

What Works for New Officers?
TEN HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE SECOND LIEUTENANTS AND ENSIGNS
by Lieutenant Colonel J. Randy Carey, USA (Ret.)

Never compromise on God's standards as you fulfill your role as a leader. Subordinates will often forget what you say, but they will never forget what you do and how you do it. As you develop your leadership skills and responsibilities, consider making the following habits a part of your daily routine:

1. Seek **FELLOWSHIP** with other Christians. Without fellowship you become a lone ranger and are in danger of becoming extinct. Your light will go out. Seek a local OCF representative. (See your chaplain's bulletin board.)
TIP: Before you head to your first assignment, call OCF at 1-800-424-1984 or access the Internet (www.ocfusa.org) so you can contact an officer who is an OCF member where you are going.
2. Do not forsake **ACCOUNTABILITY**. You are known by the company you keep. Find a brother or sister in Christ and keep each other walking the talk. Go to your chaplain and ask where the Bible studies are being held.
TIP: Seek out someone who will hold you accountable.
3. Decide now **WHOM YOU WILL SERVE** (Josh. 24:15). Will it be the Lord or yourself? Why are you in the military? Have you ever thought of yourself as a highly paid missionary?
TIP: Be the thermostat and not the thermometer. Effect your environment—don't let it affect you.
4. If you get to your unit and can't find a **BIBLE STUDY**, start one! See whom the Lord sends your way. Get support from your chaplains. Ask for their advice; they may even be able to buy study guides for your group. Start with an interesting study in which all can participate, like Luke or Philippians. Ask others for help. Make it fun, avoid controversial issues, and focus on simple truths for effective Christian living. Include prayer and praise.
TIP: You can facilitate a study with those who are of higher rank than you. Just stay disciplined, and keep it professional (2 Tim 3:16, 17).
5. Set a **GOOD EXAMPLE** morally. Live in a way that is right. Treat people fairly, give respect to everyone, and listen to all ranks carefully.
TIP: Improper language doesn't cut it. What we say is what we are. Jesus talked about this in Matthew 12:34-37. Unless someone holds you accountable, you will pick up words you wish you hadn't.
6. As a leader, **PRAY DAILY**, especially for wisdom (Phil. 4:6,7). Often we pray in a reactive sense instead of a preparatory sense. It doesn't have to be formal or even done in private. Let God speak to you, cry out to Him, be honest, admit weakness, and plead for help (1 Thess. 5:17, Rom. 8:26).
TIP: Set aside specific time to pray for coworkers, commanders, subordinates, and issues.
7. **KNOW** and **DO** your job well. Only then will you earn the respect of your peers and the right to be heard (Col. 3:23, 24). Be reliable and take the initiative when opportunity arises.
TIP: Avoid complaining. A common tendency in any workplace is to complain. Do your job as unto the Lord (Phil. 2:14, 4:11).
8. Decide now what kind of **SPIRITUAL COMMITMENT** you will require of a future mate. Will he or she have the same vision for ministry as you? After coming to know Christ, choosing a mate is the most important decision you will ever make.
TIP: Trust God that He will give you the right mate. Just because you find a Christian doesn't necessarily mean he/she will be like-minded or share the same vision for the Lord that you have (2 Cor. 6:14).

9. Watch your **ENTERTAINMENT** choices (Col. 3:2). The purpose of life is not to “get stuff and have fun.” It is rather to serve Christ. We need godly Christian men and women serving in our Armed Forces.

***TIP:** Don't feed your face until you feed your soul. God's Word will kindle a prayer response (Acts 17:11).*

10. If all else fails, rest in the knowledge that **GOD IS FAITHFUL**. Think of all the times when He has carried you through a situation and you didn't realize it until later.

***TIP:** In faith you will learn to be certain of what you do not see. Trust Him. Rely on Him (Phil. 4:4, Heb. 4:1-3).*

SPIRITUAL SUCCESS AT YOUR FIRST DUTY STATION

1. Have everyone in your Bible study write out his or her testimony. Share one with the group each week.
2. Understand what OCF is all about. Promote the encouragement that can be gained from a group coming together to worship Almighty God.
3. Participate in OCF retreats and conferences. White Sulphur Springs and Spring Canyon offer continuous programs such as retreats, family events, and Rocky Mountain High.
4. Use OCF as a meeting place to network with Christians on your base, in your unit, on your ship. Post updates on the Internet.
5. Consider journaling your walk with God. Include prayer requests and answers.
6. Remember that God selected you to serve in the exact position you are in so that you might learn to speak the military “language” to communicate about God and His love for those in the service. You may be the only person to whom a soldier or sailor will listen to about Christ.
7. Be the “aroma of Christ” (2 Cor. 2:14-6). Never do anything to cover up that aroma in an effort not to offend anyone. Ultimately, you will be the fragrance of life to those who are being saved.
8. Develop healthy relationships. Seek out like-minded Christians and participate in a chapel, a church congregation, a Bible study, or para-church organization.
9. Read the Bible and pray daily if possible. Do it like Physical Training. Find a prayer partner to get with every week.
10. When you are given the opportunity to talk to your platoon/unit, tell them who you are and include in a matter of fact way that you are a Christian. Do not preach to them; you are not paid to do that. Just inform them of the “stuff” that helps you make decisions.
11. Be physically fit and try to set the standard in military bearing and professionalism. Remember God will never give you a mission you can't handle. Like Joshua, be strong and courageous, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go (Josh. 1:9).

BIO: LTC Randy Carey USA (Ret.) has a passion to see young officers get hooked up with OCF. His last active duty assignment was at Wheaton College, preparing young men and women to become competent leaders in today's military. Randy is now Midwest Regional Director for Project MedSend, a Christian organization that offers educational loan repayment grants to health care professionals, freeing them for service in medical missions. His best friend and wife Beth, and their three boys, Ryan, Tyler and Max live in Wheaton, IL.