

Christian perspectives on life in the military

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How's your light shining?

OCF's Spiritual Pillars help keep our spiritual lights lit, serving as headlamps to illuminate the pathways of our programs and actions with Christ's light brightly burning.

The Christ-centered alpha male

There are really three areas the alpha male has to address if he is to channel the positive aspects of his personality—intelligence, resourcefulness, resilience and reliance

What would Mary Poppins say?

Believe it or not, the classic Disney tale has wonderful insight on nurturing a healthy chain of command for families.

Leadership

Integrating faith and profession



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How's your light shining?

OCF's Spiritual Pillars help keep our spiritual lights brightly burning

With spring's arrival on the horizon, like many others I'm thinking about warmer days and summer. One of my fondest summer memories was ascending a "14er" while participating in Rocky Mountain High, the outdoor leadership program at OCF's Spring Canyon Conference Center.



DAVID WARNER
Executive Director

To accomplish this feat and avoid becoming a human lightning rod from the frequent noontime thunderstorms, the ascent begins well before sunrise at O-dark thirty and requires an essential piece of equipment—headlamps.

Our headlamps blazed a trail before us in the pre-dawn dark wilderness. When my headlamp malfunctioned, the other headlamps illuminated my path until I could find fresh batteries. When a misstep took me sliding down a hill later, I switched my headlamp to strobe to signal my distress so others could find and aid me.

Now a few months removed from us celebrating "the light that came into the world" of Christmas, I wonder, how is your light shining? Is it strong and steady? Dim or no longer illuminated? Or have you switched over to the strobe mode of distress?

In OCF's ministry efforts, our eight Spiritual Pillars help keep our spiritual lights lit, serving as headlamps to illuminate the pathways of our programs and actions with Christ's light brightly burning.

OCF's Spiritual Pillars also employ a defense-in-depth strategy for protection in the spiritual realm. With cyber attacks in the news lately, thirty active duty years with computer networks and security have taught me the critical importance of having defense mechanisms in place: firewall, anti-virus, and password protections.

FIREWALL—This stands as the sentry in the cyber world, checking all information going into your system/network and keeping out anything posing as a threat. OCF's ability to UNITE FOR FELLOWSHIP is the firewall surrounding OCF with protection against the enemy and secures our perimeter by constantly sniffing out potential problems. Having the light of others helps illuminate our path, keeping us safe.

Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their labor. For if they fall, one will lift up his companion. But woe to him who is alone when he falls, for he has no one to help him up (Ecclesiastes 4:9-10).

ANTI-VIRUS PROTECTION—Should something sneak past the sentry, anti-virus software constantly patrol-

ling inside identifies, neutralizes, and destroys would-be threats. Our ENGAGING IN PRAYER pillar speaks to that which searches our thoughts, actions, and what doesn't belong and keeps us operating at peak. Our collective prayer life is what eliminates those issues threatening to dim our light and make us ineffective.

Even before a word is on my tongue, behold, O Lord, you know it altogether. ...Search me, O GOD, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting (Psalm 139:4, 23-24).

PROTECTION—Password protection and encryption are the last lines of defense safeguarding your information and hard drive so nothing can steal, destroy, or manipulate them. CENTERING ON SCRIPTURE protects our hard drive—our mind—to ensure the thought life is protected and does no harm. The WORD of God keeps us focused on the truth, helps us defend our light, and sustains our light for others when they need assistance.

For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart (Hebrews 4:12).

It's incredibly important, yet challenging, that as you run your race in uniform for Christ, to keep His light in your heart burning brightly for others to see. Adhering to OCF's proven Spiritual Pillars will surround you with others who will watch your back, preserve your protection from evil, and utilize God's WORD to defend your mind and heart. It's OCF's honor and privilege to come along-side you to keep your Christ light shining vibrantly!

In his next article, General Warner will continue to explore OCF's Pillars and their importance to running your race in uniform for Christ.

Spiritual Pillars: 8 distinctive characteristics of OCF

Centering on Scripture

We believe the Bible is God's Word written and stress the importance of studying and applying its teachings both individually and corporately. (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

Honoring God by elevating His Word

"We've been encouraging the midshipmen to grow in their knowledge of the Word. The weekly events are great occasions for the mids to be challenged by Scripture and how to apply it to their life in here and into the Fleet and Marine Corps."

—USNA ministry report

Uniting for Fellowship

We consider authentic biblical fellowship essential for individual growth and the advancement of God's Kingdom within the military. (Hebrews 10:24-25)

Seeing extraordinary hope in ordinary relationships

"We continue with robust numbers of small group fellowships (home studies, specialty fellowships, work place studies). And the discipleship training breakfast meetings average forty-five attending weekly."

—Fort Leavenworth ministry report

Engaging in Prayer

We recognize our dependence on the Holy Spirit and are committed to pray. From its inception, OCF has emphasized the importance of praying members. (Matthew 7:7-8)

Being Open and Honest With God and Each Other

"I meet every Tuesday morning with a group of officers at the OCF Fellowship House. We have devotions and pray together: Iron sharpening iron! This group has ministered to me in very significant ways."

—USMA ministry report

Lay-Led

We are a lay-led movement of Christian officers within the U.S. Armed Forces. (1 Peter 2:9)

A Lay-Indigenous Movement

"Puget Sound OCFers participating in a leadership summit retreat brainstormed the possibilities of ministry outreach with these thoughts in mind: 'problems, solutions, why us, and why now?'"

—Puget Sound & Family Outreach ministry report

Integrating Faith & Profession

We call Christian officers to integrate biblical standards of excellence into their professional responsibilities. (Colossians 3:17, 23-24)

Biblical standards of excellence in the workplace

"The integration of Christian life with personal and professional conduct is in every study we host or lead. We teach, train, equip, and exhort officers and officer candidates in the roles they have been called to fill."

