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Twenty-Five Ways the Chaplain Can Enhance Command Morale through Chaplain Support Activities

**By
Scott Paxman**

Dedicated to my wife Oscania

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Authored by Scott Paxman
Brigham Young University
For more information contact
spaxman777@gmail.com

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Contents

Introduction	1
Overview of Chaplain Holistic Care.....	10
Military Morale	19
Morale and Support Activities	32
Conclusion	42
Chaplain Support Activities	44
Steel Beach Picnic.....	45
Navy Swim Call.....	47
Battle of the Bands (Music in General)	49
Humor	51
Holiday Celebrations:	53
Christmas	53
Easter	55
Halloween (Truck or Treat)	57
Holiday Turkey Trot or Turkey Bowl	58
United Through Reading	59
Chaplain Tent.....	61
“Chappy Mart”	63

Sports Events & Friendly Competitions	65
Sports with the Locals	67
Chaplain Challenge.....	69
Spiritual Fitness Runs	71
Free Surfing Lessons.....	73
Rock Climbing Date-Night.....	75
Physical Exercise	77
Spiritual Fitness Retreats	79
Breakfast + Movie + Historical Sites.....	81
Volunteer.....	83
Service	85
Mindfulness & Meditation.....	87
Yoga	89
Nature	91
Concluding Tips & Ideas for Chaplains Support Activities	93
References	95

Introduction

The information provided in this booklet emphasizes the chaplain's role as advisor to the commander on matters of morale and encourages chaplains to engage in morale-building initiatives. It also develops a resource for military chaplains that explains chaplain support activities that they can use to improve morale in the field.

A key component included in this resource is the significant implications of morale on individual well-being, overall mission readiness, and the success of the entire unit. Morale has been praised as one of the most vital factors in combat success and, simultaneously, the chaplain has been identified as a key contributor to unit morale. Therefore, this booklet provides chaplains with a resource, accessible online, that includes the most effective events, activities, and practices, that chaplains can implement to improve unit morale, cohesion, and spiritual fitness. The chaplain support activities provided include the necessary details required to replicate the morale-building activity in the chaplain's assigned unit and area of operation.

This resource is intended to be used by Latter-day Saint military chaplains to assist them in fulfilling their unique role in addressing the crucial spiritual facet of morale. It should be used as a reference from which ideas can be drawn and imitated as the chaplain plans ways to improve morale by chaplain support activities.

Morale for chaplains has historically been an important aspect of their ministry. However, often chaplains are frequently asked, "How's the morale chaplain?" like we have the answer, or we can without hesitation explain the question. The following information in this booklet gives the reader an extensive overview of *morale* through a survey of the literature, military publications, and other sources. It also reviews and gives examples of how chaplains contribute to the well-being of the command primarily through chaplain sup-

port activities. In this introduction essential background information is given, contemporary military issues are explored, terms defined, and the chaplain's important role in addressing morale explained.

Today, less than 1% of the United States population serves in the armed forces. The Department of Defense (DoD) data shows 1,346,056 servicemembers currently on Active Duty and around 800,000 in the reserves.¹ As part of their military life, this population of over two million Americans faces significant difficulties. In an article by Lolita M. Burrell and others, they suggested that the lifestyle of the military can be stressful on the well-being of servicemembers and their families due to deployments, relocations, relational strains, existential issues, and the constant threat of the unknown.² If servicemembers remain discouraged and alone in confronting these issues then they will be at a higher risk for mental illnesses including depression, anxiety, PTSD, and suicidality.³

One of the many approaches to bolster servicemembers is by maintaining mil-

1. "Department of Defense Active Duty Military Personnel by Rank/Grade," United States Department of Defense, 28 February 2018, <https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/appj/dwp/rest/download?fileName=rg1802.pdf&groupName=milRankGrade>; United States Coast Guard, "Workforce," United States Coast Guard, accessed July 7, 2020, <https://www.work.uscg.mil/Workforce/>; DMDC, "DoD Personnel, Workforce Reports & Publications," May 2020, accessed July 7, 2020, https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/appj/dwp/rest/download?fileName=DRS_42486_SelRes_202005.pdf&groupName=resRankGrade.

2. Lolita M. Burrell, Gary A. Adams, Doris Briley Durand, and Carl Andrew Castro, "The Impact of Military Lifestyle Demands on Well-being, Army, and Family Outcomes," *Armed Forces & Society* 33, no. 1 (October 2006): 44.

3. Rajeev Ramchand, et al., "Prevalence of, Risk Factors For, and Consequences of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder and Other Mental Health Problems in Military Populations Deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan," *Current Psychiatry Reports* 17, no. 5 (May 2015): 6; Brian N. Smith, et al., "Main and Interactive Effects of Social Support in Predicting Mental Health Symptoms in Men and Women Following Military Stressor Exposure," *Anxiety, Stress & Coping* 26, no. 1 (January 2013): 64.

itary morale. Military morale is “the quality which makes men [and women] endure and show courage in times of fatigue and danger.”⁴ It inspires warriors to perform their duty “despite every opposing force or influence.”⁵ Morale serves as a critical function in unifying servicemembers in an esprit de corps that encourages them with the idea of joint purpose and meaning. Strong morale contributes to physical, mental, and spiritual fitness, which in turn affects mission readiness.⁶

Military chaplains act as advisers to the commander and staff “on religion, ethics, morals, and morale, and their impact on all aspects of military operations.”⁷ It is the duty of the chaplain to take the initiative, get involved, and propose policies or programs to enhance morale and thereby improve the well-being and readiness of the command. While not required to do so, effective chaplains have historically hosted chaplain support activities, in addition to their providing religious support, to enhance command morale.⁸

4. Viscount Montgomery, “Morale in Battle: Address Given to The Royal Society of Medicine,” *The British Medical Journal*, 2, no. 4479 (November 1946): 704.

5. James Ulio, “Military Morale,” *American Journal of Sociology* 47, no. 3 (November 1941): 321.

6. Department of the Army, *Religious Support and Internal Advisement*, ATP 1-05.04 (Washington, DC: Headquarters Department of the Army, 2017), 2-44, 2-45; see also Mark Tidd, “Department of the Navy Strategic Plan for Religious Ministry 2014–2019,” Department of the Navy, accessed May 27, 2020, <https://www.navy.mil/docs/2014-2019-StratPlan-ReligiousMinistry.pdf>.

7. Department of the Army, *Religious Support*, FM 1-05 (Washington, DC: Headquarters Department of the Army, 2019), 1-2.

8. “Chaplain Support Activities,” BYU Chaplaincy Program: Resources and Materials for Military Chaplains, accessed July 14, 2020, <https://machap.prod.brigham-young.psdops.com/chaplain-activities/programs>; see also Department of the Army, *Army Chaplain Corps Activities*, AR 165-1 (Washington, DC: Headquarters Department of the Army, June 2015): 1.

Brief Historical Background

The use of chaplains in the military dates back to ancient times. For example, the Hebrews had spiritual leaders assigned to their armies to increase morale and courage. “When you are about to go into battle, the priest shall come forward and address the army. He shall say: ‘Hear, Israel: Today you are going into battle against your enemies. Do not be fainthearted or afraid; do not panic or be terrified by them. For the LORD your God is the one who goes with you’” (NIV Deuteronomy 20:2–4). For these ancient Israelites, the priest, or chaplain, served a spiritual function to incite courage, moral duty, and, in a general sense, increase morale. Throughout the Book of Mormon, certain military figures are recorded performing the same spiritual functions.⁹ This tradition continued throughout history. In the Great Northern War in the 1700s, historians concurred that “the soldiers’ morale and discipline instilled by chaplains contributed to the Swedish victories.”¹⁰

In American history, George Washington approved chaplains in the Continental Army in 1775. Soon after, Congress recognized chaplains for the first time on 29 July 1775. This day is consequently celebrated as the official birthday of the army chaplaincy.¹¹ Chaplains have subsequently continued to serve by providing “traditional support” and ensuring guaranteed rights like the free

9. Vance Theodore, Kenneth Alford, Roger Keller, and Allen Blake Boatright (eds.), *Out of Obscurity and into the Light: Latter-day Saint Military Chaplains: Developments, History, and Ministry* (Provo, UT: BYU Academic Publishing, 2019), 61; see also Alma 43:23, 46:12 and 3 Nephi 3:19.

10. David Gudmundsson, “The Consolation of Soldiers: Religious Life in the Swedish Army During the Great Northern War,” *Scandinavian Journal of History* 39, no. 2 (May 2014): 213.

11. Parker C. Thomas, *From Its European Antecedents to 1791: The United States Army Chaplaincy* Vol. 1 (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Chief of Chaplains, Department of the Army, 1977), 106.

exercise of religion.¹² It was President Abraham Lincoln who expanded the military chaplaincy in 1861 to “help maintain the social happiness and moral improvement of the troops.”¹³ President Lincoln believed that more chaplains in the Union Army would “raise Northern morale by helping volunteers adjust to army life and become better integrated into their units.”¹⁴ Similarly, many Confederate generals also recognized the positive effect of chaplains on combat efficiency and army well-being.¹⁵ Historian Pamela Robinson-Durso noted that the use of chaplains “was perhaps the greatest single institution in the maintenance of morale in the Southern army.”¹⁶

In more recent history, chaplains have deployed in every major mission or conflict. During the Korean War, chaplain Sam Davies was captured with wounded soldiers and kept up their morale. Thousands of servicemen died in captivity and forced marches, but chaplain Davies continued his pastoral work, religious services, and singing hymns with the prisoners.¹⁷

In short, military chaplains have filled a vital role throughout history and have consistently been seen as valuable assets by both military and political leaders. With today’s need for empirical validation and evidence-based

12. *Encyclopedia.com*, “Religion in the Military,” 2017, accessed October 21, 2019, <https://www.encyclopedia.com/history/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/religion-military>.

13. *Encyclopedia.com*, “Chaplains,” Gale Library of Daily Life: American Civil War, 2017, accessed October 21, 2019, <https://www.encyclopedia.com/history/applied-and-social-sciences-magazines/chaplains>.

14. *Encyclopedia.com*, “Chaplains.”

15. Pamela Robinson-Durso, “Chaplains in the Confederate Army,” *Journal of Church & State* 33, no. 4, (Autumn 1991): 748.

16. Robinson-Durso, “Chaplains in the Confederate Army,” 763.

17. “The Rev ‘Sam’ Davies: Register Army Chaplain Who was Captured with Wounded Soldiers During the Korean War and Kept Up Their Morale.” *The Times*, Mar 30, 2009. <https://search.proquest.com/docview/320055816?accountid=4488>.

approaches, the efficacy of a chaplain has been subject to evaluation. Nonetheless, chaplains will be shown to be efficacious in not only their religious functions but also in their morale initiatives.

The Need for Military Chaplains

As already stated, the primary duties and purposes of military chaplains are to advise the command on ethics, morals, and morale, and to provide religious support.¹⁸ Chaplains also act as gatekeepers concerning the free exercise of religion—a first amendment right. In 1986, the constitutionality of the chaplaincy was challenged in the case of *Katcoff v. Marsh*. It was found that the chaplaincy was necessary to provide for the “service member’s rights (religious freedom) under the Free Exercise Clause.”¹⁹ While the federal courts have defended the constitutionality of chaplains, their actual effectiveness in improving military readiness is still a valid question.²⁰ This resource provides suggestions by demonstrating specifically how chaplain contributions enhance “unit readiness” and increase mission accomplishment in the military through chaplain support activities.²¹

18. See the following policies and regulations about the roles and responsibilities of armed forces chaplains: Department of the Navy, *Religious Ministry*, SECNAVINST 1730. 7E (Washington, DC: Headquarters Department of the Navy, 2019), Enclosure 2; Department of the Army, *Army Chaplain Corps Activities*, AR 165–1 (Washington, DC: Headquarters Department of the Army, 2015), 1–6; and Department of the Air Force, *Chaplain*, AFI 52–104 (Washington, DC: Headquarters Department of the Airforce, 2019), 2.4.2.

19. *Katcoff v. Marsh*, 755 F.2d 223 (2nd Cir. 1985). For more information and content concerning this case see Israel Drazin and Cecil B. Currey, *For God and Country: The History of a Constitutional Challenge to the Army Chaplaincy* (New Jersey, Holbrook: KTAV Publishing House, Inc., 1995).

20. *Marsh v. Chambers*, 463 U.S. 783 (1983).

21. United States Code, Title 10, Armed Forces, Chapter 555, Section 6031, Chaplains: Divine Services, 2006; This resource deals specifically with worship services and their effect on unit readiness.

Activities to Improve Unit Morale

Many time chaplains conduct activities to improve unit morale, which is often related to command climate.²² Chaplains have a high level of autonomy and, if they take the initiative, can improve command morale that may otherwise remain stagnate. Apart from a review of the research and history, information is provided delineating activities, events, and practices that chaplains can implement to improve unit morale, cohesion, and spiritual fitness.²³

A brief overview of the chaplain's holistic impact is given, followed by a discussion of their unique usefulness to the military. Also, the specific contributions made by chaplains are examined in the context of morale. A crucial part of the research is the compilation of information gathered from policy, instruction, regulation, and contemporary military chaplains on chaplain related morale-enhancing activities.

Finally, the information provided is a resource that includes the most effective events, activities, and practices, including any necessary details so that chaplains can replicate morale-building activities in their assigned units and areas of operation.

This in no way insinuates that morale should be the primary focus or number

22. Command climate is the culture of a military unit according to standards, training, and unit readiness. "The leader of the organization is solely responsible for the organization's command climate." See Joseph Doty and Joe Gelineau, "Command Climate," *Army* 58, no. 7 (2008): 22.

23. Spiritual Fitness is defined as "the capacity to (a) identify one's core self and what provides life a sense of purpose and direction; (b) access resources that facilitate the realization of the core self and strivings, especially in times of struggle; and (c) experience a sense of connectedness and with diverse people and the world." For this definition see Kenneth I. Pargament and Patrick J. Sweeney, "Building Spiritual Fitness in the Army: An Innovative Approach to a Vital Aspect of Human Development," *American Psychologist* 88, no. 1 (January 2011): 59.

one priority of the chaplain. Rather, morale is one part of the functions and responsibilities of a chaplain.

