

Christian Perspectives on Life in the Military

COMMAND

JUNE 2012

Vol. 61 • No. 3 • \$5.00

embolden

equip

encourage

engage

INSIDE



What you do and how you lead does matter

With the love of a clanging cymbal

The profound power of parental blessing

DVIDS Photo

What you do and how you lead does matter

Congratulations to the OCF Class of 2012! We who have gone before welcome you to the profession of arms and the start of your great race the Lord has set before you. Crossing the threshold, you now carry two commissions simultaneously: one conferred on you from our Commander in Chief and one from the King of kings.



DAVID WARNER
Executive Director

You are now a Christian officer. Notice that “Christian” is in the adjectival position; your Christianity is preeminent and modifies, shapes everything else you do. As you launch out on your race, you can be comforted by some sage advice from the apostles.

Lead On! “Don’t let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example...” (1 Timothy 4:12). Within a few weeks of arrival at your first training base or duty station, ask yourself, *Does anyone have a clue that I am different, that Christ matters to me?* If your answer is unsettling, be different! In OCF we have traditionally claimed that both our first act of worship—giving God our very best—and our first act of witness is our professional excellence. It is what recommends you as someone who ought to be followed and emulated, as someone who has earned the right to be heard.

Be Ready! Philemon 1:6 says, “I pray that your partnership with us in the faith may be effective in deepening your understanding of every good thing we share for the sake of Christ.” Then be ready to respond to everyone who asks.

“Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.”

1 Peter 3:13-18



7 traits to live by

2 Timothy 2 lays out seven traits of a Christian soldier, by being:

- Secure in your salvation
- Sound of faith
- Sanctified
- Single-minded
- Self-disciplined
- Strong
- A servant



Get connected

For link-up information, “Find OCF Near You,” or additional information on the military portal website, go to the OCF website: www.ocfusa.org.

This is important—one man’s evangelism is another man’s proselytizing. But when you are asked, what seeds of faith are you prepared to plant? It highlights the importance of walking in the Spirit and having a tightly crafted personal testimony, of developing habits of scripture memory, of staying in the Word, and especially being able to distill the essence of the gospel message. Stay on message of God’s great love for each of us, about Christ and His sacrifice for us.

No Fear! Peter admonishes us to “revere Christ as Lord.” The Army’s Ranger Creed challenges its adherents to give “100 percent and then some.” In your professional and spiritual life, you must not waver; you must wholly commit, completely surrender, “go all in.” Do the right thing at all times—“Who is going to harm you if you are eager to do good?”

At the same time you’re being bold, be humble. Peters challenges us to act with gentleness, with a settled confidence in our souls, and 2 Timothy 2:16 reminds us of the futility of getting sucked into stupid arguments. Our military training emphasizes the importance of the TEAM—battle buddies, the man or woman on our right and left, esprit de corps—in controlling

or even banishing fear.

The same is true for our spiritual walk, so stay in fellowship! Our OCF link-up services, the “Find OCF Near You” part of our website, the battle handoffs that our academy staff representatives do with training and operational commands, and the new military web portal are all tools to help keep you emboldened in your faith, falling out of habits and to find fellowship—and lay leadership—opportunities tailored to your specific needs and circumstances.

After leaving the Coast Guard Academy, a newly commissioned officer arrived at his first assignment in Florida. With a vision for outreach into the local community, he wanted to help care for the homeless. So he launched The King’s Sheep, a team of OCF members who team up with a local church. They are making an impact!

Never underestimate the impact of one man or woman, like the one above. These are consequential times, and what you do and how you lead does matter. “When I called, you answered me; you greatly emboldened me” (Psalm 138:3). My prayer is that the Lord will EMBOLDEN you through the ministry of OCF. Lead on! Be ready! No fear! 🚩



U.S. Navy photo

Taking a reciprocal course requires persistent steering

by **COMMANDER DAVID M. RUTH**
United States Navy

A decade ago I served a two-year tour aboard aircraft carrier USS *Constellation* (CV-64). Her sheer mass—a fighting weight of over 80,000 tons—never ceased to amaze me. And as a result, “Connie” did not turn on a dime—it took time and a forceful rudder to turn 180 degrees onto a reciprocal course.

The time and effort required to reverse course on “Connie” reminds me of how over twenty years ago the Lord changed the course of my life, using OCF to help execute that turn.

