

Christian Perspectives on Life in the Military

COMMAND

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FINISHING STRONG

OCF Running the Race:
2012 and Beyond

Being the kind of soldiers
we were called to be

Standing together as a
Spiritually Smart Couple

Running the Race in OCF—2012 and Beyond

With us now well into the new year, I am mindful of the race the Lord has put in front of OCF and have asked Him where He would lead us. What He put on my heart is to look back as we look forward.

The indigenous nature of our OCF history is based on the story of a young Army captain returning from Afghanistan. He asked his fellow officers to pray for him, which gave rise to the Officers' Christian Union in England in the 1880s. British officers exported this concept to the U.S. in 1942, which led to what OCF is today.

As I ponder our legacy, I'm struck by the verses above and realize the body of Christ is alive and well within the military through the body of OCF as we embolden, equip, encourage, and engage with one another so as to run the race set before us.

Last fall I attended a dinner for the OCF faithful in San Antonio. I was struck by how crucial stages of Lori's and my own race were divinely shaped by the body of OCF, brought to light because of several of the attendees, such as retired Lt Gen Tex and Ann Brown, Carla Bergner, and Captain Joe Rohrer.

Tex and Ann came into our lives in 1992 when Tex served as my boss and mentor. I went to school observing how he integrated faith and profession, exemplifying servant leadership. Ann taught Lori what it was to be a senior officer's spouse while keeping the light of Christ shining brightly under the spotlight.

The Body of OCF

We need to build up and expand OCF through our lay-led, peer-to-peer ministry that sets OCF apart—

- Indigenous local groups
- Academy ministries launch Christ's ambassadors!
- Regional ministries lead OCF at large population centers.
- Education center ministries equip and encourage.
- OCF's Spiritually Smart Family ministry keep families strong!
- Our two conference centers nourish the military society with Christ's living water.
- OCF retirees reach out to the active duty.



DAVID WARNER
Executive Director

"Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us."

Hebrews 12:1

Fast forward six years—Tex and Ann surprised us the night before the announcement of my promotion to colonel by coming to our house to pray over us, thanking the Lord for His blessing, and that He would be exalted.

Lori and I first crossed paths with the Bergners in 1997 at the Army War College. Because our kids were the same age, we found ourselves becoming family, creating a bond as we together attended Bible study, chapel, youth activities, and White Sulphur Springs (where our kids worked together for eight years on staff). Throughout our race, we continue to draw strength from this wonderful family.

Then in 2000, it was our turn to mentor future leaders as we sponsored Air Force Academy cadet Joe Rohrer.

During that dinner, I spoke of these relationships, exemplifying how the Lord uses the body of OCF to shape, encourage, and teach us while we run our race. The growth in Christ woven through the relationships, experiences, and sense of family we can experience through OCF is unique—that OCF is for a lifetime.

As we march toward 2020, I want to continue the legacy of OCF by leveraging what the Lord has blessed us with and continuing to function in the military as the Body of Christ through the Body of OCF.

As I look back at how OCF has helped shape the Warner family during our time in the military, I realize that this story could be recounted hundreds of times over all across our OCF membership. As we build, sustain, and foster your Christian walk in the military society, my prayer for you in 2012 is that you find joy in the journey just as the Warners did. ☺



Photo/Dena Braeger

DAD'S BACK! Christie Palmer and sons shout out their excitement as husband and dad, Army Ch(CPT) Jason Palmer, returns from Iraq.

God's Tremendous Blessing—Back Home Again!



By Chaplain (Captain) Jason B. Palmer, United States Army

I pray that I never take God's goodness for granted.

In November I reconnected with my family at Fort Riley after twelve months in Iraq. The homecoming was an absolutely awesome event and tremendous blessing from God.

Since getting back to the States, I've been all about the business of reintegrating normalcy—and it has been a joyous change of pace.

I recall the Bible account where Jesus did an amazing work in healing ten lepers and only one came back to thank Him. I have no interest in being counted among the nine. From the bottom of my heart, thank you. Your prayers made a tremendous difference.

Because you were on the front

lines of spiritual warfare, many were spared injury and death. Marriages were spared the pain of divorce. Many were encouraged. And seven men began a love relationship with the Savior for the first time ever.

You may not believe it, but in the just over nine months my battalion received mail during deployment, together all of you sent 10,943 care packages to my chaplain assistant and me. Since the soldiers alone could not possibly use all those generous giftings, your kindness was spread to American troops all over the Baghdad Province.

Soldiers who'd been deployed many times over the past decade had never before seen anything

like your level of generosity. Please accept their astonished thanks.

God truly owns the cattle on a thousand hills. Just today I learned an entire pallet of care packages addressed to me in Iraq had arrived at Fort Riley. All those unopened, much-needed packages were forwarded to our soldiers in Afghanistan.