Definition of Terms

To help understand the terms used throughout this paper, the following definitions are examined: Chaplain, Chaplain Support Activities, Morale, and Spiritual Fitness:

Chaplain—chaplain refers to commissioned officers in the military whose responsibilities include “performing religious rites, conducting worship services, providing confidential counseling, and advising commanders on religious, spiritual and moral matters.”²⁴

Chaplain Support Activities—All activities, events, functions, programs, and practices (religious and non-religious), that chaplains can implement to improve unit cohesion, spiritual fitness, and ultimately morale.²⁵ A sample of chaplain support activities is as follows: prayer breakfasts, fun runs, spiritual fitness challenges, marriage enrichment programs, holiday service opportunities, suicide prevention and awareness, Bible studies, etc.

Morale—The individual’s emotional and mental state including how they feel

24. Military One Source, “The Unit Chaplain: Roles and Responsibilities,” last modified November 28, 2018, accessed June 23, 2020 <https://www.militaryonesource.mil/family-relationships/spouse/getting-married-in-the-military/the-unit-chaplain-roles-and-responsibilities>.

25. BYU Chaplaincy Program: Resources and Materials for Military Chaplains, “Chaplain Support Activities,”

and act in all they do.²⁶ It is “the quality which makes men [and women] endure and show courage in times of fatigue and danger.”²⁷ It inspires warriors to perform their duty “despite every opposing force or influence.”²⁸ It does not depend simply on the warriors’ level of comfort or suffering but is based on fidelity to a cause believed in, a high level of unity, and an encouraging individual discipline and sense of duty.²⁹ Additionally, it encompasses the esprit de corps and the spiritually activating and vitalizing force of any military organization.

Spiritual Fitness—“The ability to adhere to beliefs, principles, and values needed to persevere and prevail.”³⁰ It is the “spiritual well-being” that makes individuals “better warriors and people of character.”³¹ Also, it is the spiritual resilience with which servicemembers are sustained and able to confront existential questions and “grow, develop, recover,

26. Department of the Navy, *Marine Corps Values: A User’s Guide for Discussion Leaders*, MCTP 6-10B (Washington, DC: Department of the Navy), 6, 15-8, 21-21 emphasis added. “Good morale” is defined by the Marine Corps as “the confident, resolute, willing, often self-sacrificing, and courageous *attitude of an individual* to do the tasks expected of” them by the group of which they are a part.

27. Montgomery, “Morale in Battle: Address Given to The Royal Society of Medicine,” 704.

28. Ulio, “Military Morale,” 321.

29. Ulio, “Military Morale,” 321; Department of the Army, *Religious Support and Internal Advisement*, ATP 1-05.04 (Washington, DC: Headquarters Department of the Army, 2017), 2-44. That being said, this higher level of morale is more common when biological and psychological needs have been satisfied. See also Shelford Bidwell, *Modern Warfare: A Study of Men, Weapons and Theories* (London: Allen Lane, 1973), 127).

30. “Spiritual Fitness Leader’s Guide,” MARINES the Official Website of the United States Marine Corps, <https://www.hqmc.marines.mil/Agencies/Marine-Corps-Spiritual-Fitness/>.

31. “Spiritual Fitness,” MARINES the Official Website of the United States Marine Corps.

heal, and adapt” despite traumatic experiences.³²

Overview of Chaplain Holistic Care

Mental Health

Whereas a chaplain’s spiritual approach may have been doubted in the past, today, holistic spiritual care is an accepted component of health care.³³ Professor Howard Clinebell writes that “holistic pastoral care and counseling... enable people to experience healing and growth in all the dimensions and stages of their lives.”³⁴ This healing and growth is facilitated by chaplain programs, religious support, and other ministry services. Chaplain services have been shown to improve mental health and well-being both when measured on the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scales and when self-reported.³⁵ Specifically, chaplain mental health care includes pastoral care, counseling, and “first aid” interventions for trauma.

Additionally, the unique spiritual aspect, involving religious behaviors

32. “Spiritual Fitness,” MARINES the Official Website of the United States Marine Corps.

33. Christopher Swift, *NHS Chaplaincy Guidelines 2015: Promoting Excellence in Pastoral, Spiritual and Religious Care* (London: NHS England, 2015), <https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/nhs-chaplaincy-guidelines-2015.pdf>; See also Barbara Burford, Eileen Worrow, and Almut Caspary, *Religion or Belief: A Practical Guide for the NHS* (London: Department for Health, 2009), <https://www.clatterbridgecc.nhs.uk/application/files/7214/3445/0178/ReligionorbeliefApracticalguidefortheNHS.pdf>; England’s National Health Services recognized the utility of health care chaplains who provide similar services to those of military chaplains.

34. Howard John Clinebell, *Basic Types of Pastoral Care and Counseling* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2011), 21.

35. Peter Kevern, and Lisa Hill, “Chaplains for Well-Being’ in Primary Care: Analysis of the Results of a Retrospective Study,” *Primary Health Care Research & Development* 16, no. 1 (2015): 97.

and beliefs, contributes to improvements in coping with mental health issues.³⁶ For example, chaplains can implement spiritual fitness programs to help lessen the effects of deployment and other traumatic experiences³⁷ Combat fatigue and combat stress are other mental stressors, which chaplains are capable of addressing by providing aid specific to their profession.³⁸ Clinebell argues that “in the areas of spiritual crises and confusion... the way they handle their own existential anxiety will influence their effectiveness far more than their head-level theology.”³⁹ These existential issues of death, suicide, illness, and mental health can diminish servicemembers’ effectiveness and test their faith. A chaplain’s ability to use spiritual resources to ameliorate the crisis and give hope is crucial in holistic care.

Furthermore, in cases where chaplains cannot provide the necessary care, they can readily refer military personnel to mental health providers; thus, they become a bridge to medical services that initially some servicemembers are not willing to seek. In short, chaplains as first responders contribute “significantly to the mental health of the armed forces” through their ministry and by reinforcing spiritual strength and

36. Harold George Koenig, “Research on Religion, Spirituality, and Mental Health: a Review,” *Can J Psychiatry* 54, no. 5 (2009): 283; John Gartner, Dave B. Larson, and George D. Allen, “Religious Commitment and Mental Health: A Review of the Empirical Literature,” *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 19, no. 1 (1991): 25.

37. David J. Hufford, Mathew J. Fritts, and Jeffrey E. Rhodes, “Spiritual Fitness,” *Military Medicine* 175 Supplement (August 2010), 79.

38. Shenandoah Nieuwsma, “Broken Spirits: A History of Spiritual Fitness Training in the United States Army Since World War II” (Ph.D. diss., University of North Carolina, 2016), 201; James H. Robnolt, “US Army Chaplaincy Battle Fatigue Ministry” in David Mangelsdorff, *Seventh Users’ Stress Workshop: Training For Psychic Trauma* (Ft. Sam Houston, TX: US Army Health Services Command, 1990), 64.

39. Clinebell, *Basic Types of Pastoral Care and Counseling*, 240.

resilience.⁴⁰

Suicide Prevention

Suicide remains a serious issue for the military. The Department of Defense (DoD) recognizes that suicide rates among military members are much higher than those of the general public.⁴¹ One of many preventative measures taken by the DoD is that of the chaplain. A 2010 report by the DoD Task Force on the Prevention of Suicide by Members of the Armed Forces, frequently cites chaplains as important assets in responding to suicide.⁴² Traditionally, chaplains have served as first responders for suicidal individuals suffering emotional or psychological distress.⁴³ Their accessibility in the midst of crisis and their strong relationship with the unit have resulted in significant opportunities to provide counseling and coaching for those in crisis, including those who suffer from suicidal

40. Rachel L. Seddon, Edgar Jones, and Surg Cdr Neil Greenberg, "The Role of Chaplains in Maintaining the Psychological Health of Military Personnel: An Historical and Contemporary Perspective," *Military Medicine* 176, no. 12 (December 2011): 1357, 1359; Robnolt, "US Army Chaplaincy Battle Fatigue Ministry," 64.

41. Rajeev Ramchand, et al., *The War Within: Preventing Suicide in the U.S. Military* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2011), 13; When disparities of age and socioeconomic status are accounted for, the military rates of suicide are not abnormal, but the fact that the demographics are more at risk for suicide still requires special attention.

42. Department of Defense Task, *The Challenge and the Promise: Strengthening the Force, Preventing Suicide and Saving Lives* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, 2010), https://www.sprc.org/sites/default/files/migrate/library/2010-08_Prevention-of-Suicide-Armed-Forces.pdf.

43. Ramchand, *The War Within: Preventing Suicide in the U.S. Military*, 90.

ideation.⁴⁴

Other tools a chaplain can utilize when helping those with thoughts of suicide are crisis intervention, emotional enabling, religious activities, church groups, etc. These approaches have been associated with a reduced risk of suicide and a reduction of mental health problems.⁴⁵ The Defense Suicide Prevention Office concluded that “community support and connectedness, while in theater, can be a protective factor against suicide.”⁴⁶ Captain Dan Stallard USN agreed, writing that social support and high morale are “protective factors for preventing suicide.”⁴⁷ Therefore, it is easy to understand why a “sizeable percentage” of veterans seeking health care after a nonfatal suicide meet with a Veterans Affairs (VA) Chaplain.⁴⁸ All in all, chaplains are a useful tool, among

44. Joint Chief of Staff, *Religious Affairs in Joint Operations*, JP 1-05 (Washington, DC: Joint Chief of Staff, 2013), II-3, https://fas.org/irp/doddir/dod/jp1_05.pdf.

45. Rita W. Law, and David A. Sbarra, “The Effects of Church Attendance and Marital Status on the Longitudinal Trajectories of Depressed Mood Among Older Adults,” *Journal of Aging and Health* 21, no. 6 (2009): 817; William K. Kay & Leslie J. Francis, “Suicidal Ideation Among Young People in the UK: Churchgoing as an Inhibitory Influence?” *Mental Health, Religion & Culture* 9, no. 2 (2006): 136.

46. Craig J. Bryan, et al., “Combat Experience and the Acquired Capability for Suicide,” *Journal of Clinical Psychology* 66, no. 10 (2010):1045; Matthew K. Nock, et al., “Suicide Among Soldiers: A Review of Psychosocial Risk and Protective Factors,” *Psychiatry: Interpersonal & Biological Processes* 76, no. 2 (2013): 107, 113; see Department of Defense Quarterly Suicide Report, Calendar Year 2016, 4th Quarter Defense Suicide Prevention Office Report (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, 2016), July 14, 2020, <http://www.dsppo.mil>.

47. Captain Dan Stallard USN, “Esprit de Corps,” *Marine Corps Gazette*, 80, April 2018, https://www.hqmc.marines.mil/Portals/61/Users/254/50/4350/Esprit%20de%20Corps_Morale_Force%20Preservation_Stallard_Gazette_April%2018.pdf.

48. Marek S. Kopacz, et al., “Chaplaincy Encounters Following a Suicide Attempt,” *Journal of Health Care Chaplaincy* 23, no. 4 (Oct–Dec 2017): 171.

others, in combating suicide in the military.⁴⁹

Relatability

The intense stressors of military life such as family separation, isolation in remote locations, violent combat, and the possibility of death, all necessitate a robust support system for servicemembers.⁵⁰ Chaplains have proved to be uniquely helpful due to their relatability. Their “firsthand knowledge of life in a combat zone,” for example, will enhance their empathy and understanding of the individual’s psychological distress.⁵¹ In fact, this ability to relate and empathize due to their common suffering in war has made chaplains uniquely effective in helping soldiers with grief and loss.⁵² Thus, the constant presence of a chaplain begets a sense of unity in shared risks and produces informal pastoral care, which unlike formal psychological interventions is very acceptable to servicemembers.⁵³ In conclusion,

49. Katherine R.B. Jankowski, George F. Handzo, and Kevin J. Flannelly, “Testing the Efficacy of Chaplaincy Care,” *Journal of Health Care Chaplaincy* 17, no. 3–4 (2011): 103.

50. Shannon J. Johnson, et al., *The Psychological Needs of US Military Service Members and Their Families: A Preliminary Report* (American Psychological Association Presidential Task Force on Military Deployment Services, 2007), 4, <https://www.apa.org/pubs/info/reports/military-deployment-summary.pdf>.

51. Karen Besterman-Dahan, et al., “The Role of Military Chaplains in Mental Health Care of the Deployed Service Member,” *Military Medicine* 177, no. 9, (September 2012): 1028.

52. Robert D. Parlotz and Washington Kirkland, “Trauma Pastoral Care: A USAF Chaplain Intervention Model for Responding to Trauma Environments,” presented at the Seventh Users’ Stress Workshop Training for Psychic Trauma 1989, 51; Nieuwsma, “Broken Spirits: A History of Spiritual Fitness Training in the United States Army Since World War II,” 237.

53. Seddon, “The Role of Chaplains in Maintaining the Psychological Health of Military Personnel,” 1360.

the position of a chaplain as “one” with the unit enhances his or her ability to minister, provide preventative care, and address issues of mental health.⁵⁴

Approachability

Another unique advantage of chaplains is their strict confidentiality. Unlike other medical or therapeutic professionals, chaplains maintain “absolute confidentiality.”⁵⁵ This fact, combined with their relatability, explains why United Kingdom servicemembers with issues are more likely to approach a chaplain than any other medical professional.⁵⁶ Stigmas around mental health, fear of command repercussions, and unfamiliarity with the system all contribute to the desire to see a less threatening chaplain in complete confidentiality.⁵⁷ It has been observed that:

As ranked personnel in positions of leadership, chaplains tended to have enough authority to demand soldiers’ attention, but not so much that the ability to develop rapport was damaged. As religious officials, they were seen as people uniquely capable and desirous to offer care and moral support.⁵⁸

54. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Religious Affairs in Joint Operation*, II-3.

55. Karen Besterman-Dahan et al., “The Role of Military Chaplains in Mental Health Care of the Deployed Service Member,” 1030.

56. Amy C. Iversen, et al., “Help-Seeking and Receipt of Treatment Among UK Service Personnel,” *The British Journal of Psychiatry* 197, no. 2 (2010): 151–152.

57. Seddon, “The Role of Chaplains in Maintaining the Psychological Health of Military Personnel,” 1360.

58. Nieuwsma, “Broken Spirits: A History of Spiritual Fitness Training in the United States Army since World War II,” 212.