Right full rudder! As a midshipman at the Naval Academy in the late ’80s, I subscribed to Judeo-Christian values but was skeptical of Christian theology. While conceding Jesus was an enlightened moral teacher, I did not accept that He was the necessary and sufficient Savior of the world. But God began changing my heart by putting believers into my life who gently but persistently challenged me. They prayed for me, encouraged me to consider the claims of Jesus Christ, and invited me to weekly OCF events and retreats.

Like “Connie’s” slow reluctant turn to a reciprocal course, my turn toward the Lord of salvation was hesitant and required per-

sistent steering toward the Truth.

My “course change” culminated in attending the *Rocky Mountain High* adventure program at OCF’s Spring Canyon Conference Center in Colorado during the summer of 1991, just a few days after I was commissioned. Surrounded by God’s creation in the mountains, immersed in activity and discussion focused on Him, as the days passed I finally recognized the lack of peace and direction dominating my young adult life. Living with my back turned to God, I came to understand that I was separated from Him because of my disobedience—and that in my place Jesus Christ had died on the cross to make a relationship with God possible. On the final night of RMH I received Christ as my Savior.

I was on a new course!

Steady as she goes! My first duty tour was two years of graduate school in Austin, Texas. As a new believer, I was a bit anxious about being out on my own. What did I know about living as a Christian? To my surprise, I found an OCF Bible study there and eagerly attended. The “old folks” in that study—Navy lieutenants, Air Force and Army captains—were instrumental in my growth as a believer. I learned how to study the Bible, and I discovered the necessity of biblical fellowship. One officer in particular came alongside to mentor me with lasting

impact. I met a precious Christian woman through that study who is now my wife of nineteen years.

My first post-commissioning OCF study clearly pointed me in the right direction as a young believer.

Maintain course and speed! Nearly two decades have now passed, and throughout that time OCF has faithfully ministered to my family and me. OCF Bible studies have been vital to our spiritual growth. We have been equipped, connected, supported, and encouraged by OCF friends, leaders, and staff from coast to coast and overseas.

My life has come full circle as I am currently assigned to the Naval Academy and lead a midshipman OCF Bible study. And the Lord has blessed me with the opportunity to be a leader at *Rocky Mountain High* this summer. We look forward to God’s plans for us as we continue to serve. “The LORD has done great things for us, and we are filled with joy” (Psalm 126:3).

Thank God for the ministry of Officers’ Christian Fellowship! 🚩

David is a permanent military professor at the United States Naval Academy and currently serves on the OCF Council. He and his wife, Leticia, have three children.



The Lord—your refuge in a high optempo

by **BRIGADIER GENERAL DAVID WARNER**
United States Air Force, Retired

WHEN WAS THE LAST TIME you had more than an hour or thirty minutes to yourself to be still? And not napping, catching a movie, or having a quiet dinner with your spouse, but an uninterrupted period of time just enjoying being in the presence of the Lord?

Last summer I took part in OCF's *Rocky Mountain High* outdoor leadership program. After a two-day trek, on the eve of summiting a 14er in the Rockies, we reached timberline. This marks the time and place where everyone stops—to catch their breath and take time to be quiet and listen to God.

Freeing myself of my loaded backpack, I separated from my fellow hikers and sought solitude, finding a place among the outcropping of rocks to sit. From this vantage point, I was moved by God's splendor and majesty in His creation—a stunning waterfall to my left and to my right, an unobstructed view of the Rocky Mountains' western expanse.

I settled in for a time of "stillness," but after a few minutes restlessness began to creep in. Believing my time with the Lord was over, I got up to return to camp. But immediately the Lord spoke to my heart, "Not so fast, David. I'm not finished with you yet! Be still and know that I am God." The next two hours were life changing as the Lord showed through Scripture and His Spirit the plans He had for me.

Somewhere along the way in your own walk with the Lord, working at a high operational tempo filled with busy days, deployment, and dwindling resources, you too may have missed the still, small voice of God. It happens to all of us, at one time or another, and the joy of knowing, serving and the pleasure of spending


time with the Lord begins to fade in all the noise.

I'm reminded of the true-life story of Jim Morris in the movie *The Rookie*, a high school baseball coach who achieves his dream of making it to a major league farm club after being challenged by his players to try out. But the simple joy of just playing baseball begins to fade in the minor league world of travel, low pay, and concern for his struggling family's welfare. On the verge of giving up, Morris' wife dissuades him from quitting by recounting their young son's glowing, joyous face of watching Dad play just for love of the game. His joy returned!

