

Christian perspectives on life in the military

# COMMAND

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### Welcome others into God's 'family'

We strive to keep biblical principles about the family at the forefront and champion them, and we demonstrate family through the witness of our conduct and actions.

### Why do good marriages go bad?

Distinctive military stressors play a role, but rooted deeper in the hearts and minds of each person exists the real answer—false thinking.

### Newly Commissioned Officers

Join us in praying for those who are members of OCF or attended OCF activities as they prepare to run the race God has called them to do for Him.



# Who Will Catch You?

Why every military family needs a strong support system



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# OCF is known for nurturing the family

Demonstrate Christ to the world by welcoming others into the ‘family’ of God

My entire life has been a military one. At the age of eight—having lived in San Antonio, Texas, for three years—and after a long day at school, I asked when we were leaving again. With five moves under my belt already, I was ready for new adventures. This military lifestyle I’d grown accustomed to at an early age had forever ruined me from what’s considered an ordinary life. It also shaped me in what I think of when it comes to family.



**DAVID  
WARNER**

Executive  
Director

One afternoon while playing Euchre, a favorite card game, I chose my friend Susan to be my partner. Her family and ours had been assigned together in the move from Hawaii. Over the previous seven years, Susan and I had shared the same experiences, cried the same tears, and learned many of the same lessons together. My aunt was appalled that I would choose someone outside the family as a partner. It confused me because Susan was “family.” Such is the military life and our concept of family.

So what is a family? Merriam-Webster dictionary defines it as a group of people who are related to each other and/or a person’s children. There are many types of families: nuclear, extended, blended, empty nest, complex, traditional, foster, adopted, church, military—and the list goes on and on.

In stripping away the labels to take a closer look, here are some of the attributes of what a true family provides its members, regardless of blood or legal ties:

- Shared values, beliefs, and traditions
- Common experiences and activities
- Unconditional, non-judgmental support and love

Francis Chan tells the story in “Forgotten God” of a former gang member who began attending his church. After a few weeks went by, Chan no longer saw him. He eventually discovered that the young man left because he felt more at home, more a part of a family with his fellow gang members. In his gang he felt unconditional acceptance as compared with the stares, condescensions, and mutterings he experienced in the church.

This should break all of our hearts as it did Chan’s. That very feeling of being at home and being accepted as a part of a family is a big measure of what OCF has always been known for, and that love and acceptance is something we hope and pray is always lived out through OCF small groups and retreats.

One of our OCF Pillars is “Nurturing the Family.” I love this pillar. It has ministered greatly to all of us. Many of the young men and women entering the military today, unfortunately, have no idea what a family is, feels like, or should look like. What a great opportunity we in the

ministry of OCF have to show and demonstrate to others what a family truly is.

In this issue of *COMMAND* we underscore the importance of a family support system. Doug Hedrick, an Army Reserve command chaplain, offers thoughts on developing a strong support family system amidst the challenges of frequent moves and separations. OCF’s Family Outreach and Puget Sound field staff reps, Larry and Bobbie Simpson, share their observations about false thinking from ungodly cultural influences and how it affects resilience in marriage over the long haul. Be sure to check out the summer activities and programs now underway at OCF’s White Sulphur Springs and Spring Canyon Conference Centers. Don’t miss what God has in store for you through a life-changing retreat.

Keeping God as the foundation of the family is foremost of what we believe in OCF. Because the physical family is the most important building block in society, OCF’s spiritual pillar of Nurturing the Family is not only spot on—it’s critical. As believers in Jesus Christ and His unchanging truth, we are adopted into God’s spiritual family, as Paul writes in his letter to the Galatians:

**So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise (Galatians 3:26-29).**

We strive to keep biblical principles about the family at the forefront and champion them. I challenge everyone within OCF to not only “nurture” the family, but also demonstrate it through the witness of our conduct and actions. There’s not a greater outreach nor a more powerful statement you can make than by welcoming others into the “family” of God. 🙏



USCGA OCF photo

## OCF USCGA

**We have a new cadet leadership team.** They bring a lot of enthusiasm and great ideas for the Kingdom. We have an outreach team, an improved schedule and plan, and a great vision. It's great to see cadets reaching out and parroting back to you what you are teaching them!

**Carl and Christy Crabtree** // OCF Field Staff reps

## OCF USNA

**Bryan and Sherri Burt** // OCF Field staff reps

### Missions trip updates

Spring Break allowed twenty midshipmen to grow deeper in their faith and to minister to others. OCF sponsored three events, which included a team doing ministry in high schools and work projects in local communities in El Salvador. Another team helped rebuild homes in Andrews, South Carolina, that were flooded out during Hurricane Joaquin. And a third team spent solo time with God in the backdrop of the Shenandoah mountain range on the Appalachian Trail. All of these trips were midshipmen-planned and led, with the trips' focus on growing the mids deeper in their faith with God, in

friendships among one another, and developing a heart for service in their community and later in the military.

Through connecting with, ministering to, and praying for the people we came in contact with, you could see the hand of God acting in the lives of the midshipmen and also the people we served. Three individuals from our teams were baptized—for the first time or in recommitment to Christ!

## OCF USMA

**Tom and Cheri Austin** // OCF Field staff reps

### Dominican trip

The Dominican Republic missions trip was a rousing success! Combining with the Sunday night service and the Naviga-

tors, the team included two families that joined twenty-six enthusiastic cadets and "Farmer" Bill Kennedy—who's accompanied these groups since 2000.

We built two houses for families. The locals were highly organized, with a poured concrete foundation and pre-cut studs, so that the houses were almost completed in three days. That allowed time to visit a leper hospital and an orphanage for special needs children. "Chocolate de Amor" was an evangelical outreach tool done each week where team members handed out hot chocolate at the train station while saying, "God loves you." The cadets are thinking of ways to recreate that particular event here on campus. The entire trip was a life-changing experience for each in many ways.