In each military branch chaplains are perceived as approachable members of the unit.⁵⁹ In brief, chaplains are considered to be “more approachable than nurses and doctors” and thus increase the support team’s breadth of influence.⁶⁰

Issues and Challenges for Chaplaincy

Chaplains have faced many challenges to become the approved professionals that they are today. One ongoing challenge is the limited integration between chaplains and their colleagues in the fields of medicine and mental health. The recurring lack of confidence or trust between the parties seems to be a result of their mutual unfamiliarity.⁶¹ Another current issue is the paucity of chaplaincy research regarding their methods and practices; minimal studies on the “efficacy...of chaplaincy care” cause some to doubt its value.⁶²

An additional barrier that chaplains face is the difficulty in measuring their impact on the command. Chaplaincy has been compared to nursing, which is also considered to be a “soft” discipline and is thus

59. Paul J. Croxon, “Defending Freedom Through Religion,” *Airman* 53, issue 6 (2009): 13.

60. “Quality Indicators Aim to Quantify Spiritual Care,” Health Care Chaplaincy Network, accessed 21 November 2019, https://www.healthcarechaplaincy.org/docs/research/quality_indicators_document_2_17_16.pdf.

61. Nieuwsma, “Chaplaincy and Mental Health,” 13.

62. Jankowski, “Testing the Efficacy of Chaplaincy Care,” 115; This particular article focused on health care chaplains, whose practices and interventions are similar to those of military chaplains; George Fitchett, et al., “Evidence-based Chaplaincy Care: Attitudes and Practices in Diverse Healthcare Chaplain Samples,” *Journal of Health Care Chaplaincy* 20, no. 4 (2014): 157–158.

“difficult to quantify.”⁶³ Nonetheless, effective chaplains understand the importance of reporting their efforts and evaluations to the commander. This can be done by reporting the number of counseling sessions, services held, spiritual or other events provided, an indicator of the current morale on a scale of one to ten, and a chaplain’s report and recommendation for the commander. The Army acknowledges a chaplain’s competency in judging morale due to their integrated status and ability to evaluate the soldiers’ “talk and demeanor.”⁶⁴

On an individual level, the Army’s 1987 *Spiritual Fitness* pamphlet provides an assessment questionnaire to determine a soldier’s spiritual health.⁶⁵ The questions invite self-reflection on one’s values, beliefs, sense of purpose, integrity, duty, and selfless service.⁶⁶ In conclusion, even though difficulties arise in the quantification of a chaplain’s work, there are methods to constructively report efforts and impact within the command. Namely, with numeric reports, semi-subjective scales, and specific details on the command’s current status, along with proposed solutions.

A final difficulty within chaplaincy is the rising number of military personnel who do not identify with any religion or are simply not religious. Having a positive impact on persons who disparage religion can appear difficult to a chaplain, who by nature is religious. However, the military acknowledges

63. Stephen Wright, “Room for God: It is Time the RCN Asked the Big Questions About Spirituality and Nursing,” *Nursing Standard* 22, issue. 37 (May 2008): 24, <https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A179658762/AONE?u=byuprovo&sid=AONE&xid=2a9f818>.

64. Anne Loveland, *Change and Conflict in the U. S. Army Chaplain Corps Since 1945* (Chicago: University of Tennessee Press, 2014), 62.

65. Department of the Army, *The Army Health Promotion Program: Spiritual Fitness*, Pamphlet 600-63-12 Spiritual Fitness (Washington, DC: Headquarters Department of the Army, 1987), 8–9.

66. Department of the Army, *Spiritual Fitness*, 8–9.

“spirituality” as an element of holistic health in all servicemembers’ lives, including atheists or the non-religious.⁶⁷ This spiritual component includes the human needs of meaning, purpose, fulfillment, etc. and is not restricted to organized religion. Therefore, even non-religious military members can improve their spiritual fitness and thus be benefited by having a chaplain. Nonetheless, the difficulty in adapting and adjusting to accommodate such individuals remains.

In the past, mandatory chaplain lectures aimed at diverse crowds were based on religious principles and displayed religion as normative.⁶⁸ It is the chaplain’s duty to design an “inclusive approach to morale building” that engages the unreligious and those of other faiths.⁶⁹ Nevertheless, chaplains in the field still face the challenges of interdisciplinary integration with other professional entities, difficulty in the quantification of impact pertaining to morale type programs, and in promoting activities that meet the needs (spiritually and non-spiritually) of servicemembers and their families in the armed forces.

Summary of Chaplain Holistic Care

In summary, military chaplains have proven their usefulness throughout history as they have consistently been considered beneficial assets within the military. Despite challenges, research and experience shows that a chaplain’s impact on the command improves mental health and well-being, reduces the risk of suicide, and increases morale.⁷⁰ The chaplain offers an intimate relatability to his or her unit and a greater approachability than other health professionals.

67. Nieuwsma, “Broken Spirits: A History of Spiritual Fitness Training in the United States Army since World War II,” 202.

68. Nieuwsma, “Broken Spirits: A History of Spiritual Fitness Training in the United States Army since World War II,” 49.

69. Loveland, *Change and Conflict in the U. S. Army Chaplain Corps*, 163.

70. Stallard, “Esprit de Corps,” 81.

In conclusion, the chaplain's unique role to care for the soul and implement spiritual resources makes them both an advantage and a benefit to the US military. Army General George Marshall understood the necessity of spiritual care. He said, "The soldier's heart, the soldier's spirit, the soldier's soul are everything. Unless the soldier's soul sustains him, he cannot be relied upon and will fail himself and his country in the end."⁷¹ Chaplains have a significant role in the military's success, and morale initiatives, such as chaplain support activities can enhance the command climate and have a positive impact on mission readiness.

Military Morale

Morale has repeatedly been cited as a major factor in the success or failure of wars and battles.⁷² Military morale is defined by the British Army Officer Viscount Montgomery as "the quality which makes men endure and show courage in times of fatigue and danger."⁷³ This morale inspires warriors to perform their duty "despite every opposing force or influence."⁷⁴ It does not depend simply on the soldier's level of comfort or suffering but is based on fidelity to a cause believed in, a high level of unity and cohesion, and individual discipline and sense

71. Marshall quoted in Chaplain COL Wayne E. Kuehne, "Faith and the Soldier: Religious Support on the Airland Battlefield," 5, U.S. Army War College Military Studies Program paper, (Carlisle Barracks, Pa., 1988): 5–6; see also Department of the Army, *Religious Support Handbook* TC 1-05 (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, May 10, 2005), B-3.

72. Anthony Kellett, *Combat Motivation: The Behaviour of Soldiers in Battle*, Springer Science & Business Media, 2013, xiv; the Greek warrior Xenophon cited in Robert W. Enzenauer, "Leadership Insights of Xenophon," *Physician Executive* 30, no. 4 (Jul, 2004): 34-7; US Marine Corps, MCTP 6-10B, *Marine Corps Values: A User's Guide for Discussion Leaders*, May 2016, 21-76.

73. Montgomery, "Morale in Battle: Address Given to The Royal Society of Medicine," 704.

74. Ulio, "Military Morale," 321.

of duty.⁷⁵ That being said, this higher level of morale is more common when biological and psychological needs have been satisfied.⁷⁶

The Marine Corps defines morale concisely as “the individual’s state of mind... an emotional and mental state of the individual... how men feel and act.”⁷⁷ In turn, morale affects one’s attitude toward everything they do. It is apparent in a person’s willingness to perform their duty to the best of their ability. Morale fosters a sense of personal worth as an important part of a great team, it leads to confidence in one’s abilities and in the mission and is accompanied by a feeling of satisfaction in one’s work.⁷⁸

Spiritual Morale

The Marine Corps recognizes that morale is three-fold: physical, mental, and spiritual.⁷⁹ Every warrior, whether religious or not, embraces transcendent ideals such as “unit before self” and is exposed to different “spiritual experiences” in the military.⁸⁰ Thus, another definition of military morale is the activating and vitalizing force of any military organization, which becomes “the indomitable spirit of man.”⁸¹ This definition recognizes the spiritual component of morale, which chaplains are specially qualified to address. Spiritual conviction can drive and sustain servicemen in the midst of difficulty.

75. Ulio, “Military Morale,” 321.

76. Bidwell, *Modern Warfare: A Study of Men, Weapons and Theories*, 127.

77. *Marine Corps Values*, MCTP 6-10B, 15-8, 15-42.

78. *Marine Corps Value*, MCTP 6-10B, 15-42.

79. *Marine Corps Values*, MCTP 6-10B, 21-75.

80. David J. Hufford, Matthew J. Fritts, and Jeffrey E. Rhodes, “Spiritual Fitness,” *Military Medicine* 175, no. 8 (2010): 77–78; For example, death, bereavement, and a sense of being part of something greater than the self.

81. Ulio, “Military Morale,” 330.

Holocaust survivor Viktor Frankl observed, “In some way, suffering ceases to be suffering at the moment it finds a meaning.”⁸² Religion, or more broadly spirituality, can provide necessary meaning and purpose to bolster morale and minimize rumination on suffering.

Speaking of morale in this spiritual context, Army General George Marshall declared the following: “It’s morale—and I mean spiritual morale—which wins the victory in the ultimate, and that type of morale can only come out of the religious nature of the soldier who knows God and who has the spirit of religious fervor in his soul.”⁸³ Similar sentiment has long been a part of military instruction evident in combat manuals. In sum, spirituality is a factor of morale that, apart from affecting well-being, can provide a powerful drive to fulfill the mission as a team.

Importance of Morale Enhancement

As mentioned, morale is a significant component of mission success. When morale is generalized throughout the entire command it becomes a “tremendous driving force” and contributes to the success of each military campaign.⁸⁴ George Marshall, five-star general of the U.S. Army, said, “It is morale that wins the victory.” For him, morale depended on our will to endure and win; it depended on “the spirit which we bring to the fight.”⁸⁵ Inspiring morale is one

82. Viktor Emil Frankl, *Man’s Search for Meaning* (Beacon Press, Boston, 2006), 117.

83. *Religious Support Handbook*, TC 1-05, B-3.

84. *Marine Corps Values*, MCTP 6-10B, 15-42.

85. George Marshall, “Speech at Trinity College,” June 15, 1941, Hartford, Connecticut, in Larry I. Bland, Sharon Ritenour Stevens, and Clarence E. Wunderlin, Jr., eds., *The Papers of George Catlett Marshall*. Vol. 2, “*We Cannot Delay*,” July 1, 1939-December 6, 1941 (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 536.

of the commander's responsibilities and each of its facets is to be addressed.⁸⁶ Morale influences the spiritual, physical, and psychological fitness of the unit.⁸⁷ In turn, an increase in morale enhances "mission readiness" and in this way serves a significant command function.⁸⁸

Navy Captain Stallard published an article on how morale relates to the preservation of Marine Corps forces. He wrote, "Morale is an essential warfighting factor. High morale can be a psychological protective factor that helps to decrease destructive behaviors and increase individual and unit morale, thus strengthening warfighting readiness."⁸⁹ Thus, morale can be an essential protective asset that strengthens the command. Again, General Marshall asserts: "The soldier's heart, the soldier's spirit, the soldier's soul, are everything. Unless the soldier's soul sustains him he cannot be relied on and will fail himself and his commander and his country in the end."⁹⁰ On a macro-level, morale is a significant factor in mission readiness and success. On the individual level, it is the mentality that gives warriors confidence and determination in everything they do and protects their mental and spiritual well-being. Chaplains, along with other leaders, have a responsibility to foster morale through their own unique contributions.

86. Department of the Army, *Operations* FM 100-5, (Washington, DC: Headquarters Department of the Army), 1986), 3, 15.

87. Department of Defense Task Force on the Prevention of Suicide by Members of the Armed Forces, *The Challenge and the Promise: Strengthening the Force, Preventing Suicide and Saving Lives: Final Report* (Department of Defense, 2010), 12, https://www.sprc.org/sites/default/files/migrate/library/2010-08_Prevention-of-Suicide-Armed-Forces.pdf.

88. Tidd, "Department of the Navy Strategic Plan for Religious Ministry 2014–2019."

89. Stallard, "Esprit de Corps," 81.

90. George Marshall, "Speech at Trinity College," 535.

Chaplain's Impact on Morale

The primary responsibility of chaplains is to support and provide for the religious needs of the command. Yet, building morale has been considered an important facet of chaplaincy, since the military has long recognized religion as a key component of morale.⁹¹ A current Marine Corps doctrinal publication includes both “religious association” and increased “spiritual welfare” in its “methods to improve morale.”⁹² Moreover, the observation that morale contains a “moral root” encourages the involvement of a chaplain in efforts to enhance it.⁹³

From biblical times, to Abraham Lincoln, to the present, political and military leaders have utilized chaplains to improve morale. The tie between faith and military morale is documented heavily in US military field manuals. In a 1958 Army manual, faith in God is said to provide soldiers with “purpose in life” and a reinforcing peace “that will lead him to continue to faithfully serve” his country in combat.⁹⁴ In 1961, military leaders were advised that religion and spirituality were “necessary motivational factors” and that spiritual stamina was the only reliable support of unit morale.⁹⁵ Central to a chaplain’s role was the responsibility to promote religion, spiritual fitness, and faith. Then, in the 1960s and 1970s chaplains’ efforts were deemed necessary to combat

91. Douglas M. Johnston, “US Military Chaplains: Redirecting a Critical Asset,” *The Review of Faith & International Affairs* 7, no. 4 (2009): 27, cited in Loveland, *Change and Conflict in the U. S. Army Chaplain Corps Since 1945*, 147.

92. *Marine Corps Values*, MCTP 6-10B, 16-13.

93. Grace Davie, “The Military Chaplain: A Study in Ambiguity,” *International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church* 15, no. 1 (2015): 51.

94. Department of the Army, *The Chaplain*, FM 16-5, (Washington, DC: Headquarters Department of the Army, 1958), 52.

95. Department of the Army, Office of the Chief of Chaplains (OCCH), *Summary of Major Events and Problems 1 July 1960 to 30 June 1961*, (Washington, DC: Headquarters Department of the Army), 26.

the stress of violent combat in Vietnam.⁹⁶ There the chaplains visited soldiers on the front lines, prayed with them, provided religious ordinances, talked of faith, assured warriors of divine love and comfort, and presented Character Guidance programs.⁹⁷ In the midst of crisis and difficulty the chaplain was sought for as a mature and calm confidant.

