

The Chaplain Kit

The Online Chaplain History Museum providing Chaplain History, Information and Resources

Chaplain Kits

(<https://thechaplainkit.com/chaplain-kits/>)

Chaplain Kits + Field Altars + Worship Kits

Each chaplain is issued a chaplain kit when they complete their initial military training. Over the years they have been called by various names to include chaplain kits, field kits, field altars, portable altars, etc., and have ranged from the very bulky and heavy to very portable. Perhaps the most well-known portrayal of a chaplain and his kit can be seen in the movie, "The Longest Day" when on D-day a chaplain is seen searching in the water for his heavy, non-floating, field kit. The chaplain portrayed in this scene, or from whose story it is inspired (Chaplain Sampson), went on to become the Army Chief of Chaplains. When he was the Deputy Chief of Chaplains he directed that a more lightweight and portable chaplain kit be developed.

In the June 1971 issue of *Soldiers*, the following article about the development of the new lightweight chaplain kit appeared:

... researchers at the Combat Development Command (CDC) Chaplain Agency at Fort Lee, VA., are developing equipment that will enable the chaplain to conduct services with all the essentials of a worshipful setting.

Chaplains in the 164 different type TOE Army field units are usually provided a jeep and trailer, tent, stove, field desk, typewriter, table and chair. They are also issued a chest for hymnbooks, a combat altar kit and a musical worship aid.

The chest has been used for many years for storage of hymnbooks and other ecclesiastical items needing protection from the elements.

Before the Korean War all necessary altar equipment was carried in a wooden case. This was later replaced by a metal case that is still being used by some chaplains.

Airborne and airmobile units, however, require a lightweight altar kit that can be strapped to the chaplain who jumps from aircraft. To meet this need a lightweight compact chaplain kit was developed. Made of weatherproof fabric and weighing only 6 pounds with all components, the kit meets minimum requirements for conducting worship services under all combat and field conditions. Both Protestant and Roman Catholic kits have the same carrying case.

The present combat altar kit, first made available in Vietnam in 1966, has been modified to reduce its cost without decreasing quality or serviceability. It features a shoulder strap, carrying handle and nylon mesh straps to secure it tightly and allow quick and easy access...

.To view different chaplain kits, move your mouse pointer over the “Chaplain Kits” tab to reveal a drop-down menu. You can view them either by Faith Group where the kits are displayed as near as chronologically within each faith group as can be determined. You can also choose to view them by war eras. (which will also include more information on the kits and their development. Dating a kit precisely to a war isn’t always precise as many were developed between the wars, but this offers one of the best way to organize their display.