come.”

During the second period on the line, memorial services on Chaplain Hill’s ship were dispensed with. In their place, special prayers and short comments were offered during the following Sunday’s worship service and mass. This procedure was followed during the remainder of the cruise, and a special memorial service was held on the Sunday after the final day on the line to honor all who had been killed.

In his reflections upon his deployment, Commander Donald C. LeMaster (American Baptist) reported that memorial services were of two kinds. A special service such as the one held by Chaplain Hill was conducted on the flight deck the day the ship left the line, and full military honors were given. Chaplain LeMaster further explained:

The second type of memorial service was conceived because of what I saw. The officers and men of the units which had KIAs, especially the pilots, were not being afforded sufficient opportunity to grieve the loss of their shipmates, to resolve their own fear and apprehension, and in a sense spiritually to rededicate themselves. Thus was instituted a service which I called a Memorial/Communion Service. It was exceptionally well received in the combat situation with its losses, the requirement to keep the planes flying, and the pilot’s inward concern that he may well be next. Within a twelve-hour period after a pilot loss, I conducted this service for the squadron or detachment concerned in the All Faiths Chapel which seats forty but held better than one hundred during one of these services. I recognized that the personnel concerned were of various faiths; I recognized that some could not participate in the Sacrament itself, but they were invited to participate to the extent they were able. Not once did anyone leave. The subjective atmosphere of the service was as dynamic as ever I have experienced at a funeral service’ but with the added grace of our Lord’s presence through the sacrament.
Chaplain Owen B. Klapperich celebrating mass aboard Hancock. (Official photograph, U.S. Navy.)

Dr. Billy Graham conducting services aboard the USS Kitty Hawk (CVA-63) during his Christmas 1966 visit to Vietnam. (Official photograph, U.S. Navy by PH2 V. D. Garrison.)

Chaplain David W. Plank conducting a memorial service aboard the USS *Hancock* (CVA-19). (Official photograph, U.S. Navy.)
Fire aboard the USS *Oriskany* (CVA-34). (Official photograph, U.S. Navy.)

Chaplains Johnie L. Perry, Thomas W. Kuhn, and Walter "B" Clayton, Jr. during transfer of the dead from the *Oriskany* fire. (Official photograph, U.S. Navy.)
Men grieved, cried, honored the departed, rededicated themselves to God, and went back to their jobs in a much healthier frame of mind and spirit.\textsuperscript{51}

Further reports continued to indicate that the impact of the carrier chaplain’s ministry upon the lives of flight personnel was profound. At the conclusion of a deployment, following the last period on the line, Chaplain Jones wrote:

We were heading for Yokosuka, Japan, and then home! After the last planes returned from their strikes, I visited the ready rooms. Surprisingly, the atmosphere was very subdued. A few said, “Padre, I made it!” Some added, “No services for me!” Gradually, the numbness, the unbelief, began to wear off, and the celebrating began. Because we were at sea, it was somewhat limited, but very little sleeping went on that night—for anyone. There were many who stopped by the little chapel for words of thanksgiving.\textsuperscript{52}

The carrier chaplain helped in building the Chaplain Corps’ tradition that the end objective of the chaplain’s ministry has been realized when he has been instrumental in bringing “God to men and men to God.” Characteristically, the chaplain has been little concerned with his own record or image or any degree of personal distinction which he may have. It is God, continually active in human affairs, whom he seeks to reveal through his ministry and whose sovereign will he seeks to relate to the men of his ship in their daily lives. It is God who is revealed through the ministry of the Navy chaplain and through the religious program of the ship to which the chaplain is attached.

Carrier chaplains off Vietnam consistently indicated that the religious program in ‘NAVAIRPAC was having its desired effect. While, as always, specific impact and tangible results were difficult to evaluate when dealing with the lives of people, occasionally some evidence emerged to confirm the position that the chaplain’s ministry was indeed effective. Such evidences occurred in the form of transformed lives and in the ascription of miraculous events to divine providence. Speaking of Kitty Hawk’s pilots, Chaplain Jones remembered:

Some survived miraculously. That is the only word to use: miraculously. That is the way in which they thought of it and the way in which they told their stories. I think of one aviator who was hit by anti-aircraft fire. The plane caught fire. He attempted to open the canopy. It was jammed. The plane was a ball of fire, and there appeared to be no hope of escape. When he had given up almost all hope, the pilot found himself separated from the aircraft and falling freely. The plane had literally come apart around him, and he was uninjured. He landed in the midst of enemy troops, eluded capture, and was rescued by helicopter within an hour. He gave full credit to God, and was not hesitant in doing so. Virtually everyone who heard him tell of his experience, and a couple who actually observed a part of it, enthusiastically agreed. The chaplain was clearly "outpreached," and glad to be!\textsuperscript{53}

There were times when NAVAIRPAC chaplains had to confront more than the saddening duty of conducting a memorial service. Their ministry sometimes had to bend to accommodate crises that extended beyond the objective fact of a pilot lost over the North. Otikany, Forrestal (CVA-59), and Enterprise suffered catastrophes which convulsed the world of the carriers. During these catastrophes, the ministry of the chaplains was vital.

The situation in Oriskany on the morning of 26 October 1966 was normal in all respects. The first strike of the day was being launched as Oriskany steamed on station off North Vietnam. The ship’s Catholic chaplain, Lieutenant Commander William J. Garrity, was in his room. The Protestant chaplain, Commander Johnie L. Perry (Southern Baptist), had left Naval Air Station, Cubi Point at 0700 to return to the ship from emergency leave. Commander Henry W. Stroman (Nazarene) and Lieutenant Commander Roth M. Laurenzano (Roman Catholic) were on duty in Constellation as she steamed nearby.

Suddenly, the routine was shattered by the fire alarm. The fire started in an aviation flare locker located on the starboard side of the main deck forward adjacent to officers' quarters. The fire and smoke spread rapidly, and within a few minutes, thirty-five officers and eight enlisted men were dead. One other officer was critically burned and survived but a few days. Chaplain Garrity was one of the victims of the intolerable fumes.\textsuperscript{54} In a report to the Force Chaplain, COMNAVAIRPAC,
Chaplain Stroman told of the ministry he and Chaplain Laurenzano had during the fire:

On Wednesday morning, 26 October, immediately after breakfast, I heard a rumor that *Oriskany* was experiencing a fire. I hurried to the bridge, finding that Roch had arrived there just a few minutes before. I suggested to the executive officer that a message be sent notifying the *Oriskany* that Roch and I were available to go and minister in any way needed. After approval by the captain, the message was sent by flashing light, and while we waited on the bridge at the direction of the XO, we watched the fire through the glasses. My previous tour in the *Ticonderoga* told me that the fire was probably in the area of officers’ country, and Roch and I both realized the possibility that Father Garrity might have been caught. In about fifteen or twenty minutes, the request came back for both of us to come. We went immediately to the flight deck, and an *Oriskany* helo shuttled us over.

We were led by an unidentified officer in a flight suit through, of course, watery and dark and slightly smoking passageways to sickbay. We were told at once that Father Garrity was one of the victims. We both viewed his remains in a nearby compartment, and Roch administered last rites and began immediately doing the same for the others. By this time (between 0930-1000), there were about seventeen bodies there, and they were being brought in steadily. I returned immediately, and Roch followed shortly, to the ward, continuing our ministering to the injured.  

At approximately 1130, having landed on *Constellation*, Chaplain Perry returned by *Oriskany* helo and joined Chaplains Stroman and Laurenzano. Chaplain Stroman wrote: “It would seem providential that Chaplain Perry had not arrived earlier than he did. I was told before he arrived that his was the closest stateroom to where the fire started.” *Constellation’s* chaplains returned to their ship as *Oriskany* left the line at about 1400. They had given all possible help.

*Oriskany* proceeded under her own power to NAS Cubi Point. The air station chaplains, Commander Walter “B” Clayton, Jr. (Southern Baptist) and Lieutenant Thomas W. Kuhn (Roman Catholic), had foreseen the need for assistance in the transfer of the casualties and met *Oriskany* upon her arrival. Other chaplains in the area were standing by to provide all possible help, and the spirit of concern and cooperation shown by the chaplains was helpful to all aboard. All of the chaplains seemed to have only one wish: to make the pain easier for all who found the nightmare all too real. Chaplains Kuhn and Senieur celebrated mass daily and provided help with counseling. *Oriskany* requested help from COMSERNVGRU 3 in providing a Catholic chaplain for the return of the United States, and Chaplain Senieur was chosen for the task.  

The transfer of the casualties from *Oriskany* was accomplished at NAS Cubi Point. Arrangements were made with Clark Air Force Base, Philippines, to provide a transport plane for the shipment of the bodies to Travis Air Force Base in California and transfer to final destination points within the United States. Two chaplains, Lieutenant Commander Donald D. Danielson (Lutheran), attached to COMSERNVGRU 3, and Lieutenant Conall R. Coughlin (Roman Catholic), stationed at the Naval Station, Subic Bay, were present on the flight deck to receive the bodies. As the bodies were lowered to the pier they were met by Chaplains Clayton, Kuhn, Senieur, and Lieutenant Commander Robert D. Tatum (Southern Baptist). From the pier each body was then escorted by both a Protestant and Roman Catholic chaplain from this group to the awaiting C-130. During the entire ceremony, which lasted nearly two hours, there stood adjacent to the guard of honor at solemn attention Rear Admiral Walter L. Curtis, Jr., COMCARDIV 9 embarked in *Oriskany*; and the ship’s commanding officer, Captain John H. Iarrobino. As the final procession made its way to the plane, the entire ship’s crew stood at attention rendering a hand salute as taps were sounded. It was a fitting and dignified tribute to forty-three sailors who had lost their lives while on combat patrol. Chaplain Coughlin stated that it was one of the most moving events he had ever witnessed.  

*Oriskany* left Cubi Point for her home port of San Diego. Her men would seek for many days to be rid of the state of shock and the horror that refused to be forgotten. Chaplains Perry and Senieur held daily services, handled a heavy load of counseling,
and circulated through the ship. Groups of men in the, wardroom, hangar bays, and other working areas began to unwind as the chaplains tried to be good listeners.

For the men of Forrestal, the day of 29 July 1967 began on an ominous note; at 0310, the ship’s company was awakened by the call to a man overboard muster. It was determined that a young sailor named Kenneth Dyke had fallen into the sea while ammunition parties were working to consolidate bombs and ammunition that had been received during an underway replenishment earlier in the afternoon. Emergency helicopter flight quarters were called away. After a brief search the rescue helicopter crew managed to locate the young sailor and was able to lower a sling to him, but Dyke was so weakened by exposure that he slipped back into the water. Efforts to relocate him were unsuccessful; he was the first man to die that day.

During the previous four days, the planes of Carrier Air Wing 17 on board Forrestal had carried out about 150 successful missions against North Vietnam. Now, the second launch of the fifth day was underway. Below decks, Lieutenant Commander Geoffrey E. Gaughan (Roman Catholic) was proofreading a letter to the archbishop of Yokohama and making corrections before having it retyped. Commander William D. Cooper (Southern Baptist) had completed some administrative details regarding the ship’s library and begun a rough draft of a letter to the parents of Seaman Dyke. After finishing this, he took an opportunity to visit with men in Hangar Bay 3 and went to talk with some of the men who had just lost a shipmate.

On the flight deck, the men were preparing for aircraft launch. Suddenly, all hands gathered aft heard a “whoosh” and saw an explosion in front of them. A Zuni rocket had accidentally been fired from one airplane and had hit the fuel tanks of another. Two A-4 jets were engulfed in flames, and burning jet fuel spewed out of them. A bomb dropped to the deck, rolled about six feet, and came to rest in a pool of the burning fuel. The ordeal had begun. Almost immediately, the fire enveloped all aircraft in its wake and spread to the fantail and decks below. Forrestal was a holocaust above and below, and the four-and-a-half acre flight deck was littered with debris and engulfed in flames.

In the chaplain’s office, Chaplain Gaughan heard the fire alarm and thought that a pilot had crashed into the fantail. As he pushed his chair back to head for the sickbay, the general quarters alarm was sounded. Chaplain Gaughan reported:

I reached for the holy oil for the last rites and as I headed forward both heard and felt a dull, hollow boom from overhead, like a man thumping his fist down hard on a table over your head. You wouldn’t say that the sound was loud. It simply had a force behind it that made my ears pound and my mouth fall open.

In the passageway, men were moving forward—almost in silence, speaking quietly if at all. No one was running; they simply walked quickly. There is a hatch that divides the after mess decks. During general quarters, it was always a bottleneck. Only one or two men could pass through at the same time. As I approached it, there were two more! thumps from above, only this time they had more of the sound of a “bang” in them, more resonance. “My God,” I thought, “this couldn’t be; not our ship!”

Chaplain Gaughan arrived at sickbay without knowing what the ship’s status was. All he or anyone in the space had heard was what little information had been passed over the ship’s communication system. But he had little time to muse on the situation, for soon after his arrival the wounded began pouring in, flooding every available space in the passageway and emergency room. The corpsmen began to direct the litter-bearers to take the wounded directly to Wards One and Two. Casualties were quickly examined by the doctor, names were taken when they could be given, and morphine was administered. Last rites were administered by Chaplain Gaughan to every man he could reach. Determination of religious affiliation was impossible in many cases, since the men were either unconscious or sedated. In a very short time, there was no space left in sickbay. The decks were covered with men in the aisles between the racks. Chaplain Gaughan wrote:

There was noise and confusion, but no disorder. In most cases, the screams were simply the unconscious
Crew members of USS Forrestal (CVA-59) fighting fire on the flight deck. (Official photograph, U.S. Navy by LT Gary A. Phillips.)

Injured personnel are evacuated from the Forrestal. (Official photograph, U.S. Navy by PH3 C. J. Wilson.)
moan of pain that even the drugs could not stifle. Time and again I was asked, “How’s it going up there?” not “How am I?” Much has been written, and will be, about the heroism and selflessness of sacrifice on the flight deck. But there was something happening here in sickbay that was truly beyond words. Death and pain seem to become a relative thing when so many share the same burden. There is no need to describe the scene in detail. There was every kind of wound and burden present.51

Both Chaplains Cooper and Gaughan assisted the doctors and corpsmen as shipmates were brought in. The chaplains helped in any way they could by moving the victims to beds or the examining table, by wiping their faces, by helping them in the racks, and by praying silently with them or leading them in brief audible prayers. After having seen everyone in sickbay, Chaplain Gaughan, on hearing that some men were trapped in the S2 compartment aft, went back there to help.

Lieutenant Commander Jack E. Six (United Presbyterian), Protestant chaplain from Oriskany, and also Chaplain Laurenzano from Constellation, arrived in the early afternoon along with doctors and corpsmen from other carriers and destroyers in the area to assist with the wounded in sickbay. This made it possible for Chaplain Cooper to visit with crewmen who were being treated in temporary sickbays on the forward mess decks and the forecastle.

Later in the evening, the living spaces on the 03 level had cooled off enough for entry, and Chaplain Gaughan proceeded there to assist in the removal of the bodies. He remembered:

There was no light, and the water was knee high. The dead were on litters and covered by blankets. The stench and the sights were ghastly. It was amazing to see the stars through the holes in the flight deck overhead. After awhile, members of the search parties were overcome by gases that had collected in the spaces. Thus, we carried out the living as well as the dead.52

The wounded and dead were then transferred to Repose in which Chaplains Coughlin and Lieutenant Commander William T. Vest (Southern Baptist) were assigned.

The time-consuming task of communication with the victims’ families back home soon began utilizing local communications, telephone, and American Red Cross facilities. Thousands of personal and official communications were handled by the chaplains’ section including those sent through Western Union, American Red Cross, Military-Affiliated Radio System, and telephone channels. The chaplains also helped in the organization and establishment of the Forrestal Memorial Education Trust, an educational assistance fund for the widows and children of the men lost in the disaster.

On 11 August, after some repair work in Subic Bay, the ship departed for Norfolk Naval Shipyard for a major overhaul. The disaster claimed more lives than any other single naval incident in the Vietnam war. The men of Forrestal united valiantly to bring under control a major holocaust which under different circumstances might have cost far more in terms of lives lost and damage sustained than that actually experienced. Chaplains Cooper and Gaughan reacted with the utmost compassion in performing their duties during the terrible ordeal. Their presence in the sickbays and their assistance in comforting the wounded while the fires were not yet under control were genuinely appreciated by the crew members to whom they ministered.

The Forrestal disaster was the most destructive of the carrier fires. The total loss entailed 134 lives, 64 aircraft, and a repair cost of $72 million.53 It was not, however, the last such fire.

On 14 January 1969, Enterprise suffered a similar experience, although it was not as extensive in terms of personnel casualties. At the end of the three-hour ordeal, twenty-eight men had died and fifteen aircraft had been destroyed.54 The challenge of ministering to the wounded and dying, helping those who were unable to help themselves, and giving assistance where needed was met equally by Commander Jack V. Crawford (United Methodist) and Chaplain Loughman. At one point during the fire, which followed an explosion on the flight deck, Chaplain Loughman carried an injured sailor weighing more than himself down a ladder and several hundred feet to a battle dressing station. After it was over, the chaplains visited the
sick at the hospitals to which they had been evacuated, conducted memorial services, and counseled those who needed to talk about their experiences in the disaster. The carrier chaplains, faced with profound physical suffering and the potential for irreparable damage to the morale of many of the men who had lost their friends, acted with compassion and calm in the sickbays and dressing stations. They provided strength and consolation for those who wished to speak about their experiences privately and conducted memorial services which assisted in binding and healing inner wounds and uniting the crew again in a common spiritual bond.

The carrier ministry was in many ways different from the usual association experienced by the chaplain assigned to a fleet unit. Conducting divine services and counseling those who required it were but the foundation upon which the carrier ministry had to be built. The sensitive issue of memorial services for pilots lost in action was eminently important both to members of the ship’s company and to the air wing. The air crewmen had to come to grips with the spectre of death or capture. They had to conquer their apprehension, get in their planes, and, day after day, fly them in attacks on targets in North Vietnam, knowing that they might not return. The carrier ministry thus required special understanding and tested the mettle of all the chaplains who were associated with it and provided several of them with the greatest challenge of their careers.

**Hospital Duty Afloat**

As the war intensified, so also did the need for facilities for treating the sick and wounded. To augment naval medical facilities ashore, the hospital ships *Repose* (AH-16) and *Sanctuary* (AH-17) were reactivated for service and sent to the waters off Vietnam. Both ships had both Catholic and Protestant chaplains assigned.

The ships were operated mainly off the coast north of Danang and had alternating schedules. The *Repose* arrived first, on 16 February 1966, with Commander Ralph G. Caldwell (Christian and Missionary Alliance), Commander William T. Vest (Southern Baptist), and Lieutenant Thomas J. Ward (Roman Catholic) aboard. Chaplain Ward became ill and was replaced briefly by Chaplain Senieur until the arrival of Commander Donald J. Rooney (Roman Catholic). Fourteen months later, on 10 April 1967, *Repose* was joined by *Sanctuary*, which was served by Commander Chester R. Weber (Disciples of Christ) and Lieutenant Commander Thomas W. Kelley (Roman Catholic).

Chaplains assigned to the hospital ships worked without definite schedules because frequent calls to flight quarters brought in wounded patients by helicopter twenty-four hours a day. Whenever flight quarters was called, both the Catholic and Protestant, chaplains were present. During the first year of service in Vietnam, *Repose* admitted 4,927 patients and performed more than 2,000 surgical operations. From April 1967 to April 1968, chaplains were called to flight quarters 2,429 times and received more than 5,900 patients. On 24 March
1967, Repose completed its 2,000th surgical operation and had admitted 635 patients for the month. On board Sanctuary the pace was equally rigorous. Sanctuary received her first patients within an hour of arriving on station in Vietnam and had 634 patients the first month.

Aboard both ships the chaplains maintained an extensive ministry to both patients and members of the hospital staff and crew. Patients in intensive care would be seen several times a day by the chaplains. Hospital duty afloat was unique in that it combined the rigors of two distinct ministries, sea duty and hospital duty. The strains and stresses of both were combined and produced a very intense but gratifying experience. One chaplain likened the duty to being in an emergency room twenty-four hours a day. In addition to American military personnel the ships also treated some civilians and also wounded NVA soldiers who had become prisoners.

During the three-year service of the two ships, twenty chaplains served aboard them.
CHAPTER FOUR
MINISTERING ASHORE

*The Tet Offensive*

Saigon during the last five months of 1967 was relatively tranquil. Apart from isolated acts of terrorism, the city was in most respects normal with its streets crowded with black market booths, young people strolling through the city parks, and Saigon-based U.S. military personnel out for a night on the town. What tensions were noticeable were those that existed between the American forces and the Saigon populace. The military community was being accused of disrupting the 2,000-year-old culture of the Vietnamese with Western ways and large amounts of money.

The depth of inter-cultural tensions during this period was noted in an article written by Van Minh entitled "Smoothing the Strained Relations," published in the *Saigon Sunday News* on 26 November 1967. He wrote:

Anti-American feelings have been simmering for a long time, and have from time to time reached explosive proportions, as during the Buddhist crisis, and during the anti-poll protest campaign. Americans on their side have been disappointed and mystified by the unfriendly attitude of many Vietnamese, and have been inclined to accuse the Vietnamese population of ungratefulness.

