

# Christian perspectives on life in the military

# COMMAND

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## Essential to military life

To be the Christian military leader God has called you to be, you must have a strong support system.

## Navigating our unique stressors

Surviving difficult transitions is no small thing. And if we do not take our recuperation seriously, we begin to lose connection with God, ourselves, and those we love most.

## PCSing? Build a RAFT

As a parent, consider the RAFT idea as a better coping strategy to help your teen develop strength in their relationships and positive patterns for the future.

# Nurturing the Family

Resources to deal with the struggles unique to military life



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# Nurturing Christian families

## Strong support system crucial to dealing with struggles of military life

In 1988, a younger Captain Warner was at his desk when his Air Force boss, Brigadier General Lance Lord, loomed over him saying, “Warner, it’s time for your mentoring session. Grab your running shoes.” Halfway through our circuit around Maxwell AFB’s perimeter, General Lord’s question provided me—a new Christian—an unmistakable opportunity to test the power of prayer: “What do you want out of your career?”



DAVID  
WARNER

Executive  
Director

My response to General Lord after imploring the Lord God for inspiration: “Sir, I’m not sure how long I’ll run this race in uniform. But when I cross the finish line, I’d like to have accomplished three goals: to finish with my integrity intact; to fully know I ran my race with excellence; and to have my family by my side.”

Speaking to my last goal on the importance of family, OCF places an extra emphasis on the role of family in the lives of our military men and women. “Nurturing the Family” is not only OCF’s sixth spiritual pillar, but it’s also a critical component in our goal of “Building Christian Leaders, Families, and Fellowships...for a Lifetime.” Many of you are under attack with your own struggles—extended absences, constant moves, never ending operational tempo—as the military life body-slams you at every turn. And you may be wondering what’s the answer to that raging storm surrounding you?

If you want to be the Christian military leader God has called you to be, I believe a must-have is a strong support system that loves, supports, and sustains you! For those with a family, I’d contend that the stronger the family, the better the leader. It’s rough enough alone to serve in combat or work those horrific fourteen-hour days without worrying about your spouse or children, but those things become even more demanding when your family is in turmoil. And this is where OCF can help, by providing you with opportunities to be surrounded by fellow believers who pray, listen, and understand you. They will come by your side and provide a safe refuge for you and your family.

There is no greater gift we could give to our deployed members than them fully trusting and knowing that during their absence their families are being taken care of at an OCF conference center retreat. When a deployed member’s spouse had once been asked how her week had gone at OCF’s Spring Canyon Conference Center, she pointed to her son, “Do you see that smile? He hasn’t smiled like that since his father deployed,” she said.

Reflecting on how the Warner family was able to overcome the unique struggles of the military life—we moved eight times, with Brittney going to three high schools and Ashley spending most of her senior year without Dad—I

### Practical ways to nurture your family

#### For your spouse:

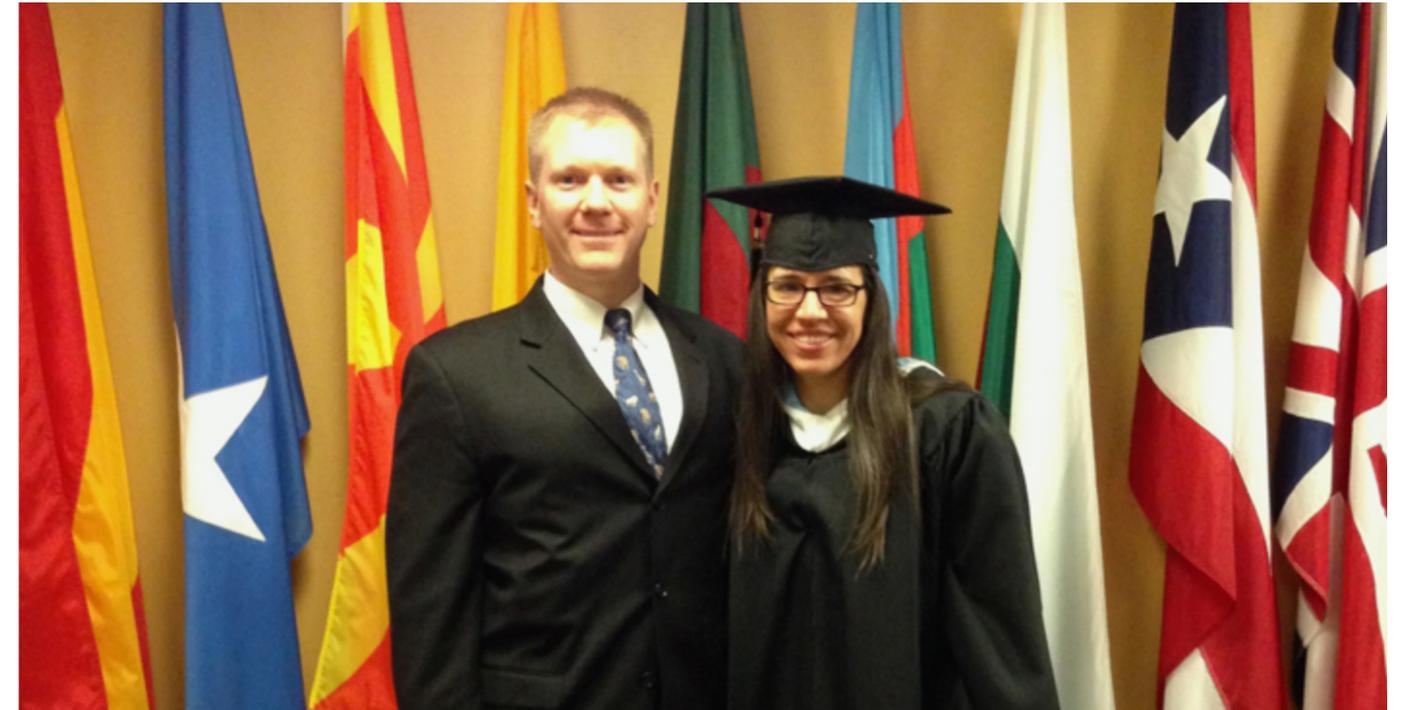
1. Pray over each other and your family daily; read Scripture together.
2. Date your spouse weekly (Bible study is good; dinner and a movie is better).
3. Steal away together at least once a year—without the children.