Some of you, such as OCF members David Ruth or Josh Gilliam, may have come face to face with the Lord Jesus Christ at RMH. In those quiet moments on the mountain, you heard and listened to the still, small voice of the Lord, "Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, 'This is the way; walk in it'" (Isaiah 30:21).

Whether you are newly commissioned, deployed, or in a high optempo job, your time is extremely limited. Maybe you have grown restless or you've lost the joy in your walk with the Lord. I encourage you to take the opportunity to attend one of our OCF conference centers or an OCF retreat. But even if it's just for a few moments each day, even in the midst of a high operational tempo, seek the Lord by planning quiet time into your schedule. If you take time to be still before Him, He will speak to you.

As Christians, we have the privilege of serving the King of kings and Lord of lords. But He also invites us to come aside and just enjoy being His children. That time will stoke the brightness of His light within us and our faces will reflect that glory He gave us!

Where's your refuge? 

"Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!"

Psalm 46:10



Department of Defense photo

BOSTON UNIVERSITY

2LT Jeremiah Cioffi, USA, MI BOLC, Fort Huachuca, AZ

BOWIE STATE UNIVERSITY

2LT Tania Mena, USA

CEDARVILLE UNIVERSITY

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CHRISTOPHER NEWPORT UNIVERSITY

2LT Shelby Phillips, USA, Operation Warrior Forge LDAC, Fort Lewis, WA, Jul-12

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2LT Jeremy Byram, USA, ABOLC, Fort Benning, GA, Sep-12; PCS, Fort Benning, GA.

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

2ndLt Nathaniel Cromer, USAF, Air Battle Manager, Tyndall AFB, FL, Jul-12
*2ndLt Justine DeChiara, USAF
2ndLt Arielle Marino, USAF, Vandenberg AFB, CA; Minot AFB, ND
2ndLt Christina Nymeyer, USMC; TBS, Quantico, VA

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SOUTHEAST MISSOURI STATE UNIVERSITY

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2ndLt Caleb Egli, USAF, UPT, Laughlin AFB, TX
2ndLt Sarah Evans, USAF, Ops Research/Rand fellow, Barksdale AFB, LA
2ndLt Lauren Fuchs, USAF, OSI, Langley-Eustis, VA
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2ndLt David Gillette, USAF, UPT, Laughlin AFB, TX
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2ndLt Kristopher Martin, USAF, UPT, Whiting Field NAS, FL
2ndLt Bryan McCarthy, USAF, Grad School, MIT, MA

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USAFA photo

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 2ndLt Jamaal Paul, USAF, INT, Goodfellow AFB, TX
 2ndLt Brandon Roberts, USAF, UCT, Keesler AFB, MS
 2ndLt Christina Salinas, USAF, Maintenance, Dyess AFB, TX
 2ndLt Michael Smith, USAF, UPT, Vance AFB, OK
 2ndLt Amanda Terry, USAF, Logistics, Lackland AFB, TX
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 2ndLt Jordan Wittman, USAF, UPT, Columbus AFB, MS

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 ENS Joseph Durfey, USCG, CGC *Rush*, Honolulu, HI
 ENS Mark Funke, USCG, CGC *Bear*, Portsmouth, VA
 ENS Heidi Gayman, USCG, CGC *Jarvis*, Honolulu, HI
 ENS Kimberly Hulbert, USCG, CGC *Northland*, Portsmouth, VA, Jun-12
 ENS Kent Hunt, USCG, CGC *Active*, Port Angeles, WA
 ENS Thomas Kennedy, USCG, CGC *Active*, Port Angeles, WA
 ENS Ronaqua Russell, USCG, FS, Pensacola, FL
 ENS Tiffany Vegter, USCG, USCG Sector Long Island Sound, New Haven, CT
 ENS Hunter Warren, USCG, CGC *Resolute*, St. Petersburg, FL
 ENS Patrick Weaver, USCG, CGC *Robert Yered*, Miami, FL
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ENS Daniel Angle, USN, SWO; USS *Iwo Jima* (LHD 7), Norfolk, VA, Jan-13
 ENS Jonathan Bain, USN, FT, Pensacola, FL, Jun-12
 2ndLt James Blake, USMC, TBS, Quantico, VA, Jul-12
 ENS Tyler Boston, USN, FT, Pensacola, FL, Jul-12
 ENS Kyle Couillard, USN, FT, Pensacola, FL, Aug-12
 ENS Ryan Couillard, USN, FT, Pensacola, FL, Aug-12
 ENS George Cox, USN, SWO; USS *Denver* (LPD 9), Sasebo, Japan, Jul-12
 ENS Spencer Ewing, USN, FT, Pensacola, FL, Jul-12
 ENS Sarah Freshwater, USN, FT, Pensacola, FL, Aug-12
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 ENS Kaila Julia, USN, SWO; USS *Jason Dunham* (DDG 109), Pearl Harbor, HI, Jun-12
 ENS Victoria Kessler, USN, SWO; USS *Lake Erie* (CG 70), Pearl Harbor, HI, Jul-12
 ENS Kierstin King, USN, SWO; USS *Dewert* (FFG 45), Mayport, FL, Jun-12
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 ENS Jordan Roach, USN, FT, Pensacola, FL, Aug-12
 ENS Carl Steffer, USN, SNFO, Pensacola, FL, Jan-13, VGEP
 ENS Michael Vahsen, USN, NPS, Charleston, SC, Aug-12
 ENS Benjamin von Forell, USN, FT, Pensacola, FL, Jul-12
 2ndLt Samuel Winsted, USN, TBS, Quantico, VA
 ENS Kara Yingling, USN, SWO; USS *Higgins* (DDG 76), San Diego, CA, Jul-12
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 LRO, Dyess AFB, TX

