

Christian Perspectives on Life in the Military

COMMAND

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He is not here!



**Lessons in leadership,
from a squadron janitor**

**Veteran recalls Easter
service at 40,000 feet**

**Transformation journey:
Maximum generosity**

Team up: You don't have to run the race alone

Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last, but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. Therefore I do not run like someone running aimlessly; I do not fight like a boxer beating the air. No, I strike a blow to my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.

1 Corinthians 9:24-27

The runners shuffle to the starting line. Of the hundreds of hopeful participants, Scott Downhard stands out as a favorite. Fort Worth's 34th Cowtown Marathon is about to commence.



DAVID WARNER
Executive Director

Bang! The runners are off and Downhard emerges from the pack to take the lead. Twenty-six grueling miles later, he rounds the last curve eyeing the prize ahead—the unbroken ribbon beckoning him to be the first to cross the finish line. He rips through the tape a full six minutes ahead of his nearest competitor, thrusting his arms skyward in victory. Exhausted, yet satisfied, his days of long runs, eating right, and the right equipment have paid off.

But even with sweat still streaming off his body, his heart pounds as a race official declares the words any of us would dread hearing after successfully winning a race, “You are disqualified!”

Downhard did everything nec-

essary to prepare for and execute a flawless race—except register!

As the Lenten season of preparing our hearts to celebrate Christ's victory on the Cross concludes, let's ponder the significance of His matchless triumph. You and I are called by Christ to run a race, one specifically laid out before each of us. For those serving in uniform, I know firsthand how extremely challenging and dangerous your race can be. My heart goes out to each of you. You will be confronted with many obstacles in your race that can get you “disqualified” from receiving the full benefits of the Lord's rewards from a life lived out as a most effective witness for Him.

Here are a few obstacles:

Succumbing: The world is full of temptations, with trappings and seductions that can take our eyes off Him. The rank on your shoulders and title behind your name can be especially intoxicating. The responsibility, authority, and power bestowed upon a young officer can be a lure into pride. As I pinned on brigadier general, a senior general officer sent me Micah 6:8 as a focus verse: “And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.”

Your greatest strength is in knowing your weakness. I believe we all have an Achilles' heel—pride, greed, lust, jealousy, etc.—and I'm convinced Satan knows exactly what it is and how to attack it. Spiritual warfare is real. Know your vulnerabilities and how best to protect yourself. As a leader, never put yourself in compromising situations, but always pray for wisdom and the courage of your convictions to do the right thing.

Separation: In nature, the lion looks for those separated from the herd. Once isolated, even the strongest of foes is easily de-

feated. And it's equally true in the Christian life. Once we're cut off from Christ, family, and friends, the enemy of our soul pounces. Sure, we know this, but how many times do we allow the body blows of life to keep us from reaching out to others for help? Don't let the enemy win!

We are built for relationships. OCF provides a wonderful harbor in the storm, a safe environment where you can be in communion with the body of Christ through the body of OCF! Having brothers and sisters running alongside you can help pace, sustain, and encourage you to press for the prize.

Self-elimination: You can do all the preparation—read Scripture and pray constantly—but fail to “register” with those around you. As you rise in rank and influence, pray about how the Lord can use you to shine the light of Christ in your new position.

Constitutionally you have the right to express your faith. I know the pressures about expressing your faith while wearing a military uniform—and don't get me wrong, there are right and wrong ways to do this. By being in fellowship with other believers, bathing yourself in prayer, and studying Scripture, you will be prepared when others ask you why you believe what you believe. Arm yourself with knowledge from the Skip Ash series of articles on the OCF website, *The Religious Rights of Those in Uniform*.

Lori and I wish you a wonderful Easter celebrating Christ's victory on the Cross. It's an honor to come alongside as you run this race you've been called to run, and I encourage you to continue running hard and claim the prize!

Your fellow OCF teammates are more than ready to run this race with you through prayer, fellowship, and support. 🏃



The Body of OCF

“The Religious Rights of Those in Uniform”... Have you ever wondered, “What exactly are my rights to freely express my faith in Jesus Christ—even while in uniform?” This six-part series of articles explores this and other questions.

Read the entire series: <http://www.ocfusa.org/articles/religious-rights-those-uniform/>



istockphoto.com

A cannonball life in a toe-testing world

by KORI YATES

The life of a military wife is an adventure I had never anticipated. A home-bodied introvert by nature, the idea of moving around frequently and having to develop new relationships is way outside my comfort zone. My tendency is to hunker down and hang on until my time is done and we can plant roots somewhere. But apparently God had other plans for me.

