

SINCE NOVEMBER 28, 1775

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NAVY



Rear Admiral E. B. Harp, Jr.,
the present Chief of Chaplains

*"But he who fights against relentless foe
When silence reigns and cheer
of eager van
Greets not his ear, but steadfast
and alone
Drives back the host of sin,
he is a man"*

Chaplain Henry Van Dyke
USNRF 1918

THE LIGHT had left the smoky Korean sky but the padre's Bible was still open in his hand. It had been a hard day. His Marines had spearheaded an assault and several of his parishioners had been killed. All had received the last rites of the church. The wounded had been evacuated and the shaken boy regained his confidence after a few

words of encouragement and returned to his platoon.

Reviewing the day's battle, the chaplain recalled an account written by one of his predecessors during World War I. He, too, had served with the Marines.

"He crawled, walked, ran among the fighting men during these uncertain days, finding the wounded and marking the position of a dead Marine by forcing the bayonet of a rifle into the ground so that the butt of the rifle stood upright. He cut away clothes from wounds, even cutting the shredded flesh that held a shattered leg or an arm to the body, sounding out words of encouragement. He heard the whine of the bullet as he dragged a wounded man into a shell hole, dazed and confused by the flashes and explosions everywhere.

"And then with the night and a lull in the fighting, the chaplain with a shovel, led off a gang of volunteers to bury those who still lay on the ground. . .

"And he of all men had to be cheery, had to perk up and say pleasant words and . . . that in spite of the horribly demoralizing influence of the handling of the bodies of men with whom he had associated and chatted intimately only a few hours before."

There were many battles before that. Navy chaplains have been around a long time.

The Fall of 1775 was a harried and confused period for the Continental Congress assembled in Philadelphia. The American Revolution was in its infant stage and the harassed lawmakers were caught up in a maelstrom of climactic and historic events. Yet, on October 13, a timid Congress by a margin of one vote, authorized the building of two swift sailing vessels—the forerunners of today's United States Navy.

They also appointed a committee to prepare Naval Regulations, and, on November 28, adopted the second article which read in part:

"The Commanders of the ships of the thirteen United Colonies are to take care that divine service be performed twice a day on board and a sermon preached on Sundays, unless bad weather or other extraordinary accidents prevent."

Although specific mention was not made of a chaplain, the article implies that Congress intended that there should be an ordained clergyman on board. On August 30, 1954, with this as reference, the Secretary of the Navy officially decreed November 28, 1775, as the anniversary of the Navy Chaplaincy.

It has been a courageous and trying 180 years. Although the early chaplains were underpaid, poorly uniformed and discriminated against, gradually a feeling of respect emerged for the dedicated men who accompanied our naval forces wherever they sailed in their globe-encircling duties. The chaplains were there, not only aboard ship, but on foreign shore stations and with Marine units in combat. Since the Summer of 1912 when the Marines landed in Nicaragua, Navy chaplains have accompanied them into battle and ministered to their spiritual and physical needs. Chaplains have been wounded or killed in practically every Marine Corps campaign since Chaplain J. F. Fleming went ashore with the Marine landing party from the *USS California* at Managua on August 4, 1912.

The early years were the hardest. The annual Navy Register for the years 1821 to 1840 show that an average of only nine chaplains were continually on active duty. One of their formative moves was to agitate fiercely for the cessation of flogging. It was difficult to preach of love and then have the crew watch one of their number flogged immediately after the service. Their efforts resulted in some of the major reforms in the Naval Service.

CHAPLAINS

Only three chaplains are known to have served in the Continental Navy but they left their mark. The first, the Reverend Benjamin Balch, a Harvard graduate and Congregational minister, set a precedent for today's chaplains by his courage in battle. When the Minutemen fired into the British on Lexington green, the good man was in their ranks. When the Americans defeated the British in the Battle of Bunker Hill, Benjamin Balch was their chaplain. When the *Alliance* captured two British ships off Halifax the log recorded:

"The peril the ship was in brought out the desperate courage of every man aboard the Alliance, the 'cloth' being no exception. The Reverend Benjamin, armed cap-a-pie, was seen in the midst of the fray and thereafter is said to have become known on the ship as the 'fighting parson'."

