



Christian perspectives on life in the military  
**COMMAND**

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**How do you lead today?**

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**A tale of two lieutenants**

Leadership is the art of influencing people to accomplish what needs to be done. Those whom you lead want leaders who give direction, take the time to understand what it takes to get things done—and allow them to accomplish it.

**Aligning our flight glide path**

God's word is like the main gyro on a jet's instrument panel—it doesn't lie and it always has the right answer. Often, we must let go of trusting our wayward senses and instead trust God's word.



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# How do you lead today?

Building up your spiritual core is key to facing life's "but if not..." moments



**DAVID  
WARNER**

Executive  
Director

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**T**he British Expeditionary Force (BEF) faced a military crisis in 1939. Adolf Hitler's German forces had invaded Holland, Belgium, Luxembourg and France, breaking through the thin Allied defensive line. Forced back to the French port of Dunkirk, disaster loomed as the bulk of the British army—in the BEF—faced capture or certain death. When told rescue was unlikely, the on-scene British commander's response was only three words: "But if not..."

Those words were immediately recognized as Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego's unflinching refusal to bow to Nebuchadnezzar's golden idol, prepared to die in the fiery furnace rather than worship a false god (Daniel 3:18). Just as their biblical counterparts did eons earlier in Babylon, the BEF believed they could be rescued to fight another day, "but if not..." they would go down fighting if it didn't happen. The BEF's renowned reply inspired the "Miracle of Dunkirk," an incredible Royal Navy and civilian craft evacuation effort that saved 338,000 Allied soldiers.

Whether you're an experienced active duty or newly commissioned officer, leading in today's military you may face a "but if not..." moment, a "falling on your sword" crossroads of making a choice between compromising or doing the right thing despite difficult repercussions. So how do you lead as a Christian today? The key is by building up your spiritual core. Just as we build up our core in physical fitness to gain strength and stay centered while maintaining endurance, similarly wise Christians must develop their spiritual core to rely upon when faced with life's inevitable "but if not..." moments.

In previous issues of *COMMAND*, I explored three components essential to developing your spiritual core that, when applied, will have prepared you for any potential "but if not..." moments ahead.

My "but if not..." moment came early in my career, when having to evaluate a civilian I was supervising after being told my boss disliked him. After much prayer and advice, I gave the civilian the rating I thought he earned, despite being warned my boss would be upset with the rating. My three-star boss did take me to task over my decision, but I stood my ground and didn't change it. The Lord's calling upon my life is to care for those He's placed in my charge and do the right thing. I was prepared for the consequences of my action, but God protected me.

Leading in today's military is fraught with many challenges. The Lord has called you exactly where He has providentially placed you, to serve as He served. Be a good steward; grow all entrusted to you. OCF fellowship groups and conference center activities help provide basic tools to build, strengthen and sustain your spiritual core, as exemplified in three of OCF's eight Spiritual Pillars: Centered on Scripture, Uniting for Fellowship and Engaging in Prayer.

As you continue to run your race for Christ in uniform, OCF stands ready to help you face your "but if not..." moments. May we learn from Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego! ✝

## Three components essential to developing your spiritual core

### 1. Know you have been called to serve the Lord through the military

→ Be confident—the Lord has you right where He wants you.

→ Realize—He has prepared you, will stand beside you, and will use you for His glory.

→ Rejoice—you will feel His pleasure as He uses you.

### 2. Be the servant leader with a Christ-like heart toward others

→ Love those you are called to serve.

→ Lead with humility—not thinking less of yourself, but thinking of yourself less.

→ Display obedience to the Lord in all things.

### 3. Take care of what has been entrusted to you

→ Discover the "diamond" buried within each of your people.

→ Create an environment where all can thrive and develop.

→ Encourage all to reach their full potential.

Editor's note: This article concludes General Warner's series exploring what it is to carry out your call to serve Christ in uniform. A special thanks to Lieutenant Colonel Greg Lane, United States Army Reserve (Ret.), for his contribution.



# LTJG Nate Barnes

## UNITED STATES COAST GUARD

**CAME TO OCF:** Major Jim and Carolyn Groves (former OCF field staff reps) introduced themselves to me and explained the ministry of OCF when I first reported to the U.S. Coast Guard Academy for swab summer.

**INVOLVEMENT IN OCF:** I have had the privilege of attending Bible studies, countless events, and serving as the president of OCF while at USCGA. My wife, Jen, and I were part of a wonderful OCF small group while in Kittery, ME. I am honored to be currently serving on the OCF Council.