#### For your children:

1. Spend special time with each of them—let them pick the activity. Remember: it’s not so much about quantity as it is quality.
2. Get into their world early on and stay there. It’s harder to build a relationship with a teenager than to sustain one.
3. Never miss an opportunity to tell them how much you love them and how proud you are of them. Read Scripture over them that shows how much they’re loved.

can point to a seminal moment in our lives, while attending the Army War College, when we took advantage of being only two hours away from OCF’s White Sulphur Springs Conference Center in Manns Choice, Pennsylvania. From attending Junior AO! with “tweener” daughter, Ashley, to the Carlisle chapel retreat or our own AWC Junior AO!, we fell madly in love with WSS because of what happens at that beautiful respite. For the next eight years—regardless of our home station—you would find Ashley and Brittney at WSS, soaking up the opportunities for friendship, service, and solid Christian mentoring. WSS is so special to the Warner family because that’s where our girls made Christ their own.

As you continue to run your race, my prayer for you is that you too are afforded the blessing of crossing the finish line with your integrity intact, having run your race with excellence, and with your family by your side! 🙏



## Colonel Mandy Birch, United States Air Force Reserve

**Born:** Indiana, 1974

**Alma mater:** USAFA; Massachusetts Institute of Technology; The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University

**Came to OCF:** 1998, invited by a co-worker at Eglin AFB, FL

**Involvement in OCF:** Council member, class of 2016; local leader and team leader at several locations with husband, Paul; Anchor Points; Conference Center Task Force II

**Why OCF for me:** The relationships formed via the small groups at the heart of OCF have served as a powerful tool for my own leadership and Christian growth. Similarly, OCF provides a rewarding opportunity to contribute to others’ spiritual and leadership development. OCF is also the only forum I’ve found to consistently wrestle with the integrally intertwined aspects of faith and profession. I especially appreciate the opportunity to connect quickly to and be encouraged by my Christian family anywhere in the world.

**Why a military life:** It’s a calling, an opportunity to serve people and a purpose greater than myself. It’s a rare place in today’s culture where young men and women are likely to consider their own mortality and *raison d’être*, which makes military service fertile ground for ministry. Furthermore, secular

democratic institutions need the voices and leadership of Christian men and women who can imitate Christ with servant leadership, who can draw upon a moral baseline to make decisions in a complex environment, and who can make self-sacrificial, difficult decisions motivated by a greater good.

**Hobbies:** Swimming; tandem bicycling; engineering and construction projects; learning languages; reading, writing, and thinking.

**What’s on my bucket list:** Visit every continent, bicycle across North America, hike the Appalachian Trail.

**Most memorable/exotic places visited:** Participated in an exchange with the French Air Force at Salon-de-Provence; worked in Yaoundé with Wycliffe Bible Translators; studied Arabic in Rabat; worked with the Africa Center for Strategic Studies in Maputo; spent a few weeks in Tallinn interacting with their president and cabinet.

**Best advice given you:** Remember that God is more concerned about your character than your comfort.

**Life Bible verse:** “Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice” (Philippians 4:4).



Katie Gardener photo

# What our re-entry from the Middle East taught me about our military family

By Leeana Tankersley

Some of you are smack in the middle of needing to call on your resilience, flexibility, strength, and sense of humor. You're in a situation that's likely somewhat beyond your control, and you're needing to make it all work for yourself, your spouse, your kids—the entire family system. You and I both know this reality—the life of the military family. It requires us to dig deeply within ourselves to find the necessary resources for navigating our unique stressors.

Like you, my husband, Steve, and I know what it's like for our marriage to have to go into survival mode during extended periods of separation. We know the pressure of caring for children in the midst of huge transitions. We know the challenge of supporting each other when our own personal resources are depleted.

Beyond constantly changing and uncertain jobs, we've weathered work-ups, deployments, last minute orders and moves, an OCONUS PCS with young children, and

the birth of a child overseas. We've navigated unthinkable loss, attending funerals and visiting gravesides, hugging young widows, and finding names on the Memorial Hall wall at the Naval Academy.

From our fourteen-month engagement spent apart, moving to the Middle East eight days after our marriage, the extended task of re-entry back to the States two years ago after a second tour in the Middle East, and everything in-between, nothing has been particularly

## 6 ways to navigate our unique stressors

**1. The body never lies:** We need to take it easy when our bodies are exhausted and hurting and trying to get our attention. Pain, chronic fatigue, and lack of energy are all signs to heed. Limiting commitments for a season—bringing in the borders of family life—is one way we can respond to our body's need for recovery.

**2. We need guides:** God is our ultimate Guide—always with us no matter what. We can experience His amazing love and presence even in the midst of tear gas and war. Additionally, chaplains, pastors or mental health professionals help us get unstuck or keep us from getting stuck. I have needed the wisdom, prayer, and counsel of various guides throughout our many marital and family transitions.

**3. We need friends:** Military families sometimes feel homeless. In Psalm 68:6 of The Message it says, "God makes homes for the homeless." I love this. Even in the most displaced seasons, God brought friends who cobbled together a sweet shelter for my family and me. We aren't meant to travel life alone, and friends can help lighten our load— if we are willing to let them into our real lives.

**4. This is not necessarily a time for life-changing decisions:** Our already stressed and overloaded systems can make things feel urgent when they may not be. Now may not be the best time to make a big decision about your marriage, having another child, or remodeling the kitchen. Certainly, some decisions must be made. But as much as possible, don't make something urgent that doesn't have to be.

**5. Self compassion leads to recovery:** If you get overwhelmed like I tend to, it's easy to turn upon ourselves for not being able to handle everything with ease. "Shoulds" compare us with others, while perfectionism leads to the self-contempt that keeps us stuck. The radical stance we need to take toward recovery is carving out some breathing room, treating ourselves as we would a dear friend.

**6. Self care leads to recovery:** Finding ways to put on our own oxygen mask first allows us to help our family members find theirs. For some this is exercising regularly, going to a place of natural beauty, or spending time on hobbies that fill you up: painting, gardening, cooking. I'm learning if I give myself the time and permission to rest and fill up instead of bully myself into pushing harder, I'm a better wife and mother.