When Chaplain Balch left the *Alliance*, Captain John Barry appointed James Geagan, a Navy surgeon, to serve as chaplain. In the early days of America's history many clergymen also practiced medicine. While it is possible that Geagan was ordained, the probability is that he was not. Since the captain was a devout Catholic, it has been assumed by some that Geagan was an Irish Catholic priest. Chaplain Geagan served the spiritual needs of the crew until he was able to resume his regular duties as surgeon.

The third chaplain, Edward Brooks, had the misfortune to be taken prisoner while serving on the *Hancock*. After a year in a British prison he was exchanged for a captured British chaplain.

For 13 years, 1785-98, there was no American Navy. The Constitution, adopted in 1789, gave Congress the authority to provide and maintain a navy but the Navy Department was not formed until 1798 and no ships were acquired during the period. The

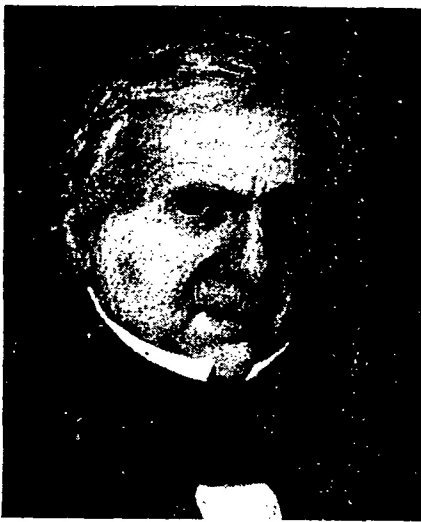
Navy was born out of a troubled international situation. As early as 1785, American ships had been seized by Algerian pirates and their crews held for ransom. Finally, in March, 1794, an aroused Congress passed an "Act to Provide Naval Armament." It called for the building of six frigates but the keels of only three were immediately laid. Construction was halted for three years when a treaty was signed with the Bey of Algiers. Continued trouble with the pirates of Tunis and the French led to the completion of the ships. On September 7, 1797, the *Constellation* was launched. A month later the *Constitution* slid down the ways. By 1799, the United States had 11 ships in her navy and two more were added in 1800 shortly before the quasi-war with France ended.

Chaplains held a peculiar position in those days. No apparent care was taken to secure ordained ministers. In fact, it was extremely difficult to find

a minister who would go to sea under existing conditions. Chaplains were the lowest paid officers in the Navy, receiving \$20 a month and two rations per day. The surgeons ranked above them and received \$25 plus four rations. It wasn't until 1794 that a raise was considered. The captains were usually more interested in the chaplain's scholastic background rather than his religious qualifications since the chaplain's main job was to instruct midshipmen in the "Arts and Theory of Navigation." He also sat at the captain's table and most times acted as his secretary—if the captain liked him. A chaplaincy was something of a political plum. Early requests for commissions as chaplains seldom showed any religious qualification. In fact, many requested positions "as clerk, purser or chaplain."

The first commissioned chaplain in the U. S. Navy was no stranger to naval service or combat. As a young-

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Reverend William Balch was the first U. S. Navy chaplain



Walter Colton was California's governor while still a chaplain



John B. Frazier was appointed first Chief of Chaplains in 1917

CHAPLAINS (cont.)

ster he had fought at his father's side aboard ship during the Revolutionary War. He was William Balch, son of the "Fighting Parson." During the quasi-war with France, seven men served as chaplains in the U. S. Navy although not all were commissioned.

The fortunes of the Navy Chaplain Corps were at their lowest ebb from 1801 to 1810. During the Winter of 1806-'07, only one chaplain remained on active duty and he repeatedly petitioned the Secretary of the Navy to change his title from "Chaplain" to "Naval Mathematician." He was Robert Thompson whose midshipmen's school at Washington, D. C., eventually led to the formation of the Naval Academy.