Such a situation was certainly not favorable to the joint anti-communist effort, and the Communists had not been idle in exploiting it to their advantage. Van Minh continued:

While communist countries carefully train their technicians before sending them to assist the North Vietnamese, almost all the Americans stationed here have not been taught to adjust themselves to local cultural and living conditions. The number of Americans who can speak Vietnamese can be counted on one's fingers; very few of them have any notion of this country's history, traditions, and patterns of reaction. Many of them have not been prepared with the local population. Vietnam is most often represented in the U.S. soldiers' minds as a land of bars, prostitutes, beggars, crooks and war-profiteers.

But Vietnam, obviously, does not consist solely of such disgraceful elements, and the Vietnamese general population is in no way happy to have them in its midst.

In many ways, it was this conflict and not the war in the northern provinces, Central Highlands, or Mekong Delta that was causing suspicion, unrest, and distrust.

It was in the midst of this semi-hostile environment that Commander Robert L. Mole (Seventh-Day Adventist) helped develop the "Personal Response Program," an educational program to provide cross-cultural value training to military personnel. Chaplain Mole was assigned by the Chief of Chaplains to assist naval personnel in II, III, and IV Corps to a better understanding of Vietnamese culture, traditions, and religion in order to help improve some of the cross-cultural tensions.

While Chaplain Mole was developing this program, the first free elections were conducted throughout the southern provinces to select the government that was to lead the nation in its struggle against Ho Chi Minh and the National Liberation Front. As a result of the elections, the people of South Vietnam selected Nguyen Van Thieu as
Devastation caused by the Tet 1968 Offensive in Saigon. (Official photograph, U.S. Navy.)
their President and Nguyen Cao Ky as Vice President. During the following period of change and transition, the Buddhist elements, which had been so strongly involved previously, were unusually quiet. It seemed that the majority of people, tired of the violence and war, was prepared to wait and see how well the new government functioned and whether it would be successful in creating a more stable life.

The deceptive calm suddenly was shattered. On 30 January 1968, in the midst of the Vietnamese New Year ceasefire, the Viet Cong began a series of vicious attacks against the major population centers of South Vietnam. Striking at more than 100 cities and towns during the Tet lunar New Year holidays, the Viet Cong and the North Vietnamese Army (NVA) left a trail of death and destruction. Saigon, a city mostly unexposed to the atrocities of war, became a city under siege with fighting extending even to the grounds of the American Embassy. The atmosphere in the city quickly turned to one of grimness and fear. The various military clubs and quarters were turned into armed bastions overnight as it became evident that the Viet Cong had infiltrated the city in great numbers. Martial law was declared, and curfews for both military personnel and civilians were imposed.

Commander Robert A. Canfield (United Methodist) wrote:

For the first time in the lives of the Saigonese, there was recognition of a war going on. In a flash of gunfire, the residents of Saigon were faced with the stark reality of communist aims and goals. A new seriousness as to what it was all about quickly pervaded the populace, civilian and military alike. The gaiety and frivolity of a city at play quickly vanished in the din of mortar and rifle fire.

The Tet offensive found Chaplain Canfield, Senior Chaplain, NAVSUPPACT, Saigon, in his room at the Splendid BOQ located on Nguyen Du Street diagonally across from the Presidential Palace. Occupying a room across the hall was Lieutenant Commander Max Eller (Southern Baptist), the Assistant Force Chaplain. Also in the Splendid BOQ at the time was Lieutenant Alvin B. Koeneman (Lutheran), a SERVGRU 3 circuit rider who was in Saigon awaiting air transportation for his return to the Philippines. Chaplain Mole was residing at the Rex BOQ and the Force Chaplain, Commander James J. Killeen (Roman Catholic), was occupying a residence near the American Embassy. Chaplain Killeen wrote of the fighting at the U.S. Embassy two hundred yards from his quarters:

At 0250 the Viet Cong blasted a hole in the wall surrounding the Embassy compound and entered the grounds. They tried (unsuccessfully) to enter and control the Embassy building. The fight that followed lasted until 0800. Imagine if you can, being in the end zone of a football field with a fight like this going on at the fifty yard line—and then imagine that you are in a building in the end zone and you didn’t know what was going on—if you can imagine this, you have an idea of what we went through for five hours. It was terrifying.

The Viet Cong attack was an attempt to throw the population into a state of mass confusion. Failing in the primary objective of instigating a general uprising of citizens and mass defections in the Vietnamese armed forces, the Viet Cong turned their Tet offensive into a hostile campaign against their own people who had rejected them. After the offensive, MACV estimated that 12,500 civilians had been killed and 22,000 had been wounded. In addition, there were almost one million homeless refugees. American losses exceeded 2,500 killed in defense of the cities.

Historically, Tet 1968 marked a new period for the people of South Vietnam. There was now little
doubt that the Viet Cong intended to topple the Thieu government by sowing disruption and creating uncertainty and fear among the people.

President Thieu, Ambassador Ellsworth Bunker, and General Westmoreland stated that Tet backfired on Hanoi. Although an initial psychological victory was won by the Viet Cong, it proved to be militarily disastrous with more than 37,000 enemy losses.\(^9\) Not only were thousands of Viet Cong slain and wounded throughout the country south of the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ), but also few military objectives were realized.

In the days following the Tet offensive, the chaplains were kept busy with their additional duties of helping the refugees through the distribution of food and clothing. Gradually the rebuilding process began. Chaplain Canfield wrote:

Big as the problem was, there seemed to be little despair seen on Saigon streets. Rebuilding was the goal and the obvious activity.

There was still great tension. In some quarters there still remained uncertainty, suspicion, and distrust. But the life stream of a government searching for her own identity continued to flow. To the Vietnamese people, who suffered through so many years of war and conflict, a faint light at the end of the tunnel seemed to emerge; dim perhaps, but bright enough to be seen.\(^10\)

**Mobile Ministry**

It was against this historical background of turmoil that the chaplains of NAVSUPPACT, Saigon ministered to their scattered flock. NAVSUPPACT, Saigon had been established to provide complete logistic support of all U.S. naval forces in
the II, III, and IV Corps areas of South Vietnam. With its widely disbursed units located from Qui Nhon in the north to An Thoi in the Gulf of Siam, it logistically supported eleven subordinate commands and detachments. In addition, there were eight support elements throughout the Mekong Delta and along the Coasts of South Vietnam. Chaplain Eugene O’Brien wrote of the breadth of the ministry:

> Our parish boundary extended from Phu Quoc Island in the Gulf of Thailand [Siam] to Qui Nhon, a distance of 400 air miles. Within this area we had responsibility for the religious and moral program of all Navy and Coast Guard personnel in the II, III, and IV Corps area comprising 80 percent of South Vietnam.

Each chaplain was assigned a definite territory of responsibility within this area. “Home-ported” at one of our larger detachments he would “make the circuit” of the smaller units within his area. A major share of his travel was via AIR COFAT, the air transportation function of Naval Support Activity, Saigon. The pilots looked forward to having the chaplain as a passenger. One of the pilots once said, “Padre, it’s always good to see you aboard. We feel you’re like a third engine. Start praying.”

Chaplain Canfield arrived in Saigon on 14 September 1967 and relieved Chaplain O’Brien as Senior Chaplain, NAVSUPPACT. Although Lieutenant Robert R. Freistedt (Lutheran), the Assistant Force Chaplain, was not officially attached to NAVSUPPACT, Saigon, he supplemented the religious coverage by sharing the circuit-riding responsibilities of the NAVSUPPACT chaplains. In September and November, Lieutenant Francis P. Burchell (American Baptist) and Lieutenant Charles J. McCoy (Roman Catholic) reported for duty at NAVSUPPACT to help with the rapidly expanding program. Chaplain Eller relieved Chaplain Freistedt as Assistant Force Chaplain in January 1968 as the scope of ministry grew rapidly.

In January 1968, an additional two billets were approved by the Chief of Naval Operations. This protected one extra chaplain who was already in country and paved the way for an additional chaplain to join the NAVSUPPACT team. In early June 1968, Lieutenant Commander William L. Jones (Southern Baptist) came on board to complete the crew of chaplains which was charged with providing religious support to widely dispersed personnel.

Since there were still too many personnel for so few chaplains to serve, it became necessary to think more in terms of area coverage than unit coverage. To fill the vacuum, Chaplain Canfield sought assistance from chaplains with the Army and the Air Force and these men responded with great enthusiasm. With their assistance, the NAVSUPPACT team was able to cover every situation that might have left Navy men without opportunities to worship God formally. The cooperation between services was an excellent example of dedication to ministry.

Two chaplains attached to COMNAVFORV but assisting in the total NAVSUPPACT effort were Chaplains Killeen and Eller, who kept the Catholic and Protestant worship services going at the NAVSUPPACT detachment, Nha Be on a consistent basis. Additionally, Lieutenant Philip D. Anderson (Lutheran), attached to Naval Air Facility (NAF), Cam Ranh Bay, also provided coverage of Protestant personnel at Naval Support Facility, Cam Ranh Bay. He was followed there by Lieutenant Glenn E. Powell (Roman Catholic) who received orders to Naval Support Facility, Cam Ranh Bay and was the first chaplain assigned solely to this facility.

NAVSUPPACT, Saigon provided logistic support of the major U.S. naval forces in South Vietnam. One such command was the Riverine Assault Force of the joint Army-Navy Mobile Riverine Force (MRF), which was designed for assault operations in a riverine environment. The primary mission of the MRF was to act as an amphibious strike force against the Viet Cong. Based on concepts and strategy developed by the French in their operations against the Viet Minh, the MRF aggressively struck at guerrilla forces throughout the Mekong Delta.

To minister to the units of the MRF, the chaplain had to utilize every available means of transportation, but even with this problem solved, he still had to employ ingenuity to accommodate
divine services with the erratic schedules of the units. As was true in other sectors of South Vietnam, the ministry had to be adapted to the military situation prevalent in the operating area, and military operations in the Mekong Delta challenged the most ambitious and resourceful of chaplains.

The MRF, which began its operations in early 1967, consisted of a force of Navy assault craft which would provide close fire support to Army units carried into combat. Unless rotated to the shore base at Dong Tam, Army infantry battalions and naval assault boat units were stationed on board a floating mobile base consisting of larger logistic support ships anchored in the rivers. From this afloat base, strikes would be mounted on enemy river traffic, supply operations, and troop concentrations. The MRF was under the operational control of NAVFORV, but it was supplied and maintained by NAVSUPPACT, Saigon.12

From its beginning in 1967 until the middle of 1969 when the MRF resources were turned over to the Vietnamese Navy, the force was served by Lieutenant Commander Richard E. MacCullagh (United Church of Christ), Lieutenant Francis J. Gill (Roman Catholic), Lieutenant Raymond W. Johnson (Lutheran), Lieutenant Nathan O. Loesch (Lutheran), and Lieutenant Rene L. Petit (Roman Catholic). To assist them in their religious coverage were four Army chaplains who were attached to the embarked Army troops of the 9th Infantry Division. These chaplains, in a united, cooperative effort, served all of the Army and Navy personnel of the MRF.

Chaplains Loesch and MacCullagh were each awarded two Bronze Stars, and Chaplain Petit was awarded one. Chaplain Johnson was the only chaplain serving with naval units in Vietnam to be awarded the Silver Star (the nation’s third highest combat award) during the conflict. However, the fact that the chaplains serving with and succeeding him were decorated with numerous Bronze Stars (the nation’s fourth highest combat award) reinforces the extremely dangerous character of the MRF ministry.

Events leading to the Silver Star award centered on an engagement with enemy troops while Chaplain Johnson was with units of River Assault Flotilla 1 in support of the Army’s 9th Infantry Division. The combined forces were battling elements of the Viet Cong’s 5th Nha Be Battalion in Long An Province during Operation Coronado. Chaplain Johnson, on board the medical aid boat, was standing by to render services needed. At midmorning, forces came under intense automatic weapon, recoilless rifle, and small-arms fire, and many wounded lay exposed to and pinned by hostile fire continuing to pour from a fortified tree line. Chaplain Johnson left the boat and ran into the battlefield in the midst of the heavy enemy fire. He then proceeded to carry the wounded back to the medical aid boat. In doing so, he encouraged volunteers to follow his example and was instrumental in recovering a large number of the helplessly wounded. Although wounded himself by shrapnel during his second trip into the field, Chaplain Johnson continued with his evacuation of the wounded. When all of the wounded were on board the aid boat, rather than having his own wounds cared for, he continued to dispense first aid and encouragement to the men. He had received medical training prior to becoming a Lutheran minister, and he employed it skillfully.

Fellow Lutheran Chaplain Loesch, who relieved Chaplain Johnson, was awarded two Bronze Stars for his gallantry while ministering to the MRF sailors. On 4 April 1968, elements of River Assault
Division 92, with Chaplain Loesch on board the parent monitor ship, were conducting a strike operation on the Ba Lai River in support of Army units. During intense fire from the shore line, one of the smaller patrol boats ahead of the monitor was raked with rocket and machine gun fire that wounded many of the personnel on board. When the monitor moved alongside the stricken patrol boat, the air was filled with gunfire and exploding rockets. Chaplain Loesch left the monitor and boarded the small patrol craft to comfort the wounded and to help the corpsman apply battle dressings. He then assisted in moving the wounded to safety.

Another NAVSUPPACT, Saigon chaplain, Chaplain McCoy, was awarded the Purple Heart for wounds he received during a mortar attack on Binh Thuy Air Force Base. He remembered:

At about 0300 I heard the unmistakable sound of incoming rounds. Putting on a flak jacket and helmet I headed for the nearest bunker. I had checked on its location the previous day. Either they had moved the bunker or it looked different at 0300 in the morning. I ran right by it and found myself alone in the open except for the twenty or thirty rounds which were hitting in the area. I flattened out on the deck, placed my arm over my helmet (so the paint wouldn’t get chipped) and waited. I could feel the pieces of shrapnel hit the helmet and was fortunate that I hadn’t been hit. It was not until I reached a bunker that the people pointed to my arm and shorts which were covered with blood. Then I realized that I had, in fact, been wounded.13

There were unique challenges and opportunities which faced a chaplain assigned as a circuit rider. The chaplain had to recognize the highly decentralized focus of the ministry in the delta. Once this
was done, it was possible to extend his ministry in varying directions with great success. Lieutenant Commander Lester L. Westling, Jr. (Episcopal), one of the circuit riders in late 1969 when the circuit was well developed, recalled:

It became evident to me immediately that the route was shaping up into focal points which could be developed as centers for the outreach by the support bases. Thus a base supporting the helicopters, PBRs, assault craft, or PCFs could be the springboard for the penetration of areas they patrolled. To depend upon reaching the men on 2-4 day patrols in the case of PBRs, or on 4-6 week staging at outposts in the 'assault craft, it would be necessary to go into the areas, visit the staging areas, and ride the patrols. In the process, it would be possible to provide a ministry to those advisory (MACV) teams which were receiving no regular chaplain visitation.

For example, Chaplain Westling’s effort was initiated with a visit to Tram Chim outpost on the Grand Canal with River Division 572. The regular routine of the visits which followed included riding the PBR outgoing patrol, spending the night in the tent or on ambush, perhaps going out on a special operation with them, holding services at the outpost for the PBR sailors and Army team members, and then returning on the next patrol. The visits were well received, and the relationship with the PBR sailors became personal and close.

There were abundant opportunities for the chaplains assigned in the II, III, and IV Corps to become involved in interesting and varied ministries. Particularly for the chaplain who ministered to the isolated units in the delta, ministry did not happen as in traditional places. It was mobile in the fullest sense of that word. Always on the move, the chaplain making his stops on the circuit often found it difficult to keep up with his mobile flock. He had to be constantly moving to conduct services, baptisms, and communions and to administer civic action programs in a climate of constant change that characterized the weather as well as military operations. Chaplain Canfield wrote of the ministry throughout the II, III, and IV Corps areas:

"I just can’t kill. I’m no killer."
"Well, what’s the difference between smoking pot and getting drunk?"
"Chaplain, I’ve got to talk to you now!"
"FIRE TO PORT! FIRE TO PORT!"
"You gettin’ short?"
"The Bible says, ‘Thou shalt not kill,’ doesn’t it?"
"You see, my wife has always resented my being gone for long periods."

"Hey, Chaplain, punch my ticket."
"CALL A DUSTOFF!"

...
“You don’t know how it is to get chewed out by your wife in a letter.”
“Aren’t all churches the same?”
“My best friend saw my wife with another guy.”
“Sat Cong. That’s the name of the game.”
“We were in SERE together, Chaplain.”
“When I get out of here, I’m going back to Michigan State.”
“PREPARE FOR FLIGHT OPERATIONS!”
“Do you want to see some pictures of my family?”

“I can’t take it any longer.”
“Have a cigar, Chaplain. My wife just had a baby.”
“You really believe in all that God-jazz?”
“POP SMOKE!”
“You like Playboy, Chaplain?”
“My wife wrote that Tommy looked at my picture and said, ‘When is Daddy coming home?”
“I need to see some ‘round eyes’ again.”

“I want to be baptized.”
“CEASE FIRE! CEASE FIRE! ALL UNITS! CEASE FIRE!”
“Here! It’s a Dear John. Read it.”
“I never prayed so much in all my life.”
“There’s more to life than chop-chop and boom-boom.”
“I wanta’ shake your hand.”
“You wanta’ see my hog book?”
“That great Boatswain’s Mate of the Sky!”
“LET’S GET OUT TO THE BIG BLUE.”
“I only knew her eight days before we were married.”
“You ever been to Bangkok, Chaplain?”
“Getting ripped away helps a lot.”
“I’d follow Mr. _____ up any river.”
“That’s all I’m waiting for, that big silver dustoff.”
“You ever been to Camp Alpha?”
“I guess I’ve really grown up over here.”

In 1969, the operational commitments of naval forces throughout the delta experienced some momentary expansion. The number of detachments, or small bases, doubled. Many were in remote areas, and transportation for the circuit-riding chaplains was a very real problem. In order to provide adequate chaplaincy coverage throughout the delta three chaplains assigned to Western Pacific Detachment, PHIBPAC were given temporary additional duty on a rotating basis to supplement the four chaplains assigned to NAVSUPPACT, Saigon. Only with this additional assistance was the force chaplain able to reach all personnel on a fairly regular basis, since in-country manpower ceilings precluded the allocation of additional chaplain billets to NAVSUPPACT, Saigon.

By 1970, however, in connection with U.S. withdrawal and redeployment, a most vigorous training program was put in operation whereby Vietnamese Navy personnel were trained to take over tasks formerly done by U.S. personnel. Gradually, U.S. Navy assets, including boats and bases, were turned over to the Vietnamese Navy as a part of the Vietnamization of the war. In June of 1969, MRF had already become a Vietnamese operation. As this turnover program progressed, there was a marked reduction in U.S. personnel and by late 1970, the requirement for chaplains was considerably reduced.

Ministry in II Corps

From February through July 1967, Lieutenant John M. Collins III (Episcopal) was the only Navy chaplain stationed in the II Corps area. Early in August, ‘the situation changed with the arrival of Chaplain Anderson at NAF, Cam Ranh Bay. There were three areas in II Corps occupied by U.S. naval units: Cam Ranh Bay, Nha Trang, and Qui Nhon. Cam Ranh Bay was the largest single installation. The Naval Support Facility consisted of several commands and detachments, and the number of personnel aboard the base increased constantly, so that near the end of 1967 the number was 750. In Nha Trang, thirty miles north of Cam Ranh Bay, 120 men were stationed at the Inshore Undersea Warfare Group (IUWG) unit, and about twenty men were stationed at the Coastal Surveillance Center (CSC). More than 100 miles to the north, another NAVSUPPACT detachment and IUWG. Unit and CSC were located at Qui Nhon, and about 600 men were assigned to these units.

In II Corps, all the U.S. naval units were located in areas near major airports. Coastal patrol boats also provided good means of transportation
daily between Cam Ranh and Nha Trang. NAVSUPPACT, Saigon ran flights north and south on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays with scheduled stops at all three II Corps areas. NAVSUPPACT, Danang covered the same route by air on Tuesdays and Thursdays and naval personnel had precedence on these flights. The U.S. Air Force also had scheduled flights daily between all these locations. Transportation, therefore, was not a major problem for chaplains, although traveling from one place to another often took up entire days. As an example, until the arrival of Chaplain Anderson, Chaplain Collins’ weekly schedule involved the following:

Sunday—Conduct services at Cam Ranh Bay, including services aboard naval ships in the harbor.


Tuesday—Ride to airport with postal clerk about 0715. Fly to Cam Ranh Bay aboard Danang Market Time flight (depart Qui Nhon 0830, arrive Cam Ranh Bay about 1030). Ride bus from NAF to Support Detachment base.

Wednesday—Prepare for Sunday services. Write sermon. Visit officers, shops, sick bay, naval personnel in Air Force hospital, counsel, etc.

Thursday—Embark on 0700 boat (PCF) for Nha Trang. About 0930, PCF docks at IUWG site pier. Announce over speaker system that chaplain is available. Visit offices and shops. Counsel. Visit CSC headquarters (transportation provided by IUWG). Return to IUWG site and remain there overnight.

Friday—Embark on PCF about 1030 for return trip to Cam Ranh Bay. Arrive Cam Ranh Bay about 1200. Work in chaplain’s office Friday afternoon.

Saturday—Visit other units in Cam Ranh Bay area (NAF and IUWG). Consult Postal Services Officer concerning ships due in on Sunday. (Also whenever possible.)

