



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS
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OPNAVINST 1120.9
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OPNAV INSTRUCTION 1120.9

From: Chief of Naval Operations

Subj: APPOINTMENT OF OFFICERS IN THE CHAPLAIN CORPS OF THE NAVY

Ref: (a) DOD Instruction 1304.28 of 11 Jun 04
(b) DOD Directive 1310.2 of 28 May 96
(c) SECNAVINST 1000.7E
(d) DOD Directive 1205.5 of 22 Apr 04
(e) DOD Directive 1312.3 of 21 Oct 96
(f) OPNAVINST 1210.5
(g) DOD Directive 1304.19 of 11 June 04
(h) SECNAVINST 1730.7B
(i) SECNAVINST 1420.1 Series
(j) SECNAVINST 5300.28C
(k) NAVMED P-117, Manual of the Medical Department
(l) 10 U.S.C.
(m) OPNAVINST 1427.2
(n) OPNAVINST 1427.1
(o) SECNAVINST 1920.6B

Encl: (1) Chaplain Candidate Program

1. Purpose. To delineate Department of the Navy (DON) policy, responsibilities, and procedures for the appointment and recall of chaplains under references (a) through (e).

2. Cancellation. SECNAVINST 1120.4A.

3. Applicability. This instruction applies to all persons appointed as chaplains in the Regular or Reserve Component of the Navy. Processing initiated before the effective date of this instruction will be continued pursuant to policy and instructions in effect before that date.

a. Additional guidance on the transfer of Chaplain Corps officers from other services into the Chaplain Corps of the Navy is found in references (c) and (d).

b. Additional guidance on the transfer of Chaplain Corps officers into the Regular Component of the Chaplain Corps from the Reserve Component and the transfer of Regular and Reserve Component between the Line and the Chaplain Corps, or between another Staff Corps, and the Chaplain Corps, is found in reference (f).

4. Policy - Appointment of Chaplains. DON will ensure that persons appointed as chaplains meet the minimum professional and educational qualifications required by reference (g). Authorized strength and grade levels in the Chaplain Corps shall be maintained by recruiting Religious Ministry Professionals (RMPs) of Religious Organizations (ROs) of the United States to provide religious ministries under reference (h), to support the annual 5-year promotion plan approved under reference (i), to provide a base for an all-Regular career force, and to attain authorized strength in the Reserve Component to meet approved mobilization requirements.

a. Requirements for newly-appointed officers on the Active Duty List (ADL) sufficient to support an all Regular force will be filled primarily through the Chaplain Candidate Program authorized in enclosure (1). Requirements, which cannot be fully met by this source, will be met by direct appointment of qualified religious ministry professionals.

b. Requirements for officers on the ADL in career grades that cannot be met by promotion will be supplemented by voluntary recall to active duty of Chaplain Corps officers who have not served previously on extended active duty.

c. Requirements for officers on the ADL which cannot be met by the preceding sources will be met by voluntary recall of Chaplain Corps officers who have served previously on extended active duty and by interservice transfer of chaplains from other services.

d. Requirements for Selected Reserve (SELRES) and Individual Ready Reserve (IRR) officers will be filled primarily by the transfer of officers from the ADL who have completed their initial obligated service. Requirements which cannot be met from this source will be met by direct appointment of

qualified religious ministry professionals as Reserve officers of the Chaplain Corps on inactive duty or through the Chaplain Candidate Program.

5. Action

a. Deputy Chief of Naval Operations (DCNO) (Manpower, Personnel, Training, and Education (N1/NT)) may approve entry grade credit and establish entry grades and dates of rank in compliance with this instruction.

b. Chief of Chaplains shall:

(1) Develop an annual accession plan to support authorized strength in the Chaplain Corps. There must be enough accessions to support the 5-year promotion plans for the ADL and Reserve Component and ensure that the promotion opportunity and flow necessary to meet authorized strength-in-grade requirements are maintained.

(2) Certify professional qualifications and calculate entry grade credit based on these qualifications for DCNO (N1/NT).