He has moved us five times in the span of our seven-year marriage. As we have walked this journey, I have learned to focus on what God has for me to do in the place where He has planted me. It has taken some time, but God has taught me that I do not follow the Army. I follow my Savior. Not simply a camp follower, I am a Christ-follower—a Christian. God has a calling on my life just as He does for my husband in this camouflaged world.

Every place we live is different, and the tasks God calls me to in those places is different as well. I have done everything from teach fitness classes to lead Vacation Bible School. God has people He wants me to encounter—whether for me to touch their lives, for them to make a difference in mine, or both. He has challenged and changed me, and I have come to be very thankful for it all.

He is teaching me to live for more than the end of a deployment or the next PCS, to seek what He would have me to do today. But even outside of this military world, I believe that is what He wants for all of us as Christians. He

has no desire for toe-testing faith.

Our Christian walk is much like those summers at the local swimming pool. Three kinds of people were there—the ones who never touched the water, those who tested it and maybe got in eventually, and those who took off from the edge with no hesitation. They were all present, but only one group truly experienced the joy of the water: they would fly into the air, curl into a tight ball, and make the biggest splash possible with a cannonball.

I have experienced the joy as well. Those cannonball moments when I sank deep into the water feeling the coolness rush over me on those hot summer days were some that can never be replaced. Now, don't get me wrong. I had days where I jumped in and that water was mighty cold—and checking the depth of the water is important as well—but think of what I would have missed if I had never given it a shot.

Much like my summers at the pool, I believe God has called me to a cannonball life—a life completely sold out to Him. He calls me to do some crazy things sometimes, and all He expects of me is that I trust Him and jump. Giving everything I am out of love for Him regardless of my location or circumstance is all He desires.

Sometimes those things seem so minimal, like taking dinner to a neighbor or hugging someone who just needs it today. However, those requests can seem more like mountains at times. He asks me to step beyond what I understand or know and trust Him com-

pletely. I have even had moments, just like at the pool, when the direction I thought He wanted me to go was not His desire at all. I was wrong, and yet God has even blessed me in those times.

His grace and mercy rain upon me not because I am doing the right thing, but because I take a step of faith. He does not ask for perfection, but simply for a desire to serve my Savior.

So, me? In the middle of this military soil where He planted me, I plan to live a cannonball life in this toe-testing world. Standing back as far as possible, I will take off running. Leaping from the edge, my desire is to jump for all I am worth. He will be there waiting. He always is. At the end of my life I desire to say, “I, however, followed the Lord my God wholeheartedly” (Joshua 14:8b).

How about you? Cannonball life or toe-testing mediocrity? 🏃

Kori has been a part of OCF since January 2011, when she and her husband, Kyle, moved to Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. Since then she has published her first book, *Olive Drab Pom-Poms*, and made her fifth move as a military wife. Kori and Kyle are the parents of two wonderful blessings.



• For information on how to order Olive Drab Pom-Poms, check out “As Seen in COMMAND” at www.ocfusa.org.



LESSONS IN LEADERSHIP... FROM A SQUADRON JANITOR

by COLONEL JAMES E. MOSCHGAT, United States Air Force, Retired

Editor's note: The original article, "Lessons in Leadership: From a Janitor," appeared in the Wharton Leadership Digest, December 2001, and On Patrol, fall 2010. This article is adapted from On Patrol and is reprinted with permission.

WILLIAM CRAWFORD WAS AN UN-IMPRESSIVE FIGURE, one you could easily overlook during a hectic day at the U.S. Air Force Academy. Mr. Crawford was our squadron janitor.

While we cadets busied ourselves preparing for academic exams, athletic events, Saturday morning parades, and room inspections—or never-ending leadership classes—Bill quietly moved about mopping and buffing floors, cleaning toilets, or just tidying up the mess 100 college-age kids can leave in a dormitory.

For many years, few of us gave him much notice, rendering little more than a passing nod or throwing a curt, "G'morning" in his direction as we hurried off. Why? Perhaps it was because of the way he did his job, always keeping the squadron area spotlessly clean. Frankly, he did his job so well, none of us had to notice or get involved. After all, cleaning toilets was his job, not ours.

Maybe it was his physical appearance that made him disappear. Bill didn't move very

quickly and even shuffled a bit, as if he suffered from some sort of injury. Bill was an old man working in a young person's world. What did he have to offer us on a personal level?

Bill was shy, almost painfully so, seldom speaking to a cadet unless they addressed him first, always burying himself in his work. The Academy, one of our nation's premier leadership laboratories, kept us busy from dawn till dusk. And Mr. Crawford...well, he was just a janitor.

That changed one fall Saturday afternoon. I was reading a book about World War II and the tough Allied ground campaign in Italy, when I stumbled across an incredible story.