Over the years, chaplains have been recognized for their “beneficial effect... on the morale and discipline of the enlisted men” and their opportunities for such beneficial ministry are described as “unlimited.”⁹⁸ In 1983, the Army Training and Doctrine Command pamphlet on “Religious Support in Combat Areas” instructed chaplains to “facilitate spiritual factors” that strengthen faith, inner stability, and peace.⁹⁹ The 1984 chaplain field manual recognized the chaplain as an advisor to the commander on morale and specifically noted pastoral counseling and religious programs as factors that enhance both unit cohesion and morale.¹⁰⁰ Later, in 1988, Chaplain Wayne Kuehne, who played a significant role in the development of Army Chaplain Corps battlefield doctrine, designated faith as “one of the major contributors to combat morale.”¹⁰¹ He urged chaplains to foster faith that would sustain soldiers amidst difficul-

96. Department of the Army, *The Chaplain*, FM 16-5, (Washington, DC: Headquarters Department of the Army, 1967) 40–41.

97. *The Chaplain*, FM 16-5, 1967, 41–42; Loveland, *Change and Conflict in the U. S. Army Chaplain Corps*, 61.

98. J. Gerard Mears, “Chaplains Labor to Uphold Army Morals and Morale,” *America*, vol 65, issue 20, 1941, 539.

99. Department of the Army, *Military Operations: US Operational Concept for Religious Support in Combat Areas*, TRADOC Pamphlet 525-26 (Washington, DC: Headquarters Department of the Army, 1983), 2.

100. Department of the Army, *The Chaplain and Chaplain Assistant in Combat Operations*, FM 16-5 (Washington, DC: Headquarters Department of the Army, 1984), 3, 11.

101. Kuehne, “Faith and the Soldier: Religious Support on the Airland Battlefield,” 2, 52 n22.

ty.¹⁰² In response, chaplains instigated activities, functions, and programs that focused on faith to increase and sustain combat morale.

“Spiritual fitness” or “spiritual resilience” is acknowledged as a necessary element of command readiness in all branches of the military. Chaplains actively participate in morale initiatives by facilitating spiritual functions such as worship, prayer, scripture study, individual or group counseling, workshops, seminars, and self-development activities.¹⁰³ All of these initiatives and events are part of chaplain morale building in the form of “spiritual fitness training.”¹⁰⁴ In sum, the chaplain to the degree that they are willing to is a key actor who influences command morale.

The Unique Religious Impact on Morale

Of everything a chaplain has to offer in terms of improving morale, it is their religious approach that is most unique. This important religious contribution to morale and servicemember well-being has been measured as “spiritual fitness” in the military. While it may be seen as an unnecessary addition by some, the chaplain’s religious support has been defended by both military leaders and civilians, as in this periodical during World War I:

We want to win the war, we are making immense sacrifices to win it, and it is extremely short-sighted for anyone to let his religious prejudice deprive our army of one of its chief supports. The influence of religion is one of the most powerful ways of inspiring, maintaining

102. Kuehne, “Faith and the Soldier: Religious Support on the Airland Battlefield,” 52 n22.

103. Department of the Army, *Religious Support: Army Chaplain Corps Activities*, AR 165-1 (Washington, DC: Headquarters Department of the Army, 2009), 10–11, 31.

104. *Religious Support Handbook*, TC 1-05, J.3, J.4.

and increasing the soldier's morale and personal heroism.¹⁰⁵

The chaplain's contribution is of chief support and provides powerful inspiration for heroism and meaningful purpose in the execution of daily duties.

How religiosity affects human health and well-being has been studied many times. The *Handbook of Religion and Health* compiled 1,200 such research studies and emphatically confirmed that religious belief is "very good for your mental and physical health."¹⁰⁶ In general, religiosity corresponds to an increase in well-being, happiness, and life satisfaction.¹⁰⁷ Specific research findings listed the following benefits:

1. Hope and optimism
2. Purpose and meaning in life
3. Higher self-esteem
4. Adaptation to bereavement
5. Greater social support and less loneliness
6. Lower rates of depression and faster recovery from depression
7. Lower rates of suicide and fewer positive attitudes towards suicide
8. Less anxiety
9. Less psychosis and fewer psychotic tendencies
10. Lower rates of alcohol and drug use and abuse
11. Less delinquency and criminal activity
12. Greater marital stability and satisfaction¹⁰⁸

105. "The Chaplain's Military Value," *America* 19, no. 8 (June 1918): 192.

106. Harold George Koenig, Dana King, and Verna B. Carson, *Handbook of Religion and Health* (Oxford: University Press, USA, 2012), 19.

107. Koenig, *Handbook of Religion and Health*, 19.

108. Koenig, *Handbook of Religion and Health*, 19.

These benefits may appear abstract, but they can be realized through concrete action of the commander's Religious Program team. For example, chaplains of the Abrahamic religions (Christianity, Judaism, and Islam) facilitate spiritual practices that "include prayer, sacred scripture study, worship, music, fasting, and practicing charity and service to community."¹⁰⁹ Additionally, through pastoral counseling, which inherently has a religious component, the chaplain "lessens stress and enhances the soldier's morale and performance." Other religious support, often termed pastoral care, is provided in the form of "counseling, spiritual reassurance, and encouragement" that sustain or rebuild servicemembers' "emotional, psychological, and spiritual strength."¹¹⁰

Where religion does not meet the servicemember's needs, a personal faith may. Personal convictions, apart from organized religion, are still based on spiritual beliefs, existential questions, and metaphysical experiences. In an analysis of morale in the *American Journal of Sociology*, the authors determined that "morale is directly dependent on a man's faith" and his sense of meaning, which often are derived from their religious or spiritual beliefs.¹¹¹ Chaplains, who are trained to engage with all denominations and facilitate the spiritual needs of each individual, can support these foundational components of morale for any servicemember.

In conclusion, the religious element of morale is essential for a holistic approach to bolster morale and achieve victory. The unique religious ministry of chaplains "inspires hope, strengthens spiritual well-being, increases personal resilience," and benefits unit morale.¹¹² This explains why the 1958

109. Hufford, "Spiritual Fitness," 76.

110. Loveland, *Change and Conflict in the U. S. Army Chaplain Corps*, 152.

111. William Ernest Hocking, "The Nature of Morale," *American Journal of Sociology* 47, no. 3 (1941): 316, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2769281>.

112. Tidd, "Department of the Navy Strategic Plan for Religious Ministry 2014–2019."

Army Field Manual regarded chaplains as “one of the most important members of the Combat team.”¹¹³ In fine, while other facets of morale can be addressed by others, a religious program including a chaplain is required for the maximum benefit to the unit and its mission readiness.¹¹⁴

Spiritual Fitness

Spiritual Fitness is “the ability to adhere to beliefs, principles, and values needed to persevere and prevail.”¹¹⁵ For many, spirituality is the source of these principles and values. Nonetheless, spirituality is not specific to any religion and instead universally applies to the existential needs of service-members. The military understands that our intangible “thoughts, beliefs, values, and worldview” affect our behavior and physical fitness.¹¹⁶ Thus, spiritual fitness serves an objective function and has been “recognized by secular professionals as a matter of health.”¹¹⁷

The Commander of the Marine Corp has highlighted the effect of “spiritual well-being” to make Marines “better warriors and people of character.”¹¹⁸ He adds, “Research indicates that spiritual fitness plays a key role in resiliency, in our ability to grow, develop, recover, heal, and adapt.”¹¹⁹ For this reason, the

113. *The Chaplain*, FM 16-5, 1958, 53.

114. Loveland, *Change and Conflict in the U. S. Army Chaplain Corps*, 152.

115. “Spiritual Fitness,” MARINES the Official Website of the United States Marine Corps, 6.

116. “Spiritual Fitness,” MARINES the Official Website of the United States Marine Corps, 7.

117. Nieuwsma, “Broken Spirits: A History of Spiritual Fitness Training in the United States Army since World War II,” 202.

118. Department of the Navy, *Spiritual Fitness*, ALMAR 033/16 (Washington, DC: Headquarters Marine Corps, 2016).

119. *Spiritual Fitness*, ALMAR 033/16.

Marine Corps emphasizes all components of fitness, “particularly the physical and spiritual aspects.”¹²⁰ To determine effective ways to enhance their spiritual fitness, Marines are advised to meet with their chaplains.

John Hufford, in *Military Medicine*, breaks down some of the salient elements of spiritual fitness, defining it as the fitness of “the spirit or soul, especially from a religious aspect.”¹²¹ Included in this spiritual fitness are the many existential anxieties or questions that combat evokes: “Who am I? Why am I here? What is my purpose in life? What happens after I die?”¹²² Servicemembers with uncertainty about these cosmic questions surrounding the purpose and meaning of life can find “consoling answers” in spiritual beliefs.¹²³ Whatever one’s belief, the idea of a divine plan, a higher power, a teleology or purpose to life, all give individuals

a grounding position to approach the vicissitudes of military life.

Spiritual fitness gained “legitimacy in the military” from the 1970s through the 1990s when military generals and health care officials acknowledged spirituality as a “useful tool” to address internal problems.¹²⁴ Hufford states the clear reality that “combat has always presented fighters with complex and difficult spiritual issues;” for example, moral trauma can lead to “a downward spiral of physical, psychological, and behavioral problems.”¹²⁵ These acknowledgments are followed by a proscribed solution:

Service members who demonstrate risk factors for moral injury or

120. *Spiritual Fitness*, ALMAR 033/16.

121. Hufford, “Spiritual Fitness,” 75.

122. Hufford, “Spiritual Fitness,” 76.

123. Hufford, “Spiritual Fitness,” 76.

124. Nieuwsma, “Broken Spirits: A History of Spiritual Fitness Training in the United States Army since World War II,” 202.

125. Hufford, “Spiritual Fitness,” 73, 84.

spiritual problems or who screen positive for mental health problems, should be referred immediately to a chaplain or mental health professional for appropriate follow-up, including chaplain-sponsored programs, skills training, and counseling.¹²⁶

Other recommendations to improve spiritual fitness include the following efforts of chaplains:

1. Pre-deployment discussions
2. Roleplay preparation for difficult moral situations
3. Exploration of the reality of death
4. Performance of memorial services
5. Discussion of the spiritual ramifications of combat trauma
6. Pastoral care visitation and care of the wounded
7. The development of a contingency plan in the event of physical, mental, emotional, and/or spiritual injury.¹²⁷

Spirituality and religion offer a “safe haven” amidst the chaos of combat experiences.¹²⁸ Personal convictions can become a source of strength that “sustains the soldier in combat;” these convictions can be rejuvenated through spiritual rituals, “functions, and activities” performed by the Unit Ministry Team.¹²⁹ In conclusion, spiritual fitness influences unit readiness and commitment to the mission; it is addressed primarily through spiritual support provided by military chaplains.¹³⁰

126. Hufford, “Spiritual Fitness,” 78.

127. *The Chaplain*, FM 16-5, 1958, 53; Hufford, “Spiritual Fitness,” 77, 85.

128. Hufford, “Spiritual Fitness,” 73.

129. Kuehne, “Faith and the Soldier: Religious Support on the Airland Battlefield,” 47, 52 n22.

130. Hufford, “Spiritual Fitness,” 73.

Morale Report for the Commander

Ultimately, the religious support program and command morale are the commander's responsibility.¹³¹ Thus, the commander will want and appreciate concise reporting on the current status and efforts-made to successfully engage these important responsibilities. A chaplain functions as "the commander's eyes and ears in the unit through informal and formal interaction with Service members;"¹³² the chaplain can "take the pulse of the entire command" and assist the commander in determining morale issues and solutions.¹³³

Then, a chaplain can include their observations and assessment of morale in a frequent report to the commander. Active duty military chaplains have advised that such a report be just 1 page and that it include specific data, pie graphs, recommendations, and chaplain efforts in a succinct manner.¹³⁴ Still, measurements of morale and spiritual fitness are "inherently subjective" and thus have caused some difficulty in reporting.¹³⁵ In the Navy, individuals' spiritual fitness is measured on a colored "Spiritual Continuum Model" that demonstrates their sense of meaning, level of hope, morality, respect of oth-

131. Department of the Army, *Religious Support*, FM 1-05 (Washington, DC: Headquarters Department of the Army), 1-2.

132. *Religious Support*, FM 1-05, 2019, 1-6.

133. Department of the Navy, *Religious Ministry in the U.S. Navy*, NWP 1-05, (Washington, DC: Headquarters Department of the Navy, 2003), 3-3, 4-1, <https://www.marforres.marines.mil/Portals/116/Docs/Chaplain/instruction/NWP%20RELMIN%20IN%20THE%20USN.pdf>.

134. LCDR Chaplain Justin Top, personal communication, Provo Utah, February 13, 2020.

135. Hufford, "Spiritual Fitness," 75; "Good morale" is defined by the Marine Corps as "the confident, resolute, willing, often self-sacrificing, and courageous attitude of an individual to do the tasks expected of him/her by a group of which he/she is a part" (see *Marine Corps Values*, MCTP 6-10B, 21-21).

er's faiths, and engagement in their core beliefs.¹³⁶ One option is for chaplains to include a section assessing morale in their reports to the commander.¹³⁷ It could include a morale score on a colored or numbered scale of one to ten with the specific contributing factors observed by the chaplain, the specific efforts made to address the issues, and finally any recommendations for the commander.

Morale and Support Activities

Ancillary Responsibility

The fundamental responsibility of chaplains is to “provide religious support” and facilitate the “free exercise of religion.”¹³⁸ In addition to this central duty, the chaplain field manual adds, “The chaplain is a member of the special staff and acts as adviser and consultant to the commander in all matters related to religion, morals, and morale in the command.”¹³⁹ As an advisor and consultant in matters pertaining to morale, the chaplain “displays initiative” by working with other staff officers, recommending policies, and incorporating his unique “knowledge in the field of religion, morals, and morale.”¹⁴⁰

136. Lt. Victoria Chappell, “How Spiritually Fit Are You?” The Flagship, last modified 24 April 2012, https://www.militarynews.com/norfolk-navy-flagship/news/chaplains_corner/how-spiritually-fit-are-you/article_d8bf1c7c-6468-5019-9fbc-53879bead570.html.

137. Similar to the Army’s 24 question Command Climate Survey. See Steven M. Jones, *Improving Accountability for Effective Command Climate: A Strategic Imperative* (Carlisle Barracks: US Army War College 2003), 8.

138. *Religious Support*, FM 1-05, 2019, 1-1.

139. *The Chaplain*, FM 16-5, 1958, 3; *Religious Support*, FM 1-05, 2019, 1-4.

140. *The Chaplain*, FM 16-5, 1958, 7; Department of the Navy, *Religious Ministry*, SECNAVINST 1730. 7E (Washington, DC: Headquarters Department of the Navy, 2019) 1, <https://www.secnv.navy.mil/doni/Directives/01000%20Military%20Personnel%20Support/01-700%20Morale,%20Community%20and%20Religious%20Services/1730.7E.pdf>.