(3) Notify Chief of Naval Personnel (CHNAVPERS) when an ecclesiastical endorsing agency withdraws its endorsement of a chaplain or when the Chief of Chaplains withdraws its designation of a chaplain.

(a) Recertify a chaplain's professional qualification upon receipt of a new ecclesiastical endorsement.

(b) Recommend to CHNAVPERS a chaplain's continuance, based on needs of the Navy.

c. Commander, Navy Recruiting Command (COMNAVCRUITCOM) shall determine a chaplain's grade and date of rank based on the criteria established in this instruction subject to the approval of DCNO (N1/NT).

6. Policies and Procedures for Appointment of Regular and Reserve Officers in the Chaplain Corps

a. Basic Qualifications for Appointment as a Chaplain. To be eligible for appointment as a Chaplain Corps officer in either the ADL or Reserve Component, or for voluntary recall

from the Reserve Component to the ADL, the applicant must meet the following requirements:

(1) Citizenship. A Chaplain Corps appointee must be a citizen of the United States under reference (b).

(2) Age. Must be able to complete 20 years of active commissioned service by age 68. DCNO(N1/NT) may waive these restrictions for otherwise qualified applicants for appointment on the ADL or in the Reserve Component in the following instances:

(a) When there is a shortage against authorized strength in the ADL, which cannot be met through the Chaplain Candidate Program, direct appointments, voluntary recall from the Reserve Component, or by in-zone promotion under the annual 5-year plan.

(b) When there is a shortage against authorized strength in the Reserve Component which cannot be met by transfer of officers from the ADL, from the Chaplain Candidate Program, in-zone promotions under the annual 5-year promotion plan, or by direct procurement of qualified civilians who meet age requirements.

(c) When extraordinary circumstances cause such a waiver to be in the best interests of the Naval Service.

(d) When a gross inequity to the applicant would otherwise result. Before appointment, applicants who will be unable to complete 20 years of creditable service for retirement shall acknowledge the same in writing.

(3) Moral character. Must be of good moral character and of unquestioned loyalty to the United States as determined by interview and investigation. As prescribed under reference (j), no person who is alcohol and/or drug dependent, who currently abuses alcohol and/or drugs, whose pre-service abuse of alcohol and/or drugs indicates a proclivity to continue abuse in the service, or who has a record of any trafficking offenses shall be permitted to enter or be retained in the Chaplain Corps.

(4) Physical standards. Must meet the physical standards for service on active duty established by Chief, Bureau of Medicine and Surgery and approved by CNO. DCNO

(N1/NT) may grant waivers for physical defects that will not interfere with the performance of active duty within the guidelines of reference (k).

(5) Moral assent. Applicants shall affirm that, if appointed, they shall abide by applicable laws, and all applicable regulations, directives, and instructions of the Department of Defense (DOD) and DON. This includes a willingness to function in a pluralistic environment and to support, both directly and indirectly, the free exercise of religion by all members of the Naval service, their family members, and other persons authorized to be served by the chaplaincy.

(6) Ecclesiastical Endorsement. Applicants must have an endorsement from a qualified Religious Organization (RO) as specified in reference (a), enclosure (5) that verifies:

(a) The individual is a Religious Ministry Professional (RMP) as defined in reference (a). An individual endorsed to represent a RO and to conduct its religious observances or ceremonies. An RMP is a fully qualified member of the clergy for those Religious Organizations that have a tradition of professional clergy or their equivalents. The RO's endorsement verifies that an RMP is professionally qualified to serve as a chaplain in the military and meets the graduate education and religious leadership requirements of reference (a).

(b) Two years of religious leadership experience for an ADL appointment. Religious leadership experience shall be compatible with the duties of RMPs in their respective RO and relevant to the settings of military chaplaincy.

(c) An RMP's application shall include the endorsement of the person's ecclesiastical credentials on DD Form 2088, Statement of Ecclesiastical Endorsement as provided in reference (a), enclosure (6).