During the war with the Barbary pirates, Thompson was the only chaplain to sail with the Mediterranean Squadron. Assigned to the *President*, he accepted an invitation to dine with Captain Daniel McNeill, the eccentric skipper of the *Boston*. During dinner, the unpredictable McNeill upped anchor and sailed for Tunis. The outcome of the incident, in which the only Navy chaplain in the Mediterranean was either deliberately or inadvertently "shanghaied," is not recorded. It is assumed that Chaplain Thompson managed to get back to the *President* before the ship returned to the United States in 1802. If he was shanghaied, it was probably more for his teaching ability than for his religious convictions.

By 1818, it was becoming the rule rather than the exception to appoint ordained men as chaplains, thus dimin-

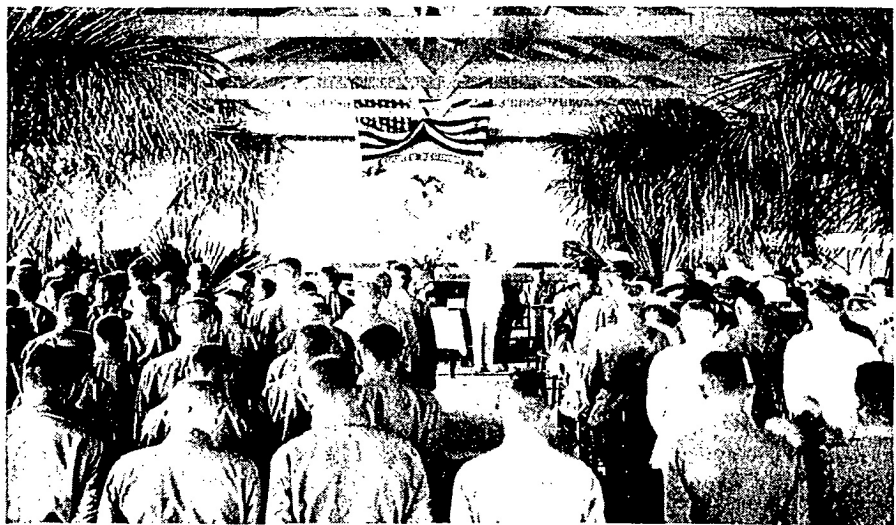
ishing the appointment of political favorites or just "literate" men to be chaplains. Age apparently received little consideration. In 1818, 18-year-old Philander Chase, Jr., received a commission. He was the youngest chaplain ever commissioned.

That he was commissioned "... was done at the insistence of Commodore McDonough, who had for some time past known his pious and manly character, and being well assured of his competent learning, had made application for him. . ."

McDonough was captain of the *Guerriere* and Chase served under him on cruises to Russia and the Mediterranean.

The first known Roman Catholic priest to serve in the Navy was Father Adam Marshall, S.J. He was carried on the rolls of the *North Carolina* as a "schoolmaster" in 1824. The first priest to receive a commission was Father Charles H. Parks in 1888.

During the years 1821-'30 inclusive, a total of 30 chaplains served in the Navy for varying periods of time. Twelve of these had been appointed prior to 1821. Since the Navy Depart-



Fourth Marines' divine services were well attended in 1923 in Santo Domingo. Chaplain C. V. Ellis used the regimental theater for a chapel

ment adhered to the policy of limiting the number of chaplains on active duty to nine, most of them were able to serve only a few years. Such a turnover reflected the dissatisfaction of many chaplains over such matters as pay. It also revealed a definite weakness in the Navy Department's method of selection. Physical fitness and age were practically disregarded. Burgess Allison was 70 years old when he received his commission.

But good men were being selected. At the close of 1840 there were 13 chaplains on duty. Among them was Walter Colton who had been persuaded to enter the Navy by President Andrew Jackson. Not only did he rise above his contemporaries in ability and accomplishments, but he ranks among the greatest of the Navy chaplains.