## OCF USAFA

**Steve and Rita Wade** // OCF Field staff reps

### Serving Syrian refugees

Wow, what a serious commitment to go and serve: One of our cadets traveled to Greece and served the Syrian refugees. While there, the government of Greece changed the status of the "refugees" to "detainees," and our cadet saw camps turned into detention centers with armed guards posted.

Some of her thoughts: "We invited some of the Afghan women to help us prepare lunch and they took over our kitchen and cooked us a spicy Afghan pasta dish with our limited supplies. And when it came time to eat, they fed us first. It was a warming gesture as we realized that although they were our guests at the camp, we were their guests for the meal!

Working in the clothing tent, we helped replace worn-out/dirty clothes for the refugees. We also served food during meal-times. And we reconnected with families we met earlier, quite touching to see the spark of recognition in their eyes when they saw us, to have the children run up to ask us to play. It was a rare moment of warm, genuine human interaction, without the weight of refugee vs. volunteer—just

*Continued on Next Page* ►

human-to-human.

In a state of fear and uncertainty, people think about themselves and their own survival. It was quite evident in the camp, and clearly showed me the necessity for Jesus in our lives—to overcome the baseness of our human nature, our selfishness, and our natural instinct for survival. Jesus does not give us a spirit of fear but empowers us to lay down our

lives and take up our crosses. I think the call of the cross compels us to put the needs of others above ourselves—that we could do more for those who can't do anything for themselves."

*Editor's note: more details about this story will be in a future issue of COMMAND magazine.*

**Council News**

**Lieutenant Nate Barnes // USCG**

**OCF Spring Council meeting wrap-up**

Your OCF Council gathered mid-April to worship, pray, and seek the Lord's will for how to effectively serve our military community with the good news of the

**Births**

**Vera Maria Potts**, born 19 February 2016, daughter of **1stLt Natasha Holm** and **1stLt Glenn Potts, USMC**, Camp Lejeune, NC.

(Ret.), 21 November 2015, Oklahoma City, OK.

**Lt Col James Winter USAF (Ret.)**, 12 December 2015, husband of **Linda Winter**, Fresno, CA.

By COL & Mrs. Travis H. Small Jr., USA (Ret.)

**MIDN Abigail White, USN**  
By Mr. & Mrs. Tim White

**PFC Jessica Lynch, USA**  
By Mr. Donald A. Williams

By Colonel & Mrs. John R. Black  
By Mr. & Mrs. John M. Holman  
By Mr. John K. Asante  
By Ms. Carol W. Young

**CAPT Irvin W. Lindemuth, USCG (Ret.)**  
By Mrs. B. Carolyn Lindemuth

**CAPT Michael Dallam, USNA (Ret.)**  
By CAPT & Mrs. Paul D. Imo Jr., USN (Ret.)

**Joyce Patrick**  
By Col. & Mrs. Robert B. Patrick, USAF (Ret.)

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

**LTC Steven (Mike) Dougan, USA (Ret.)**  
By Mrs. Kyong Dougan

**Lt Col James G. Winter, USAF (Ret.)**  
By Mr. & Mrs. Randall L. Bishop

**Weddings**

**2ndLt George Waring, USAF**, married **Sidney Brothers**, 19 December 2015. Their home is Carbondale, IL.

**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 OCF.

**Ralph Martin**  
By Ms. Melinda Martin-Guess

**Secretary Robert McDonald**  
By Maj. Wesley T. Carter, USAF (Ret.)

**Capt Mark McDowell, USAF**  
By Capt Christopher D. Peterson, USAF

**COL Billy F. Miller, USA (Ret.)**  
By CH(COL) & Mrs. Robert R. Covington Jr., USA (Ret.)

**Col Rob Woodruff, USAF (Ret.)**  
By Col. & Mrs. Clifford Henning Jr., USAF (Ret.)  
By Mrs. Sara W. Ingram

**Rev. Richard C. Brookes**  
By Lt Col & Mrs. Anthony Villalobos, USAF

**1LT Jonathan Shine, USA**  
By Mr. & Mrs. Robert W. Yaap  
By MG & Mrs. Michael J. Nardotti Jr., USA (Ret.)

**COL Ronald C. Baldwin, USA (Ret.)**  
By Mr. George B. Cauthen  
By Mrs. Patti Hammond  
By Mr. & Mrs. William C. Hunter

By Ms. Karen M. Joss  
By Ms. Stephanie J. Bond  
By Mr. John W. Witters  
By Nelson Mullins Riley & Scarborough LLP  
By MSgt & Mrs. Timothy E. Reichert, USAF (Ret.)  
By Mr. John Wright  
By MG & Mrs. David R. Gust, USA (Ret.)

By Mr. Thomas K. Seybold  
By Mr. Larry Singer  
By Mr. Ronald D. Harris  
By Ms. Elizabeth Moss

**Taps**

**COL Ronald Baldwin, USA (Ret.)**, 15 February 2016, husband of **Jeri Baldwin**, Lexington, VA.

**In Honor of... CDR & Mrs. Bryan Burt, USN (Ret.)**  
By Mr. Kyle T. Waldorf

**USMA Class of 1978**  
By COL & Mrs. Kim R. Kadesch, USA

**In Memory of... Betsy Teuton**  
By LTJG Rachel L. Christensen, USCG  
By LT & Mrs. Nathan D. Barnes, USCG

**CPT Jeffrey Davis, USA**  
By COL & Mrs. Richard B. Davis Jr., USA (Ret.)

**Dorthea Gillam, Donald Offutt, Lt Col Joe Telford, USAF (Ret.)**  
By CAPT & Mrs. O. W. Camp Jr., USNR (Ret.)

**Gladys Hawley**  
By Mr. & Mrs. Calvin W. Bedford  
By Mr. & Mrs. Stephen H. Bakke  
By Mr. Kenneth A. Bakke

**CDR Eugene Beaumont, USN (Ret.)**, 26 January 2016, husband of **Nilda Beaumont**, Ashburn, VA.

**CDR George H. Teuton, USCG (Ret.)**  
By CAPT & Mrs. Larry J. Olson, USCG (Ret.)

**Nancy Spoeede**  
by COL & Mrs. Travis H. Small Jr., USA (Ret.)

**Andrew Baer**  
By COL & Mrs. Robert A. Baer, USA  
By COL & Mrs. Gregory H. Graves, USA (Ret.)  
By Mr. Larry Baer  
By Ms. Gabi Everett  
By Mrs. Helena M. Gerard  
By Ms. Martha E. Johnson  
By Mr. & Mrs. Thomas W. Lloyd  
By Ms. Stephanie Metzler  
By Ms. Melissa Snyder  
By Mr. Peter Woolley