You will never fully conceptualize on this side of eternity the impact you made, but know that your efforts demonstrated to our military men and women what a small section of the body of Christ can do when mobilized.

God bless you as you continue to serve Him with all your heart. ☺



DVIDS Photo

Finishing strong, in Iraq and life

By Danny Byram

WHERE WERE YOU IN 2003?

Most of us remember the United States' invasion of Iraq. The media covered our military's every move and with those reports came images none of us will forget.

Shortly before the invasion, I was in Vicenza, Italy, giving a concert for our Army personnel there. Upon returning home, I learned that some of the same men attending the concert had parachuted into the mountains near Kirkuk, Iraq, only days later.

That period in our history was punctuated with excitement, mystery, and danger. And now just over eight years later on 21 December, the war in Iraq officially ended.

Last summer while performing and ministering to our military personnel there, a question emerged in my mind: are we finishing strong?

Finishing strong in any endeavor depends on knowing where we started. The military mission in Iraq went through its own evolutionary process, and now the finish looks like this: the U.S. presence in Iraq created the opportunity for a divided nation to unite democratically under one flag and voice.

And If Iraq embraces this prospect through wise choices, they will pass on this freedom to their children.

Our troops articulated this mission well. From the motor pool mechanic to the communications expert under antennas on dusty hills, they clearly understood the support they provided. During some of my unannounced visits to the troops' work places, I heard them talk firsthand about how

their individual roles were significant and how what they did contributed to the final mission of handing over the infrastructure to the Iraqi army.

Our soldiers are professional, dedicated, strong, and compassionate. Yes, they looked forward to getting home to their families and lives on American soil. But in Iraq last summer, morale was upbeat—considering they still had to take cover when sirens sounded “incoming rocket fire” from insurgents. My view is our soldiers knew they were finishing strong because they understand what was started and what the ending result should look like.

As New Testament Christians, we are aware that God desires His children to finish strong—in our daily endeavors and all the way to our last breath on this side of eternity. I believe this encouragement to finish strong is because of what He began in us. It is something so wonderful that He admonishes our cooperation with Him daily, so He can finish what He started. From what we see in Scripture, His “final product” is vastly superior to anything we could ever muster for ourselves.

At every stop on my Iraqi tour, I had the privilege of handing the soldiers a postcard with this Scripture passage:

“I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until

the day of Christ Jesus” (Philippians 1:3-6).

Whether a military mission or in life itself, who doesn't want to finish strong?

Like the Iraqis, we have choices to make to ensure we finish our race with strength and dignity. There are some practical concepts for us from this passage in Philippians that can lead us to God's finish line: remember each other; pray for one another; be joyous; be a partner; be confident; and do good work. We are all called to be the kind of soldiers who finish strong—on the battlefield and in life. ✝



Danny Byram is a musician who has entertained and inspired U.S. military personnel at home and overseas, earning him the moniker “Combat Musician” from the troops and commanders. He has released nine CDs of his varied music. Danny and his wife, Angela, live in Colorado with their three children, the oldest of whom will graduate this spring from Colorado State University and will commission as an Army lieutenant.

A MAN of FAITH and WAR

There sometimes can be conflict in the minds of Christians serving in the military. When is it right to fight? How shall I treat my enemies? How can I maintain a testimony for Christ while serving in the military? One Christian of distinction, who fought in five wars, was U.S. Army Brigadier General Gustavus Loomis. In Loomis is the ideal balance of Christian faith, devotion to family, and excellence in military service.

By Chaplain (Colonel) Kenneth Lawson
United States Army

Editor's note: This story was recommended to us by Army Major John Hoyman, a longtime OCF member now serving on the OCF Council.

BORN IN VERMONT IN 1789, and an 1811 graduate of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, Loomis was regarded as a tactically and administratively skilled officer, and a sincerely religious man of faith and prayer.

When the War of 1812 began, Lieutenant Loomis was transferred to a northern New York combat zone, fought in two battles, and was briefly held as a British prisoner of war. After the war, Loomis became part of the United States Coastal Survey, making maps and maritime charts around New York City and southern New England. In 1817, he married Julia Mix. They had three children, only one of which survived infancy.

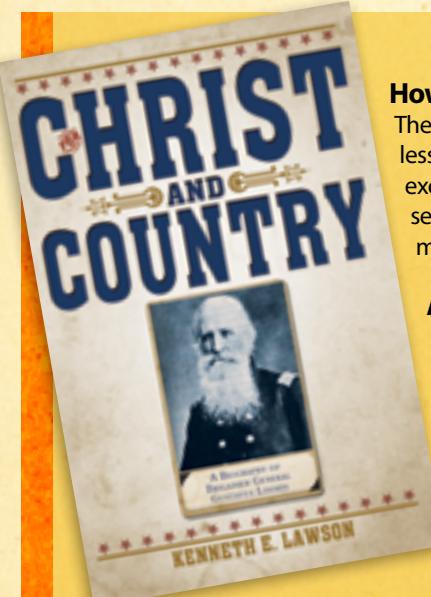
In the early 1820s, Captain Loomis and his family were stationed throughout southern regions of the United States. He was first exposed to slavery on these assignments, an experience that solidified his anti-slavery upbringing in Vermont.