Colton was a prominent editor as well as a clergyman. He served as historiographer and chaplain on several ships and accompanied Commodore R. F. Stockton to California in 1845. Since the United States was responsible for the civil administration of the state, some provision had to be made for the establishment and maintenance of civil authority. Stockton appointed Chaplain Colton "Alcalde" of Monterey—a district which extended 300 miles along the California coast. The office was a Mexican institution which combined the duties of sheriff, prosecutor, coroner and governor. Colton held the office for three years, being regularly elected two months after his appointment. He was the first Protestant clergyman to settle in California.

It was during this period that the first regulation requiring ordination for

chaplains entering the Navy was made. The regulation also stated that no chaplain was to be over 30 years of age when appointed. Despite the regulation, most of the chaplains commissioned between 1841 and 1860 were in their forties.

Pay during these years was reaching the critical stage for the chaplains, inasmuch as they were still the lowest paid officers in the Navy. They were still receiving only \$660 a year. In 1835 their pay was increased to \$800 a year but the raise kept them behind the surgeons who were given \$1000. Some chaplains, who were maintaining a family at home while they were at sea, were unable to pay their mess bill in the officers' mess and were forced to eat with the crew.

Discrimination on the part of the ships' captains and Navy Yard commanders also detracted from the chaplains' prestige. An unnamed chaplain in the New York Navy Yard once involved himself with Commodore Chauncey, a legendary commandant of the yard.

The chaplain read a church notice, which he innocently added, was by order of the Bishop of the Diocese.

"By whose order, did you say?" suddenly interrupted the commodore, springing up.

"By order of the Bishop of the Diocese," meekly replied the chaplain.

"Well," thundered the commodore, "the notice will not be obeyed. I'll let you know that I am the Bishop of this Diocese."

But the chaplains were fighting back. Slowly they helped establish precedents and policies which are followed to this

day. Chaplain Edward McLaughlin, stationed at Portsmouth, New Hampshire, requested that he be notified whenever there were patients in the hospital who were seriously ill. He had learned that two men had died; one had requested a chaplain but McLaughlin had not been notified. The doctor replied that "compliance was impossible." The doughty McLaughlin promptly laid the case before the Secretary of the Navy. The Secretary made it quite clear to the doctor "that it is desirable, where there is an attending chaplain, he should be admitted unless the sick requires another."

Gradually the chaplains were forcing their way clear of their earlier roles as teachers and secretaries. As more ordained ministers entered the service they were able to concentrate their efforts toward the spiritual aid needed by the men. The Civil War bound the chaplains together. They began to refer to their group as a Corps. The provision for relative rank and the right to wear the sign of their ministry, the cross, helped create an *esprit de corps*. Stricter regulations were made regarding the age and health of new appointees. The old tradition of flying the church pennant above the flag during Divine Services was officially recognized. Radical changes, such as permitting voluntary attendance instead of enforcing attendance to Divine Service aboard ship had been made.

And, during the Civil War, the Navy's first chaplain was killed in action. He was John Lenhart, who went down with the *Cumberland* when she was sunk by the CSS *Virginia*, better known as the *Merrimac*.

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"In the midst of death, there is life." Navy chaplains accompanying the Marines in combat in the Pacific brought all the rites of the church





Circuit-riding chaplains made sure men in Korea saw a representative of their faith at least every

three days. Chaplain Robert Ruleman led Marines in worship while they were in range of the enemy



Chaplain John Craven, a former Marine, served in five of the Corps' Pacific campaigns and Korea



No group is too small to be visited by the Navy chaplains. Sub's deck served Chaplain J. Agnew

CHAPLAINS (cont.)

The greatest changes took place from 1901 through 1916, shortly before the United States entered the war. Annoying discriminations which had existed at the beginning of the century and had adversely affected the Corps were removed by acts of Congress or decrees of the Navy Department. Along with a long awaited pay increase, a new policy for selection and promotion of chaplains was made which greatly elevated the dignity of the chaplains and improved their efficiency. The YMCA had begun its service to naval personnel on leave or liberty and there were even a few Reserve chaplains standing by for any emergency service.