**WHY OCF FOR ME:** The Lord has worked through OCF to change my life. I have been blessed with tremendous mentors, have developed close Christian friendships, and have been encouraged in serving the Lord and my country. The ability to connect with the body of Christ wherever we are stationed and be a part of the

Lord's work in that area is a unique aspect of OCF similar to the early church in Acts.

**BORN:** New Haven, CT, 1989

**ALMA MATER:** USCGA

**HOBBIES:** Freeride and downhill mountain biking, skiing, outdoor adventures, working with my hands, drumming, and spending time with my wife.

**WHAT'S ON MY IPOD:** Most genres of music, Phil Wickham, Jeremy Camp, and Lecrae.

**WHY A MILITARY LIFE:** I didn't want to sit behind a desk, and wanted to serve our country. I do sit behind a desk half of the time and realize that will only increase as I get older. But I have really enjoyed the Coast Guard so far and know this is where the Lord wants me.

**WHAT'S ON MY BUCKET LIST:** Bike at Whistler in B.C. Canada, refurbish an old truck, and travel overseas with Jen.

**MOST MEMORABLE/EXOTIC PLACES VISITED:** Olympic National Park in Washington; Italy; Shanghai, China; and Roatan, Honduras.

**BEST ADVICE GIVEN YOU:** From my grandfather, Dr. Spiros Zodhiates: "Stay faithful to the Lord."

**QUIRKY HABITS:** I brush my teeth for a long time.

**SOMETHING I CAN'T LIVE WITHOUT:** My wife, Jen

**LIFE BIBLE VERSE:** "How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to your word" (Psalm 119:9).

# On the Threshold of Opportunity: Mirroring Christ in Your Career

by AURELIA SMITH

former United States Air Force captain

It's a saunter down memory lane I thoroughly delight in from time to time: that golden, glorious day of my United States Air Force Academy graduation and commissioning. I vividly remember the sights and sounds—tossing my wheel cap up into the blue sky, my triumphant shout drowned out only by the Thunderbirds' echoing flyby above the USAFA stadium. For our Christian brothers and sisters in uniform, just ahead of you in your new military career are great blessings and challenges you will have the privilege of experiencing because you are a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ.

You now have the profound opportunity to mirror Christ to those around you: a servant leader humbly, sacrificially giving of time, talents—and even life, if required—for a greater good. When overwhelmed by the enormity of this call, and all the seemingly relentless and trying circumstances involving it, you can depend on Jesus for wisdom, strength and grace. He will empower you to be faithful to this high calling, “Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need” (Hebrews 4:16).

The active duty life of frequent moves, hazardous duties, and distance from family and friends delivers large-scale opportunities to grow in God-dependence in ways you've never experienced before. As a young, single lieutenant working in intelligence, I found myself stationed far away from my parents and prior support networks. Sometimes I was on required duty seven days a week. At other times, as a part of contingency operations, the lives of others were at stake—based on the quality and accuracy of the information I provided. Some assignments had me “disappearing” without being able to tell anyone how long I'd be gone or what I was doing. Nor could I contact anyone during that time.

These difficult and fear-inducing circumstances drew me closer to God, teaching me just how dependent I was upon Him for His protection, grace and wisdom. He was with me—a refuge, strength and

ever-present help in trouble (Psalm 46:1). I was never hidden from the loving Father's eyes, whether in the most remote or secreted of locations (Psalm 139:7-12). Because He is all knowing and has complete authority over everything, I could perform my assignments with joy and a sense of eternal purpose rather than fear. By trusting Him, I could know that it was He who placed me in a certain time and place for His sure purposes—essential for effective service to both Him and my country (Esther 4:14).

Interdependence with other Christians is also paramount for believers to recognize. During those intense times of my responsibilities, I would gather with other military Christians to worship the Lord, study His Word, and pray for each other. Those relationships became some of my most enduring friendships and cherished memories.

Our nation lauds and applauds the independence and self-sufficiency of those who seemingly overcome insurmountable odds with grit and determination. But our autonomous reserves aren't big enough, strength strong enough, nor intellect and planning powers ample enough to overcome the extraordinary challenges of the military life. The message of the cross makes it clear that apart from God we can do nothing (John 15:5). We are utterly dependent upon Him for life, breath, provision, and salvation.