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2ndLt Alan Knapp, USAF, USMT, 392nd Training Squadron, Vandenberg AFB, CA

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA/NORTHWESTERN COLLEGE

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VIRGINIA MILITARY INSTITUTE

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VIRGINIA TECH INSTITUTE

2ndLt Josh Anderson, USAF, FS, Columbus AFB, MS

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*ENS Ashley Gaines, USCG
 2ndLt Hannah Eshuis, USAF
 Capt Olufemi Olatunji, USAFR
 2LT Jediah Schlissel, USA
 *WO1 William Vohaska, USA

LEGEND

U.S. Air Force
 14 OSS—14th Operations Support Squadron
 AETC—Air Education and Training Command
 FS—Flight School
 INT—Intelligence
 LRO—Logistics Readiness Officer
 OSI—Office of Special Investigations
 STO—Special Tactics Officer
 UCT—Cyberspace Training
 UPT—Undergraduate Pilot Training
 USMT—Undergraduate Space and Missile Training

U.S. Army
 ABOLC—Armor Basic Officer Leader Course
 BOLC—Basic Officer Leadership Course
 IBOLC—Infantry Basic Officer Leadership Course
 LDAC—Leader Development and Assessment Course
 MI—Military Intelligence

U.S. Coast Guard
 CGC—Coast Guard Cutter
 FS—Flight School

U.S. Marine Corps
 TBS—The Basic School

U.S. Navy
 FT—Flight Training
 NPS—Nuclear Power School
 SNFO—Student Naval Flight Officer
 SWO—Surface Warfare Officer
 VGEP—Voluntary Graduate Education Program

*Late 2011 graduate

With the love of a Clanging Cymbal

My self-righteousness was coming through loud and clear.

by ERIC CREEKMORE

A SQUADRON BUDDY in the process of getting a divorce had just finished telling me of a weekend with his new girlfriend. Technically, he was still married—the papers weren't yet signed. Trying to be the "good" Christian, I saw this as my opportunity to point out his transgression.

"If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal" (1 Corinthians 13:1).

Clanging cymbal—that was a perfect description of my actions as I "clanged" away about a friend's moral failure without any concern for the how or why. I had

After a brief treatise on fidelity and marriage, I punctuated my comments by calling him, "Mr. Immorality." That would make clear the error of his ways and with any luck I would soon be leading him in the sinner's prayer.

I eased back in my office chair with a sense of pride at my work for the cause of Christ. Looking for additional opportunities to "help," I asked why he was getting a divorce in the first place. His response included a detailing of his wife's two one-night-stands, the second one resulting in a pregnancy with baby due any day.

My self-righteousness abated and my soul began to ache at the realization of my sin, completely jumping to conclusions when I didn't have all the facts.

My friend described his attempts to save the marriage by going to counseling after the affairs. But his wife had no interest in working on their marriage. Her adultery took them to the doorstep of divorce, and she was ready to take the next step.

As he finished the story, I commented that he was handling the whole ordeal amazingly well. No one would have known the upheaval that was going on below the surface of his life. I was actually very impressed with his conduct, all things considered, and wondered if I would have handled the situation any differently. My self-righteousness was now completely replaced with sorrow, for him and for my response to him.

In his first letter to the church at Corinth, Paul pens arguably the most eloquent passage on love anywhere in the Bible. It's almost impossible to go to a wedding and not hear the thirteenth chapter read as part of the ceremony. If, as the passage states, love is patient and kind, bears all and believes all, where was this type of love in my exchange with my friend?

