



## **NORTHEAST REGION CHAPLAIN CORPS**

### **2023 Annual Report**

**Submitted by NER Chaplain, Lt Col Adma Ross**

**Northeast Region:**      **Chaplain: Ch, Lt Col Adma Ross**  
                                 **Chaplain Emeritus, Ch, Lt Col Matthew Wissell**  
                                 **Region CDI: Col Bryan Cooper**

#### **GENERAL DATA**

**2023 Data reflects an increase in Chaplain and CDI applications during 2023.**

**Maine Wing:** Wing Chaplain Vacant

7 CDIs; 10 Squadrons,\* 7 cadet squadrons directly served

**Vermont Wing:** Wing Chaplain Vacant;

1 Chaplain, 1 CDI; 6 squadrons (include 1 senior squadron);\* 2 cadet squadrons directly served

**New Hampshire Wing:** Wing Chaplain Maj Gary Atkins

2 Chaplains, 8 CDIs; 9 squadrons;\* 7 cadet squadrons directly served

**Massachusetts Wing:** Wing Chaplain Maj Peter Preble

6 chaplains, 7 CDIs; 11 squadrons;\* 9 squadrons directly served

**Rhode Island Wing:** Wing Chaplain Pending

2 Chaplains, 3 CDIs; 5 squadrons;\* 4 squadrons directly served

**Connecticut Wing:** Wing Chaplain Lt. Col Dennis Mercieri

4 Chaplains, 18 CDIs. 13 squadrons include 2 senior;\* 11 cadet squadrons directly served

**New York Wing:** Wing Chaplain Maj Jay Hill;

18 Chaplains, 26 CDIs; 68 squadrons\* (includes senior squadrons and 8 groups)

**New Jersey Wing:** Wing Chaplain Maj Rochelle Coles

13 Chaplains, 23 CDIs; 31 Squadrons\* (8 are groups); 24 cadet squadrons directly served

**Pennsylvania Wing:** Wing Chaplain Mark Shulman

6 Chaplains, 26 CDIs, 52 squadrons (1 senior squadron, 6 are groups)

\* Count does not include 000 and 999 squadrons; figures above are based on transitional data

#### **APPLICATIONS APPROVED Sept 22-June 2023**

**Chaplain Applications:** Capt. Benjamin Eleff (NYWG), Capt. Samuel Kanner (NJWG), Capt. David Hoffman (NJWG), 1<sup>st</sup> Lt Ginger Bennett (PAWG)

**CDI Applications:** **CTWG** 1<sup>st</sup> Lt Steven Deignan-Schmidt; **MAWG** 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt Edward Brown; 1<sup>st</sup> Lt Michael Thelen; **NHWG** 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt Michael Smith; 1<sup>st</sup> Lt Wanda Kivela, SMSgt Lawrence Batherwich, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt Jonathan Shomody; **MEWG** 1<sup>st</sup> Lt Shelby Bright, 1<sup>st</sup> Lt Diana Southwick, Capt Gregory Marshall, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt Matthew Giesecke, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Jessica Woodcock; **NJWG:** Maj. Susan Blood, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt Stacey Feeney; **NYWG:** 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt Geoffrey Bertollini, Lt Col Lynn Walker, 1<sup>st</sup> Lt Maria Massone, 1<sup>st</sup> Lt Jacob Ente, SSgt Joshua Wynn, 1<sup>st</sup> Lt Amie Shapiro-Markowitz; **PAWG:** Capt. Jennie Rubright; 1<sup>st</sup> Lt Kathleen McMillen, Maj Gregg Rubright, Maj Dale Williams, 1<sup>st</sup> Lt Brenda Hatcher, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt Morgan Daugherty, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt Eugene Yeo **VTWG:** Capt Alan Colvin

## **NER CHSS MISSION CHAPLAIN & CHAPLAIN SUPPORT SPECIALISTS (thru May 23)**

**NHWG** 1 MCCS, 1 CSSCS. **MAWG** 1 MCDS, 3 MCCS, 1 CSSCS. **CTWG** 1 MCDS, 1 MCCS, 6 CSSCS, 1 CSSDS. **NJWG**: 1 MCDS, 4 MCCS, 3 CSSCS. **NYWG**: 4 MCCS, 1 MCDS, 3 CSSCS, 1 CSSDS. **PAWG**: 5 MCCS. **NER**: 1 MCCS. Region totals: 14 MCCS, 3 MCDS, 14 CSSCS, 2 CSSDS (not including 2023 NESA)

## **NER ViCP COVERAGE**

**October 2-27, 2022** Ch, Maj Rocelle Coles, Ch, Capt Thomas LeBeau, Ch, Maj Gary Atkins, Maj Chanoch Lebovic; **May 21-Jun 17, 2023**: Ch, Lt Col Adma Ross, 1st Lt Susan Davis; Ch Maj Steven Racite, Lt Col Richard Walsh. **Dec 31-Jan 27, 2024** is next.