—Maxwell-Gunter ministry report

Nurturing the Family

We are committed to encouraging, supporting, and assisting military families as they implement the biblical principles of marriage and parenthood. (Ephesians 5:33, 6:1-4)

Being a helping, encouraging community

"We've come to the [winter retreat] several times as a family, and it's a blessing to have a predictable touchstone to start the year as a family—a time of renewal and rest for us."

—White Sulphur Springs ministry report

Equipping to Serve

We are committed to the spiritual development of each person in our movement by helping him or her in ways that find expression in godly service and outreach to the military. (Ephesians 4:11-12)

Offering God our very best through professional excellence

"Bible Study leaders gathered at Shepherd's Fold to acquire techniques and tools for their roles as leaders in the barracks. These skills transfer to the fleet as each one commits to putting these principles into practice at sea."

—USCGA ministry report

Supporting the Chaplaincy

We seek to support and encourage chaplains. Local or ship-based chapel activities offer prime venues for Christ-centered outreach and service to a military community. (1 Thessalonians 5:12-13a)

Our first partners in outreach and ministry

"It's a privilege to help our chaplains whenever possible, to multiply the chaplains' reach by serving them to accomplish their mission of inspiring "men and women to become leaders of character through spiritual formation."

—USAFA ministry report

OCF is here to encourage you as you run your race.

Read the full version of OCF's Spiritual Pillars: www.ocfusa.org/about/spiritual-pillars

Need prayer? www.ocfusa.org/contact/request-prayer

Is there an OCF group where I'm being stationed? www.ocfusa.org/find-ocf

The Christ-centered alpha male

By Dr. Ron Welch

Men have a lot in common with wolves. We mark our territory, strut in front of females, and bristle in the presence of another alpha male. We learn this behavior from older wolves more than happy to train us: coaches, fathers, teachers, older brothers, and eventually our bosses. For a wolf pack to survive and prosper, they must be stronger, smarter, and braver than all other packs, requiring direction, plans, structure, hierarchy, discipline and a leader—the alpha wolf.

Excerpt from "The Controlling Husband," by Dr. Ron Welch, PsyD, and Revell, a division of Baker Publishing Group, 2014. Used by permission.

Alpha wolves gravitate toward positions in the work world providing the type of control they enjoy. They become the leaders in the military, or managers in business, not the employees.

Men who are successful alpha males at work find it hard not to allow alpha behavior to affect their marriages at home where they are expected to stop giving orders, directing others, and being in charge. The military and law enforcement husbands I have met tell me it's especially challenging for them.

For couples who follow the Christian belief system, words like submission and headship are often heard, describing a perceived difference in power in the marital relationship. The belief that there is a difference in power between husbands and wives is integrated into the way decisions are made in the marriage of many Christian couples.

Paul's words in Ephesians 5:22-25 are the most of-

ten quoted: "Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her."

I worked with a husband who brought in his Bible app where he had highlighted the Ephesians passage about submission. He wasn't interested in reading on to the part where husbands are to give up their lives for their wives, to be sacrificial and selfless and acting in the best interest of the person over whom he had authority.

God's model of marriage in Ephesians means that even if the husband wanted to be selfish and choose his path, he is expected to think of his wife first and choose the path empowering her. This is exactly the conclusion that I reached after my own abuse of power in my mar-

riage and years of counseling couples with power and control issues.

I never wanted to be wanted to be that guy—the poster boy of an alpha male who is also a controlling husband—always wanting to be in charge, always thinking he's right. What I have done is spend much of my marriage caring more about myself than my wife and children. From an early point in our marriage I was extremely jealous, overtly controlling, and subtly manipulative in a variety of ways, wanting her to do most everything my way. I was showing her a confusing mix of church on Sunday morning and control and manipulation Sunday afternoon through Saturday.

One day our teenage son became angry and belligerent with Jan, the tone in his voice scaring me, almost as if he were ordering her to do something. At first I was angry, thinking, "Who do you think you are, kid? You can't talk to your mother that way." Then it hit me like a ton of bricks—he learned it from me. I'm teaching my sons not to respect their mother and to disrespect all women. God used this to remind me very clearly of the hypocrite I was—sitting in the church pew, professing to love others above myself while teaching my sons to care more about themselves than their own mother.

I began to desire living up to the standards of my Christian faith, to believe in something more important than my own desires and seriously consider a relationship model of focusing on others before myself. There are really three areas the alpha male has to address if he is to channel the positive aspects of his personality—intelligence, resourcefulness, resilience and reliance—into becoming the husband, father and leader he's needed to be: trust others' leadership skills, transform competition into cooperation, and turn self-focus into focus on others.

There was no overnight transformation. It's taken many years for me to progress in my ability to think of Jan and of others first, and it will continue to be something I devote myself to daily. In Christian marriage, it's only in a climate of mutual respect, honor, selflessness and dedication that biblical submission can take place without a controlling, oppressive environment developing.

About Ron

Ron, a Denver Seminary faculty member, also serves on the board of the military ministry Cadence International. He earned a PsyD from Central Michigan University, has over twenty years of clinical psychology experience, and authored "The Controlling Husband." He counsels struggling couples with his Transformational Marriage™ approach. He and his wife, Jan, live in Colorado. For more information, go to "As Seen in COMMAND" at ocfusa.org.