(7) Education. The RMP will meet the requirements set forth in reference (a), paragraph 6.1.5.

b. Examination of professional qualifications. The professional qualifications of all applicants for appointment in the Chaplain Corps, the Chaplain Candidate Program Officer (CCPO) program, and transfers between active and inactive duty shall be validated by the Chief of Chaplains with the assistance

of the Chaplain Appointment and Recall Eligibility (CARE) Advisory Group. This includes applicants for direct appointments to active duty, direct appointment to inactive duty in the Reserve Component, voluntary recall from the Reserve Component to the ADL, interservice transfers, and superseding applications from CCPOs to active or inactive duty.

(1) Voluntary recall. To be eligible for voluntary recall from the Reserve Component to the ADL, the applicant must be a fully qualified RMP of a RO represented by a DOD-recognized ecclesiastical endorsing agency under reference (g). Recalled officers will be recalled in the rank held in the Reserve Component and will not have entry grade recomputed.

(2) Examination procedure. The CARE Advisory Group shall review an applicant's academic performance, graduate theological education, professional experience, professional reputation, interviews by a recruiting officer and a chaplain, and letters of personal or professional recommendation; and shall ensure that an ecclesiastical endorsement has been submitted for each applicant. This review must be completed before recommending the applicant for appointment or recall and prior to recommending the entry grade credit to be granted upon appointment. Once the examining body has examined and certified the applicant's professional qualifications, DCNO (N1/NT) or COMNAVCRUITCOM acting for DCNO (N1/NT) shall determine whether the applicant is otherwise qualified for a commission as a chaplain. No applicant shall be appointed as a Chaplain Corps officer without these determinations.

c. Entry grade credit. Entry grade and date of rank upon appointment in the Chaplain Corps shall be based on the number of years of entry grade credit awarded for prior active commissioned service, advanced education, and professional experience under reference (e). Credit shall be granted subject to the computation rules in paragraph 6d and as specified in the following table:

ENTRY GRADE CREDIT TABLE

Qualification	Credit
1. Commissioned service in any of the uniformed services on active duty or in an active status.	1 year
2. Successful completion of graduate professional study validated by a Master of Divinity or equivalent degree under the criteria of paragraph 6a(7).	3 years

<p>3. Seven or more years of full-time practical experience in ministry following the completion of the educational requirements in paragraph 6a(7). To be credited, the applicant must have accrued the experience as a fully qualified RMP of a RO. The experience may include pastoral ministry, religious education, or other form of full-time religious vocation.</p>	<p>1/2 year for each year not to exceed 1 year of credit</p>
<p>4. The DON will not normally grant entry grade credit for special experience or unique qualifications. Assistant Secretary of the Navy (Manpower and Reserve Affairs) (ASN (M&RA)), considering the recommendations and supporting justification of DCNO (N1/NT), may waive this limitation on a case-by-case basis when there is a requirement that cannot be met within the guidelines of this instruction.</p>	<p>Maximum of 3 years of credit</p>

d. Limits and Computation of entry grade credit. Entry grade credit shall be computed as follows:

(1) A period of time or a qualification shall be counted only once.

(2) Qualifying periods of less than one full year will be proportionally credited to the nearest day.

(3) Credit will not be awarded for service as a warrant officer.

(4) Graduates of the service academies will not be awarded credit for any service performed or education, training, or experience obtained before graduation from the academy concerned.

(5) Entry grade credit will not be normally awarded for education, training, or experience obtained while on active duty or on inactive duty in an active status. If the officer completes advanced education specified in reference (a) for initial appointment in less than the normal number of years, the officer may be given constructive credit for the difference between the normal number of years and the actual number of years taken. Detailed guidance is furnished in reference (1), sections 533 and 12207.

(6) To obtain a high level of experience in the naval chaplaincy environment before entering the career force, total entry grade credit shall normally be limited to six years. ASN (M&RA), considering the recommendations and supporting justification of DCNO (N1/NT), may waive this limit on a case-by-case basis when there is a requirement that cannot be met within the guidelines of this article.

(7) Because the recall of a Chaplain Corps officer from inactive duty is not an appointment, such officers are not entitled to additional entry grade credit.

