

Christian perspectives on life in the military

COMMAND

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Three ways to find certainty

We live in a world of hurting people desperate for answers. As a Christian, you have the answer—Christ in your heart.

God is active in our lives

Army CWO2 Sheldon Duffy and his wife, Salena, share their story of Sheldon's near-death experience with leukemia and how they endured the trials and uncertainties of not knowing if he would survive.

Soul mission: Stop, rest, and heal

We often cope with stress by trying to survive our wounding rather than allowing God to heal and refresh us. But God doesn't want us to simply survive. His mission field, after all, is your heart and mine.



Facing Uncertainty

In times of crisis, are we equipped to handle the struggle?



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Finding certainty in an uncertain world

Paul outlines three ways that Christians can adapt to a troubled culture

We answered the ringing phone awakening us at 0430 while on vacation years ago. On the other end of the line my vice wing commander quickly informs me to tear up the PCS orders I've had since March, orders that would have kept the Warner family in Colorado for another year. Now wide-awake, Lori and our two daughters are hanging on every single word of the one-way conversation they're hearing.



DAVID
WARNER

Executive
Director

We're to be at our new duty station in thirty days.

The impact of sudden change was overwhelming. Lori had to inform her school she wouldn't be returning in the fall to teach. Eldest daughter, Brittney, would spend her senior year at a new high school—her third high school. And Ashley would leave behind her best friends. Uncertainty had flooded in, leaving in its wake a myriad of swirling emotions.

Such is the military life. Many of you are facing multiple layers of uncertainty and the list is endless: Where's my next assignment? Will I make the next rank? Am I on track for the next rung of the ladder? Will my spouse find a job? What school will the kids attend? Will they find friends there? Adding to that list of uncertainties are our contemporary culture's changes to the make-up of our military. What will the military lifestyle look like five, ten, twenty or more years down the road from the repeal of don't ask, don't tell and the legalization of same-sex marriage?

All this begs the question, "How do we find certainty today in an uncertain world?" Examining Philippians 4:4-9, we find Paul's outlined three-pronged formula for the how-to of adaptation to life's uncertainties by guarding your face, heart and mind:

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near (vv. 4-5).

Guard your face. We can tell the difference as to whether someone possesses true joy or is worried about the future. Paul tells us to rejoice in God because He is near. Do you feel God's presence? Are you resting comfortably in His hands? If you do, your face and countenance will show it.

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus (vv. 6-7).

Guard your heart. Have you placed the cause of your uncertainty at the Lord's feet? Are you thankful for where He has you and what He's allowing you to experience?

When you do this, the overwhelming sense of peace will pour over you and your heart will be free of worries.

Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you (vv. 8-9).

Guard your mind. What governs your thought life? Paul's instructions are clear—don't allow the enemy to cloud your mind with all the negativity swirling around us. Train your mind to focus on the Lord.

For the Warner family, when new orders came to us during that vacation years ago, we asked the Lord to be in every aspect of the move. Immediately His peace enveloped us despite our thousand questions about moving overseas. Though the move's impact upon us was substantial, we laid all questions and concerns at His feet. We welcomed the change and turned our thoughts toward making the most of it, rather than becoming bitter.

Guarding your face, heart and mind all play out in OCF through our eight Spiritual Pillars. Pillars four and five address our key principles of being a "lay-led" ministry where "integrating faith and profession" is exhorted to our members. I believe the ability to shine the light of Christ effectively in the most difficult of our military careers' situations depends upon how well we live out God's instructions through Paul's letter to the Philippians.

We live in a hurting world of people desperate for answers. As a Christian, you already have the answer—Christ in your heart. If you have successfully guarded your face, heart and mind, when uncertainty strikes those you lead will look to you and find comfort and confidence. And they will also be curious about the source of your peace.

In contrast to the world's increasing uncertainty, rejoice in the Lord! Know that He is near. Don't be anxious, but focus on Him and meditate on His Word. And you will be the light of Christ in a dark world. ✝



Lieutenant Colonel Hezekiah Barge, UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS

Born: Pensacola, Florida, 1969

Came to OCF: John and Denise Kruse invited my family to their on-base OCF Bible study at Quantico, VA.

Involvement in OCF: Involved with OCF since the late '90s, the first decade was primarily participating in/hosting Bible study groups and attending White Sulphur Springs. After a few OCF training events, I was a local and regional rep and am now back on OCF Council for the third time.

Why OCF for me: OCF's always provided great opportunities to connect and grow in Christ with numerous outstanding officers. It addressed a need for my family and me over the years. I have an exceptional opportunity to be a part of OCF Council's ongoing discussions about the ministry's future growth and our capability to minister to others in the military society at-large.

Alma mater: Florida A&M University

Why a military life: I first felt the call in my early teens, enlisted in 1986, commissioned years later, and am still serving in 2015. I call it the "Great Missionary Journey." Deployment has given me great opportunities to meet people, learn about numerous cultures, and experience the good, bad, and ugly

aspects of living around the world.

What's on my iPod: Sermons/teachings from Dr. J. Vernon Magee and Bill Johnson. Music: Hillsong, Vineyard, Bethel Music, and other Christian artists.

What's on my bucket list: Watching my children and grandchildren grow in Christ, more scuba diving, visiting states that I have yet to see, and hunting in Alaska, Montana...

Most memorable/exotic places visited: Mountainous areas: White Sulphur Springs and Spring Canyon. Southern California beaches and private islands around the world.

Quirky habits: Enjoying lots of Fritos in chili, humorous mannerism during public speaking.

Something I can't live without: God's presence and words in my life.

Life Bible verse: No life verse, but this is a favorite: "And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near" (Hebrews 10:24-25, ESV).



Fifth and Ephesians Photography photo

God is real and active in our lives

By OCF Communications

CWO2 Sheldon D. Duffy, USA, and his family simultaneously enjoyed his birthday, Father's Day, and his return from Kuwait in June 2013. Did they ever celebrate in the Duffy household that day! But Sheldon and his wife, Salena, had no idea that in less than five short months they would face the biggest challenge of their marriage.

Even though Sheldon returned from deployment in "pass PT test" shape, in November while running in Colorado's cold weather a sharp pain struck him in his side. "It was the earliest indication that something was wrong," he said. And for the first time in his twenty-five-year military career, Sheldon failed a physical fitness test. "I was misdiagnosed as having exercise-induced asthma," he said.

"Sheldon was really down and out. Felt ashamed and discouraged, a military officer failing a PT test," said Salena. "He was concerned about what people thought, an issue of identifying with what you do. He struggled doing PT, would come home and plop into a chair, exhausted."

By January Sheldon moved from 1st Brigade to 3rd Brigade, a move that would soon prove providential. He developed a severe sore throat and was forced to sleep on the couch in order to breathe. On 19 February, Sheldon returned home from PT depleted. Unable to walk upstairs, he could only crawl up on his hands and knees. "He was having trouble breathing and his chest hurt," recalls Salena. A battery of tests at ER diagnosed Sheldon with Acute Myeloid Leukemia. He was immediately admitted to Memorial Hospital's oncology ward in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

During devotions with God earlier that day, Salena recalled, "He led me to the Gospel account of the woman with the issue of blood, where Jesus tells the woman,

"I prayed, 'Father, if it's Sheldon's time, then I need peace; if not I stand on your Word.' I heard the Lord say, 'He shall live and not die.' I held on for dear life to that verse from Psalm 118:17. I knew my Father had a purpose."

Salena Duffy

"Your faith has made you well" (Mark 5:25-34). I had no idea then how that Scripture would soon play out in our lives."

Within twenty-four hours Sheldon was taken to ICU because his lungs were filling with blood; the situation was so dire he had to be intubated twice. And his oxygen was so low that nurses said later they didn't know how he was even cognitive.

His liver and kidneys then began failing. The advanced leukemia required continual blood and platelet infusions, so Sheldon's immunity was compromised. Few working in ICU expected him to live.