Issues: Many MC/CSS who connect well to Ch Corps Zoom sessions cannot connect with the links provided with MEET links (ViDP and NER Area Command missions and exercises.) when our chaplains become frustrated or believe we do not take their ministry seriously, they do not wish to volunteer. I can always connect (Goggle Meet); provider compatibility may be the problem.

## **NER AREA COMMAND MISSIONS AND EXERCISES**

**NER VT Flooding Area Command Mission**: July 15 -ongoing. MCCS A Ross & J Hill, CSSCS J Luysterborghs. **NER Area Command Exercise Jul 27-31**, CST coverage A Ross & CSSCS Maj Jonathan Luysterborghs. **NER Area Command Exercise Nov 4-5, 2022**, CST coverage by MCCS A Ross & T LeBeau & CSSCS Maj Jonathan Luysterborghs.

## **NER 2023 ENCAMPMENTS**

**PAWG** 18-25 June 2023 Fort Indiantown Cap, Annville, PA. **MEWG** 25 Jun-02 July 2023 Bog Brook Training Facility, Gilead, ME. **NYWG** 09-16 July 2023 Hancock Field ANG, Syracuse, NY. **NHWG/RIWG** 15-23 July 2023 Location Fort Devens in Mass. **MAWG** 29 July-05 August 2023 JBCC MA. **CTWG** 29 July-05 Aug 2023 Camp Nett, Niantic, CT. **NJWG** 12-19 August 2023 Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst. Looking to submit AARs ~ October 2023.

## **SER-NER JOINT CCSC** (Thanks to the gracious invitation of the SER Chaplain Corps!)

In Fall 2022, we could not reserve the Niantic, CT ANG site as the base was housing Afghan refugees. Ch J Hill secured the NYWG Hancock USAF Reserve Base in December 2022, too late under NER standards to schedule and budget a NER activity. In 2016, the NER placed the NERCCSC under NER program, registration, and budget controls. We continue to work to resolve this issue.

## **COMMUNICATION**

### **NER Wing Chaplain Reporting**

NER Wing Chaplains meet virtually bi-monthly. We maintain a PowerPoint file as a database for pre and post-meeting review. Items covered in the July meeting included: Prayer requests; Chaplain Corps HC calendar, HC news (new 80-1 reg, 40-80 pamphlet, & CAPF 80-1 & 80-2 updates), SITREP coverage, NER & Wing Conferences, NER Calendar, Encampments, Application Status, and Wing Reports.

### **NER Newsletter**

We publish a NER Newsletter quarterly to inform NER Chaplains of HC-NHQ, NER, and Wing Chaplain Corps directives and schedules. Coverage of the activities and interests of our NER Chaplain Corps members is the focus: articles by members, the listing of new chaplains & CDIs. Key personnel send emails to welcome new members and congratulate award winners! The Summer Newsletter featured reports of the April 2023 NJ and PA Wing conferences and the May 19-21 NER Region Conference held in Hyannis, MA, all attended by Ch Ross.

## NER NEWSLETTER SUMMER 2023

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### NER OTY Awards

NER Chaplain OTY: Chaplain, Maj Jacob Hill      NER CDI OTY: Lt. Col. LouAnn Maffei-Iwuc

### The Importance of Personal Recognition:

We pay our volunteers with recognition! Individual recognition, critically important at the region level, is not always easy for a region chaplain to confer. Activity-based award ceremonies are important but may not grant volunteers recognition among their peers.

*Level Awards:* I am reluctant to list level awards, as the STR database records level promotions derived from all specialty tracks. Meanwhile, ChESS and CCC have become the gold standard in Chaplain Corps Training. *ChESS* awards are accessible to region chaplains from the ChESS Registrar. I used to sift through individual OPS Qual listings for spot updates, but ChESS ratings are now listed in E-Services Member Search Reports! *CCC Awards:* Listings are not readily available to region chaplains. I hope to see CCC graduates recognized by their peers. It would help me when scheduling region activity to know when my chaplains and CDIs are attending CCC courses and when they are deployed.

### AREAS NEEDING ATTENTION IN 2024

#### Wing Chaplains Needed for VT, ME, and RI Wings

All three wings are isolated geographically and limited in ability to draw from other areas.