### As Seen in COMMAND

Find out more about author Leeana Tankersley and photographer Katie Gardener online: [ocfusa.org/ocfresources/command-magazine/seen-command](http://ocfusa.org/ocfresources/command-magazine/seen-command)

"normal" for us. It's something you understand.

Steve's highly dynamic community has required me to become comfortable with flexibility, counting on things absolutely changing regardless of what we are told. Though tempted at first to blame Steve, I quickly learned not to punish him for things beyond his control. Rather than let his work drive a wedge between us, we've had to learn how to turn toward each other and be on each other's team instead.

Our family moved back a few years ago to San Diego from a two-year tour in Bahrain—a tour that was both amazing and gnarly, as is every adventure. There were the exciting and interesting moments: eating shawarma while walking through the spice souq, swimming in the Persian Gulf with our kids, and flopping ancient Persian rugs while sipping tea with shop owners and new friends. But then there were uncomfortably disorienting moments too, such as walking out of a restaurant into a cloud of tear gas while pregnant with our youngest, a violent riot between Sunni and Shi'a unfolding across the street. Or the way we at times felt trapped living on a small island with restricted liberties because of ongoing unrest.

After living through those intense extremes in Bahrain, it took our family the better part of a year back stateside to recover. Even though Steve and I have been married nearly twelve years, I'm just now learning how much of military life is about recovery—from moves, changes, war, family separation, trauma.

Time and time again, no matter what our family has to navigate and recoup from, I'm learning it always takes longer than I think—or prefer, frankly—to get my feet back under me. Surviving difficult transitions is no small thing, especially if you are the one primarily responsible for helping your children manage their disorientation. And if we do not take our recuperation seriously, we begin to lose connection with God, ourselves, and those we love most.

I love the passage in Psalm 18:16-19 that talks about the psalmist reaching out to God, being rescued from the waters in which he was drowning, and standing in a wide-open expanse. Such a beautiful image of a God who sees us and wants us to experience His breathing room and broad grace! I believe in the power of reaching out to God as our ultimate Guide, giving Him access to what's going on in our hearts, and allowing Him to bring us up and out of the swirling waters and into the spacious place.

I've learned a number of things over the years that have helped me take better care of my marriage, our family, and myself when in the midst of particularly stressful seasons. For a time we need to listen to our exhausted bodies and avoid life-changing decisions as much as possible. Supportive, compassionate mentors and friends are a must—as is extending self-compassion and self-care to ourselves.

Helping our children feel seen, safe, and unconditionally loved throughout tense times is essential. The best thing I can do for my kids is make sure I intentionally spend time reducing my own stress and fatigue. That investment in myself helps me be present with them and avoid becoming a version of myself none of us wants to experience.

There are few things in military life we can control—almost nothing, at times. But one thing we can control is how we treat ourselves, and that one thing can change everything. If you're in the midst of a stressful season, finding yourself overwhelmed, I so entirely understand this unique military life journey we're on together. First acknowledging your family's need and yours, and then carving out breathing room towards recuperation, can be a life-changing difference for your entire military family. 🌿

### About Leeana

Leeana is the author of "Breathing Room: Letting Go So You Can Fully Live." This writer, Navy wife, and mom is stationed in San Diego with husband, Steve, and their three kids: twins Luke and Lane, and Elle.



Photo by SGT Luther Washington, USA

“Leaving” strategies teens use to create distance from others before a PCS move include avoidance, picking fights, or the “it’s all cool” act. As a parent, consider the RAFT idea as a better coping strategy.

# When PCSing, build a RAFT for teens

By Dr. Dave Sanders and Raine Miller

**A** military teen recounts this transition story: “Summer camp had ended and the parents were there to pick us up. My buddy, Jose, came over to me, gave me a guy hug and said, ‘See you, man.’ I told him I would call him tomorrow, but he said, ‘No, I’m leaving. We’re driving to the airport in thirty minutes. I’m PCSing to Ft. Bragg.’ Before I could even respond, he got in the car and drove away. Unbelievable! I had just spent a week with him, and he hadn’t said anything about moving. I was hurt, and angry, and stunned, and sad. I couldn’t believe that anybody could actually do that!”

Parents need to understand that this kind of “leaving” is not all that unusual for military brats. The most common strategies teens use with one another involve simple avoidance, picking a fight to create distance so it’s easier to leave, disconnecting through moodiness or hyperactivity, or adopting the “It’s all cool” act.

This is why we need to build a RAFT instead! The concept of RAFT comes from *Life in Motion: Growing Through Transitions* by Ruth E. Van Reken and Amy Casteel. The

push-away or neglect strategies actually prolong the transition because teens know they haven’t handled things well and friends are hurt. Living with that wrong sense of leaving can haunt them for years and take its toll on future relationships. As a parent, consider the RAFT idea as a better coping strategy to help your teen develop strength in their relationships and positive patterns for the future.

## Four parts to every RAFT

Here’s how to help kids cope with the inevitable transition by building a RAFT:

### Reconciliation

**Idea:** Resolve unfinished business with anyone you need to put things right, resolve conflict, re-establish friendship.

**Action step:** Ask your teen, “Are there any people you need to talk things out with before we go? I want to help you figure out how to do that. Let’s talk and make a list together.”

### Affirmation

**Idea:** Thank those who have been important in our lives.

**Action Step:** Encourage your military brat to make a list of five people they want to thank for the kindness, counsel, encouragement and/or energy they have generously given. Bonus points if they do it face-to-face.

### Farewell

**Idea:** Say goodbye to people, places, pets and possessions.

**Action Step:** Facilitate and allow your family to take time to revisit meaningful places, people, and things. Ask them, “What will you miss/remember the most? How can we say goodbye and maybe take a token to remember this by?”

### Think destination

**Idea:** Plan ahead for what will be needed to live successfully in the next place.

**Action Step:** Ask things like, “What is the first thing you want to do when we get there (that doesn’t have to do with moving)?” Start and encourage dream sessions about ideal situations or new goals and then come up with a plan to try and make some of them come true (new hobby, change of personal style, different school activity, etc).