Upon the arrival of the NAF chaplain, this schedule was revised. Chaplain Anderson conducted the Protestant services at Cam Ranh Bay on Sundays, and Chaplain Collins flew to Qui Nhon on Fridays, conducted Sunday services at the support detachment base and IUWG site, and
flew back to Saigon on Monday. Chaplain Collins was assigned to NAVSUPPACT, Saigon and served the last six months of his tour in II Corps. When Chaplain Anderson arrived in Cam Ranh Bay in August 1967, Chaplain Collins had almost completed his tour in Vietnam and was preparing to depart for his next assignment. Chaplain Collins reported in summary:

At Cam Ranh Bay, the chaplain has been regarded as a regular member of the Support Detachment staff, often consulted about emergencies or asked to assist in problems involving the men. There is a Quonset now being used as the chaplain’s office and chapel. The support here has been very good. A regular chapel building is scheduled to be constructed between 1 October and 1 December 1967. Some of the equipment ordered for the chapel has already arrived. In the meantime, the base carpentry shop has constructed a beautiful pulpit and altar at my request. The interior of the Quonset has been decorated and a fine chapel atmosphere has been created.\(^\text{18}\)

Because of the growing number of personnel at the two facilities in Cam Ranh Bay, it was decided that other arrangements had to be made for coverage of Qui Nhon and Nha Trang. Contact was made with the Army at Qui Nhon and Nha Trang, and they willingly cooperated by supplying the needed services. Frequent visits to those two areas were still made by the force chaplain and by the senior chaplain, NAVSUPPACT, Saigon. The other Navy chaplains could then focus their efforts on Cam Ranh Bay, which had the largest concentration of naval personnel in II Corps.

NAF, Cam Ranh Bay and its tenant commands totaled in excess of 1,200 men. The Naval Support Facility and its tenant commands, located fifteen miles to the south, had grown to a total of 1,000 men. A small harbor defense unit consisting of fifty men was located at the mouth of Cam Ranh Bay. In addition to these 2,250 men permanently assigned to Cam Ranh Bay, Chaplain Anderson called on Navy personnel receiving care in the local Air Force hospital. The men in the hospital arrived from many points throughout Vietnam. A personal vehicle had been provided Chaplain Anderson upon his arrival in Cam Ranh Bay, and this permitted him to visit all the men on a regular basis.

Since November 1967, worship services at NAF, Cam Ranh Bay had been held in chapel space provided within one of the barracks. Office space was provided for the chaplain and his clerk beside the worship area. In August 1968, construction was begun on an "A-Frame" type chapel which was to be completed by the end of 1968. The chapel was eighty feet long by forty feet wide and had a seating capacity of more than 150. In addition, a small balcony, sacristy, chaplains’ offices, reception room, and discussion-fellowship room were included in the plans.

Divine services at the Naval Support Facility were initially held in a Quonset hut. In January 1968, the first service was held in the new chapel-theater building. Arrangements were proceeding to construct a worship center at one end of this building in order that the worship area could be screened off when various United Services Organization (U.S.O.) shows were being presented. Chaplain Anderson reported:

Cooperation and support are the rule and not the exception in Cam Ranh Bay. In addition to counseling referrals, the commanding and executive officers of the many units warmly welcome the chaplain. Many actively participate in the chapel program, and none have been hostile or unreceptive to the concern and counsel of the chaplain.\(^\text{19}\)

In September 1968, Chaplain Powell reported to the Naval Support Facility, enhancing the denominational and counseling coverage. Together with the Protestant NAF chaplain, complete coverage could then be realized for the NAVFORV personnel in II Corps. It was requested by the senior chaplain at NAVSUPPACT, Saigon that the two chaplains in Cam Ranh Bay be permitted to set up a visitation schedule to the naval detachments at Qui Nhon and Nha Trang. The commanding officers at NAF and the Naval Support Facility were in complete accord with the idea, and the ministry in II Corps was well established and remained that way until the phase-out of U.S. troops in late 1971.
Force Chaplain

As the war in Vietnam expanded, so did the responsibilities of the force chaplain of COMNAVFORV. The early force chaplains had laid an excellent foundation for their successors who oversaw the increase in chaplains and administrative matters that went with the buildup of forces.

There were three primary roles in which the force chaplain functioned. The first was concerned with the welfare and morale of all Navy personnel scattered throughout the country. The second was concerned with his role as supervisor of all chaplains under the operational control of COMNAVFORV, and the third related to his role as chaplain for Saigon-based Navy personnel.

In his first role, the force chaplain had to visit practically every naval installation in the delta and along the coast to the northernmost unit at Cua Viet, about five miles south of the DMZ. Inasmuch as Saigon was close to the delta, and considering the mobile and decentralized nature of the operations in the delta, his visits to units in IV Corps were probably more frequent than visits to units in I, II, and III Corps. These visits allowed for a first-hand observation of the conditions under which naval personnel lived and worked. Getting to these bases often involved travel by river patrol boat, helicopter, or fixed wing aircraft. At each base, in addition to meeting the officer in charge, he would make it a point to look in on the barracks area, the galley and mess hall, and whatever recreational facilities were available and then talk with as many enlisted personnel as happened to be in the area at the time of his visit. This informal personal contact was both rewarding and informative. Riding with boat crews afforded an excellent opportunity to get acquainted with these men.

In his supervisory role, the force chaplain worked closely with the senior chaplains at Saigon and Danang who were coordinating the chaplains’ activities in their areas. At peak involvement in 1968, there were thirty-two chaplains with naval units. Through their quarterly reports, through correspondence, and through visits, the force chaplain obtained a good understanding of the work they were doing.

Late in 1968, NAVSUPPACT, Saigon moved its headquarters from Saigon to Nha Be, about ten miles south of Saigon. In his third role, the force chaplain, Captain James S. Ferris (United Methodist), and the assistant force chaplain, Commander John P.X. Bergeur (Roman Catholic), were the only Navy chaplains functioning as chaplains in the Saigon area. Commander Earl W. Fedje (United Methodist) was located in Saigon as Personal Response Coordinator, which precluded his involvement in routine chaplaincy functions. Commander Ralph W. Hopkins (United Methodist) had recently relieved Captain John D. Vincer (Episcopal) at MACV and was also located in the Saigon area, but his efforts were restricted to the requirements of the MACV staff. There were a sizeable number of personnel serving other commands in the Saigon area. Invariably, all of these personnel would utilize the force chaplain’s office when there was a need for a chaplain’s services.

All personnel desiring to extend their tours in Vietnam had to be interviewed by a chaplain as did all personnel desiring to marry a Vietnamese national. Much counseling was done in connection with personal problems (usually involving unstable marital situations), and frequently a Red Cross message required the attention of the chaplain. Divine services were held each Sunday at the
NAVFORV compound, and visits were made to the local military hospitals. The billet for an assistant force chaplain, in addition to accommodating those of a different religious persuasion, allowed one chaplain to be in the office while the other was out in the field.

**Personal Response Program**

The Personal Response Program mentioned earlier, to which Chaplain Mole was the first chaplain assigned, began originally with the Marines in the summer of 1965. The Commanding General, Fleet Marine Force, Pacific requested that the Chief of Chaplains provide a program of cross-cultural training for Marines in Vietnam, which would promote better personal relationships and understanding between the Marines and South Vietnamese. The program was first established and put into effect with the Marines in III Corps. Several chaplains after Chaplain Mole served with the Marines as Personal Response officers, among them, Lieutenant Commander Otto Schneider (United Church of Christ), Commander Neil M. Stevenson (United Presbyterian), and Lieutenant Commander Leroy E. “Skip” Vogel (Lutheran).

The Personal Response Program was extended to the Navy in 1967 when Chaplain Mole returned to Vietnam. He was assigned as the program director and was attached to NAVSUPPACT, Saigon. This Navy program was sponsored there by Rear Admiral Edwin Hooper, Commander Service Force, Pacific (COMSERVPAC). Admiral Hooper described the objectives for the Personal Response Program to be the following:

a. Assemble, organize and evaluate information pertaining to the religious belief and value systems of indigenous citizens with special emphasis given to the Mekong Delta region.

b. Formulate, validate and administer questionnaires to military personnel and indigenous citizens to identify positive and negative cross-cultural interactions, and devise a program and communications strategy for the project.

c. Prepare and distribute programs and presentation materials, background information and training aids to assist personnel in understanding why the peoples of the Delta think, feel and act as they do.

While the program operated admirably and efficiently under much the same premises as the Marine program, it did not receive implementation Navy-wide in Vietnam until 1968 when Rear Admiral Elmo R. Zumwalt, Jr. was assigned as COMNAVFORV. His arrival coincided with the first stage of massive American withdrawal from Vietnam, and the resulting situation provided a favorable environment for wider implementation of the Personal Response Program. Unlike the Marines, who were simply being withdrawn from their positions in the North, the Navy was forced to adopt a slower pace of transition and turnover, one consistent with the President’s policy of Vietnamization.

During the fall of 1968, following the presidential elections, it became necessary to adopt a new attitude with regard to naval policy in Vietnam and greatly accelerate the rate at which the U.S. Navy turned over both assets and responsibilities to the Vietnamese Navy. In the face of this
challenge, it became apparent that the existing system for formal training of Vietnamese Navy personnel would be too heavily taxed to prepare in a reasonable time the large number of personnel who would be required to man and maintain this equipment. The standard and most immediate solution appeared to be on-the-job training, but since so much of the material involved river patrol craft, this necessitated the development of a plan in which a large number of Vietnamese Navy personnel would actually be phased into U.S. Navy crews for training. Then, as they were qualified, they would relieve U.S. Navy personnel aboard. When the last Vietnamese crew member became qualified, the craft could then be turned over to the Vietnamese Navy.

Entitled Accelerated Turnover to the Vietnamese (ACTOV), this program required a more sophisticated approach to ease the transition and turnover than simply an English language course for the Vietnamese. Personal Response seemed to be the ideal solution for this unique situation, and after Chaplain Mole’s groundwork, Chaplain Fedje was tasked with formulating a plan to fit the needs of ACTOV. Chaplain Fedje had arrived in Vietnam in September 1968, one month prior to Admiral Zumwalt, and had begun development of the Personal Response Project in IV Corps based on the approach that Lieutenant Commander Richard A. McGonigal (United Presbyterian) was employing with the Marines in I Corps. He also drew heavily on material provided by Dr. Robert Humphrey, the Army’s consultant in Thailand, and during this period spent a great deal of time in indoctrination. In the meantime, however, Chaplain Fedje was hard at work developing the project in country. These efforts were soon rewarded by examples of cross-cultural training successes which more than confirmed the validity of the Personal Response philosophy.

In the six months after he first learned of ACTOV, Chaplain Fedje formed nine experience orientation teams which provided coverage to over 9,000 U.S. Navy personnel, and six months after he sent his first team for initial training, the Personal Response orientations reached 12,000 personnel. While the training went on, it was supported by local attitude surveys to determine prob-
lem areas, and after these were isolated the teams went to work on orientation.

Chaplain Fedje was relieved by Commander Maurice E. Roberts (United Presbyterian). The program continued as Commander William R. Samuel (Disciples of Christ) relieved Chaplain Roberts in August 1970. Chaplain Samuel took over a program heavily oriented toward American military withdrawal. He was affected by new decisions to limit chaplain control of Personal Response, and much of the program at this time was placed under the direction of line officers. This notwithstanding, Chaplain Samuel and his teams gave emphasis to the orientation of incoming personnel and assisted in the establishment of a Personal Response Project in the Vietnamese Navy.

The last chaplain to serve in the role of Personal Response officer with the naval forces in Vietnam was Lieutenant Commander Wayne A. Stewart (Southern Baptist). He served in that position from June 1971 until May 1972. Chaplain Stewart worked with the Vietnamese in the Personal Response Program and, faced with a dwindling American presence, provided Personal Response orientation to incoming AID personnel. Both Chaplain Stewart and Chaplain Samuel extended Personal Response training to areas that involved race relations among U.S. military personnel, where by now significant gains had been made.

Personal Response eventually became a line function, and its philosophy was extended to cover both military and domestic situations. It is fortunate that this happened so that it could be further disseminated among the troops.

It was understood and promulgated as a program to assist in developing constructive relationships and communication among persons based upon their equivalent worth and dignity as human beings. By 1972, Personal Response had outgrown the administrative relationship with the Navy Chaplain Corps due to wide implementation. Eventually, the program became so encompassing in scope that it extended into every area of the Navy. The Chaplain Corps was gratefully seen as the advance researcher and originator of a program the principles of which came to be recognized as central to the understanding of human relationships. No longer a project to which a few chaplains were assigned, Personal Response had become a part of every Navy person’s training. Of the implementation, spread, and influence of Personal Response, Captain W. Warren Newman (Disciples of Christ) who served with the program in Vietnam during 1969 wrote:

It was to grow rapidly, finding official acceptance and staffing in a number of major Navy and Marine Corps commands and utilization by several Army and Air Force unit commanders. Personnel were trained prior to deployment, in country, and at key training commands. Role-reversal experiences enabled both Americans and Vietnamese to see themselves, usually for the first time. Incidents were analyzed and discussed to determine what went wrong and to prepare people for more positive future interactions. The religious, cultural and historical foundations of behavioral differences were explored so that they became understandable and natural, rather than strange and perplexing. Basic language training helped people to get a “feel” for each other. A wide variety of educational methods were used to begin to replace negative attitudes and actions with mutual understanding, appreciation and respect. The results were dramatic and measurable wherever Personal Response was allowed to operate. It made a difference that was exciting and contagious. A lot of people were suddenly able to see that there were a number of things more important about Vietnam than just leaving it.

Garrison Chaplaincy

The nature of the military establishment in the areas under the supervision of NAVSUPPACT, Saigon and NAVSUPPACT, Danang provided the opportunity for a great amount of interchange between the Americans and their Vietnamese counterparts. Because many of the servicemen were assigned to a garrison installation such as the large enlisted Camp Tien Sha outside Danang, there was frequent and sustained contact with their Vietnamese counterparts. For the circuit-riding chaplain, countless instances occurred which presented openings for civic action assistance, and many chaplains became deeply involved with and committed to a particular civic action program.

Opportunities for civic action existed throughout
Vietnam, and the promotion of these projects assisted immeasurably in bridging the cultural gap which existed between the Americans and the Vietnamese. For example, through a naval advisory team, Lieutenant Karl D. Nordstrom (Lutheran) of NAVSUPPACT, Danang became aware of a refugee village to the south of Danang where about 10,000 of these transient people lived. The chaplain visited the village where he would ultimately become deeply involved in humanitarian efforts. He reported:

The conditions of the people there were appalling, and they were having trouble getting aid to help themselves. I wrote numerous appeals to a variety of people back home, and $1260.00 was sent to help the village. Soap was purchased for a cost of $400.00 and the remainder was used to purchase material, labor, and equipment for building an infirmary . . . . This was acquired working through the Vietnamese Navy located at the “Junk Base” right next to the village and its commanding officer, LTJG Toan. It has been a very exciting thing and will be a wonderful feeling to see something built with the help from both Americans and Vietnamese in caring for the health and welfare of the people of this almost forgotten village.25

Duty with the NAVSUPPACTs included not only the constantly changing ministry of the circuit-riding chaplains in the delta but also the self-contained and stable ministry of the garrison and hospital chaplains. Chaplain Nordstrom found himself a pastor at Camp Tien Sha, the quarters area for the great majority of the enlisted personnel of NAVSUPPACT, Danang. He noted that with an average of 4,300 enlisted men living in the camp and an average of 200 officers in the BOQ, the camp served more or less as a hotel. One of his greatest problems was the vastness of the camp, which affected many in the military community by emphasizing their remoteness. Commander William J. Clardy (Southern Baptist) experienced a similar reaction to the conditions of a large-scale ministry oriented around a static military community. He wrote:

Unlike most other chaplains in Vietnam, my job has been an in-camp pastoral ministry . . . a chapel-centered program right in the middle of nearly 7,000 men. Not too unlike stateside garrison duty, except for thousands of miles and circumstances you just don’t find back home.26

Although the ministry at Tien Sha appeared to be in a representative garrison situation, it offered infinite opportunities for constructive work and counseling, opportunities common to chaplains operating in a war zone and in many cases the product of this unique war. Chaplain Clardy reported:

What a ministry! Whereas the stateside chaplain or pastor has more or less his own flock, those who are involved in the ministry only because they choose to go there instead of somewhere else, I have had everybody involved in my religious ministry; there has been nowhere else for them to go, you might say. The religious program has had to meet a general need but at the same time be as personal as possible, meeting as many of the varied individual needs as there were backgrounds.

Also involved in this full-time ministry were a heavy counseling load; through the week, evening happenings in the chapel; a day every two weeks or so relieving the NSA Hospital Protestant chaplain so he could get away from it all (which always brought me, all of a sudden, very close to the war); correspondence with parents, gift givers, and other interesting people all over the world; and no days off. And then there were those who found trouble adjusting to their new environment. Most in Vietnam wear their emotions on their sleeves; it is very easy to cry, easy to laugh. Men worked hard and played hard for the most part. Everything that happened to them could be filled with meaning and significance. This, for many, is where religion entered the scene. They discovered that they were either religious or they had experienced only some second hand thing in the past that meant little to them now. They were discovering their real selves, and some did not like what they were finding out. Many times I was glad I was in the right place at the right time to say a word on God’s behalf.27

On garrison duty in Danang, men occasionally had the time to stand aside and think about the war, the “why” of the United States’ being there. Their jobs, in a way distant from the war itself, offered opportunity to question and to reason. The
Ministering Ashore

chaplain had to be more than just a practiced listener in matters of war and peace, hate and love, 'good and bad. He had to be pastor, father, brother, and friend. The ministry encompassed the entire spectrum of human relationships and problems.

Counseling has always been an important aspect of the chaplain’s ministry; in Vietnam, it played a major role. Chaplains dealt with all of the problems that these sailors struggled with—and not only problems, but also guidance in regard to marriage, education, the U.S. involvement in Vietnam, and a myriad of other issues. Chaplain Loesch aptly summarized:

One man finds it tough to welcome a child into his family from 12,000 miles away, another is threatened with divorce; others have wives and families who don’t write; a few are depressed; some complain about lack of liberty; some question our nation’s involvement in Vietnam. For some, drinking is a problem . . . . The chaplain lives the same life, takes the same risks, has the same hang-ups with homesickness and fear. He learns with his men that fear is neutral, i.e., if fear leads to distrust in God, it’s demonic; but if it leads to dependence upon God, it’s redemptive.  

Throughout their tours of duty, the NAVSUPPACT chaplains were also deeply involved in the sensitive but rewarding ministry of hospital visitation. The evacuation hospitals were widely dispersed, but at one time or another the chaplains visited them all, including the 3rd, 17th, 24th, and 93rd Field Hospitals in the II Corps area, the 6th Convalescent Hospital in Cam Ranh Bay, and the 36th Field Evacuation Hospital in Vung Tau. At the Danang hospital, Chaplains Paulson and Pepera began the practice of making sure every patient was seen at least once daily, with those in intensive care units being seen’ two or three times daily. This practice was continued by the chaplains who followed them.

As the war effort increased, so did the number of casualties. By early 1968, NAVSUPPACT, Danang’s station hospital was admitting more than 2,500 patients monthly, and the walking wounded were often not even counted. Sometimes the helicopters had to maintain a holding pattern over the landing pad while they waited for their turn to unload wounded. In May 1968, Commander Eugene T. Flatley (Roman Catholic), Senior Chaplain, NAVSUPPACT, Danang, shared his typical experiences in the hospital ministry:

There was a steady influx of hot, tired, dirty, sick, wounded but brave young men being admitted. Although these men were no longer able to be in battle, many of them worried about their buddies still in the field and begged to be patched up and returned to assist their friends. Some of them thanked God for their safety, others took it for granted that their lives were spared again.

As one of the Marines was lying on a stretcher in Receiving, awaiting his turn to be taken to X-ray, it was difficult yet wonderful for me to be asked by him to read a passage from the scriptures to him. This wonderful lad pulled his New Testament from a pocket of his torn and tattered uniform and asked for a reading from St. Mark’s gospel. These young lads may not be great saints, but they are good, fine red-blooded Americans.

Visiting patients who had become the casualties...
of war and passing words of encouragement to the ill, the chaplains wrote of being impressed by the indomitable spirit of the young American military men. It was a general feeling that when chaplains had had a hard, frustrating day and nothing seemed to be going right, a visit to the hospital brought renewal.

The ministry of chaplains ashore, just like its counterpart at sea, was varied and intense. Only the environment was different. The problems and pains, as well as the joys and pleasures, were much the same. Wherever the chaplain went, he found spiritual needs to be met and an enthusiasm to have them met.
CHAPTER FIVE
TAPERING TO DISENGAGEMENT

The Beginning of the End

In June 1969, President Nixon began to carry out his campaign promise to conduct a slow withdrawal of troops from Vietnam. On 8 June 1969, he met with President Thieu on Midway Island, and then announced that he was ordering a gradual withdrawal of American forces. By the end of August 1969, more than 25,000 troops had been withdrawn, and an additional 100,000 were taken out over the next year. 

In May 1969, Sa Dec was the jumping off point for circuit-riding chaplains, and the gradual but steady tapering of American naval involvement was reflected there early. Additional responsibilities for chaplaincy coverage had included the Navy personnel at An Long, Chau Doc, Vinh Long, and Ben Tre. In due course, changes were made in the assets assigned to these locations, and almost all Navy craft left in August 1969. Although chaplains were personally as busy as before, the steady decline in troops was seen everywhere. For example, during periods of heavy activity in November and early December 1969, as many as six river assault divisions worked out of Vinh Gia, and a chaplain could have counted as many as forty-five boats lined up at Vinh Gia during the day. But by May 1970, almost all of these were gone. The outpost was occupied only by a skeleton crew to defend it.

