



Chaplain (Commander) Garry R. Thornton, Jr.

Joint Plans and Operations Chaplain
Joint Force Headquarters, National Capital Region,
Military District of Washington
Fort McNair, DC 20319

Chaplain Thornton was born in Bangor, Maine, the son of a career United States Air Force enlisted man. He lived on bases in Maine, Labrador, Massachusetts, California, Kansas, Alaska and Texas. After graduating from Cooper High School in Abilene, Texas, he attended Texas A&M University majoring in aerospace engineering. After one year of study followed by a one year hiatus as a U.S. Tariff Specialist, he enrolled at Hardin-Simmons University, where he graduated with a Bachelor of Behavioral Science degree in Psychology (1989). Garry went on to work as a Certified Adult Probation Officer. Upon surrendering to the call of ministry, he moved his family to Mill Valley, California, in order to pursue seminary studies. In 1994, he received the Master of Divinity degree from Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary. Following seminary, Commander Thornton served pastorates in Benicia, California and Kihei, Maui, Hawaii. He was commissioned as a naval officer and chaplain (Lieutenant/O-3) in April 2003.

Chaplain Thornton's assignments include: Naval Chaplain Basic Course Student, Naval Chaplaincy School and Center, Naval Station Newport, Newport, Rhode Island, (June 2003 – August 2003); Naval Mobile Construction Battalion ONE THIRTY-THREE, Naval Construction Battalion Center, Gulfport, Mississippi where he served in OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM & OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM (August 2003 – September 2006); First Recruit Training Battalion, Marine Corps Recruit Depot, Parris Island, Beaufort, South Carolina, (September 2006 – March 2008); Headquarters and Service Battalion, Marine Corps Recruit Depot, Parris Island, (March 2008 – September 2009); USS OAK HILL (LSD-51), Joint Expeditionary Base Little Creek, Virginia Beach, Virginia, (October 2009 – September 2011); Marine Corps Air Facility Quantico/Marine Helicopter Squadron One (HMX-1), the Presidential Helicopter Squadron, Marine Corps Base Quantico, Quantico, Virginia, (September 2011– August 2014); and Wounded Warrior Regiment, United States Marine Corps, Marine Corps Base Quantico, (August 2014 – August 2017).

His deployed/operational tours include: Camp Shields, Okinawa, Japan, (June 2004 – December 2004); Camp Knott, Fallujah, Iraq, (November 2005 – April 2006) and at sea on the USS OAK HILL (LSD-51).

Chaplain Thornton personal awards and decorations include the Meritorious Service Medal (2), Navy Commendation Medal (3), Navy Achievement Medal, Armed Forces Service Medal, Humanitarian Service Medal and Military Outstanding Volunteer Service Medal.

He is a graduate of Naval Chaplaincy School and Center Basic Course (2003/2009), Professional Naval Chaplaincy Intermediate Leadership Course (2012) and Joint Professional Military Education I, Marine Corps University Command and Staff College (2014). He is also a Fleet Marine Force qualified officer and is also authorized to wear the Presidential Service Badge.

Chaplain Thornton is married to the former Rhonda Michele Leech of Lubbock, Texas. They have five children and are the proud grandparents of one granddaughter.

Current as of 19 July 2019