The “leaving stage” of transition is when teens begin to see the future and the present with mixed feelings of excitement for what will be gained and sadness for what will be lost. Help your adolescent (and family) cope with these natural reactions by enacting the strategies within RAFT. This will enable healing and a healthy transition and equip them with strategies for a lifetime of resilience.

### 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 PCSing

**1 God’s call for you in the move (Genesis 12:1-5):** If you’ve ever wondered if God understands your issues when it comes to moving with your family—especially with your kids who often have no say at all—the Bible is full of stories about people PCSing. Such as Abraham, who was in and out of various cultures and situations. Sometimes his transitions went well; other times he totally blew it. The takeaway for your family: God called Abraham to PCS, was with him 24/7, and worked through him to bring about His eternal plans.

**2 God’s shaping of you in the move (Genesis 27:1-45):** Abraham’s grandson, Jacob, also moved a lot—and didn’t leave well because of unresolved conflicts. When we PCS without relational junk being dealt with, a few things happen. The anger and pain we feel doesn’t just go away. We carry it with us right into other relationships at new locations. Then in the future if we ever see those strained relationships, embarrassment and fear really eats at us inside, souring our hearts. God’s huge emphasis on reconciliation in Scripture is because He knows the toll it takes on us if not dealt with. Though a long story, you can see how this works out by following Jacob’s life over the years.

**3 God’s promise for you in the move (Daniel 3):** The people of Israel were taken to Babylon as captives. Despite being there against their will, because of their skills Daniel and three of his friends had risen to prominent positions with the king. Yet the ruler could do with them whatever he wanted. Though they seemingly had no control over their external, bodily situation, they had complete control over their faith, internal values, and beliefs. But by trusting God with the outcome, they watched Him display his control, which ultimately led to the king and others worshiping God. Trusting God and holding on to what is right are strategies PCSing families can use in those times of feeling like you have no control.

## Take it further with these steps

**Step 1.** Get together as a family and discuss this idea: when new to a place, as a means of fitting in, have you ever helped out someone? Try finding someone who needs help and lend them a hand. Turn this strategy around if you haven’t PCSed recently: find someone new to your location and ask for their help with something.

**Step 2.** Discuss with your family and friends different ways they’ve used to get connected at a new place. Rate the various stories you have as to the worst (like selling drugs) or the best (joining a club or team) ways to get connected.

**Step 3.** Pray together as a family: “Lord, we pray that you would be close to us as we begin this new journey in our lives. We ask for your blessing on our lives as we begin a new life in a new place, find new friends, and experience new schools and jobs. Shelter us when we are at home, be our companion when we are away, and our welcome guest when we return. In all things, we pray that your presence will be our security, our one constant, when all else is changing. Amen.”

# Congratulations graduates

The ministry of OCF is about touching lives for Jesus Christ, and that's especially true when it comes to reaching the next generation for Him. Through the efforts of OCF's devoted field staff reps, their teams, and local leaders at our nation's service academies and college ROTCs, many of our nation's newest military leaders have been eternally impacted by their tireless ministry efforts. Please take a few moments daily to pray for these newly commissioned officers who are members of OCF or attended OCF activities.

**Armstrong Atlantic State University**  
2LT Sherril Rawlinson, USA

**American University**  
\*2ndLt Antonio Washington, USAF

**Austin Peay State University**  
2LT Zacery Moore, USA

**Baylor University**  
2ndLt Joanna Guhl, USAF

**California State University, Sacramento**  
2ndLt Kacey McKenzie, USAF

**Cedarville University**  
2LT Timothy Gauthier, USA  
2LT Kyle Greene, USA  
\*2LT Megan Van Kampen, USA

**Chief Warrant Officer Professional Development**  
\*CW02 Donald Royal, USCGR

**Citadel**  
2LT Lowell Dixon, USA

**Colorado State University**  
2LT Matthew Brewer, USA

**East Carolina University**  
2ndLt Jenna Colon, USAF  
\*2ndLt Jessica Dulin, USAF

**Eastern Michigan University**  
\*2LT Benjamin Pharis, USA

**Fresno State University**  
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**George Mason University**  
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**Georgia Military College**  
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**Iowa State University**  
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**Kansas State University**  
2LT Aaron Clopton, USA

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\*2ndLt Bethany Cromer, USAF

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2ndLt Karl Schroeder, USAF  
2ndLt Richard States, USAF

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ENS Kelsey Hickle, USCG  
ENS Jonathan Jester, USCG  
ENS Adam Kline, USCG  
ENS Leanna Marlin, USCG  
ENS Jalle Merritt, USCG  
ENS Joshua Moan, USCG  
ENS Bryce Monaco, USCG  
ENS Joshua Payne, USCG  
ENS Jonathan Ray, USCG  
ENS Christopher Saylor, USCG  
ENS Anne Schneider, USCG  
ENS Justin Sherman, USCG

**United States Military Academy**  
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2LT Kirby Ammons, USA  
2LT Caitlin Anderson, USA  
2LT Tyler Bertles, USA  
2LT Hamilton Bonds, USA  
2LT Daniel Brown, USA  
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2LT Andrew Carstensen, USA  
2LT Casey Childers, USA  
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2LT Alyssa Hanson, USA  
2LT Marvin Hargraves, USA  
2LT Amanda Harrison, USA  
2LT Matthew Hewes, USA  
2LT Trent Jones, USA  
2LT Matthew Kane, USA  
2LT Ye Young Kim, USA  
2LT Seth King, USA  
2LT Christopher Kolster, USA  
2LT Valerie Kutsch, USA  
2LT Nicolas Laffosse, USA  
2LT Hope Landsem, USA  
2LT Zachary Lim, USA  
2LT Christmas Linzy, USA



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2LT Hannah Metheny, USA  
2LT Luke Miller USA  
2LT William Miller, USA  
2LT Jamie Moreno, USA  
2LT Daniel Myers, USA  
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2LT Aaron Pell, USA  
2LT Victoria Rao, USA  
2LT Katherine Roose, USA  
2LT James Rozak USA  
2LT Wesley Sakarapane, USA  
ENS Bryan Sandulli, USA  
2LT Albert Sheppard III, USA  
2LT Sally Sittnick, USA  
2LT Douglas Sprowl, USA  
2LT Cody Stamm, USA  
2LT Richard Steele, USA  
2LT Scott Steggerda, USA  
2LT Michael Stein, USA  
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2LT Shalanda Williams, USA  
2LT Walter Woo, USA  
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ENS Shawn Allen, USN  
ENS Andrew Blank Jr., USN  
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ENS Maddie Buck, USN