Another change occurred along the border in mid-August 1969 when River Division 532 was transferred from Sa Dec to Ha Tien. Chaplain Westling remembered:

I requested and received Ha Tien as an addition to my route because I knew the men, and because transportation from An Thoi had been difficult for the few chaplains we had at that time. The conditions at Ha Tien were primitive, the rain and mud heavy, and I felt that after moving two-thirds of the way out the Vinh Te Canal, I might as well go all the way. It was a privilege to share the hardships . . . . The action was not heavy, but the patrol area was new, and sixty men tried to live in tents in the mud and maintained their mess with only a fifty-five gallon drum of charcoal over which to cook and had no fresh water for washing.

Sa Dec was the original home for the chaplain on the circuit. In the beginning, it was at the geographic center of the activity on the central delta route. With the shift of the balance of activities commencing in September 1969, the decommissioning of the MRF, the closing of the NAVSUPPACT detachment at My Tho, and the use of Army chaplains at the NAVSUPPACT detachment at Dong Tam, the use of Sa Dec as the chaplains’ home port became unnecessary.

Another circuit, the “Giant Slingshot” circuit, consisted of Logistic Support Bases (LSBs) Dong Tam, Ben Luc, and My Tho; Advanced Tactical Support Bases Ben Keo, Go Da Hau, Tra Cu, Tuyen Nhon, and Mobile Repair Base II; Askari (ARL-30), Krishna (ARL-38), APL 30; and two Seabee detachments. Seven of these sites were accessible by vehicle while the others were reached either by boat or helicopter. Weekly services were held by Lieutenant H. Thomas Hiers (Southern Baptist) and Lieutenant Peter R. Pilarski (Roman
Dong Tam Mobile Riverine Base. (Official photograph, U.S. Navy.)

Naval Support Activity Detachment at My Tho. (Official photograph, U.S. Navy.)
Catholic) at six of these locations, and the other sites were scheduled for coverage every other week. During visits to remote areas, several days were spent on location. Dong Tam, as the largest facility on the circuit, was chosen as home base.

A drug awareness program was begun with the physician and chaplain as resource personnel. Films supplied by NAVSUPPACT Senior Chaplain, Commander Ralph G. Caldwell (Christian and Missionary Alliance), were used to supplement a regular program of informal discussions and lectures. English classes for Vietnamese officers were begun at the request of Commander Dong, Deputy Commander of LSB Dong Tam, and Chaplain Hiers taught these classes temporarily until regular instructors were recruited.

Civic action was almost always a part of the Navy chaplain’s activities, and this work continued during the period of reduction in forces. Two orphanages at nearby My Tho, one Protestant and one Catholic, were “adopted” by the Dong Tam base. Chaplain Pilarski spent long hours in attention to these institutions. Food, clothing and school supplies sent by churches of servicemen were contributed to these orphanages, as well as scrap lumber, paint, cement blocks, and labor.

Lieutenant Patrick A. Garzione (Roman Catholic) relieved Chaplain Pilarski in March 1971, but illness soon forced him back to the States for surgery and left Chaplain Hiers alone on the circuit. Catholic coverage on this circuit suffered until late April except at Dong Tam where the Army chaplain agreed to add one more mass to his Sunday schedule. At the request of the force chaplain, all Catholics at other bases were encouraged to either attend Vietnamese churches or come by his office for mass when in Saigon.

Further reduction in chaplaincy coverage occurred when the MRF “Green Fleet” lost its Army and Navy chaplains and River Flotilla 1 in Dong Tam was disestablished. Chaplain Westling, circuit rider, envisioned the conversion of the MRF office on the waterfront into a chapel. He and another officer mobilized about twenty-five men of the detachment, and the chapel was completed, furnished, and topped with a cross-tower by Christmas. He reported:

In mid-April, I made my last visit to Dong Tam, as the work there is to be coordinated now under the chaplains from Ben Luc. USS Krishna (ARL-38) received visits and services near Dong Tam on 12-13 September and 9-10 October 1969, and USS Askari (ARL-30) received services when located there 8-9 April 1970.

The role of the Americans in Vietnam was in rapid flux. Thus, the role of the chaplain also had to be in rapid flux if chaplains were to serve as they should. With the exception of the support bases, all operating units were turned over to the South Vietnamese Navy. The potentially forgotten man now was the American advisor who served with them. He worked longer hours than he did with his U.S. Navy unit, suffered numerous communication frustrations, experienced isolation and loneliness, and learned the difficulties of lack of familiar conveniences. To reach him meant that the chaplain would still have to cover the same vast distances, spend time where he went, and not measure his effectiveness by the number of services he held when he got there or the number of men who might attend. Chaplain Hiers wrote:

The faces and areas were different but the men were the same. Loneliness, fear, anxiety, and boredom were becoming the real enemies. Reduction in U.S. Navy operational commitments had left many men with time on their hands and an increasing sense of frustration over their role as advisors.

In May 1971, Chaplain Hiers was sent to Nha Be to work with the recently established Vietnam Drug Amnesty Program. In an attempt to help Navy personnel who had drug problems, Chaplain Hiers served as the senior counselor, training and supervising others who, along with medical personnel, sought to help these men. At the end of his time at the Drug Rehabilitation Center, Chaplain Hiers wrote:

This experience not only demonstrated the immense resources of the Navy which can be utilized when needed, but also the concern for its members. I have been impressed with the ability and concern of line officers, on all levels, to organize and implement a viable program in such a unique field as drug rehabilitation. Experience here has proven that young men who want
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To be rehabilitated from the use of drugs can be helped in a military environment.6

Civic Action

There was much that could be accomplished in the field of civic action in every area of Vietnam. During 1970-71, the pastoral care of men in combat was the chief concern in the area along the Cambodian border. In the central and lower delta, however, there was more time available during the chaplain’s visits, and the men of the Navy units were more free to devote their energies and talents to civic action. In these areas of Vietnam, one of the greatest challenges presented to the Americans was the encouragement of pacification through assistance with self-help projects in the Vietnamese communities.

It was not the chaplain’s function to assume the position of civic action officer of any unit, but where commands were willing, the chaplain often acted as an advisor in suggesting projects and encouraging them to completion on subsequent visits. In addition to the obvious help they gave to Vietnam and her people, these projects proved to be great assets to morale for the men and provided them close contact with the local people. Throughout the war and in every portion of South Vietnam, orphanages, schools, and churches were helped by American servicemen. Everywhere the servicemen were gathered, there were special humanitarian projects in progress. Working closely with civic leaders and missionaries, chaplains were able to distribute needed aid.

For example, the Sa Dec Catholic Orphanage was one such program that was close to the lives of the Navy men at Sa Dec. Regular visits to the children and providing supplies of clothing from the United States, soap and medicines, as well as wood for the kitchen fires, had been an ongoing project. Of special interest was the provision of Japanese formula milk during an epidemic of intestinal illness in January 1970 which claimed the lives of a large number of the infants. Catholic Alms funds were drawn from NAVSUPPACT, Saigon, and the milk was purchased for the orphanage.

My Tho, with billets in the midst of the city, was another obvious field for Navy civic action. Two institutions, the Catholic Orphanage and Old People’s Home and the Protestant Orphanage and School, were helped. NAVSUPPACT gifts of $200.00 were sent to each of the two institutions, and the men of the NAVSUPPACT detachment wrote to their families and hometown newspapers asking for lightweight children’s clothing, toys, and other supplies for distribution during the regular visits of the men and of the chaplain. On 16 August, men of NAVSUPPACT and River Division 572 answered an appeal for help with 105 men and shell boxes for the construction of bunkers and hog troughs at the Catholic Orphanage and Old People’s Home. They transported the building materials with 2 1/2-ton trucks from Dong Tam artillery sites. Chaplain Westling reflected:

A strong relationship of Christian love and understanding was built in My Tho with Sister Joseph and with Pastor Ha and his family and with the children and elderly people whom they assist; and the men of the Navy in My Tho learned a great deal about Vietnam through their association with these people.7

The men of Garrett County (LST-786) enjoyed a close relationship with the Convent of the Good Shepherd in Vinh Long since they had rescued the Sisters from the action of Tet 1968. Several projects were undertaken at their school and orphanage in Vinh Long, and the men repaired war damage and reconstructed a room for vocational sewing classes.8

Wherever chaplains were, they were involved in helping with civic action. The special projects initiated by them far exceeded the number of chaplains present, and through their efforts they broadened their ministry to the servicemen to whom they were assigned.

Continued Reduction

As 1970 began, troop reduction continued throughout Vietnam. Chaplaincy activity in II Corps was reduced as Lieutenant Michael V. Summers (Southern Baptist) relieved Lieutenant
Samir J. Habiby (Episcopal) and assumed full responsibility as Protestant chaplain of NAF, Cam Ranh Bay. Until mid-April 1970, he served as the only Protestant Navy chaplain in II Corps. In April, Lieutenant Commander Eli H. Campbell, Jr. (Southern Baptist) reported as Protestant chaplain for Constructon Battalion Maintenance Unit 302 (CBMU 302) at the Naval Support Facility and assumed Protestant responsibility for that facility, thus eliminating the need for coverage by the NAF chaplain.

The reduction of Navy units and continued turnover of Navy assets to the Vietnamese Navy in II Corps reached the point where chaplaincy coverage was largely confined to parent commands, with additional coverage as necessary for counseling services. Nevertheless, in January 1970, plans were drawn for a new 150-seat chapel to be constructed at the NAF. A Seabee team from CBMU-302 began construction in late January 1970. The chapel dedication service was conducted on 25 June 1970, and 27 September, when construction was completed, the first Catholic mass and Protestant service were conducted.

In an effort to improve morale and to provide more diversified forms of recreation for the men, the Red Cross representatives visited the different departments and tenant commands on a weekly basis. This well-received program was supervised and scheduled by the chaplain’s office. The reduction in responsibilities enabled Chaplain Summers to build his program more fully. In the interest of morale and in order to provide a better cultural understanding, he conducted weekly tours to the My Ca Monastery near the NAF. He secured transportation, obtained permission to pass through the checkpoints, and coordinated the tours with the Catholic priests and the monks at the monastery. A tour was also conducted on Binh Ba Island, giving personnel the opportunity to witness the living and working conditions of their counterparts in the Vietnamese Navy.

The NAF chaplain’s participation in civic action was largely confined to liaison between the Cam Ranh City Christian Orphanage, the Tan Binh Orphanage, and the NAF civic action officer. Civic action at the Tan Binh Orphanage was by this time limited to the role of advising the NAF civic action officer and NAF personnel involved in helping support the orphanage.

Lieutenant Commander Edwin A. Gates (Southern Baptist) reported aboard NAF in November 1970 as a relief for Chaplain Summers. Chaplain Gates served during the major turnover of the facility to the Vietnamese and was the last chaplain to serve a full term there. In November 1971, Lieutenant Gerald L. Cook (Southern Baptist), who had been circuit-riding in IV Corps, relieved Chaplain Gates. Under Chaplain Cook the turnover was completed and he left the facility in January 1972.

On 30 November 1970, Commander Walter "B" Clayton, Jr. (Southern Baptist) reported to NAVSUPPACT; Saigon for duty as senior chaplain. His office was located at the LSB, Nha Be. By this time, the assignment involved the coordinating and supervising of the Navy circuit-riding chaplains in all four military regions of South Vietnam. At this time, there were only eleven circuit-riding chaplains in-country. On 16 May 1971, due to staff consolidation, Chaplain Clayton ceased to be Senior Chaplain, NAVSUPPACT, Saigon and became an assistant to the Force Chaplain, NAVFORV. There was a period of transition when the former chaplain assets of NAVSUPPACT were being consolidated with those under the direct supervision of the force chaplain. This transition was completed with the arrival of Captain Leonard W. Dodson (Nazarene) as force chaplain. At the conclusion of his tour, Chaplain Clayton reflected on his transitional role in the tapering to complete disengagement. He wrote:

It was my privilege to greet newly arriving chaplains and to provide an initial indoctrination for them. It was truly heartening to see the high level of devotion each one of these men of God brought with him. It was equally heartening to see in the days ahead how they stood up to the tests of Vietnam.

I have the highest admiration for each of them and possess a deep appreciation for the difficulties they have overcome in order to make their ministries meaningful.

Circuit-riding, chaplains were among the last chaplains still in Vietnam as late as the end of 1971.
A Navy circuit-riding chaplain entering a helicopter in the Mekong Delta. In his right hand is his altar kit. (Photo courtesy of Chaplain H. Lawrence Martin.)


Aerial view of the Mekong Delta. (Photograph by Chaplain H. Lawrence Martin.)

Chaplain H. Lawrence Martin counseling a sailor at Logistic Support Base, An Thoi, on Phu Quoc Island. (Photo courtesy of Chaplain Martin.)
and the beginning of 1972. By February 1972, there were only seven chaplains assigned with naval forces in Vietnam, and some chaplains spent the final months of a tour, that began in I Corps with the Marines, circuit-riding in IV Corps with Navy units. It was inevitable that they made comparisons. Lieutenant Frank D. Mintjal (Roman Catholic) wrote:

I was never so busy, so harried, so worn out, as when I was a battalion and an assistant regimental chaplain with the Marines-so many men were spread so far and wide. And I was almost totally at ease in my circuit in the Delta, with so many less men so easily accessible when transportation was available. Only the hours down-South were sometimes as long as up-North, and the mileage on the shockless and springless automotive vehicle alone amounted to two thousand miles per month, but ah-h, there were no marches through muddy rice paddies.  

Still, the consensus was that ministry was essentially the same at both places. A chaplain in his pastoral ministry in a combat zone had to get away from his desk if he was to be effective. Seeing the chaplain in the natural habitat of the servicemen emphasized the objectives of faith and conviction. Getting into that environment in late 1971 and early 1972 was progressively more difficult. The tours of duty for Navy chaplains were now anything but typical due to the reduction taking place. One circuit-riding chaplain, Lieutenant Commander H. Lawrence Martin (Southern Baptist), who was among the last few chaplains in Vietnam, listed the reasons for the uniqueness of his tour of ministry:

There were rapid and drastic changes in several areas: (1) the shift from a combat to an advisory role on the part of allied forces; (2) a sharp decrease in the number of personnel to be ministered to and in the number of points to be covered on circuits; (3) increasing frustration over the prolongation of the war; (4) intensified friction between the Americans and the Vietnamese with the growing feeling of some of the Vietnamese that they could carry on better themselves, and the belief by others that they were in a sense being deserted; (5) dissatisfaction in Vietnam and in America with the allegedly slow rate of reduction in forces; (6) tension arising from events surrounding the general elections in October; and (7) the high rise in drug abuse and alcoholism.

Amid all these changes, a chaplain’s flexibility was as taxed as it was necessary. Chaplain Martin’s circuit from the LSB at Binh Thuy consisted of LSB, An Thoi; Intermediate Support Base, Sa Dec (until deactivated in April 1971); Detachment 8 of Helicopter Attack (Light) Squadron 3, Rach Gia; Intermediate Support Base, Rach Soi; Operating Base, Kien An; Intermediate Support Base, Vinh Long; and Intermediate Support Base, Long Phu. Traveling by fixed wing aircraft, helicopter, motor vehicle, and boat, he visited each point on the circuit at least once a month and made periodic visits to Attack Support Base, Ca Mau; Attack Support Base, Nam Can; and outlying ships in the Gulf of Siam. At the end of his tour, he left a list of suggestions for further use entitled “Practical Suggestions for Circuit Riders.” In part, it stated:

1. Have as regular an itinerary as possible.
2. Inform the command of your coming, if at all possible.
3. Work closely with the commanding officers.
   a. Let them know that you consider yourself a part of the staff and that you are anxious to be of help in any way that you can.
b. Call upon them as soon as possible after arrival.
C. Keep in contact with them while you are away.
d. Look for opportunities to help, not only when aboard, but also while away.
4. Cooperate with executive officers on the circuit.
5. Develop and use lay leaders to the best possible extent.
6. If possible, stay aboard long enough to do some counseling. Do everything possible to make your availability known.
7. Be fully acquainted with Navy policies and procedures regarding such matters as leave, marriage to foreign nationals, adoption, minority races, personal response, civic action, humanitarian transfer, hardship separations, alcoholism, and drug abuse.
8. Make sure that religious literature is available, current and attractively displayed.
9. Don’t expect unusual treatment while on the circuit.
10. Keep thorough records of your work, including your complete itineraries.
11. If you have a clerk to carry on while you are away, train him patiently and thoroughly so that he can be of the greatest possible use to you.
12. Have a good working relationship with your seniors in the Corps.
15. Remain flexible

The need for persistence could not be overemphasized if a chaplain was to reach his men. Chaplain Mintjel remembered:

The Army helicopter pilots became a source of assistance and friendship when I followed Luke 11:8 by going to their Operations Bunker for fourteen nights around 2300 to ask if there were a Huey scheduled the next day in the direction of a naval support base I couldn’t reach by boat, car, or Navy plane. On the fourteenth night, the pilots themselves “arranged” to get an unscheduled helicopter just to accommodate me.

In early 1972, the time for departing drew close for all chaplains as the naval units also left Vietnam. Chaplain Hiers reflected on the ministry opportunity offered him during the years of Navy reduction:

There have been times when both physical and spiritual resources were nearly exhausted and only a sense of commitment to a divine call made the effort seem reasonable. “Humping it” over here demands more flexibility and initiative . . . . Men have gained strength when reminded of their eternal values, dignity, and possibilities through a Christ-like life . . . . This year has revitalized my ministry and demonstrated that a relevant faith grows stronger through exercise.17

The last year of Navy chaplains’ presence with naval units in Vietnam included an extraordinarily rapid de-escalation and withdrawal, since the role of American personnel abruptly returned to advisory and combat support functions under the control of the U.S. Army. The remaining Navy chaplains were quickly redeployed, both individually and with their units. Among these last chaplains were Lieutenant Robert L. Hubbard (Evangelical Free Church of America) who left in January 1972 and Lieutenant James F. Mennis (Roman Catholic) who left in June 1972. This period was one of frustration, rumor, and personal dislocation. The peace talks in Paris in 1972 were on again, off again, and punctuated by military attacks and counterattacks in Vietnam itself. President Nixon ordered renewed bombing of the North and directed the mining of North Vietnamese ports. As 1972 ended, the situation seemed grim. In January 1973, however, a breakthrough was made in Paris and the situation measurably brightened. On 27 January, the final cease-fire document was signed in Paris.

By mid-1972, there were only two chaplains still in Vietnam and assigned to MACV. They were Lieutenant Commander Wayne A. Stewart (Southern Baptist), soon to complete his tour, and the senior chaplain, Commander Stanley D. Miller (Disciples of Christ), who was the last chaplain to spend a full tour in Vietnam. Chaplain Miller was relieved in September 1972 by Lieutenant Commander David H. Fitzsimmons (United Presbyterian). Chaplain Fitzsimmons, after assisting thousands to leave the country during the rapid withdrawal, finally left himself on 30 March 1973, a little more than two months after the cease-fire was signed and two days before the last naval personnel were withdrawn from Vietnam.

By the time the last chaplains boarded a plane out of Vietnam, it was obvious that the Navy
chaplains in Vietnam had faced a different kind of ministry than ever before. The deprivations and fearfulness of the battlefield were the same, but the attitude of the individual service member, his morale and motivation, were vastly different. He was profoundly and, in some cases, tragically affected by the conflict among his countrymen over the validity of the military contribution he was making. The image of the United States as the champion of liberty under all circumstances was tarnished severely enough to be thought of by some as unredeemable. The agonizing length of negotiations, the cessation and resumption of the bombing of the North, and the stories of the prisoners of war in Hanoi all contributed to the frustration and confusion of the military member who often felt as if he were a pawn in a mindless game of chess.

Chaplains, perhaps those least inclined to use war as a method of settling disputes between peoples and nations, involved themselves personally in this conflict, and in doing so indicated their willingness to walk in the center of confusion, debate, and fear to minister as best they could to men of their nation. This seemed like gallantry to some, inconsistency to others, and foolishness to still others. But the chaplains themselves felt the compulsion to demonstrate their conviction that they had to serve God wherever men were in need.
Refugees arriving by helicopter aboard USS Blue Ridge (LCC-19). (Department of Defense photograph.)

of them. The role of the chaplains was summarized by Chief of Chaplains Kelly after his Christmas tour in 1969, when he said:

The presence of the chaplain, who is deeply and selflessly involved, is a reminder that God cares and that He is intimately involved in every area of human experience . . . . God himself raises up a ministry to meet the needs of his people.