Says Salena, "It was very dark, very rushed because things were constantly changing. Treatment decisions had to be made, and we weren't sure if the outcome of those decisions might mean he wouldn't be coming home."

While the battle for Sheldon's life waged on in ICU, an unseen spiritual battle was being waged in prayer closets and in community gatherings, connected straight to the Great Physician, seated at the right hand of God Almighty in heaven.

Sheldon's 3rd Brigade move placed him and his family in a unique position where command teams, family readiness groups, and two chaplains could minister to them during Sheldon's hospital stay. His uncle Clarence, a minister, established a Facebook prayer page where people around the world prayed for them.

Amy Wooten sent the prayer message out to the OCF community in Colorado Springs where they and OCF leaders Arnie and Lois Ahnfeldt prayed for the family. Sarah Ball, president of PWOC at Fort Carson, coordinated meals. The Duffys felt sustained by the prayers of believers, "many that we didn't even know."

"I prayed, 'Father, if it's Sheldon's time, then I need peace; if not I stand on your Word.' I heard the Lord say, 'He shall live and not die.' I held on for dear life to that verse from Psalm 118:17. I knew my Father had a purpose."

Tasked with making difficult health care decisions for Sheldon, all while trying "to make everyday as normal as

Continued on next page →



Colorado Springs OCF photo

Members of the Colorado Springs, Colorado, OCF Bible study pray for Sheldon and Salena.

Three life lessons

1 We believe the Lord has a greater purpose that's being worked out in the heavenlies. God literally healed Sheldon and brought him back from the brink of death. It's a powerful testimony of God's grace and power in the midst of a life-threatening illness.

2 Don't prepare for a storm in the storm. Know the Commander's voice, His character, and that you can trust Him. Trust God and turn to prayer in the crisis.

3 Share your story to help others who are facing trials and the many uncertainties of life. "Our strong military community and Christians in OCF, PWOC, Navigators and church came alongside lovingly and powerfully to help us," shared Sheldon and Salena.

A letter from Sheldon's ICU physician: '[He] beat tremendous odds'

As an intensive care physician, I'm accustomed to dealing with life-threatening illnesses. To compensate for that stress, I avoid emotional involvement by focusing on the disease and its associated physiological derangements. Occasionally, however, a patient and family comes along whose situation forces me to let down my guard. Such was the case with Sheldon and his wife, Salena.

Sheldon's status rapidly deteriorated in ICU from bleeding throughout his lungs. He was placed on a respirator then on dialysis for kidney failure. To realize the gravity of Sheldon's situation, it's crucial to understand those organ failures resulted from the leukemia itself. He urgently needed the treatment for the leukemia that could temporarily worsen those failures or even hasten his death. Sheldon's prognosis for survival was less than five percent, despite his favorable leukemia type. The consensus was, "This patient's likely to die, but we can't let him die without giving treatment a try."

During the numerous discussions with Salena she exhibited an unusual calmness and sense of confidence in the face of overwhelming odds. My initial reaction to her demeanor was, "She just doesn't get it!" But it soon became apparent her confidence came from her strong Christian faith and belief that God was sovereign and in complete control.

The high doses of chemotherapy intended to kill all leukemia cells also kills most normal bone marrow cells. The bone marrow literally shuts down. The patient becomes dependent on blood transfusions, virtually unable to fight off any infection. There was little good news to tell the family except offering, "Well, he's still alive."

On day ten, although Sheldon was taken off the respirator because his lung bleeding had improved, he continued needing dialysis and developed liver failure. Salena told me through this, "Sheldon's got prayer warriors from all over the country praying for him!" I found myself frequently praying for Sheldon while examining him during daily rounds. Over the next two weeks, Sheldon's bone marrow started regaining function. He got off dialysis because his kidneys started working. His liver function markedly improved. After five weeks of hospitalization he was discharged to rehab, and discharged home five days later. A follow-up bone marrow biopsy was free of any evidence of leukemia.

I can't say for certain that this was a miracle. But I can say that Sheldon clearly beat tremendous odds stacked against him. As a Christian, I do believe God heard the many prayers of the sheep of His flock and brought Sheldon through this as a testimony to His power and glory.

Ronald Rains MD, FCCP, FCCM
Pulmonary / Critical Care Medicine

possible" for their sons Daniel and Samuel—who's autistic—Salena's prior military service as well as training for officers' wives shaped in her the spiritual depth that "you don't prepare for a storm in a storm. I already knew my Commander's voice, His character, and that I could trust Him.

"With Samuel especially, routine change is not good. He knew something was going on, but didn't know what—except Daddy was gone. I just put my military spouse's hat back on and kept going forward," said Salena.

Once Salena knew her husband would survive, she "told our boys I was in the hospital recovering from a life threatening sickness," said Sheldon.

"I still remember the first day I saw my boys after nearly thirty days in the hospital. Daniel approached gingerly, with tears in his eyes. Samuel stood and just stared. I was quite a sight—skinny, darkened skin, jaundiced eyes, and

a dialysis port sticking out of my neck. A big smile lit up on his face and he jumped on the bed with me."

Reflecting on it later, Salena observed, "I realized I had PTSD from literally watching my husband fade away, as do many caring for a loved one in trauma. It's not unlike battlefield trauma. The smells, sights and sounds of the machines are indelibly imprinted on my memory forever."

"My near-death experience has truly transformed my life," Sheldon said. "I have first-hand experience that God is real and active in my life. God can work miracles no matter how sick a person is or how negative the situation may be. He can truly cause all things to work out for good."

"I've seen ordinary people truly be the hands and feet of Christ as He used them to care for my wife and me during this difficult time of our lives." ✠

Q&A with Sheldon and Salena

What were some of your hardest moments? How did you get through them?

Sheldon: I honestly don't even remember some of them. Salena dealt with the constant changes and multiple crises that occurred: my lungs filling up with blood, being sent to the ICU, the fear I wouldn't stop bleeding from the incision site for chemotherapy treatments.

Salena: The hardest was not knowing if Sheldon would ever return home. We weren't certain of the outcome from the decisions that had to be made immediately as Sheldon's crises occurred. It was my belief in God and the prayers of godly friends that held me up throughout.

What are some of the greatest things you each learned about yourselves, your family, others—and God—that you would not have known otherwise but for this event?

Sheldon: We are fragile. Anything can hit us at any time because we live in a fallen world. No matter how great our faith, it will be tested, proven. That's when it becomes your own real faith—stops being momma's, grandma's, or the popular preacher's faith. The crisis makes it your own faith. This also showed me how precious family is, why you fight for it, and how essential our military and Christian communities are because they rallied around us. And since I had to learn to walk again, it's given me much more compassion for people dealing with physical ailments and handicaps.

What encouragement would you give others experiencing seasons of uncertainty in their lives, whether health, job or family issues?

Sheldon/Salena: Trust God, put everything into His hands. Spend time with Him daily so you don't prepare for a storm during a storm. That daily walk with God in relationship with Him is essential, so that when hard times come you have the solid foundation of Christ to stand on.

What were some of the most encouraging "God moments" you experienced during this time?

Salena: Seeing the miracle of God healing Sheldon because almost everyone in ICU did not think he was going to survive. And knowing that people around the world were praying for us.

Sheldon: It was the realization of how close I had been to death—and that I had survived. I wasn't fully aware of what was happening to me because of being so drugged up in the hospital. I had no idea I was suffering from lung, kidney and liver failure. I had dead skin around my fingernails and spots on the palms of my hands, forehead, and on my head, and later found out those spots are called mottling—usually appearing a day or two before death. I was that close to death. It really makes me appreciate what God has done for me.



Salena Duffy photo

Sheldon in hospital with son Daniel.

In what ways did your fellow OCFers & others in the Christian community come alongside you to support and encourage you?