My conscience, no doubt under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, drew me to the first verse of that chapter,

no love for him, and it was the one thing that, unfortunately, came through loud and clear. I wanted to show I was morally superior—I knew right from wrong while he didn't. He was still married and should not be dating.

But I had missed the heart of the issue. What kind of opportunities would I have had to listen or to share Christ with him had I first discovered the betrayal he was facing? In error, I believed that by pointing out his sin he would logically want to repent for it.

Mahatma Gandhi, a leader of India who championed nonviolent civil disobedience, is quoted as saying, "I like your Christ; I do not like your Christians." His problem with the Christian faith isn't Jesus Christ—it is us. I proved Gandhi right that afternoon with my troubled friend.

There are times when we need to stand up for the faith and proclaim the message of the Gospel in a clear and direct fashion. But there are also times when we need to sit back and carefully listen to what's being said before launching into our critique of another's life. In either case, love for the individual should always be our underlying motivation. When our speech lacks the love of Christ, Scripture clearly declares we are just a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. ✠

Eric served twelve years on active duty as an F/A-18 Hornet pilot, deploying twice for combat operations. Upon leaving the Marine Corps as a major in 2008, he completed a Master of Theology degree at Dallas Theological Seminary and planted Mission Church where he serves as lead pastor. Eric enjoys speaking to men's groups across the country to reach them with the Gospel. He and his wife, Heather, have four young children.



The Profound Power of Parental Blessing

by DEAN RIZZO
Director of Spring Canyon

THERE ARE CERTAIN MOMENTS in a lifetime you never forget.

For me, the memories of formally giving a father's blessing to my children in person continues to give me joy as I recall each event.

Many of us have not received a spoken blessing from our fathers or mothers, and for some, emotional wounds persist from not receiving caring and affirming words spoken into our lives from them, particularly in our American culture. As the Rev. Chuck Stecker points out in *Men of Honor Women of Virtue*, "Understand that for the most part, our parents have not known the blessing. It's been lost in our society, our culture and our churches."

I first learned of spoken blessings as a current practice only within the past ten years, having read many times the stories in the Bible of this ancient Hebrew practice among the twelve tribes.

Stecker, of A Chosen Generation Ministries, introduced to me the biblical custom of a father's spoken blessing, and I still use the *Preparing the Blessing* guide he gave me.

At OCF's Spring Canyon Conference Center, we continue this powerful tradition every summer during each of our Father-Teen Adventure (FTA) program weeks.

At the ceremony where I blessed my son, with other FTA fathers and sons watching, each father blessed his son by figuratively knighting him with a broadsword. It symbolically communicated the power of our words as we invited them alongside us to be men who follow Jesus Christ.

At my daughter's blessing, each dad first had a special private dinner with his own daughter, giving them flowers and a small gift to commemorate the event. Later, with all the fathers and daughters, each dad touched his daughter's head while tenderly, lovingly speaking God's blessing on them as their earthly fathers, assuring them of God's unique plan for them.

For those who have grown up without the benefit of receiving a spoken blessing into their lives, it's not too late to seek out and receive a father's blessing that is missing from your life. I've watched profound healing, joy, and peace come into the lives of men and women who receive a father's blessing from sincere men trained to bless them as representatives of a father no longer alive or possibly a father that is reluctant to follow this old tradition.

Ask a godly chaplain, pastor, or organization such as Stecker's ministry to speak a father's blessing into your life.

I encourage all fathers to embrace the biblical tradition of blessing. A mother's blessing will be equally powerful to the children of those whose husbands are unable or unavailable to give a blessing. My formal blessing spoken over my children's lives has powerfully cemented our relationships ever since, so that even now when we talk, I still bless them as a part of praying for and encouraging them.

Whether you learn from a new digital Bible on a portable electronic device or from an old tattered Bible, even in this modern age you will find tremendous joy in using God's Word as a spoken blessing.

Dean has served as the director of OCF's Spring Canyon Conference Center since 2002. His wife, Sue, was an active duty officer who introduced him to OCF and Spring Canyon after they were married. He credits an OCF Bible study at Fort Bragg with leading him to Jesus Christ and regards Spring Canyon's *Rocky Mountain High* program as one of the best discipling experiences in his life. Dean and Sue are blessed with four children.