William Crawford "in the face of intense and overwhelming hostile fire...with no regard for personal safety...on his own initiative...single-handedly attacked fortified enemy positions. ...for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at risk of life above and beyond the call of duty, the President of the United States..."

"Holy cow," I said to my roommate, "I think our janitor is a Medal of Honor recipient."

We couldn't wait to ask Bill about the story.

We met Mr. Crawford bright and early Monday and showed him the page from the book. He stared at it for a few silent moments and then quietly uttered something like, "Yep, that's me." Mouths agape, my roommate and I both stuttered, "Why didn't you ever tell us about it?"

He slowly replied after some thought, "That was one day in my life and it happened a long time ago."

Things were never again the same around our squadron. Word spread like wildfire among the cadets that we had a hero in our

midst—Mr. Crawford, our janitor, had been bestowed the Medal! Cadets who had once passed by Bill with hardly a glance, now greeted him with a smile and a respectful, "Good morning, Mr. Crawford."

Those who had before left a mess for the "janitor" to clean up, started taking it upon themselves to put things in order. Almost overnight, Bill went from being a simple fixture in our squadron to one of our teammates.

Mr. Crawford changed too, seeming to move with more purpose, his shoulders not as stooped, meeting our greetings with a direct gaze and a stronger "good morning" in return, and flashing his crooked smile more often. While no one ever formally acknowledged the change, I think we became Bill's cadets and his squadron.

A wise person once said, "It's not life that's important, but those you meet along the way that make the difference."

Bill Crawford, our janitor, taught me many valuable, unforgettable leadership lessons:

Be Cautious of Labels. Labels you place on people may define your relationship to them and bind their potential. We labeled Bill as just a janitor, but he was so much more. Therefore, be cautious of a leader who callously says, "Hey, he's just an Airman."

Everyone Deserves Respect. Because we hung the "janitor" label on Mr. Crawford, we often wrongly treated him with less respect than others. He deserved much more, and not just because he received the Medal of Honor. Bill deserved respect because he walked among us and was a part of our team.

Courtesy Makes a Difference. Be courteous to all around you, regardless of rank or position. Military customs, as well as common courtesies, help bond a team. When our daily words to Mr. Crawford turned from perfunctory to heartfelt, his demeanor and personality outwardly changed.

Take Time to Know Your People. Life in the military is hectic, but that's no excuse for not knowing the people you work for and with. Who are the heroes that walk in your midst?

Anyone Can Be a Hero. Mr. Crawford was

a private the day he earned his Medal. Don't sell your people short. Today's rookie could and should be tomorrow's superstar.

Leaders Should Be Humble. Most modern-day heroes and some leaders are anything but humble. Mr. Crawford was too busy working to celebrate his past heroics. Leaders would be well served to do the same.

Life Won't Always Hand You What You Think You Deserve. We in the military work hard and we deserve recognition, right? Sometimes you just have to persevere, even when accolades don't come your way. Don't pursue glory; pursue excellence. Bill Crawford did his duty and then swept floors for a living.

No Job is Beneath a Leader. If a Medal of Honor recipient could clean latrines and smile, is there a job beneath your dignity? Think about it.

Pursue Excellence. No matter what task life hands you, do it well. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said, "If life makes you a street sweeper, be the best street sweeper you can be."

Life is a Leadership Laboratory. Too often we look to some school or class to teach us about leadership when, in fact, life is a leadership laboratory. Those you meet every day will teach you enduring lessons if you just take time to stop, look, and listen. Don't miss your opportunity to learn. ✍️

William Crawford, a Medal of Honor recipient for his heroic actions during World War II, retired from the Army and worked as a janitor at the U.S. Air Force Academy so that he could remain close to the military. He passed away in 2000.

Jim is the deputy commandant, National Security Space Institute, Peterson AFB, Colorado. He and his wife, Becky, have four children. To contact him, go to "As Seen in COMMAND" at www.ocfusa.org.





Celebrating the empty tomb of JESUS CHRIST

As the sun comes up on Easter morning, can there be a better place to celebrate than in front of an empty tomb—the one where Jesus might very well have been laid to rest after His crucifixion?

by RICHARD MERYON

“Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; he has risen!” (Luke 24:6).

GO BACK IN TIME as we explore the places and events, through the lens of Scripture, shaping the most dramatic event in the history of the world—the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

From the empty tomb, we walk two hundred yards to the east, where the image of a skull face eerily peers out from among the juts and gaps of stone in the rocky hillside. Is this indeed Golgotha (literally meaning “the place of the skull”) where Jesus was crucified? It’s a place suitable for maximum public humiliation, located by a busy intersection just a short walk north of the Damascus Gate into the Old City of Jerusalem. It’s the certain location where Stephen was later martyred (Acts 7:57-58).