He played a major role in the 1831-1833 Black Hawk War, making significant strategic decisions that defeated Black Hawk, ending the war and saving lives on both sides, which earned him national recognition.

He then served at Fort Snelling, Minnesota, for several years of peace-keeping duties between Indians and white settlers. When no chaplain was around, Loomis conducted church services and prayer meetings, and was an instrument for revival.

From 1837-1842, he served in the Second Seminole War in Florida, living through five years of humidity, insects, inadequate supplies, and elusive Seminoles.

Known for his Christian compassion for blacks and Indians, he taught them to read the Bible and had religious services for them. Many southern officers hated him for this, while northern officers considered him be-



How Can Christians Serve in the Military?

The life story of Brigadier General Gustavus Loomis provides six timeless principles for maintaining a testimony for Christ in the military: excellence in your career, strong faith in God, dedication to family, service and outreach, personal and professional integrity, and humility.

About General Loomis

- Excelled as an officer tactically, technically
- Uncompromising faith, even when ridiculed
- Nurtured spiritual life by daily Bible study, worship
- Never sacrificed his faith, family, or career
- Sought ways to minister to others
- Known as a man of integrity, honesty
- Respected by both subordinates and enemies



Ken first joined the Army as a private in 1979, later becoming an NCO and finally an officer. Now a colonel, he is the garrison chaplain at Fort McCoy, Wisconsin, and has served both on active duty and in the Army Reserve. A 2007 graduate of the U.S. Air Force Air War College, Ken earned doctorate degrees in Sacred Theology and United States History. Blessed with four children, he and his wife, Vera, just celebrated their twenty-fifth wedding anniversary.

• Copies of his book are available for purchase from the OCF home office, 1-800-424-1984.

necticut with his second wife, Annie. They were very active in supporting their local church and assisting the underground railroad.

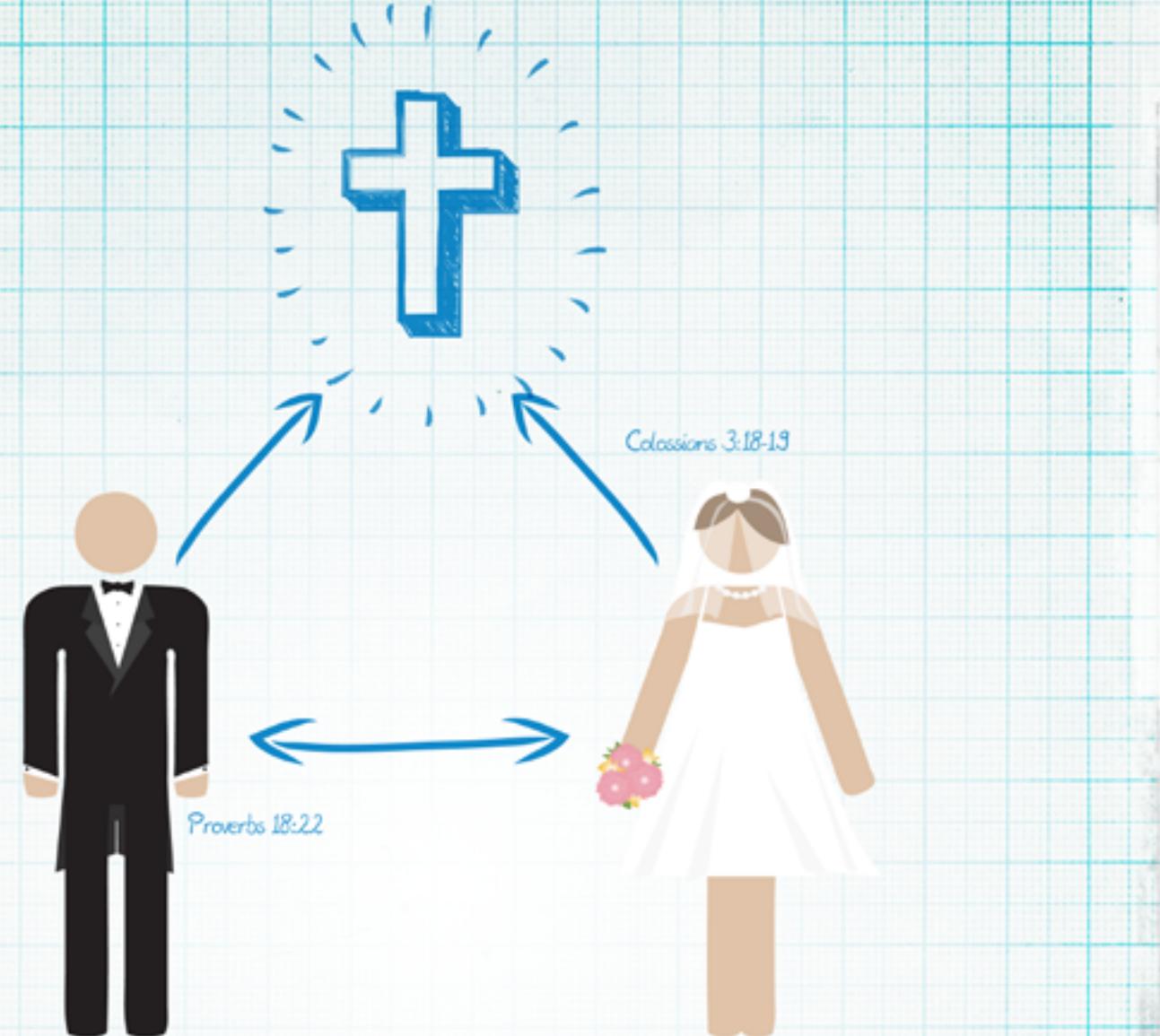
Loomis was seventy-two years old when the Civil War began in 1861. Called out from extended paid military leave, he was appointed the senior recruiter for the Union Army by President Abraham Lincoln.