The chaplain is a symbol of divine peace in the midst of human strife. On the decks of a man-of-war, or from foxhole to fighting pit, he moves among his men, enduring their hardships and hazards in intimate rapport. He gives counsel, comfort, condolence and encouragement to his people. He prays for his enemies and encourages the young men in his spiritual charge to do the same.\(^{18}\)

**Project Homecoming**

While most men in Vietnam spent only twelve or thirteen months in-country, for one group the time was much longer. Since 5 August 1964, when Lieutenant (j.g.) Everett Alvarez, Jr., was shot down over Hon Gai, American servicemen had been held as prisoners in North Vietnam. It was not until 27 January 1973, when the peace agreement was signed in Paris, that the release of these men was secured. The agreement provided that during February and March the prisoners were to depart Hanoi in three increments and approximately in the order in which they were captured.\(^{19}\)
By 1 April 1973, 566 U.S. military personnel and 25 civilians had been returned from captivity. The return of the prisoners of war was an occasion that involved chaplains of all branches of military service. The first stop for the returnees was Clark Air Force Base in the Philippines where each branch of service had its own team of chaplains which worked with medical and administrative personnel in an attempt to make the homecoming as efficient and pleasant as possible. The Navy team consisted of six chaplains and was headed by Captain Ross H. Trower (Lutheran), who was then serving as Pacific Fleet Chaplain. Assisting him were Captain Samuel R. Hardman (Episcopal), Commander John G. Newton (Roman Catholic), Lieutenant Commander Alexander B. Aronis (American Baptist), Lieutenant Commander John C. Keenon (United Methodist), and Lieutenant Commander Edward A. Roberts (Roman Catholic).

As each group of returnees arrived, the chaplains were present for counseling, worship services, and support. Prior to their arrival, all the chaplains had agreed to have a twenty-four-hour watch schedule in the hospital chapel so that a chaplain would be available at any time he was needed.

Upon their return, each Navy and Marine Corps member was seen by one of the Navy chaplains. In a series of taped situation reports to the
Chief of Chaplains, Rear Admiral Francis L. Garrett (United Methodist), the six chaplains told of their work. Chaplain Trower spoke of the first twenty-four hours saying:

During the first twenty-four hours after the arrival of the returnees there was enormous elation characterized by happiness, joy, and thanksgiving that our men were back. This was also expressed by the people at Clark Air Force Base, as you well know from news reports, and was a source of tremendous excitement and activity. The initial processing included medical clearance from the doctors who were assigned, then a meeting of the escorts with the doctors after the place was cleared. At this juncture if a man had some kind of bad news to be delivered to him before he made his telephone call, the chaplain rounded up with the escort officer and the doctor to discuss the matter . . . . Every Navy and Marine Corps returnee was seen by one of us. I think that all of us had plenty of opportunity to see some of the civilians as well as the Army and Air Force returnees in our common ministry. I’m sure that every Navy returnee and every Marine Corps returnee had ample opportunity to receive the services and ministry of Navy chaplains . . . . Those of us that had some kind of opportunity to minister to men in those early moments of receiving that kind of information found that this was a precious, difficult, trying, emotionally exhausting experience.\textsuperscript{21}

Each day there were Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish worship services scheduled for any who wanted to attend. Apart from these services, there were services, conducted by the returnees themselves. As the chaplains talked with the men, they were frequently told of the faith in God which supported the men during their captivity. Chaplain Trower recalled:

I think all of us were impressed at the condition of the men who came out of this first group. That is, particularly the men from the North. Their ability to survive, to endure, and the terms on which they learned to survive and endure provided for all of us tremendous inspiration in the capacities of man, as well as the tremendous inspiration we received from the ways in which they expressed that endurance or that survival as related to God. So we came out with some feeling that man was renewed under the whole business of his dependence upon God. This kind of thing was inspiring to us, but it found its way into ways in which we were being instructed all the time. I think Sam, you said earlier that the ministry was to us but I don’t think that at any point they were trying to instruct me. They didn’t try to set out: “Now, Chaplain, I want to tell you something I’ve learned,” as though somehow you didn’t know it. It was more of a sharing, or that of all the things a man has to sort out of this experience one thing was most important.\textsuperscript{22}

Chaplain Aronis related one conversation he had:

One man said the moment his feet hit the ground, God was standing there next to him. He was three buildings tall and the top of his shoes came to his head and God said to him, “I’m here with you and I’m going to take care of you.” Another indicated that this wasn’t only an emotional experience, but that they had had a lot of time to think about religion and a lot of other things that were there. There was an emotional aspect to this but there was also the intellectual aspect. These men grappled with doctrine and they quizzed one another on what religion meant and how they could integrate various points of view. This one person is very keen, now, about taking up the study of religion and understanding his faith more, and studying world religions and the historical development of religion.\textsuperscript{23}

Throughout their time with Project Homecoming, the chaplains were able to minister in many ways, often simply by listening and being available to the men when they needed to discuss. Perhaps Chaplain Hardman best summarized the entire operation when he said in the last situation report, “I think one of the biggest things in our ministry was just that we cared. How we cared just seemed to be less important than the fact that we did care.”\textsuperscript{24}

\textbf{The Final Passage}

The signing of the cease-fire agreement in January 1973 did not end the combat and turmoil in Southeast Asia. Shortly after the agreement was signed, North Vietnam began to violate its provisions, and thousands of North Vietnamese Army troops infiltrated South Vietnam. The infiltration continued throughout 1973, and by March 1974, U.S. intelligence estimated that NVA strength in
South Vietnam had reached 185,000 men? In late December 1974 and early January 1975, the NVA began a military drive in Phouc Long Province northeast of Saigon, and the final struggle began. By mid-March, Pleiku and Kontum in the Central Highlands had fallen to the NVA, and what had been the I and II Corps zones was then lost. On 25 March, Danang fell, and the final push for Saigon began.

When the collapse of South Vietnam was certain and imminent, plans were made by the United States to evacuate as many people as possible. Under the name Frequent Wind, an operation was initiated to evacuate by air and sea all remaining American military personnel and as many South Vietnamese as time allowed. Throughout the month of April, U.S. military aircraft, as well as other available civilian aircraft, produced history’s largest aerial evacuation.

Steaming offshore in the South China Sea south of Vung Tau there awaited an evacuation task force of more than forty ships. As planes from Enterprise and Midway (CVA-41) flew final fighter cover during Frequent Wind, ships such as the Navy’s Hancock, Coral Sea, Okinawa (LPH-3), Blue Ridge (LCC-19), and those of the Military Sealift Command took on fleeing South Vietnamese. The last naval chaplain in Saigon before it was overrun by NVA forces was Lieutenant Eugene E. Perry (National Baptist Convention, U.S.A., Inc.) who was serving with the 2nd Battalion 4th Marines in the ground security force for the evacuation operation. On 30 April, shortly before 0800, the final helicopter departed from the roof of the American Embassy carrying the last remnant of the Marine Security Force. As they departed, NVA troops had already entered the city. At 1100, a tank crashed through the gates of the Presidential Palace, and a flag of the Provisional Revolutionary Government was raised. With this act, Saigon and South Vietnam had fallen.

Just as they had done twenty years before, Navy chaplains assisted in this last evacuation operation. More than 8,000 people were evacuated from Saigon by helicopter in those last few days. In the end, hundreds of thousands of people eventually fled South Vietnam, many of whom emigrated to the United States. Thus, the twenty-year Chaplain Corps ministry in Vietnam had come full circle with this final “Passage to Freedom.”
This roster was compiled primarily from Volumes VII and VIII of The History of the Chaplain Corps, U.S. Navy, which consist of biographical sketches, and from annual rosters of the Chaplain Corps. The principal criterion used was the listing of the Vietnam Service Medal under an individual’s name in the former source matched with service with a naval unit for those years. It is possible that some names have been inadvertently omitted, but until now there has been no attempt at such a roster. Major difficulty arises when trying to determine which ships with chaplains were serving in Vietnamese waters during specific years during an individual chaplain’s tenure. Some chaplains served more than once in Vietnamese waters or in country and this also presents difficulty. Those chaplains serving with Mobile Construction Battalions have not been included because of the administrative connection they had with the Marine Corps.

Abel, Kenneth B.  NAF, Cam Ranh Bay  USS Princeton (LPH-5)
Aldrich, Robert D.  MSTST  NAF, Cam Ranh Bay  PHIBRON 3
Anderson, Philip D.  NAVFORV  NAF, Cam Ranh Bay  USS Hancock (CVA-19)
Anderson, Robert E.  NSA, Saigon  NAVFORV  USS Hancock (CVA-19)
Antos, Paul J.  NSA, Danang  NAVFORV  SERVGRU 3
Austin, Henry E.  NSA, Saigon  NAVFORV  SERVGRU 3
Baar, Harold L.  DESDIV 112  USS Eldorado (AGC-11)
Baird, Lyle M.  PHIBRON 1  USS Hancock (CVA-19)
Baker, Marvin D.  DESRON 17  USS Hancock (CVA-19)
Baker, Robert E.  PHIBRON 1  USS Hancock (CVA-19)
Baldwin, John F.  NSA, Saigon  USS Hancock (CVA-19)
Barcus, Richard E.  NSA, Danang  USS Hancock (CVA-19)
Barrett, Benson C.  NSA, Saigon  USS Hancock (CVA-19)
Baxter, Clifford A., Jr  NSA, Saigon  USS Bon Homme Richard (CVA-31)
Baxter, John A.  NSA, Danang  USS Bon Homme Richard (CVA-31)
Baxter Roy A.  NSA, Danang  USS Bon Homme Richard (CVA-31)
Bealo, Kenneth C.  NSA, Saigon  USS Bon Homme Richard (CVA-31)
Beasley, James O.  NSA, Danang  USS Bon Homme Richard (CVA-31)
Begg, Wendell R.  NSA, Danang  USS Bon Homme Richard (CVA-31)
Bell, William H.  NSA, Danang  USS Bon Homme Richard (CVA-31)
Berger, John W.  NSA, Danang  USS Bon Homme Richard (CVA-31)
Bergeson, Lowell G.  NSA, Danang  USS Bon Homme Richard (CVA-31)
Berger, John P. X.  NSA, Danang  USS Bon Homme Richard (CVA-31)
Berry, Reginald A.  NSA, Saigon  USS Essex (CVA-9)
Berry, William E.  NSA, Saigon  USS Essex (CVA-9)
Bevan, LeRoy A.  NSA, Saigon  USS Essex (CVA-9)
Bevins, John J.  NSA, Saigon  USS Essex (CVA-9)
Biffar, William J.  NSA, Saigon  USS Essex (CVA-9)
Bigler, Robert L.  NSA, Saigon  USS Essex (CVA-9)
Black, Gerald W.  NSA, Saigon  USS Essex (CVA-9)
Black, Richard D.  NSA, Saigon  USS Essex (CVA-9)
Bobrek, Edwin J.  NSA, Saigon  USS Essex (CVA-9)
Bodle, Harold D.  NSA, Saigon  USS Essex (CVA-9)
Boerger, Antonine  NSA, Saigon  USS Essex (CVA-9)
Bohula, Edwin V.  NSA, Saigon  USS Essex (CVA-9)

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<p>| Bond, Hollis H. | USS <em>Annapolis</em> (AGMR-1) | Cooper, William D. | USS <em>Forrestal</em> (CV-59); NAVFORV |
| Bond, Thomas D. | NAVFORV | Cortney, Kevin J. | USS <em>Saratoga</em> (CV-60) |
| Bonner, Roy L. | USS <em>Haven</em> (AH-12) | Costa, Joseph A. | USS <em>Coral Sea</em> (CVA-43) |
| Borden, Robert S. | USCG Squadron 3 | Cox, Joseph D. | NSA, Danang |
| Bott, George F. | USS <em>Mount McKinley</em> (LCC-7) | Cram, Norman L., Jr | DESRON 3 |
| Bouck, Wayne L. | DESRON 7 | Crawford, Canice T. | PHIBAC, WESTPAC |
| Boyd, James A. | NAVCOMMSTAPHIL | Crawford, Jack V. | USS <em>Enterprise</em> (CVN-65) |
| Brennan, Joseph F. | USS <em>Coral Sea</em> (CVA-43) | Croston, Calvin J. | HSA, Saigon |
| Brock, John D. | SERVRON 3, Det C | Cusack, Joseph P. | USS <em>Nereus</em> (AS-17) |
| Brosius, George R. | USGC Coral Sea (CVA-43) | | |
| Brown, Robert G. | USS <em>Okinawa</em> (LPH-3) | Daly, John R., Jr. | |
| Brummel, Robert L. | SERVGRU 3 | Day, Richard T. | USS <em>Kitty Hawk</em> (CVA-63) |
| Buckley, Gail E. | NSA, Saigon | Dean, John C. | DESRON 7 |
| Burchell, Francis P., Jr. | DESRON 7 | Dobbs, Veldon “B” | SERVGRU 3 |
| Burt, Michael F. | USS <em>New Jersey</em> (BB-62) | Dodson, Leonard W. | USS <em>Ticonderoga</em> (CVA-14) |
| Bymes, John P. | | Dologhan, John | DESRON 19 |
| Caldwell, Ralph G. | | Dorr, Charles E. | DESDIV 22 |
| Callahan, James T. | USS <em>Repose</em> (AH-16); NSA, Saigon | Dowers, Jack E. | USS <em>Sanctuary</em> (AH-17) |
| Campbell, Eli H., Jr. | USS <em>Oriskany</em> (CVA-34) | Doyle, James M. | NAVFORV |
| Canfield, Robert A. | NSA, Saigon | | MSTS |
| Capers, Keene H. | NSA, Saigon | | FLTLOGCOMPAC |
| Carpenter, Elbert N. | USS <em>Ranger</em> (CVA-61) | | MSTS |
| Carpenter, Malcolm A. | USS <em>Mount McKinley</em> (LCC-7) | | USS <em>Ticonderoga</em> (CVA-14) |
| Carson, Charles J. | USS <em>Oklahoma City</em> (LG-5) | Doyle, Mark A. | NSA, Danang |
| Casazza, David J. | USS <em>Niagara Falls</em> (AFS-3) | Doyle, William F. | USS <em>Hancock</em> (CVA-19) |
| Casey, Denis | USS <em>Ranger</em> (CVA-61) | Dumas, John F. | USS <em>Tripoli</em> (LPH-10) |
| Casey, Vincent de Paul | NSF, Cam Ranh Bay | Dunks, Max E. | COMINPAC |
| Cassady, Florian W. | USS <em>Ranger</em> (CVA-61) | Dunn, Edward J. | USS <em>Oriskany</em> (CVA-34) |
| Cassady, Kermit R. | PHIBPAC, WESTPAC | Dunning, David D. | DESRON 13 |
| Chamberlin, Marvin L. | NSA, Saigon; MINFLOT 1 | Durkin, Paul J. | NSA, Danang |
| Christmann, Harold L. | NSA, Danang | Ebarb, Walter E. | NSA, Danang |
| Clardy, William J. | NSA, Danang | Egan, John J. | COMPHIBPAC |
| Clark, James H. | USS <em>Repose</em> (AH-16) | | WESTPAC DET; SERVGRU 1 |
| Clayton, Walter “B”, Jr | NSA, Saigon | Eller, Max A. | NAVFORV |
| Collins, John M. III | NSA, Saigon | Elliott’, Robert E. | NAVFORV |
| Conavad, Joseph J. | NSA, Saigon | Ellis, Larry H. | DESDIV 52 |
| Connor, Robert M. | PHIBRON 7 | Elwood, Carl | USS <em>Oriskany</em> (CVA-34) |
| Cook, Elmer D. | PHIBRON 4 | Essinger, Jesse W. | MSTS |
| Cook, Gerald L. | NAVADGRU, Vietnam | Evans, Edward E. | DESDIV 152 |
| Cooke, Joseph J. | NSF, Danang | | |</p>
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Parham, T. David, Jr.
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Paulson, Gordon E.
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Ramsey, Vernon J.
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Roberts, Jack W.
Roberts, Maurice E.
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Robinson, Paul D.
Rogers, Lowell R.

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USS Valley Forge (LPH-8)
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Stewart, Wayne A.
Still, Frederick E.
Stone, Daniel G.
Stott, Albert W.
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Stubbe, Ray W.
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Sundt, Valery E.
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Tate, Robert C., Jr.
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CRUDESPAC
# ABBREVIATIONS AND TERMS

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<td>ACTOV</td>
<td>Accelerated Turnover to the Vietnamese</td>
<td>COMINFLOT</td>
<td>Commander Mine Flotilla</td>
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<td>ATSB</td>
<td>Advanced Tactical Support Base</td>
<td>COMLANDSHIPRON</td>
<td>Commander Landing Ship Squadron</td>
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<td>AFCB</td>
<td>Armed Forces Chaplains Board</td>
<td>COMNAVFORPHIL</td>
<td>Commander Naval Air Force, Pacific</td>
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<td>AFS</td>
<td>Combat Stores Ship</td>
<td>COMNAVFORV</td>
<td>Commander U.S. Naval Forces, Philippines</td>
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<tr>
<td>AGC</td>
<td>Amphibious Force Flagship</td>
<td>COMSERVGRU</td>
<td>Commander U.S. Naval Forces, Vietnam</td>
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<td>AGMR</td>
<td>Major Communications Relay Ship</td>
<td>COMSERVPAC</td>
<td>Commander Service Group</td>
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<td>AH</td>
<td>Hospital Ship</td>
<td>COMUSMACV</td>
<td>Commander Service Force, Pacific</td>
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<td>AID</td>
<td>Agency for International Development</td>
<td>CORTRON</td>
<td>Commander United States Military Assistance Command, Vietnam</td>
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<td>AKA</td>
<td>Attack Cargo Ship</td>
<td>CRUDESPAC</td>
<td>Escort Squadron</td>
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<td>Chief, Naval Advisory Group</td>
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<td>HEDSUPPACT</td>
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<td>LPH</td>
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<td>Military Assistance Advisory Group</td>
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<td>Mobile Riverine Force</td>
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<td>Minesweeper, Coastal</td>
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<td>Naval Air Facility</td>
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<td>Naval Air Station</td>
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<td>Naval Tactical Data System</td>
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<td>North Vietnamese Army</td>
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<td>PBR</td>
<td>Patrol Boat, River</td>
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<td>Patrol Craft, Fast</td>
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<td>Republic of Vietnam</td>
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<td>Service Squadron</td>
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<td>TAOR</td>
<td>Tactical Area of Responsibility</td>
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<td>T-AP</td>
<td>Military Sea Transportation Service APA</td>
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<td>TF</td>
<td>Task Force</td>
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<td>TRANSDIV</td>
<td>Transportation Division</td>
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<td>VC</td>
<td>Viet Cong</td>
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<td>WHEC</td>
<td>High-Endurance Cutter</td>
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<td>WIA</td>
<td>Wounded in Action</td>
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<td>WPB</td>
<td>Patrol Craft</td>
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<td>XO</td>
<td>Executive Officer</td>
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Chapter I. Ferring to Freedom

1. COMPHIBGRU ONE letter Chief of Naval Operations, FG1/1/A4-3, 31, serial 055 of 15 June 1955. (c); Encl. (1), p. 11.
2. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
10. Commander Task Force 90 letter of Chief of Naval Operations, Serial 4 of 3 January 1955. This document represents a progress report of Passage to Freedom from its inception through 15 November 1954.
11. Ibid.
13. Prior to the beginning of the operation there were nine chaplains in the area with U.S. naval forces. They were Chaplains Joseph A. Costa (Roman Catholic), Milton P. Cans (Roman Catholic), Raymond F. Gover (Roman Catholic), Timothy J. McGrath (Roman Catholic), Clarence V. Northrup (American Baptist), Robert E. Osman (United Presbyterian), Lawrence R. Phillips (United Church of Christ), Robert W. Radcliffe (United Methodist), and Tedford L. Shenefelt (Evangelical United Brethren).
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid.
18. CDR T. J. Wooten, CHC, letter of 18 July 1967 to CHC Historian.
19. Ibid.
23. Ibid.
24. Ibid.
26. Ibid.
27. Ibid.
29. CTF 90 letter of 3 January 1955.
Chapter II. Developing Presence Ashore

5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
11. Chief of Naval Operations letter, no date, to Chief, USAID. Navy Operational Archives, Washington D.C.
12. See Chapter Five for more information on civic action throughout the war.
16. CDR Edward W. Pipho, CHC, memorandum of 15 April 1965 to Fleet Chaplain PACFLT.
17. LCDR Thomas J. Hilferty, CHC, memorandum of 15 June 1966 to Chief of Chaplains.
19. Ibid.
Chapter III. Steaming Offshore

1. The chaplains were Henry E. Austin (American Baptist), Benson C. Barrett (United Methodist), Roy A. Baxter (Southern Baptist), James T. Callahan (Roman Catholic), Keene H. Capers (United Presbyterian), David J. Casazza (Roman Catholic), Vincent de Paul Casey (Roman Catholic), Joseph R. Cusack (Roman Catholic), William F. Doyle (Roman Catholic), Carl Elwood (Lutheran), Jack D. Graham (American Baptist), John R. Hershberger (Lutheran), John E. Hollingsworth III (Southern Baptist), John T. Moore (Roman Catholic): David P. W. Plank (Assemblies of God), Carl E. Ruud (Lutheran), Vincent M. Smith (Roman Catholic), David E. Spradling (United Methodist), and George H. Wheeler (United Methodist).

2. Background, p. 10.


4. Ibid.

5. CDR George E. Haroldsen, CHC, letter of July 1966 to CHC Historian.


7. LCDR Andrew F. Jensen, CHC, letter of 12 April 1967 to CHC Historian.


9. This was LTJG Everett Alvarez, Jr., shot down over Hon Gai on 5 August 1964. He became the first American POW and remained in prison until 1973.