Probably at no time in its history was the Navy better prepared than in 1917 when America entered the war. The Chaplain Corps, with 40 men on active duty, had never before been so large or so well regulated.

The Corps reached its full maturity during World War I. The most important gain was the establishment of the Chaplains' Division within the Bureau of Navigation. The responsibility of assigning chaplains was given to this division. On November 5, 1917, 142 years after the anniversary date of the Corps, Chaplain John B. Frazier was appointed the first Chief of Chaplains. His appointment was met with approval in naval circles even though five chaplains on duty at the time were his seniors. He proved to be an outstanding choice. The fact that he was a close friend of Josephus Daniels, Secretary of the Navy, helped iron out many rough spots.

Chaplain Frazier selected each new chaplain personally. He would often take the Protestant applicants to the old City Mission in Washington, D.C., and give them instructions to preach a sermon. Without the applicant's knowledge, he would mingle with the motley congregation and later deliver his opinion of the sermon.

If an applicant failed to meet his requirements he was promptly rejected.

One day an ambitious young wife ushered her husband into Chaplain Frazier's office. While the young minister was closeted in the inner office for the interview with the chief, his wife was nervously anticipating the outcome in the anteroom. Finally, the separating door opened and the two men emerged.

Before either could speak to her, the wife bubbled forth, "Oh, Chaplain Frazier, I do hope you have taken Henry into the Navy. He is so fond of water."

"If that is the case," the chaplain is said to have retorted, "you'd better go home, dig a well and let Henry jump into it."

The chaplain's unbending attitude to-

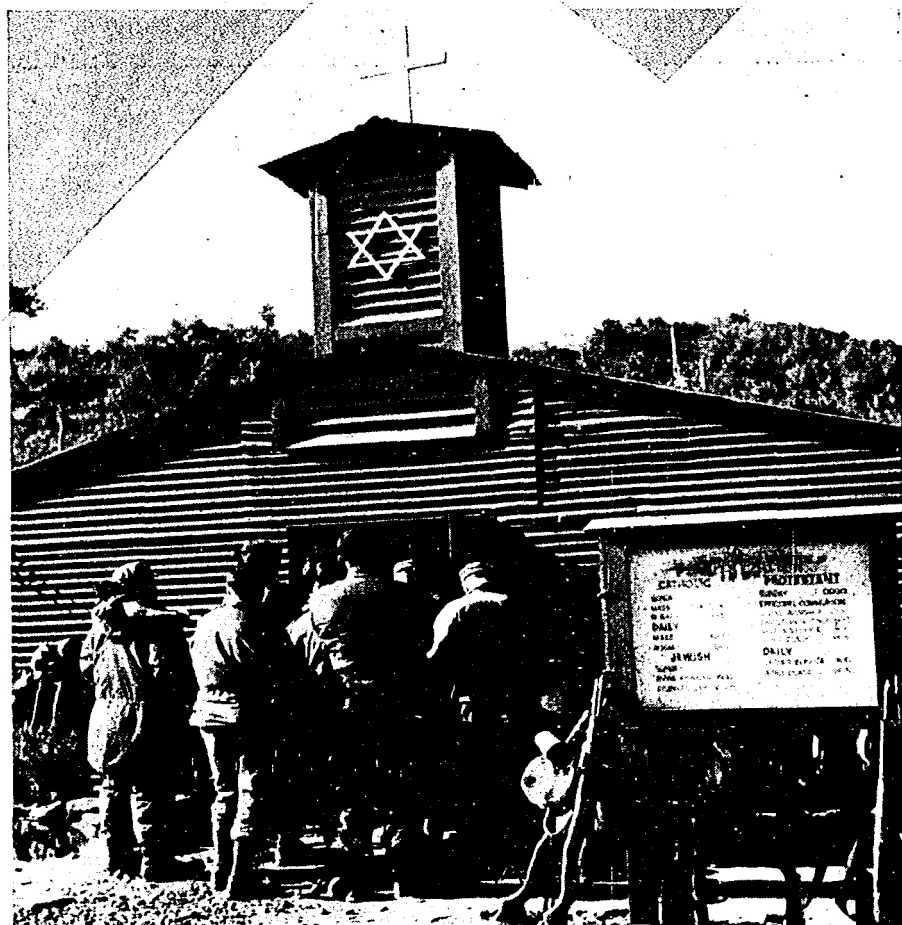
ward applicants was not surprising. It required a man of strong will and character to be a chaplain. One newly-commissioned chaplain, before Frazier's time, went aboard his ship in New York harbor, took one look at the crew—and the next boat back. His name is not known, but he probably served the shortest cruise as a chaplain in the U. S. Navy.

