

Moffett Field Chapel

Although the history of Moffett Field dates back to 1933, it was not until April 1945 that the ground-breaking ceremonies for the chapel took place. Five months later, September 23, 1945, dedication ceremonies were conducted. Prior to this time, worship services were conducted in the Station Theater.

The chapel is patterned after the twenty-one California Missions and originally was designed with two offices to accommodate two chaplains and their yeomen. Two complete chapels are housed under the one roof. The main chapel seats 200 people. A small chapel, located directly behind the main one, is used for daily Catholic Mass and reservation of the Blessed Sacrament. With an ingenious revolving altar, first designed and used by the U. S. Navy's Seabees, the chapel is equipped to provide Protestant, Catholic, Jewish and non-denomination services by simply revolving the turntable which houses the appropriate settings.

In 1953, Chaplain Charles W. Adams started the ball rolling by collecting \$500 in pennies to purchase the first stained glass window in the chapel. Chaplains George A. Wright, Joseph P. Cusack, and Joseph F. Geary continued to collect monies from personnel of the squadrons and units attached to Moffett Field to make possible the purchase of the remaining eleven windows. At a cost of over \$6,000, a story-in-glass of the faith, sacrifices and loyalty of the men and women of the Navy and Marine Corps was created. Squadron insignia were incorporated into each window as a memorial to individuals or squadrons. By September 1956 the windows were installed and formally dedicated.

Stained glass windows enhance the beauty of the chapel, as well as contribute to the worship experience. It was not until almost eight years after the chapel dedication that plans for replacing the plain, frosted windows with stained glass were begun. Cummings Studios of South San Francisco came up with the design for each of the twelve windows.

Mariners' Cross



The first window to be installed in the Chapel bears as its central motif the Mariners' Cross. The cross itself stands upon a stylized headland above the waves of the sea. This is symbolic of the firm establishment of the Cross of Christ above the violence of the waves and the passions of mankind. On either side of the Cross, we see the sun and the moon in subordinate positions. This, of course, is symbolic of our Lord's sway over all nature. The composition itself is placed upon a ruby medallion, the top and bottom of the medallion itself being shaped like the ribs of a ship.

In the base is the pilot's wheel, symbol of our Lord as our Leader and our Guide. While the central medallion and base varies in each window as to subject matter, the apex and border are constant and harmonious. The flanking dolphins are ancient symbols of our Lord, selected by the early Christians because of the dolphin's great friendship for humans in general and for distressed mariners in particular. At the apex of the window is the official naval insignia, while the border is composed of a turbulent wave-like motif, set off at the corners by golden stars and at the sides by the ancient naval and Christian symbol of hope, the anchor. This window was purchased by the *Protestant Chapel Fund* in June 1953.

Lamb of God



The second window on the Gospel Side portrays the "Lamb of God," our Lord, whose blood was shed for the redemption of the world. "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing" (*Revelation 5:12*). The Lamb carries the banner of the Resurrection, symbolizing the Glorious and Immortal rising of Christ from the tomb. This is one of the most ancient of all Christian symbols.

The medallion at the base carries the insignia of *Air Transport Squadron THREE* (VR-3) and was given by squadron personnel in memory of shipmates who lost their lives in the line of duty.

Symbol of Christ



The Greek monogram composed of the letter "Chi" (X) and "Rho" (P) form the medallion subject of the third window. These intertwined letters "XP," are the equivalents of our own Latin letter "CHR," the first three letters of the Greek "CHRISTOS" (XPICTOC), or "CHRIST." This monogram, like the "I.H.C" of the opposite window, was used on the early Christian tombs in the Roman catacombs in the first century and has been used ever since as the symbol of Christ, "the anointed one." The small medallion contains the insignia of *Composite Squadron THREE*, the sponsoring activity for this particular window, in honor of VC-3 personnel who lost their lives in the service of their country.

The initial chairman of the COMPRON THREE Chapel Window Fund, LTJG E. H. Tandy, USN, lost his life under tragic circumstances. His plane disappeared near the California coastline after encountering difficulty on a routine training flight. Many friends, both civilian and military, contributed generously toward the window in honor of the memory of this outstanding young aviator.

Ship of the Church



The "Ship of the Church" is an apt symbol for the Chapel's fourth window. The ship, identified as the Church by the cross-bearing sail, is tossed on the sea of disbelief, worldliness, and persecution but finally reaches safe harbor with its cargo of human souls.

The striking, as well as symbolic, insignia of *Fleet Aircraft Squadron TEN* (FASRON 10) indicates their sponsorship of the memorial window.