2ndLt Matthew Dunovant, USMC  
ENS Daniel Godkin, USN  
ENS Benjamin Gonzales, USN  
ENS Daniel Green, USN  
ENS Yoshi Grubbs, USN  
2ndLt Alec Jarm, USMC  
ENS Andrew Jones, USN  
ENS Carrie Langsley, USN  
ENS Eric Longabaugh, USN  
ENS Whitney Morey, USN  
ENS Molly Nantz, USN  
ENS David Parker, USN  
ENS Sierra Parks, USN  
ENS Bryant Renfro, USN  
2ndLt Lauren Riffle, USMC  
ENS Perla Rodriguez, USN  
2ndLt Jake Sanborn, USMC  
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ENS Andrew Stallard, USN  
ENS Tara Steen, USN  
2ndLt Joseph Toole, USMC  
2ndLt Nicolas Towers, USMC  
ENS Brant Verhulst, USN  
ENS Kyle Waldorf, USN  
ENS Joshua Werling, USN

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ENS Lisa Jiang, USN

**University of Central Florida**  
2LT Dylan Gearhart, USA  
2ndLt Rachel Glenn, USAF

**University of Oklahoma**  
2ndLt Morgan Kovachevich, USAF

**University of St. Thomas**  
\*2ndLt Shawn Nevala, USAF

**University of Washington**  
ENS Levi J Ellis, USN

**Virginia Military Institute**  
2LT Fredrick Walker, USA  
2LT Kurt Schommer, USA

**Virginia Tech**  
2LT Danny Deardorff, USA  
\*ENS Matthew Hughes, USN  
\*2ndLt Christopher Miller, USMC  
2LT Matt Reynolds, USA

**Western Michigan University**  
2LT Ryan Taylor, USA

**Various Universities**  
\*2ndLt Evan Draper, USAF  
\*2ndLt Benjamin Harm, USAF  
\*2ndLt Eleni Kistler, USAF  
2ndLt Wes McCann, USAF  
2ndLt Kristi Newberry, USAF  
2ndLt Aaron Pence, USAF  
2ndLt Nicole Provo, USAF  
\*2ndLt Robert Rodgers, USAF  
\*2ndLt Richard Scheff, USAF  
\*OT Chaz Smith, USAF  
\*OT Mariah Strong, USAF  
\*2ndLt Stephen Sweetnich, USAF

\*Late 2014 graduate



WSS photo



Fort Benning OCF photo



Charleston OCF photo

**OCF/VALOR Eastern ROTC retreat—Pennsylvania**

TOP: “Really resonated with the cadets”—Nearly 200 cadre, staff, and sponsors from seven universities attended the OCF/VALOR Eastern ROTC retreat at OCF’s White Sulphur Springs conference center earlier this year. The annual event, which included icebreakers, and junior officer, male/female, and service-specific panels, featured Maj Kate Veseth, USAF, who presented key elements of Christian apologetics. Danny Byram also performed in concert and hosted a music workshop.

**Fort Benning OCF—Georgia**

ABOVE LEFT: *It’s a small world*—Fort Benning OCF local leaders CH(MA) Anthony and Jeanine Randall, USA, host a weekly Bible study that includes 2LT Blake Bucknam, USA (left). Their connection goes back when Bucknam was a sixth grader in the PE class CH Randall taught and was bridged again years later at an Army Ranger graduation. At that ceremony CH Randall gave the invocation and 2LT Bucknam’s

Ranger tab was pinned on him by his brother whose own Ranger tab was pinned on him years ago by CH Randall.

**Charleston OCF—South Carolina**

ABOVE RIGHT: *Fantastic presentation*—Speaker David Dusek (left) encouraged this OCF group with a “phenomenal story... about what it takes to be a father and husband in today’s military.” Key takeaways included: everyone has a story, words are powerful, and you’re in a position of spiritual leadership.

**Send us your #MinistryInAction group photo**

Got a great photo of your group engaging in Bible study, participating in a community or missions project, or just enjoying a special dinner or other event? For consideration in *COMMAND* magazine or OCF Facebook, send your high-resolution photo to Managing Editor Karen Fliedner: [karen.fliedner@ocfusa.org](mailto:karen.fliedner@ocfusa.org).

**Family Leadership Moments**

**Influence requires obedience**

*Then the Lord said to Noah, “Go into the ark, you and all your household, for I have seen that you are righteous before me in this generation” (Genesis 7:1).*

Despite the whirlwind of mankind’s evil all around him, Noah found favor “in the eyes of God” by refusing to compromise to mass lawlessness, self-indulgence, and letting the evil of his day shape him (Genesis 6:5-8). His godly behavior and influence in the home as the father of three sons is something we can also adopt in the workplace as leaders. When you find yourself surrounded by misbehavior, unethical practices and wickedness, a significant testimony to emulate is Noah’s cultivation of right thinking and keen discernment, both safeguards for godly living in an ungodly culture.

When we have our eyes set on godly living, the lust of the flesh has no attraction. We dare to do bold things for God, and will influence others. Noah was 600 years old when he, his wife, sons, and their wives boarded the ark. While the ark was under construction, Noah’s example was so convincing and credible during that 100-year period that his sons followed their father’s lead throughout the project. Cynics say, “No one else listened to Noah. Why is he such a noteworthy person?” The more I think of Noah’s influence in his sons’ lives, the more it blows me away.

What has God commissioned you to do? In your vocation or avocation, are you aware of the influence that your obedience is positioning you to wield? Positive influence on others requires full obedience to God. In your home, church, community and work, steadfast conformity to God’s “always perfect, sometimes counter-intuitive” directions for living is still the way to distinguish yourself for God. It’s impressive that Noah’s influence over his sons was greater than the negative influences around them. Noah honored God, and his sons followed suit.

**Points to Ponder**

- Be intentional about making a lasting, positive influence in the life of another.
- Be aware that influence is often a function of others watching our non-polished or non-published actions.
- Obediently perform what God has given you to do—and keep at it.