Imagine the stunning scene playing out, where the throng at the crowded crossroads is throwing scorn and insult at our crucified Lord, dying an unimaginably excruciating death. Now so contaminated by our sin, no longer in fellowship with His Father, Jesus cries out in abandonment and agony, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” (Mark 15:34). The earth shakes violently and the temple curtain is torn in half as our Lord dies. And the Roman centurion, who cared for his career and not for the new sect led by this prisoner, now cries out in terror, “Surely He was the Son of God!”

Joseph of Arimathea, a wealthy man, carries Jesus’ body 200 yards to the west, through the garden he owns, and places Him in an unused tomb hewn out of the rock. Nicodemus, a secret believer in Jesus though a member of the

Sanhedrin, assists him. A stone is rolled across the entrance of the tomb, sealed, and then guarded by Roman soldiers.

Ponder that morning of the third day as Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bring spices to anoint Jesus’ body, wondering who will move the stone. “While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, ‘Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; he has risen!’” (Luke 24:4-6).

Later, Peter and John run to the burial site, only to see Christ’s grave clothes lying there in the empty tomb.

Did they believe what they saw? Do we really grasp it? The stone of Jesus’ grave was not rolled aside to let Him out. It was rolled aside so that all of us throughout the ages could look in and see an empty tomb—that Jesus is alive, the ultimate victor over sin, death, and the grave.

This is the core of the Christian faith: Jesus’ death and resurrection. And because He rose again, those of us who believe and put our trust in Him, even though we die, will be raised to eternal life with Him. And without the resurrection of Christ, as Paul argued to the church at Corinth, “If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins...If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied” (1 Corinthians 15:16-19).

Here in this corner of East Je-

rusalem is the perfect visual image of the Lord’s crucifixion and resurrection. Known as the Garden Tomb, it’s been owned and operated by a British charity since 1894. Rosalind and I have not been called here to guard a relic, a religious site. The stones have no mystical properties; prayer here is no more effective than where you celebrate Easter.

It matters little if this is the right place on your Satnav device because the importance of the Garden Tomb is not declaring the place but the person of Easter—Jesus Christ. And that is what we tell the quarter of a million people who visit this place every year. ✚

Richard is the director of the Garden Tomb in Jerusalem, Israel, and lives with his wife, Army Captain Rosalind, on the site (but not in the tomb).



A Navy Captain, Richard served thirty years in the British Royal Navy and ten years with Christian Vision for Men. The Meryons have lived in the U.S., including Virginia Beach while Richard worked with NATO, and were regular speakers and counselors at OCF’s White Sulphur Springs conference center in Pennsylvania. They have three children.

The Meryons would love to meet OCF members who are in Israel for travel. Check out “As Seen in COMMAND®” at www.ocfusa.org for more info.



Easter at 40,000 feet

by **LIEUTENANT COLONEL ART SMITH**
United States Air Force, Retired

ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL COMBAT mission over Southeast Asia was now under our belts, much like the previous other 100 missions my B-52 crew had flown, with one significant exception—it was Easter morning.

Before this flight I had been praying either for a temporary Easter Sunday ceasefire to be declared or that my crew would be excluded from the schedule. I wanted to celebrate this glorious Easter Sunday by worshipping in church with family and friends.

Not only were we scheduled to fly, but we also were leading the formation of airplanes above the secret target.

With the mission now completed, we settled in for the tedious six-hour return trip to the base on Guam. Letting my adrenaline surge finally drain, I retrieved the small New Testament I always carried with me from my flight suit leg pocket. As I flipped through the pages, the thought hit me, why not celebrate Easter on the plane?

Since I was the only Christian believer on the crew, I wasn't sure if any of the other guys would join me. I radioed the pilot and said, "I'm having my own Easter service right here over the Pacific and switching to private interphone now. No pressure, but anyone is welcome to join me." The gunner located in the tail of the airplane said, "I can't come forward to join you but will join you on the private interphone."

I later learned that everyone had tuned in to my frequency.

I started my in-flight Easter service by reading the biblical accounts of Christ's crucifixion and His resurrection three days later, just as He predicted. I sang Easter hymns, "Were you there when they crucified my Lord?" Then I briefly testified why Easter was so important to me, ending with a prayer.

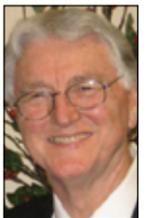
The members of my crew were not the most religious guys, and were mostly bragging instead about how they would do anything but go to church—even on Easter. But this year they willingly decided to join this airborne Easter Sunday service to break up the long flight back to Guam.