Alpha and Omega



The fifth window contains the famous "Alpha and Omega," taken from the Book of Revelation or Apocalypse of St. John. In the first chapter, our Lord, coming in clouds of glory, says, "I am the ALPHA and the OMEGA, the beginning and the end...who is and who was and who is coming, the Almighty."

The letters Alpha and Omega are the first and the last letter of the Greek alphabet, the beginning and the end, and as such are long established in Christian usage. The cross, rising between the letters, naturally represent our Lord Himself as the "first and the last," uncreated and eternal.

The small medallion in the base of the window contains the Papal Tiara and crossed keys of St. Peter, insignia of the Roman Catholic Church. Appropriately, this window was purchased by the *Catholic Chapel Fund*.

Star of David



The sixth window presents the Old Testament's "Mogen David," or "Shield of David" commonly called the "Star of David." It has been used for several centuries as a symbol of Israel and is found today as an integral part of the symbolic design in most of our synagogues.

The small base medallion contains the tablets of stone upon which the prophet Moses inscribed the Ten Commandments, the Law given him by God on Mount Sinai.

Lighthouse



The seventh window, carrying the design of a lighthouse, symbolizes the loving concern of Christ for the mariner and airman. The lighthouse stands upon storm-lashed rocks. Its beams shine out into the storm in the form of a cross of light, assuring spiritual comfort and safety to all those risking their lives for the protection of their country and loved ones.

The small medallion contains the insignia of *Carrier Air Group FIFTEEN*, the first fleet unit to sponsor a memorial window. The window was installed and dedicated in April of 1956, shortly before CAG-15 sailed for a routine tour of duty aboard a carrier operating in Western Pacific waters.

Lord's Supper



The eighth window bears a chalice and wafer emblematic of Christ's institution of the Lord's Supper or the Holy Eucharist: "This is my body...this is my Blood." The wafer of bread, the body of our Lord, hovers over the cup of wine, His blood.

The emblem of the United States Marine Corps proudly serves to indicate the sponsorship of this memorial window by *Marine Corps personnel* stationed at Moffett Field, who donated fifty cents each pay day to purchase a window.

I.H.S.



The ninth window depicts one of the oldest and most venerable of all Christian symbols, the "I.H.C." (or "I.H.S."). Contrary to widespread popular belief, these letters do not stand for any pious motto or phrase. They are simply the first three letters of the name JESUS, in Greek, the old Greek "Iota" (O), "Eta" (E), and "Sigma" (C or S). Thus, in our Latin letters, the Greek name would appear as "IESOUS," or "JESUS." The "I.H.C." is simply our "IES," the letter "I" being used as our modern "J," which does not exist in Latin or Greek.

The Spartan helmet of *Carrier Air Group NINETEEN* may be seen in the medallion at the base of this memorial window. This memorial window was contributed by CAG-19 personnel as a memorial.

Open Bible



The tenth window depicts the Open Bible, a well-known Christian emblem whose meaning is almost universally understood. In this window, "The book" is surmounted by a tongue of flame, symbol of the inspiration of Holy Spirit, who hovered over the minds and hearts of the Prophets and Evangelists. The two book-markers are symbolic of the Old and New Testaments, the left marker containing the Star of David and the right marker the Greek emblem of the name Christ, the "Chi Rho."

Personnel of *Air Transport Squadron FIVE*, whose title also appears in the body of the insignia, contributed this lovely memorial window.

Cross and Crown



The eleventh window contains another venerable Christian symbol, the well-known Cross and Crown. This is the symbol of Victory or our Lord's triumph over Death and the powers of Evil. The crown has always been used as a symbol of victory, and its incorporation with the cross makes the meaning obvious.

The small medallion in the base of this window represents the mythical Phoenix rising from a funeral pyre. Legend has it that the Phoenix, feeling old age coming upon it, plunges itself into fire, rising triumphantly from the flame with youth renewed. The Phoenix and flame is used here as symbol of the Protestant Faith of the Reformation. This window was purchased by the ***Protestant Chapel Fund***.

Menorah



The twelveth window depicts the ancient Menorah, the seven-branched candelabrum first mentioned in the Book of Exodus; "And thou shalt make a candlestick of pure gold: of beaten work shall the candlestick be made: his shaft, and his branches, his bowls, his knops, and his flowers, shall be of the same" (*Exodus 25:31*). The menorah is used to this day in the synagogue and is one of the best known of all Jewish symbols.

The small medallion in the base of the window contains a Scroll of the Torah, the Law contained in the Pentateuch: *Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy*.