Sheldon/Salena: Through their prayers and actions. Amy Wooten is a friend of Salena's through Protestant Women of the Chapel (PWOC), and she sent out the message to the OCF community throughout Colorado Springs to pray for us. We are OCF members because we met OCF leaders Arnie and Lois Ahnfeldt at a local restaurant. After talking with them we realized we had a common friend in Amy—and that they'd been praying for us even before we met! We accepted the Ahnfeldts' invitation to a Spring Canyon event that weekend, and later started attending the OCF Bible study in their home.

How have these challenges brought you closer together in your marriage and as a family?

Sheldon/Salena: It has taught us to embrace the life that God has given us even more and to appreciate one another. At least five times a week we ensure that we spend time alone together and talk—even if it's just sitting on the porch sipping coffee. And we enjoy taking date nights together.

Advice for those in the military society who aren't engaged in a supportive community?

Sheldon: If Salena hadn't been involved in PWOC and unit activities where she actively sought to help others and give something back to the Fort Carson community, she wouldn't have been in a position to receive much of the aid we were given. We really saw God work through them, literally becoming the hands and feet of Christ. I know we would not have been able to make it without their aid. This community really stood by us. ✠



Bonnie Gray photo

Bonnie Gray with husband, Eric, who served in U.S. Army Military Intelligence, and their sons Josh and Caleb.

Allow God to heal the hidden wounds

By Bonnie Gray

I've never stepped onto the battlefields of Iraq or Afghanistan. I've never seen anyone get shot or heard the explosion of mortar. I have never served in the military. But, what I didn't know is that we all carry wounds from the battlefield of life. Sometimes we take on a role to fulfill a military mission, take care of others, manage or please. Yet, we can end up hiding wounded parts of ourselves that God values and sees.

I didn't know that emotional trauma has the same effect as physical trauma.

Until one night, I was suddenly jolted awake. My throat narrowed and I began choking. My heart pounded like a jackhammer against my chest.

I was having panic attacks. You'd think a woman my age—loved by her soul-mate husband, a mom of two, a high-tech professional who once served as a missionary—would know better than to spiral into a place of uncontrollable anxiety.

I walked around in a fog, debilitated by insomnia. No one knew because I was highly functioning. That's how I coped with stress. I survived by being strong. Pushing through whatever gets me down. Taking care of every-

thing and everybody. Except me.

When I found myself in a therapist's office, I was shocked to discover: I have Post Traumatic Stress Disorder—PTSD. From childhood trauma.

When my mother forced me to cut up pictures of my dad the day he packed his bags to leave us. The countless times she abandoned me in the basement, "You're lucky I don't throw you away to the orphanage!" That night I felt my uncle touching me under the sheets where he shouldn't. I used my faith as an eraser to the past—to hide my shame and anger—rather than share my story and let God heal me.

A person, an event, a stress, or a change can unravel emotional trauma that apparently can be frozen in time.

3 Truths to Set your Heart Free

Myth #1: Anxiety, panic attacks, or trauma happens because I'm failing in my faith.

The Truth: Healing is God's invitation to bring your heart home, to deepen your faith.

I trusted God to survive my childhood. I was happily married to Eric, with two beautiful boys. Why would panic attacks happen then? My therapist, a world-leading expert in PTSD, told me military members don't experience panic attacks in the heat of the battle, but only experience trauma after coming home, when finally safe. You haven't failed. It's the opposite. You've been faithful, and God hasn't forgotten your wounds. It's time to let God love you more intimately than ever before. It's time to heal and rebuild. God makes everything broken beautiful.

Myth #2: Prioritizing time to rest is a luxury I don't have. Caring for my needs is selfish.

The Truth: The more I am able to enjoy rest, the more others will see God's life in me. When my soul is at rest, I am free to please God right where I am.

Rest sounds inactive, doesn't it? I was surprised to find that rest is one of only three ambitions that God explicitly calls out in the Bible. The other two are preaching the gospel and pleasing God (Romans 15:20, 2 Corinthians 5:9). Our marching orders: Quiet rest is equally as important as preaching the gospel and pleasing God.

Myth #3: Feeling troubled or worried is wrong. God doesn't want me to complain.

The Truth: Jesus understands and says, "Come to me, weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28, NIV).

Jesus does not say "Come to me happy, cheerful and strong. Keep your doubts or troubles far away. Don't bother me." Jesus longs to care for us. But, how can he comfort us if we don't express our fears and worries to him? We often hesitate to tell God our troubles. Yet we can only comfort others with the comfort we first receive ourselves from God (2 Corinthians 1:4)!



This happened to me. Writing my book *Finding Spiritual Whitespace* re-ignited painful childhood memories. I began reliving all the feelings attached to emotional trauma.

Two years later, after recovering from panic attacks doing PTSD therapy and publishing my book, CH(CPT) Robert Sterling invited me to lead a Spiritual Whitespace retreat for the military officers and spouses serving in Kentucky's Fort Campbell Warrior Transition Battalion.

These officers succeeded in their service to our country because of their strength and ability to perform under unspeakable pressure—leading their units with excellence, order and control.

They've been in combat themselves and relive it through the angry or depressed soldiers they care for 24/7, guiding them on recovery's disorienting journey. They're responsible for each soldier's transition back to active duty, or for those irreversibly injured, preparing them to re-enter civilian life.

What can a five-foot-Chinese-American woman with zero combat experience say to these officers?

I challenged them to go on a mission of the soul. To stop. Rest. To connect deeply to God and each other.

As I led everyone through the arc of storytelling, journaling childhood stories, connecting to God through silence on a solo nature walk, prayer, meditation, and visual arts (painting) — people began sharing powerful stories through laughter and tears. Everyone had fun and yet, the stories being painted were deeply personal.

We were no longer talking about rest in a book. We were experiencing rest with each other.

"We are not very different at all," a smiling officer and his wife shared with me during a break.

I led them to explore the same journey God used to transform my heart, what I call "Finding Spiritual Whitespace." It's making time in your heart and schedule to refresh your soul with God. To enjoy activities nurturing rest, customized to your needs. But it requires investigating your story. Just like beautiful art needs blank space to bring out a painting's beauty, our souls need spiritual whitespace.

As leaders, spouses, or parents serving others, we often don't have time to tend to our souls. We know how to pour ourselves out, but struggle to rest and receive. Is God calling you to this mission of soul rest too?

This journey requires vulnerability. To share your story. To be known.

To say no. Letting things fall off the plate—and maybe break—so God can heal and create something new. Letting go of burdens we're never meant to carry. We all carry wounds. But, there comes a time when it takes more faith to be broken with Jesus than to stay strong enough to stop it from happening.

Faith calls us to stop hiding and become God's artwork. Paul tells us, "For we are God's *poema* ('works of art'), created in Christ Jesus to do good works" (Ephesians 2:10, NIV).

What if we prioritized ourselves and our families as God's artwork rather than projects to manage?

The officers and spouses I met did not retreat from their soul-care mission. God moved in amazing ways. Lives changed, marriages strengthened, and we came away renewed in ways we'll never forget because stories were shared.

We leaders often cope with stress by trying to survive our wounding rather than allow God to heal and refresh us to fully live. God doesn't want us to simply survive.

God's mission field, after all, is your heart and mine. ✝️

About Bonnie

Author of "Finding Spiritual Whitespace: Awakening Your Soul to Rest," Bonnie's writing has appeared in numerous publications. A UCLA graduate, missionary, ministry entrepreneur and Silicon Valley high-tech professional, she lives in California with her husband and two sons. For more info on Bonnie, go to ocfusa.org/ocfresources/command-magazine/seen-command

OCF Council elections open through 30 Sept.

OCF Council elections for the Class of 2018 start 1 September. Eligible OCF members are encouraged to vote in the election running through 30 September. Vote for as many as five candidates at <http://voting.ocfusa.org>. Members who cannot/prefer not to vote online can contact Susan Wallis at the OCF home office for a hard copy ballot—800-424-1984 or susan.wallis@ocfusa.org.