Learning to more fully lean on God in every situation of life, particularly in your new military career, is an opportunity of an ever-growing delight to know: God's strength is sure, His wisdom unending, grace sufficient, and love never-ending. ✠

Aurelia, a 1997 USAFA graduate, grew up globe-trotting as the daughter of a retired senior master sergeant. No longer in the Air Force, she still moves frequently with her husband, Col Nate Smith, and their two sons. Aurelia has a master's degree in biblical counseling, is a certified counselor, and is a speaker for Spiritually Smart Family conferences, part of OCF's Family Outreach/Puget Sound ministry, headed by Col Larry and Bobbie Simpson, USAF (Ret.).

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*U.S. Coast Guard photograph by Petty Officer 2nd Class LaNola Stone*

### *Dear graduates,*

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. At OCF, we pray God will guide you as you look to Him for strength and counsel. **OCF is proud to recognize these graduates.**

#### **Austin Peay State University**

2LT James Scott, USA

#### **Dowling College**

ENS Rowland George, USN, NAVAVSCOLSCOM, NAS Pensacola, FL

#### **East Carolina University**

2ndLt Kathleen Tcherkezian, USAF, UPT, NAS Pensacola, FL

#### **Eastern Illinois University**

2LT Michael Bird, USA

#### **Kent State University**

2LT Tara Bresette, USA, BOLC, Fort Sill, OK, Apr-15

#### **Middle Tennessee State University**

2ndLt Justin Vagts, USAF, UPT, Vance AFB, OK

#### **Ohio University**

2ndLt Emily Allen, USAF, Offutt AFB, NE, May-15

#### **St. Francis College**

\*2ndLt John Montes, USAF

#### **St. John's University**

2LT Gerald Pittman, USA  
2LT Tiffany Pittman, USA

#### **Southern Illinois University—Edwardsville**

2LT Rachel Kurzeja, USA, SBOLC, Fort Gordon, GA, Jun -14

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Defense.gov photo

### **Trident University International**

2LT Jeffrey Matney, USA

### **The Citadel,**

#### **The Military College of South Carolina**

2LT Benjamin Thompson, USAR, FA BOLC, Fort Sill, OK, Jun-14

### **The Ohio State University**

ENS Gerold Haumschild Jr., USN  
2ndLt Courtney Kiggine, USAF

### **United States Air Force Academy**

ENS Daniel Barringer, USN, FT, Pensacola, FL, Aug-14  
2ndLt Hannah Cox, USAF, COO, Keesler AFB, MS, Aug-14  
2ndLt Nathan Carey, USAF, UPT, Columbus AFB, MS, Oct-14  
2ndLt Sam Kiekhaefer, USAF, COO, Keesler AFB, MS, Aug-14

### **United States Coast Guard Academy**

ENS John Dierker, USCG  
ENS Catherine Durand, USCG, FT, Pensacola, FL  
ENS Brian Hills, USCG  
ENS Stephanie Jocis, USCG, CGC Cypress, Jun-14  
ENS Karlin Joh, USCG  
ENS Kathryn Lamphere, USCG

ENS Allyson Mason, USCG

ENS Ryan Moore, USCG, USCGC Mackinaw, Cheboygan, MI, Jun-14

ENS Jessica Nelson, USCG, Sector Anchorage, Anchorage, AK, Jun-14

ENS Nickolas Palacios, USCG

ENS David Parker, USCG

ENS Jordan Rank, USCG

ENS Benjamin Wolhaupter, USCG

ENS Makaila Woodard, USCG

### **United States Military Academy**

2LT Jennifer Alonso, USA

2LT Logan Bolitho, USA

2LT Niki Boyda, USA

2LT Blake Bucknam, USA

2LT Micah Clark, USA

2LT Neal Covell, USA

2LT Breawna Davis, USA

2LT Nathan Davison, USA

2LT Ethan Dewart, USA

2LT Andrew Fanko, USA

2LT Michael Fung, USA

2LT Michael Gotschall, USA

2LT Mitchel Hazelwood, USA

2LT Jonathan Holmgren, USA

2LT Carson Hoshall, USA

2LT Ashley Justice, USA

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2LT Cristine Kaufman, USA  
2LT Charles Llewellyn, USA  
2LT Kayla Long, USA  
2LT Johanna Lund, USA  
2LT Ryan Menicucci, USA  
2LT Zachary Newman, USA  
2LT Andrew Oswald, USA  
2LT Andrea Park, USA  
2LT William Pinkerton, USA  
2LT Cameron Prince, USA  
2LT Oswaldo Restrepo, USA  
2LT Andrew Riekenberg, USA  
2LT Matthew Rohrback, USA  
2LT Holly Schlotterbeck, USA  
2LT Catherine Sedy, USA  
2LT Jordan Sims, USA  
2LT Natalie Stone, USA  
2LT Stephen Stringfield, USA  
2LT Spencer Strohmeier, USA  
2LT Mackenzie Vaughn, USA  
2LT Pierce Wasdahl, USA  
2LT Charles Whitaker, USA  
2LT Hollis Young, USA