Spiritually Smart Family conference photo

Marriage moments // [OCF Family Outreach ministry](#)

Bridle the Tongue, Build the Marriage

Recently at a Spiritually Smart Family marriage seminar, Larry and I shared four barriers to oneness and the accompanying patterns that promote resilience. One of those barriers is invalidation, which author Scott Stanley cites as one of the best predictors of marital problems and divorce. Characterized by belittling thoughts and words, cynicism, blame, name-calling and putdowns, invalidation discounts the other person and fosters feelings of inadequacy. Slowly, it erodes the desire to please or to try.

The Bible gives the antidote to such harmful relating. Use the tongue to speak life into your spouse (Proverbs 18:21) and to benefit him or her by imparting a timely word of grace (Ephesians 4:29). While this practice may become reciprocal, it begins with the one who knows the right thing to do and does it.

Are you up for a challenge? Practice these three things:

1. Heart change—In words and attitude, place right value on one (your spouse) made in God's image (Genesis 1:27, Malachi 2:15).

2. Practical change—Speak only words that build, encourage, express affection, and solidify commitment to the one you chose (Philippians 4:8). Let actions accompany your words (James 1:19-22).

3. Promote change—Express intentionally and often words of appreciation and gratitude for the other's character, contribution, and purpose (Philippians 1:6, 2:3-4).

In the area of handling conflict, the Bible has much to say that applies to our tongues: We all make mistakes often, but those who don't make mistakes with their words have reached full maturity. Like a bridled horse, they can control themselves entirely (James 3:2 CEB). Let's get busy managing that horse and building strong marriages!

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

For more information about OCF's Spiritually Smart Family program, contact Larry Simpson, ocfoutreach@comcast.net.

Three areas the alpha male must address

1 Trust Others' Leadership Skills

Alpha males don't have to give up being involved in decisions or become subservient members of the pack. They can simply learn that all members of the pack have value and leadership qualities. True headship as a leader often consists of helping a team develop to the point of functioning well on their own without direct guidance. The best leaders are those whose organizations function seamlessly when they're not present.

2 Transform Competition into Cooperation

Whether it's an argument or competition at work, it's always been about being number one—and first is not always best, regardless. In marriage and family life especially, disagreements are not opportunities to prove points, but to talk about the issue. The best outcome to feel closer as a couple, family or team is for each person and their ideas to be valued.

3 Turn Self-Focus into Focus on Others

The alpha male absolutely must see himself as only one part of a system, which is difficult for a man who has generally thought of himself first for most of his life. As he begins to trust others more and realizes he doesn't have to do everything himself, he instinctively begins to realize that the system works better as a team.



Photo submitted by Christy Kaiser

Mary Poppins and chain of command

By Dr. Dave Sanders and Raine Miller

The chain of command—everybody has one. Everybody knows where they are in that chain, and it honestly clarifies and simplifies your life as a military member. As officers, you are in the upper echelons of the chain of command where your word and orders carry a certain level of authority. You know what it means to give a command and see it followed out by those beneath you. You have seen how this chain designates responsibility and is critical to maintaining order and accomplishing your mission. There is little wonder why it has been the governing structure for militaries for millennia. So what happens when you transfer that structural framework from your military environment into your family life? How does your understanding of the chain of command work itself out in your family system? And how does being an officer who follows Jesus as your Savior and Lord play into all of this?

Believe it or not, a great story to look at for insight into this topic is the classic Disney movie *Mary Poppins*. What you may remember as a lighthearted tale about a nanny and her two wards, is, upon closer inspection, really a story about a man, Mr. Banks, and what happens to his life and perspective on his family when his chain of command is disrupted.

The father's favorite line defines so much about the family's life, "Everything in its place and a place for every thing!" Mr. Banks is actually a banker, and he prides him-

self on running a "tight ship" as the ruler of his personal domain. While not a military family, the parallel is clear. The chain of command is regularly enforced and fearfully followed—until the old nanny quits, and Mr. Banks and his family meet the magical Mary Poppins.

In response to a strictly dictated advertisement, Mary Poppins appears, and the children are astounded by her joy, imagination, and magical adventures! She brings life and love and music into a very structured world, and Mr. Banks resists this change at every turn. Wishing for his

children to exist only when it is convenient, Banks wants his nanny to know her place in the chain of command and execute his intentions!

What he doesn't see is that Mary Poppins has connected with his children because of the love she gives them; and her attempts to include him in the adventure are attempts to encourage connection and love between Mr. Banks and his family. This special nanny understood that the chain of command has no true influence at home unless it is accompanied by love. Perhaps that's how Mary Poppins represents what Jesus would want most in our families—not simply a structured and functioning group, but rather a connected, loving, respecting, engaging, thriving family unit. To misquote Mr. Banks, "Every person is loving and there is love for every person."

Military families are usually fairly structured units. Sometimes, especially because of deployments, there is a felt need to have everything in its place before the military member leaves. Keeping the order seems to loom large and sometimes even becomes "the most important thing."

We might be tempted to think of a chain of command as the ultimate guide for group structure, but what we see in scripture is the Lord encouraging a loving, purposeful order where each person's dignity and worth is celebrated, and their contribution can be offered and appreciated. When you open up your family to the influence of love and begin to personally connect, you will be surprised by the response you get. Teens in particular are asking questions like, "What is my role in this family?" "Where do my gifts and abilities fit in?" "Does the family even need me?" It's easy to see how your family could begin to grow and unite when you start discussing things like this!

Perhaps you have a mission statement for your family that drives your structured actions, or maybe you just feel like you're barely hanging on and completely winging it. Wherever you find yourself on this spectrum, reaffirming your personal submission to Jesus and his love is a critical first step. Next steps may include some or all of these ideas—making God known, serving through Christ's love, and working at unity.