LTC(P) Steve Berger, USA

Education: University of Illinois, 1993, General Engineering; Cameron University, 2000, Master's, Business Administration

Present Assignment: Chief of Operations, Joint Intelligence Center Central, United States Central Command

Ministry Involvement: OCF member since 1992; attended winter Rocky Mountain High; Fort Stewart local leader, 1995-1996; Bible studies: Fort Knox, Fort Benning, Fort Huachuca, Quantico, Fort Leavenworth, Norfolk and Fort Lewis. During my Joint Command Warfighting School at Norfolk my wife and I were inspired by the steadfastness of the Bible study that held a special session to prayerfully consider each and every OCF board nomination; Ramstein South Chapel Advisory Council vice-president, 1999-2000; "2:42 On the Move" Tampa Homeless Ministry.

Personal Testimony: I became a Christian in 1986 at a church retreat. Influenced by the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, I learned about a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. I have continued to grow in Christ and now am a husband and father of three girls, which comes with an understanding that it is now my role to help them grow in Christ. This past year, our family lived in Israel and the experience made the Bible come alive by allowing us to see and experience where the events took place.

What is the biggest challenge you see currently facing OCF right now? The future of OCF relies on the ministry reaching cadets and company grade officers and the role of the small neighborhood study. As a single lieutenant, OCF helped me as



an officer as I was welcomed into a company grade home Bible study. OCF also has to continue to maintain a strong and consistent presence at all of our TRADOC installations. OCF always provided a quick way to integrate into a training installation and this is a great opportunity to reach our officers.

Nominated by: COL John Haddick, USA (Ret.); COL Laurence Mixon, USA; Col Larry Simpson, USAF (Ret.); CH(LTC) Michael Wood, USA (Ret.)

RADM Rick Breckenridge, USN

Education: USNA, BS Aerospace Engineering, 1982; Naval Postgraduate School, MS Engineering Acoustics, MS Electrical Engineering

Present Assignment: Director, Warfare Integration, OPNAV, Washington, DC

Ministry Involvement: OCF member since 1978, OCF Council member, attended both OCF conference centers; supports chapel/chaplain, adult Sunday school teacher; involved in local groups, twice OCF Council or nonprofit ministry board experience, evangelizes and disciples.

Personal Testimony: Through the encouragement of two roommates at USNA, I read through the New Testament and learned of my separation from God, and the great lengths He went to in restoring our broken relationship. I learned how to follow Jesus Christ through OCF's ministry at the academy.

What is the biggest challenge you see currently facing OCF right now? Leadership development: by maturing the OCF ministry model to more effectively equip



Christian officers to serve others in a way that honors God.

Nominated by: CPT Alysa Angel, USA; LT Nate Barnes, USCG; CAPT Jamie Vandiver, USN (Ret.); Maj Kate Veseth, USAF; LTC Colin Wooten, USA

CH(Lt Col) Alan Chouest, USAF

Education: Southeastern University, BA Ministry, 1987; Asbury Theological Seminary, M.Div. Theology, 1992; Asbury Theological Seminary, MA Counseling, 1993; Air Command and Staff College, MAS Military Operational Art and Science, 2008.

Present Assignment: Deputy Command Chaplain, PACAF

Ministry Involvement: OCF member since 2002, attended OCF's Spring Canyon conference center; sponsoring chaplain Maxwell AFB (2001-04), USAFA (2004-07), FE Warren AFB (2010-13); supports chapel/chaplain; evangelizes and disciples.

Personal Testimony: I grew up in a military home. At 16 I totally surrendered my life to Jesus Christ and immediately sensed the call to ministry. After college and within the first year of full-time ministry, my wife and I both acquired the burden and call to pursue the military chaplaincy. We're humbled and honored to serve our God and great nation these past 19 years.

What is the biggest challenge you see currently facing OCF right now? Staying true to OCF's core doctrine. While we want to stay culturally relevant within the social structure of the military, we must remain true to our core doctrines and always allow the Holy Spirit to empower and enable us to stay passionate about the OCF burden



and calling.

Nominated by: Col James Martin, USAF (Ret.); Capt Clare Reynolds, USAF; LCDR Chad Tidwell, USN

Lt Col Jupe Etheridge, USAF

Education: Troy University, 1994, MS Biology; Air Force Institute of Technology, 2005, MS Leadership & Management; Air War College, 2015, MA Military Leadership and Global Security.

Present Assignment: HQ USAF, Pentagon

Ministry Involvement: OCF member since 2009,

discussion group leader, Air War College Maxwell, 2015; OCF Bible study home host, Okinawa, Japan 2012-13; men's ministry Counselor, Assist Crisis Pregnancy Center, Annandale VA, 2014; Adult Sunday school teacher, 2002-05, 2011-13; led/hosted couples' and men's discipleship studies/men's accountability groups since 2004.

Personal Testimony: Since my adult conversion in 1992, my faith develops as I come to better know Christ. Thanks to my wonderful wife, strong Christian men, good churches, and the faithful Holy Spirit leading me through his Word, I am learning to not just believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, but to follow Him with all my heart, soul, mind and strength.

What is the biggest challenge you see currently facing OCF right now? The challenge for OCF is the same as the challenge of all believers in Christ today—are we ready and equipped to answer Paul's command in Philippians 1 to live in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, and "not only believe in Him but also suffer for His sake?" From our strongest chaplains to our newest young leaders, we must be "with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel."

Nominated by: Lt Col Scott Hoffman, USAF; Col (Sel) Richard Steele, USAF; Col Houston Waring, USAF (Ret.)

COL Rich Goldsmith, USA (Ret.)

Education: USMA, BS Engineering, 1963;

Tulane, MBA(ORSA), 1972

Present Assignment: Retired

Ministry Involvement: OCF member since 1974, attended both OCF conference centers numerous times; current OCF Council member and governance committee chairman; have been a participant, founder or leader at every station since 1972; OCF team leader, Madison/Huntsville/Redstone Arsenal, AL; OCF group leader, numerous locations; OCF area coordinator, Hampton Roads, VA, and Carlisle, PA; chapel council VP at Redstone Arsenal Chapel, AL; led about 6 to Christ and mentored 15.

Personal Testimony: Sue and I became believers in 1972. Up until then we were, at best, deists. Things were fine career-wise, but at home Sue was asking questions I could not answer. They were the eternal questions like, "Why are we here? Where did we come from? What is our purpose in life?" We found the answers in Jesus through a local church ministry. It changed everything!

What is the biggest challenge you see currently facing OCF right now? OCF and other Christian organizations face many challenges, but I believe the biggest is the growing anti-Christian trend in the culture and in the armed forces. Military believers will be tempted to go underground to protect their careers thus muting their ability to share the Good News with those who need most to hear it.

Nominated by: COL Rob Jassey, USA (Ret.); LTC Joe Orosz, USA (Ret.); LCDR Chad Tidwell, USN; CAPT Jamie Vandiver, USN (Ret.)

MAJ David Guida, USA

Education: Concordia College, Bachelor's degree Psychology & English Literature, 1998; Florida Institute of Technology, Master's Logistics Management, 2010

Present Assignment: Joint Staff Logistics Directorate (J4), the Pentagon.

Ministry Involvement: OCF member since 2010, visited Spring Canyon numerous times; attended Anchor Points, son volunteered this summer at WSS; attended/



leader of OCF Bible study at the Pentagon; OCF POC for Pentagon area; my children and I play instruments and sing with the worship team at church near Burke, VA; regular mentor to Christians in uniform; director of the Armed Forces Skeet Association (501-C19).