**RIWG:** Col Cooper secured retired USAF Chaplain Geraldine Youdlen to serve as RIWG Chaplain. She is completing Level I and Level II part 1 requirements for her CAP chaplain appointment.

The VT and ME Wings have never had a permanent wing chaplain. These wings are geographically isolated: on the west and east by Lake Chaplain, the White Mountains, and the Atlantic Ocean, and by the Canadian border on the north. They have long operated within their own authority, only connected to the region by narrow borders in the south. Serving ADY as wing chaplain, I must be diplomatic. The new SUI requirements have generated interest within VT and ME wing command to appoint CDIs to local squadrons.

The **MEWG** is recruiting CDIs through the efforts of Lt Col Catherine Spaulding, CDI and MEWG Deputy Commander. Formerly having 2 CDIs, they added 5 five CDIs this year. I plan to follow up my application interviews with new CDIs to complete their CD tech ratings, and hope to name a Wing CDI.

**VTWG:** To progress with VT Wing CDI applications, I had to wait for VT Wing Commander Col Beach to return from active USAF deployment. He advanced Capt. Alan Colvin as CDI, who is now approved. Capt Colvin is well connected with VT squadrons, looks to recruit, and sent me a lead for a chaplain candidate.

## **DIVERSITY ISSUES**

### **WAIVERS**

We obtained waivers: in NY and NJ wings for beards for Jewish and Muslim senior members and male cadets, and skirt length waivers for one Orthodox Jewish (CTWG) and one Messianic Jewish (MEWG) female cadet. NJ Wing Ch Coles submitted a waiver request for 'bindi' (a dot on the forehead).

### **SPIRITUAL SUPPORT FOR DIVERSE COMMUNITIES IN THE NER**

Many CAP NER members lack chaplain support within their diverse communities, notably immigrant Latino, Hindu, and Muslim members. Efforts are underway (at Yale U, see Transmitter articles) to provide endorsement and CHEA educational opportunities for future Hindu and Muslim chaplains.

Meanwhile, we must provide spiritual support to these groups, a need separate from current NHQ efforts to recruit chaplains. Religious leaders in our Hindu/Muslim/Other communities do not yet have a clergy pool with USAF credentials to qualify as chaplains. We often find members, particularly cadets, from these communities in fragile circumstances, lacking support from resources familiar with their culture. To provide support, we need to think outside the box.

#### **Examples:**

- 1) The Danbury CT squadron recruited 175 cadets during 2016-2019 from the local Latino community. Parents saw CAP as an opportunity for their children to advance in the military and had connections with Danbury Army Reserve Base officers from their community. Participation abruptly ended when the base closed access to the squadron during Covid restrictions.
- 2) The Edison, NJ squadron (NJ 102) is famous among NER Hindus! IT workers from NY City & NJ choose to live in middle-class Edison and see CAP as a way for their children to experience US culture. Most of NJWG's Muslims belong to this squadron that includes 185 cadets and 233 total members. CAP News featured squadron commander Capt. Jose Vergara in a recent article. Edison squadron families encounter pressure within CAP to meet expectations they do not understand. When families send their children to grandparents in India during July and August, cadets do not attend summer activities the wing requires to maintain enrollment. Their high-achieving parents panic when told cadets are falling behind! NJ Wing Chaplain Coles, equipped with a Ph.D. in counseling, is following the situation. We need additional resources to connect with the community and an awareness that our own lifestyles may frame CAP benchmarks.

#### **The beginning of a solution?**

Since my term as CTWG Chaplain, I have worked with Yale Chaplain Asha Shipman, Chair for the North American Hindu Chaplain Association (NAHCA). Shipman is providing credentials and coursework for hospital and military chaplaincy at Yale and Hartford Seminary. [A Muslim Yale chaplain is following her lead.] Shipman re-established DOD endorsement for Hindu chaplains at Chimaya West.

Chaplain Shipman asked her NAHA Deputy, Sanjay Mathur, to apply to serve as a CAP CDI. Mathur, a community leader in Rochester, NY, serves as the chaplain at RIT, the University of Rochester, Syracuse U, and local hospitals. Upon receiving his US Citizenship in June, he joined the Rochester Composite Squadron. He will submit a CDI application and may qualify as a CAP chaplain in time.

Mathur can support our NER Hindu members spiritually and culturally. HC-HNQ may wish to take advantage of his background.

Respectfully submitted,

Chaplain Adma Ross, NER Region Chaplain