

Chaplain

The Chaplain plays an important role in the Detachment by tending to the needs of members and members families, particularly during periods of distress, illness, and/or death. It is every member's responsibility to keep the Chaplain informed of situations and issues of need within the Detachment. In addition, the Chaplain is called on to offer invocations and prayer for meetings, initiations, installations, and for ceremonies. The Chaplain may be called on to participate in funeral services, and to make visitation to members/families that are sick, or who have lost a loved one. In addition, the Chaplain may be required to assist in funeral arrangements (to include contacts for USMC honor guards), and/or publicize needs of the sick (to include blood donations, etc.)

The Chaplain's job, as a primary representative of the Detachment, is to provide comfort and service to members and families in time of need. This support should go

beyond members and family - it should include the entire Marine Corps community (current or former) within the Detachment's geographic area. This may necessitate reviewing obituaries, or having hospitals make contact when a Marine is there. He/she should be supported by other officers and members during these times of distress. It is part of the adage that "Marines take care of their own."

Characteristics and Traits

- Compassion for others
- Ability to communicate in stressful situations
- Ability to offer advice and assistance/support to persons in distress
- Initiative to contact members for support and assistance
- Liaison with local USMC units for support
- Written communications capability in offering wishes or condolences
- Initiative to make appropriate response to needs with flowers or gifts
- Sincerity of purpose
- Positive representation of Detachment

Narrative of Job Accountability and Responsibilities

PERFORM THE DUTIES OF A SPIRITUAL NATURE - The term "Chaplain" implies the providing of support to individuals and groups for spiritual or religious guidance. Every aspect of League objectives, purposes, initiation, and ritual, references God. It is not expected that a Detachment Chaplain be schooled in theology, but it is

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expected that the Chaplain will provide support to those in need and provide prayer for meetings and ceremonies (either as provided in the Ritual, or as developed to meet situational needs). The “bottom line” to providing service as a Chaplain is the Golden Rule - “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.” Simply stated, it’s how you would want to be treated if you were in a distress situation. The Chaplain needs to respond to needs and wishes, offer comfort, and provide advice and counsel where needed. He/she needs to make sure that other members of the Detachment are aware of situations in which support is needed.

VISIT SICK MEMBERS OR FAMILIES/CORRESPOND APPROPRIATELY -

The Chaplain should make every effort to visit members, or member’s families, who are incapacitated. He/she should make Detachment officers and members aware of the situation and solicit participation. A card of well wishes should be sent to the individual on behalf of the Detachment. Where appropriate and feasible, a gift should also be considered as a token of concern by the Detachment.

The primary purpose of visitation and correspondence is to let the individual know that they are being thought of, that they are missed, that they are important, and that they are a part of the Marine Corps family. Advice, counsel, warm wishes, words of comfort, and appropriate kidding are all a part of support.

ASSIST MEMBERS AND FAMILIES AT TIME OF DEATH - The Chaplain should be immediately advised of any member’s death, or family member’s death. He/she should call on the family and determine how he/she and/or the Detachment can assist. If the family should request participation in the funeral or graveside service, the Chaplain should coordinate functions with the Commandant and the Officer Board. If coordination with a USMC unit is required, the Chaplain should contact the appropriate unit and assist in coordination with the CO or SNGO. The Chaplain should advise the Adjutant and other members of the Detachment for additional help and support.

It is appropriate for the Chaplain to send a sympathy card on behalf of the Detachment, and where feasible to provide flowers for the funeral or a plant to the surviving family members. Detachment members should attend funeral services and assist the family to the degree possible.

The Ritual of the Marine Corps League provides for services honoring members and should be offered. If accepted, the Chaplain should take charge of coordinating such services with the family, funeral director, and Detachment members. The Chaplain may need to assist with finding a DD-214 for a casket flag, and for a USMC rifle squad.

The same assistance and support should be offered to Marines or Marine families who are not members of the Marine Corps League. Our purpose is to support Marines, and membership is not a requirement for assistance in time of need.

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The Chaplain fulfills a role of assisting and supporting a family in any way possible and should be able to call on Detachment members for assistance when necessary.

PROVIDE NOTIFICATION TO DEPARTMENT AND NATIONAL ON DECEASED MEMBERS

- The “Death Notice” form should be completed by the Chaplain and forwarded to the Department Chaplain, and National, for deceased members of the Detachment. This form should be completed and transmitted immediately upon notification. In addition to other administrative reasons, deceased members are honored with a memorial service at Department, Division, and National meetings.

PROVIDE INVOCATIONS AND SERVICES AS REQUIRED

- As a part of the opening and closing ceremonies at business meetings, the Ritual provides for the opening and closing of the Bible, and for an invocation and benediction. The Chaplain may use the words of the Ritual, or offer other appropriate prayers at the meeting.

The Chaplain may also be called on to render a prayer at ceremonies, joint veterans observances, and/or special events. (Such as the Marine Corps Birthday) As indicated above, the Chaplain may also need to prepare and coordinate services for a deceased Marine.

PERFORM DUTIES AS REQUESTED BY THE COMMANDANT

- While most of the duties of the Chaplain have been described above, the Commandant may request the Chaplain to attend, participate, and/or coordinate an event not listed. This might include community ceremonies, dedications, or other special events.

ABIDE BY THE RITUAL OF OFFICE

- The Marine Corps League Ritual is comprehensive in addressing the situations in which the Chaplain may be asked to participate. Again, he/she may be innovative in developing prayers or statements that suit the purpose of any given situation. For situations not covered, the Chaplain should improvise and treat each situation with respect for the office.

OTHER - Other duties of the Chaplain may include:

- Establish and maintain a checklist and plan for actions to take upon death of a Marine, or member of a Marine’s family
- Establish and maintain a checklist and plan for actions to take upon illness or distress of a Marine, or member of a Marine’s family
- Obtain budget approval from Board of Trustees on expenditure limits for gifts/flowers
- Establish contact with Veterans Administration, Veterans Services, and USMC units for information in the event of a Marine’s illness or death

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- Develop scenarios and contingency plans for events

Summary

A major focus of the Chaplain should be on contingency planning for events that may arise. It is better to be prepared for an eventuality than have to scramble at the last minute when the event has occurred. The Chaplain plays a key role in meetings, ceremonies, and other events, reminding each of us about our reliance on Divine Providence. In addition, the Chaplain is the “point man” for providing assistance and support, aid and comfort, to Marines and Marine families in need. He/she requires the support of every member in effectively carrying out his responsibilities, especially in times of distress.