Personal Testimony:

Although I was raised in the church, my faith and obedience ebbed and flowed throughout my youth. On my third deployment to Iraq I participated in several ministry events and Bible studies. It was on this deployment that I really began to understand the sacrifice Jesus Christ made for me, and upon return I was re-baptized and born again.

What is the biggest challenge you see currently facing OCF right now? The biggest challenge facing OCF is a lack of exposure. OCF is an organization that should be on the lips of Christians throughout the military. However, when I ask other service members about OCF, most haven't heard of it. I think OCF does a fantastic job in the academies but we miss the opportunity to reach fellow Christians for the majority of our time in the military. We need to continue to grow and keep bringing light into darkness.

Nominated by: Col Mandy Birch, USAFR; Col Scott Fisher, USAF; Col Bill Hudspeth, USAF (Ret.); LTC Tom Schmidt, USA (Ret.); COL Mike Tesdahl, USA (Ret.)

MAJ Kwenton Kuhlman, USA

Education: USMA, International Relations degree, 1999; Kings College, London, England, Defense Studies Master's, 2010; Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies, International Public Policy Master's, 2011.

Present Assignment: Assistant G3/5, NATO HQ, Spain

Ministry Involvement:

OCF member since 1999; attended Anchor Points, Spring Canyon, 2013; senior military POC Fort Campbell,



Continued on next page →

KY; helped lead a Bible study while not deployed; wife led a women's study while I was deployed; led/hosted home Bible study in Fort Leavenworth, KS, while attending the Joint Services Advanced Command and Staff College, England, and while attending graduate school, Washington, DC; in stateside assignments we have attended chapel when my unit chaplain preaches to support him. We do not have local access to a base with a chapel/chaplain in Spain; plan to start a small group study for Americans this fall; currently involved with our local church's small group study and sharing Christ with teenagers in my Sunday school class.

Personal Testimony: My parents taught us about Christ as children and I attended church weekly growing up. I accepted Christ as my Savior at 13. At USMA, I taught kindergarten Sunday school and led God's Gang youth groups. I was active in OCF and BSU at USMA. My wife, Summer, and I led a youth group at Fort Bragg. We are active in a local church, both teaching Sunday school classes in Spain.

What is the biggest challenge you see currently facing OCF right now? The biggest challenge is reaching a military that is tired from years of war. Little time between back-to-back deployments has left some unwilling to take on additional activities, including attending studies and taking on leadership roles. As our military resets, it will be important to reset the spiritual balance in the lives of our service men/women. OCF has a huge role to play in strengthening the spiritual vitality and accountability of leaders across the military.

Nominated by: CAPT Chris Blake, USN (Ret.); COL Jackie Kem, USA (Ret.); COL Mike Tesdahl, USA (Ret.)

Col Mike Moyles, USAF

Education: University of Portland, Portland, OR, BS Computer Science, 1994; Webster University, St. Louis, MO, MA Information Resources Management; Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, CA, MS Space Systems Engineering; Biola University, La Mirada, CA, MA, Christian Apologetics; Air War College, Maxwell AFB, AL, MA National Security Studies

Present Assignment: Chief, Information

Technology Services Division, US Northern Command (USNORTHCOM/J66), Peterson AFB, CO.

Ministry Involvement: OCF member since 2000, OCF lay leader, Air War College, Maxwell AFB and Randolph AFB; supported chaplain ministries through OCF and a regular supporter of chapel lunches, deployed spouses' dinners, and squadron chaplain services during multiple commands; taught Sunday school/led small groups for 13 of the last 15 years; children's ministry, AWANA, youth



minister; speak/teach on apologetics-related topics; active blog, answering Christian doctrine and apologetics questions; equipping other believers to effectively articulate what they believe and why they believe it, and help them overcome basic objections to the Christian faith; church planning and constitution committee, 2006-08; many church- and non-church affiliated local groups involvement, including local chapters of the American Cancer Society and Cancer Support Groups; public speaking/teaching at Kiwanis, Rotary, local small-business/brown-bag lunches, fundraisers, high schools, and volunteer instruction at high school JROTC.

Personal Testimony: I was raised in a Christian home, but strayed in college. Two wonderful men—both OCF leaders—brought me back to Christ, after which I fell in love with not only Jesus, but also the woman who is now my wife. I have been devoted to both ever since, and hope to spend my life serving God and my family.

What is the biggest challenge you see currently facing OCF right now? Christian servicemen and women face a military that is more and more hostile to the tenets of the Christian faith, from religious expressions in the workplace to gender identity issues. OCF must remain relevant and value-added, helping officers navigate these difficult issues and remain biblically grounded in their faith, equipping them to remain beacons of light to share the gospel of Christ to the world.

Nominated by: Lt Col Matt Gaines, USAF; Lt Col Scott Hoffman, USAF; Col Houston Waring, USAF (Ret.); COL Aaron Zook, USA (Ret.)

CH(MAJ) Anthony Randall, USA

Education: USMA, BS Environmental Studies, 1996; Denver Seminary, M.Div, 2006; Army Command and General Staff College, 2013 graduate; ACS student, Candler School of Theology, Th.M. Ethics and Moral Leadership, May 2016



Present Assignment: Attending Army's Advanced Civil Schooling for Master's to assume the MCOE Fort Benning Ethics Instructor position, May 2016.

Ministry Involvement: OCF member since 1997, attended both OCF conference centers, guest speaker at Spring Canyon's Winter Sports Retreat, 2012; Spring Canyon's Summer Celebration, 2014; speaker/mentor RMH Veteran's Retreat, 2014 and 2015; senior pastor, Crossroads Chapel, Fort Benning, GA; executive board member, Ben A. Stevenson Foundation, a Gold Star family foundation providing scholarships for children seeking K-12 private school education; executive mentor/leadership coach, Pittsburgh Pirates' executives, coordinators and coaches at its major and minor league affiliates; chaplain/pastoral care to players and staff; Little League baseball coach; baptized 10, dedicated one child, led 6 people to Christ (Jan-Jun 2015); weekly/bi-monthly discipling of 13 military and civilian personnel.

Personal Testimony: My father led me to Christ when I was 8 and I "grew up in the church." However, I was a nominal Christian at best at USMA, making bad decisions, and going my own way. God's calling and my wife's influence radically transformed my life from 1997-1999. I received my call to full-time ministry in 2002, as a chaplain since 2006.

What is the biggest challenge you see currently facing OCF right now? A recent chapel survey noted greater than 30% of attendees are "unchurched," meaning they have never attended church at all or in the last five years. This mirrors the percentage of the civilian population, especially under 30, affiliating themselves as "Nones/NRA." The military is a microcosm of society. OCF will thrive with an evangelistic approach to this growing population through Scrip-

tural truth, discipleship, servant leadership opportunities, and leadership development teaching the practice of faith in private and public forums.

Nominated by: LTC David Bowlus, USA; CH(COL) Marc Gauthier, USA; LTC Jeffrey Paine, USA; MAJ Mark Winton, USA

MAJ Stephen T. Schmidt, USA

Education: University of Idaho, BS Family and Consumer Sciences, 1999; University of Idaho, MS Family and Consumer Sciences, 2001.



Present Assignment: Department of the Army G3/5/7 at the Pentagon,

Ministry Involvement: OCF member since 2014, attended Leavenworth Week, Spring Canyon, 2015; OCF discipleship breakfast; Fort Leavenworth mentorship program; Bible study leader, neighborhood Bible study area coordinator, Fort Leavenworth, KS; children's Sunday school teacher.

Personal Testimony: I attended church off and on throughout my life and was baptized in 2007, but lacked a relationship or mentorship to deepen my relationship with Christ. However, after a challenging deployment to Afghanistan, I began to fully understand the sacrifice that Christ made for me and was born again, fully dedicating my life to my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

What is the biggest challenge you see currently facing OCF right now? Encouraging and equipping military officers to boldly stand for Christ and minister effectively in a military society that presents increasing challenges to open ministry. We must remain clear and focused on effective support to the chaplaincy and Scripture-centered programs that serve to equip military personnel with the full armor of God integrating faith and the military profession. Finally, we must continually strive to increase exposure across the military ensuring maximum opportunity to strengthen Christian military officers at every opportunity.

