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CHAPLAIN ALLIANCE FOR RELIGIOUS LIBERTY
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Chaplain Alliance commends Navy for reversal on minority religious services

RTC-Great Lakes to again protect religious liberty for all recruits

WASHINGTON – Only days after Chaplain Alliance for Religious Liberty and other groups [expressed concern](#) over the Navy’s dismissal of religious volunteers tending to the spiritual needs of young recruits, the command at the Recruit Training Center in Great Lakes, Illinois, has reversed itself and reinstated minority religious services.

“Religious liberty must be protected for service members of all faiths,” said CH (COL) Ron Crews, USA (Ret.), executive director of Chaplain Alliance for Religious Liberty. “The Navy’s decision to terminate religious volunteers who were tending primarily to sailors of minority faiths was a clear violation of regulations, federal law, and the Constitution itself. We commend Navy officials for recognizing their error and ensuring religious liberty for recruits of all faiths at the RTC.”

On April 3, the command at the Recruit Training Center informed about a half-dozen civilians who tended to the spiritual needs of minority faiths there that they would no longer be allowed on base. The command’s decision was reportedly in response to a mistaken interpretation of Navy regulations which first – but not exclusively – require religious services to be performed by a uniformed chaplain.

With this reversal, the RTC has invited back four individuals: representatives of the Unitarian Universalists, Baha’is, Buddhists, and Christian Scientists. In addition, the RTC has reportedly found uniformed personnel to tend to the needs of recruits in the Church of Christ and earth-centered community.

“Chaplain Alliance is very pleased with the Navy’s change of heart,” said Crews. “Our service members put their lives on the line every day to protect our freedoms. Each and every one of them needs to know that we’re protecting their freedoms as well.”

[The Chaplain Alliance for Religious Liberty](#) is an organization of chaplain endorsers, the faith groups that provide chaplains for the U.S. military and other agencies needing chaplains. The endorsers in the Chaplain Alliance speak for more than 2,600 chaplains serving the armed forces.

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