

MCRP 6-12C

**The Commander's
Handbook for Religious
Ministry Support**



U.S. Marine Corps

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Unless otherwise stated, whenever the masculine gender is used, both men and women are included.

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FOREWORD

Successful commanders have discovered that effective use of their Religious Ministry Teams (RMTs) has a positive impact on readiness, moral, and family support issues. They also understand that an effective Command Religious Program (CRP) and the spiritual care that chaplains provide are irreplaceable on the battlefield.

Marine Corps Reference Publication (MCRP) 6-12C, *The Commander's Handbook for Religious Ministry Support*, is a common-sense guide designed for field grade commanders to help facilitate their CRP and to empower their chaplains and RMTs. As a part of the Marine Corps Religious Ministry family of publications, it summarizes information contained in Marine Corps Warfighting Publication (MCWP) 6-12, *Religious Ministry Support in the U.S. Marine Corps*, which is crucial for commanders to become leaders in their CRP.

I commend this publication to all commanders to better use their CRP and to train Navy chaplains for responsible positions in the operating forces.

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Chapter 1

Spirituality and Warfare

There are only two forces in the world, the sword and the spirit. In the long run the sword will always be conquered by the spirit.

—Napoleon Bonaparte

Lieutenant Colonel Ray Murray commanded the 5th Marines at the Chosin Reservoir. Reflecting on leadership during the fighting withdrawal from this hellish deathtrap he said, “I personally felt in a state of shock, the kind of shock one gets from some great personal tragedy, the sudden loss of someone close. My first fight was within myself. I had to rebuild that emptiness of spirit.”¹

The rebuilding that Lieutenant Colonel Murray refers to is replenishing the spirit. He was referring to his own spiritual life and how important it is to keep that aspect of our life intact in spite of the chaos that surrounds us. We call that spiritual readiness. This chapter will address spiritual readiness and what it has to offer Marines.

Spiritual Readiness

Spirituality begins when a person searches for religious faith. Paradoxically, spirituality is a private matter acted out in a public way. Spiritual readiness renders a Marine capable of coping with any crisis. It is inner self that is tough without being cold. Spiritual readiness is the quality of a Marine’s inner self that distinguishes between courage and recklessness. It is an aspect of leadership that is as important as physical readiness or training. Spiritual readiness is the bedrock upon which the concepts of honor, courage, and commitment are built.