

MOAA[®]

CHAPLAINS VIRTUAL CHAPTER

Quarterly Newsletter

"In unity, there is strength."

Q2 2026 | April - June



From the President's Desk

Dear Fellow Chaplains,

Spring brings renewal, and with it comes a focus on the heart of military service: family. This quarter, we celebrate Military Spouse Appreciation Day, Mother's Day, Father's Day, and the countless ways our military families demonstrate resilience and sacrifice.

As chaplains, we have the privilege of walking alongside military families through deployments, PCS moves, and the unique challenges of military life. Our ministry extends beyond the service member to encompass the entire family unit. Strong families build strong units, and our pastoral care plays a vital role in family readiness and resilience.

This newsletter continues our comparative study of service Chaplain Corps structures, building on the foundation we established in Q1. Understanding how our sister services support chaplain ministry in joint operations enhances our effectiveness when serving across service lines.

I encourage you to engage with the MOAA advocacy priorities affecting military families. From child care to spousal employment, these issues directly impact the families we serve.

May this season bring growth, hope, and renewed commitment to serving military families with excellence.

**Never Stop Serving,
Lamar D. Reece, Ch, Maj, DMin, USAF
President, MOAA Virtual Chaplains Chapter**

Quarterly Prayer

Prayer for Military Families:

"Gracious God, we lift before You the military families who sacrifice alongside their service members. Grant strength to spouses who manage households alone during deployments. Comfort children who miss their parents. Provide wisdom to families navigating frequent moves and changing schools. Bless the extended family members who provide support from afar. Help us as chaplains to minister effectively to the whole family, recognizing that service to nation is a family commitment. May Your presence be evident in military homes, bringing peace, unity, and hope. Amen."

Religious Events & Holidays (April - June 2026)

April 2026

- April 2-9: Passover (Jewish - begins sundown April 1)*

- April 5: Easter Sunday (Western Christian)
- April 12: Easter Sunday (Orthodox Christian)
- April 13: Rama Navami (Hindu - birth of Lord Rama)
- April 14: Vaisakhi (Sikh New Year and spring harvest festival)
- April 21: Ridvan begins (Baha'i - 12-day festival)
- April 23: St. George's Day (Christian)

May 2026

- May 1: Beltane (Wiccan/Pagan)
- May 1: Vesak/Buddha Day (Buddhist - birth, enlightenment, death of Buddha)
- May 5: Lag BaOmer (Jewish)*
- May 10: Mother's Day (U.S. National Holiday)
- May 12: Military Spouse Appreciation Day
- May 21: Ascension of Jesus (Christian)
- May 24-26: Shavuot (Jewish - Feast of Weeks)*
- May 25: Memorial Day (U.S. National Holiday)
- May 27-30: Eid al-Adha (Islamic - Festival of Sacrifice)*
- May 31: Pentecost Sunday (Christian)

June 2026

- June 17: Islamic New Year (Muharram 1)*
- June 21: Father's Day (U.S. National Holiday)
- June 21: Summer Solstice/Litha (Wiccan/Pagan)
- June 24: Nativity of St. John the Baptist (Christian)
- June 26: Day of Ashura (Islamic)*
- June 29: Feast of Saints Peter and Paul (Christian)

**Jewish and Islamic dates begin at sundown the previous evening;
dates subject to lunar observation*

QUARTERLY MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT

Q2 Chapter Meeting - Supporting Military Families

Date & Time: TBD | 7:00 PM Eastern

Join us for our second quarterly meeting focusing on family ministry and chaplain support to military families in all their diversity.

Meeting Link: [To be announced via email]

Agenda Topics:

- Family Readiness and Chaplain Ministry
 - Supporting Military Spouses and Children
 - Ministry During PCS Season
 - Deployment Cycle Ministry Best Practices
 - MOAA Family Advocacy Updates
 - Member Sharing: Effective Family Ministry Programs
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CONTINUING FEATURE: Joint Operations & Professional Development

Building on Q1's Comparative Foundation

In Q1, we examined the structural differences between Army, Navy/Marine Corps, and Air Force Chaplain Corps. This quarter, we explore how these differences impact joint operations and professional development opportunities across services.

Professional Military Education (PME) for Chaplains

Each service provides unique professional development opportunities for chaplains. Understanding these programs helps chaplains identify cross-service learning opportunities.