Spring Canyon photo

Dave Andrews blesses his son Paul at a Father/Teen Adventure at Spring Canyon. Dave said, "It's a very meaningful time for sons to put a stake in the ground as they're becoming a man." Since this picture was taken in 2006, Dave and Paul have been to Uganda as part of a team supporting ministry outreach near the city of Kampala. This spring, Paul graduated from Liberty University with a degree in graphic design and a minor in photography. Paul hopes to use his degree in a position with a Christian camp or missions organization. He participates as a prayer leader at Passion (Atlanta), along with 42,000 college students who have so far raised over \$3 million to combat human slavery worldwide.



'Preparing the Blessing'

To read the full text of *Preparing the Blessing*, scan the QR Code with your smart phone or mobile device to open a PDF version. You can also go to "As Seen in COMMAND" at www.ocfusa.org.



Share your blessing

Whether it was a Spring Canyon Father/Teen Adventure or your own personal blessing of your son or daughter, share your story with other readers of Command magazine! Email karen.fliedner@ocfusa.org with your story and/or photo.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

OCF Council elections start 1 August

Update your contact information now.

Though voting for the OCF Council elections for the Class of 2015 doesn't start until 1 August, now is the time to make sure OCF has your current e-mail address. Voting will once again be conducted electronically. Eligible OCF members are encouraged to exercise their right to vote.

- Voting runs 1 August-9 September on the OCF website.
- Members qualified to vote will need their voting ID (your OCF member number-found on the COMMAND address label) and your voting password (your ZIP code).
- Members who cannot/prefer not to vote online may request a hard copy ballot from Susan Wallis at the OCF home office, 800-424-1984.
- Vote for as many as five candidates.
- Each nominee's picture and bio info will be posted on the website in mid-July, with an abbreviated version in the August COMMAND magazine.

Happy 50th Birthday, Spring Canyon!

Spring Canyon Conference Center is celebrating fifty years of ministry! Captain Cleo "Buck" Buxton, USAF, became the first general secretary of Officers' Christian Union (now OCF). He envisioned a "campus in the woods" for the building up of military believers. His vision is alive and well in 2012!

AS SEEN IN COMMAND

Rocky Mountain High workshop

In late July and early August, U.S. and international military cadets and officers conducting military ministries will take part in the *Rocky Mountain High* outdoor leadership program at OCF's Spring Canyon Conference Center.

OCF congratulates ensign on award

OCF member and recent U.S. Coast Guard Academy graduate **ENS Tyler Dewechter** received a Tomorrow's Leader Award at the Aviation Week Laureate Award gala earlier this year in Washington, D.C.

For more info, check out "As Seen in COMMAND" at www.ocfusa.org.



USCGA OCF photo

USCGA firsties dinner—Connecticut

Groton, Connecticut area OCF members treated USCGA OCF's firsties to a dinner hosted by Navy RADM Rick and Melanie Breckenridge in their home. Ensign Bobby Carsey later encouraged the graduates to follow hard after God and be pro-active in finding fellowship.



OCF/Valor Mid-South ROTC photo

ROTC at Fort Fisher—North Carolina

Spiritual Fitness—Designing Your Workout was the theme of the OCF/Valor Mid-South ROTC retreat attended by over fifty cadets earlier this year. Lessons on spiritual fitness, a panel discussion being a Christian in today's military, and plenty of games and activities highlighted the event.

OCF Council Meeting, 19-22 April, at White Sulphur Springs

by MAJOR JON SHINE

United States Army

Bathed in prayer as ever, the OCF Council assembled in April for its first meeting ever in the new Heritage House at White Sulphur Springs. Leaning on the promises of Proverbs 3:5-6, Council's eighteen members used the Lord's Prayer framework in a Pray-Discover-Obey process to focus squarely on the Master before moving forward to wrestle with the challenges and opportunities facing OCF.

Much of the meeting centered on identifying trends in the current cultural environment, combined with upcoming changes to the Armed Forces, as we transition out of the last decade of conflict. In today's society, secularization, consumerism, and hyper-politicization coincide with reductions in the size of the Armed Forces, a force that is increasingly isolated from the civilian population, fewer large-scale deployments of ground troops, and increasing hostility to religious expression in the military.

Brig Gen David Warner, USAF (Ret.), OCF's Executive Director, reported on OCF's ongoing commitment to embolden, equip, and encourage the membership to engage as Christ's wit-



White Sulphur Springs photo

OCF council members enjoy the deck at the new Heritage House.

nesses to the military society. The Council left the weekend excited by what the Lord is doing in OCF. We continue forward, now focused on the Spring Canyon Phase of the Growing and Building Campaign. An emphasis on synchronizing our ministry efforts and development of

the members, especially in the areas of leadership and integrating faith and profession, are among the priorities for 2013.