He also became commandant of a Confederate prison camp, where the prisoners viewed Loomis as an elderly man who showed Christian compassion, leading prayer meetings and Bible studies with his chaplain.

When the Civil War ended in 1865, seventy-six-year-old Brigadier General Loomis was the oldest soldier on either side of the war. Two years later, he hung up his uniform for the last time.

He and his wife settled into civilian life and active church ministries in southern Connecticut. He died in 1872 at age eighty-two, a veteran of nearly six decades of military service.

Brigadier General Gustavus Loomis was both a fierce combatant and devout Christian commander. Whether coming from him in his tent, on the field, or in his home, sounds of psalm singing and Scripture reading were common. God was first in his life, then family, and finally career. In all these areas, he was blessed of the Lord.



GETTING INTENTIONAL in your marriage

Standing Together as a [Spiritually Smart Couple] Requires Prayerful Planning

By Colonel Larry & Bobbie Simpson • United States Air Force, Retired • Family Outreach Ministry

A CLOSE LOOK AT THRIVING Christian marriages reveals intentionality—a purposeful plan and pursuit of spiritual growth, revealing its depth in increasing relational service and contentment.

At Puget Sound's recent Climb On! Regional Training Conference for equipping OCF members, we challenged couples to resist going through the motions of marriage and lukewarm service to one another. Christian military marriages thrive when couples purposely:

- Open the dialogue box—and keep it open,
- Seek to understand your wife or husband's need, goal, or point of view,
- Commit to caring for the other's concerns,
- Catch, pray for, and cooperate with God's vision, and
- Serve each other with proper motives.

Following an interactive session, a young spouse asked us, "So how do you grow together spiritually?" Our response was to start with these basics of good communication:

- Routine spiritual pulse check. Safeguard from serving on an empty tank.
- Weekly calendar merge. Share, know, and be involved with what each other is doing.
- Inquire about what your husband or wife is learning through personal quiet time and study.
- How can I pray for you today? Be deliberate and discerning in praying for your spouse.
- Give permission to ask each other difficult questions. If you don't, who will?
- Challenge, support, and encourage deeper spiritual growth: journaling, Scripture memory, extended time alone with God, fasting...
- Ask yourself: How am I serving my spouse today? Is he or she on my "calendar" or "to do" list?
- Extend grace— daily. Forgive and ask for forgiveness. Think the best of your



Cultivating Thriving Marriages—Couples at Joint Base Lewis-McChord in Washington attended a Spiritually Smart Family seminar, which covered topics including conflict resolution, communication, and forgiveness.

OCF's Spiritually Smart Family Conferences: Cultivating Thriving Marriages

Cultivating thriving marriages through closeness in relationship is the focus for 2012 through OCF's Spiritually Smart Family conferences.

Via targeted marriage enrichment seminars, OCF's family ministry offers sessions customized to the needs of requestors. Because of anticipated reduction in unit funds to support marriage retreats and weekend conferences, SSF offers seminars conducive to those reduced unit budgets.

The most cost-effective seminar available is a one-day-only event, which includes light refreshments, and childcare. Weekend-long SSF conferences can also be tailored. Seminar topics include:

- Communication in marriage
- Thriving through forgiveness
- Oneness in marriage
- Helping one another stand strong
- Family spiritual formation
- When war invades the marriage
- Readying for the next deployment

spouse's motives and intentions.

In the Book of Acts, we are introduced to a married couple that moved in tandem, seamlessly serving others with humility and excellence—Priscilla and Aquila. "When Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they invited him to their home and explained to him the way of God more adequately" (Acts 18:26).