10. LCDR Lucian C. Mattiello, CHC, letter of 6 January 1967 to CHC Historian.


13. Ibid.

14. LT Wavne A. Stewart, CHC, letter to CHC Historian, no date.

15. See Mersky and Polmar, pp. 21-26; and Lewy, pp. 38 and 374-89.

16. On board the carriers were Chaplains Keene H. Capers (United Presbyterian) and Vincent de Paul Casey (Roman Catholic) aboard Ranger, Chaplains Wendell R. Begg (United Methodist) and Edwin J. Bobrek (Roman Catholic) aboard Hancock, and Chaplains George B. Riley (United Methodist) and John P. X. Berguer (Roman Catholic) aboard Coral Sea.

17. LCDR Wendell R. Begg, CHC, letter of 5 August 1967 to CHC Historian.

18. Ibid.

19. One hundred and fifty Navy chaplains served afloat in Korean waters during the Korean War.


21. CHC Historian File, “MSTS Chaplains.”

22. LT Jesse W. Essinger, CHC, interview of 1 December 1966 with MSTS Staff Chaplain.

23. LCDR John D. Brock, CHC, report in CHC.
Chapter IV. Ministering Ashore

   2. Ibid.
   3. CDR Robert A. Canfield, CHC, EOTR of September 1968.
   4. Ibid.
   5. CAPT James J. Killeen, CHC, EOTR of 5 July 1968.
   9. Maclear, p. 204.
   15. Canfield, EOTR of September 1968.
   16. LT Nathan O. Loesch, CHC, report to Fleet
Chaplain, CINCPAC of 4 October 1968.
18. Ibid.
22. See Schreadley, pp. 205-6, for information on ACTOV.

Chapter V. Tapering to Disengagement

1. Lewy, p. 166.
6. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid.
15. Ibid.
17. LT H. Thomas Hiers, CHC, EOTR of December 1971.
22. Ibid., p. 18.
23. Ibid., p. 13.
24. Ibid., p. 69.
26. Ibid., p. 10-16.
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Assignment Questions

Information: The text pages that you are to study are provided at the beginning of the assignment questions.
1-1. What was the name of the operation whereby the United States evacuated refugees from North Vietnam in the 1950s?
1. Operation HANDCLASP
2. Passage to Freedom
3. EVAC 54
4. Project Refugee

1-2. What specific total number of Vietnamese was evacuated aboard Navy ships to regions below the 17th parallel?
1. 117,846
2. 293,002
3. 302,450
4. 310,848

1-3. What number of Navy chaplains participated in the above indicated evacuation?
1. 18
2. 21
3. 27
4. 35

1-4. What dates were the official times for Passage to Freedom?
1. 21 July 1953 to 17 October 1953
2. 30 May 1954 to 4 July 1955
3. 8 August 1954 to 18 May 1955
4. 8 August 1954 to 5 June 1955

1-5. Ships assigned to this evacuation process were drawn from which of the following units?
1. Military Sea Transportation Service (MSTS)
2. Amphibious Group, Western Pacific
3. Service Squadron 3
4. All of the above

1-6. In Vietnamese history, what significant event happened on 5 June 1948?
1. The State of Vietnam was established
2. President Diem was elected
3. Chiang Kai-Shek returned from exile
4. The United States and Vietnam signed a mutual defense treaty

1-7. Which, if any, of the following countries trained and supported the Viet Minh?
1. France
2. Communist China
3. United States
4. None of the above

1-8. The final French defeat in Indochina came in the battle to defend what city?
1. Danang
2. Dien Bien Phu
3. Haiphong
4. Quang Tri
Questions 9 through 16 refer to the deliberations to determine the future of Indochina following the defeat of the French forces.

1-9. On what date did the deliberations begin?
1. 8 May 1953
2. 22 June 1953
3. 8 May 1954
4. 14 July 1954

1-10. In what European city did the deliberations take place?
1. Paris, France
2. Brussels, Belgium
3. Helsinki, Finland
4. Geneva, Switzerland

1-11. Which of the following countries sponsored the deliberations?
1. Great Britain
2. Soviet Union
3. Both 1 and 2 above
4. United States

1-12. Delegates from which of the following countries/organizations did NOT attend the deliberations?
1. Thailand
2. France
3. Laos
4. The Viet Minh

1-13. At the deliberations, autonomy was declared for which of the following countries?
1. Laos
2. Vietnam
3. Cambodia
4. All of the above

1-14. Which of the following accords were reached by the deliberations?
1. An immediate cease-fire
2. The partitioning of Vietnam along the 17th parallel
3. Both 1 and 2 above
4. Immediate removal of French forces

1-15. Free elections on the subject of reunification were to be held within how many years?
1. 1 year
2. 2 years
3. 3 years
4. 4 years

1-16. The United States was not a signatory to the Geneva Agreement.
1. True
2. False

Learning Objective: Identify people and events associated with Passage to Freedom.

1-17. What country/countries requested naval support from the United States in the evacuation of North Vietnam?
1. South Vietnam
2. France
3. Both 1 and 2 above
4. Switzerland

1-18. In the first 3 months of Passage to Freedom, Rear Admiral Sabin's task force grew from 15 ships and craft to
1. more than 50
2. more than 70
3. more than 85
4. more than 100

1-19. Which, if any, of the following men was the first chaplain to arrive for participation in Passage to Freedom?
1. Fitzpatrick
2. Gano
3. Montague
4. None of the above

1-20. By what name was Vietnam formerly known?
1. The Indochinese Republic
2. The Empire of Indochina
3. Campuchea
4. French Indochina

1-21. Although first used as an interpreter, LTJG Thomas Dooley later became famous as a
1. medical missionary in Africa
2. military attache to France
3. medical missionary in Southeast Asia
4. folk singer.
1-22. By what means were language difficulties on board the MENARD solved?

1. The Catholic chaplain spoke to Vietnamese Catholic priests in Latin
2. French interpreters were used
3. Sign language was used
4. Some Vietnamese businessmen acted as interpreters

1-23. What attitude was displayed by the Viet Minh toward civilians who wished to leave?

1. They encouraged their departure
2. They encouraged them and offered assistance
3. They were not involved and remained neutral
4. They were opposed, often using violence to prevent their departure

1-24. For what reason did Chaplain Fitzpatrick have difficulty establishing himself as a Catholic priest with the refugees?

1. He was not oriental
2. He did not speak Vietnamese
3. He was not dressed in clerical garb
4. He wore glasses

1-25. By what means did the ESTES protect herself from sabotage while anchored off the mouth of the Red River?

1. The harbor was mined
2. An armed landing craft slowly circled her at night
3. Armed sentries patrolled the decks
4. She was guarded by submarines

1-26. By what name was the helicopter known which was used to carry chaplains from ship to ship to conduct services?

1. Holy Helo
2. Church Chopper
3. Chaplain Delivery System
4. Heavenly Helo

1-27. Which of the following additional units of Amphibious Group, Western Pacific, was/were transferred to North Vietnam during the initial phases of Passage to Freedom?

1. LSTRON 1
2. LSTRON 3
3. LSDRON 1
4. Both 2 and 3 above

1-28. One of Chaplain Stone's ministries aboard the COMSTOCK was a devotional service that took place every morning before 0400. Although this service was poorly attended, the chaplain felt it gave some comfort to a few members.

1. True
2. False

1-29. Which of the following phrases best describes the lay leader program in Chaplain Stone's squadron?

1. Nonexistent and not wanted
2. Provided for by regulations, but not functioning
3. Functioning, but poorly organized and ineffective
4. Well organized and functioning

1-30. Primarily, which of the following types of equipment did LSTRON 3 evacuate from North Vietnam?

1. Armored vehicles
2. Jeeps
3. Trucks
4. All of the above

1-31. Which of the following personnel accompanied the equipment evacuated by LSTRON 3?

1. Members of the Foreign Legion
2. French Union troops
3. Refugees
4. All of the above

1-32. During the LSTRON 3 evacuation from Haiphong, any unused space aboard the ships was occupied by

1. food
2. ship's stores
3. refugees
4. safety equipment

1-33. During Passage to Freedom, the ministry of Navy chaplains was primarily directed at which, if any, of the following personnel?

1. Refugees
2. Navy dependents
3. Diplomatic personnel
4. None of the above

1-34. Since operations evacuating equipment from Haiphong were extremely fatiguing, crews of the amphibious ships were allowed liberal leave and liberty between trips.

1. True
2. False
1-35. Which of the following descriptions best characterizes the role played by PHIBPAC lay leaders in providing religious coverage for personnel of PHIBGRU 2 during Passage to Freedom?

1. Energetic and enthusiastic
2. Indifferent and lethargic
3. Occasionally helpful
4. Operationally cumbersome

Learning Objective: Demonstrate knowledge of service force chaplains' activities during Passage to Freedom.

1-36. Tourane Bay is located halfway between Hanoi and

1. the Philippines
2. Saigon
3. Yokosuka Naval Base
4. Haiphong

1-37. What is the present name of Tourane Bay?

1. Cam Ranh Bay
2. Chu Lai Bay
3. Danang Bay
4. Haiphong Harbor

1-38. While in Tourane Bay, the hospital ship CONSOLATION provided emergency care for which of the following personnel?

1. Vietnamese civilian evacuees
2. French Army personnel
3. French Foreign Legion
4. All of the above

1-39. Which of the following phrases best describes the continuous workload aboard the CONSOLATION during Passage to Freedom?

1. Extremely small
2. Not full capacity, but busy
3. Working full capacity
4. Working at or above full capacity

1-40. At what port did members of the Foreign Legion aboard the hospital ship HAVEN disembark?

1. Oran, Algeria
2. Suez, Egypt
3. Sidi-bel-Abbes, Algeria
4. Marseilles, France

1-41. What was the first U.S. hospital ship to circle the globe?

1. CONSOLATION
2. HOPE
3. SOLACE
4. HAVEN

1-42. Which of the following individuals was the only service force circuit-riding chaplain to be ordered to Vietnam for temporary duty with Passage to Freedom?

1. Fitzpatrick
2. Bonner
3. O'Leary
4. Wooten

Learning Objective: Demonstrate knowledge of the later stages of Passage to Freedom.

1-43. What number of tons of cargo had been evacuated from North Vietnam by U.S. ships by 15 November 1954?

1. 20,000
2. 23,000
3. 26,000
4. 28,000

1-44. Which, if any, of the following statements best defines a "laissez passer"?

1. A certificate of good health
2. A permit to allow travel from one village to another
3. A confirmed seat on a boat or train
4. None of the above

1-45. On what date was the Hanoi zone closed to evacuation?

1. September 1954
2. October 1954
3. November 1954
4. January 1955

1-46. When the main avenues of passage were closed, by which of the following means did many Vietnamese escape North Vietnam?

1. Airplane hijacking
2. Sampans and bamboo rafts
3. Overland trails
4. Both 2 and 3 above
1-47. As originally planned, ships attached to PHI BGRU WESTPAC would be replaced or augmented by vessels from what other group?

1. Military Sea Transportation Service (MSTS)
2. The South Vietnamese Navy
3. The French Navy

1-48. During Passage to Freedom, chaplains were assigned to what specific number of MSTS transports?

1. Three
2. Five
3. Six
4. Seven

1-49. What ship was the last refugee ship to leave Haiphong when the "Bamboo Curtain" closed?

1. USNS MARINE LYNX
2. USNS GENERAL R. L. HOWZE
3. USNS GENERAL A. W. BREWSTER
4. USNS GENERAL WILLIAM M. BLACK

1-50. What was the religion of most refugees?

1. Buddhist
2. Roman Catholic
3. Presbyterian
4. Hindu

1-51. Chaplain Kane, a Catholic priest, was a member of what order?

1. Dominican
2. Jesuit
3. Franciscan
4. Trappist

1-52. What connection did Francis Cardinal Spellman have with the American military forces in Vietnam?

1. He was Archbishop of Southeast Asia
2. He was a former enlisted Marine
3. He was Military Ordinariate
4. His nephew was an Army ranger serving at Danang

1-53. In January 1955, Cardinal Spellman and various officials and dignitaries visited with Passage to Freedom refugees. They were accompanied by what high-ranking South Vietnamese official?

1. Secretary of the Navy
2. The President
3. Head of State Security
4. Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces

1-54. The USNS HOWZE was the first U.S. ship to receive what privilege/award?

1. The Meritorious Unit Citation
2. The Vietnamese Presidential Citation
3. A USO tour
4. The Humanitarian Service Medal

Learning Objective: Demonstrate familiarity with conditions and actions during the final days of Passage to Freedom.

1-55. Which of the following was NOT among the ships in Vietnam in May 1955?

1. USNS GENERAL A. W. BREWSTER
2. USNS GENERAL R. L. HOWZE
3. USNS MARINE ADDER
4. USNS MARINE SERPENT

1-56. On what date was the port of Haiphong officially closed?

1. 13 May 1954
2. 21 June 1954
3. 19 August 1954
4. 13 May 1955

1-57. Which of the following events took place on 20 May 1955?

1. The Communist offensive began
2. Final accords were reached at the Geneva Conference
3. Emperor Bao Dai died
4. Passage to Freedom task force was disestablished

1-58. The significance of Passage to Freedom lay in its humanitarian aspects in which Navy chaplains played key roles from beginning to end.

1. True
2. False
Learning Objective: Demonstrate familiarity with the period between the end of Passage to Freedom and the later involvement in Vietnam by the United States.

1-59. Following Passage to Freedom, what period of time elapsed before a Navy chaplain was assigned duty ashore in Vietnam?

1. 3 1/2 years
2. 5 years
3. 6 1/2 years
4. 9 years

1-60. USS PINE ISLAND (AV-12) paid an official visit to Nha Trang in July 1957. What type of ship was the PINE ISLAND?

1. Aircraft carrier
2. Helicopter landing ship
3. Oiler
4. Seaplane tender

1-61. At Danang, Chaplain Seim had an unusual opportunity to provide ministry to which, if any, of the following people?

1. Air Force personnel
2. Buddhists
3. Members of the Royal Canadian Air Force
4. None of the above

1-62. The internal situation in South Vietnam between mid-1955 and the end of 1961 could have been characterized by all EXCEPT which of the following conditions?

1. Increased Communist insurgency
2. Increased political instability
3. Decreased American economic support
4. Increased American military aid

1-63. What official or activity assumed responsibility for training the South Vietnamese armed forces in February 1965?

1. Ngo Dinh Diem
2. U.S. MAAG
3. MINDIV 71

1-64. What government post did Ngo Dinh Diem hold before becoming President in October 1955?

1. Chief of State Security
2. Secretary of the Navy
3. Prime Minister
4. Premier


1. It decreased slightly
2. It ceased entirely
3. It broadened
4. None
Assignment 2

Developing Presence Ashore

Textbook Assignment: Chapter 2 (pages 17 through 34)

Learning Objective: Demonstrate knowledge of conditions in Vietnam during the early stages of American involvement.

2-1. Which of the following Navy chaplains was the first chaplain assigned to a full tour of duty in Vietnam?

1. CDR K. R. Cassady
2. LCDR D. W. Jolly
3. LT J. E. Seim
4. LCDR H. R. Miller

2-2. Which of the following activities or organizations was responsible for the logistic support of the American State Department activities in Saigon in September 1962?

1. American Embassy, Saigon
2. Headquarters Support Activity
3. Department of State Regional Headquarters, Tokyo
4. U.S. Navy

2-3. Besides Navy personnel and dependents in the Saigon-Cholon area, Chaplain Miller's ministry extended to which of the following organizations?

1. United States Information Service
2. Agency for International Development
3. American Embassy
4. All of the above

2-4. Chaplain Miller was prevented by the Status of Forces Agreement from providing ministry to Vietnamese civilians.

1. True
2. False

2-5. Which of the following conditions best describe the number of terrorist incidents caused by the Viet Cong in 1962?

1. Few
2. Declining
3. Steady level
4. Mounting

2-6. By February 1962, what number of American military personnel were in Saigon?

1. Less than 2,000
2. More than 4,000
3. More than 6,000
4. More than 9,000

2-7. Which of the following measures was taken by the South Vietnamese government in 1962-64 to defend civilians from terrorist attacks?

1. Construction of strategic hamlets
2. Individual martial arts instruction
3. Improved evacuation procedures
4. Issuance of weapons

2-8. Regarding the program described in question 2-7, was this action successful?

1. Yes, it was an unqualified success
2. Yes, to some extent
3. No
4. The project was never fully implemented

Learning Objective: Demonstrate knowledge of conditions in Saigon and chaplains' activities during the period from 1962 to 1964.
2-9. What consideration was the most important in the assignment of living, working, and worship spaces in Saigon in the early 1960s?
   1. Square footage available
   2. Location
   3. Security
   4. Cost

2-10. One of Chaplain Miller's urgent and continuing problems was locating which of the following resources?
   1. Lay leaders
   2. A permanent space for services
   3. Ecclesiastical supplies
   4. A chaplain's clerk

2-11. To what location were services moved when the lease on the theatre being used as a chapel expired?
   1. The U.S. Information Service auditorium
   2. Another theatre nearby
   3. The roof of the local BOQ
   4. A newly constructed chapel

2-12. According to Chaplain Miller, the Christian and Missionary Alliance Vietnam Mission was seeking to build a strong indigenous church rather than a denominational structure.
   1. True
   2. False

2-13. Which of the following priests provided coverage for Roman Catholics during Chaplain Miller's tour in Saigon?
   1. LCDR Robert Crawford, CHC, USN
   2. Two U.S. Any Catholic chaplains
   3. A civilian priest
   4. Both 2 and 3 above

2-14. According to the text, religious program activities consisted of all EXCEPT which of the following?
   1. Pre-marriage encounters
   2. Bible study groups
   3. Religious retreats
   4. Communicant classes

2-15. Although supportive, higher echelon officers did not become personally involved in Saigon's chapel community.
   1. True
   2. False

2-16. What amount of money was donated to missions by Saigon chapel members during Chaplain Miller's tour?
   1. Less than $4,000
   2. Approximately $5,500
   3. More than $10,000
   4. More than $12,000

2-17. Which of the following activities was/were sponsored as mission projects during Chaplain Miller's tour in Saigon?
   1. Printing of scriptures in Vietnamese
   2. Renovation of orphanages
   3. Church restoration
   4. All of the above

2-18. Chaplain Croston, Chaplain Miller's relief, reported for duty in September 1964 for an assigned tour of what number of months?
   1. 9 months
   2. 12 months
   3. 18 months
   4. 24 months

2-19. During Chaplain Croston's tour in Saigon, what individual(s) provided coverage for Roman Catholics?
   1. Lay leaders
   2. Catholic missionaries
   3. U.S. Army chaplains
   4. A civilian priest from the Saigon Cathedral

2-20. When the auditorium being used for services became unavailable, Chaplain Croston took which of the following actions?
   1. He moved services first to a private home, then to a briefing room
   2. He moved services first to a briefing room, then to a private home
   3. He moved services to a civilian church
   4. He was forced to suspend services

Learning Objective: Demonstrate familiarity with Project Handclasp and chaplains' involvement in it.
2-21. Which of the following statements describes the goals of Project Handclasp?

1. Provide educational material to the Vietnamese
2. Increase the involvement of U.S. service personnel with the Vietnamese people
3. Provide humanitarian aid to the Vietnamese people
4. Each of the above

2-22. On the average, what number of tons of humanitarian materials was distributed annually by Project Handclasp?

1. 50 tons
2. 100 tons
3. 300 tons
4. Over 500 tons

2-23. In which of the following locations was the Project Handclasp central warehouse?

1. Saigon
2. San Diego
3. Subic Ray
4. Yokosuka

2-24. What official was directing Project Handclasp at the end of 1964?

1. The American Ambassador to Vietnam
2. Commander, Naval Forces Vietnam
3. HEDSUPPACT Saigon Chaplain
4. MAAG Chief of Staff

Learning Objective: Demonstrate familiarity with conditions in Vietnam and chaplain activities as American involvement increased.

2-25. By what maximum number did the amount of American military personnel in South Vietnam increase in 1964?

1. 4,500
2. 6,500
3. 7,000
4. 8,000

2-26. In his letter to the Chief of Chaplains, Chaplain Croston stated that it was imperative that HEDSUPPACT should have which of the following resources?

1. A Jewish chaplain
2. More chaplain’s assistants
3. A Catholic chaplain
4. Larger office spaces for the chaplain

2-27. What official controlled the administration and operations of HEDSUPPACT during Chaplain Croston's tour of duty?

1. COMNAVFORPHIL for administration and MACV for operations
2. MACV for administration and COMNAVFORPHIL for operations
3. COMNAVFORPHIL
4. MACV

2-28. In April 1965, what number of Navy Jewish chaplains, if any, was/were serving in Vietnam?

1. One
2. Two
3. Three
4. None

2-29. Which of the following priests was the first Navy Roman Catholic chaplain to serve at HEDSUPPACT?

1. LCDR T. R. Hilferty
2. CAPT J. F. Dreith
3. CDR E. W. Pipho
4. LCDR R. T. Crawford

2-30. Which of the following individuals was responsible for formulating solutions concerning problems arising from the concentration of U.S. personnel in the Saigon-Cholon area?

1. The American Ambassador
2. Commanding Officer, HEDSUPPACT
3. The Community Relations Committee of MACV
4. Chaplain Croston

2-31. Which of the following conditions was/were of primary concern to the Community Relations Committee?

1. Prostitution
2. Traffic
3. Overcrowding
4. All of the above
2-32. To prevent terrorist attacks, American personnel were encouraged not to live in clusters, but to spread themselves throughout the civilian community.

1. True
2. False

2-33. Because of increased terrorist activity, which of the following actions became necessary in February 1965?

1. Evacuation of dependents
2. Severance of relations with North Vietnam
3. Expansion of religious services
4. Cancellation of religious services

2-34. Which of the following spaces were used as quarters due to large numbers of incoming personnel in early 1965?