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

**More family leadership articles on [ocfusa.org](http://ocfusa.org)**

- [The Profound Power of Parental Blessing](http://ocfusa.org/articles/profound-power-parental-blessing/)
- [The Unconditional Love of a Father](http://ocfusa.org/articles/unconditional-love-father/)

**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 Honor of...**

**MIDN Marco Alejos, USN**  
**Andres Alejos**  
By Mrs. Barcia Alejos

**Dr. Robert Spoede**  
By Dr. & Mrs. Travis Small Jr.

**Linda Dunlap**  
By Mr. & Mrs. Wayne Mihailov

**Col & Mrs. William E. Hudspeth, USAF (Ret.)**  
By Tania Fendel

**Ilene Warner**  
By MG & Mrs. Kevin Bergner, USA (Ret.)

**In Memory of...**

**Linda A. “Mom” McKaughan**  
By LT James & ENS Amy Tynan, USCG  
By Maj & Mrs. James Groves, USAF (Ret.)  
By Leffingwell Baptist Church  
By Mr. & Mrs. Robert MacGregor

By Mr. & Mrs. David Pietraszewski  
By CAPT & Mrs. Lyle Watkinson, USN (Ret.)  
By Mr. & Mrs. John Malatesta  
By Mr. & Mrs. Wayne Brittan  
By LCDR & Mrs. Michael Moyers, USCG  
By CDR Durley

**Evelyn Harrison Kent**  
By CDR & Mrs. Richard Zahn, USNR  
By CDR & Mrs. Frank Cole, USCG (Ret.)  
By Col & Mrs. Charles Cox, USAF (Ret.)

By Mrs. Elizabeth Hoke

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

**Lt Col Guy E. Pulliam, USAF**  
By Patricia Miller

**Lt Col Marvin D. Gardner, USMC (Ret.)**  
By A. J. Gardner

**Nancy Spoede**  
By Dr. & Mrs. Travis Small Jr.

**CAPT Guy Jarratt, USN (Ret.)**  
By Col & Mrs. Thomas Hopkins, USAF (Ret.)

**Births**

**Annabelle Renee Padgett,** 15 February 2015, daughter of **TSgt Ryan and Krisha Padgett, USAF,** Fairfield, CA.

**Samuel Mark Ward,** born 11 November 2014, son of **MAJ Elijah and Jennifer Ward, USA,** Greenville, VA.

**Taps**

**CAPT Guy Jarratt III, USN (Ret.),** 17 March 2015, husband of **Ginny Jarratt,** Rockville, MD. Guy served on OCF Council, 1964-66, 1980-82.

**Orville Stevens,** 29 April 2015, husband of **Joan Stevens,** Westminster, CO.

**Carole Tredinnick,** 10 April 2015, wife of **COL Richard Tredinnick, USA (Ret.),** Gainesville, VA.

**COL Homer Wright, (Ret.),** 11 December 2014, husband of **Lillian Wright,** Lakewood, WA.

**LTC Kit Valentine, USA (Ret.),** 15 September 2014, husband of **Rebecca Valentine,** Baltimore, MD.



Houstoun Waring photo

Col Tom Capps, USAF (Ret.), spoke at the OCF Southeast Region retreat in Alabama.

### OCF hosts inaugural Southeastern region retreat

Deemed “a great success,” the inaugural OCF Southeast Region retreat at Fort Rucker’s Lake Tholocco in Alabama featured Christian fellowship, fun, and “hard-hitting” teaching from speaker Col Tom Capps, USAF (Ret.), on how to incorporate a pray and plan for making biblically based decisions.

OCF field staff reps Houstoun and Tami Waring, Maxwell-Gunter AFB, AL, and Chet and Michelle Arnold, Pensacola, FL, spearheaded the inaugural 20-22 March event, which included a childcare plan with Christian ministry materials specifically tailored to military children.

Tom and Peggy Capps’ testimonies of how God worked His will in their personal and professional lives encouraged attendees and evoked evening discussions where several attendees expressed the desire to be more intentional in living and trusting God more in His plan, timing, and provision.

Fort Rucker garrison commander COL Stu and Helaine McRae, USA, and their children welcomed the OCFers, joined in the events, and also prepared food that included a birthday cake.

The pray and plan process has begun toward another event, possibly occurring more than once a year.

### Spring Canyon hosts Chaplains Retreat

Keynote speaker Chaplain (Major General) Douglas Carver, USA (Ret.), spoke on “The Authority of Jesus” at the Spring Canyon Chaplains Retreat hosted by OCF 24–26 April. It was the eighth year of this springtime chaplains’ event that continually grows in attendance, with this year’s retreat drawing 104 attendees, including sixty youth.

Along with four messages from Chaplain Carver, there was a question and answer breakout session for both the chaplains and their spouses. Danny Byram provided the times of worship.

Consequently, a weekend where chaplains and their families can share their burdens and experiences with each other is an opportunity that they’re rarely afforded. It is a wonderful experience to see the joy of those who have always been the minister to be the ones being ministered to, as one participant observed, “It has been a long time since I’ve been to the well.”

It is easy to lose one’s zeal for the Gospel when one is overwhelmed with administrative duties in isolated settings. As another chaplain explained, “It’s not you all come, it is to be out there among the troops.” In an ever-changing military society where so many have never even heard the Gospel, it is still the role of the chaplain to offer the hope that lies within us to those who are searching.

—Lois and Arnie Ahnfeldt

### OCF welcomes two new Field Staff couples

CDR Carl and Christy Crabtree, USN, and LTC Tim and Kim Stiansen, USA (Ret.), have been selected to serve at two key OCF ministry locations as the new OCF field staff couples.

The Crabtrees will assume leadership at USCGA OCF in June as CDR Hank Teuton, USCG (Ret.), retires from the ministry he and his late wife, Betsy, shepherded there for the past five years. The Stiansens stepped into the seventeen-year “tilling the Fort Leavenworth vineyard” ministry efforts of LTC Tom and Jean Schmidt, USA (Ret.). Tom and Jean’s “incredible leadership, experience, and wisdom,” said OCF executive director, Brig Gen David Warner, USAF (Ret.), have transitioned into the OCF home office’s director of field staff operations position, a post vacated by CAPT Chris Blake, USN (Ret.), who became director of ministry advancement in late 2014.