They worshipped, studied, encouraged others, and even taught together. How exciting that on any given day God could use them individually or together for His purposes.

In essence, this couple hosted an OCF fel-

lowship in their home (1 Corinthians 16:19). As they opened their home and lives, the members of their small group fellowship would have likely seen in them how couples grow together spiritually and keep pace with each other for the sake of the gospel.

As a spiritually smart couple in today's military and society, what do you need to add or remove to be intentional about God's priorities for you? Open the dialogue with your spouse and discuss what you believe is God's purpose for your marriage. Get intentional in your marriage. ☘

• For more information or to schedule a Spiritually Smart Family conference, seminar, or workshop, visit the OCF website: www.ocfusa.org/resources/family-conferences/ or contact Larry Simpson at ocfoutreach@comcast.net.

✓ Challenge, support, and encourage deeper spiritual growth: journaling, Scripture memory, extended time alone with God, fasting...

The Dangerous Lie of Perfectionism

By Colonel Brett Morris, Ph.D.
United States Air Force, Retired

TYPE-A PERSONALITY. HARD CHARGING. Driven. Perfectionist. In control.

All these traits are common to successful officers, but they come at a price. Unless one relies on God's truth and love for guidance, such traits can promote problems with self-condemnation.

Unlike guilt feelings that nag us in the wake of offenses against God or others, self-condemnation typically follows less-than-perfect performances as gauged by our standards rather than God's. Why didn't I act sooner? Why didn't I see that coming?

Past sins—even those long confessed, covered by the Blood of the Lamb, and tossed by Him into the sea of forgetfulness—can also prompt points of self-condemnation. How can God forgive me? I don't deserve to be forgiven for that.

Rather than resting in Jesus—our source, Savior, and role model—our flesh can demand perfection of us, refusing to let go. Our enemy is quick to pile on with lies that enflame such damaging thought-life.

The military culture can add its own stamp by telling us our career's all on us: if we aren't improving, we're stagnating—failing.

Seasons of crisis and conflict only intensify such feelings of self-condemnation, such as our inability to care for loved ones at home during long deployments, struggling with "survivor's remorse," or regretting command decisions.

Though our personalities demand us to have the foresight, wisdom, and endurance we don't expect of anyone else, the urge to self-condemn for failing to be superhuman can be relentless.

And yet there's little time to recognize self-condemnation for what it is—a dangerous lie immobilizing and robbing us from receiving the power, peace, and promise of our loving God's best. At its worst, persistent self-critiquing can be deadly, prompting some to take their own lives when the impossibility of "doing more" becomes overwhelming.

Yet God's Word provides a timeless truth that we need to cling to and reaffirm daily: "Therefore, there is now no condemnation

for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death" (Romans 8:1-2).

The world, our flesh, and the enemy all seek to turn us from this truth: We stand justified before God because the perfect life of Jesus Christ provided the means by which we stand before God forgiven—and as His children. No one can condemn us. God's love and acceptance are not earned by our attempts at "perfection."

Paul, likely another perfectionist who faced similar challenges, reminds us of God's promise, "Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him!" (Romans 5:9).

Just as God ordered Israel to create cities of refuge where the falsely accused could flee for protection, God opened an eternal refuge for all who accept Jesus as Savior. Rather than despairing over our failings, we must flee to this refuge and "take hold of the hope set before us" (Hebrews 6:18). Even if the pressure is so great it requires us to take refuge in this promise minute-by-minute, our hope still lies in Jesus. He promises to "never drive away" those who cling to Him (John 6:37).

Casting yourself, your fears, and every demand from self-condemnation upon Him shows wisdom in knowing one's limits, recognizing the simple truths that we are neither perfect nor God. He knows our frailty and our failings, and made a way for us to make all things right, by seeking Him and His perfecting work.

So give up control to the One in control, and rest in Him. ✝



Brett is a 1987 graduate of the Air Force Officer Training School, serving more than twenty-three years in several Air Force specialties. A father of five, he's served in both operational and support roles, including multiple deployments to the Middle East and Central Asia. He now works as a professor of international relations and military studies.

The OCF Honor Fund gift is a meaningful way to honor or remember someone special in your life while also supporting the ministry of Officers' Christian Fellowship.

BG Roy O. Miller, USA (Ret.)
By Ellen Rember

*Mrs. Jeanne Shepherd
Virginia Taylor
Floy Hoke
Ed Henley
Frank Humphries Jr.
Nancy Plunkett
Pat Compton
Doyle Williams
Jack McLendon*
By CAPT & Mrs. O. W. Camp Jr. USNR (Ret.)