(8) The total entry grade credit granted shall be no more than that required for the person to receive an entry grade of lieutenant commander. This may be waived by Secretary of the Navy (SECNAV) in individual cases if there are significant reasons to appoint a person in a higher grade. This is not applicable to the appointment of a Reserve commissioned officer as a Regular commissioned officer under reference (1).

e. Entry grade credit in a transition period. This instruction provides credit to be awarded to individuals appointed in the Chaplain Corps from the effective date of this instruction. There shall be no retroactive changes made as a result of this instruction to the number of years credit previously granted to officers in the Chaplain Corps before the effective date of this instruction.

f. Appointments. A prospective Chaplain Corps officer will be appointed initially as a naval officer subject to the following guidance governing entry grade, date of rank, precedence, and application processing:

(1) Entry grade. A prospective Chaplain Corps officer shall be appointed in a grade based on total entry grade credit awarded. The minimum entry grade credit required for each grade is equal to the promotion flow points prescribed in the approved annual 5-year promotion plan in effect at the time of the appointment. Entry grade and date of rank of Chaplain Corps officers transferred from other services into the Chaplain Corps of the Navy shall be determined under references (c) and (d).

(2) Date of rank. When the minimum entry grade credit required for appointment in a given grade is granted, the date of rank shall be the date of appointment. When entry grade credit is granted in excess of the minimum years required for

appointment in a given grade (but is less than the amount necessary to justify the next higher grade), the excess credit shall be used to adjust the date of rank within grade. The appointee's excess entry grade credit shall be compared with the time-in-grade of Chaplain Corps officers on the ADL in the same grade. The date of rank upon appointment shall be the same as that of the Chaplain Corps officers on the ADL in the same grade with time-in-grade most equal to, but not less than, the appointee's excess entry grade credit.

(3) Assignment of precedence. Each appointee will be placed on the ADL or assigned precedence as follows:

(a) Appointees ordered to active duty or retained on active duty (other than active duty of Reserve officers as described in reference (l), section 641), incident to appointment shall be placed on the ADL under the provisions of reference (m). All appointees whose placement on the ADL would render them eligible for consideration in zone or above zone for promotion by an active duty promotion selection board shall be counseled regarding the option to defer eligibility for consideration for promotion under reference (h), and shall acknowledge such counsel in writing.

(b) Appointees not concurrently ordered to or retained on active duty (other than active duty as described in reference (l), section 641), shall be assigned a running mate on the ADL and placed on the inactive duty precedence list in an active status under reference (n).

(4) Failure to complete qualifications. Officers who fail to complete the Chaplain Basic Course or any required qualification in the Chaplain Candidate Program normally shall be relieved of any statutory service obligation and active duty obligation incurred as a result of accepting an appointment into the Chaplain Corps or the Chaplain Candidate Program, and shall be separated for cause per reference (o) under the following guidelines:

(a) Officers who do not have pre-existing service obligations under prior appointments or enlistments shall normally have their service obligation cancelled and be discharged for cause.

(b) Officers who have pre-existing service obligations under prior appointments shall normally be

reappointed in their previous competitive category to complete their initial service obligation.

(c) Officers who have pre-existing service obligations under prior enlistments shall normally be reverted to their previous enlisted status to complete their initial service obligation.

(d) CHNAVPERS may recommend, with supporting justification, retention and transfer to another competitive category when that action would be in the best interest of the Naval Service.

g. Chaplain Candidate Program. Selection and appointment for active duty in the Chaplain Corps through the Chaplain Candidate Program shall be made as required by enclosure (1) and paragraph 6f.

h. Application Processing. All qualified applicants for appointment either on active duty or inactive duty shall be commissioned within 120 days following receipt of a complete application by Navy Recruiting Command. DCNO (N1/NT) may authorize delayed commissioning when a later time is requested by the applicant.

/s/
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Deputy Chief of Naval Operations
(Manpower, Personnel, Training,
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CHAPLAIN CANDIDATE PROGRAM

1. Purpose. To familiarize graduate students of religion with religious support activities in the military environment and to aid in meeting future year accession requirements for chaplains on the Active-Duty List and in the Reserve Component. CNO (N1/NT) will conduct a Chaplain Candidate Program following reference (a).