When Mr. Banks' very efficient and structured world collapsed around him, he did not lose the family's respect as he feared, but gained their love and admiration. It was the personal connection with his family members and discovering the joy and hope that love can bring, which led to true transformation. ✈️

About Dave and Raine

Dave is a Christian Ministries professor at Judson University, special projects assistant for MCYM, and senior author/editor for the military teen website RezLife.com with American Bible Society. Dave's daughter, Raine, is a freelance writer, reader, nomad, new wife, art historian, animal lover, Pinterest addict, horror fan and Christ follower.

Three Scriptures to balance your chain of command

1 Making God known (Psalm 78:1-7): The Lord gives us a glimpse into His purpose for establishing families. It shows how structure tempered with love is a powerful formula that creates families with legacies that last generations and faith that is nurtured and passed on from parent to child again and again. While the child's role is to learn and obey, the parent's responsibility is to actively love and pursue a life serving the Lord. This is how the glories of the Lord pass among your family and down through the generations.

2 Serving through Christ's love (1 Corinthians 13:4-7): Those you lead need to know you love them. The key to a vibrant, nurturing chain of command is love, which was modeled by the ultimate servant leader, Jesus Christ. This involves respect and appreciation and knowing your family members—they are all very different people made in God's image!

3 Working at unity (Mark 3:24-25): Stresses and strains of military life on people in a family unit are bound to create tension and flares of anger every once in a while. That's pretty normal. Destructive families attempt to undermine and create failure and ruin for each other. This kind of competition of win/lose, crush and destroy is what Jesus warns against. Make sure that in your "family fighting," you aim for a win/win where everyone is left standing and knows they are valuable and loved even if they disagree!

Take it further with these steps

The Scriptures give us multiple analogies describing the way many parts make up the whole—particularly when referring to the Church or another group of Christ followers. This week, ask your family to participate in this three-part activity.

Step 1. Early in the week, gather together as a family and read 1 Corinthians 12:1-26 together. This Scripture describes a unit of people like an actual body. Read it twice if it's confusing. That's it. No discussion or long boring lessons. Just read it together and you're done.

Step 2. Spend some time thinking about the Scripture. Then, later in the week, each family member should write down what they specifically contribute to the family. It could be anything, like having a cool head in arguments, or the ability to navigate the Internet, or maybe serving when no one is looking—whatever it is, write it down. Bring it to talk about with the rest of the family.

Step 3. Get together as a family again and have each person share what they wrote down during the week. Now read through the passage in 1 Corinthians once more. Get a sheet of paper and draw an actual picture of a body. Take turns labeling who is what from your family. Is some part missing? Does some part feel small and unimportant? Listen to what each person says and notice how others respond. This can be a very revealing and sometimes emotional conversation. At the end of your time together, take a moment to go around and each say one affirming thing about each family member. This can be a compliment or observation—anything you think will communicate that you see them for who they are and love them! Finally, conclude this time together with a prayer.

Reasons to celebrate our freedoms

BY MAJOR KATE VESETH, United States Air Force

Friends, we have a lot to celebrate, starting with: Jesus changes lives. We worship a God who's in the business of redemption—and He's good at it. As Christians and members of Officers' Christian Fellowship, we celebrate that Jesus is at work in us and through us in practical ministry that is the tangible outflow of hearts aligned with Kingdom goals.

We celebrate: Christianity hinges on an actual historical event—the Resurrection. Christianity does not stand on some empty “pie in the sky” hope, but the very testable claim that either Jesus died and rose again—or He did not. Paul recognizes the impact of that claim in his letter to the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 15).

Christianity does require faith, since the veracity of any historical event does not admit of mathematical certainty, and never will. But it is a reasonable faith, one where the seeker can kick the proverbial tires of Christianity and will find solidarity. We celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, “who bought our freedom with his blood and forgave us all our sins” (Colossians 1:13-14, TLB). The Resurrection is the litmus test; let's test it!

We celebrate: America's freedoms. To have freedom of religious expression is a beautiful thing. We're free to pursue truth, to openly investigate the claims of Christ in an arena against other worldview claims. We welcome such discourse because truth withstands scrutiny. And we pray for those seeking the Truth, for as Augustine observed, “Oh, God, our heart is restless until it finds its rest in You.” May America's freedoms enable more people to find the rest their soul thirsts for, but make no mistake: society's salvation is not to be found in politics. Salvation is found in Christ. We quench this thirst, ultimately and exclusively, at the empty tomb.

We celebrate: The cross of Calvary. Take a careful look at the blood-stained cross. The Creator of the universe dearly loves us, and nothing else compares! In Christ's Resurrection from the grave, we finally have the resolution we seek; our soul thirst is now quenched. This is necessarily predicated upon the realization that God is holy. I am not. I can't do anything about it. Therefore, our infinite creator God is free to do with me as He chooses.

Good works are the evidence of our faith (James 2:26). But if we errantly believe that good works alone make us righteous before God, then we have missed this eternal truth: we are spiritually bankrupt. Based on good works alone, the gap between holy God and us remains impossible to bridge. Once we fully grasp the reality of our spiritual condition, we can't help but find ourselves despon-

dent. But sustained despondency only comes when we process the reality of our spiritual condition apart from the Cross!

We celebrate: those who uphold the Constitution. Freedom is not free, and those in the profession of arms face unique challenges. Wisely wielding destructive power and leading amidst war's fog and friction are sobering and heavy responsibilities coming at tremendous cost to our military and their loved ones. Innumerable people have experienced this, such as Helen Shine, mother of 1LT Jonathan Cameron Shine, whose Christian legacy is honored by the namesake Fort Shine Lodge at OCF's Spring Canyon conference Center. Helen lost two sons in the Vietnam War: Jon in battle; Tony went MIA. We are deeply grateful to all those throughout our nation's history who paid the price for our freedom with their lives, and to their grieving families.