*LTC Darin & Kelly Thomson
By Anthony E. Major III*

*Lt Roy Seaman
By Mr. & Mrs. Delbert S. Elliott*

*Pat Girod
By Naval Academy Parents Club of Central Ohio*

*Col John M. Fain, USAF, Ret
By Barbara H. Fain*

*Tom Hemingway
Roy Hammond
By Laura D. Zeron*

*Parents of LTC Larry Henderson, USA
OCF Military Men, Women & Families
Dr. Leo Gidzich
By LTC Larry & Jill Henderson, USA*

*Col Bill Miller
Col Roy Hammond
By CH(COL) & Mrs. Robert R. Covington Jr., USA (Ret.)*

*ENS Thomas Dill
By Mr. & Mrs. G. Donald Kaye*

*CDR Robert G. Hawley
By Mr. & Mrs. Calvin W. Bedford*

*Rev. A. W. & Dorothy Jackson
By Mr. John Jackson*

*Charles H. Hoke Sr.
By Mrs. Libby Hoke*

*Col Tom Hemingway
By John Eidsmoe*



Photo by Maxwell AFB OCF

Maxwell: Senior Mentor Breakfast

Approximately fifty people attended a senior mentor breakfast to hear former OCF Executive Director, Bruce Fister (center), speak on leadership. Maxwell AFB OCF, in partnership with the chapel, hosts monthly breakfasts off base with active duty and retired flag officers speaking on various subjects. Students and faculty at War College, Staff College, SAASS, and other senior and field grade officers involved in Maxwell's OCF ministry and chapel programs comprise the target audience. Also pictured with Lt Gen Fister are Maxwell OCF field staff rep Mike Martin (left) and Mike Conn.



Photo by Jacksonville OCF

Jacksonville: Bible Study and Fellowship

A growing, ever-changing group that "has so much fun together," these Jacksonville OCFers just finished studying the book of Hebrews. They meet weekly in the home of CDR Mitch and Beckie Conover, USN.



Photo by Larry Simpson

Chaplain Retreat at the Cove

OCF was privileged to participate in a four-day retreat for 250 chaplains and their spouses, hosted by the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association at The Cove in North Carolina. OCF's executive director couple, David and Lori Warner (right) and Air Force Chief of Chaplains, Maj Gen Cecil and Jan Richardson, attended the event. OCF's family outreach director, Larry and Bobbie Simpson, Spiritually Smart Family Conferences, presented a workshop. LTG Robert Van Antwerp, USA (Ret.) was one of the keynote speakers.



Photo by Fort Bliss OCF

Fort Bliss: Bible Study and Fellowship

Gathering in the Lord's name for Bible study, prayer, and fellowship—core competencies of OCF—is modeled by this Fort Bliss OCF group who supports one another in their military service.

BIRTHS

Nicholas Gabriel Chandler, born 3 December 2011, son of **LTJG Michael Chandler and Julia Brown Chandler, USCGR**, Washington, DC.

Caleb Heyward Davis, born 23 April 2011, son of **MAJ Heyward and Jennifer Davis, USA**, Monterey, CA.

Georgia Victoria Johnson, 22 December 2011, daughter of **LT Flip and Christie Johnson, USN**, Bremerton, WA.

Elisabeth Lane Madren, born 15 December 2011, daughter of **Capt Joe and Rebekah Madren, USMC**, Oceanside, CA.

Henry Smith, born 26 October 2011, son of **LT Jack and Sarah Smith, USCG**, Suffolk, VA.

Peter William Wort, born 22 August 2011, son of **Capt Joshua and Valerie Wort, USMC**, Kailua, HI.

WEDDINGS

2LT Judson Noel, USA, married **2LT Mary Alice Pass, USA**, 23 July 2011. Their home is Fort Benning, GA.

2ndLt Tim Plante, USAF, married **2ndLt Ariel Scheimann, USAF**, 9 October 2011. Their home is Andrews AFB, MD.

2ndLt Steven Stanton, USAF, married **2ndLt Rebecca Burditt, USAF**, 2 November 2011. Their home is Sumter, SC.

TAPS

Dorothy L. Dodson, 7 October 2011, wife of **CAPT Leonard W. Dodson, CHC, USN (Ret.)**, Monticello, FL.

GEN Ralph E. Haines Jr., USA (Ret.), 23 November 2011, San Antonio, TX.

CAPT Charles H. Hoke, USN (Ret.), 8 October 2011, husband of **Elizabeth Hoke**, Bethesda, MD.

LTC Wayne Kirkbride, USA (Ret.), 25 September 2011, husband of **Melanie Kirkbride**, Monument, CO.

Joseph P. Longo Jr., 26 March 2011, husband of **Betty Longo**, Pebble Beach, CA.



Photo by John Davenport. Copyright 2010 San Antonio Express-News, reprinted with permission. The self-professed "cavalry man and a Calvary man," GEN Haines is shown here in a 2010 photo, holding a portrait of himself that features the West Point chapel on the left.

