

Teacher Inquiry Kit: Grades 6-12



Edith Rene Porter-Stewart


Title	Edith Rene Porter-Stewart - Chaplains in the Military
Author(s)	Dr. Rose E. Honey
Grade Level	6-12
Soldier	Edith Rene Porter-Stewart
Tribal Affiliation	Cherokee and Blackfeet
Branch of Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Marines ● Navy
Dates of Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 2nd Marine Air Wing, Headquarters, Air Group Chaplain, Cherry Point, North Carolina: 1989-1992 ● Navy USS Mount Hood, Command Chaplain, Concord, California: 1992-1994 ● Naval Air Station, Air Wing Chaplain, Alameda, California: 1994-1995 ● Naval Medical Center, Staff and USNS Mercy Chaplain, San Diego, California: 1995-1997 ● Chaplains Religious Enrichment Development Operation, Assistant Director, San Diego, California: 1997-2001 ● Naval Station, Staff Chaplain, San Diego, California: 2001-2004 ● Naval Medical Center, Staff Chaplain, San Diego, California: 2004-2006
Essential Question	What role do chaplains play in the military and how is this position important to our country?
Contextual Paragraph	<p>Lieutenant Edith Rene Porter-Stewart, a Protestant Chaplain, served in both the Marines and the Navy. When Chaplain Porter-Stewart's was growing up, her mother and father directed plays and she has written, directed, and starred in plays and written poetry her whole life. After receiving her bachelor's and master's degrees in speech therapy, she worked as a speech therapist, and also toured with a professional theater company in the U.S. and Canada.</p> <p>After performing for military bases, she was led to follow in her father's footsteps who had served in the Navy during World War II. She attended seminary and went to Chaplain school in Newport, Rhode Island. Her first duty was with the Marines, where she was the first operational woman in the 2nd</p>

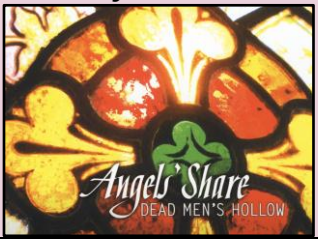

Marine Airwing working with the headquarters squadron, in Cherry Point, NC. This was during Operation Desert Storm and Desert Shield, when women were not yet being deployed, so she remained in the U.S. covering 27 supply squadrons in North and South Carolina. Her work included developing a program for key wives (spouses of deployed soldiers) and developing a television program called "Sense of Value," covering topics relevant to military families such as being reunited with returning soldiers. She also supported soldiers who were in legal trouble, and soldiers who had returned from combat overseas. She established an airport ministry where she offered worship services and prayer to troops who were being deployed or returning home. Her husband, Edwin Porter-Stewart was a great support to her during her service.



Her next duty was aboard the U.S.S. Mount Hood, an ammunition ship out of Alameda, CA. Here, she produced an onboard newspaper and a television program called "Not Necessarily the News." This program broadcast information about what to expect from the culture of the different ports that the ship traveled to. Next, she worked in Naval Station Alameda and was the last Protestant Chaplain there before the base closed. Later at the Naval Hospital, she was in charge of the mental health ministry, was part of the Martin Luther King Gospel Choir, and was the assistant director for the Chaplains Religious Enrichment Development Operation (CREDO).


Chaplain Porter-Stewart values what a colleague of hers called "million-dollar checks." These are the fond memories that she considers priceless gifts and lessons in life. The advice she would give to others is to "stay true to yourself, be who you are, stay fit, be up to being a big sister to all you encounter and love what you do." As a female, Chaplain Porter-Stewart was a pioneer, and faced discrimination based on both her religion and her gender. However, in the end, she feels that the support that she felt far outweighed the difficulties that she felt from the people she worked with. As of 2022, Chaplain Porter-Stewart lives in Spearfish, South Dakota and is 70 years old.