“We owe Tom and Jean a tremendous shout out for a job well done as they sacrificially and selflessly served Christ,” said OCF’s executive director. “The ripple effects from their ministry will continue to have Kingdom impact in, through, and beyond the military for many, many years to come.”

Brig Gen Warner praised the Teutons’ USCGA ministry work, “We’re in debt to Hank and Betsy Teuton for the dedicated and selfless service they’ve given. Their Christ-centered teaching, fellowship, and growth that the Lord built through them will be their lasting legacy, prospering throughout the Coast Guard, our military, and beyond.”

### OCF Council elections start 1 September

Elections for OCF Council, Class of 2018, begin 1 September. Now is the time to make sure OCF has your current e-mail address as voting will be conducted online, and a link will be sent to you via e-mail. If you and your spouse are both regular members, please ensure we have both e-mail addresses in our database. If you and your spouse share an e-mail, contact Susan Wallis for special instructions.

The September issue of *COMMAND* magazine will contain abbreviated candidate information and voting information. Beginning mid-August the OCF website will have comprehensive candidate information. Eligible members may vote online or request a hard copy ballot. For questions or further details, contact Susan Wallis at 800-424-1984 or [susan.wallis@ocfusa.org](mailto:susan.wallis@ocfusa.org).

### OCF Council spring meeting

## Glimpsing God’s glory, remembering His promise

Your OCF Council had its first meeting of 2015 nestled in the Allegheny Mountains of Pennsylvania, which were beginning to spring alive with new life a couple weeks after Easter. We came together 16-19 April to seek the Lord’s guidance through God’s Word, and in corporate prayer and worship. Our theme verse was “Not to us, O Lord...but to your name give glory” (Psalm 115:1, ESV).

At the conclusion of our opening morning devotion time, God gave a glimpse of His glory, reminding us of one of His promises with an amazing rainbow, which beautifully framed “Hezekiah’s backbone ridge” at OCF’s White Sulphur Springs Conference Center.

LTC Tom and Jean Schmidt, USA (Ret.), were honored at a special ceremony for their seventeen years of ministry at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. With particular attention to “the team,” Eric Hathaway’s passionately personal account of Tom and Jean’s service culminated into an emotional moment when this son in the faith hugged Jean, a Proverbs 31 woman who had lovingly poured so much into him spiritually. Tom said, “God loves us and we have been blessed to get to share His love with others.” Council President, MajGen Mel Spiese, USMC (Ret.), thanked them for their dedication, sacrifice, and the far-reaching impact they’ve had on senior and flag level officers across our military. The Schmidts are transitioning to Tom’s new OCF home office role as director of field operations.

Following an inspirational Pray, Discover and Obey time, OCF executive director, BrigGen David Warner, USAF (Ret.), gave his report and spoke of our uniquely “indigenous” organization with military ministering to military. He acknowledged the many threats and emphasized the incredible opportunities as well as reminding everyone, “our roots are in prayer.” The five-year strategic plan development was a main topic of business. Other highlights of God’s faithfulness during the meeting were reports from the field reps and conference centers. A beautiful example of God’s



OCF Council photo

OCF Council members (from left) Col Paul Riegert, LtCol Hez Barge, and OCF’s director of finance, Maj Dean Millard—all Marines—participated in the Council’s spring meeting.

provision and blessings was seeing CDR Hank Teuton, USCG (Ret.), and his late wife Betsy’s dream of making their “Shepherds Fold” home a permanent OCF facility for ministry at the USCGA become a reality. Hallelujah!

The Council was blessed to host a special visitor, SgtMaj Bryan Battaglia, USMC, the senior enlisted advisor to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Affectionately nicknamed “Sergeant Major America,” Battaglia said, “The passion that I see here is quite impressive. My wife, Lisa, and I are pleased to be here.” He discussed several of the threats to our military, in particular suicide, which led to a discussion about hope and the need people have to experience purpose and meaning in their lives.

Let us continue to unite in prayer and carry on the mission of OCF in our beloved military, looking for opportunities to share the true hope—the life-saving and life-changing power of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

—Lieutenant Commander Chad “Coach” Tidwell, United States Navy

### Warner tapped for Faith Comes By Hearing council

Faith Comes By Hearing (FCBH), a New Mexico-based Christian ministry offering “hope to more than 5.7 billion people through Bible recordings in 883 languages,” recently launched its Aerospace Advisory Council, which includes OCF executive director Brig Gen David Warner, USAF (Ret.) and two other OCF members.

Joining Brig Gen Warner on FCBH’s new council for a three-year term are Col Jim Dutton, USAF (Ret.), a former OCF Council member, and Col Tom Adang, USAF (Ret.), who will serve as board chairman for the FCBH’s Aerospace Advisory Council.