We celebrate: God is not aloof to our suffering. We live in a broken world where pain, suffering and evil are real. So why does He allow it? And the simple, insufficient answer is we don't know the reason. But not knowing God's reasoning is not enough to warrant distrust or anger with God for there's a subtle premise underlying such a line of reasoning. Saying “I don't know the reason for suffering” belies the presumption “because I can't see a reason for suffering, there must not be one.”

Friends, we are woefully under-qualified for the job of the infinite God; we finite beings are unable to discern the secondary and tertiary future consequences of actions, particularly evil ones. This is certain: God is not detached from our suffering—He enters it, and the incarnation is proof. Jesus knew pain, suffering and betrayal in infinite proportions unfathomable to us. He voluntarily put Himself on the Cross, paying for humanity's sin debt at the cost of Himself. And one day He will wipe away every tear.

We celebrate: Holy God loves us more than we can imagine. When we come to fully comprehend what His holiness really means, it changes everything. We understand that it's God's graciousness, not our winsomeness, which catalyzes a relationship with Him. In light of God's



OCF Photo

Kate Veseth speaking at the Fort Shine Lodge dedication at OCF's Spring Canyon Conference Center, Memorial Day 2014.

holiness, we see afresh that God owes us nothing; we bring nothing to the table. Spiritual pride's subtle self-righteousness melts and is replaced by true amazement at grace. Entitlement is replaced by gratitude. Bitterness and resentment are revealed for the futile and inane joy-robbers that they are. The restless asymptotic goal of “doing to get loved” is replaced by “doing because I am loved,” bringing with it a freedom and delight to life so splendid I'm unable to express it adequately in words.

In light of the Resurrection and the holiness of God, we can rest—and celebrate—in knowing we are loved even more than we ever thought possible. ✠

About Kate

[Kate is a C-17 instructor pilot, holds an MA in Theology from Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary, and is currently assigned to Columbia Graduate School of Arts and Sciences studying philosophy. She is a graduate of USAFA where she came to know the Lord, and serves on OCF Council as secretary.](#)



Kaneohe Bay OCF photo



Fort Riley OCF photo



NCR photo

KANEOHE BAY OCF—HAWAII

TOP: Pupus and prayer—Meeting on Tuesdays to feast on God’s Word, this OCF group’s fellowship opportunities are as diverse as the island settings: video studies, family gatherings, picnics, hikes—and outings on the sand under the sun!

FORT RILEY OCF—KANSAS

ABOVE LEFT: Uniting for Fellowship— Whether one-on-one, small groups, retreats, or at an OCF conference center, God-centered biblical fellowship is one of the ministry’s hallmark characteristics. This Fort Riley OCF group exemplifies the relational aspect of OCF’s kingdom work within the military society.

NCR MILITARY SUMMIT—VIRGINIA

ABOVE RIGHT: Engaging in prayer—Over a hundred participants attended OCF’s National Capital Region’s third annual Military Summit in late 2014 at Quantico, VA. Chaplains, pastors, and other leaders from local churches, parachurches and other military-minded organizations prayerfully collaborated on how best to enhance ministry among the military community. The event is part of the strategic operations plan developed through prayer and relationship-building by OCF field staff rep CH(MAJ) Mark Benz, USA (Ret.).



Lieutenant Gordon Hood, United States Coast Guard

Came to OCF: As a cadet at USCGA. Major Jim and Carolyn Groves, OCF field staff couple at the time, were really great at connecting the academy fellowship with the organization at-large.

Involvement in OCF: local leader at Kodiak, Alaska, and Council class of 2017. In Annapolis I had the opportunity to work with the U.S. Naval Academy ministry and served as faculty representative.

Why OCF for me: Integration of faith and profession; as officers we have unique challenges and must keep one another sharp as “iron sharpens iron” and focused “on the race.” Professional excellence is a great witness.

Born: Manchester, Connecticut, 1983

Alma mater: USCGA, class of 2005.

Hobbies: Hiking (with a baby on my back) and running (pushing a stroller).

What’s on my iPod: I don’t have one! But we listen to a lot of K-Love Christian radio and *Donut Man* CDs in the car.

Why a military life: Structure, service, saving lives.

What’s on my bucket list: Thru-hike the Appalachian Trail.

Most memorable/exotic places visited: Remote islands of the Bering Sea and Aleutian chain. And Dunkin’ Donuts in Kuwait—we don’t even have Dunkin’ Donuts in Alaska!

Best advice given you: The military is your mission field.

Quirky habits: Weekly haircuts—by day eight it’s too long and starts to bother me. I also like to iron, find it relaxing.

Something I can’t live without: Coffee.

Life Bible verse: Romans 1:16a “I am not ashamed of the Gospel...”

Leadership Moments

Are You Leading?

“Then Jesus said to him, ‘Put your sword back into its place; for all those who take up the sword shall perish by the sword’” (Matthew 26:52).

Jesus wielded His influence, not his power, to accomplish the prophecies concerning Him. Man’s natural inclination is to think: He who carries the biggest stick wins. Instead of condoning Peter’s protective gesture, Jesus healed the servant’s injury and told Peter to put away his weapon (John 18:10-11).

Jesus could have responded to the arresting entourage with a show of His mighty power or through a simple appeal to his Father and the thousands of angels standing by for Jesus’ use. Instead, He identified Himself as the one they sought (John 18:5).

A good leader leads best with actions reflecting decisions arrived at through calm, calculated, inspired thought rather than reckless displays of power. Jesus command to Peter reveals that leaders who use overwhelming displays of power are not always effective at accomplishing the mission. His leadership style was that of influence and not the use of “shock and awe.”