C3 Standards	<p><u>C3 Standards:</u></p> <p>Civics - Civic and Political Institutions: D2.Civ.2.6-8. Explain specific roles played by citizens (such as voters, jurors, taxpayers, members of the armed forces, petitioners, protesters, and officeholders).</p> <p>History - Perspectives: D2.His.4.6-8. Analyze multiple factors that influenced the perspectives of people during different historical eras.</p>
Primary Source 1:	<p>http://memory.loc.gov/diglib/vhp/story/loc.natlib.afc2001001.93902/</p>
Primary Source Title: 	<p>Veterans History Project - Edith Rene Porter-Stewart (website): This collection from the Veterans History Project is focused on Edith Rene Porter-Stewart who was the first female chaplain to serve in the Second Marine Aircraft Wing. As a pioneer, she went on to found and host on-base television shows, on-ship newspapers, and an airport ministry to bless departing and incoming soldiers. Included in her collection is a selection of the poetry that she wrote while on tour.</p>
Suggested questions for the source	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What years did Chaplain Porter-Stewart serve in the navy? ● How did Chaplain Porter-Stewart say she was received at her first military post? What branch was this with? ● Name at least two of the places that Chaplain Porter-Stewart lived during her time in the military.
Possible discussion prompts beyond the questions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How did Chaplain Porter-Stewart state that she was discriminated against in the military? Estimate the decade this happened in and discuss whether you think this kind of discrimination is still happening today. Why or why not? - What are “million-dollar checks,” and what are some “million-dollar checks” that you have had in your life?
Primary Source 2:	<p>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BNKjArvT3tQ</p>
Primary Source Title: 	<p>Navy Chaplain - Ministry of Presence - The Full Experience (video): What does it mean to be a Navy Chaplain? This video demonstrates how being a military chaplain can mean making a difference for those who serve our country and is the kind of ministry that you can't find anywhere else.</p>

Suggested questions for the source	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on this video, describe what you think a Navy Chaplain’s job is? What specific details in the video helped you to formulate your ideas about their role in the military? • After watching this video, what questions do you have about being a Navy Chaplain? Based on the information you learned, pinpoint what led you to come up with this question, and what do you think the answer might be? • Based on what you heard and what you saw in this video, what religions do you think are represented here? What religions do you think are represented in the military?
Possible discussion prompts beyond the questions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do you think it is important to have chaplains serving in the Navy and in other branches of the military? If you think it is important, what role do you think that they play in the military and how is this role important to the people in the military, and ultimately in our country? - How do you think the roles and responsibilities of chaplains in the Navy and military in general have changed over time? Do you think their role is different today than it was 100 years ago?
Primary Source 3:	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vUlmXOsq_TA
Primary Source Title: 	Four Things Chaplains Cannot Do (video): This video goes over the basics of why there are chaplains in the military including how the chaplain post started, what they are there to do, and four things that they cannot do in the military.
Suggested questions for the source:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does Chaplain Kelley say is the main reason for having chaplains in the military? What are they there to protect? • How does he describe the duties of a chaplain in the armed services? What is their job? • When were chaplains first established in the United States military? Who was the main person to decide that this position was important?
Possible discussion prompts beyond the questions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discuss some of the things that Chaplain Porter-Stewart referred to during her interview (Primary Source 1) that you think align with the role of a chaplain as it is described in this video. - In this video, Chaplain Kelley discusses that today we have a “pluralistic military”. Discuss what you think he means by this and pose any questions you have to the discussion group.
Primary Source 4:	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vPjg0_THkxE

Primary Source Title: 	Ballad of the Four Chaplains (song): This song tells the story of four chaplains and their greatest sacrifice aboard the sinking United States Army Transfer (USAT) Dorchester during World War II.
Suggested questions for the source:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the main theme of the story that this song tells? • In what year did this story take place? • Describe the context for this song. What questions do you have about it? • What time period does this take place in, and is the time period significant to the story?
Possible discussion prompts beyond the questions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discuss whether you think that the chaplains in this song are carrying out their roles and duties in the Navy in this scenario? Why or why not? - Discuss what you think the line of the song that says, “each prayed to his higher god,” means, and how you think this played a part in the actions that the chaplains in this song took?
Primary Source 5:	https://m.facebook.com/watch/?v=435990201240677&_rdr
Primary Source Title: 	U.S. Army Chaplain Corps (video): Listen to Chaplain Tim Maracle reflect on his Native heritage and what his grandfather taught him about the importance of helping others.
Suggested questions for the source	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is Chaplain Maracle’s heritage? What tribe is he a part of? • What are some of the lessons that Chaplain Maracle talks about learning from his grandfather? • How are Chaplain Maracle’s stories about his grandfather related to why he became a chaplain in the army?
Possible discussion prompts beyond the questions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discuss what Chaplain Maracle is talking about when he brings up Native American influences in the armed services. What are some of the influences he brings up? Have you, or has anyone in your group learned about this before?