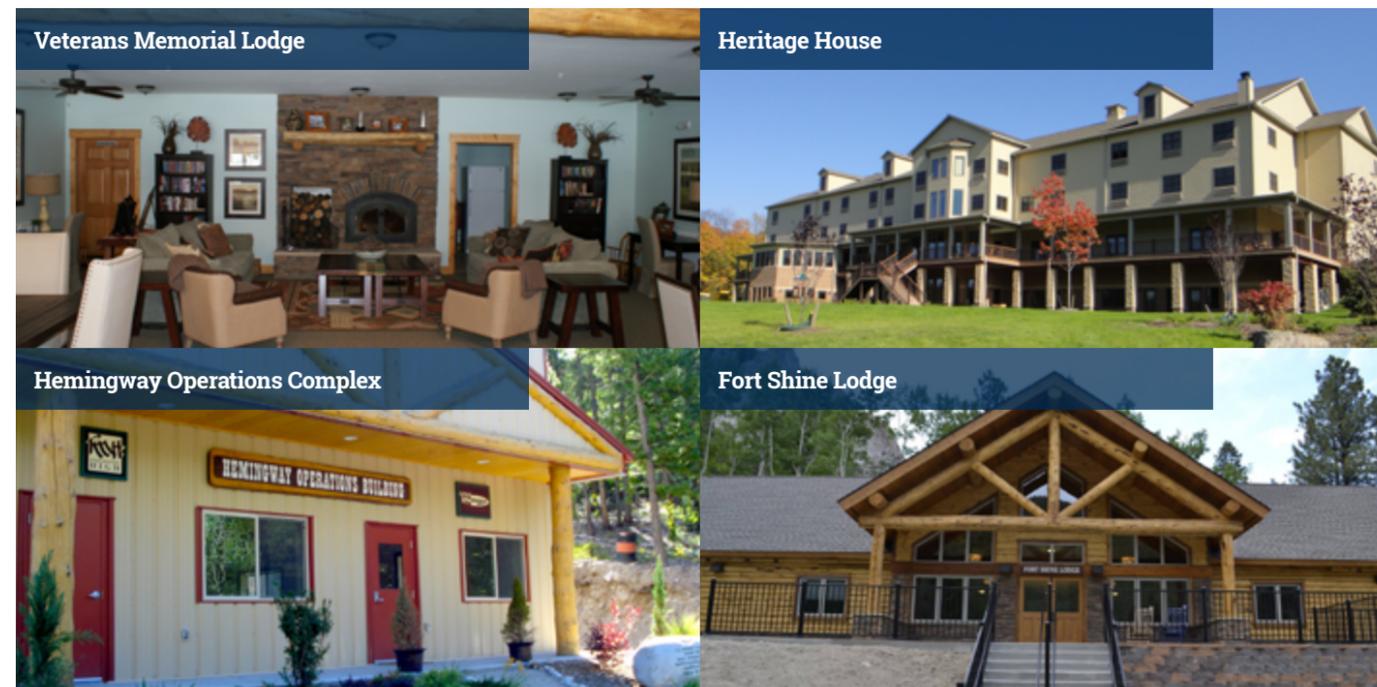
The council will explore the use of aerospace delivery systems and

technologies similar to user defined radio software, as well as virtual SIM applications and spread-spectrum radio technologies.

Using microsatellite networking and other leading communication technology, FCBH expects to reach every person on the planet with digital Scripture. Despite the challenges of reaching the nearly six billion “unconnected” people worldwide, FCBH believes the issues to be solvable “in the very near future.”

Troy Carl, FCBH vice president overseeing this project said, “It’s hard to imagine, but for the first time in human history technology is making the fulfillment of the Great Commission actually possible. We are incredibly hopeful because of the God-given talents of this council.”

Look what God has done



PHASE	GOAL	FUNDING	PROJECT DESCRIPTION	STATUS
Phase 1 White Sulphur Springs	\$7.56M	\$7.56M (100%)	Heritage House	complete
Phase 2 Spring Canyon	\$4.14M	\$2.9M (70%) net of expenses	→ Hemingway Operations Complex	complete
			→ Wastewater Treatment Plant	complete
			→ Veterans Memorial Lodge	complete
			→ Fort Shine Lodge	complete
			→ Hartley Holmes renovation Expanded dining room and kitchen	TBD ECD: 2017-18
Phase 3	\$800,000	\$119,000 (15%)	Scholarships	Ongoing
<b>TOTAL CAMPAIGN</b>	<b>\$12.5M</b>			

Amounts as of May 2015 / OCF photos

# The significance of the dining table

The familiar clanging of the old bell resonates throughout the property—echoing off sheer rock cliffs, across small ponds stocked with trout, and through stands of aspen and pine. It's mealtime at OCF's Spring Canyon Conference Center, where 165 hungry guests and staff crowd into the dining hall and onto the outdoor deck of Hartley Holmes Lodge. They have come to this spiritual depot to be refreshed—wary from the exhausting operational tempo of life in today's military society.

There's nothing quite like big, family-style meals filled with good food and conversation. When you gather for a meal, you receive more than physical nourishment—the dining table is a place where people come together to share life. It's a place where the family of Christ comes together in His name.

However, the dining tables at Spring Canyon are crowded—elbow room only. When the retreat center approaches maximum capacity of almost 200, tables that normally seat six or eight must add an extra chair, maybe two, because the forty-year-old dining room, which adequately seats only 124, is no longer able to meet the needs of those who need it most.

Once the chairs in the dining hall are filled, guests or staff need to find room on the outdoor deck—weather permitting. In the snowy months, the retreat center must limit the number of guests and groups to less than 145 because there isn't enough room to feed everyone indoors. This means Spring Canyon will turn away groups, resulting in lost relationships, ministry, and revenue.

Funding the expansion of the Hartley Holmes Lodge and the dining room to seat and feed 200 guests at Spring Canyon is our next big initiative. We need to meet the increased demand for dining space at Spring Canyon.

### Look what God has done

Ten years ago the membership of OCF came together in forty days of prayer and fasting before God to seek His will and direction for the ministry. Since 2005, God

has graciously prompted more than 2,300 OCF members and friends to provide the funds to allow OCF to build more than \$10 million of much-needed expansions and upgrades at both Spring Canyon and White Sulphur Springs along with improving our utility infrastructure.

### An opportunity to expect more

Physically, the final push of the campaign at Spring Canyon means building a larger dining room. It means growing our capacity by nearly double, allowing us the ability to multiply the number of different groups we can serve at any given time and eliminating the logistical constraints of trying to feed so many in a room where every inch is filled to its limit. But spiritually, this final phase of the campaign carries an even greater significance as we build truth into people's lives enabling them to better integrate their faith and profession as Christian military leaders.

### Look what God is doing

Your partnership is about more than just the outward, tangible expansion of a building. It's an investment in the hearts and lives of people. It means more fellowship to be had, more friendship to be kindled, more life-changing connections with God and with each other. It's exciting to see what God is doing through OCF. Please join us in seeing the Growing and Building Campaign to completion. Join us in praying. Join us in giving.



**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](http://www.ocfusa.org/donate)

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ON THE COVER: Photo submitted by Matt & Carrie Boyd

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## Ready for OCF Summer Fun?

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.

***Act now! There's still time to register for a summer session >>>***

Sign up for one of our exciting summer programs now by going to [SpringCanyon.org](http://SpringCanyon.org) or [WhiteSulphurSprings.org](http://WhiteSulphurSprings.org).