The most pressing problem facing Chaplain Frazier was chaplain procurement. Between the declaration of war and his appointment, only 26 chaplains were added to the Navy. For the two war years of 1917-'18, a total of 162 chaplains entered the Navy. The procurement program had the cooperation of the Catholic and Protestant churches. Some of the chaplains selected in those years were still on active duty in WW II.

In 1917 the first Jewish chaplain to be commissioned in the United States Navy and the only one to serve in World War I was appointed. He was Rabbi David Goldberg. His appointment to the regular service showed that the Navy had recognized an obligation to meet the

spiritual needs of personnel of the Jewish faith. However, his appointment from one of the minority religious groups of the United States posed new problems of administration for the Chaplain Corps. Did such an appointment establish a precedent for other minority groups? Since the Jewish personnel were so widely distributed throughout the Navy, how could Chaplain Goldberg best minister to the members of his faith?

The same problems faced Richard J. Davis, the first Christian Scientist appointee, the following year. Like Chaplain Goldberg he brought the highest testimonials as to character, personality and ability. The Secretary of the Navy rejected the proposal of making a representative of one of the religious minorities an itinerant chaplain. Such chaplains, he ruled, would have to accept the usual duty given to other appointees. While it meant that minority group chaplains would not be able to contact as many of their faith as they might wish, they (continued on page 78)



Marines in Korea built this chapel to serve all faiths during a lull in the campaign. Stacked weapons were grim reminders of the fighting

CHAPLAINS

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accepted the ruling and both men made outstanding records. Chaplain Goldberg was instrumental in making a change of identifying insignia for Jewish Chaplains.

Non-denominational services helped to solve part of the problem. Such services continue today in cases where chaplains of the various faiths are not available. This is especially true where chaplains are assigned to Marine combat units but their system of rotation assures the Marines of seeing a chaplain of their faith about every three days.

With the rising educational and professional standards required of new appointees to the Corps, the chaplains won even more respect and confidence from both officers and enlisted men. By 1939, the chaplain's place in the life and organization of the Navy was accepted and secure.

When the United States entered the war in 1917, only one chaplain, E. A. Brodmann, was serving with the Marine Corps. His tour of duty at Marine Barracks, Port Royal, S.C., in 1916, began an unbroken connection of Navy chaplains with the Marines. When the Fifth and Sixth Marines sailed for France, a Catholic and Protestant chaplain were with each unit. More went to France with the 1st Replacement Battalion. Then, as now, the Navy men of God went into combat with the Marines. They were often instrumental in saving lives for they searched among the casualties at the risk of their own lives to bring comfort to the dying and wounded. Chaplain Albert J. Park, Jr., served in every Marine campaign in France. He and three other Navy chaplains received the Navy Cross plus Army and foreign decorations.

A marked change in the attitude of the major denominations to their chaplains and members in uniform was seen in comparison of World War I and World War II. The churches were slow in organizing during the first war. But even before hostilities began in World War II, the churches were alert and beginning to make ready for their part in ministering to the spiritual and moral needs of service personnel.

During World War II the government spent millions of dollars for chapels and religious supplies. The Chaplain Corps expanded to an unprecedented number of more than 2800 chaplains on active duty at one time. Navy chaplains received 93 medals and awards ranging from the Medal of Honor to Letters of Commendation. Forty-six received the Purple Heart and 24 were killed in

action or died as the result of wounds or accidents.