**CDR Richard Zahn, USNR (Ret.)**  
By Ms. Barbara Kronewitter

**CPT & Mrs. Benjamin Marquez, USA**  
By CPT A. Edward Major III, USA

**Debora Porto**  
By Mr. Lucas Torres

**Donald Henderson**  
By LTC & Mrs. Larry D. Henderson, USA (Ret.)

**Dr. Martin C. Carlisle**  
By Mr. Luke T. Jones  
By Ms. Reagan A. Mullin

**MAJ Robert Spoeede, PhD, USA**

**Maj Shawn Campbell, USMC**, 14 January 2016, husband of **Kelli Campbell**, Kailua, HI.

**CAPT Irvin Lindemuth, USCG**, 4 February 2016, husband of **Carolyn Lindemuth**, Warsaw, IN.

**Bennett Maddock**, 10 March 2016, son of **LCDR Erik and Nicole Maddock, USNR**, Montgomery, AL.

**LTC Roger Redhair, USA (Ret.)**, 1 February 2016, husband of **Mary Redhair**, Duncanville, TX.

**CAPT David Swafford, USN**

Gospel. Council members from across all services and ranks arrived at White Sulphur Springs's peaceful acreage where we began to quiet our hearts and minds. The theme of the weekend from Zechariah 4:6, "... 'Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,' says the Lord Almighty," guided us as we embarked on the work ahead.

Much of the weekend's discussion revolved around OCF's strategic framework. Lots of prayer and work between the staff and council has gone into developing the following areas we feel the Lord is leading us to focus on: member engagement and growth, growing Christian military leaders, delivery of ministry, and stewarding resources. It was humbling to hear about the Lord's goodness and blessing upon this ministry and the exciting opportunities we have to serve Him in the future.

Before jumping into our weekend's "to do" list, (CH)COL Mark Gauthier, USA, led us in two hours of prayer and worship using the Lord's Prayer as our guide. It was a wonderful time of humbling ourselves before the Lord and reflecting on His goodness. OCF executive director, Brig Gen David Warner, USAF (Ret.), shared a very encouraging report of where OCF has come from, where we are, and where we're headed. WSS director, LTC Paul Robyn, USA (Ret.), shared the past year's wonderful growing ministries and financial blessings at WSS. We also heard from and prayed for LTC Tim and Kim Stiansen, USA (Ret.), Fort Leavenworth's new field staff reps, and MG Gregory and Kathy Schumacher, USA (Ret.), National Capital Region's new volunteer associate staff reps.

## OCF Council elections start 1 September

Class of 2018 elections begin 1 September. All regular members eligible to vote need to ensure OCF has current e-mail addresses for the election taking place online. Spouses sharing an e-mail account should contact Heidi Martin for special instructions. Hard copy ballots are available by request.

Mid-August the OCF website will have comprehensive candidate information with abbreviated information in September's COMMAND magazine.

For questions or further details, contact

## OCF USMA

*"Our trip to the Dominican Republic was incredible. We witnessed what it meant to be sold out for Christ. The trip changed my life as God is calling me into a deeper and closer walk with Him."*

USMA Cadet, Class of 2018

Heidi Martin: [heidi.martin@ocfusa.org](mailto:heidi.martin@ocfusa.org) or 800-424-1984. If any of your contact information has changed, go to [ocfusa.org/contact](http://ocfusa.org/contact) to update it for our records.

## Ministry News

### Transition Strategies Workshop wrap-up

Almost two dozen military leaders recently attended the second Transition Strategies workshop at OCF's White Sulphur Springs conference center to jump-start the essential planning process needed to successfully exit the military into new arenas.

Conducted by the Caleb Challenge ministry, the workshop provided attendees with biblically based insights and tools to intentionally explore "not just what God wants you to do when the time comes for you to leave the military, but what He wants you to become," said Col Bill Spencer, USAF (Ret.), one of the five senior officers of the Caleb Challenge transition coaching team.

That intent especially resonated with a colonel who commented on his experience at the 1-3 April event, "The workshop addressed the most important factor for me in my transition: seeking God's heart."

One sustaining takeaway from the

event for another transitioning military leader was, "to move away from the notion of looking for a job that I might find satisfying to figuring out where—with God's calling and gifting—I should go, and then respond to that." For another officer, it was the "idea that we are discovering what God has already created, not having to create the next steps ourselves... that this is a journey of discovery more than creation."

While first impressions of doing "ministry work for God" tends to evoke images of being on the mission field overseas, Col Spencer said the workshop's core counsel is in being "obedient to whatever God has for you next in light of your uniqueness as God's workman (Ephesians 2:10), no matter where He places you. It's not pushing people in any one direction, like being a missionary to Africa. Anywhere you are is a place for kingdom work."

**Upcoming Transition Strategies events 21-23 October**, White Sulphur Springs, details at [whitesulphursprings.org/agenda/transition-strategies-conference/](http://whitesulphursprings.org/agenda/transition-strategies-conference/)

**11-13 November**, inaugural workshop at OCF's Spring Canyon Conference Center over Veterans Day weekend, contact Spring Canyon at [888-663-1417](tel:888-663-1417).

**Caleb Challenge:** [calebchallenge.org](http://calebchallenge.org)



*LCpl Jacob Barber, USMC*

Military life isn't easy, and it's important for families and individuals to develop support systems to work through a challenging lifestyle.