We trust that God will continue to straighten the path ahead of OCF through 2020 and beyond. 🙏



OCF/Valor photo

OCF-Valor retreat Upper Midwest ROTC Retreat—Illinois

Forty-five cadets and mids from several states and universities attended the Upper Midwest OCF-Valor ROTC retreat earlier this year. Speakers provided introspection with challenges such as, if Jesus Christ is the model for servant leadership, how do I as a military officer follow His example?

BIRTHS

Isak Dylan Halvorson, born 16 November 2011, son of **LT Andy and Megan Halvorson, USCG**, Mystic, CT.

Matthew William Richie, born 9 April 2012, son of **Lt Col Dave and Melissa Richie, USAF**, Colorado Springs, CO.

WEDDINGS

CDT Tyler T. Akers, USA, married **Erika Blair**, 10 December 2011. Their home is Toledo, OH.

TAPS

Linda Dunlap, 6 April 2012, wife of **LCDR Calvin Dunlap III, USN (Ret.)**, Lakewood, CO.

Banquet casts exciting vision for Spring Canyon

by COLONEL ARNIE AHNFELDT
United States Army, Retired

At the recent Growing and Building Campaign banquet in Colorado Springs, Colorado, OCF leaders cast an exciting vision for increasing the ministry already going on at OCF's Spring Canyon Conference Center.

Chaplain Josh Gilliam of the 10th Special Forces gave the invocation and his testimony of how he became a Christian as a West Point cadet attending Spring Canyon's *Rocky Mountain High* outdoor adventure program.

OCF's Executive Director, Brig Gen David Warner, USAF (Ret.), presented the keynote address by first introducing the Spring Canyon video shown to the attendees. Speaking of Spring Canyon's need, ministry, and mission, he later said, "What joy to see others catch the Lord's vision for the ministry of OCF as we grow both physically and spiritually to build leaders, families, and fellowships for the future. It is exciting to share how we are achieving the Lord's purposes as we 'declare His power to the next generation'" (Psalm 71:18).

Three testimonies followed Warner's presentation, the first by CPT Galen Peterson, a West Point graduate and Bronze Star recipient, who suffered a traumatic brain injury in an IED explosion. He shared his moving story of how he had been ministered to during Spring Canyon's Medical Week, with loving follow-up by a Colorado Springs OCF group.

Air Force Academy graduate Joelyn Nowlin related how Spring Canyon served as a home away from home in her family's many moves and deployments, while Aaron Danielson shared many amusing incidents of his experiences working as a voluntary staff member with former Spring Canyon director, the late Lt Col Tom Hemingway. Danielson represented a third-generation family with multiple roots at Spring Canyon: his parents served on the Spring Canyon Advisory Committee, he met his wife there on volunteer staff, and now his children volunteer.

Moderator COL Arnie Ahnfeldt, USA (Ret.), concluded the evening underlining the importance of committing to or renewing pledges to establish collateral so that the OCF Council can move forward with plans for the new construction. Over \$58,000 in gifts was pledged.



Among those attending the OCF Growing and Building capital campaign fundraiser in Colorado Springs, Colorado, were (from left) Rita Wade, Lois Ahnfeldt, Katie Gilliam, and Josh Gilliam.

Lt Col Steve Wade, USAF (Ret.), shared how important Spring Canyon is to the cadet ministry before offering the closing prayer.

Pre-planning for the event included the selection of fourteen table captains with two pray and plan meetings where they gathered to pray for the project. They prayed for three or four couples to join them at their table specifically for the purpose of fundraising for Spring Canyon, inviting couples who were not OCF members, but who had a heart for the military and were active in the community.

One donor covered the entire cost of the meal so that there would be no financial reason for lack of attendance.



The Carlisle Barracks OCF community in Pennsylvania came out in force to attend and support an event benefitting the Spring Canyon Phase of OCF's Growing and Building capital campaign.

Carlisle Barracks OCF Growing and Building event

The Carlisle Barracks OCF community in Pennsylvania gathered at White Sulphur Springs earlier this year at an event benefitting the Spring Canyon Phase of OCF's Growing and Building capital campaign. Speaker Jon Shine highlighted both Spring Canyon's effective ministry and the resultant need for expanded facilities to serve more families and groups, while MG Don Riley, USA (Ret.) underscored what OCF and its two conference centers have meant to his family over the years, which included several deployments.