Faith and leadership are more appropriately modeled through keeping sight of how to achieve God’s purposes through godly influence, using softer tones, quieter approaches and direct resolve to see the mission through. Simply acting or reacting is not necessarily an effective leadership quality. Leading entails helping people see the bigger picture when “it must happen this way.”

Points to Ponder

→ How do you respond to inaccurate or injurious comments? Do you fire back with insults, or are you exercising servant leader restraint? (1 Peter 2:23)

→ How effectively do you take the spiritual high road when resolving conflicts? (James 1:20, Proverbs 15:1)

→ When project goals are seemingly being thwarted, do you entertain the idea that God can also work through this opposition? (Romans 8:28, Acts 8:1)

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

More leadership articles on ocfusa.org

→ [Courageous Command: Beyond Battlefield Boldness](http://ocfusa.org/articles/courageous-command/)
ocfusa.org/articles/courageous-command/

→ [Lessons in Leadership...from a Squadron Janitor](http://ocfusa.org/articles/lessons-leadership-squadron-janitor/)
ocfusa.org/articles/lessons-leadership-squadron-janitor/

→ [Leadership Q&A](http://ocfusa.org/articles/leadership-q/)
ocfusa.org/articles/leadership-q/

OCF Council Nominations

Whom do you know in OCF who:

- Exemplifies biblical, spiritual, and professional leadership?
- Is committed to OCF’s purpose and vision?
- Has the capacity to participate throughout the year in prayer, occasional phone calls and email discussions?
- Is able to devote six days yearly (on leave or permissive TDY) to participate in spring (April) and fall (October) Council meetings?

It’s time for OCF members to prayerfully consider nominees (yes, you can nominate yourself) who will be elected by our membership to serve on the OCF Council for a three-year term beginning 1 January 2016. Nominations begin 1 March and run through 30 April. At least three OCF regular members (present/former officers, officer candidates, midshipmen and cadets) must submit an endorsement online for each nominee. Go to the OCF website for more information on nominating candidates for the OCF Council.

The OCF Council represents and governs the organization, meeting bi-annually to set and review ministry priorities, establish policies, examine significant issues and approve the budget.

Spring Council meeting at White Sulphur Springs

OCF Council’s spring meeting is set for 16-19 April at White Sulphur Springs Conference Center. If you would like to attend, contact Susan Wallis at susan.wallis@ocfusa.org or 800-424-1984.

Evelyn Kent remembered as ‘blessing to so many’

Mrs. Evelyn Kent, daughter of the late Lieutenant General William K. Harrison Jr., USA, who served as Officers’ Christian Fellowship’s president from 1954-1972, went home to be with the Lord on 11 January. During her long association with OCF, Mrs. Kent volunteered at OCF’s White Sulphur Springs Conference Center, answering phones, greeting guests, and making friends with thousands of people over the years. Many of them gathered with her family 19 January at WSS for a memorial service and celebration dinner honoring her life. Ellis Pratt, Mrs. Kent’s great-grandson, and John Hoyman laid a memorial brick in the garden by the flagpole.

Mrs. Kent’s family expressed appreciation for the many prayers over the recent months, and also how much the ministry meant to Mrs. Kent. They’ve requested that gifts in her memory can be given to White Sulphur Springs.

WSS director Paul Robyn said, “Mrs. Kent was a blessing to so many over the years at WSS. Even in her final chapter of life, she was an encouragement to us all as we watched her joyfully walk the last few painful miles of her journey, always keeping her eyes focused on Christ and her eternal home.”

Fort Carson Chaplains’ Family Weekend

When: 24 April-26 April (Friday dinner through Sunday lunch)

Where: OCF’s Spring Canyon Conference Center, Buena Vista, CO

Speaker: Former Army Chief of Chaplains, CH(MG) Douglas Carver, USA (Ret.)

Music by: Christian composer and recording artist Danny Byram

Cost: \$100 per family (includes registration, accommodations and meals); children’s ministry provided; please include ages of children.

RSVP: NLT 17 April by calling 719-395-2328

OCF Honor Fund

IN HONOR OF...

Thelma Thornburg

By Mr. and Mrs. Edward Welsh

CDR Frank K. Cole, USCG (Ret.)

By CDR & Mrs. James Ellis, CHC, USN (Ret.)

Tom and Cheri Austin

By Ms. Sandra G. Manougian

CAPT & Mrs. Thomas M. Barry, USN (Ret.)

By Mr. and Mrs. E. Frank Barry

LtCol Marvin Gardner, USMC

By Jay Standish

CDR Richard L. Zahn, USNR

By Barbara Kronewitter

Rev. Richard C. Brookes

By Lt Col & Mrs. Anthony Villalobos, USAF

Ralph Martin

By Ms. Melinda Martin-Guess

COL George E. Meaders, USA (Ret.)

By COL & Mrs. Robert Jayne Jr., USA (Ret.)

IN MEMORY OF...

Martha Elizabeth “Betsy” Teuton

By Dr. & Mrs. James Caraway
By Mr. & Mrs. Michael Knaup
By Mr. & Mrs. John Maxwell

By Mr. & Mrs. William Ray
By Christopher & Jennifer Covill
By Mr. & Mrs. Stephen Puddington

By Mr. & Mrs. James Hall
By Mr. & Mrs. Robert Christensen

By Marlene & Bernard Christianson

By Mr. & Mrs. Rodney Holmes

By Mr. & Mrs. K. S. Prime
By Mr. & Mrs. W. A. Jones

By Mr. & Mrs. John Graham
By Mr. Joseph Wilson Jr.