## Developing a support system is crucial to the health of military families

By Chaplain Major Doug Hedrick, United States Army Reserve

When a military family chooses to be part of the military community, there are a number of challenges they will face—from frequent moves and long separations, to missed family activities and careers put on hold. Maneuvering successfully through these challenges requires an enormous amount of time, energy, and emotional investment. It also requires military families to put in their rucksack the one tool that will enable them to live victoriously—a strong support system.

The first few years of my marriage were a struggle. I cannot tell you how many times the word “divorce” was uttered. I thought I knew enough and was more than capable to make it on my own. My wife and I were intelligent professionals and highly accomplished. However, lurking behind my reluctance to seek out the help of my support system was pride. I really did not want others to know what was going on in our marriage because of how it would make me look. I did not want the people in my life to know what was going on because of how I would be perceived. I was supposed to be the person who had

everything together and who others went to for help, not the other way around.

Things began to change when a group of friends who had gotten wind of what was going on in our marriage pooled their money together to pay for us to attend a weekend marriage conference. When I told my wife about what they had planned for us, tears welled up in her eyes. Brokenness and quiet desperation was written on her face. I knew it was time to act. If it had not been for our support system, I can honestly say that our marriage would have ended years ago.

# Four godly ways to create a support system for your teen

By **Dave Sanders**, senior author/editor for RezLife and American Bible Society

Even the most supportive families realize they can't provide on their own everything each family member needs. It's especially critical for raising your military kid that others provide harboring environments for their growth. In 1 and 2 Timothy, we find great insights on supporting a young person in their life of faith and following Jesus. The author, Paul, has known Timothy since he was an adolescent and is now his father in the faith, his spiritual mentor. Through these Scriptures, he now offers us some godly ideas on supporting our military teens.

## 1. Find a spiritual mentor

There's nothing like a caring adult to walk with a young person on their developmental journey of becoming their own person and separating from parents. It's normal that for a few years, mom and/or dad need another voice echoing the same supportive messages into their child's life. Look for a local youth pastor, Club Beyond leader, chaplain, retiree, another parent, a coach or others who love Jesus and count it a privilege to invest in your kid. Then, connect them and give them space.

## 2. Make chapel or church a priority

Here's where you find a family of people who understand God's grace. Even if your teen is not a willing participant, they will experience getting wet in the river of grace! Messages of affirmation and love and kindness and joy will wash over your son or daughter even as they may resist like a large rock in a stream. After time, the rock is transformed into a smooth stone, but first it has to be in the moving water!

## 3. Study Scripture and pray

Get your teen engaged with the Scriptures. Use a teen Bible, a 40-day reading plan, the RezLife.com website, a devotional/journaling Bible. Share what you are doing and model it in front of them. God's word transforms! And pray through their triumphs and disappointments. Prepare them for the life-battle through prayer. As a supportive parent, don't prevent their pain, but rather caringly listen and pray with them through it.

## 4. Serve others and give generously

Time, talent and treasure are what every kid has to offer someone else. There's nothing like serving others to provide perspective on your teen's needs, and there's nothing like investing their resources in God's Kingdom to offer a completely new angle on life. Both of these avenues support your teen's character development and life focus.

Why is a support system important? One reason is this—it's biblical. God created humans with the innate need to be in relationship with others, or said another way, to be part of a support system. Concerning a husband and wife, God said, "it is not good that man should be alone" (Genesis 2:18); concerning His church, He compared it to that of a physical body, that "For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body" (1 Corinthians 12:12,14); and regarding friendships, God said, "Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another" (Proverbs 27:17).

No person or couple has everything they need or has all the answers to do life successfully by themselves. Keep in mind "to support" simply means to give assistance, and it can take many forms: the person who volunteers to check on their neighbor's house while they are out of town; the church group who delivers meals to a family who just gave birth to a child; the friends who volunteer to babysit so that another couple has time to work on their marriage; or maybe it's the person who is willing to sit and listen over a cup of coffee to a friend who needs advice on how to handle a difficult situation.

In each case, it is the support system that helps give peace of mind and allows the individual, couple, or family to know that someone loves them and cares for them. In a sense, a biblical support system is not unlike what the military has coined as having a "battle buddy."

One of the themes I have often heard from military couples is that they were unaware how important a support system would become until they experienced their first deployment or extended time away from each other. Such was the case with a young military couple I counseled once: "Jake" and "Sarah." Having just found out the good news that they were expecting their first child, the couple received word that Jake would be deploying for 13 months to the Middle East. After his departure and without a support system in place, Sarah told me she became increasingly depressed and anxious.

This went on for several weeks until one day when Sarah met another military spouse while out walking her newborn daughter. It was only when she finally took action by attending church—after receiving multiple invitations—and began meeting regularly with a group of military women that Sarah says her outlook began to change for the better. With this new support system, Sarah found a place where she could not only receive prayer and be honest about her struggles, but also help others in the group to successfully navigate challenging situations similar to hers—it was a place where iron sharpened iron.

The couple went on to tell me the success of their first deployment—and their marriage—was directly related to the strong support system Sarah received from the group of women whom she referred to as her "life-line." That is what a support system is there for—to help you make it through a difficult time or challenging season of life.

Take time to examine your own support system, or if you do not have one, get started now. The health of a marriage can often hinge upon the strength of the support system that has been established. ✂

## About Doug

Doug, who serves as a command chaplain in the Army Reserve, is the founder and president of Centurion's Watch, a faith-based nonprofit organization dedicated to building strong military families. The servant leader and speaker produces a weekly blog on topics such as marriage, faith and leadership for a global audience. Find out more at [centurionswatch.org](http://centurionswatch.org).

## Centurion's Watch on social media:

**Facebook:** [facebook.com/militarymarriage](https://facebook.com/militarymarriage)

**Twitter:** [twitter.com/centurionswatch](https://twitter.com/centurionswatch)



*Puget Sound OCF photo*

How do we overcome false thinking? Our power for change is in the great exchange: "...our old man was crucified with Christ, that the body of sin might be done away with, and that we should no longer be slaves of sin" (Romans 6:6). By the Spirit's power, we say no to sin and yes to Christ.