Several OCF members who had already fulfilled their pledges to the WSS Phase of the campaign, which resulted in the new Heritage House, "reenlisted" for the Spring Canyon Phase towards several future projects including the construction of the Veterans Memorial Lodge.

Be the strong silent (giving) type

Recently I was asked an unusual question: "In your experience, do those who are most critical tend to be less financially invested than others?" That's one I'd never been asked, but if you're in full-time ministry, it's bound to cross your mind. Just ask your pastor.

I'm not sure what prompted this question, but let's explore it a bit because we may find a few insights. Let's start with basic generosity. Is there something in the Bible that explains what it means to be generous?

Actually, there are hundreds of verses that describe generosity, verses like John 3:16 (God "gave" His Son) and John 10:28 where Jesus says, "I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand." Here is the very source of generosity. Could God be any more generous?

For a more human perspective, I point you to 2 Corinthians 8 and 9, maybe the richest chapters in the Bible on the subject. Take for



Points to ponder

More points to ponder on the journey of growing generous toward God:

- Have you ever meditated on God's generosity say about who He is?
- What does your generosity say about who you are?
- Have you given yourself completely to God like the Macedonians did?
- How do you make giving decisions and how do you think God makes them?
- Has God given you a heart of generosity toward any group, like the military?
- Is your giving in the center of God's will?



DAVE ROWLAND
Director of Resource Development

example, chapter 8, verses 2-3: "Out of the most severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own." We humans would consider that extreme generosity.

But why did those Macedonians give even of what they had to live on? The key word here is "joy." They had overflowing joy. That abundant joy moved them to action. And why were they so joyous? God had given them grace.

But the Macedonians also did another thing Paul didn't expect. They gave themselves *first* to God and then to Paul and his co-workers. Then we see a few words in the NIV (verse 5) that I'm sure get little notice. Those words are "in keeping with God's will." They were doing God's will.

Here is a process for becoming generous. First, we give ourselves to God and then to the task of giving. That resulted in extreme generosity among very poor people. The story in Exodus 35 of the Israelites giving materials for the first tabernacle shows that same abundant, joyous giving.

We see that both groups gave themselves to the Lord, and the Lord gave them joy and a heart to give. But what don't we see in these stories is any complaining

or whining about how those gifts would be used—no giving to get something or insisting on immediate recognition. Just joy.

Back to the opening question. We must be careful not to generalize because only the Lord knows a person's heart, but here's what I've seen with those who are the most financially "invested" in a particular ministry. These are folks who are rarely, if ever, critical or demanding. On the contrary, they are usually the most supportive.

Why? I think it's because they trust God and believe they are actually giving to Him, not an organization He called into existence. For them, Matthew 6:21 is real:

"For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." The heart follows the treasure, just like the Macedonians giving themselves to God and then to the task of giving.

So why do those more critical tend to give less generously? Maybe it's a case of little treasure, little heart versus much treasure, much heart. But rather than thinking less of these folks, we each should think more about our own heart.

I want to be the "Strong Silent (Giving) Type." You too? ☞

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Published six times a year, February, April, June, August, October, and December, by Officers' Christian Fellowship of the United States of America, 3784 South Inca Street, Englewood, Colorado 80110-3405. Distributed free to OCF members and some military agencies. Subscription price for others is \$20 per year, \$30 for two years, \$40 for three years. Periodicals postage paid at Englewood, Colorado, and at additional mailing offices. **Postmaster:** Send address changes to Command at 3784 South Inca Street, Englewood, CO 80110-3405.

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Join OCF and take the

EXTREME CHALLENGE

DATE: 31 July-3 August

LOCATION: Spring Canyon and Mt. Harvard

MISSION: To fund the completion of two dorms for Spring Canyon to broaden its ministry impact to military families

GOAL: \$25,000 per Climber Team

The *Race to the Summit—Extreme Challenge* is an invitational event for twelve climbers and their three-person support teams who agree to undertake an extreme mission to expand the ministry impact of OCF and Spring Canyon Conference Center. The climb is limited to just twelve climbers and a guide. Climbers must be in sound physical condition and will take the 14,420-foot summit of Mt. Harvard. Before the ascent, climbers and their teams will seek to raise \$250,000 through personal sponsorships to fund the building of two additional dorms at Spring Canyon.

Scan the QR Code with your mobile device to get more info on *Extreme Challenge*.



Go to ocfusa.org
for more info and help
put your favorite team
over the top!



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