Nominated by: LTC James Cameron, USA; LTC Vaughn Hathaway, USA; LCDR Jesse Maynor, USNA; LTC Tim Stiansen, USA (Ret.)

COL Alicia Smith, USA

Education: North Carolina State University, BS zoology and pre-vet medicine, 1989; University of Alabama, MS Biology, 1999; Industrial College of the Armed Forces, MS National Resource Strategy, 2010; currently: Emergency Management doctoral program, Jacksonville State University, AL.



Present Assignment: Defense Threat Reduction Agency

Ministry Involvement: OCF member since 2010, attended both OCF conference centers, Fort McNair OCF Bible study, Washington DC; eight-year board member, private youth camp; alumni association committee chair; one-year fill-in on OCF Council; 20 years youth ministry, including currently over 8 years as youth group leader; evangelizing and discipling.

Personal Testimony: I was saved following a prayer meeting led by my great-grandfather and baptized that same week. My mother died young and my father struggled with her loss but my grandparents' faith impacted me for life. After marrying, my husband and I agreed to join the Lutheran Church together to ensure our children were raised in a Christian home.

What is the biggest challenge you see currently facing OCF right now? I believe the biggest challenge for OCF is in finding a relationship-building model that meets the needs of the modern military while remaining biblically sound. The social networking and gaming tends to fill the void people feel instead of filling it with seeking Christ through the Word, prayer and other Christian friendships and accountability partners.

Nominated by: CPT Alysa Angel, USA; (CH)MAJ Mark Benz, USA (Ret.); Col Bill Hudspeth, USAF (Ret.)

Maj Matt Uber, USAF

Education: University of Pittsburgh, Nursing Degree, 1997; Uniformed Services University, Nurse Anesthetist, 2008.

Present Assignment: Special Operations Surgical Team, AFSOC, Hurlburt Field, FL.

Ministry Involvement: OCF member since 1997, attended both OCF conference centers, OCF Bible study host/leader or co-leader: Hurlburt Field, FL, Dyess AFB, Landstuhl, Germany, Wright Patterson AFB, Andrews AFB; OCF Regional Link up Rep, Landstuhl, Germany; junior/senior high teacher at White Sulphur Springs, PYOC, Military Marriage seminars coordinator, music ministry for deployed chaplain (AFG); Sunday school, AWANA leader; board member for 40L homeschooling phonics program; Hurlburt Dive Club member; PYOC youth discipleship, led co-worker to Christ on last deployment, actively discipling him, led team Bible study while deployed.



Personal Testimony: Raised in a Christian home and accepted the Lord as a child. Real relationship with Christ began in high school when on boys' staff at White Sulphur Springs. Continued to grow in my faith through college and summers spent on senior staff at WSS. Since entering active duty, involvement in OCF central to Christian growth.

What is the biggest challenge you see currently facing OCF right now? The decentralization of base life in the military community and a push to reflect our civilian culture have led to a loss of the Christian military culture and identity. Many Christians in the military have ceased to see their unique calling and have compartmentalized religion out of their professional military experience. Never has the need for the discipleship ministry of OCF been more acute to unify and embolden military Christians as ambassadors for Christ in uniform.

Nominated by: Lt Col Jon Anderson, USAF (Ret.); Col Cliff Henning Jr., USAF (Ret.); Lt Col Gregg Jerome, USAF

How to vote

Council voting will take place online at <http://voting.ocfusa.org>. If you have any questions, problems logging in, or need to verify your correct email address, contact Susan Wallis at 800-424-1984 or susan.wallis@ocfusa.org.



Quantico OCF photo



Hannah Jerome photo



Fort Drum OCF photo

Quantico OCF—Virginia

Top: *Dynamic community*—OCFs vision is about Christian military leaders integrating their faith and profession to passionately serve God in their calling. This Quantico OCF group exemplifies the pursuit of biblical truths that anchor Christian military leaders in their personal, family, and professional relationships and activities.

Naples—Italy

Above Left: *Spanning the globe*—The local fellowship is the heart of the OCF ministry. With over 350 small groups meeting worldwide,

this group meeting in the home of CAPT Cartus and Cathy Thornton, CHC, USN, exemplifies the opportunities for Bible study, prayer and encouragement among Christians throughout the military society.

Fort Drum—New York

Above Right: *Uniting for Fellowship*—This OCF small group illustrates OCF's Spiritual Pillar of authentic biblical fellowship with the Lord and each other. The inevitable goal: visible, dynamic works of service and witness that glorify God throughout the military society.



Mark Collier, Norwich University Office of Communications photo



Melina D Photography/Melina Dellamargio photo



1LT Jeremy Byram, USA, photo

Mastriano book award—Vermont

Top: *Book award*—COL Douglas Mastriano, USA, (right), received the William E. Colby Award earlier this year for his book about Sergeant Alvin York, a World War I hero and Medal of Honor recipient. *Alvin York: A New Biography of the Hero of the Argonne* earned Mastriano three other awards as well. Mastriano is also a co-founder of an organization that uncovered artifacts in France supporting the exact battlefield site of York's heroism. Nearly 1,000 relics were given to the U.S. Army Center of Military History.

American Legion Post named for John Ford—Arizona

Above Left: *Honoring a legacy*—Sherry Ford, widow of Col John Ford, USAF (Ret.), attended the official ceremony and swearing in of Arizona's newest American Legion Post named in honor of her late hus-

band. Stan Kobojek (right), who served with Col Ford in Vietnam, was instrumental in the establishment and naming of Arrowhead/John E. Ford III American Legion Post 144, which honors Col Ford's life and military service.

Wooten change of command ceremony—Colorado

Above Right: *Change of command*—LTC Colin Wooten, USA, gathers with his family after the ceremony where he relinquished command of Fort Carson, Colorado's 4th Squadron, 10th United States Cavalry Regiment.

Send us your #MinistryInAction group photo

For consideration in *COMMAND* magazine or OCF Facebook, send your **high-resolution photo** to Managing Editor Karen Fliedner: karen.fliedner@ocfusa.org.

Leadership Moments

Dealing with discouragement

And he asked that he might die, saying, "It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life, for I am no better than my fathers" (1 Kings 19:4, ESV).

Discouragement. Is there anything worse? Discouragement can suck the life out of momentum and halt progress. Oftentimes following life's victories, discouragement and compromise can ensue. The prophet Elijah experienced a decisive victory over Ahab's Baal prophets (1 Kings 18:16—40). But on the heels of victory, fear and discouragement from a well-timed threat had Elijah throwing it in reverse and fleeing for his life into the desert. Discouraged and desirous of death, he abandoned his Helper. He felt alone and his judgment was clouded—which can happen to us if we mishandle and allow discouragement to take us off task.

Can you recall a situation when you reacted to it with raw, fearful emotion rather than by seeking God's comfort? Isolation is often the enemy of a courageous response. Not even the strongest earthquake will free us from its grip. Discouragement can place us at the opposite end of God's intention, requiring Him to correct us, turn us around, and put us back on His course. After God revealed Himself to Elijah with a question, "What are you doing here?" God told him to go back the way he came.

Sometimes we can feel that we have had enough. If God has called us to a task, He is the one to determine when He is done using us. Discouragement will be there despite the truth. Though Elijah felt alone—he was not! He did not know the truth of God's plan. Don't allow threats or the appearance of being the only one interested in what God is working halt your forward momentum and progress.

Points to Ponder

→ Recognize that believers can and do experience spiritual highs and lows. Avoid course redirection, especially when God mapped the course.

→ Pray—ask God's help in seeing beyond the range of natural thinking, limited perspective, and dulled spiritual insight.