1. Large hotels
2. Large villas
3. Apartment houses
4. All of the above

2-35. Which of the following individuals was NOT assigned to Chaplain Osman’s office when he reported as HEDSUPPACT Senior Chaplain?

1. An Army chaplain’s assistant
2. A Navy dependent wife
3. An Air Force sergeant
4. A Navy Yeoman

2-36. By the end of 1965, three additional chaplains were assigned to HEDSUPPACT. What source provided them?

1. U.S. Navy
2. U.S. Army
3. Theological Student Program

2-37. Which of the following groups was NOT among the missionary organizations in South Vietnam?

1. The Christian and Missionary Alliance
2. The Mennonite Committee
3. The Wycliffe Hymnal Society
4. The American Bible Society

2-38. Offerings from the Protestant worship services were used in special projects based on

1. direction from higher authority
2. arbitrary decisions by the senior chaplain
3. information received by the Public Affairs Office
4. “want lists” supplied by the various missionary headquarters

2-39. Between fall 1963 and February 1966, what maximum number of tons of supplies and materials was distributed through Project Handclasp by HEDSUPPACT Chaplains?

1. Over 200 tons
2. Over 300 tons
3. Over 400 tons
4. Over 500 tons

2-40. When HEDSUPPACT Saigon was phased out, the chaplain’s functions were transferred to what organization?

1. The American Embassy
2. NAVFORV
3. The Saigon Logistics Activity, U.S. Army
4. The Military Assistance Advisory Group


2-41. In early 1965, two events occurred that marked the Navy’s initial combat activity in Vietnam. These were the employment of aircraft from the U.S. Seventh Fleet in airstrikes against military targets in North Vietnam and the establishment of TF 115, the Coastal Surveillance Force.

1. True
2. False

2-42. What name was given to the operation designed to prevent enemy men and material from entering South Vietnam by sea?

1. Operation Roadblock
2. Operation Charlie
3. Operation Market Time
4. Operation Reaver Dam
In questions 2-43 through 2-46, match the unit on the left with the supervisory authority in the column on the right as of the summer and fall of 1965. Responses may be used once, more than once, or not at all.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A. Unit</th>
<th>B. Authority</th>
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<tr>
<td>2-43. SEABEE</td>
<td>1. III MAF chaplain</td>
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<tr>
<td>2-44. Navy chaplains in Saigon</td>
<td>2. Commanding General, III MAF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-45. I Corps</td>
<td>3. TF 115 chaplain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-46. NAVSUPPACT Danang</td>
<td>4. COMNAVFORPHIL chaplain</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2-47. As of late 1965, MACV was comprised of what four major commands?

1. I MAF, NAVFORV, SECOND MARDIV, USARV
2. NAVFORV, 7th AIR FORCE, 7th U.S. ARMY (V), III MAF
3. 7th AIR FORCE, III MAF, NAVFORV, USARV
4. USARV, U.S. 7th FLEET, III MAF, 7th AIR FORCE

2-48. From February to May 1966, Chaplain Hilferty was providing religious coverage to what total number of bases?

1. 7
2. 9
3. 16
4. 18

2-49. What was the Rung Sat Special Zone?

1. An area of swamp southeast of Saigon
2. An area near the Thai border
3. A rendezvous point in the South China Sea
4. A Viet Cong prisoner of war camp

2-50. The first staff chaplain of COMNAVFORV, LCDR W. C. League, reached headquarters to assume his duties on what date?

1. 1 May 1965
2. 5 May 1966
3. 7 May 1966
4. 9 May 1966

2-51. The coastal advisory group at An Thoi was located in which of the following places?

1. The Mekong delta
2. Cam Ranh Bay
3. An island in the Gulf of Siam
4. The Con Son Islands

2-52. As of June 1966, what number of chaplains, if any, was assigned to NAVSUPPACT Saigon?

1. Six
2. Two
3. Four
4. None

2-53. Which of the following tasks was NOT one that Chaplain Elliott was required to perform after reporting to the staff at NAVFOPV?

1. Recommending locations for new chapels
2. Proposing a comprehensive structure of chaplain billets
3. Comparing requirements against current manning level
4. Traveling throughout the country

2-54. What chaplain, if any, had the responsibility for the coordination of religious activities between the different military services in Vietnam?

1. HEDSUPPACT chaplain
2. Senior area chaplain
3. MACV command chaplain
4. None

2-55. Before a civilian church authority could be granted area clearance to visit Vietnam, a request had to be made to which of the following officials or organizations?

1. The Armed Forces Chaplains Board, gave final approval
2. COMUSMACV
3. The American Ambassador to South Vietnam
4. The Armed Forces Chaplains Board, although final approval was granted by CINCPAC with the concurrence of COMUSMACV
2-56. The Tactical Area of Responsibility (TOAR) was sometimes referred to by which of the following terms?

1. Indian territory
2. No-man's land
3. Beyond the fringe
4. The outback

2-57. Which of the following distinguished clergymen did NOT visit Vietnam during Chaplain Fairchild's tour of duty?

1. Dr. Billy Graham
2. Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen
3. Rabbi Selwyn D. Rushlander
4. Francis Cardinal Spellmann

2-58 through 2-65. To answer questions, select from column B the home base of the chaplain responsible for religious coverage of the location shown in column A. Responses may be used more than once.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Locations</th>
<th>Home Bases</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2-58. My Tho</td>
<td>1. Saigon</td>
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<tr>
<td>2-59. Qui Nhon</td>
<td>2. An Thoi</td>
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<tr>
<td>2-60. Sa Dec</td>
<td>3. Cam Ranh Bay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-61. Vung Tau</td>
<td>4. Cat Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-63. Nha Be</td>
<td>4. Cat Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-64. Tan Chau</td>
<td>2. An Thoi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-65. Vinh Long</td>
<td>1. Saigon</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2-66. Which of the following individuals preached the dedicatory sermon at the new chapel at Camp Tien Sha on 23 December 1966?

1. Commander, NAVSUPPACT Danang
2. Chief of Chaplains
3. Command chaplain
4. A local Catholic missionary

2-67. At Camp Tien Sha, what area was the White Elephant?

1. The entire camp
2. The command chaplain's office
3. The headquarters building
4. The camp dispensary

2-68. During the latter part of 1966, the level of ministry of Navy chaplains to naval personnel ashore in Vietnam is best described by which of the following terms?

1. Sharply decreasing
2. Slightly decreasing
3. Remaining stable
4. Definitely increasing
Learning Objective: Demonstrate familiarity with conditions and events in Vietnam during the period 1962-64.

3-1. Which of the following statements describe(s) American naval presence in Vietnam from 1962-65?

1. Presence on shore did not occur until 1965
2. Presence at sea increased from 1962 to 1964
3. Both 1 and 2 above
4. Presence both at sea and ashore increased steadily

3-2. What total number of Navy chaplains served in Vietnamese waters with Seventh Fleet units in 1962-63?

1. 7
2. 9
3. 12
4. 19

3-3. In mid-1962, American forces were deployed against Hanoi-backed Laotian communists in which of the following countries?

1. India
2. Burma
3. Thailand
4. Indonesia

3-4. For which of the following reasons was the IWO JIMA ordered to the waters near Saigon in August 1963?

1. To provide air cover
2. To evacuate American personnel and dependents if necessary
3. To conduct coastal surveillance
4. To blockade the port

3-5. Which of the following Naval ships was/were involved in the Tonkin Gulf Incident on 2-5 August 1964?

1. TICONDEROGA
2. TURNER JOY
3. MADDOX
4. All of the above

3-6. Which of the following events occurred on 7 August 1964?

1. The MADDOX was attacked
2. The Gulf of Tonkin Resolution was passed by Congress
3. The Diem government collapsed
4. The military barracks at Pleiku was bombed

3-7. According to Chaplain Harroldson, what feelings were personnel aboard the MADDOX experiencing shortly after the Gulf of Tonkin incident?

1. Fatigue, but morale was high
2. A desire to brag about their accomplishments
3. Exhilaration and eagerness
4. A sense of impending tragedy

3-8. Due to increased tempo of operations, the destroyers accompanying the TICONDEROGA were frequently unable to arrange for chaplains' visits, and services, when held, were poorly attended.

1. True
2. False
3-9. Besides ship's company, which of the following units was/were embarked on VALLEY FORGE's 1964 deployment off Vietnam?

1. A Marine battalion landing team
2. Two Marine helicopter groups
3. Both 1 and 2 above
4. A SEABEE battalion

3-10. During which of the following months was the first seaplane base set up in Danang Bay?

1. July 1964
2. August 1965
3. September 1965
4. December 1965

3-11. According to Chaplain Jensen, what event(s) caused the cancellation of liberty in Danang and forced members of his crew to recognize the seriousness of the Vietnamese situation?

1. A large political demonstration
2. Bomb threats
3. Sniper attacks
4. Several attempts at sabotage

3-12. Aboard the CONSTELLATION, Chaplain Snelbaker discovered that a good way to meet the crew and find opportunities for counseling was to engage in which of the following activities?

1. Speak on the ship's public address system daily
2. Post notices throughout the ship
3. Sing contemporary music in the services
4. Spend time moving about the ship visiting

3-13. Most air operations aboard the CONSTELLATION during her 1964 deployment took place to fulfill which of the following missions?

1. Aerial reconnaissance and photography
2. Ferrying passengers
3. Pilot training
4. Air strikes

3-14. Aboard the OKLAHOMA CITY following the Gulf of Tonkin incident, routine Sunday services became impossible due to the heavy watch load. Which of the following actions did the chaplain take to help alleviate this problem?

1. Services were temporarily suspended
2. Services were shifted to Saturday evenings
3. Short services were held after each daylight watch
4. Prayers and a short sermon were read over the public address system

3-15. What event concerning the MSTS-chartered ship CARD happened in the Saigon River on 22 May 1964?

1. While refueling, it exploded
2. It was sunk by Viet Cong saboteurs
3. It was scuttled to avoid capture
4. The President of Vietnam paid an official visit

Learning Objective: Demonstrate familiarity with events and conditions in Vietnam during the period 1965-66.

3-16. On 6 February 1965, the Viet Cong attacked which of the following locations?

1. Pleiku
2. Nha Trang
3. Tuy Hoa
4. All of the above

3-17. In response to the attacks of 6 February 1965, the United States, either alone or together with South Vietnam, took which of the following actions?

1. The U.S. Navy initiated a blockade of Hanoi
2. The U.S. and South Vietnam launched air attacks against targets in North Vietnam
3. The U.S. sponsored a condemnation in the United Nations
4. The U.S. severed relations with North Vietnam
3-18. What lesson did Chaplain Begg learn as chaplain aboard the HANCOCK?
1. There are no atheists in foxholes
2. The Navy chaplain always gains more than he gives
3. Attendance in church increases with combat
4. Chapel services are secondary to the ship's mission

3-19. What total number of Navy chaplains was serving aboard ships in Vietnamese waters by late 1966?
1. 26
2. 30
3. 35
4. 42

3-20. What total number of different denominations was represented by Navy chaplains at the end of 1966?
1. 33
2. 38
3. 45
4. 49

3-21. Which of the following actions contributed to the broadening scope of religious coverage to shipboard personnel in 1965-66?
1. Dissemination of resources and training materials
2. An increase in chaplain's sea billets
3. A conscious effort to extend ministry to ships without chaplains
4. All of the above

Learning Objective: Demonstrate familiarity with the ministry of Navy chaplains and conditions in general aboard Military Sea Transportation Service (MSTS) Ships in the Vietnam era.

3-22. In late 1965 and early 1966, what total number of MSTS transports was engaged in the trooplift to Vietnam?
1. 16
2. 18
3. 19
4. 24

3-23. Before conversion to troop carriers, MSTS transports had been used to carry military dependents.
1. True
2. False

3-24. On the average, what total number of days did an MSTS troop transport take to sail from California to Vietnam?
1. 14 days
2. 16 days
3. 18 days
4. 21 days

3-25. In crossing the Pacific, MSTS troop transports usually visited which of the following ports?
1. Subic Bay
2. Pearl Harbor
3. Yokosuka
4. All of the above

3-26. What observation(s) did MSTS chaplains make about troops who were to be committed to combat?
1. They tended to gravitate toward the stability and security of eternal truths
2. They tended to be contemplative and sensitive, spiritually
3. Both 1 and 2 above
4. They tended to withdraw and avoid attachments

3-27. According to Chaplain Essinger, what liturgical ceremony provided a dramatic and spiritually uplifting climax to religious activities of every voyage?
1. Sunrise services the day of landing
2. Pre-debarkation service of communion
3. Special services the night before landing
4. A community hymn sing just before debarkation
3-28. Ecclesiastical supplies and equipment were provided MSTS chaplains by staff chaplains at which of the following locations?
   1. San Diego, California
   2. Oakland, California
   3. Brooklyn, New York
   4. Both 2 and 3 above

Learning Objective: Demonstrate knowledge of methods of extending ministry to units not normally assigned a chaplain.

3-29. The use of which of the following media or techniques was the most effective for extending the scope of ministry to fleet personnel?
   1. Radio
   2. Messages
   3. Circuit-riding
   4. Television

3-30. Using the medium or technique cited in question 3-29, a chaplain could provide coverage for what number of ships?
   1. 3 to 6
   2. 5 to 10
   3. 10 to 15
   4. 15 to 20

3-31. During what year did the first "holy helo hop" take place?
   1. 1948
   2. 1955
   3. 1962
   4. 1964

3-32. From the YORKTOWN, Chaplain Williams tried to provide coverage to other ships within what total number of miles?
   1. 75 miles
   2. 100 miles
   3. 110 miles
   4. 120 miles

3-33. A circuit-riding chaplain could visit different ships by which of the following means of transport?
   1. Highlining
   2. Small craft
   3. Helicopter
   4. All of the above

3-34. In November 1967, what total number of chaplains was assigned to COMSERVGRU THREE as circuit-riders?
   1. Six
   2. Two
   3. Five
   4. Four

3-35. A chaplain's tour aboard most WESTPAC ships normally lasted what total number of months?
   1. 12 months
   2. 18 months
   3. 24 months
   4. 36 months

3-36. What was the primary mission of the two helicopters aboard the SACRAMENTO?
   1. Reconnaissance
   2. Troop transport
   3. Search and rescue
   4. Vertical replenishment

3-37. According to Chaplain Senieur, what statement best describes the chief difference between the Service Force circuit-riding chaplain and other seagoing chaplains?
   1. Service Force chaplains were more junior
   2. The Service Force chaplain usually had only one opportunity to visit each ship
   3. Service Force chaplains were better supplied
   4. Service Force chaplains were more flexible

3-38. During the year beginning 1 June 1966, what number of visits, on the average, did Service Force circuit-riding chaplains pay to SEHVPAC ships and other units?
   1. 52
   2. 68
   3. 87
   4. 92

3-39. Of the Service Group circuit-riding chaplains, approximately what percent were Roman Catholic?
   1. 17%
   2. 33%
   3. 50%
   4. 66%
3-40. What port was "home" for all chaplains afloat in the Pacific, where ships were resupplied?
   1. Yokosuka
   2. Subic Ray
   3. Pearl Harbor
   4. San Francisco/Alameda

Learning Objective: Demonstrate familiarity with units, conditions, and the activities of chaplains in Operation Market Time.

3-41. Commander Mine Flotilla 1, which supplied units for Operation Market Time, was based at which of the following ports?
   1. Sasebo, Japan
   2. Yokosuka, Japan
   3. Guam
   4. Subic Bay

3-42. Units of Operation Market Time were responsible for guarding the Mekong River entrances and the Vietnamese coastline to the 17th parallel out to what total number of miles?
   1. 12 miles
   2. 25 miles
   3. 40 miles
   4. 50 miles

3-43. The EPPING FOREST's first patrol in Operation Market Time lasted what number of days?
   1. 17 days
   2. 25 days
   3. 33 days
   4. 40 days

3-44. What individual was the first Navy chaplain to be assigned to sea duty with the Coast Guard?
   1. LT R. R. Mitchell
   2. CDR B. H. Williams
   3. LT J. A. Williams
   4. CAPT J. E. Day

3-45. What number of chaplains served with the Coast Guard in Vietnam?
   1. One
   2. Two
   3. Three
   4. Five

3-46. The status of U.S. Coast Guard ships in Vietnam in December 1971 is best described by which of the following statements?
   1. They were active units of the Seventh Fleet
   2. They had been turned over to the South Vietnamese Navy
   3. They were an independent command
   4. They had all been sunk

Learning Objective: Demonstrate familiarity with conditions and chaplains' activities aboard aircraft carriers in Vietnam.

3-47. Approximately what percent of Navy chaplains in Vietnam was assigned to NAVAIRPAC aircraft carriers and seaplane tenders?
   1. 5%
   2. 10%
   3. 15%
   4. 30%

3-48. What number of chaplains provided ministry for the 3,500 to 5,800 people serving aboard NAVAIRPAC aircraft carriers?
   1. Five
   2. Two
   3. Seven
   4. Four

3-49. Because of the heavy workload, carrier chaplains were not expected to extend their ministries to other ships.
   1. True
   2. False

3-50. Which of the following methods proved to be effective for a successful carrier-based chaplain?
   1. Closed-circuit television
   2. Discussion groups
   3. Personal counseling
   4. All of the above
3-51. During a deployment aboard a carrier, chaplains would often counsel what number of men?

1. Less than 500
2. 1,000
3. 1,500
4. Over 2,500

3-52. What activity did the carrier-based chaplain usually carry on during combat air strikes?

1. Carried on business as usual
2. Caught up on admin work
3. Closely followed the action
4. Retired to his stateroom to pray

3-53. According to Chaplain Hill, individual memorial services for pilots killed in action were replaced by what kind of service or commemoration?

1. Special prayers the next Sunday, with a full service for all KIAs later
2. A short prayer service
3. A Roll of Honor on the quarterdeck
4. A letter from the entire squadron to the next of kin

3-54. Chaplain LeMaster combined his memorial services with what liturgy or activity?

1. A discussion group
2. A sermon on courage
3. Holy Communion
4. A Service of Dedication

3-55. What individual was Chief of Chaplains in 1970?

1. RADM R. H. Trower
2. RADM J. W. Kelly
3. RADM F. L. Garrett
4. RADM L. W. Dodson, Jr.

3-56. What three aircraft carriers suffered catastrophic fires in the period 1966-69 in Vietnamese waters?

1. CORAL SEA, FORRESTAL, ENTERPRISE
2. ENTERPRISE, ORISKANY, FORRESTAL
3. ORISKANY, FORRESTAL, LEXINGTON
4. FORRESTAL, ENTERPRISE, CONSTELLATION

3-57. LCDR William J. Garrity, a Roman Catholic chaplain, was killed in a fire aboard which of the following ships?

1. ORISKANY
2. CORAL SEA
3. FORRESTAL
4. ENTERPRISE

3-58. Just after the death of Chaplain Garrity, his ship received help from the chaplains of which of the following ships?

1. FORRESTAL
2. LEXINGTON
3. ENTERPRISE
4. CONSTELLATION

3-59. What was the date of the tragic fire aboard the FORRESTAL?

1. 26 October 1966
2. 31 May 1967
3. 29 July 1967
4. 20 October 1967

3-60. Which of the following events caused the fire aboard the FORRESTAL?

1. A boilerroom explosion
2. Impact with a floating mine
3. An explosion in a flare locker
4. The accidental firing of a rocket on the flight deck

3-61. What location was Chaplain Gaughan's general quarters station aboard the FORRESTAL?

1. The bridge
2. Sickbay
3. A ready room
4. The ship's chapel

3-62. What number of men lost their lives in the FORRESTAL fire?

1. 76
2. 84
3. 107
4. 134

3-63. What number of aircraft was destroyed in the three carrier fires in Vietnam?

1. 36
2. 42
3. 79
4. 81
Learning Objective: Demonstrate familiarity with conditions and chaplains’ activities aboard hospital ships.

3-64. Which of the following hospital ships was/were reactivated for service in Vietnam?

1. HAVEN
2. SANCTUARY
3. REPOSE
4. Both 2 and 3 above

3-65. When flight quarters were called aboard U.S. hospital ships, which, if any, of the following actions did the chaplains take?

1. Both Protestant and Catholic reported
2. Protestant and Catholic alternated in reporting
3. They went to their staterooms and awaited further calls
4. None

3-66. Which of the following personnel received treatment in U.S. hospital ships?

1. U.S. military personnel
2. North Vietnamese prisoners
3. Some civilians
4. All of the above
Assignment 4

Ministering Ashore

Textbook Assignment: Chapter 4 (pages 63 through 80)

Learning Objective: Demonstrate familiarity with conditions, events, and people associated with the 1968 Tet Offensive.

4-1. During the last few months of 1967, the situation in the city of Saigon could be best characterized by which of the following descriptions?

1. Relatively tranquil
2. Uneasy
3. Under siege
4. Chaotic

4-2. During late 1967, intercultural tensions surfaced in Saigon. The main conflict was between the population of Saigon and what group of people?

1. College students
2. The American military
3. The North Vietnamese
4. Refugees from rural areas

4-3. According to Van Minh’s article, a chief cause of the tensions in Saigon was which of the following conditions?

1. Prostitution was rampant
2. Shantytowns were overcrowded with refugees
3. Few Americans had been prepared for local cultural and living conditions
4. Communists could not be distinguished from the local population

4-4. In many ways, the cause of distrust, suspicion, and unrest in Saigon was the conflict in what area?