By LT & Mrs. Michael Hennebery, USCG

By Mr. & Mrs. G. J. Madden
By Patricia and Bob Flournoy

By Mrs. Donna L. Vanderford
By Debbie, Michael & Grant Strobel

By Ms. Mildred F. McGehee
By Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Wilson

By Mr. & Mrs. Andy Alsop
By Mr. & Mrs. William David Jones

By Mr. & Mrs. Ronald Marlin
By Mr. & Mrs. Hoyt Greer Jr.

By CDR & Mrs. Paul Stocklin Jr., USCG

By Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Lenoir
By Mr. & Mrs. John McKenzie

By Ms. Brenda Wright
By Mr. Neal Carpenter

By Mr. Eric Lenoir
By Mr. & Mrs. Oscar Hoffman Jr.

By Mr. & Mrs. Brian Owens
By Mr. & Mrs. Steven Carpenter

By Mr. Paul Lapeyre
By Mr. & Mrs. Jay Mahaffey

By Jerry Callender
By CAPT & Mrs. Robert Durfey Jr., USCG (Ret.)

Births

Kelly Joy Maynor, 16 August 2014, daughter of **LCDR Jesse & Shannon Maynor, USN**, Fort Leavenworth, KS.

Weddings

CDR Brad Winsted, USN (Ret.), married **Margareta Krpcova**, 28 June 2014. Their home is Atlanta, GA.

Taps

Christopher Banning, 11 January 2015, husband of **Kay Banning**; son of former Spring Canyon directors **Larry and Kay Banning**, Buena Vista, CO.

Col Milton Howell Jr., USAF (Ret.), 5 September 2014, husband of **Peggy Howell**, Albuquerque, NM.

By Mr. & Mrs. Steven Griff
By Ryan Marshall
By CAPT & Mrs. Larry Olson, USCG (Ret.)
By ENS Rachel Christensen

LT Roy E. Seaman, USN

By Mr. & Mrs. Delbert Elliott

Carolyn Row Barber

By Col & Mrs. Irving Schoenberg
By LTC Robert Graf, USA (Ret.)
By Frasca, Joiner, Goodman & Greenstein, P.C.

By Maj Gen & Mrs. Bryan Hawley
By Mr. & Mrs. David McCloy

By Lt Col & Mrs. Terrance Stokka, USAF (Ret.)

By Mr. & Mrs. Wayne Johnson
By LtCol & Mrs. Glenn Bethany, USAF (Ret.)

By Ms. Arline Castleberry
By Mr. & Mrs. Chester Judy

Kenneth Hawthorne Barber & Carolyn Row Barber

By Mr. Ken Ruddy

Beverly Kaldem

Dr. W. H. Landers

Tom Baumgardner

Julie Watkins

“Penny” Ralston

Eugenia Griffin

By CAPT & Mrs. O. W. Camp Jr., USNR (Ret.)

Carl Johnson

By Gladys Hawley

Maj. Ronald P. Johnson, USMC (Ret.)

Evelyn Kent, 11 January 2015, daughter of the late **LTG William K. Harrison**; sister of **Terry Harrison**, Newnan, GA.

Col Victor Lipsey, USAF (Ret.), 20 October 2014, husband of **Annette Lipsey**, Crowley, TX.

Linda McKaughan, 27 December 2014, wife of **Dr. Michael McKaughan**, Salem, CT.

By Mrs. Earline Johnson

LTC Maurice D. Milton, USA (Ret.)

By Ms. Linda Myrick

LTC Jon Shine, USA

By MG & Mrs. Robert Ivany, USA (Ret.)

Charalambos “Tok” Tokatloglou

By Mr. & Mrs. Steven Kator

COL Milton (Pat) L. Howell Jr., USA (Ret.)

By Peggy Boone Howell

Cpt Jeffrey B. Davis

By COL & Mrs. Richard David Jr., USA (Ret.)

Joyce Allen Patrick

By Robert Patrick & Leda Patrick

Ralph Polachek

By Daniel Case

CDR Garvin McGettrick, USNR (Ret.)

By Col & Mrs. B. A. McGettrick, USAF

COL Billy Miller & COL Leroy Hammond, USA (Ret.)

By CH(COL) & Mrs. Robert Covington Jr., USA (Ret.)

Linda A. “Mom” McKaughan

By Charles Leffler
By Salient Federal Solutions
By Paul Mathias

LTC Maurice Milton, USA (Ret.), 24 November 2014, husband of **Virginia Milton**, Willow Street, PA.

CH(LTC) Herbert Spencer, AUS (Ret.), 18 July 2014, husband of **Stella Spencer**, Naples, FL.

Marilyn Zimmer, 9 January 2015, wife of **Dr. Robert Zimmer**, Interlochen, MI.

Recent ROTC retreat at OCF's White Sulphur Springs Conference Center in Manns Choice, PA.



White Sulphur Springs photo

Conference centers more than brick and mortar

By Lieutenant Colonel Jeff Silliman, United States Air Force, Retired

It is deeper than mere “bricks and mortar,” much more than just having new buildings for the year-round retreats and programs occurring at OCF’s White Sulphur Springs and Spring Canyon Conference Centers.

→ For updates on campaign progress or to join in God’s kingdom work of ministry to our military through OCF, check out <http://SpringCanyonAlive.ocfusa.org>

Heritage House at WSS and Veterans Memorial and Fort Shine Lodges at SC—God’s gracious gifts funneled through devoted donors—are already ministering in ways OCF’s Growing and Building capital campaign planned all along: more ministry opportunities to more people. At the very core of the “life-changing experiences” or “meeting God in the glory of His creation” moments taking place in those structures is the Architect of the Universe’s heart as He builds His eternal kingdom, a family of sons and daughters.