→ Be open to the possibility that God reveals Himself in unexpected ways and sometimes through a "gentle whisper."

—By Colonel Larry and Bobbie Simpson, USAF (Ret.)

More resources to combat uncertainty on ocfusa.org

→ **Spiritual Battle Plans for Spiritually Dry Times:** www.ocfusa.org/articles/spiritual-battle-plans/

→ **The Power of Prayer:** www.ocfusa.org/articles/power-prayer/

→ **Walking in the Train of His Triumph:** www.ocfusa.org/articles/walking-train-his-triumph/



Lola Deckard photo

Jim Hocker (right, in blue jeans) and 2LT Zack Steelman, USA, (center, in red) share opportunities in OCF and Valor with CST cadets who attended the voluntary chapel services—often packed to standing-room only.

OCF and Valor partner in U.S. Army Cadet summer training ministry

This summer Fort Knox, Kentucky, hosted the Army's largest leader development course for approximately 8,900 Army Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) cadets and 4,400 staff and cadre in support of Cadet Summer Training (CST).

With eighty percent of the Army's future commissioned officers produced through the ROTC program, OCF has partnered with Valor in this strategic outreach ministry that includes voluntary opportunities for cadets to participate in small group Bible studies in conjunction with scheduled cadet worship services.

The local Fort Knox Chapel Bible study of OCF and Navigator members, and local area Christian leaders, assisted with conducting Bible studies during CST. They also met with chaplain candidates and shared training resources available for partnering with these future chaplains preparing to enter active duty.

The volunteers, several of whom traveled over an hour to be a part of the ministry efforts, were comprised of both active duty soldiers and retirees in their early eighties. The team's elder statesman at 82, LTC Dan Dantzer, USAR (Ret.), emulates Psalm 92:14 (NKJV): "They shall still bear fruit in old age; they shall be fresh and flourishing." During one of the summer's first Bible studies, the former OCF local leader at Fort Knox led a cadet to Christ, which reinforces the Lord's desire for Christians to be fruitful and productive in the kingdom regardless of age, to bless and mentor our nation's up-and-coming leaders!

It's inspiring to see the value of the OCF/Valor ministry partnership as exemplified by 2LT Zack Steelman, USA. This trophy of God's grace, who hit the ground running as a CST cadre member, totally involved himself in the OCF/Valor ministry as a small group Bible study leader and mentor. 2LT Steelman shared his personal testimony with the chaplain candidates, which included becoming a Christian in college as the result of a fellow cadet being encouraged at CST to start a Valor Bible study on campus.

—Lieutenant Colonel Robert Deckard, United States Army, Retired

Transition Strategies Conference

White Sulphur Springs welcomes transition coaching team this fall

You've been serving your country, and are now preparing to transition from military service to a new season in life. And perhaps that desire is to move from career success to the significance of serving God as a faithful Kingdom finisher.

Ever wonder what's next ahead—and how to go about getting there?

This fall at OCF's White Sulphur Springs conference center, 13-15 November, a transition and executive coaching team called Caleb Challenge will conduct a workshop to help like-minded military officers who are exiting the military to jump-start the essential planning process.

Comprised of five retired senior officers, the team will provide attendees with perspective, experience, and biblically based insight principles to think through, discover, plan and initiate their service to God in accordance with their unique equipping and calling.

Areas that will be explored include: discovering/clarifying personality, strengths, and experience; use of proven tools, models and methods, and building/executing a life plan that can be used indefinitely.

The conference is limited to forty participants and will run from 1800 hours on 13 November to 1300 hours on 15 November. Cost for workshop attendees is \$169 for lodging and six meals (Friday dinner to Sunday lunch), plus a registration fee. Spous-

es (\$100) and children (\$50 each) may accompany and enjoy the conference center and grounds, but there won't be any other programs except the workshop.

Attendees can take advantage of special discounted fees for early registration: by 1 October—\$100; by 31 October—\$125; and by 11 November—\$150. Contact WSS's office for more information.

Conference Details

What is it: Jump-start your planning process with perspective, experience, and biblically based insight principles from retired senior officers of the Caleb Challenge executive coaching team.

When: 13-15 November, 1800 hours Friday-1300 hours Sunday
Where: OCF's White Sulphur Springs Conference Center, Manns Choice, PA

Pricing: Cost is \$169 per attendee, which includes lodging and six meals, plus a registration fee of:

\$100—if by 1 October

\$125—if by 31 October

\$150—if by 11 November

Spouses (\$100) and children (\$50 per child) are welcome to attend, but the conference training is focused on the transitioning military member. No other programs will take place.

Space is limited: There's only space for 40 participants in the workshop. To register or for more info contact, call the WSS office, 814-623-5583, or go to whitesulphursprings.org.

Jim Meredith wins Centurion award

COL Jim and Barbara Meredith, USA (Ret.), were honored in January at the National Association of Evangelicals Chaplains Commission banquet where Jim received the Centurion of the Year award for his support of the chaplaincy and its work among our nation's Armed Forces.

"We are thrilled that some wise people in NAECC have seen fit to honor them this way," said CDR Clay Thomas, USN (Ret.), OCF's White Sulphur Springs Conference Center's former director, "even though Jim and Barb would tell you, 'We've done only what we ought to do.'"

Clay called Jim "a true spiritual pillar in OCF," whose multi-faceted participation in OCF includes starting local fellowships throughout his career, and serving several terms on OCF Council and on OCF's Growing and Building capital campaign. Jim was also on the search team resulting in the acquisition of White Sulphur Springs. The Merediths have also participated in summer programs at both of OCF's conference centers.

Past Centurion of the Year recipients include OCF members such as former Council presidents Clay Buckingham, Grady Jackson and Robert Van Antwerp, and former executive director Bruce Fister.

Make plans now for winter retreats

Now is the time to consider the Christmas gift God has in store for you at either of OCF's conference centers. Come celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ with other military Christians this Christmas in Colorado or in Pennsylvania. Surrounded by the glory of God's creation in winter, you'll be blessed and refreshed as you enjoy fellowship, soul-stirring teaching, and a sleigh-full of activities that include skiing, sledding or sitting in front of a fireplace.

At Spring Canyon

Winter Sports Retreat #1: 19-26 Dec.

Winter Sports Retreat # 2: 27 Dec.-3 Jan.

For more information or to make reservations call: 888.663.1417

At White Sulphur Springs

Winter Retreat #1: 18-22 Dec., Speaker: Pastor Joe Batluck Jr.

Winter Retreat #2: 22-26 Dec., Speaker: CH(COL) Marc Gauthier, USA

Winter Retreat #3: 26-30 Dec., Speaker: VADM Scott Redd, USN (Ret.)

Winter Retreat #4: 30 Dec.-3 Jan., Speaker: Dr. Gary Phillips

For more information: whitesulphursprings.org/winter-retreat

OCF Honor Fund

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.

In Memory of...