OCF member and Army's oldest four-star general goes to glory

General Ralph Haines Jr., the Army's oldest four-star general, died 23 November 2011 in San Antonio, Texas. He was 98.

The one-time vice chief of staff, who led the 1st Armored Division preparing to invade Cuba during the 1962 missile crisis, was also a longtime OCF member. Said former OCF executive director, Lt Gen Bruce Fister, USAF (Ret.), "General Haines was a fine Christian officer and leader. He had an influence on my life beginning when I was a young major at Little Rock, AFB. He was a faithful supporter of our ministry over the years."

GEN Haines was an impassioned leader of military prayer breakfasts both nationally and in San Antonio, Texas, the latter where several other OCF members were featured speakers over the years, including Army MG R. L. Van Antwerp, Marine LtGen Charles Krulak, and Air Force Brig Gen Charles Duke, also a NASA astronaut. ☀

AN UNFORGETTABLE OATH

At Fort Leavenworth in the mid-1970s, shortly after Sue and I had become Christians and while George and Peggy Kuykendall were developing the OCF ministry there, we attended chapel where GEN Haines was giving the message.

He enthusiastically gave his testimony, joking that his wife and her born-again friends had conspired against him by praying for over twenty years for him to be transformed from his lackluster, duty-

requirement approach to church and faith. Her prayers were answered not very many months before that day at the Leavenworth chapel, and he became a very outspoken new believer—which can be problematic when you are wearing four stars!

At the end of his message, he asked us to stand, raise our right hands, and then administered an oath enlisting us as privates in the army of the Lord. I will never forget him or the oath I took that day.

COL Rich Goldsmith, USA (Ret.)

Climb On! Regional Training Conference

Ten military couples, spouses, and families participated in OCF's first Climb On! Regional Training Conference near Arlington, Washington in October.

Led by Mike and Peggy Tesdahl, Bill and Judy Hudspeth, and Larry and Bobbie Simpson, the weekend training retreat equipped OCF members and leaders with the mission of OCF, reinforced small group leadership skills and techniques, and encouraged one another through worship and fellowship.

If you would like the OCF staff to bring a similar event to your area, contact Mike Tesdahl at the OCF home office, 1-800-424-1984.

OCF's Lead & Aim High Sporting Clay Event

Proceeds raised from OCF's Lead & Aim High sporting clay fundraiser sent nearly a dozen families to OCF's first Climb On! Regional Training Conference in Washington State.

Because of donor contributions, all expenses were paid for the junior officer and mid-grade enlisted and their families who attended the



Photo by Puget Sound OCF
Climb On!—OCF's first Climb On! Regional Training Conference in Washington was led by (right to left) Mike and Peggy Tesdahl, Larry and Bobbie Simpson, and Bill and Judy Hudspeth.

conference. Participants enjoyed refreshment and renewal, and returned home equipped and certified to lead local Bible fellowships.

The attendees' gratefulness spurred them to

"pay it forward" with donations of their own for other families at future conferences, thereby multiplying the original Kingdom investment!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Council Nominations

gible to be re-nominated for a second consecutive term:

- LTC James B. Karr, USA (Ret.)
- LTC Norman G. Lane, USAR (Ret.)
- CH(LTC) John Peck, USA
- CDR David Ruth, USN
- MAJ Elijah Ward, USA

At least three OCF regular members (present/former officers, officer candidates, midshipmen and cadets) must submit or endorse each nomination. You must provide your complete name, address, telephone number, rank and service and also that of the person you're nominating. The nominations are due no later than 30 March.

The OCF Council meets twice yearly to set the annual ministry priorities, establish policies, examine significant issues, and approve the budget. Nominees elected to Council by the OCF membership will serve a three-year term beginning 1 January 2013.

In addition to new candidates, these council members in the outgoing Class of 2012 are eli-

Spring Council meeting announcement

OCF Council's spring meeting is 19-22 April at OCF's White Sulphur Springs conference center in Pennsylvania. If you want to attend, notify Susan Wallis before 30 March: susan.wallis@ocfusa.org.

ROTC Retreat

What: OCF/Valor Mid-South Spring ROTC Retreat

When: 2-4 March

Where: Fort Fisher Air Force Rec Center, Kure Beach, NC

Topic: Spiritual Fitness—Designing Your Workout

For more information check out the OCF website: www.ocfusa.org.

Not Just Bricks and Mortar—Impacting Lives for Christ

The Spring Canyon Phase of the Growing and Building Campaign

By Lieutenant Colonel Jeff Silliman
United States Air Force, Retired

OCF'S GROWING AND BUILDING CAMPAIGN is about more than constructing much-needed newer, larger facilities at our two conference centers in White Sulphur Springs, Pennsylvania, and Spring Canyon, Colorado.

It's about building Christian lives within our military and within members' families, nurturing them in spiritual growth so they can reproduce their faith across the entire military community.