### United States Naval Academy

ENS Haley Adams, USN  
ENS Carolyn Adkins, USN  
ENS Michael Ashmore, USN  
ENS Justin Betz, USN  
ENS John-Michael Dampf, USN  
ENS Christian Dane, USN  
ENS George Davis, USN  
ENS Stephanie DeBoer, USN  
ENS Caleb Drogowski, USN  
ENS Bo Joost, USN  
ENS Yechan Kim, USN  
ENS Michael Madrid, USN  
ENS Marcus Perez, USN  
ENS Matthew Sheeler, USN  
ENS Paul Zimmerman, USN

### University of Illinois

2ndLt Zach Baumann, USAF  
2LT Taylor Carmichael, USA  
2ndLt Trisdon Miller, USAF, CSOT, NAS Pensacola, FL, Jul 14

### University of California—Los Angeles

ENS Ian Conte, USN, Aviator, FT, NAS Pensacola, FL, Oct-14

### University of Minnesota

\*2LT Grant Fritz, USA  
\*2ndLt Matthew Larson, USAF

### University of Portland, Oregon

2ndLt Cameron King, USAF, UPT, Vance AFB, OK, May-14

### University of South Carolina

2LT Justin Adams, USA, EBOLC, Fort Leonard Wood, MO, Jun-14

### University of Texas—San Antonio

\*CPT Lawrence Peacock, USA

### Virginia Military Institute

2ndLt Nicholas DeMaria, USMC  
2ndLt Michael McDonald, USMC  
2LT Zachary Stark, USA, IBOLC, Fort Benning, GA

### Virginia Tech

2ndLt Lucas Adams, USAF  
2ndLt Michael Krieger, USMC  
2ndLt Sally Woodrum, USAF

### Wheaton College

2LT John Van Zwieten, USA

### Various Universities

\*2ndLt Aniekanabasi Ifon, USAF  
\*ENS Andrew Maddox, USN  
\*2ndLt Joseph King, USAF

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## Legend

### U.S. Air Force

CSOT: Combat Systems Officer Training  
COO: Cyberspace Operations Officer  
UCT: Undergraduate Combat Systems Officer Training  
UPT: Undergraduate Pilot Training

### U.S. Army

EBOLC: Engineer Basic Officer Leader Course  
FA BOLC: Field Artillery Basic Officer Leader Course  
IBOLC: Infantry Basic Officer Leadership Course  
SBOLC: Signal Basic Officer Leader Course

### U.S. Coast Guard

CGC: Coast Guard Cutter  
FT: Flight Training

### U.S. Navy

NAVAVSCOLSCOM: Naval Aviation Schools Command

\*Late 2013 graduate

# A tale of two lieutenants

Effective leaders use their resources, take action, and own decisions

by **CHIEF MASTER SERGEANT VANCE CLARKE**  
United States Air Force, Retired

Leadership is the art of influencing people to accomplish what needs to be done. Since for the most part officers direct and the enlisted execute, those whom you lead want leaders who give direction, take the time to understand what it takes to get things done—and allow them to accomplish it. In the Bible we read of Nehemiah, who didn't build much of the wall surrounding Jerusalem, but directed all the successful rebuilding (Nehemiah 3:1-32).

For the Christian officer, just as Christ is with you, our enlisted men and women must know you are with them as well. They will inspect, test, and measure you—see what you are made of—while looking for courageous, caring leadership that knows both the officer and enlisted roles, and values their input and expertise. You can learn a lot from those who have done the work. Take advantage of asking them, “How can we do this better? What issues should I consider?” You will get answers.

Consider the leadership examples of Lieutenant Smith and Lieutenant Jones.

Both officers came to my office on separate occasions asking for advice. We discussed each situation, and I provided some pros, cons and my perspectives. Both asked what I would do and I voiced possible courses of action, but reinforced that the decision was theirs.

Although he didn't have to, Lieutenant Smith later shared his decision with me, describing the factors he weighed beforehand and thanking me for my candid input.

Contrast that with Lieutenant Jones who announced to the sixty-three airmen in formation what our unit would do “because the Chief said so.” Lieutenant Jones did not display character or courage, nor did he care to take a stand and take ownership of his decision.

Yet, Lieutenant Smith owned his decision with courage and consideration. Lieutenant Smith hon-

ored me—by wanting, valuing, and contemplating my input before making a decision he bravely stood by.