Andrew Baer

by Ms. Lauren Armstrong
by H. E. Minor
by Ms. Olga K. Nicholson
by Mr. & Mrs. David Nelson
by Mr. & Mrs. Thomas B. Vaughn
by Mr. & Mrs. Wayne Loehring
by CPT & Mrs. George T. Rabb, USA
by Shane M. McMillen
by LTC & Mrs. Douglas G. Perritt Jr., USA
by COL & Mrs. Robert A. Baer, USA
by Mr. & Mrs. Russell E. Holmes
by Ms. Nancy L. Slack
by Mr. & Mrs. Larry G. Bosetti
by Lt Col & Mrs. William R. Robertson, USAF (Ret.)
by Mr. William E. Todd, II
by Mr. & Mrs. Steward E. Remaly
by Mr. Melvin Baker
by Mr. O. C. Gadecken
by Dr. & Mrs. Arthur C. Wittich
by Ms. Kelly McKone
by Mr. & Mrs. Reggie Ross
by Mr. & Mrs. Robert F. Howe
by Mr. & Mrs. Robert Wilhelm
by Mr. Edward Wilhelm
by Mr. James Brown
by Mr. & Mrs. Michael Fulghan
by CW3 & Mrs. James L. Lance, USA (Ret.)
by Mr. & Mrs. L. W. Banks

by COL & Mrs. James M. Meredith, USA (Ret.)
by Mr. & Mrs. Michael Andersen
by Ms. Lauren E. Williams
by Mr. & Mrs. Michael Stenberg
by Mr. & Mrs. Paul C. Baer
by Mr. & Mrs. Brian R. Gren
by COL & Mrs. George H. Barr, USA (Ret.)
by Mr. Mark Woolley
by Mrs. Christine Albus
by Mr. & Mrs. William S. Brophy
by Mr. & Mrs. Matthew J. Sklerov
by Mr. Matthew M. Bell
by Mr. & Mrs. Rick Power
by Dr. & Mrs. Samuel W. Tate, Maj. USAF (Ret.)
by Ms. Gwendolyn A. Ford
by Mr. & Mrs. Paul E. Wilhelm
by Ms. Eleanor M. Curtin
by Mr. Max W. Knouse
by Lt Col Clifton G. Hertel, USAF (Ret.) & Mrs. Joanne Hagadorn
by LTC & Mrs. Paul W. Robyn, USA (Ret.)
by Mr. & Mrs. D. P. Dilling
by MAJ & Mrs. Michael J. Hall, USA
by LtCol & Mrs. John R. Giltz, USMC
by CH(MAJ) & Mrs. Jerald P. Jacobs, USA
by Mr. & Mrs. Thomas W. Lloyd
by Mr. & Mrs. Joseph L. Wilde
by Ms. Edlynn K. Bruhn
by CAPT & Mrs. Michael D. Hendrickson, USCG
by Mr. & Mrs. David A. Ham
by Ms. Barbara Kiaknoa
by Mr. J. D. Taylor
by COL Patrick Sullivan, USA

Carole Tredinnick

by Mrs. Audrey Webb

Births

Evalyn Charis Beckmann, born 23 August, 2014, daughter of **MAJ Jonathan and Amber Beckmann, USA**, San Antonio, TX.

Esther Joy Holmertz, born 18 July 2015, daughter of **Eric and Amber Holmertz**, Henderson, CO.

Anna Jane Hood, born 5 May 2015, daughter of **LCDR Gordon and Arlene Hood, USCG**, Kodiak, AK.

Taps

CAPT Tom Barry, USN (Ret.), 29 May 2015, husband of **Anna Barry**, Sugar Grove, NC.

CH(Col) Paul Byram, USAF (Ret.), 7 August 2015, husband of **Nancy Byram**, Boerne, TX; father of **Danny Byram**, Evergreen, CO; and grandfather of **1LT Jeremy Byram, USA**, Colorado Springs, CO.

Maj Elizabeth Kealey, USMC, 23 January 2015, daughter of **Christine Kealey-Thompson**, Windemere, FL.

LT Roy E. Seaman, USN
by Mr. & Mrs. Delbert Elliott

LTC Kit J. Valentine, (Ret.), U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
by Mrs. Rebecca Valentine

Velma Thornburg
by Mrs. Miriam L. Thorpe

COL Richard L. Kail, USA (Ret.)
by Mrs. Miriam L. Thorpe

Linda A. "Mom" McKaughan
by Dr. Michael E. McKaughan

Martha Elizabeth "Betsy" Teuton
by LT & Mrs. Orion R. Bloom, USCG

COL & Mrs. George Meaders, USA (Ret.)
by Mr. & Mrs. William R. Burby

Capt Elizabeth R. Kealey, USMC
by Mr. & Mrs. Charles Thompson

Maj Ronald P. Johnson, USMC (Ret.)
by Mrs. Earline Johnson

Art Gustavson
by Mr. & Mrs. Paul L. Gustavson

Lt Col Guy E. Pulliam, USAF
by Mrs. Patricia J. Miller

Walter Bakke
by CAPT & Mrs. George A. Zolla, USNR

Rachel Wade
by Ms. Thelma J. Elgersma

CH(COL) Michael West, USAR (Ret.), 27 December 2014, husband of **Carol West**, Gilbert, AZ

Jean Whipple, 30 April 2014, wife of **Dr. Caryl Whipple**, Wyomissing, PA.

Meaningful ways to participate in OCF

Each summer at OCF's Spring Canyon Conference Center, a group of spouses and children of deployed service members gathers for a week of ministry that focuses on refreshing their weary bodies and spirits. For these home front heroes, the fear and uncertainty of military life with its multiple deployments can feel overwhelming. The OCF conference center ministry at both Spring Canyon and White Sulphur provides people with precious times of renewal, connection and encouragement.

Thanks to you and many others, OCF is able to provide these spiritual depots in an increasingly post-Christian world. Never before has it been so important that we all join together in unity to fulfill our God-appointed mission within military society.

But it's not just OCF staff members that "do ministry." It is you and the more than 17,000 fellow members of OCF, who as representatives of the body of Christ in the military, are called by Him to serve with the "gifts that differ according to the grace given us."

There are several meaningful ways you can participate in God's work through OCF:

Join. Prayerfully consider your part in this dynamic movement where life-changing ministry eternally impacts others for Christ. In addition to conference center activities, Bible studies, discipleship and mentoring, outreach to ROTC and service academies' cadets and mids, mission trips, and marriage and family workshops are just a few ministry efforts geared toward serving and leading others in Christ's name within military society.

Pray. From its inception, OCF has emphasized the importance of members who recognize their dependence upon God through prayer. Your fervent prayer support for OCF is powerful, effective and greatly appreciated. Submit your personal supplications by contacting the home office or at the OCF website. Join in with our network of over 400 OCF prayer warriors who lift up others through the monthly prayer guide, *Power in Prayer*.

Lead. OCF motivates, equips and supports its members to lead dynamic, Christ-centered ministries of outreach and service in military society. To confidently un-

dertake your calling, there are many Christian leadership resources available at the OCF website.

Volunteer. OCF is a lay-led movement, not a staff-directed organization. In addition to praying and leading you can make a donation of your time and talents in service projects at OCF's conference centers. You can also volunteer to help and support local OCF field staff representative at many military locations.

Contribute financially. You can give a gift online through our secure web page to support vital home office operations, field and conference center ministries, or the exciting Growing and Building capital campaign. And you can also contribute through workplace giving. For federal workers, participate in the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) with your gift through payroll deduction (OCF's CFC number: 10531).

Shopping online at Amazon? Through AmazonSmile select OCF before you start shopping and you automatically support OCF at no cost to you. You can also contribute with a purchase from our Amazon Wish list found on the OCF website. Your purchase from that list of items used in OCF's daily operations is a supplemental way to directly support the ministry.

Please take prayerful inventory of your gifting to consider your part in God's Kingdom work through OCF. As the Holy Spirit leads you, thank Him today for the measure of faith He has assigned you. Then use your gifts to help OCF be a steady shining light for Jesus in an uncertain and ever-darkening world. ✝



CHRIS BLAKE

Director of Ministry Advancement

Ways to get involved

Pray.
Donate.
Join OCF.
Lead.
Volunteer.

To make a donation:
www.ocfusa.org/donate

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Pray. Join. Donate. Volunteer. Lead.

Take a look at the logos for the different OCF programs and venues shown below. Thanks to you, OCF is able to provide these spiritual depots in an increasingly post-Christian world. Never before has it been so important that we all join together in unity to fulfill our God-appointed mission within military society. It's not just OCF staff members that "do ministry." It is you and the more than 17,000 fellow members of OCF, who are called by Him to serve with the "gifts that differ according to the grace given us."

The ways to participate in OCF are plenty. How will you give back?



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