## False thinking can poison any marriage

By Colonel Larry and Bobbie Simpson, United States Air Force, Retired, OCF Family Outreach and Puget Sound field staff reps

Red-eyed and weary-hearted, Beth begins a scenario we've heard far too often in our ten years of marriage ministry: "Bob and I no longer have anything in common. After fifteen years of this military marriage, where I give so much and get so little, I'm bone tired of this pace and his neglect. If God wanted this marriage to work, things would have changed years ago."

Bob's response to Beth's "bone tired" cry is typical—he works hard, seeks promotion for his family's welfare, and enjoys bits of free time when he can. Sure, he's rarely there, but his efforts make possible the good life they have. He rarely feels truly appreciated.

Beth and Bob's story is not unique. In our own marriage throughout twenty-seven years of active duty service, we're all too familiar with the unique challenges placed on military marriages and families. Deployments, high ops tempo, and frequent relocations make change the constant, resulting in geographic or emotional disconnectedness from long limbo-like waiting periods.

In our ministry work as OCF's family outreach couple, we've seen countless couples agonize over trying to keep love aglow in their homes. While some pairs seemingly possess built-in self-corrections for weathering their de-

manding lives, others wallow in wondering—is a thriving marriage even possible?

What goes awry in the hearts of God-loving people that brings them to the edge of the "I'm through working on this marriage" precipice? While the distinctive military stressors play a role, rooted deeper in the hearts and minds of each person exists the real answer—false thinking.

False thinking is anything that stands against the knowledge and veracity of God and His Word. It's an effective weapon in the enemy's campaign against God's children to thwart their obedience and effectiveness, where words and actions lack godly truth. False thinking flourishes so profusely in our culture that even those claiming a saving relationship with God through Jesus Christ instead function by the fabricated truths they've created—selective pieces of Jesus' teachings merged with

convenient secular philosophies.

False thinking allows careworn couples to exempt themselves from biblical truths of commitment and fidelity, with musings such as, “I am not happy. God wants me to be happy. Therefore, I am free to pursue happiness.” Such musings make disobeying God or breaking covenant with a spouse easier, and also paves a chaotic path into personal dissatisfaction or unmet expectations: “I will make rank;” “My children will excel and be great role models;” “My spouse will be outgoing and proficient.”

By excluding God’s ways as factors, this skewed thinking pattern holds career advancement, marital success, and parenting satisfaction hostage to impossible standards. Even our definition of what it means to be Christian becomes hijacked by culture operating outside of God’s truth.

This me-first mentality, starkly apparent in too many marriages today, hinders us from unswervingly loving and honoring one another as we once vowed we would. Given voice, it says...

**“If I love with abandon, I will be hurt, betrayed, disappointed, even devastated.”** Right thinking demolishes fear as a motive for withholding love. Marriage kindled by love rather than fear is full, fruitful. As Paul declares, we have not been given a spirit of fear, but of power, of love, and of a sound mind (2 Timothy 1:7).

**“I think I could love that way if someone loved me the same without faltering.”** Hear self’s demand for reciprocity? Right thinking no longer seeks what it can get out of relationships and instead takes a cue from Paul who cautions doing nothing from selfish ambition or conceit (Philippians 2:3-4). The Spirit-filled self considers others’ needs in consistent ways. Marriages can receive fresh infusions daily when we think of our spouses first.

**“I made a mistake choosing this person. I deserve to be happy.”** This entitlement mentality asserts itself in Christian marriages where each has come to be served, not to serve. Christ humbly surrendered His divine privileges so that we could be made right with God (Philippians 2:6-7). True joy, satisfaction and peace take up residence in marriages when right-thinking husbands and wives serve one another.

**“My children did not sign up for this lifestyle. They should have a more stable life with a dad/mom who shows up.”** Appropriately, parents should advocate for their children. But erroneously labeling a spouse’s actions as unfair occurs when one parent compiles an unwritten list of “must haves” for the other that’s based upon self-absorbed criteria such as comparison. In this worldview, performance is the standard for love and harmony to even exist. For right-thinking spouses or couples, thinking the best of the other often spurs on a greater desire to persevere through every circumstance with hope (1 Corinthians 13:5-7).

Whatever the incentive, when our thinking becomes self-centric, truly loving our spouses and families for a

## Strategies to maintain Right Thinking or to correct False Thinking

**Surrender your mind and philosophies to God.** Offer yourself, marriage, parenting, and career to God. Relinquish every desire, need, and waking hour to His guidance, and invite His perfect use for all of it. (Romans 12:1, Proverbs 3:5-6).

**Acknowledge error and take all thoughts captive.** Exhale self-focused, negative, non-Scriptural thoughts. Confess wrong attitudes toward your spouse and kids, such as belittling, withholding affection, comparing them to others, or refusing conflict resolution. Disconnect from false thinking sources. Reject perilous concoctions in your mind.

**Think of yourself rightly.** Empty yourself of prerogatives by following Christ’s example. Think the best of others. Begin to place another’s coming to know God’s love and grace as a higher priority than your own rights or reputation (Philippians 2:3-4, 5-8).

**Recall and rehearse truth.** Express words of true affirmation to each other, whether in writing, thinking, or speaking. They will produce change in your marriage outlook. Meditate on how your spouse provides or cares for your children and home. Recall your feelings of first love in the marriage God’s given you. Believe God’s promises: He loves us. He will not abandon us. Our struggles are not too big for Him to handle.

**Be slow to take offense.** Be quick to hear, slow to speak, and slow to take offense (James 1:19-20). See the good in your spouse. If your spouse’s annoyance has used up all the grace you think you have, dig deeper. Consider Christ’s long-suffering, patient love for you—and pay it forward.

lifetime as Christ loves us ceases to be our goal.

Beth asserts, “If God wanted this marriage to work, things would have changed years ago.” Absent Bob contends his hard work is unappreciated. In our years of ministering to couples like them, marital struggles always came down to making choices: either trust God’s guidance for their lives or their own flawed predisposition.