As we later deplaned and headed to our mission debriefing session, our pilot remarked, "Isn't it interesting that none of us, except you, would have gone to Easter church services today if we hadn't flown this operation?"

I learned some very important lessons that day. First of all, I can worship the Lord anywhere. Even while on a mission, especially in the midst of death and destruction, my hope rests in Jesus, the ultimate victor over sin, death, and the grave.

And I was humbled and amazed how God used me to share with unbelievers the promise of eternal life because of Christ's resurrection. This combat mission became an Easter Sunday at 40,000 feet. ✈️

Art is a Purdue University graduate who was commissioned from their AFROTC program and served on a B-52 crew for thirteen years, flying 135 combat missions over Vietnam. He also served as a staff officer, deputy commander, and chief planner. Introduced to OCF in Guam by longtime OCF member and Bible teacher, Charalambos "Mr. Tok"



Tokatloglou, he helped form the first OCF group there in 1975. Art also led other OCF groups and served as OCF's Northwest Regional Representative for three years. Art retired in 2006 from civilian employment, and resides in Newberg, Oregon, with his second wife, Mary Gail.

"Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen; he is not here." Mark 16:6

All-out, unreserved commitment to God

by **LIEUTENANT COLONEL STEVE WADE**
United States Air Force, Retired

Editor's note: This article's inspiration comes from The Discipline of Grace by Jerry Bridges.

Is God calling you to an all-out, unreserved, nothing-held-back commitment? Is He speaking in some area of your life that you've been holding back from Him?

There are times when, with life pressing in or finding our walk with God too easily satisfied, we need to refocus in to action. He is likely calling you to a greater commitment in your life or ministry. The Apostle Paul exhorts, "Therefore, I urge you [appeal to you] brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship" (Romans 12:1, NASB).

All-out commitment is first of all about a commitment to God, giving nothing less than ownership of our lives to Jesus! This is the sacrifice that is "acceptable to God."

We all make commitments in life—the military oath of office, taking out a mortgage, or the life-long vow of marriage—but what to God? Committing to Him means I will pursue a way of life with humility and dependence that is pleasing to Him.

Unreserved commitment to God can never be a self-improvement program where our "spiritual service of worship" is by our own merits. Jesus addressed the fallacy of such self-improvement to the spiritual leaders of His day, calling them "whitewashed tombs." They looked good on the outside, but inside were ugly. Self-effort fails to lead to holiness.

We are also called to a decisive commitment. In Romans 12:1, "to present your bodies" has the idea of a decisive, once-for-all dedication that's not halfhearted. Life is too difficult for lukewarm commitments to God. Affliction, persecution, or worries can choke out half-hearted commitments.

Along with committing to God and doing so decisively, a for-life commitment is in the offering up of our body as a "living sacrifice." It's day after day and committed to holiness. It doesn't mean living in a state of sinless perfection, but having a firm conviction not to sin willfully.



DVIDS photo

"Let us know; let us press on to know the Lord; his going out is sure as the dawn; he will come to us as the showers, as the spring rains that water the earth."

—Hosea 6:3

We will always battle with the flesh, the world, and spiritual attacks in this life. But are you willing to pursue holiness as the cadence of your life? It relates to everything we do: in school, the squadron, or onboard ship; in our shopping or what we read; and in the way we talk, compete in athletics, spend our time, or relate to others.

Most importantly, it's a commitment in view of God's mercies. Rejoice if you are a follower of Christ—your sins are forgiven and you're without condemnation from Christ Jesus (Romans 8:1)! God will never count your sinfulness against you (Romans 4:8). Jesus fully exhausted the cup of God's wrath against you in your place, and you stand before the Creator of the universe in daily grace justified by faith.

This is the basis for our commitment and the only hope in carrying it out. We can't do it in the flesh, but only in God's sustaining power.

May these two foundational truths echo in your heart, knowing that decisive, life-long commitment to God is made in full view and understanding of God's grace, and only by

God's divine enablement through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Is God calling you for an all-out, unreserved, nothing-held-back commitment to Him? His voice is usually a gentle whisper (1 Kings 19:11-12), but don't disregard it. He will empower you to do whatever He calls you to. It may be exhausting at times, but it will never be burdensome as you walk in His grace! Now go out and serve Him with a new commitment, sustained and empowered by His mercy. ✝

Steve and his wife, Rita, who have "always had a passion to build a new generation of disciples for Christ," serve as OCF field staff representatives at USAFA. They started married life together as college ministry staff for Campus Crusade for Christ, and served twenty-two years in the Air Force. Steve was a flight instructor and an evaluator with over 2,500 flight hours in aircraft including the T-37, T-43, and F/A-18. Steve and Rita "count it a great blessing to have faithfully and professionally served our country," and be used by God at every assignment for kingdom purposes.