Since morale is so crucial to victory, each of its facets is taken into consideration by commanders. The 1958 US Army field manual praises spiritual contributions of the chaplain saying, “Spiritual stamina is the only dependable support for training, *esprit*, and morale. Hence, every effort to conduct frequent appropriate religious services is the *minimum* expected of any chaplain.”¹⁴¹ Chaplains foster and care for spiritual stamina through their ministry and religious activities. Nonetheless, meeting the religious needs of the command is the “basic requirement,” or the minimum, and a dedicated chaplain goes above and beyond that.¹⁴²

For example, Navy Chaplain LT Marc Diconti took responsibility in Iraq in 2005 saying, “My job here is to maintain *esprit de corps* and high morale so the military mission can be fulfilled.”¹⁴³ This kind of initiative and strong individual morale is what drove Chaplain Diconti to persevere in his morale-building efforts, whether it be chatting with the Marines as they fill sandbags together or going out of his way to be as approachable as possible.¹⁴⁴ In conjunction with the chaplain’s effort, the Morale, Welfare, and Recreation (MWR) office is another powerful asset in addressing morale.

Morale, Welfare, and Recreation (MWR)

The MWR team is the Navy’s specific program tasked with monitoring the morale, welfare, and recreation of the command. MWR “strives to deliver the highest quality programs and services... ranging from deployment support, and family and child and youth programs to recreation, sports and fitness, entertainment, travel, and leisure activities... and other support services to

141. *The Chaplain*, FM 16-5, 1958, 52, 109; emphasis added.

142. *The Chaplain*, FM 16-5, 1958, 52.

143. Shane T. McCoy, “Services in the Sand,” *All Hands Magazine*, July 2005, 17.

144. McCoy, “Services in the Sand,” 18, 21.

soldiers in theatre.”¹⁴⁵ Moreover, they provide “discounted tickets to theme parks, sports events, and base events throughout the year.”¹⁴⁶ The MWR office is a great morale resource that can offer the following:

Games

Large screen televisions

Electronic game stations, up-to-date video games, and game CDs

DVD/CD players and first-run movies

Free Internet access, e-mail, and voice over Internet phone capability

Paperback books and online libraries

Cardiovascular and weight equipment

Sport and recreation equipment

Continuing education support¹⁴⁷

In summary, these important quality of life experiences are part of a varied approach to morale that emphasizes the need “to interact with one another, to feel like a part of the community.”¹⁴⁸ Although the

fundamental approach to morale building by the MWR department is different from the chaplain’s, the multifaceted approach is more effective than a single faceted one.

145. Joanne Marshall-Mies, David Westhuis, and Richard Fafara, *US Army Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) Programmes: Links to Readiness and Retention* (Arnold, MD: Swan Research Inc., 2011), 3.

146. One Hundred Tenth Congress: First Session, *Overview of Morale, Welfare, and Recreation (MWR Programs: Hearing Before the Military Personnel Subcommittee* (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 2008), 19.

147. One Hundred Tenth Congress: First Session, *Overview of Morale, Welfare, and Recreation (MWR Programs: Hearing Before the Military Personnel Subcommittee*, 4, 153.

148. Dean Tice, “Always Prepared,” *Parks & Recreation* 31, no. 12 (December 1996): 2, <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&AN=9701131486&site=eds-live&scope=site>.

How to Collaborate with the MWR Officer

Knowing that another department is committed to the improvement of the command's morale can convince the chaplain that they need not get involved. However, rather than shirk this responsibility, chaplains can form powerful partnerships with the MWR team. The overlap in objectives is evident and can best be achieved with collaboration. Every ship has an MWR officer and the chaplain should take initiative to meet and coordinate with them. Specifically, chaplains should make an effort to join the MWR committee or have their Religious Professional do so. The dual approach (religious and non-religious) to servicemember morale will "combine to weld a seasoned fighting force capable of defending the nation."¹⁴⁹

Chaplains who reach out and form relationships with the MWR team have notable success. Common collaborations are those of big holidays. For Thanksgiving in Iwo Jima, the chaplain ministry team partnered with the MWR department to have a two-day event with a Thanksgiving meal, live music, scripture reading, and a Turkey Trot 5K run on the flight deck, all ending with karaoke and festivities.¹⁵⁰ Easter events can also be enhanced by a joint effort like the Navy did in Yorktown with the "Eggstravaganzas."¹⁵¹ Another capability of the MWR office is to arrange visitations from celebrities and professional entertainers; chaplains can assist in this effort by connecting with charity organizations or by making invitations, similar to when Billy

149. Ulio, "Military Morale," 321.

150. Jonathan L. Correa, "Iwo Jima Culinary Specialists Create Thanksgiving Feast," The Flagship November 28, 2012, https://www.militarynews.com/norfolk-navy-flagship/news/top_stories/iwo-jima-culinary-specialists-create-thanksgiving-feast/article_f6f4de0b-9c04-5bd8-ac40-d91db923deed.html.

151. Mark O. Piggott, "Yorktown Celebrates Easter with Military Families," The Flagship April 21, 2011, https://www.militarynews.com/norfolk-navy-flagship/news/quarterdeck/yorktown-celebrates-easter-with-military-families/article_e729fb69-243f-5c81-80fb-cb2fe19e28ca.html.

Graham visited troops in Vietnam.¹⁵² Moreover, chaplains need not initiate every morale-building activity, but can with humility join in and offer assistance in events that are already planned or proposed.¹⁵³

In conclusion, the MWR department is an exceptional resource that chaplains can partner with, in close cooperation.¹⁵⁴ Nonetheless, in the end: “Health measures, recreation, books, comforts... all these and their variations are but the means. The thing itself when developed is the indomitable spirit of man.”¹⁵⁵ Activities, health, and recreation are significant means to improve command morale and yet morale itself, at the core, depends on the spirit and is independent of these external pleasures.¹⁵⁶

The Rationale for Chaplain Morale Initiatives

Acknowledging that other departments are dedicated to morale may make the chaplain’s involvement in morale initiatives seem superfluous. Yet, the religious impact on morale is real, significant, and unique. It provides existential answers, bolsters the will, provides a moral grounding, and a sense of value in the world.¹⁵⁷ As noted, morale is multi-faceted. One component of

152. *One Hundred Tenth Congress: First Session, Overview of Morale, Welfare, and Recreation (MWR Programs: Hearing Before the Military Personnel Subcommittee)*, 111th Congress, 1st sess., 12 March 2009, 153.

153. Christine Senini, “Priest, Pastor or Porthole: The Role of a Navy Chaplain,” *Commander’s Papers* 2013: 4, file:///C:/Users/vancept/Desktop/53051postpub.pdf.

154. Noelle Veronica Phillips, “A Phenomenological Study of the Impacts of Morale Welfare and Recreation (MWR) on Soldiers During Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF),” (master’s thesis, Bowling Green State University, 2006), 56, accessed April 2, 2020, <https://etd.ohiolink.edu/>.

155. Ulio, “Military Morale,” 330.

156. Department of the Army, *Religious Support and Internal Advisement*, ATP 1-05.04, 2-44.

157. Montgomery, “Morale in Battle,” 703.

morale is that of community or communion. British Army Officer Montgomery explained this element of morale as follows:

Comradeship Morale cannot be good unless men come to have affection for each other; a fellow-feeling must grow up which will result in a spirit of comradeship... Men must laugh and joke together, must enjoy each other's company, and must get fun out of life even in times of danger. Comradeship is based on affection and trust... Men learn to have faith in each other and to depend on each other according to the abilities of each. Comradeship is a great antidote to fear because it gives a man friends. If he has friends he will derive strength from their presence and will be anxious not to let them down in battle.¹⁵⁸

Chaplain events can foster wholesome respectable activities in a light way that disciplined daily drills do not. Simultaneously, chaplain support activities will incorporate spiritual fitness emphases in a way that MWR activities do not. The Department of the Navy advises chaplains to be involved and attend trainings, retirements, promotion ceremonies, and community building activities.¹⁵⁹ These and other extra events provide a needed outlet to reduce stress, enjoy communion with the other servicemembers, and build comradeship morale. Participation in such social activities results in improved unit cohesion.¹⁶⁰

With similar sentiment, Navy Captain Stallard recommends chaplains host “recreational and community building activities,” including service activities,

158. Montgomery, “Morale in Battle,” 703.

159. *Religious Ministry*, SECNAVINST 1730. 7E, 1.

160. Phillips, “A Phenomenological Study of the Impacts of Morale Welfare and Recreation (MWR) on Soldiers During Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF),” 4.

to increase morale.¹⁶¹ On the other hand, the alternative is inactivity; in the Army between “33% to 39% of troops report boredom is a major concern.”¹⁶² In short, chaplain support activities address the threat of lethargy and boredom that inevitably lower morale. Therefore, the rationale for chaplain morale initiatives, in addition to the other morale-focused resources, is that the chaplain’s approach to morale is a unique spiritual and religious approach.

CREDO

The Navy Chaplain Corps has institutionalized some morale-building chaplain support activities. Notably, the Chaplains Religious Enrichment Development Operation (CREDO), is an encouraging service that is positively rated by servicemembers.¹⁶³ Chaplains host the events that include: “marriage enrichment retreats, single service members’ personal growth retreats, resiliency workshops, destructive behavior prevention briefs,” transformational workshops, seminars, and other retreats for well-being and enrichment.¹⁶⁴ All these CREDO activities are to strengthen servicemembers and their families with a focus on spiritual well-being.

Chaplain retreats are a popular option that became well established during World War II. Religious retreats have been defined as “a period of group withdrawal for prayer, meditation, study, and instruction under a director.” Some retreats are pilgrimages to holy sites, like the visits to Palestine in World War

161. Stallard, “Esprit de Corps,” 82.

162. Judith A. Lyons, “Commentary on MHAT-IV: Struggling to Reduce the Psychological Impact of War,” *Traumatology* 13, no. 4 (2007): 40.

163. Michael J. Schwerin, et al., “A Cluster Evaluation of Navy Quality of Life Programs,” *Evaluation and Program Planning* 25, no. 3 (2002): 310.

164. Stallard, “Esprit de Corps,” 81; “Chaplains Religious Enrichment Development Operation (CREDO),” Official Website of the United States Navy, <https://www.navy.mil/local/chaplaincorps/credo-map.html>.

II, while others are locally based.¹⁶⁵ In all retreats (whether they are focused on marriage, fellowship, personal growth, meditation, coping skills, suicide prevention, etc.) there is the central goal to rejuvenate and strengthen the spirit.¹⁶⁶

Another traditional part of the religious program is workshops. These workshops are based on the unit's needs and have a wide variation. As the chaplain assesses issues within the command, he recommends workshops such as the following: Suicide prevention or intervention, stress reduction skills and mindfulness, self-help tools and coping mechanisms, financial solutions, relationship strengthening, etc. Once specific stressors or concerns are identified, a workshop can be prepared to target that specific population and their needs. Therefore, while the chaplaincy's generalized approach to morale enhancement (or the improvement of spiritual fitness) is primarily addressed through religious engagements, other approaches and activities are available. CREDO provides focused and effective activities but is only the beginning since its efforts are limited in application.

Chaplain-Led Activities

The focus of this resource are the activities hosted and led by chaplains. Latter-day Saint military chaplains have a history of going above-and-beyond in their efforts to serve their units. One of the first Latter-day Saint military chaplains, Calvin Smith, recognized that he could do as much good as he was determined to; apart from his religious support, Chaplain Smith organized classes on topics that interested the soldiers, sent a mini newsletter back to the

165. Venzke, *Confidence in Battle, Inspiration in Peace: The United States Army Chaplaincy*, 113; Community Relations, Com-Rel, can be useful in collaborating on cultural visits while alongside an overseas port.

166. "Navy Chaplain Corps CREDO Retreats," The Flagship, 29 July 2009, https://www.militarynews.com/norfolk-navy-flagship/news/leadership_voice/navy-chaplain-corps-credo-retreats/article_68437385-8aa0-545e-821f-aeacc44dbb31.html.

families at home, arranged for band concerts, dances, boxing contest, movie nights, theatrical plays, intercompany athletic competitions, and other recreational activities.¹⁶⁷ All of these efforts would not have happened had the chaplain not taken the initiative and accepted the responsibility to increase his servicemembers' morale.

Today, chaplains can acquire funding for "command-sponsored religious support activities" that include and are not limited to "retreats, camps, conferences, meetings, workshops, and family support programs."¹⁶⁸ Some examples of chaplain-led support activities are:

1. Planning Olympics competitions
2. Coordinating Operation Gratitude care packages
3. The Better Life Program
4. Prayer Breakfasts
5. Spiritual Challenges
6. Fun Runs
7. Character Development and Divorce Proofing
8. Leadership Seminars
9. Holy Day Activities
10. Holiday Service Opportunities
11. Bible Studies with lunch
12. Chaplain Anniversary Activities
13. Suicide Prevention and Awareness¹⁶⁹

Support activities led by the chaplain include many social and

167. Harold H. Jenson, "Utah's Three Latter-day Saint Chaplains," *The Juvenile Instructor* 54:10 (October 1919), 521–522.

168. Department of the Army, *Army Chaplain Corps Activities*, AR 165–1, (June 2015): 37.

169. "Chaplain Support Activities,"; LCDR Chaplain Justin Top, personal communication, February 13, 2020.

physical activities supplemented with spiritual significance. Morale encompasses the emotional and mental state that inspires servicemembers to continue on and win. It relies more on the existential spiritual foundation than fleeting comfort or fun. Chaplain support activities always include a dose of spirituality, whether it be in reference to purpose, meaning, morality, core beliefs, or character. This unique addition, even in what appears to be trivial activities, is what makes them worth the extra effort.

Scriptural Precedent for Chaplain Activities

Biblical examples of chaplain activities appear limited to prayers, blessings, and encouraging speeches. The Israelites had priests who accompanied their armies to strengthen moral courage and increase morale by trusting in their God who accompanied them (Deuteronomy 20:2–4). When giants and enemies assaulted the saints, Enoch as prophet “led the people of God, and their enemies came to battle against them;” and Enoch spoke the word of the Lord and commanded the elements and wildlife in his people’s defense (Moses 7:13). Nehemiah inspired his followers to defend their holy city by standing and declaring to them: “Don’t be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, who is great and awesome, and fight for your families, your sons and your daughters, your wives and your homes” (NIV Nehemiah 4:14). Fear has a corrosive effect on morale and must be remedied by an increase in faith and hope, which can be fostered through chaplain efforts.¹⁷⁰

In the Book of Mormon, military officers performed chaplain functions as leaders who “had the spirit of revelation and also prophecy” (3 Nephi 3:19). Prophet warriors, like Alma, provided religious advisement through prophecy regarding specific military stratagem and tactics

170. Herbert R. McMaster, “Remaining True to Our Values—Reflections on Military Ethics in Trying Times,” *Journal of Military Ethics* 9, no. 3 (2010): 188.