	<p>- Chaplain Maracle’s grandfather told him, “Everything you are given is important.” What does his grandfather mean by this, and do you think this is something that is still important now?</p>
Primary Source 6:	<p>https://memory.loc.gov/diglib/vhp-stories/loc.natlib.afc2001001.93902/zoomturner?ID=pm0002001&page=1</p>
Primary Source Title 	<p>Red and Blue Blanket (poem): Chaplain Edith Rene Porter Stewart reads her favorite poem that she wrote called Red and Blue Blanket:</p> <p>Red and Blue Blanket. The smell of sage. My face to the wind. Red and blue blanket, cover me. Tall and proud. To dance among the stars.</p>
Suggested questions for the source	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you were to summarize the main theme of this poem, what would you say it is about? • If you could talk to the author, what are two questions that you might ask that are specifically about the poem? • What are some perspectives that the author is communicating through this poem?
Possible discussion prompts beyond the questions.	<p>- Is it clear what the red and blue blanket is in the poem? Discuss some other ideas or perspectives that the red and blue blanket might be referring to.</p> <p>- Discuss how “the smell of sage,” is relevant to the poem and relevant to the perspective of Chaplain Porter-Stewart.</p>
Primary Source 7:	<p>https://www.defense.gov/News/News-Stories/Article/Article/603727/face-of-defense-native-american-navy-veteran-paved-way-for-women-sailors/</p>
Primary Source Title: 	<p>Face of Defense: Native American Navy Veteran Paved Way for Women Sailors (article): Navy Chief Petty Officer Old Horn-Purdy was one of the first females in the Navy to serve on a combatant ship. This article tells the story of her experiences in the Navy and how protecting America is important to her.</p>
Suggested questions for the source	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What years did Navy Chief Petty Officer Old Horn-Purdy serve in the Navy? • What tribe is Old Horn-Purdy a part of?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • She has some relatives who also served in the military. What branches did they serve in and what were their roles?
Possible discussion prompts beyond the questions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What benefits were provided to Navy Chief Petty Officer Old Horn-Purdy when she enlisted in the Navy? Discuss how you think these benefits were important to her. What did she state as the main reason for joining? - How did Navy Chief Petty Officer Old Horn-Purdy talk about how she was treated in the Navy? Did she feel she was treated well? In what ways, if any, does this differ from the experiences portrayed by Chaplain Porter-Stewart? - Near the end of the article, Old Horn-Purdy states, “We still have to protect America, no matter what. It’s in our blood.” Discuss what you think she means when she says this. What questions do you have about this statement?
Primary Source 8:	https://www.baltimoresun.com/features/women-to-watch/bs-fe-female-firsts-20170804-story.html
Primary Source Title: 	Female firsts: What it means to be a groundbreaking woman in the 21st century (video and article): Listen to Major General Linda L. Singh, a former high school dropout, talk about becoming the first woman and first African American to command the Maryland Army National Guard. Read the article that provides an overview of women trailblazers.
Suggested questions for the source	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are some of the struggles that Major General Linda Singh went through as a woman in the military? • Name at least two other roles that Major General Singh talks about having while also being in the military. • What year did Major General Singh enlist in the military (stated in the article)?
Possible discussion prompts beyond the questions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discuss what Major General Singh says about what it means for women in the military to be role models? What does she say about this? - Do you think that being a woman in the military has changed since the time that women were first being integrated into the military? What evidence does Major General Singh give that makes you think this?
Works Cited	“Ballad of the Four Chaplains.” YouTube, uploaded by Dead Men’s Hollow, 25 July 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vPjg0_THkxE .

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U.S. Army Chaplain Corps, with Chaplain Tim Maracle, *Facebook*, uploaded 27 November 2021,

https://m.facebook.com/watch/?v=435990201240677&_rdr.