

# The Military Is Turning to the Chaplain Corps More and More: 'God's Working in This'

From a pier in San Juan, Puerto Rico, Coast Guard crews launch into some of the branch's toughest assignments. For Chaplain Genesis Guerrero, the focus goes beyond the mission itself, to the people carrying it out.

"My job is to help the operator complete the mission, and one of the ways I do that is just to care for the operator, whatever that might look like," Guerrero told CBN News.

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Sometimes that looks like early morning walks around base, praying over each cutter crew, small boat mission, and command decision. Daily workouts become connection points, meeting service members where they are. It's recognizing new faces, remembering injuries, celebrating milestones, and honoring loss. Guerrero says those seemingly small moments often grow into something much bigger.

"A lot of my ministry happens kind of in the margins. It happens when I'm passing by, I'm walking by someone on the boat or in the hallways, or really even just serving food. Just not too long ago, a guy was just telling me about, 'Hey, I'm, you know, getting over divorce, and this is kind of what's happening,' and so that would have never happened had I not been serving alongside that Coastie...That's what makes this ministry unique...A lot of it is not planned," Guerrero said.



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Crews from Sector San Juan handle everything from maritime safety to the border mission, and what they see on the job isn't always easy to process. Guerrero provides a rare safe space to talk, with conversations that remain 100 percent confidential.

"When they can let go of that weight, like, 'Chap, I've been holding this in for months. I have not been able to talk to anyone, not even my spouse,' my hope is that, when they can unburden, so to speak, that way, it'll free them to do their job better, to be a better spouse, to be a better teammate, to be a better shipmate, to be a better friend. Whatever it might be," Guerrero explained.

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Military chaplains wear many hats. They can provide grief counseling, marriage support, suicide prevention, or even just a quiet moment away from command. They constantly bear witness to the hidden cost of service, offering connection as a lifeline.

"Honestly, that's one of the reasons why I love this job, is because it's special, it's sacred. I know I'm getting emotional, but people invite you into their lives, and usually when I meet with them in that context, it's the hardest part of their life, the hardest season, and the fact that they would invite me into that, it's sacred...I honor and I treasure, cherish, that they would trust me with that information," Guerrero said.

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Recognizing that value, the Defense Department wants to increase the number of chaplains across the armed services. Navy chaplains cover all sea services, which include the

Marine Corps and Coast Guard.

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