(Alma 43:23). Captain Moroni participated in military activities and prayed mightily for his people to be blessed with liberty (Alma 46:13). In a crucial moment, Captain Moroni significantly enlivened morale through a motivational display and a subsequent religious ritual that emphasized their shared core values of God, religion, freedom, peace, and family (Alma 46:12). Later, the prophet warrior Mormon also encouraged his people “and did urge them with great energy, that they would stand boldly... and fight for their wives, and their children, and their houses, and their homes” (Mormon 2:23). The scriptures present us with many inspiring military figures who served as a type of chaplain that cared for the spiritual well-being, spiritual fitness, and morale of their comrades. Scripture’s emphasis on the religious component of chaplain-work in the military reminds us to relate all chaplain-led activities to a deeper spiritual meaning.

Conclusion

Morale is the state of mind that affects one’s attitude and effectiveness in performing all their duties. Morale inspires warriors to endure and has repeatedly been cited as a major factor in the success or failure of wars and battles. Throughout history, the chaplain has been responsible for the religious and spiritual components of the tri-faceted military morale. Through their unique contributions, chaplains foster morale in a way essential for a holistic approach that maximizes individual well-being, mission readiness, and success.

The information provided emphasizes the chaplain’s role as advisor to the commander on matters of morale and encourages chaplains to engage in morale-building initiatives. As already stated, the purpose of this resource is to equip chaplains with a resource, accessible online, that includes the most effective events, activities, and practices, that chaplains can implement to improve unit morale, cohesion, and spiritual fitness. The chaplain support activities provided include any

necessary details required to replicate the morale-building activity in the chaplain's assigned unit and area of operation. Rather than being simply additional "fun" activities, chaplain support activities many times include a dose of spirituality addressing purpose, meaning, morality, core beliefs, or character, that make them worth the extra effort.

Major General John A. Lejeune cited the prophet Moses as "the greatest example in history of the upbuilding of the morale of a whole people, and the changing of a race of slaves into a nation of mighty warriors."¹⁷¹ Each chaplain has the same opportunity to improve the morale of the whole unit and, like Moses, to inspire them to be mighty warriors.

A chaplain driven by his divine call will engage the service members, not with command authority, but by invitation and initiative to enhance morale and, in addition, will take ownership of his responsibility by reporting morale conditions to the commander.

171. US Marine Corps, MCTP 6-10B, *Marine Corps Values*, 21-79.

Chaplain Support Activities

This resource is for military chaplains who perform and provide an array of functions, one of which involves the morale of the unit. Improving morale in a unit through chaplain support activities is the specific focus of this resource. The intended audience are military chaplains who can implement chaplain support activities. Thus, the following chaplain support activities provide pragmatic information that is applicable and beneficial for chaplains and subsequently for their commands.

To create the chaplain support activities, military chaplains were contacted to provide events that they found successful. Also, a review of literature and military publications provided other chaplain support activities.

Chaplain support activities include events, functions, programs, and practices (religious and non-religious), that chaplains can implement to improve unit cohesion, spiritual fitness, and ultimately morale. Support activities led by the chaplain include many social and physical activities supplemented with spiritual significance. Chaplain support activities can always include spirituality, whether it be in reference to purpose, meaning, morality, core beliefs, or character.

The following activities were provided by military chaplains to help improve morale in their units. Use or revamp them to fit your unit or specific chaplain support activity.

Steel Beach Picnic

What:

A festive party with games, competitions, food, and music.

Why:

It brings the ship together and provides fun opportunities to boost morale and enjoy company. Usually it is done as part of a celebration.

Who:

Chaplains collaborate with other departments to bring the event together.

How:

Chaplains can help plan the logistics, gather the materials, and organize events for the picnic. These can be competitions like weightlifting on deck, or games like jousting, or sumo wrestling.¹⁷²



172. "America's Navy Chaplains," Navy Recruiting Command, 2 August 2017, accessed 4 June 2020, <https://www.facebook.com/navychaplain/photos/a.380285239271/10155080470534272/?type=3&theater>; "Navy Chaplain Corps Continues 234 Years of Service," MC1 Amie Gonzales, December 3, 2009, accessed 4 June 2020, https://www.militarynews.com/norfolk-navy-flagship/news/leadership_voice/navy-chaplain-corps-continues-234-years-of-service/article_c40cb03b-65ce-59c4-8d40-12f8f505f75f.html.



Chaplain Stephen Warne sumo wrestles with shipmate during a steel beach picnic aboard the USS Fort McHenry.

Navy Swim Call

What:

Under the proper conditions the ship stops for a swim in the middle of the ocean. There is jumping, swimming, and BBQ. Cargo nets are draped off the edge so sailors can climb back up and a motorboat does security in case of sharks.



Why:

For morale and spontaneous diversion from the routine.

Who:

The commander, encouraged by their advisers, notifies all departments of the event. Chaplains can get involved and offer a hand, like chaplain Baker helping a sailor in the image below.

How:

Work through the chain of command. If you do not make the

suggestion, maybe no one will.¹⁷³



“It was absolutely unbelievable how this impromptu party *improved morale* on a ship that had been at sea for some 30 days. It is a clear memory for me almost 50 years after it happened.”

– John Lemke

173. John Lemke, “What is a Swim Call,” answered 14 March 2016, accessed April 7, 2020, <https://www.quora.com/What-is-a-swim-call>; Navy Recruiting Command, “America’s Navy Chaplains,” September 10, 2012, accessed June 1, 2020, <https://www.facebook.com/navychaplain/photos/a.380285239271/10151094266259272/?type=3&theater>.

Battle of the Bands (Music in General)

What:

A Saturday concert featuring performances by musicians of all ranks and ages stationed in Germany. The chaplain, himself a drummer, observed these musicians as they practiced in the post chapel and took the initiative to plan the event. There were multiple performances of diverse music all performed by soldiers stationed in Germany.

Why:

To increase morale and unit cohesion through a fun social experience free of stress. Music alters the state of the brain, affects mood, and has been used as a “morale booster” for warriors in WWII and back to biblical times.

Who:

Organized by Chaplain (CPT) Daniel Powers to support soldier wellness and morale.

How:

Chaplain Powers first determined that soldiers would be interested and had them sign-up. Then, he collaborated with MWR (Morale, Welfare, and Recreation) to get the necessary equipment and the stage. After a lot of “planning and coordination” they had a great show.¹⁷⁴

174. Israel A. S. Yost, Michael Markrich, and Monica Elizabeth Yost, *Combat Chaplain: The Personal Story of the WWII Chaplain of the Japanese American 100th Battalion* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2006, 157); “Battle of The Bands,” Joseph Knoch, Germany, 2019, accessed 2 June 2020, <https://www.dvidshub.net/news/335951/battle-bands>.



“It was evident by the cheering crowd that they thought the show was indeed great as they requested an encore following the last song”

– *Chaplain Powers*

Humor

"A merry heart doeth good like medicine."

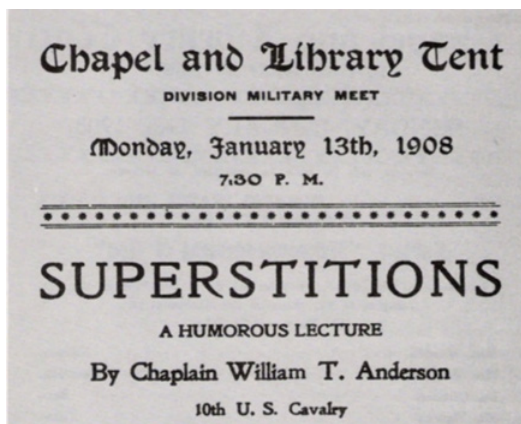
Proverbs 17:222

What:

Chaplains have hosted "humorous lectures" for over a century. More recently, U.S. Army chaplain veteran James King coached a "comedy boot camp" for the soldiers as an outlet for stress.

Why:

Laughter is a natural and therapeutic remedy to combat stress and anxiety that simultaneously improves mood. Laughing releases, the neurotransmitter dopamine, which triggers the reward center of the brain causing a sense of euphoria. "For the past forty years, studies have shown that good, hearty laughter can relieve tension and stress; boost the immune system, by reducing stress hormones and increasing activity among immune cells and antibodies; and help reduce the risk of heart attack and stroke, by improving blood flow and blood vessel function."





How:

Network and find someone able to perform or willing to teach stand-up comedy as an event. As chaplain be an example of “a merry heart;” replace negativity and complaining with cheerful encouragement.¹⁷⁵

175. Earl F. Stover, *Up from Handymen: The United States Army Chaplaincy, 1865-1920* Vol. 3, (University Press of the Pacific, 1977): 183; Staff Sgt. Natasha Stannard, “Chaplain Battles Demons Through Comedy,” Fort Eustis, VA, United States, 2016, accessed June 4, 2020, <https://www.dvidshub.net/news/206727/chaplain-battles-demons-through-comedy>; Scott Edwards, “Humor, Laughter, and Those Aha Moments” in *On the Brain: The Harvard Mahoney Neuroscience Institute letter* 16, no. 2 (2010): 3; Image Credit: Shorpy, “And So He Says to Me,” 1942, accessed 10 June 2020, https://www.shorpy.com/node/21319?size=_original#caption.

Holiday Celebrations:

"I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people."

– Luke 2:10

Christmas

What:

- 1. Caroling and Visitation** (military hospital or homes)
- 2. Delivering Care Packages**
- 3. A Live Nativity Scene**
- 4. An Annual Tree-Lighting Ceremony** (featuring Santa Claus and his wife)
- 5. A Christmas Meal**

Why:

December is a time of multiple religious holidays (Hanukkah, Solstice, Bodhi Day, and other holy days) that are nationally recognized and bring us together with a piece of home. Decorations and events improve morale, whereas their neglect can harm it.

Who:

The chaplain can host many of these holiday events and can collaborate with MWR for bigger celebrations.

How:

This military chaplain collaborated by dressing as Santa Claus and

giving out small gifts.¹⁷⁶



176. "Bahrain Nativity Rescheduled for Christmas Eve," Cristina Silva, 14 Dec 2012, accessed 2 June 2020, <https://www.military.com/daily-news/2012/12/14/bahrain-live-nativity-rescheduled-for-christmas-eve.html>;
U.S. Army Chaplain Corps, "New Photo," December 19, 2019, accessed June 7, 2020, <https://www.facebook.com/ArmyChaplainCorps/photos/a.408322599243107/3434911779917492/?type=3&theater>.

Easter

What:

Even during COVID-19, there was an Easter procession, an Easter Bunny, drive-by gifts, and handout crafts. “The holiday convoy made its way through a collection of neighborhoods while using sirens to encourage families to come out to their yards and wave to the Easter Bunny.”

Who:

The chaplain in conjunction with Community Relations organized an Easter procession for the base. Military Police and Firemen escorted the bunny and added to the show.

Why:

Multiple departments “worked together to raise the morale of the installation in a community wide Easter holiday event.”¹⁷⁷

177. Ashley Savage, Airborne Corps Public Affairs, “Fort Bragg Conducts Easter Bunny Tour,” Fort Bragg, NC, 2020, accessed 2 June 2020, <https://www.dvidshub.net/news/367195/fort-bragg-conducts-easter-bunny-tour>; Shane T. McCoy, “Services in the Sand,” *All Hands Magazine*, July 2005, 17.



Chaplain (CPT) Kenneth Harrison “prepares for his role as the Easter Bunny tour at Fort Bragg.”

Halloween (Trunk or Treat)

“My job here is to maintain esprit de corps and high morale so the military mission can be fulfilled.”

– Lieutenant Chaplain, Marc Diconti

What:

Community event where everyone can dress up and distribute candy from their trunks. This can be combined with a costume contest, a chili cook-off, and other activities.¹⁷⁸



Sagamihara, Japan - “Maj. Mark A. Johnston, brigade chaplain... prepares to hand out candy to children of the local community to deepen ties with neighbors during the 1st annual Trunk-or-Treat event.”

178. “38th ADA Volunteers Make Halloween Special for the Community,” Sgt. Raquel Birk, Japan, 2019, accessed 2 June 2020, <https://www.dvidshub.net/image/5874324/38th-ada-volunteers-make-halloween-special-community>.

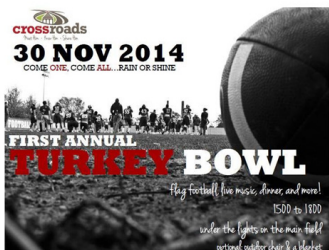
Holiday Turkey Trot or Turkey Bowl

What:

A “5k fun run” event open to military members, their families, and civilians. Or a Turkey Bowl with an organized football game, music, and dinner.

How:

The chaplain organizes and markets the event. They coordinate scheduling by making sure it does not conflict with the base calendar. Then, they book the location.¹⁷⁹



Major Chaplain, Ian Howarth, the 124th
Fighter Wing chaplain, “runs in the 2nd
annual Gowen Field Turkey Trot at Gowen
Field, Boise, Idaho.”

179. U.S. Army Chaplain Corps, “Turkey Bowl,” 9 December 2014, accessed June 10, 2020, <https://www.facebook.com/ArmyChaplainCorps/photos/a.408322599243107/767085383366825/?type=3&theater>; Joshua Allmaras, “2nd Annual 124th Fighter Wing Family Programs Turkey Trot,” November 2019, accessed June 10, 2020, <https://www.dvidshub.net/image/5900551/2nd-annual-124th-fighter-wing-family-programs-turkey-trot>.

United Through Reading

What:

Keep families connected to children “by sending home recorded videos of the deployed service member reading a book” to their children.

Another option that can be done with older children and adults is to independently read the same book when deployed.

Why:

It provides an opportunity to stay connected with home, share emotional moments, and be remembered by loved ones. Hospital corpsman Nicholas Covington, who participated in United Though Reading said, “This will definitely help the morale of any Sailor or Marine who participates.”

Who:

Navy Chaplain (LT) Jisup Choi who helped with the activity said, “It’s not just a matter of reading a book, but it’s about keeping that avenue of communication open for those who need it the most.”