Photo by Karrison Garza

Colorado Region ROTC Retreat

Slip sliding down a snowy mountain slope on a tube was among the free time activities enjoyed by nineteen cadets attending the Colorado Region ROTC Retreat at Spring Canyon in February. Learning valuable principles about integrating their Christian faith with the military profession, the cadets were challenged by Lt Col Tom Falconer, USAF (Ret.), to "follow Jesus' example and become servant leaders to those in the military society." One cadet remarked, "Going to this retreat was like hitting the reset button... undoubtedly an answer to many a prayer!"



Photo by Lucy Lane

APSU at Eastern U.S. OCF ROTC Retreat

Members of the Fort Campbell/Austin Peay State University ROTC OCF were among the eighty attendees at the Eastern U.S. OCF ROTC Retreat at White Sulphur Springs, Pennsylvania, in early February. The cadets pictured here with (right) leader LTC Greg Norman, USAR (Ret.), are the core of the Bible study leadership at APSU OCF.



Photo by Connor Dittmar

Pax River OCF—Maryland

Rotating hospitality monthly, the Pax River, Maryland, OCFers fellowship together on Tuesdays with praise and worship, Bible study, and dessert. They also enjoy other gatherings such as picnics and parties, and Christmas caroling.



Photo by Fort Huachuca OCF

Fort Huachuca OCF—Arizona

We believe God calls military believers to minister effectively in the Armed Forces—The OCF Purpose Statement is mirrored in this Fort Huachuca, Arizona, OCF group that meets together for Bible study and fellowship.

BIRTHS

Alexa Rosita Berrios, born 26 November 2011, daughter of **Maj David and Sonia Berrios**, USAF, Leesburg, VA.

Daniel Joshua Kerrigan, born 12 December 2011, son of **COL Hunt Kerrigan**, ARNG, and **Capt Stephanie Kerrigan**, ANR, Eagle River, AK.

Vivian Strabbing, born 11 December 2011, daughter of **Capt Tim and Jada Strabbing**, New York, NY.

Declan Christopher Whelan, born 27 December 2011, son of **LTC Christopher and Jennifer Whelan**, Laurel, MD.

WEDDINGS

Col Paul D. Adams, USMC (Ret.), married **Lori Clark Groby**, 11 November 2011. Their home is Prescott, WI.

TAPS

Robert W. Bryan, 19 December 2011, husband of **Carol Bryan**, father of **LtCol Fred Bryan**, USMC (Ret.), Manns Choice, PA.

COL Harvey M. Dick, USA (Ret.), 28 January 2012, husband of **Margie Dick**, Charleston, SC.

Barbara Inch, 1 February 2012, wife of **BG Mark S. Inch**, Fort Leonard Wood, MO.

SPECIAL EVENT

OCF Day of Prayer

Join OCF on Wednesday, 11 April for a special day of prayer and fasting for the Spring Canyon Phase of the Growing and Building capital campaign.

All members and friends of OCF are asked to spend extra time invoking the Holy Spirit's guidance as we corporately lift up the ministry of OCF and the plans to increase capacity at OCF's conference center in Colorado.

For more information, go to www.ocfusa.org/articles/join-us-day-prayer.



Photo by Kevin Norberg

OCF members Johnny Dimenna (left) and Arion Mangio (third from left) were among the seventy-five attendees at Minnesota OCF's sixth annual dinner in February. Both will graduate as newly commissioned officers this spring.

Minnesota OCF comes together for annual dinner

They're a mix of retired military, National Guard, and ROTC cadets, meeting together at various luncheon events, Bible studies, and an annual dinner—all in the name of Christ and under the banner of OCF.

Meet the very active Minnesota OCF, headed by Fred Zimmerman, Karl Bakke, and former OCF President Stan Anderson, a retired Navy admiral.

At the University of Minnesota and University of St. Thomas pizza luncheons, speakers are brought in to share their faith and military experiences while cadets studying together at the Bible studies will also hear teachings by a guest chaplain.

Seventy-five attended Minnesota OCF's sixth annual dinner in February at the Fort Snelling Officers' Club, and heard Maj Gen Jerry White, USAFR (Ret.), speak on "Six Keys for Influence."

OCF Minnesota also partners with Campus Crusade's VALOR program, which is CRU's outreach to ROTC students. In addition to engaging these future leaders in fellowship and Bible study, there was a three-day Twin Cities Exchange (TCX) retreat with over 1,000 college students attending.

