



Captain John A. Swanson

USN Chaplain Corps USCG Pacific Area Chaplain



Captain John Swanson, a Washington State native, graduated from Pacific Lutheran University with a B.A. in History in 1980. In 1984 he graduated with a Master of Divinity Degree from Wartburg Theological Seminary, Dubuque IA. After accepting a call to Belfield Lutheran Parish—a three-point parish in western North Dakota—he was ordained into the American Lutheran Church (ALC) on July 8th, 1984. He served the Belfield Lutheran Parish for four years before accepting a call to St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church in Elizabeth, Illinois. He served there three years before being commissioned as a Navy Chaplain on June 19, 1991.

After completing the Basic Chaplain Course at Newport, Rhode Island, he received orders to USS JUNEAU (LPD 10), home ported at San Diego. While onboard he deployed to Somalia in support of Operation Restore Hope. In 1994 he reported to the Naval Special Warfare Center, Coronado, California and was ADDU to Naval Special Warfare Command. While there he attended U.S. Army Airborne School at Fort Benning, Georgia and received his basic parachutist's insignia followed by the Navy-Marine Corps Parachutist's Insignia. In 1997 he received orders to 1st Marine Division, Camp Pendleton and was assigned to 2nd Battalion 1st Marines. As the Battalion Landing Team Chaplain, he deployed for six months to the North Arabian Gulf with the 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit. He was promoted to Lieutenant Commander on Feb 1, 1999. Following his tour at 2/1, he was assigned as the First Marines Regimental Chaplain.

In 2001 he reported to Submarine Base, Bangor Washington (Naval Base Kitsap) and was promoted to Commander on June 1, 2004 and then reported to United States Coast Guard District Thirteen, Seattle, WA where he was responsible for the District Commander's Command Religious Program for over seventy Coast Guard Units in Washington, Oregon, Idaho and Montana. In July 2007 he reported as Command Chaplain onboard USS ABRAHAM LINCOLN (CVN 72) home ported at Everett, WA. While onboard he deployed as part of Carrier Strike Group NINE for seven months to the North Arabian Gulf and Gulf of Oman in support of Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom. In August 2009 he reported to Commander Naval Forces Japan (CNFJ) as the Region Chaplain and was promoted to Captain on 1 August, 2010. In September 2012 he reported to Bangor, WA as Navy Region Northwest Chaplain until April, 2016. He is currently assigned to the United States Coast Guard Pacific Area Command, Alameda, CA.

Captain Swanson's awards include the Legion of Merit (2 awards), Meritorious Service Medal (2 awards), Navy-Marine Corps Commendation Medal (2 awards), Navy-Marine Corps Achievement Medal, National Defense Medal, Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal (2 awards), Southwest Asia Medal (2 awards), Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, Humanitarian Service Medal, and the Navy-Marine Corps Parachutist's Insignia.