How:

The chaplain reserves the location and invites participation using a sign-up document to schedule a time to record the reading.¹⁸⁰

180. “Uniting Families Through Reading Aboard,” Lacordrick Wilson, Amphibious Squadron Public Affairs, February 14, 2013, San Antonio, accessed June 6, 2020, https://www.militarynews.com/norfolk-navy-flagship/news/top_stories/uniting-families-through-reading-aboard-san-antonio/article_c3e0b5da-2cbc-5b28-b038-579470db2555.html.



“Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Terah Molise, reads a book to her children during a United Through Reading session aboard the amphibious transport dock ship USS San Antonio.”

Chaplain Tent

“And there shall be a tabernacle for a shadow in the daytime from the heat, and for a place of refuge.”

– Isaiah 4:6

What:

In the field, Army Chaplain (CPT) Bret Livingston had “an air-conditioned tent and provide free popcorn and slushies along with movies and video games.” When it is 108 degrees, the tent offers a peaceful refuge that “allows soldiers and leaders to change the pace for a few minutes.” The cold slushies and a place to relax really “hit the spot.”

Why:

Chaplain Livingston explains how this supported soldier well-being. He did it “to lift morale, give me an opportunity to build relationships and trust, provide kindness to a tired soldier, and provide a safe place when someone is sad or hurting.”

How:

For successful activities you need to get leadership buy-in. Then you can borrow the tents, get equipment through MWR funds or personal funds, and make sure you can have a generator to power the tent.¹⁸¹

181. Chaplain Bret Livingston, personal communication, 20 August 2020; Image Credit: AlaskStructures.com



“Chappy Mart”

What:

Set up a “Chappy Mart” during field exercises. The mini-market has drinks and snacks available for servicemembers to purchase while they are at ranges, pulling guard duty, etc. All the proceeds go to the unit’s MWR fund for family events and holiday parties. It also gives the chaplain an opportunity to touch base with people who normally do not come talk to him.

Why:

The objective is to provide servicemembers with some relief from monotony through the tactical application of food, and to encourage people to visit the chaplain to get some kind of need met.

Who:

Chaplain (CPT) Blaine Daimaru, from the National Guard, puts on the activity and reported that “every year, I have people come ask me if I’ll be doing this again.”

How:

It is helpful to coordinate with the S4 (supply) shop to see if they can use some non-government money (do not use official unit budgets for this!) to purchase the items for you. Then, find containers in which you can transport the items while protecting them from theft. Get containers that can hold ice if you need to keep things cold. Next, create a sign that lists what you are selling and their prices. Also, get a secure cash box and a Venmo account so you can take different payment types. Have your chaplain assistant inventory what you have and track purchases. It helps if you have a vehicle so you can drive things around to wherever the servicemembers are. Put the word out through whatever channels your unit uses to

disseminate information.¹⁸²



182. Blaine Daimaru, personal communication, 20 August 2020; Image Credit: Chris Crowley, “Meet the Snackbeasts of Instagram,” 18 July 2019, accessed 17 September 2020, <https://www.grubstreet.com/2019/07/the-super-snack-store-interview.html>.

Sports Events & Friendly Competitions

What:

1. **Dodgeball**
2. **Competitions** (In the pool, on the track, etc.)
3. **Canoe Battles:** Teams equipped with buckets battle to flip or sink the others
4. **Rental Orb Games at the Park**
5. **Be Creative:** Chaplain Vance Theodore while at the School of the Americas, wrote about what a Special Forces commander had planned for morale, “By the way, in a few weeks we will be having a competition [fun jump] on the drop-zone to see who can come closest to hitting a big x that will be laid out on the ground. It will be good for morale.”

How:

In Ohio, the base chaplain sponsored a dodgeball tournament and worked together with the Sexual Assault Prevention Response Program offices to raise donations for the domestic violence resources agencies. There were 15 teams of small groups that competed in single-elimination contests at the indoor gym.¹⁸³

183. Vance Theodore, *Lessons Learned in Ministering to Others* (Provo UT: BYU Academic Publishing, 2020), 94; R.J. Oriez, “Wright-Patterson R3 Dodgeball Tournament,” 2019, accessed 2 June 2020, <https://www.dvidshub.net/image/5296421/wright-patterson-r3-dodgeball-tournament>; U.S. Army Chaplain Corps, 5 November 2019, accessed 1 June 2020, <https://www.facebook.com/ArmyChaplainCorps/photos/a.408322599243107/3277254965683175/?type=3&theater>.



Sports with the Locals

*“This interaction with our friends from
Nicaragua is important”*

– Chaplain (LCDR) Donald Fix

What:

Sailors and Marines joined with the Nicaraguan citizens and veterans in Puerto Cabezas for a friendly game of softball. Softball games are part of ongoing community relations events to strengthen ties with local citizens and the US military. The command chaplain, Donald Fix, said of the event, “We’ve completed many projects together, but this gives us the opportunity to interact on a personal level.”

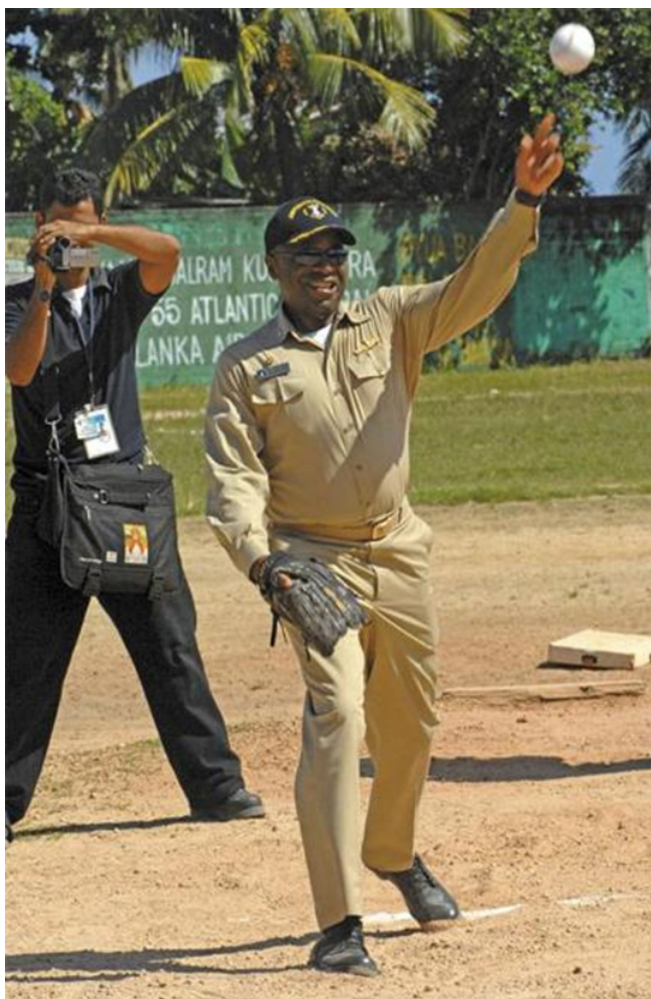
How:

The Community Relations department heads all interactions with the local populous; chaplains can coordinate with them to initiate programs or plan events.

Who:

Navy chaplain (LCDR) Paul Schumann explains how spontaneous sports can be fun and effective. While accompanying a Marine Corps unit in Twentynine Palms, the training they were to attend was significantly delayed. After some hip-pocket training, chaplain Schumann took the initiative to buy a wiffle ball and bat from the exchange and lead a game for the Marines.¹⁸⁴

184. MCSA Ernest Scott, “Sailors, Marines Play Ball with Nicaraguans,” Continuing Promise public affairs, 2008, accessed 9 June 2020, https://www.militarynews.com/norfolk-navy-flagship/sports/seasonal_sports/sailors-marines-play-ball-with-nicaraguans/article_a510a6fe-bab4-5673-a1f7-899455f78f89.html.



Chaplain Challenge

“It builds morale and makes it easier to come to the chaplain”

– Senior Airman Antonio Blackwell

What:

The Chaplain Challenge is a competition in which each team performs job-related tasks while paired with a chaplain as a handicap (since they are not trained for the specific job, whatever it be). These challenges can be done in many different departments; the Langley Air Force Base in Virginia had a fire department challenge where chaplains quickly had to learn the ropes as they competed in time-sensitive rolling and throwing of the fire hose, ladder placement, and dressing into protective gear.

Then, after the last challenge, “both teams and observers enjoyed a pizza social in the kitchen, where the losing team had to serve the winning team.”

Why:

The Chaplain’s Challenge helps chaplains learn what servicemembers do in their particular department in a fun way. Staff Sgt. Katie Ward said, “The objective of the Chaplains Challenge is to boost morale, test job knowledge, and build relationships with squadron members.” Chaplain Michael McDonald added, “The challenge allows Airmen to feel more comfortable talking to chaplains... this also breaks down the barriers. If they’ve got an issue, they feel more comfortable talking to us later on.”

How:

1. Meet with all the chaplains and find those willing to participate.
2. Acquire funding for the pizza; collaborate with MWR if necessary.

3. Ask department leaders to see who would be interested in having the challenge. Emphasize that it also effectively tests job knowledge in a non-stressful way.
4. Plan it well and notify public affairs so pictures and memories can be facilitated.¹⁸⁵



185. Staff Sgt. Katie G. Ward, “A Critical 60 Seconds: Fire Department Challenges Chaplains,” 633rd Air Base Wing Public Affairs, 9 November 2012, accessed 6 June 2020, https://www.militarynews.com/peninsula-warrior/news/top_stories/a-critical-60-seconds-fire-department-challenges-chaplains/article_bebdab1c-f48d-52c3-988a-38a5ae54aeaf.html.

Spiritual Fitness Runs

“Builds great unit cohesion and connects every participant to the chapel team”

– Chaplain (MAJ) Scott Brill

What:

Army Chaplain (MAJ) Ryan Lewis found that mixing physical and spiritual health has been effective. One way to do this is by having a run with stations set up along the route. During the run, the servicemembers stop at each station for a few minutes to briefly discuss different resiliency topics.

In similar fashion, Air Force (Maj) Scott Brill hosted a Spiritually Fit 5K. It is a regular 5K but sponsored by the Chapel and supported by the Force Support Squadron (FSS). He gave a spiritual resiliency message prior to the run and afterward distributed T-shirts with their chosen spiritual fitness logo/message.

Why:

Getting the servicemembers up and moving helps engage the mind and is a relief from the monotony of PowerPoint briefings. The event connects people we hope to strengthen and provides an opportunity to influence them while we have their attention. In those connections, we build relationships that strengthen spiritual resiliency and link people to the available helping agencies on base.

How:

1. Plan with whatever Security Forces or Force Support Squadron to support the event.
2. Have a base-wide invite.
3. Preplan the run route and ensure that the participating company

knows where to run.

4. Split up the company by platoon to keep the groups small and manageable.
5. Coordinate with the NCOs ahead of time to have a short 3-5 min presentation or vignette given by the chaplain.
6. Coordinate with Public Affairs for publicity and a news story for the base paper, etc.
7. At each station have a helping agency with their table, materials, oranges, water, etc.¹⁸⁶



186. Chaplain Ryan Lewis and Major Scott Brill, personal communication, August 20, 2020; “Fun Run,” US Dept of Defense official website, 2017, accessed 10 October 020, <https://www.defense.gov/observe/photo-gallery/igphoto/2001752679/>.

Free Surfing Lessons

“The surfing lessons were definitely a morale booster”

– QM1 Carlos Gonzalez

What:

Chaplain (LT) Eric Hammen facilitated a free training on surfing conducted by Eric Coulson, a local surf instructor. Some 45 students from the Training Support Center Hampton Roads participated in the two-hour lesson and learned the basics to surfing: how to paddle out, catch waves, pop-up, and stay safe.

Why:

“I thought this would be a good way to show the students awaiting training that there is more to do in Virginia Beach than just partying. Surfing is a fun healthy sport” said chaplain Hammen.

How:

Chaplains take the initiative to discover opportunities and connect with community resources. Chaplains can advocate for charity and volunteer services in exchange for newspaper coverage; this can be coordinated with military public relations or community relations.¹⁸⁷

187. Robin Holland, “Surfing 101 at Dam Neck,” Training Support Center Hampton Roads Public Affairs Officer, 25 September 2008, accessed 2 June 2020, https://www.militarynews.com/norfolk-navy-flagship/oceana/news/surfing-101-at-dam-neck/article_dcba9eb3-bf14-5c4e-95bc-c05cf899bdf9.html.



– Chaplain (LT) Eric Hammen Surfing

Rock Climbing Date-Night

“And the LORD called Moses to the top of the mountain, and Moses went up.”

– Exodus 19:20

What:

Chaplain (CPT) Brandon Schlecht hosted a rock climbing date night. The act of climbing has so many things that help to parabolically emphasize the importance of working together in relationships.

Why:

It is a great way to focus on strengthening marital relationships, have great social interactions, and is an opportunity to relax and recreate outside of work.

How:

1. Solicit the assistance of a professional.
2. Seek out other qualified helpers to assist with the event (servicemembers who climb).
3. Keep the number of participants low to make sure the event is manageable.¹⁸⁸

188. Chaplain Brandon Schlecht, personal communication, 20 August 2020; Image Credit: REI Co-op, “Communication for Climbing,” <https://www.rei.com/learn/expert-advice/communication-climbing.html>, accessed 20 August 2020.



Physical Exercise

“Only those closely associated with soldiers can realize how much and how far physical training affects the morale of the men”

– Frederic C. Spurr

What:

Air Force chaplain (LTCOL) Jason Klodnicki believes that sometimes the simplest thing improves morale. His advice is to visit and do PT (physical training) with the Airmen (servicemembers). Army chaplain (COL) Thomas Helms agrees. He says, “Simple visits to troops in the barracks, field, motor pool, workplace, battlefield, foxhole, their homes, at unit training, in meetings, field exercises, or even in the chapel” facilitate connections and are key to building relationships.

Why:

This builds trust, rapport, and relationships. Having a trusting relationship is the foundational key to being able to minister. Hence, when issues come up, they are more willing to see the chaplain as a resource.

How:

It is accomplished by simply making the time to get out from behind the desk and go be where the service-members are. Intentionally plan to spend time with them. Schedule counseling sessions in the afternoon to free up the morning for PT.¹⁸⁹

189. Frederic C. Spurr, *Some Chaplains in Khaki: An Account of the Work of Chaplains of the United Navy and Army Board* (London: HR Allenson, 1916), 131; COL Thomas Helms and LT COL Jason Klodnicki, personal communication, August 20, 2020.