We don’t know if Beth and Bob weathered their marital storm. But we have seen other couples draw closer together in resilient marriages by addressing their own thinking, resisting cultural entrapments, and keeping God in the center of their lives. ✝

### About Larry and Bobbie

Married for thirty-nine years, Larry and Bobbie are OCF’s Family Outreach staff couple and Puget Sound field staff reps. They founded OCF’s Spiritually Smart Family Conferences, where they’ve worked with many military couples, individuals and chaplains nationwide at multiple marriage enrichment events. Larry and Bobbie have three children and five grandchildren. Contact Larry and Bobbie at [ocfoutreach@comcast.net](mailto:ocfoutreach@comcast.net).

# Congratulations, Class of 2016

Reaching our next generation of military leaders for Jesus Christ, touching lives for Him one person at a time—that's the investment made by faithful OCF field staff reps, their teams, and local leaders at our nation's service academies and college ROTCs. Take a few moments daily to pray for their newly commissioned officers listed below, who are members of OCF or attended OCF activities, as they prepare to run the race God has called them to do for Him.

## **Cedarville University**

2ndLt Paul Danielson, USAF

## **Citadel**

2ndLt Harley Martin, USAF  
2LT Robert Scarborough, USA

## **Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University**

\*ENS Joshua Sullivan, USN

## **Florida State University**

2LT Alexandra Koch, USA

## **Franklin University**

2LT Isaac Beasley, ARNG

## **George Mason University**

2LT Anthony Rossi, USA

## **Georgia Tech**

2ndLt David Twibell, USAF

## **Indiana Wesleyan University**

2LT McKinzie Horoho, USA

## **Liberty University**

2ndLt Erin Jenkins, USAF  
2LT Elisa Lyon, USA

## **Michigan Technological University**

\*2LT Luke Grossmann, USA

## **Norwich University**

ENS Taylor Albamonti, USN  
2LT Terri Atwater, USA  
2LT Abigail Jansen, USA  
ENS Katrina Loberger, USN (Katie)  
2LT William Symonds, USA (Will)

## **Ohio University**

2ndLt Hunter Begy, USAF  
2ndLt Caleb Covert, USAF  
\*2ndLt Trevor Vogelhuber, USAF

## **Regent University**

2LT Jonah Bryant, USA  
2ndLt Joshua Duran, USMC

## **Sacramento State**

2ndLt Troy Anderson, USAF

## **Southern Illinois University**

2ndLt George Waring VI, USAF

## **The Ohio State University**

2ndLt Bruce Lee, USMC  
2LT Robbie Wedebrook, USA  
2LT Lucas Blumenschein, USA  
2LT Heath Flowers, USA  
2LT Patrick Njeru, USA

## **United States Coast Guard Academy**

ENS James Boyce, USCG  
ENS Connie Chung, USCG  
ENS Micaela Crabtree, USCG  
ENS Casey Fall, USCG  
ENS Meredith Figgatt, USCG  
ENS Christy Frost, USCG  
ENS Townshend Hirst, USCG  
ENS Jackson Karama, Rawandan Army  
ENS Sarah Kukich, USCG  
ENS Mike McGee, USCG  
ENS Caleb Metroka, USCG  
ENS Ryan Ostrander, USCG  
ENS Alex Palacios, USCG  
ENS Paul Puddington, USCG  
ENS Sarah Sorensen, USCG  
ENS Carrie Smith, USCG  
ENS Hunter Stowes, USCG  
ENS Megan Toomey, USCG

## **United States Air Force Academy**

2ndLt Nolan Anderson, USAF  
2ndLt Layne Barrett, USAF  
2ndLt Steven Brandt, USAF  
2ndLt Faith Brodtkorb, USAF  
2ndLt Mark Caldwell, USAF  
2ndLt Kevin Clink, USAF  
2ndLt Logan Coffey, USAF  
2ndLt Neal Cox, USAF  
2ndLt Jennifer Cutler, USAF  
2ndLt Troy Dennis, USAF  
2ndLt Nathaniel Dickman, USAF  
2ndLt Jayna Dodd, USAF  
2ndLt Christopher Edwards, USAF  
2ndLt Daniel Eichman, USAF  
2ndLt Shannon Field, USAF  
2ndLt Aaron Goins, USAF  
2ndLt Zacchaeus Graf, USAF  
2ndLt Joshua Hayden, USAF  
2ndLt Chloe Hurst, USAF  
2ndLt Stephen Jones, USAF  
2ndLt Erica Lewandowski, USAF

2ndLt Rachel Matson, USAF  
2ndLt Ashley Moore, USAF  
2ndLt Veronica Morthorpe, USAF  
2ndLt Rebecca Murphy, USAF  
2ndLt Caleb Myhre, USAF  
2ndLt Kevin Porath, USAF  
2ndLt Rachel Powell, USAF  
2ndLt Kaitlyn Sanborn, USAF  
2ndLt Paul Solomon, USAF  
2ndLt Matthew Sprague, USAF  
2ndLt Benjamin Stallmann, USAF  
2ndLt Richard Sutedjo, USAF  
2ndLt Brennan Taylor, USAF  
2ndLt Hansena Vangen, USAF  
2ndLt Matthew Vaninger, USAF  
2ndLt Matthew Womacks, USAF

## **United States Military Academy**

2LT Savanna Aversa, USA  
2LT Randolph Barker, USA  
2LT Samuel Berard, USA  
2LT Cedrik Bell, USA  
2LT Jordan Bray, USA  
2LT Aaron Churchill, USA  
2LT Mark Dabeck, USA  
2LT Andrew Fields, USA  
2LT Tyler Gates, USA  
2LT Kyle Hinrichsen, USA  
2LT Joshua Hurlbut, USA  
2LT Joyce Johnson, USA  
2LT Warren Kay, USA  
2LT Alex Kovaka, USA  
2LT Mackenzie Latimer, USA  
2LT Kayla C. Long, USA  
2LT Tiffany Matthews, USA  
2LT Evan Peasley, USA  
2LT Gabriel Santiago, USA  
2LT Chris Schwartz, USA  
2LT John Sproul, USA  
2LT Justin Stacy, USA  
2LT Nathan Swanson, USA  
2LT Tucker Van Dyke, USA  
2LT Matthew Waldrep, USA

## **United States Naval Academy**

ENS Marco Alejos, USN  
ENS James Brisotti, USN  
ENS Samuel Bruce, USN  
ENS Kenneth Byrd, USN  
ENS Nia Chandler, USN  
ENS Dean Corbett, USN  
ENS Robert Currie, USN



Photo by Sgt. Mikki L. Sprenkle, USA

West Point Cadets hug at the completion of the 2014 graduation and commissioning ceremony at the United States Military Academy.