For more than fifty years now, OCF’s conference center ministry has buoyed OCFers’ Christian faith to carry God’s salvation message with them into the military society—their own Jerusalem, Judea, and uttermost points of the earth mission fields. Both conference centers are hosting more people during the busy summer and winter camp seasons, especially at SC with its two new lodges and meeting rooms, where multiple groups can now be accommodated concurrently and not turned away because of space constraints.

Between the conference centers’ busy seasons many varied groups utilize the facilities for retreats, including local churches, women’s/men’s groups, police offi-

cers, academy and ROTC cadets/midshipmen, and high school choirs and bands. Within these assorted ranks, those searching for hope and reason encounter Christ, whether for the first time ever or in new ways. Lives are lifted up by the Savior’s love in this special atmosphere.

My own OCF ministry experience was jump started by our first OCF Bible study leaders, who invited my wife and me to Spring Canyon. The retreat and speaker Mr. Tok were so impacting, even as relatively new Christians we jumped at the opportunity to head up the study when the leaders PCSed. Through twenty-three years of active duty, our periodic “vacations with a difference” at OCF’s conference centers always energized us for our ministry efforts at all assignments.

I met up with Mr. Tok for the final time at WSS, shortly before he went home to glory, and was able to introduce this storied saint to my elderly mother at this special place of vibrant ministry—one making such a difference in our lives across a half a century. I remain so very indebted to OCF’s special places of lifetime ministry and the wonderful people serving there.

God is working powerfully at OCF’s conference centers. He continues blessing OCF through all those generously giving of their time, talents and treasures into something far beyond what can be imagined or dreamt possible.

You’re strongly encouraged to partake and participate in the ministry opportunities at OCF’s conference centers. I truly believe it will deepen your faith, walk, and your ministry. ✝

Manager Editor Karen Fliedner contributed to this story.

OCF’s big draw? It’s about relationships

Humans are meant to be in relationship. We are blessed to have the opportunity of eternal relationship with our Creator (Revelation 21:3), and to be in relationship with other humans (Genesis 2:18). And as Christians we are called to be in relationship with other believers (Galatians 3:28). So in building and nurturing relationships we are responding to God’s call. And as we respond to His call to be in relationship with Him and other believers, He uses us to expand his Kingdom.

Sounds easy. But because we humans are also prideful and selfish, relationships seldom just happen. Maintaining relationships takes effort; broken relationships are often difficult (Ephesians 4:3, 26). Furthermore, maintaining and restoring relationships can be especially challenging for those in uniform. This is what has drawn many to OCF, whose fellowships are one of the only “constant” relationship venues in military life. This is because the focus of OCF is to help build up a special community of Christians within military society through lifelong relationships centered on the Word, engaged in prayer and united in loving fellowship with one another and with God.

Many other nonprofit organizations are primarily transactional: “you give us money and in exchange, we will do something good with your donation.” In the Christian context, such ministries raise funds to do good works in the name of Christ to the glory of God (Matthew 5:16)—and that’s wonderful.

However, OCF is primarily a relational ministry, using its resources to build, sustain and expand a unique community operating at a personal level through mentoring relationships, local Bible studies and conference center activities. OCF encourages, emboldens and equips its members and others to engage in loving Christian fellowship and thereby minister effectively in military society to the glory of God.

I’m now often asked, “why would you want to get into fundraising for OCF?” My basic response is it gives me many exciting opportunities to share the great story of OCF. But on a deeper level, I’m a relational person. And

OCF is a relational ministry. When one of our members was wounded in Afghanistan last year, it was only a matter of hours until several hundred OCFers were on their knees in prayer. And wherever my travels take me, I am always warmly welcomed like family into OCFers’ homes and at OCF Bible studies everywhere. So leading Ministry Advancement efforts for OCF is a blessing to my relational nature.

As Henri J.M. Nouwen says in *A Spirituality of Fundraising*, “Fundraising is a very concrete way to help the kingdom of God come about. . . Even a small act of generosity can grow into something far beyond what we could ever ask or imagine (Ephesians 3:20)—the creation of a community of love in this world...Indeed, if we raise funds for the creation of a community of love, we are helping God build the kingdom. We are doing exactly what we are supposed to do as Christians.”

Raising funds to help God build His kingdom through the OCF community of love is a calling wrapped in a blessing. Because we are better together, won’t you join me? ✝

About Chris

CAPT Chris Blake, USN (Ret.) recently transitioned from his OCF Director of Field Operations role to Director of Ministry Advancement, succeeding COL Mike Tesdahl, USA (Ret.). Chris is responsible for overseeing all fundraising including OCF’s Growing and Building capital campaign and CFC.



CHRIS BLAKE

Director of Ministry Advancement

OCF is here to encourage you as you run your race. If you’ve been blessed by this ministry, would you prayerfully consider making a donation?

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

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Home office address: OCF, 3784 S. Inca St., Englewood, CO 80110-3405
OCF website: www.ocfusa.org Phone: 303-761-1984 Fax: 303-761-6226
Toll Free 800-424-1984 e-mail: ocfdenver@ocfusa.org
Publisher/Editor: Michael.Edwards@ocfusa.org
Managing Editor: Karen.Fliedner@ocfusa.org
Senior Graphic Designer: Josh.Jackson@ocfusa.org



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Vacation with a Purpose

The only thing more exciting than being on summer vacation is planning it and thinking of all the possibilities. Whether you dream about spending time in the majestic Rocky Mountains or beautiful Alleghenies, what you will experience at both OCF conference centers is God-breathed ministry and fun to recharge you from everyday cares and military life.

Exclusively for our mail subscribers >>>
LOOK INSIDE for your free copy of 2015 OCF SUMMER FUN. Register for one of our exciting summer programs now by going to SpringCanyon.org or WhiteSulphurSprings.org.