Service	Entry-Level Training	Intermediate Development	Senior Leadership
Army	Chaplain Basic Officer Leader Course (CHBOLC) - 12 weeks at Fort Jackson, SC	Chaplain Captain Career Course (CH-C3); Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE)	Intermediate Level Education (ILE); Senior Service College

Navy/Marines	Naval Chaplaincy School and Center (NCSC) Basic Course - Newport, RI	Intermediate Course; Staff College; Communities of Interest (COI) training	Senior Course; Naval War College; Joint Professional Military Education
Air Force	Basic Chaplain Course - Maxwell AFB, AL	Chaplain Spiritual Leadership Course; Deputy/Wing Chaplain Course; Chaplain Corps College	Senior Chaplain Course; Air War College; Joint Professional Military Education

Specialized Ministry Training

Army Specializations:

- Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) for hospital chaplains
- Mortuary Affairs training for casualty ministry
- Mobilization and deployment preparation courses
- Family Life Chaplain training (marriage enrichment, family counseling)

Navy/Marine Corps Specializations:

- Fleet Marine Force (FMF) qualification for Marine Corps ministry
- CREDO (Chaplain Religious Enrichment Development Operation) facilitator training
- Chaplain Religious Enrichment Development (marriage retreats, spiritual fitness)

- Deployment Health Assessment and pastoral counseling

Air Force Specializations:

- Comprehensive Airman Fitness integration training
- Resilience Training and Suicide Prevention
- White Rope Program facilitation
- Chapel Management and Resource Stewardship

Joint Chaplain Training Opportunities

Several joint training opportunities are available to chaplains across all services:

- **Armed Forces Chaplaincy Center (AFCC):** Joint training at Fort Jackson, SC
- **Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC):** Deployment preparation exercises
- **National Training Center (NTC):** Large-scale combat operations training
- **Joint Professional Military Education (JPME):** Required for joint assignments
- **National Defense University:** Strategic leadership education

Deployment and Operational Ministry

Understanding how each service approaches deployment ministry enhances joint operations:

Service	Deployment Preparation	In-Theater Operations
Army	Unit Ministry Team (UMT) trains together; pre-deployment counseling; family readiness briefings	UMT embedded with units; forward operating base (FOB) ministry; battlefield circulation
Navy/Marines	FMF training for Marines; shipboard familiarization for Navy; Religious Ministry Team integration	Battalion/ship ministry; combat operations support; casualty assistance
Air Force	Religious Support Team readiness; deployment ministry planning; family care plans	Base ministry; expeditionary operations; coalition partner engagement

Cross-Service Ministry Considerations

When Army Chaplains Support Other Services:

- Understand Navy/Marine Corps rank structure and protocol
- Adapt to Air Force wing structure and religious support model
- Learn service-specific terminology for religious programs
- Coordinate with service-specific enlisted support personnel

When Navy/Marine Chaplains Support Other Services:

- Understand Army garrison vs. unit ministry distinctions
- Adapt to Air Force installation-based ministry model
- Navigate different funding streams for programs
- Work within different command structures

When Air Force Chaplains Support Other Services:

- Understand Army/Navy deployment operational tempo
- Adapt to more austere field ministry environments
- Work with different enlisted support structures
- Navigate combat arms unit culture

Professional Development Resources

- **Armed Forces Chaplains Board (AFCB):** Joint chaplain policy and coordination
- **Chaplain Corps Professional Reading Lists:** Each service publishes annual lists
- **Association of Professional Chaplains (APC):** Professional certification and standards
- **Military Chaplains Association (MCA):** Professional networking and development
- **National Conference on Ministry to the Armed Forces (NCMAF):** Annual professional conference

Credentialing and Endorsement

All military chaplains must maintain:

- **Ecclesiastical Endorsement:** From DoD-recognized faith group endorsing agent
- **Graduate Theological Education:** Master of Divinity or equivalent (120 semester hours)
- **Professional Certifications:** Board certification (where applicable)
- **Annual Endorsement Renewal:** Maintaining good standing with faith group

Next quarter (Q3) will explore chaplain ethics, confidentiality practices, and legal considerations across services.

MOAA Advocacy & News

MOAA continues championing military family quality of life. Current advocacy priorities:

Military Families:

- [Child Care Expansion and Fee Assistance](#)
- [Military Spouse Employment Tax Relief](#)
- [Interstate Licensing Portability for Spouses](#)
- [Military-Connected School Support](#)
- [PCS Move Reimbursement Improvements](#)

Active Duty:

- [BAH Reform and Transparency](#)
- [Quality of Life Improvements](#)

- Transition Assistance Program Enhancements

Guard & Reserve:

- TRICARE Reserve Select Improvements
- Educational Benefits Parity
- Employer Support Initiatives

Retirees & Survivors:

- TRICARE Access Protection
 - COLA Protection
 - Survivor Benefit Plan Advocacy
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Key Advocacy Issues

- Expand Access to Quality Child Care
 - Support Military Spouse Career Portability
 - Improve Military Housing Standards
 - Protect TRICARE Benefits
 - Enhance Educational Opportunities for Military Children
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Navigating Transition: PCS Season and Family Ministry

1. Supporting Families During PCS Moves

- **Pre-Move Ministry:** Blessing of homes, farewell gatherings, transition counseling
- **Arrival Support:** Newcomer orientation, community integration, school transitions
- **Spouse Care:** Employment resources, friendship networks, adaptation support

2. Military Children and Youth

- Supporting military children through frequent moves and school changes
- Deployment ministry for children and teens
- Youth programs and faith formation in transient communities

3. Deployment Cycle Ministry

- Pre-deployment family readiness and spiritual preparation
- During deployment: rear detachment ministry and family support
- Reintegration challenges and post-deployment family reunification

Health & Wellness Tips

Second Quarter Wellness Focus:

- **Physical:** Outdoor activities; family fitness; spring allergies management

- **Mental:** Transition stress; social connection; work-life balance for families
 - **Spiritual:** Family worship; gratitude practices; service opportunities
 - **Relational:** Marriage enrichment; quality time with children; extended family connections
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Faith Group Spotlight: Buddhist Practices

Continuing our quarterly series on faith traditions, this quarter we focus on Buddhist service members and their practices.

Understanding Buddhist Military Service Members



(photo of our very own Chaplain Tid Chuck, left side of the Supreme Pontiff - Head Buddhist monk of Buddhism in Thailand)

Core Beliefs:

- Four Noble Truths: suffering exists, its cause, its cessation, and the path to cessation
- Noble Eightfold Path: right understanding, thought, speech, action, livelihood, effort, mindfulness, concentration
- Concepts of karma (action and consequence) and rebirth
- Goal of achieving enlightenment (nirvana) and freedom from suffering

Buddhist Diversity:

- **Theravada:** "Way of the Elders" - emphasizes monastic tradition and individual enlightenment
- **Mahayana:** "Great Vehicle" - emphasizes bodhisattva ideal of helping all beings
- **Vajrayana/Tibetan:** Incorporates tantric practices and lama teachers
- **Zen:** Emphasizes meditation and direct experience
- **Pure Land:** Focuses on devotion to Amitabha Buddha

Key Practices Chaplains Should Know:

- **Meditation:** Central practice for mindfulness and concentration
- **Five Precepts:** Ethical guidelines (no killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying, intoxicants)

- **Vegetarianism:** Some traditions practice vegetarianism; not universal
- **Mindfulness:** Present-moment awareness in daily activities
- **Chanting:** Recitation of sutras and mantras

Major Observances:

- **Vesak (Buddha Day):** Celebrates birth, enlightenment, and death of Buddha (May)
- **Parinirvana Day:** Buddha's final passing (February)
- **Bodhi Day:** Buddha's enlightenment (December)
- **Lunar New Year:** Celebrated by many Asian Buddhist communities
- **Uposatha Days:** Observance days on new and full moons

Accommodation Considerations:

- Time and space for daily meditation practice
- Dietary accommodations (vegetarian options when requested)
- Observance of major holy days for worship and reflection
- Respect for statues and images as teaching tools, not idols
- Access to meditation cushions, incense, or other practice aids

Pastoral Care Insights:

- Buddhism emphasizes personal responsibility and self-reflection

- Suffering is viewed as part of existence, not punishment
- Meditation and mindfulness can complement military resilience training
- Non-violence (ahimsa) principle may create tension with military service for some
- Concept of "right livelihood" - military service as protecting others from harm
- Emphasis on compassion (karuna) and loving-kindness (metta)

Military Service Considerations:

- Many Buddhists reconcile military service through protective intent vs. harmful intent
- Mindfulness practices align well with situational awareness training
- Emphasis on discipline and mental training compatible with military values
- May seek guidance from teachers/lamas on ethical questions

Ministry Resources:

- Installation meditation groups or sanghas (communities)
- Virtual connections to Buddhist teachers and communities
- Buddhist chaplain endorsers for lay leadership when chaplains are unavailable
- Mindfulness and meditation apps for deployed environments

Important Note: Buddhism is incredibly diverse. Individual practitioners may follow some, all, or adapted versions of these practices. Always ask individuals about their specific tradition and needs rather than making assumptions.

Get Involved

Your involvement makes a difference! Spouses are welcome to serve and join our email list.

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