2. Eligibility. Chaplain Candidate Program Officers (CCPOs) must meet the basic qualifications in paragraph 6 above and must:

a. Receive a letter of approval from a Religious Organization (RO) recognized as able to provide ecclesiastical endorsements for chaplains under reference (a).

b. Possess a baccalaureate degree of not less than 120 semester hours from an accredited college or university.

c. Be a matriculated student in a graduate-level, degree-granting religious studies program in a qualifying educational institution as set forth in reference (a), paragraph 6.2 and subparagraph 6.7.3.2.

d. Be able to complete educational, ecclesiastical, and professional experience requirements for an original appointment as a chaplain prior to reaching the age limitation for such an appointment.

e. Meet all other appointment eligibility criteria of the Navy.

f. Maintain a satisfactory full-time standing under the standards of the graduate theological school in which enrolled and in any training program prescribed by the religious faith group.

3. Appointment. Candidates selected for the program will be appointed as an Ensign in the Reserve Component, Staff Designator 1945, for inactive duty, inactive status, during the period of their professional studies, under the following conditions:

- a. Serve without pay or allowances while in a student status except during periods of Active Duty for Training (ADT).
- b. Complete theological education and receive a qualifying degree.
- c. Obtain an ecclesiastical endorsement under paragraph 6a.
- d. Complete CCPO Orientation Program.
- e. Accept, if offered, a superseding appointment to lieutenant (junior grade) in the Chaplain Corps, USN, 4100, for Active Duty; or lieutenant (junior grade) in the Chaplain Corps, USNR, 4105, for inactive duty under reference (a).
- f. Complete total service obligation of 8 years upon superseding appointment in the Chaplain Corps. Obligated service in the Chaplain Corps is either on Active Duty, in an active status in the Reserve Component, or a sequential combination of the two. For officers appointed to the Active Duty List (ADL), the initial active duty obligation is 3 years.

4. Disenrollment. CCPOs may be separated from the Navy Reserve under paragraph 6f(4) above in the following circumstances:

- a. Withdrawal of the letter of approval by the CCPO's RO. If a letter of approval is withdrawn, the CCPO has 10 days from the date of notification by the Chief of Chaplains office to contact that office regarding their status. Failure to respond or obtain another letter of approval in a timely fashion will result in disenrollment.
- b. Failure to maintain a grade point average of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale in the school listed in paragraph 2c above.
- c. Discontinuing professional training or withdrawal from school without prior assurance of resumption within 1 year.
- d. Failure to obtain a qualifying degree.

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e. Failure to obtain an ecclesiastical endorsement for superseding appointment before coming into zone for lieutenant commander.

f. Failure to attend or successfully complete CCPO Orientation Program when ordered to that school.

g. Violation of the Uniform Code of Military Justice or State or Federal criminal statutes.

h. Failure to conform to prescribed standards of dress, weight, personal appearance, or military deportment.

5. Active Duty for Training. CCPOs, at the discretion of the Chief of Chaplains, and after the completion of the Chaplain Candidate Orientation Course, may voluntarily accept ADT orders for on-the-job-training under the supervision of a chaplain. Such assignments shall, to the extent possible, involve tasks in religious ministry programs consistent with the level of training of the CCPO. CCPOs are not authorized to serve as or in place of chaplains. The assignment will be performed at a command as near to the CCPO's school as possible, except as may be otherwise directed by the Chief of Chaplains.

6. Superseding Appointment in the Chaplain Corps. DCNO (N1/NT) may offer superseding appointments in the Chaplain Corps to CCPOs who successfully complete the necessary requirements. The number of appointments per year is equal to the current year accession plan requirements for the ADL and the Reserve Component.

a. Selection for appointment will be based on criteria established by DCNO (N1/NT) and the Chief of Chaplains.

b. CCPOs that are not offered a superseding commission, and those who do not accept one when offered, will be honorably discharged from the Navy Reserve.

7. Wearing of Chaplain Corps Insignia. CCPOs may be authorized by the Chief of Navy Chaplains to wear Chaplain Corps insignia. When wearing Chaplain Corps insignia, CCPOs must also wear a nametag indicating their status as Chaplain Candidates.