As a result of this partnership, ROTC students and military instructors from other



Photo by Minnesota OCF

Minnesota OCF local leader Fred Zimmerman (left) with Bob Holthouse at the Twin Cities Exchange ROTC retreat. OCF partners with the Campus Crusade (CRU) VALOR program, an outreach to ROTC students.

parts of Minnesota and Wisconsin joined OCF and attended the annual dinner.

For more information about Minnesota OCF, go to www.ocfusa.org/resources/links/ocf-minnesota or www.ocfusa.org/find-ocf/state/minnesota.

—OCF Home Office



Photo by Pensacola OCF

Pensacola OCF—Florida

This Pensacola OCF group took advantage of a sunny Florida day to cycle at the beach and later refuel with fried chicken at a tailgate party.

IN HONOR OF

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.

Gill Roesler

By **CPT Vanessa A. Roesler, USAR (Ret.) & Mrs. James A. Kline**

1stLt Jonathan C. Shine

By **MG & Mrs. Michael J. Nardotti Jr., USA (Ret.)**

Nancy Spoede

By **Dr. & Mrs. Travis H. Small Jr.**

Robert W. Bryan

By **Patricia and Robert Monroe Patricia & Roger Diehl Donald and Belva Bailey LCDR & Mrs. Wendel Toedter, USN (Ret.) Covenant College**

Carol Bryan

2ndLt & Mrs. Benjamin Bryan, USAF COL & Mrs. Douglas Braendel, USA (Ret.) Mr. & Mrs. Richard Powell Andrew & Mary Catherine Hinton Dennis & Elyse Murphy

Rodney M. French

By **LTC & Mrs. Edward A. Daggit, USA (Ret.)**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Military Believer Web Portal

Are you interested in a social networking tool that allows you to interact with a Christ-centered military community? One where you can connect with fellow military believers, churches, and ministries wherever you go?

OCF is one of several Christian ministries that is launching a web portal to provide a community setting for military men, women and their

families to connect with others who understand the unique needs of the military believer.

Check the OCF website www.ocfusa.org and click on "As Seen in COMMAND®" for more information.

Spiritually Smart Family's Cultivating Thriving Marriage seminars

What if researchers discovered a pill that could cure issues in your marriage—would you take it? With one swallow, all that miscommunication, past hurts, unmet expectations, and unforgiveness would simply disappear!

While no magic pill exists, what's available is a foundation for developing tools to successfully combat marriage's complexities.

Through OCF's family outreach ministry, Spiritually Smart Family conferences, Larry and Bobbie Simpson facilitate "Cultivating Thriving Marriages" seminars.

To schedule a seminar for your group, chapel, or church, contact Larry at: ocf outreach@comcast.net.

The transformation journey—maximum generosity

“Growth” means different things in different contexts. There’s the physical growth of a boy growing to over six feet tall, or the growth in those Mid-west cornfields that are vital to our economy, or the kind of growth in our spiritual life. Whatever else it means, “growth” is an increase of some sort.



DAVE ROWLAND
Director of Resource Development

I recently heard an interview with noted Christian researcher George Barna that literally shook me. Then I read his book *Maximum Faith*. Barna talks at length about how one grows mature in faith, but he concludes that from six years of studying American Christians, most never reach maturity.

Don’t stop reading yet! While this is disappointing, it has a seed of encouragement.

Barna observes that most born-again Christians do lots of things. We go to church, read the Bible, memorize verses, donate money, and volunteer. He says, “We may be ‘religious’ but we are not truly transformed by our faith in and relationship with God.” We’ve reached a plateau in our passion

Points to ponder

Points to ponder on the journey of growing in generosity toward God:

Understand that this is a journey, not a box to be checked on a list of other things.

God has much to say about generosity in His Word. 2 Corinthians 8 and 9 are great places to start.

Have we let barriers come between God and us, especially sin, self, and society?

Ask God to show you your true spiritual state, especially your heart attitude toward Him and others. It may not be pretty, but it helps to get real.

Ask Him how you can get started on this journey.

Think about how brokenness, dependence, and surrender play a role in this process.

What tools would help you, like self-examination, accountability and other relationships?

and influence. In fact, if we look through the lens of the New Testament, this looks a lot like where the Pharisees stood spiritually.

In short, we are not yet fully transformed. In Romans 12:2, the Apostle Paul shows us the goal: “Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.”

So what is transformation? Jesus said the most important thing is to “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these” (Mark 12:30-31). Notice the critical transforming word in this passage—“all.” Jesus is saying we have to be all in, not just actively observing.

Jesus describes success as “fruit,” but we seem to think being transformed means knowledge and activity. Barna notes, “To become transformed, we have to let God rule our lives while we become servants.” But are we willing to take what comes with this, like brokenness, surrender, sacrifice, and maybe downward mobility?

