



The following established style guidelines reflect the long-standing practices of developers and editors of content for the Chaplains program area. They are consistent with the rules and guidance outlined in The Associated Press Stylebook and reflective of Office of Military Community and Family Policy style and usage preferences.

Content Tips

- Pay attention to the overall organization and flow of an article. Information and ideas should be logically organized, and there should be some sense of continuity or flow from one idea to the next.
- Keep sentences short.
- Use concise language. Less is more.
- Write in relationship-neutral terms such as “partner,” “couple” or “spouse.”
- Write statements and ideas clearly.
- Ensure that subheads reflect the content of the text that follows.
- Focus on the positive side of content as much as possible.
- Keep the wide audience range in mind.

Things to Avoid

- Avoid redundancy.
- Avoid making assumptions.
- Avoid telling people how they should feel.
- Avoid telling people what they should, need to, must, ought to or cannot do.

Abbreviations and Acronyms

Abbreviation or acronym	Full title
CREDO	Chaplains Religious Enrichment Development Operation
MFRS	Military Family Readiness System
RA specialists	religious affairs specialists

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Abbreviation or acronym	Full title
RAA	religious affairs airmen
RP specialists	religious program specialists

Preferred Terms

Acceptable

can, may or might (instead of will or are)

military life (instead of military lifestyle)

often or generally (instead of always)

partner, spouse (instead of husband or wife)

some or many (instead of most or all)

tend to (instead of usually)



Definitions

Term	Definition
chaplain	A chaplain is a commissioned officer of the Chaplain Corps of the Army, Navy, or Department of the Air Force who is endorsed and designated for duty as a chaplain.
chaplain assistant/religious affairs specialist/religious program specialist/religious affairs airman	A chaplain assistant is an enlisted service member who provides expertise in religious support and general support to the chaplain. They are called religious affairs, or RA, specialists in the Army; religious program, or RP, specialists in the Navy; and religious affairs airmen, or RAA, in the Department of the Air Force.
Chaplains Religious Enrichment Development Operation	Also known as CREDO, this Marine Corps and Navy program offers transformational, retreat-based programs designed to assist service members and their families in developing the personal and spiritual tenacity necessary to excel in a military environment.
command chaplain	In the Army, a command chaplain is a senior chaplain assigned to, or designated by, a commander of a staff, command or unit. In the Department of the Air Force, a command chaplain is a colonel-grade chaplain who is responsible to a major command commander for Chaplain Corps programs and personnel. In the Navy, a command chaplain is the senior chaplain assigned to and designated by the commander of a staff, command or unit.
command religious program	A command religious program is a religious ministry planned, programmed and implemented to meet the

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Term	Definition
	religious ministry needs of personnel and other authorized users of a command.
confidentiality	Confidentiality is the act of keeping information given by or about an individual, in the course of a professional relationship, secure from others.
family members	Family members are individuals whose relationship to the military sponsor leads to entitlements, benefits or privileges due to the sponsor's military service.
family readiness group	A family readiness group is a command-sponsored organization of service members, civilian employees, family members (immediate and extended) and volunteers belonging to a unit. The family readiness group provides mutual support and assistance — and a network of communication among the family members, the chain of command and community resources.
family readiness officer	A family readiness officer is a representative in the Marine Corps who serves as the liaison between a command and families.
joint force chaplain	A joint force chaplain is a military chaplain designated by the joint force commander to serve as the senior chaplain for the joint force.
lay leader	A lay leader is an authorized, trained and command-appointed individual who supports the free exercise of religion by providing a service consistent with their lay status.
Military and Family Support Center	A Military and Family Support Center is a facility on a military installation with the resources and expertise to deliver military family support programs. It may be called

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Term	Definition
	Army Community Service, Marine Corps Community Service, the Navy Fleet and Family Support Center, or the Airman and Family Readiness Center.
Military Family Readiness System	The MFRS is a network of programs, services, people and agencies, and the collaboration among them, that promote the readiness and quality of life of service members and their families.
Navy Family Ombudsmen Program	The Navy Family Ombudsmen Program is a Navy-wide program primarily executed at the local command that improves mission readiness. Navy ombudsmen serve as both communications links between the commanding officer and command family members and as professionally trained information and referral specialists for the command's families.
Prevention and Relationship Enhancement Program	The Prevention and Relationship Enhancement Program is a Marine Corps chaplain program for service members, spouses and fiancés/fiancées that teaches marital/premarital couples some essential skills, including how to communicate effectively, work as a team, solve problems, manage conflict and preserve and enhance love, commitment and friendship.
privileged communication	Privileged communication is communication made to a chaplain either as a formal act of religion or as a matter of conscience
protective factors	Protective factors are conditions in individuals, families or communities that, when present, increase the health and well-being of an individual or family.
religious accommodation	Religious accommodation is the reasonable and good faith effort to support religious requirements of individuals and groups within the boundaries of good order and discipline.

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religious advisement	Religious advisement is the practice of informing the commander about the impact of religion on operations — including worship, rituals, customs and practices of U.S. military personnel, international forces and the indigenous population.
religious affairs	Religious affairs are the combination of religious support and religious advisement.
religious ministry	Religious ministry is the entire spectrum of professional duties performed by chaplains and chaplain assistants (and religious program specialists) to provide for or facilitate the free exercise of religion and accommodate the religious practices of military personnel, their families and other authorized personnel.
religious ministry team or religious support team	A religious ministry team or religious support team is comprised of at least one chaplain and one chaplain assistant/religious program/affairs specialist who design, implement and execute the unit ministry or religious program. The same team may be called a unit ministry team in the Army.
religious support	Religious support is the chaplain-delivered free exercise of religion through worship, religious and pastoral counseling services, ceremonial honors for the dead, crisis intervention and advice to the commander on matters pertaining to morals, ethics and morale as affected by religion.
wing, garrison or installation chaplain	A wing, garrison or installation chaplain is a senior chaplain assigned to oversee all chapel staff and religious programming at a particular installation or site.



Official Resources

War Department policy

- [DOD Instruction 1304.28, "The Appointment and Service of Chaplains," May 12, 2021, Change 1 Effective, May 8, 2024](#)
- [DOD Instruction 5120.08, "Armed Forces Chaplains Board," April 24, 2024](#)
- [DOD Instruction 1300.17, "Religious Liberty in the Military Services," Sept. 1, 2020](#)
- [Department of the Air Force Instruction 52-101, "Chaplain Corps Planning and Organizing," Nov. 29, 2023](#)

Military OneSource websites

- [Article on Military Couples: When Both Spouses Are Service Members](#)
- [Article on Self-Injury Explained](#)
- [Article on Parenting and Teen Stress](#)
- [Benefit page on Building Strong and Ready Teams](#)
- [Benefit page on Navy Chaplains Religious Enrichment Development Operation](#)
- [Benefit page on Unit Chaplain](#)
- [MilLife Guide on During Your Deployment](#)
- [MilLife Guide on Keeping Your Relationships Strong](#)
- [MilLife Guide on Using Military OneSource Counseling and Other Options](#)
- [MilLife Guide on Military OneSource for Foreign Military Service Members](#)