



RELIGIOUS MINISTRY TEAMS (RMTs)

Strengthening spiritual readiness and fostering total wellness throughout the Navy Medicine Enterprise

- RMTs play crucial roles in **upholding religious freedom** and **fostering spiritual readiness** by providing **compassionate support and spiritual care** to every person, regardless of their beliefs; and **offering expert guidance on matters of religion and morale**.
- This comprehensive approach, known as Religious Ministry (RM), combines the **four core competencies** of the Chaplain Corps: **PROVIDE**: Directly offering religious services and spiritual guidance; **FACILITATE**: Enabling individuals to practice their own faith, even if it falls outside the chaplain's specific denomination; **CARE**: Delivering compassionate pastoral care during times of crisis, stress, or personal need; and **ADVISE**: Offering informed counsel to leadership on religious, ethical, and morale-related issues.



RMT BREAKDOWN

RMTs are comprised of: Chaplains, Religious Program Specialists (RPs), Chaplain Assistants (CAs), volunteers, and those hired to work within or support the Command Religious Program

Across the Navy Medicine Enterprise there are **109 Chaplains and RPs** / 48 are currently assigned to **expeditionary medicine (EXMED) platforms**

RMTs provide support to: hospital ships, expeditionary medical facilities (EMFs), expeditionary medical units (EMUs), and expeditionary medical ships (EMSs)

SPIRITUAL READINESS

—**RMTs cultivate resilient “warfighting healers.”** In direct support of the Surgeon General's strategic initiatives, Navy Medicine Enterprise RMTs ensure every warfighting healer possesses a strong spirit. This includes fostering a sense of meaning and purpose, connection to something greater than oneself, deep-trusted relationships within a community, a foundation in strong values, and a life dedicated to serving others.

—**Religious and spiritual engagement can reduce suicide risk:** A February 2025 article by Rear Adm. Carey Cash, Deputy Chief of the Chaplain Corps, highlights a strong connection between religious / spiritual engagement and a reduced risk of suicide. According to Cash, adults who practice a faith or are spiritually engaged are 62% less likely to die by suicide. This effect is even greater when a person cultivates their faith or practice within a community, increasing the reduction to 82%.



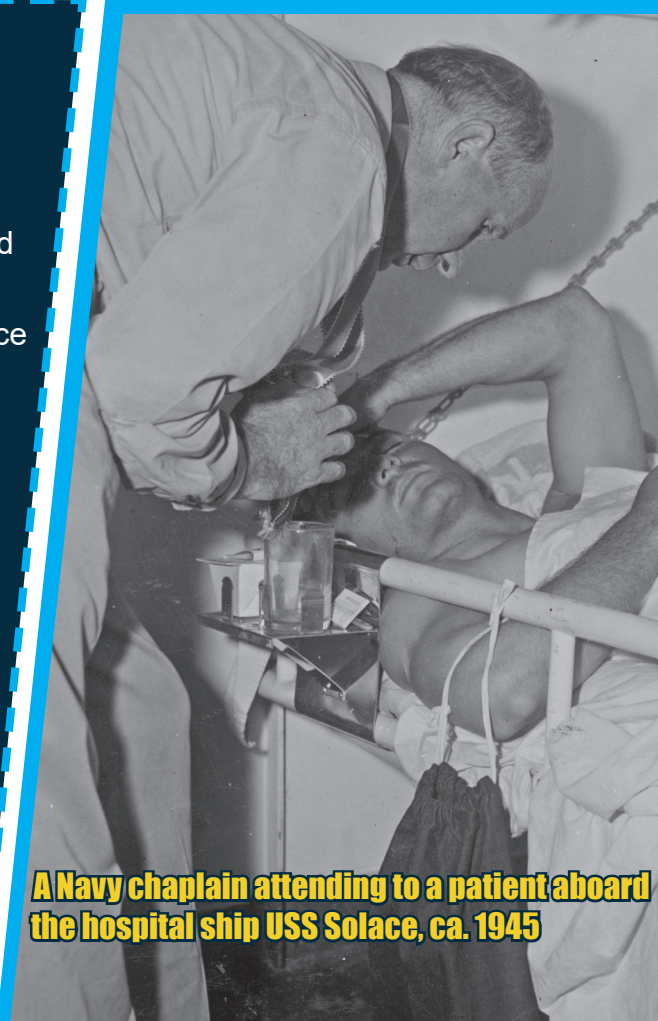


NAVY MEDICINE CHAPLAIN RESIDENCY

- Navy Medicine chaplains undergo a demanding **12-month Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) residency** in a healthcare setting. This rigorous training specifically prepares them to be essential members of interdisciplinary healthcare teams in military treatment facilities and to provide crucial support in combat casualty care during expeditionary medical operations.
- Navy Medicine sponsors and funds this specialized CPE program, known as the **Pastoral Care Residency (PCR)**.
- Eight active-duty Navy chaplains are selected each year** through a competitive board process to participate in the PCR program.
- After completing the residency, these chaplains commit to a three-year assignment within Navy Medicine commands.** Historically, the PCR program partnered with accredited VA training locations on both coasts.
- The PCR program is currently evolving**, instituting changes that will make the program more adaptable and flexible, better preparing Navy Medicine chaplains for service in dynamic expeditionary environments.

BUILDING ON A PROUD LEGACY

- A Historic Alliance:** The U.S. Navy Chaplain Corps and Navy Medicine have shared a unique and enduring bond since the Navy's inception in 1775. In fact, medical officers (surgeons) and chaplains were the very first naval staff officers authorized by the Continental Congress.
- Early Recognition of Chaplain's Role in Healthcare:** The importance of chaplains in hospital care was recognized early on. In 1814, Surgeon William Paul Crillon Barton (1786-1856)—who would later become the first Chief of the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery—recommended that uniformed chaplains be assigned to all naval hospitals.
- Support in Times of Crisis:** From the earliest sailing ships to today's modern forces, Navy chaplains and Religious Program Specialists (RPs) are consistently by the side of medical providers. They are always ready to offer comfort and spiritual care to those in need. Through counseling and prayer, RMTs have historically been vital to the recovery and healing process for countless service members, whether at sea or forward deployed, serving with SPRINTs (Special Psychiatric Rapid Intervention Teams), or ministering at hospitals.



A Navy chaplain attending to a patient aboard the hospital ship USS Solace, ca. 1945