Spiritual Fitness Retreats

“Retreats strengthen servicemembers and their families with a focus on spiritual well-being”

– Vance Theodore

What:

Air Force Chaplain (Maj) Spencer Cooper believes that Marriage Retreats are the #1 activity chaplains can lead. They can have a relationship enhancement emphasis, which he considers the most effective objective for the stability of warriors. Religious retreats have been defined as “a period of group withdrawal for prayer, meditation, study, and instruction under a director.”

Why:

In all retreats (whether they are focused on marriage, fellowship, personal growth, meditation, coping skills, suicide prevention, etc.) there is the central goal to rejuvenate and strengthen the spirit.

How:

For the Army and Air Force there are certified curriculum and funds provided to plan the retreats. In the Navy, the Chaplains Religious Enrichment Development Operation (CREDO), hosts events that include: “marriage enrichment retreats, single service members’ personal growth retreats, resiliency workshops, destructive behavior prevention,” transformational workshops, seminars, and other retreats for well-being and enrichment.

1. Schedule and reserve locations and resources
2. Advertise to the base population via base-wide email
3. Create a roster of attendees based on first-come-first-serve basis
4. Incorporate good food, instructive speakers, and memorable

activities¹⁹⁰



190. Vance Theodore, “Chaplain Support Activities,” accessed 6 July 2020, <https://brightspocdn.byu.edu/ba/9f/9533238545689d15d889cacb27b7/spiritual-fitness-challenge.pdf>; Image Credit: Halle Thornton, “50th SW Chaplains Host Family Retreat at Great Wolf Lodge,” 15 January 2019, <https://www.dvidshub.net/image/5069426/50th-sw-chaplains-host-family-retreat-great-wolf-lodge>.

Breakfast + Movie + Historical Sites

"I don't know how I'm going to live with myself if I don't stay true to what I believe."

– Desmond Doss

What:

Air Force chaplain (CPT) Fabian Tafuna hosted a breakfast at the ministry center while watching *Hacksaw Ridge*. Then, they got on a bus and went to the actual historical site there in Okinawa. The base historian came along and at different designated spots on the ridge he gave them history lessons. Chaplain Tafuna also discussed the movie with them and how it related to the powerful influence faith had on the main character. First, the protagonist was ridiculed for his beliefs but eventually is seen as a persevering and reliable hero because of it.

Why:

The desired outcome is to appreciate those who have gone before us and sacrificed so much. It inspires the servicemembers to see the value and power in spiritual resilience even when it is not popular. There is also the aspect of appreciation for history and "sacred grounds."

How:

1. Coordinate with LRS (Logistics Readiness Squadron or its equivalent) to secure a bus and driver.
2. Secure funds for breakfast.
3. Coordinate with the base historian's scheduling and compatibility.
4. Advertise; advertise; advertise.
5. Test to make sure TV and DVD audio/visual are secure and that the room is set up for comfortability.
6. Secure volunteers to cook and serve breakfast (ministry council).

Work with the ministry center director to make sure volunteers and breakfast go smoothly.¹⁹¹



191. Fabian Vaingamalie Tafuna, personal communication, 20 August 2020; Image Credit: MovieTimes.com & GodInterest.com.

Volunteer

*“It was a great event and morale was
extremely high.”*

– Chaplain (LT) Andrew Hayler

What:

In Sasebo, Japan Navy chaplain (LT) Andrew Hayler organized a volunteer beach cleanup to support the local community. More than 80 sailors from USS Germantown participated to improve community relations and better the community. The sailors enjoyed the beach with free drinks and snacks (donated by the ship). Similar beach cleanup projects have been done by the Navy all over the world.

Why:

Volunteerism builds morale, enhances relationships with foreign nationals, and in this case showed the sailors the beauty of Japan. Chaplain Hayler said, “It was fun, the weather was beautiful, and it was extremely motivating to see all of the volunteers working together as a team.” One of the participating sailors remarked, “I’ve always wanted to help my fellow man, I hope the command does more of these events. The feeling of coming together to help others; there is nothing like it.”

How:

1. Look for volunteer opportunities. Ask locals, other departments, etc. to assess what opportunities or needs there are.
2. Advocate for command sponsorship to make the event easier and to have food provided.
3. Encourage sailors to participate in the days leading up to the

event.¹⁹²



Chaplain Gregorio Huerta serves at a beach cleanup in the Phillipines.



192. "Navy Ship Conducts COMREL in Japan," Jesse Rond, USS Germantown, Public Affairs, 2 April 2015, accessed 2 June 2020, https://www.militarynews.com/norfolk-navy-flagship/news/quarterdeck/navy-ship-conducts-comrel-in-japan/article_7cf7bca8-2f5f-55eb-ac2d-427b20fd2a07.html; Navy Recruiting Command, "America's Navy Chaplains," 2 August 2017, accessed June 1, 2020, <https://www.facebook.com/navychaplain/photos/a.380285239271/10151547250944272/?type=3&theater>.

Service

“It’s good for their spirit, the fact that they’re helping other people”

– Chaplain (LT) David Mobray

What:

Chaplain (LT) Dave Mobray invited San Antonio sailors to help rebuild a Habitat for Humanity warehouse. Whatever the service activity, if it involves the whole unit (or whole family) and makes a spiritual connection, it will be great.

Why:

Religious fellowship, social activities, and “opportunities for meaningful service projects” all build unity. It is an opportunity to connect with servicemembers and build relationships.

How:

1. Look for service opportunities: Ask community leaders, military families, and solicit ideas from the servicemembers.
2. Determine the cost or necessary materials, the time/date, and rationale for the event. Use this information to acquire command sponsorship for the event.¹⁹³

193. MC2 Riza Caparros, “San Antonio Sailors Help Rebuild Habitat for Humanity Warehouse,” Fleet Public Affairs Center Atlantic, 12 April 2007, accessed June 6, 2020, https://www.militarynews.com/norfolk-navy-flagship/news/top_stories/san-antonio-sailors-help-rebuild-habitat-for-humanity-warehouse/article_4803c9a6-7715-5a1b-b2bd-48f13b829f0f.html; Rodger R. Venzke, *Confidence in Battle, Inspiration in Peace: The United States Army Chaplaincy, 1945-1975 Vol. 5*, Department of the Army, Office of the Chief of Chaplains, 1977.



Mindfulness & Meditation

*"I believe the inner strength to keep going
is the true definition of morale."*

– Chaplain (LCDR) Ryan Williams

What:

Chaplain (LCDR) Ryan Williams leads Mind-body-spirit mindfulness exercises for the sailors. After years of serving aboard a ship, he found that developing self-awareness and mindfulness are key to building spiritual and mental toughness. This spiritual fitness in turn gives a person the strength to keep going.

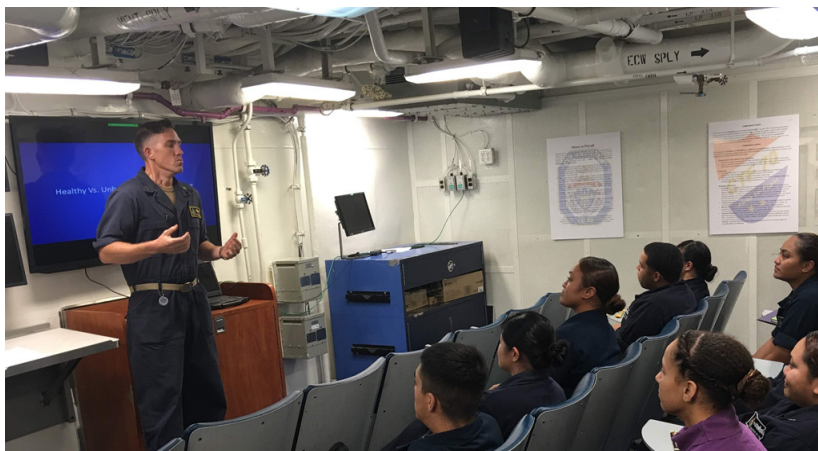
Why:

Mindfulness and meditation are key to develop greater inner strength (i.e. morale). It strengthens the fighting spirit, the will to progress, and the will to move forward and fight another day. Thus, fleeting comforts and happiness are not morale. Rather, it is the fighting spirit to persevere. Studies show that 15 minutes daily can make a huge impact over a few weeks. Chaplain Williams concludes, "In helping service members develop a greater sense of awareness (mindfulness) we simultaneously empower greater inner toughness within them."

How:

1. Reserve the space and time.
2. Advertise and publicize the event.
3. Invite groups and individuals to attend and help them see the benefits.
4. Mindfulness sessions can also be conducted at quarters or

musters and take only about 10-15 min to complete.¹⁹⁴



194. Chaplain Ryan Williams, personal communication, 20 August 2020.

Yoga

*“If you are depressed you are living in the past.
If you are anxious you are living in the future. If
you are at peace you are living in the present.”*

– Lao Tzu

What:

Host weekly Yoga sessions as an exercise class or as part of a mental fitness course. The yoga that Americans typically think of is Hatha Yoga, which focuses on body movements to align and calm the mind and spirit in preparation for meditation.

Why:

Yoga and the accompanying period of stillness at the end of a session help develop mindfulness, concentration, tranquility, and insight. Yoga has been empirically shown to reduce stress, help regulate emotions, give a sense of control and safety, improve heart rate variability (HRV), and enhance flexibility which reduces injuries.

Who:

Chaplains can lead the classes and design their own course if they have the training and initiative. Or the chaplain can coordinate with another instructor to lead the classes.

How:

1. Reserve the location and keep the course consistent.
2. Advertise and show the benefits.
3. Participate in the classes and model for the other servicemembers.
4. The instructor should encourage others, allow participants to follow their own body's needs adjusting any position, and should end with the “dead man's pose” where silent meditation is facilitated for about ten minutes.

5. The instructor should have a great selection of music for the session, including music with no words for the meditation period.
6. The instructor can incorporate incense or the sound of a gong as well.¹⁹⁵



195. David J. Hufford, "Spiritual Fitness," *Military Medicine* 175, no. 8 (2010): 84; Image Credit: Aaron Chase, "Alameda Sailors Engage in Exercise with Veterans Yoga Project," 13 February 2020, accessed 15 October 2020, <https://www.dvidshub.net/image/6094239/alameda-sailors-engage-exercise-with-veterans-yoga-project>.

Nature

“A resiliency event like this helps build esprit de corps and furthers the morale of the troops so that when we go back to work everybody has an upbeat attitude and carries out their tasks at a more ambitious rate”

– Chaplain Peter Hofman

What:

1. **Hike:** Army Chaplain (MAJ) Peter Hofman accompanied the 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne) on a hike up Thousand Steps Trail at Franklin Mountain State Park in El Paso, Texas. Chaplain Hofman said, “Hiking Thousand Steps Trail can really help people focus, allow time for reflection, and enjoy something they normally wouldn’t have the opportunity to do.”
2. **Summit:** In the Army 7th Infantry Division, the Unit Ministry Team and guests climbed to the summit of Mount St. Helens in Washington “as part of a Care for the Caregiver Resilience event.”
3. **Picnic:** Air Force chaplain (Cpt) Portmann Werner hosted a resiliency picnic at Schriever Air Force Base, Colorado. They had games, food, and fun times with an emphasis on building resilience. Chaplain Portmann said, “Attendees participated in competitive activities such as laser tag and corn hole.”

Why:

Chaplains recognize that nature and outings are “all part of the healing process.”

The Wounded Warrior coordinators observed the benefit saying, “We get the guys out... stimulate their minds and challenge them a bit.”

Who:

Chaplain support activities can also be hosted specifically for the

ministry team. Chaplain (Maj) Coyn remarked that the nature outings were critical opportunities for those who spend their time taking care of soldiers and families “to avoid compassion fatigue and burnout in order to continue their role as caregivers.”¹⁹⁶



196. Sean Hall, “A Thousand Steps to Resiliency,” Fort Bliss, Texas, 2018, <https://www.dvidshub.net/news/>; Image Credit: Mark Miranda, “Unit Ministry Teams Climb to Mount St. Helens Summit,” 8 October 2015 ; Arielle Vasquez, “Chaplain Office Hosts Resiliency MSG Picnic,” 2017; Gary L. Kieffer, “Wounded Warriors Take Healing Process Outdoors,” 31 January 2008, <https://www.fortleetraveller.com>.

Concluding Tips & Ideas for Conducting Chaplains Support Activities

➤ Which Activity Should I do?

1. It does not matter what you do as long as you plan, execute, and be sincere. Focus on improving character or spirituality. They will feel the Holy Spirit through fellowship and accomplishment.
2. Any activity surrounding food that involve the whole family (or the whole unit as appropriate) and links in a meaningful spiritual health/fitness component is great.
3. Discover opportunities by connecting with community resources. Advocate for charity and volunteer services from civilian organizations in exchange for newspaper coverage; this can be coordinated with military public relations or community relations.

Many Events Will Already be Planned – Assist them!

1. Support the MWR events that are already being planned. Offer to help and add a spiritual fitness component to the events.
2. Many trainings and events will be sponsored by the command as “mandatory.” Offer to help with them.
3. Support leadership trainings.
4. Consider doing a support activity specifically for your ministry team.

➤ Work with Your Commander!

1. Always work through the chain of command and coordinate with the commander. Get their support; successful activities require leadership buy-in.
2. Advocate for command sponsorship to make the event easier and to have food provided.

3. Unify the command by getting everyone involved in making things better.
4. Make sure the activity does not conflict with the base calendar.
5. Remember that if you do not make the suggestion for an event, maybe no one will.

➤ **How to Make it a Success?**

1. Build interest in the event. Advertise; advertise; advertise.
2. Invite the base population via a base-wide email.
3. Make sure the activity targets the right audience.
4. Practice or test run the event beforehand. For example, make sure the TV audio/visual are secure and that the room is set up for comfortability.
5. Utilize volunteers to assist in the event. Reach out to your ministry council, ministry team, community groups, etc.
6. Participate in the event and model for the other servicemembers (Invite your family if appropriate).

➤ **Other Ideas:**

1. Assist with communication. Mail and news from home are very important in maintaining morale. Some chaplains have successfully created brief newsletters for the command and also newsletters to send home to the servicemembers' families. The chaplain's motivational thought can be included in these.
2. The changing seasons and holidays are crucial. Festive Decorations and events break away from the monotony of routine and improve morale, whereas their neglect can harm it.

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