Father J. T. O'Callahan, the only Navy chaplain to receive the Medal of Honor, was the Catholic chaplain aboard the *USS Franklin* when she was nearly sunk off the coast of Japan in 1945. His citation noted that "... serving with courage, fortitude and deep spiritual strength, Lieutenant Commander O'Callahan inspired the officers and men of the *Franklin* to fight heroically and with profound faith in the face of almost certain death and to return their stricken ship to port."

The accounts of every Navy action during World War II carried the story of the bravery and courage of the chaplains. When their ships were sunk, no chaplain went over the side until certain that the wounded had been saved. Many went down with their ships.

Chaplains serving with Marine units were no less brave. They were cited on every beachhead from the Marshalls' raid to Okinawa. Marines will never forget their courage under fire or their unflinching sense of humor.

Chaplain E. T. Michaels, who was wounded on Saipan, wrote this personal account:

"... we assaulted the beach ... three weeks later was accompanying the 3rd Battalion under Colonel Vandegrift in one of the final battles of Saipan. In front of us was the beach where many of the enemy had been pocketed. I had administered the last rites of the church to several Marines who had played their part so well as to merit the classification 'Supreme' ... firing had become intense and I had just stooped over to console a Marine on a stretcher when a bullet penetrated my collarbone and shoulder blade leaving them both broken. I immediately placed my hand over the wound, afraid to look for fear of having lost my entire limb. The Marine, consoled, gave up the stretcher and I lay thereon quietly calling for aid..."



Chaplain Michaels later received the Bronze Star for his heroism during the campaign.

The same spirit of courage, sacrifice and good humor in the face of death and extreme danger was just as apparent in Navy chaplains with the Marines in

Korea. On July 1, 1950, only 436 chaplains were on active duty, 88 of whom were Reservists. Out of the nearly 950 chaplains who were on active duty during the "police action," 166 served with the Marines and 150 more served aboard ships in Korean waters. More than 200 medals and 20 Purple Hearts were awarded these chaplains.

They were such men as Commander John Craven—a former Marine—who served as a chaplain with the Marines on Saipan, Tinian and Iwo Jima before going with his Marines into battle again in Korea. He has probably served through more campaigns with the Marines than any chaplain in the Navy.

During the Chosin Reservoir campaign, one Marine regimental commander remarked that statistics couldn't express the almost unbelievable value of a chaplain in combat. He pointed out that the very presence of a chaplain gave the troops an uplift of immeasurable value as a means of maintaining morale. Other leaders have been no less enthusiastic in their praise of chaplains. Realizing the value of the chaplains, the Marine Corps requested and received 10 more per division than they had in World War II.

The courage and self sacrifice of these chaplains was often imparted to the Marines. When Chaplain Cornelius Griffin was seriously wounded Sergeant Matthew Caruso assigned himself to watch over him. Later an enemy machine gun suddenly opened up. Caruso flung his body across his wounded chaplain and died taking the bullets meant for his "Padre."

During the lulls between battles the chaplains helped raise money and clothing for destitute Koreans and were instrumental in founding orphanages and schools.

A new aspect of chaplain training was inaugurated in 1954 when Ensign Probationaries—young divinity students who had completed their second year at theological seminary—were admitted to the Navy Chaplain's School. They are given training necessary to cope with the spiritual and moral problems peculiar to the service. The experience of 180 years' service by dedicated men is theirs.

The present Chief of Chaplains is Rear Admiral Edward B. Harp, Jr., who entered the Navy in 1929. He is the ninth man to head the Chaplain Corps.

Bishop William C. Martin, president of the National Council of Churches once said, "The chaplain in the armed forces stands in the place of the father and friend to every man who enters the service."

A World War I Marine expressed it just a little differently but the same sentiment is just as true today:

"It certainly made us feel good to see you up there with us..." **END**