ENS Zachary Dannelly, USN  
 ENS Jacob Garrett, USN  
 ENS Whitney Heer, USN  
 ENS Brock Hightower, USN  
 ENS Sarah Howard, USN  
 ENS Michael Jacobson, USN  
 ENS Jeremy Jones, USN  
 ENS Jody Lamb, USN  
 2ndLt Anthony Mayes, USMC  
 2ndLt Juliana Mellgard, USMC  
 ENS Derek Moore, USN  
 ENS Oliver Nelsen, USN  
 2ndLt Christien Oman, USMC  
 ENS William Parker, USN  
 ENS Eric Poletti, USN  
 ENS Colston Polly, USN  
 ENS Luke Riewestahl, USN  
 ENS Lorraine Roberts, USN  
 ENS Jessica Rodriguez, USN  
 2ndLt William Rose, USMC  
 ENS Garrett Sabesky, USN  
 2ndLt David Sands, USMC  
 ENS Susan Scheid, USN  
 2ndLt Seth Sotelo, USMC  
 2ndLt Laura Stromback, USMC  
 ENS Tasha Talbot, USN  
 ENS Daniel Thompson, USN  
 ENS Charisse Villareal, USN  
 ENS Nicholas Villemez, USN  
 ENS Jenna Westerberg, USN

**University of California, Davis**  
 2LT Elliot Wong, USA

**University of Illinois**  
 \*2ndLt Timothy Chlasta, USAF

**University of Indianapolis**  
 2LT Grant Koenig, USA

**University of Iowa**  
 2LT Afton Greif, ARNG

**University of Kentucky**  
 2ndLt Brett Emerson, USAFR  
 2ndLt Alexis Gill, USAF  
 2ndLt Eric Pope, USAFR

**University of Minnesota**  
 2ndLt Lucas Hash, USAF  
 2ndLt Bradley Jackson, USAF  
 ENS Daniel Van Horn, USN

**University of Oklahoma**  
 2LT Lindsey Burkig, USA

**University of Saint Thomas**  
 2ndLt Samuel Wasberg, USAF

**University of Virginia**  
 2ndLt Justin Mayfield, USAF  
 2LT Joshua Underwood, USA

**Virginia Military Institute**  
 2LT James Griffith, USA  
 ENS Adam Hansen, USN  
 2LT Colin Hughes, USA  
 ENS Holden Shepard, USN

2LT Joshua Washechek, USA  
 2LT Michael Williams, USA

**University of California, Los Angeles**  
 2ndLt Hunter Kenyon, USAF  
 ENS Zachary Perez, USN

**Virginia Tech**  
 2LT Thomas Lamm, USA  
 2ndLt Trevor Schmidt, USAF

**Western Michigan University**  
 2LT Joshua Penny, USA

**Officer Candidate School/Officer Training School**  
 2ndLt Skylar Lund, USMC  
 2ndLt Adam Hawk, USAF

**Various Universities**  
 \*2ndLt Joshua Butterworth, USAF  
 \*2ndLt Christopher Cannon, USAF  
 CH(1stLt) Robert Edwards, USAF  
 \*2ndLt Nerissa Fijal, USAFR  
 \*2ndLt Bryan Galcik, USAF  
 \*2ndLt Matthew Gregory, USAFR  
 \*2ndLt Brett Leighton, ANG  
 2ndLt Kristofer Kain, USAF  
 \*2ndLt Tracy Mankins, ANG  
 \*2ndLt Shannon Robinson, USAF  
 2ndLt Joshua Spence, USAF

*\*Late 2015 graduate*



White Sulphur Springs photo



OCF/Valor photo



Mat-su Valley OCF photo

**OCF and VALOR ROTC Retreat at WSS**

**TOP: Integrating Faith and Profession**—CDR(P) Dave Ruth, USN, gave the keynote address of “The Godly Centurion” at the OCF/Valor ROTC retreat earlier this year. The event at OCF’s White Sulphur Springs Conference Center included insights and encouragement from senior officer and junior officer panels. The USNA OCF praise band led worship.

**Valor Retreat South**

**ABOVE LEFT: Equipping to Serve**—Thirty-one cadets attended the MidSouth OCF/Valor ROTC Retreat in Mocksville, NC, earlier this year. Among the conference’s varied activities of fun, fellow-

ship and inspiration was a junior officer panel that provided perspectives of serving our nation both as officers and as Christians.

**Alaska OCF**

**ABOVE RIGHT: First ever**—The Mat-Su Valley OCF small group in Wasilla, Alaska, is a diverse mix of spirit, experiences, and military branches comprised of veterans, active duty, and retired military members. Meeting every other Saturday at King’s Chapel-Wasilla Church, Dave Ammons, (second from left, middle row) OCF leader since 2006, reports, “We are excited to pray, learn, and grow together in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.”



USAFA OCF photo



Fort Benning OCF photo



Minnesota OCF photo

**USAFA study group—Colorado**

**TOP: Bearing Fruit**—Impacting young lives for Christ is central to the outreach by OCF field staff reps at the service academies and local leaders at college ROTCs. This USAFA study group is one of many such gatherings where Christian growth and excellence in life and career is honed.

**Fort Benning—Georgia**

**ABOVE LEFT: Uniting Christian officers**—Military leaders gather for lunch and discussion with the new OCF associate field staff rep couple for Fort Benning, CH(LTC) Walt and Susan Hoskins, USA (Ret.), pictured second and third from left.