1. The Mekong Delta
2. Saigon itself
3. The Central Highlands
4. The northern provinces

4-5. The Personal Response Program was developed to provide military personnel with a better understanding of which of the following aspects of Vietnam?

1. Religion
2. Culture
3. Traditions
4. All of the above

4-6. What person was the leader of North Vietnam’s National Liberation Front?

1. Le Duc Tho
2. Nguyen Cao Ky
3. Ho Chi Minh
4. Nguyen Van Thieu

4-7. In late 1967, which of the following men was/were elected to lead the South Vietnamese government?

1. Nguyen Cao Ky
2. Nguyen Van Thieu
3. Both 1 and 2 above
4. Le Duc Tho

4-8. On what date did the Viet Cong launch their Tet Offensive?

1. 30 January 1968
2. 7 February 1968
3. 22 February 1968
4. 14 March 1968

4-9. Which of the following actions was/were taken as a result of the Tet Offensive?

1. A civilian curfew was imposed
2. A military curfew was imposed
3. Martial law was declared
4. All of the above
4-10. Which of the following chaplains was NAVSUPPACT Saigon senior chaplain during the 1968 Tet Offensive?
1. LCDR M. Eller
2. LT A. B. Koeneman
3. CDR J. J. Killeen
4. CDR R. A. Canfield

4-11. What number of Americans, if any, was killed defending cities during the 1968 Tet Offensive?
1. 2,500
2. 12,500
3. 22,000
4. None

4-12. What event took place at Ban Me Thout during the Tet Offensive?
1. Mass burials took place
2. Agent ORANGE was first used
3. Several medical missionaries were killed
4. A prisoner of war camp was established

4-13. What individual was American Ambassador to South Vietnam during the Tet Offensive?
1. Nelson Rockefeller
2. Ellsworth Bunker
3. William Westmoreland
4. Henry Cabot Lodge

4-14. Although the Tet Offensive was a psychological victory, it was a military disaster.
1. True
2. False

4-15. What total number of subordinate commands and detachments was supported by NAVSUPPACT Saigon?
1. 7
2. 11
3. 14
4. 19

4-16. NAVSUPPACT Saigon chaplains, unable to provide coverage for all naval personnel in their jurisdiction, appealed for and received help from which of the following organizations?
1. U.S. Air Force chaplains
2. U.S. Army chaplains
3. Both 1 and 2 above
4. Australian Army chaplains

4-17. At which, if any, of the following locations were there two separate major commands, a Naval Air Facility and a Naval Support Activity?
1. Danang
2. Saigon
3. Cam Ranh Bay
4. None of the above

Learning Objective: Demonstrate familiarity with activities of chaplains assigned to the Mobile Riverine Force (MRF).

4-18. What was the primary mission of the Mobile Riverine Force?
1. Preventing smuggling
2. Carrying supplies in-country
3. Acting as an amphibious strike force against the Viet Cong
4. Transporting personnel

4-19. What official provided operational control and logistic support for the MRF?
1. NAVFORV for logistics and NAVSUPPACT Saigon for operations
2. NAVFORV for operations and NAVSUPPACT Saigon for logistics
3. NAVSUPPACT Saigon provided both
4. NAVFORV provided both

4-20. For approximately what number of years was the MRF in operation?
1. 1 1/2 years
2. 2 1/2 years
3. 5 years
4. 4 years

4-21. What total number of chaplains provided religious coverage to MRF units?
1. 5
2. 7
3. 9
4. 12
Learning Objective: Demonstrate familiarity with activities of chaplains and conditions in II Corps.

4-31. Which of the following bases was NOT occupied by naval units in II Corps?

1. Nha Trang
2. Qui Nhon
3. Danang Bay
4. Cam Ranh Bay

4-32. Approximately what number of men was stationed at the three naval facilities in II Corps near the end of 1967?

1. 600
2. 1,000
3. 1,500
4. 2,200

4-33. Transportation was NOT a major difficulty for chaplains in II Corps because of which of the following factors?

1. All naval units were located near major airports
2. A helicopter and crew were assigned solely for the chaplains' use
3. Coastal patrol boats connected all bases
4. The highways were in good repair

4-34. In what location were chapel services held during Chaplain Collins' tour at Cam Ranh Bay?

1. The officers' mess
2. A Quonset hut
3. An open-air pavilion
4. A newly constructed chapel

4-35. What organization or company constructed the pulpit for the Cam Ranh Bay chapel?

1. The supply department
2. A local church
3. The base carpentry shop
4. A civilian company
4-36. In late 1967 coverage to naval personnel in Qui Nhon and Nha Trang became difficult. Although Navy chaplains made frequent visits, what group of individuals, if anyone, provided day-to-day coverage?

1. U.S. Army
2. U.S. Air Force
3. Lay leaders
4. No one

4-37. In what location was the largest concentration of naval personnel in II Corps?

1. Cam Ranh Bay
2. Nha Trang
3. Danang
4. Qui Nhon

4-38. Construction on a new chapel at NAF Cam Ranh Bay began in August 1968. What seating capacity did it have?

1. Less than 75
2. Approximately 100
3. Approximately 125
4. More than 150

4-39. At NSF Cam Ranh Bay, chapel services were held in a chapel combined with a

1. mess hall
2. theater
3. bomb shelter
4. briefing room

4-40. Which of the following responsibilities was/were (a) primary role(s) for the COMNAVFORV chaplain?

1. Supervision of COMNAVFORV chaplains
2. Welfare and morale of all naval personnel in Vietnam
3. Ministering to Saigon-based personnel
4. All of the above

4-41. Which of the following was NOT a method of transportation used by the force chaplain when visiting naval units?

1. Fixed-wing aircraft
2. River patrol boat
3. Jeep
4. Helicopter

4-42. In 1968, at the peak of American involvement in Vietnam, what number of chaplains was with naval units?

1. 27
2. 32
3. 41
4. 59

4-43. In late 1968, NAVSUPPACT Saigon moved its headquarters from Saigon to which of the following?

1. Nha Be
2. Cat Lo
3. Chu Lai
4. Quang Try

4-44. Of all Navy chaplains in the Saigon area in late 1968, what number of chaplains was actually functioning as chaplains?

1. Two out of four
2. Two out of seven
3. Three out of seven
4. Four out of six

Learning Objective: Demonstrate familiarity with the Personal Response Program and ACTOV.

4-45. The Personal Response Program extended to the Navy in 1967 was actually established by which of the following services?

1. U.S. Army
2. U.S. Air Force
3. U.S. Marine Corps
4. American Red Cross

4-46. The objectives of the Personal Response Program included which of the following goals?

1. Identify positive and negative cross-cultural interactions
2. Promote understanding of the peoples of the Mekong Delta
3. Gather information on the religion and values of the Vietnamese
4. All of the above
1. True
2. False

4-48. Which of the following goals identifies the purpose of ACTOV?
1. To understand Vietnamese values
2. To identify North Vietnamese
3. To maintain security in the Mekong Delta
4. To accelerate turnover of the war effort and materials to the Vietnamese

4-49. Which of the following descriptions best depicts what Chaplain Fedje started out with when first tasked with adapting the Personal Response philosophy to ACTOV?
1. Absolutely nothing
2. An office and one Yeoman
3. An organized, but ineffective program
4. A fully operative, efficient program

4-50. Within 6 months of learning of ACTOV, what number of experienced orientation teams had Chaplain Fedje formed?
1. Six
2. Seven
3. Nine
4. Four

4-51. When Chaplain Samuel took over Personal Response in August 1970, the program was oriented toward which of the following goals?
1. Winning the war
2. American withdrawal
3. Personal counseling
4. Understanding the Vietnamese

4-52. During the later stages of Personal Response, both Chaplains Samuel and Stewart extended training to which, if any, of the following areas?
1. Race relations among U.S. personnel
2. Preparing Americans for returning home
3. Indoctrinating Vietnamese war brides on American culture
4. None of the above

4-53. Which of the following methods was/were used by Personal Response for training purposes?
1. Basic language instruction
2. Role reversal
3. Analysis of incidents
4. All of the above

Learning Objective: Demonstrate familiarity with conditions and activities of chaplains assigned to garrison duty in Vietnam.

4-54. Chaplain Nordstrom helped raise funds for a refugee village near Danang. Most of the money was used to build which of the following buildings?
1. Housing
2. A chapel
3. An infirmary
4. A kitchen

4-55. In what location were most of the personnel assigned to NAVSUPPACT Danang quartered?
1. Camp Tien Sha
2. Quang Try
3. BEQs at Danang
4. Underground bunkers

4-56. Which of the following chaplain’s tasks took a major portion of the typical chaplain’s time in Vietnam?
1. Baptisms
2. Counseling
3. Conversions
4. Preaching

4-57. Chaplains visited hospitals at which of the following locations?
1. Vung Tau
2. Danang
3. Cam Ranh Bay
4. All of the above

4-58. By early 1968, what number of patients was being admitted monthly to the station hospital at Danang?
1. Less than 250
2. Approximately 700
3. Approximately 1,200
4. More than 2,500
4-59. Many chaplains found that performing visits to hospitalized personnel often gave the chaplains themselves a renewal.

1. True
2. False

4-60. What factor was the chief difference in the ministry between sea- and shore-based chaplains in Vietnam?

1. Physical environment
2. Problems in counseling
3. Amount of stress
4. Intensity of emotions
Assignment 5

Tapering To Disengagement

Textbook Assignment: Chapter 5 (pages 81 through 93)


5-1. What total number of American troops was withdrawn from Vietnam between June 1969 and August 1970?
1. 25,000
2. 75,000
3. 100,000
4. 125,000

5-2. What location was the original "home base" for circuit-riding chaplains in the Central Delta?
1. Char Doc
2. Sa Dec
3. An Long
4. Ben Tre

5-3. Which of the following events was the reason for discontinuing the use of Sa Dec as the chaplains' home base?
1. The NAVSUPPACT detachment at Dong Tam was covered by Army chaplains
2. The NAVSUPPACT detachment at My Tho was closed
3. The MRF was decommissioned
4. All of the above

5-4. Which of the following phrases best defines the Giant Slingshot?
1. A type of tent
2. An aircraft carrier
3. A particular circuit covered by naval chaplains
4. A type of hand-held rocket

5-5. What kind of program, using a chaplain and a physician, was begun on the Dong Tam circuit?
1. Drug awareness
2. Race relations
3. Effects of stress
4. Venereal disease prevention

5-6. Which of the following individuals was the first instructor of English for the Vietnamese officers at Dong Tam?
1. CDR Dong, the Deputy Commander
2. Chaplain Hiers
3. Chaplain Pilarski
4. Chaplain Caldwell

5-7. Which of the following institutions was "adopted" by the base at Dong Tam?
1. Orphanage
2. Hospital
3. Leper colony
4. Church school

5-8. What building was converted into a chapel at Dong Tam with the disestablishment of the River Flotilla?
1. A theater
2. A mess hall
3. The MRF offices
4. A laundry

5-9. In what month and year did Chaplain Westling make his last circuit to Dong Tam?
1. March 1971
2. April 1971
3. May 1971
4. January 1972
5-10. In 1971, all U.S. Navy operating units in Vietnam were turned over to the South Vietnamese Navy, with what exceptions, if any?

1. Support bases
2. Mobile Riverine Force
3. Coast Guard patrol boats
4. None

5-11. In May 1971, Chaplain Hiers was assigned to a newly established program with which of the following purposes?

1. To ease the Navy's withdrawal
2. To prepare personnel for return to the United States
3. To teach English to Vietnamese dependents
4. To help Navy personnel with drug problems

Learning Objective: Demonstrate familiarity with special projects undertaken or directed by chaplains.

5-12. During 1970-71 in the central and lower Mekong Delta, a great challenge was the encouragement of pacification through

1. arming friendly villagers
2. assistance with self-help projects
3. a strong military presence
4. attacking known Viet Cong strongholds

5-13. It was usually the chaplain's job to act as civic action officer for his unit.

1. True
2. False

5-14. Besides obvious benefits to the Vietnamese people, civic action projects also resulted in which of the following rewards?

1. Americans were brought into close contact with the local population
2. American morale was improved
3. Both 1 and 2 above
4. Americans were kept busy

5-15. Which of the following projects was NOT among those helped by American civic aid?

1. Schools
2. Orphanages
3. Churches
4. Private homes

5-16. In helping the orphanage at Sa Dec, the special infant's formula used during the epidemic of intestinal illness was brought from

1. Japan
2. Saigon
3. California
4. the Philippines

5-17. Which of the following civic institutions received help from naval units at My Tho?

1. A Protestant orphanage
2. A Catholic orphanage
3. An old people's home
4. All of the above

5-18. Which of the following methods did the NAVSUPPACT Detachment at My Tho use to get the clothing, toys, and other supplies they donated to various causes?

1. Making the items themselves
2. Writing to hometown newspapers
3. Asking their families for assistance
4. Both 2 and 3 above

5-19. In what location was the orphanage and school of the Convent of the Good Shepherd, which was helped by the crew of USS GARRETT COUNTY?

1. My Tho
2. Sa Dec
3. Vinh Long
4. Cam Ranh Bay

Learning Objective: Demonstrate familiarity with conditions and chaplains' activities during the reduction of American involvement in Vietnam.
5-20. From January to September 1970, a new 150-seat chapel was constructed at which of the following locations?

1. CBMU 302
2. Naval Support Activity, Cam Ranh Bay
3. Naval Air Facility, Cam Ranh Bay
4. NAVSUPPACT Detachment, My Tho

5-21. In a program supervised and scheduled by chaplains at Cam Ranh Bay, representatives of which of the following organizations visited weekly?

1. Red Cross
2. USO
3. Navy Relief
4. American Bible Society

5-22. For what reason did Chaplain Summers arrange for tours to Binh Ba Island?

1. Personnel could participate in picnics and team sports
2. Personnel could see living and working conditions of the Vietnamese Navy
3. Personnel would be able to attend religious retreats
4. Chaplain Summers could visit a monastery

5-23. At NAF Cam Ranh Bay, the chaplain was NOT the civic action officer.

1. True
2. False

5-24. Which of the following chaplains was the last Navy chaplain to serve at NAF Cam Ranh Bay?

1. LT S. J. Habiby
2. LT M. V. Summers
3. LT G. L. Cook
4. LCDR E. H. Campbell

5-25. In November 1970, which of the following chaplains was responsible for coordinating and supervising activities of all circuit-riding chaplains?

1. Force chaplain
2. PACFLT chaplain
3. Squadron chaplain
4. Senior chaplain, NAVSUPPACT Saigon

5-26. In late 1970, due to the withdrawal of American Forces, what total number of circuit-riding chaplains was left in Vietnam?

1. 7
2. 11
3. 14
4. 18

5-27. When his billet was consolidated, Chaplain Clayton, who had been the NAVSUPPACT Saigon senior chaplain, was given which of the following assignments?

1. COMNAVFORV force chaplain
2. NAVFORV force chaplain
3. Senior chaplain at NAVSUPPACT
4. Rotation out of Vietnam

5-28. By February 1972, chaplains assigned to naval units in Vietnam had dropped to which of the following levels?

1. Seven
2. Six
3. Five
4. Four

5-29. In 1971, what number of Protestant and Catholic services were scheduled every Sunday at the Logistic Support Base, Binh Thuy?

1. One Protestant and one Catholic
2. One Protestant and two Catholic
3. Two Protestant and one Catholic
4. Two Protestant and two Catholic

5-30. The consensus of opinion with chaplains who served with both Marines and naval units in Vietnam was that the ministry was essentially the same.

1. True
2. False

5-31. In early 1972, tours of duty for Navy chaplains became less and less typical due to

1. budget cuts
2. lack of transportation
3. the reduction of American involvement
4. extraordinary monsoon rains
5-32. Which of the following reasons is NOT listed by Chaplain H. L. Martin as a cause of the uniqueness of his tour?
1. Rising drug abuse
2. Fear that forces were being reduced too quickly
3. Frustration over the prolongation of the war
4. A shift from a combat to an advisory role

5-33. In his circuit, Chaplain Martin visited ships in which, if any, of the following waters?
1. Gulf of Tonkin
2. Gulf of Siam
3. South China Sea
4. None of the above

5-34. Which of the following suggestions was NOT included in Chaplain Martin's "Practical Suggestions for Circuit Riders"?
1. Utilize lay leaders
2. Expect unusual treatment while on the circuit
3. Keep thorough records
4. Keep in contact with all activities served when away

5-35. As illustrated by Chaplain Mintjal, one of the most valuable attributes a chaplain could possess was
1. tranquility
2. record keeping ability
3. a good memory
4. persistence

5-36. Chaplain Hiers wrote that "a relevant faith grows stronger through
1. prayer"
2. adversity"
3. understanding"
4. exercise"

5-37. In what city did the peace talks aimed at ending the Vietnam conflict take place?
1. Hanoi
2. Geneva
3. Helsinki
4. Paris

5-38. During what month and year was the Vietnam cease-fire signed?
1. June 1972
2. November 1972
3. January 1973
4. January 1974

5-39. By mid-1972, what number of Navy chaplains was assigned to the Military Assistance Command, Vietnam?
1. One
2. Two
3. Three
4. Four

5-40. Chaplain Fitzsimmons, the last chaplain assigned to a naval unit in Vietnam, served for what period of time in Vietnam?
1. 4 months
2. 6 months
3. 9 months
4. 12 months

5-41. The ministry of chaplains in Vietnam differed from any previous ministry in that, although the deprivations and fearfulness of the battlefield were the same, the individual service member was different in which of the following areas?
1. Morale
2. Attitude
3. Motivation
4. All of the above

5-42. Which of the following actions was NOT a central factor contributing to the frustration and confusion of the average military man in Vietnam?
1. Stories of prisoners of war
2. Breakdown of the chain of command
3. Prolongation of the peace negotiations
4. Cessation and resumption of bombing in North Vietnam

Learning Objective: Demonstrate familiarity with the return of American prisoners of war, and the activities of Navy chaplains in connection with them.
5-43. During what month and year was the first American prisoner captured in Vietnam?

1. August 1964
2. September 1964
3. January 1965
4. March 1966

5-44. The American prisoners of war were to be released in what number of increments?

1. One
2. Two
3. Three
4. Four

5-45. In what order were American prisoners of war released from North Vietnam?

1. Order of seniority, senior to junior
2. Order of seniority, junior to senior
3. Camp by camp
4. Order of capture

5-46. Between 27 January and 1 April 1973, a total of what number of Americans had been released by North Vietnam?

1. 470
2. 566
3. 591
4. 620

5-47. Chaplains of which of the following services were heavily involved in the return of the prisoners of war?

1. Air Force
2. Army
3. Navy
4. All of the above

5-48. After departing Vietnam, what location was the first stop for returning prisoners of war?

1. Clark Air Force Base, Philippines
2. Subic Bay, Philippines
3. Yokosuka, Japan
4. Agana, Guam

5-49. What number of Navy chaplains was assigned to the initial processing of returning prisoners of war?

1. Six
2. Seven
3. Three
4. Nine

5-50. Which of the following religions/denominations was NOT represented by Navy chaplains in the initial processing of returning prisoners of war?

1. Roman Catholic
2. Episcopal
3. Jewish
4. United Methodist

5-51. When the prisoners of war reached Clark Air Force Rase, during what hours was the hospital chapel manned by the chaplains?

1. During services only
2. During daylight hours
3. Chaplain on call
4. Manned 24 hours a day

5-52. Which of the following persons was Chief of Chaplains during the time of Project Homecoming?

1. R. H. Trower
2. F. L. Garrett
3. A. B. Aronis
4. J. C. Keenon

5-53. The return of the Prisoners of war from Vietnam was designated Project

1. Return
2. Recovery
3. Homecoming
4. Restoration

Learning Objective: Demonstrate familiarity with the final stages of involvement and withdrawal of American forces in Vietnam.

5-54. By March 1974, intelligence reports estimated North Vietnamese Army strength in South Vietnam to be at what level?

1. 165,000
2. 185,000
3. 196,000
4. 200,000

5-55. In late December 1974, the North Vietnamese began an offensive in what location?

1. Phouc Long Province
2. Kontum
3. Pleiku
4. Danang
5-56. On what date did Danang fall to the North Vietnamese?
1. 25 March 1974
2. 29 April 1974
3. 31 August 1974
4. 25 March 1975

5-57. What name was given to the operation designed to evacuate as many people as possible from South Vietnam?
1. Homecoming
2. Frequent Wind
3. Heartbreak Ridge
4. Pickett's Forest

5-58. The evacuation task force consisted of what number of ships?
1. 20
2. 30
3. 40
4. More than 40

5-59. The last Navy chaplain to leave Saigon was serving with what unit?
1. 2nd Battalion 4th Marines
2. 4th Battalion 2nd Marines
3. HQ Battalion 10th Marines
4. USMC Detachment, American Embassy

5-60. The last helicopter departed from the roof of the American Embassy on what date?
1. 25 March 1975
2. 18 April 1975
3. 30 April 1975
4. 4 July 1975

5-61. How long after the final American helicopter departed did Saigon fall?
1. 1 week
2. 2 days
3. 3 hours
4. 30 minutes

5-62. In the final days before the fall of Saigon, what number of people was evacuated by helicopter from the city?
1. 2,650
2. 6,500
3. More than 8,000
4. More than 10,000

5-63. With the departure of American forces from Vietnam, all evacuation routes were sealed so that virtually no one could flee the country.
1. True
2. False