

*Alvarado v. Austin*

**22-cv-00876-AJT-JFA**

**Exhibit 5**

**BG Dunford**

**Chaplain Declaration**



3. During combat operations, chaplains provide worship services, counseling, and a significant leadership presence. They also assist units in dealing with casualties to include leading memorial services that are critical to the grieving process. All of these duties have a direct and critical role in maintaining the will and spirit of our Marine and Sailors; these intangibles are the most important factors in the combat readiness of our units. Chaplains perform their duties in the most demanding conditions. One chaplain in the division bravely participated in ninety-two combat patrols to provide ministry to our Marines and sailors. These patrols were routinely exposed to the threat of insurgent improvised explosive devices and direct fire weapons. This experience is characteristic of all the chaplains in the Division who made a significant contribution to the Division's success throughout the last two years of combat operations. In addition to their upfront leadership in combat, chaplains serve as a connecting file between the command and families back home. The chaplains' efforts in communicating with families enable parents, spouses and children to cope with and minimize highly stressful situations, while at the same time enabling their deployed family members to focus on the mission. Finally, chaplains have provided "Warrior Transition and Return" briefs for thousands of Marines and Sailors to help them transition from a hostile combat environment. They have also provided numerous post-traumatic stress briefs and suicide awareness briefs.

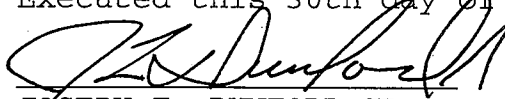
4. The assignment of chaplains from a mix of different faith categories, and the ability of those chaplains to have access to other chaplains of different faith group categories, contributed greatly to my ability as an operational commander to provide a religious program for the personnel within the First Marine Division as well as their dependents. These personnel have a wide range of religious beliefs. To the extent possible, it was my duty as the Assistant Division Commander to provide a program that met the religious needs of all the Soldiers, Sailors, and Marines, regardless of their religious beliefs or denominations. Chaplains within the First Marine Division are expected, to the extent possible, to provide for and facilitate the religious needs not only of those of their own faith, but also of those who are not members of their denominations. It is important that the chaplains assigned to the First Marine Division, or that those from other services and units working with us, be from a broad mix of faith group categories in order to maximize their ability to meet the broad range of religious needs.

5. Prior to the deployment of our Marines to Operation Iraqi Freedom, chaplains were essential in the development of pre-deployment combat stress training that assisted in every aspect of mission fulfillment. Upon initial deployment, I am aware of chaplains performing the crucial tasks of personal and spiritual counseling, as well as administering to the religious needs of our personnel as they prepare for battle. While deployed, each battalion of Marines is assigned one chaplain who respectfully ministers to the needs of personnel of many different faith groups to the extent possible. While specific religious needs cannot be met by the assigned chaplain on some occasions, we seek to respond to those needs through the presence of an appropriate mix of chaplains from various faith groups who are spread out among many battalions or geographically separated areas. The chaplains who were present in theater worked together to maximize every commanding officer's ability to meet, to the extent possible, the religious needs of every Soldier, Sailor, and Marine regardless of religious beliefs or denomination. In my judgment, this was, and continues to be an important factor in keeping morale high during deployments and in preparation of combat.

Further declarent sayeth not.

I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the United States of America that the foregoing is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Executed this 30th day of March, 2006.



JOSEPH F. DUNFORD JR.  
BRIGADIER GENERAL, USMC

Dated: 30 March 2006