**Minnesota OCF**

**ABOVE RIGHT: Uniting for Fellowship**—Pizza lunch outreach to ROTC students (pictured above) and a banquet with a NASA astronaut are among the events hosted by OCF local leaders in Minnesota. Guest speakers from varied military backgrounds typically speak at the luncheons. Col Jack Lousma, USMC (Ret.), who flew three Apollo missions in space, spoke at Minnesota OCF’s annual banquet earlier this year, and shared his testimony of faith.

**Send us your #MinistryInAction group photo**

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



White Sulphur Springs photo

# OCF summer programs are life changing

By OCF Communications Department

With Summer Celebration at Spring Canyon and Summer R&R at White Sulphur Springs now underway, OCF’s conference center directors Col Kim Hawthorne, USAF (Ret.), and LTC Paul Robyn, USA (Ret.), reflect on all the things God has in store for you this summer in Colorado and Pennsylvania. It will change your life!

## What makes coming to an OCF summer retreat so special?

**Kim:** At Spring Canyon, you will experience a “vacation with a purpose” that’s relevant to all seasons of life, one that provides phenomenal renewal while leaving behind the weights of deployment, separation, and relocation. Reconnect with God and others by spending time together in His Creation in the beautiful Rocky Mountains. Vibrant teaching and small group sessions led by respected speakers and staff offer opportunities for growth in faith and building lasting friendships. And activities including: hiking, whitewater rafting, sitting around a fire with old friends or new.

**Paul:** Summers at WSS are special, where the Lord uses the time to bless those who come. Here’s what some of our guests said last summer:

“This was a great and much needed opportunity to gain perspective after a challenging and stressful command tour.”

“White Sulphur Springs is the place we come to hear from God on big issues in our lives.”

“God met me where I am through worship, the message of the speakers and friendship. I am physically, emotionally, and spiritually refreshed.”

## Any special plans for the retreats this summer?

**Kim:** We’ve added an End of Summer Weekend retreat for those who would like a shorter vacation, just prior to starting back to school. Other weeks include partnering with the Christian Medical and Dental Association for a “His Brain/Her Brain” discussion and with the Alpha Omega Institute for Creation week. We have freshly renovated cabins, delicious new meals, and our own “Spring Canyon Blend” brewed coffee—enjoy a cup when you’re here.

**Paul:** The kitchen is working on some exciting new menu items. And there’s the fun, new “9 Square in the Air” game to introduce to everyone. Of course all the things you love about WSS will still be here—great teaching and programs, whitewater rafting, horseback riding, a day spa, and more. You can plan your R&R around what you and your family love to do.

## What do guests need to know for this summer?

**Kim:** Come join us for the life-changing

opportunities available to you and your family. You can escape for a week—or longer! Strengthen your relationship with God. Grow in your knowledge and understanding of Scripture. Reconnect with friends and family. Create memories that will last a lifetime. Join the many others at Spring Canyon who’ve turned it into an annual family tradition!

**Paul:** We have several new programs this year. Enjoy a discount for 1-2 night stays when you’re picking up/dropping off Camp Caleb and AO! campers. There’s also the WSS Loyalty Program—stay ten nights; get a night free. Summer R&R’s a great way to get seven of those nights, and you get a night for each child you send through Camp Caleb and AO!. We also have a referral program: When you refer a newcomer to WSS and they come and stay with us (and let us know you referred them), we’ll give you the same 10% first-timer discount on your next visit.

## ON THE WEB

For more information or to make reservations at one of our conference centers:

- > **Spring Canyon:**  
[springcanyon.org/summer-celebration](http://springcanyon.org/summer-celebration)
- > **White Sulphur Springs:**  
[whitesulphursprings.org/summer-rnr](http://whitesulphursprings.org/summer-rnr)



**Lieutenant Billy Hardison**  
UNITED STATES NAVY, CHAPLAIN

**Came to OCF:** At Navy Officers Development School, Newport, Rhode Island.

**Involvement in OCF:** As a Navy chaplain, once I'm aware of local groups I recommend OCF to everyone I know. The articles in COMMAND magazine are incredibly helpful.

**Why OCF for me:** If, as a chaplain, I could influence and be a catalyst for life transformation in a handful of officers and enlisted, at every command I serve for the cause of Christ, the trickle-down effect could be unimaginable. OCF works the same way. Its ability to influence leaders has great implications for the spreading of the Gospel!

**What's on my iPod:** I like House music, especially when writing. Is that ok as a chaplain? Anything NEED-TOBREATHE or David Crowder! Hillsong United, Plumb, Caedmon's Call, Lauren Daigle. Also Dave Matthews Band, Counting Crows, Pearl Jam. I grew up in the '90s—I can't help myself!

**What's on my bucket list:** After a catapult shot and hook-down on board aircraft carrier USS Harry Truman in a T-45 fighter/training jet, my list is pretty extreme: a nighttime HALO jump with Naval Special Warfare. Ride in the backseat of an F/A-18 Super, or any "grey" jet. (If anyone can accommodate, I have NATOPS clearance!)

**Most memorable/exotic places visited:** NAS Kingsville, Texas, my first command chaplaincy. Anyone reading this who's been stationed there is now laughing! Seriously—Tianjin, China, is probably the most memorable.

**Best advice given you:** My dad telling me as a teen: your reputation, name, and who you are as a man will always get somewhere before you do and stay long after you leave.

**Life Bible verse:** "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect" (Romans 12:2 ESV).

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CFC# 10531

# Vacation with a purpose



**Registration is underway at Spring Canyon and White Sulphur Springs!**

The only thing more exciting than being on summer vacation is planning it and thinking of all the possibilities. Whether you dream about walking in the shadows of the majestic Rocky Mountains or beautiful Alleghenies, what you will experience at both OCF conference centers is a “spiritual depot” designed to help you refresh, refocus, and re-center as you reconnect with Christ!

**> Register now at [springcanyon.org](http://springcanyon.org) or [whitesulphursprings.org](http://whitesulphursprings.org)!**