So how do we grow? First, we have to understand that this is an

ultimate journey, something not completed overnight. Next, we have to decide in our hearts and minds whether we’re willing to pursue being all in. This is entirely up to us. Then we need to find some “tools” to help us. Those are harder to define but can include things like self-evaluation, information, relationships, accountability, and encouragement—most of which we can’t order off the Internet.

Barna identifies ten steps on this journey, with most Christians tending to stop at step five or six. Progress along this path is not linear; you could even be working on two or more steps at once. And progress won’t be quick. This is lifetime stuff.

One of my passions is to help us all grow in our generosity toward God, not to sell books. Growing in generosity is simply part of our journey toward spiritual maturity. It’s not about how much we give. It’s not about how much we volunteer. It’s really about how much we love—God first and others second. That’s maximum generosity.

We can only really mature when we grow to be so in love with God that we become fully devoted and given over to Him in every phase of the life He has given us.

I’m all in. Are you? 🏔️

you might help. For example, if seven OCF Centurions give \$100 a month for three years it would qualify for a Room Sponsorship. You might consider asking six friends to partner with you in this project.

“Your help will make an eternal impact in OCF’s life-changing ministry and service to many more military members and families,” General Warner said.

For details about becoming a room sponsor, please visit www.ocfusa.org or contact David Rowland, Director of Resource Development, at: dave.rowland@ocfusa.org.



Photo by Karen Fliedner, OCF

Mount Yale is one of the several 14ers that participants climb as a part of Spring Canyon’s Rocky Mountain High leadership program.

Race to the summit—extreme challenge

by COLONEL R. MICHAEL TESDAHL
United States Army, Retired

Turning southwest at the only stoplight in Buena Vista, Colorado, we cross the last of the high plateau and enter the canyon. In folds of familiarity, the result of earlier pilgrimages, the land tightens around us, Mount Princeton and Mount Yale on our shoulders pressing us toward our destination. The sign: “Welcome Home.”

Three days later: 3:30 a.m., high base camp at 11,500 feet. Twelve hardy souls emerge from tents into the frigid air of a mountain so high and so massive that it creates its own weather system. A fast, cold breakfast snack and we turn our faces upward; we’ll need to beat the afternoon electrical storms. This is peak day, the day of the ascent of one of Colorado’s mighty “14ers.” The tree line falls behind. Crosswinds work against footing and balance. Breathing is

difficult. Put your game face on.

“The Trek,” the climb of a 14er, is the quintessential experience of Rocky Mountain High, the capstone leadership development program at OCF’s Spring Canyon Conference Center. Cleo “Buck” Buxton, OCF’s first general secretary, understood the need for lay training to prepare for Christian witness and believed that summer training programs were essential to the work of OCF. OCF’s conference center legacy was born.

In the first week of August this year, twelve teams will complete this extreme challenge. Why would they do this? Each team is committed to raising \$25,000 for the Spring Canyon phase of OCF’s Growing and Building Campaign. Their common goal is to collectively bring \$250,000 to the campaign, virtually guaranteeing that construction on the first of two new lodges can begin this fall.

How can you get involved?

- ✓ **Become a team captain.** Captains are both climbers and fundraisers, actually making the ascent, finding donors from within their own circle of influence, recruiting teammates, and shepherding the team toward its fundraising objective.
- ✓ **Become a team member.** Not everyone can make the climb, but the climb will not be successful without you. Each captain needs two team members to shoulder a portion of the fundraising responsibility, to establish prayer support, and to maintain the momentum of the main effort.
- ✓ **Become a sponsor.** If you can’t participate in the actual climb or as a member of a fundraising team, watch for opportunities to support your favorite team with a pledge or a one-time gift. 🏔️

For more information and to get involved, contact COL Mike Tesdahl, USA (Ret.) at (303) 761-1984 or mike.tesdahl@ocfusa.org.

OCF kicks off Room Sponsorship Program for Spring Canyon

Brig Gen David Warner, USAF (Ret.), announced the Room Sponsorship Program for the Spring Canyon Phase of the Growing Together...Building the Future capital campaign. Sixteen guest rooms are slated to be built in New Fort Shine and Veterans Memorial Lodge.

A Room Sponsorship of \$25,000 provides opportunities for individuals and local OCF groups to honor a deceased OCF hero, military campaign, unit, or school. Ask God how

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On the cover and on page 6: Watercolor illustrations by Andrew C. Jackson of Mobile, Alabama

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(18 and older)*

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(Build a solid, biblical relationship with your
teenage son or daughter.)*

<http://www.springcanyon.org/>