Because personal transformation depends largely on the power of authentic relationships in a biblical context, the "Fellowship" aspect of the Officers' Christian Fellowship name has always been accentuated. OCF's core is the local OCF Bible study where military members and their spouses can both witness to and grow in their faith, while in turn reaching out to others on their bases, posts, or ships.

The local OCF study and involvement with our military chapels or military neighborhood churches remains the front line of OCF's ministry and outreach. Around the world, week in and week out, lives are reached for Christ, disciplined in Him, and supported in times of need.

With the local OCF study serving as the front line of OCF's ministry, OCF's conference centers serve as an arm for R&R and professional training. At these places people are refreshed, encouraged, and equipped for their work on the front line.

The special times spent at either Spring Canyon or White Sulphur Springs have lasting and significant influence upon entire families in their Christian walk. It has long been recognized within OCF that a large percentage of members who've attended our conference-center programs become long-term leaders and supporters of the OCF ministry.

With the opening of Heritage House this past year, White Sulphur Springs saw a 45 percent increase in attendance for the summer sessions followed by an astounding 70



Photo by Spring Canyon

Testimonies abound about the impact of OCF's conference centers

"The family had a wonderful time...we didn't want to leave. I'm home now and all fired up for the OCF opportunities here." (Family camp attendee)

"This was our first time to attend and we were blown away! Please know your investment in our family has made a huge impact in giving us rest and recharging for the days that are ahead as we continue on in this military chaplain role." (Chaplain couple)

"I've been on the mountaintop. It has refreshed me—given me hope." (OCF widow)

"The conference centers have helped me stay tied in and engaged with OCF for the past twenty plus years after retiring from the Air Force." (Capital campaign committee member)

percent spike for the winter retreats. Anticipating further attendance growth—guests have voiced their approval of the new facilities and enhanced experiences—OCF will be able to minister Christ to more people with the Heritage House, backed by the beloved Harrison House. But much work remains.

It's now time to focus on the Spring Canyon phase of the capital campaign—the "race to the summit." The planned two new lodges and expanded dining areas would nearly double Spring Canyon's guest capacity by the 2013 season. December's winter sports retreats there were totally full and had waiting lists. In fact, because Spring Canyon has averaged a 94 percent capacity in its summer programs since 2006, there are also waiting lists for many of those weeks.

The need for expanded facilities is vital for enhanced ministry to many more OCF mem-

bers, their families, and other groups.

Many are already enjoying an initial result of the campaign at Spring Canyon—the completed Hemingway Operations Complex. With year-round adventure activities now available, such as the indoor climbing wall in the Hemingway Building, guests are coming away encouraged and energized.

To date, we have 42 percent of the funding needed to implement the Spring Canyon improvements. We are asking the Lord to bring the necessary pledges and funding for OCF to make the plans a reality.

Please consider prayerfully what the Lord might be calling you to do in helping make OCF's conference center ministry at Spring Canyon available to more OCF members—both now and for generations to come. It's all about building Christian leaders...families...fellowships—for a lifetime. 

Sola Fide—A Sound Strategy

Sola fide is Latin for "faith alone" or "by faith alone." It is one of the five solas some use to describe the Reformation. The concept is found throughout the Bible (Romans 4, Ephesians 2, and Philippians 3). It's at the core of our Christian walk.

Faith—without it, generosity is just giving our time, treasure, or talent to get something back, like public recognition or "extra credit" from God. With it, giving of any type becomes a sign of change (or transformation), a visible demonstration of God's working in us and through us.

I see three parts to the faith process. First, foundationally we have to decide whether we can trust God—completely. Proverbs 3:5 says, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding." In what else could we place all our trust? Our government, our church—surely not ourselves? (Remember what the Macedonians did before giving their offering?) They "gave themselves first to the Lord" (2 Corinthians 8:15).



DAVE ROWLAND
Director of Resource Development

An eternal perspective

Here are a few hints for laying up treasure in Heaven:

- Pray, ask for direction, and keep praying.
- Ask God to reveal where He's working and how you can join Him.

- Check out the work and look for obvious accountability.
- Seek God about how much time, treasure, and/or talent to commit.
- Pray for God to be glorified and His Kingdom to be furthered.
- Step out in faith and get involved.
- Leave the "results" to God.

Second, we must consider God's nature. Can He and will He provide for us? Is He the God of scarcity or of abundance? Psalm 50:10 comes to mind: "... for every animal of the forest is mine, and the cattle on a thousand hills." God, our Provider, has promised to meet our needs.

"But store up for yourselves treasures in Heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

Matthew 6:20-21

up or even expand? I think it boils down to this. Are we willing to live by faith or should we take care of ourselves first?

Please don't get the wrong idea. I'm right there with you. My grasp on money is too tight at times! As Martin Luther said, "A man is generous because he trusts God and never doubts that he will always have enough. In contrast, a man is covetous and anxious because he does not trust God."

Sola fide? 

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