I prayed for Lieutenant Jones, asking God what I should do. The lieutenant and I had a long talk that I initiated after the formation incident, where I shared how the team and I were affected. It made a positive impact, and the last I knew he was a major and doing well. Though I lost contact with Lieutenant Smith, I was blessed to see his same courage and care in the many fine young officers I served with over the years.

Using your resources, taking action, and owning your decisions—that is leading. It shows responsibility and confidence, and is what our enlisted members desire. If their leaders can't own it, they won't either, and they will quietly question your decisions.

I think of all you cadets and midshipmen graduating from our military academies and ROTC programs, especially the Christians, now becoming commissioned officers in service to our nation. A time of excitement, exhilaration, and maybe just a little fear as you enter the officer ranks, serving your country and your God. You are the future of our military and nation. Think of it—from your ranks will potentially come four-star generals, full admirals, and other top leaders.

As you venture into unfamiliar experiences, in those moments when fear grips at you, remember that the Lord is always with you. His Word tells us not to be afraid, which can be done only if we are with Him and He with us, “Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go” (Joshua 1:9).

As a thirty-year veteran, NCO, SNCO, chief and command chief master sergeant, that Scripture from Joshua was the verse I drew upon for encouragement, keeping me focused on the God I ultimately worked for. While ranks are unimportant in serving Christ, being able to recognize and use the resources He puts before us is critical to success.

To be successful in our military while following Christ, the Christian believer must seek the Lord's

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*Vance Clarke submitted photo*

Chief Master Sergeant Vance Clarke speaks at a Veterans Day Ceremony.

**Using your resources, taking action, and owning your decisions—that is leading.** It shows responsibility and confidence, and is what our enlisted members desire. If their leaders can't own it, they won't either, and they will quietly question your decisions.

direction and will. While following Him I often used short, targeted prayers as I worked through issues. He often guided me to other believers for counsel—both officers and enlisted—with more experience and wisdom.

To the graduating lieutenants and ensigns—go forth and serve. Show your courage and consideration. Let God, other officers, civilians—and yes, even enlisted—guide and shape you. We look forward to your success! Our nation needs you! ✚

Vance, who serves on the OCF Council as the senior enlisted advisor, retired from the Air Force after serving in a variety of positions, including his last ten years in six different CCM roles. He is married to his love, Pam. Vance now works in Texas as a logistics program manager and certified program management professional.

# Aligning our life glide path

God's Word must guide our wayward senses in our Christian walk

by **COMMANDER H.C. THOMAS III**  
United States Navy, Retired

It was the darkest of nights—no moon or stars, just a low cloud ceiling—as I taxied my single-seat Corsair II Navy jet into position on Cat One, preparing for my first night catapult shot and carrier landing. Hooked up tight to the catapult, running my engine at full power, I tightly gripped the throttle full forward, sneaking one quick look at the blackness in front of the ship, *it's so dark! Oh Lord—help me!*

I flipped on my wingtip and taillights to salute the cat officer on deck, commenced my instrument scan, and awaited the inevitable—an incredibly fast acceleration toward the front of the ship. It happened so quickly my eyeballs distorted, the whole instrument panel a blur. The steam cat's powerful stroke blasted me from zero to 160 knots flying speed in only two seconds.

Now only sixty feet above the unseen ocean surface, my only thought was *climb, climb, climb! Keep it straight, level, and climb! Do I have enough flying speed?* I checked the airspeed indicator now that my eyeballs had uncaged. Whew! The catapult did its job! Scan the main attitude gyro—**KEEP CLIMBING!** *Gear up; faster, keep climbing.* 200 feet...flaps up...400 feet...600 feet...800 feet. Where would I be without these instruments?

I then entered the clouds, where it was both dark and weirdly opaque all around the cockpit. While

working as hard as I could to climb to pattern altitude of 1200 feet, the ship's air traffic controller told me, "402, turn left downwind heading 240." I gently banked into what I thought was a 30-degree climbing left turn. *But what is that I am seeing out to the left?* Violating the axiom of not getting diverted from my instrument scan, I quickly looked outside the cockpit to see an eerie glare off the clouds—that's my plane's wing light reflecting creepily off the clouds! My eyes darted back to my instrument scan: the main attitude gyro was showing the wings as level! *Wait! The wings aren't level! I have to be in a 30-degree bank to the left!*

Or so I thought. My brain and body told me I was in a left turn, but the attitude gyro showed the wings level. And though I'd been taught to trust the instruments, my feelings that I was in a left turn were so overwhelming that if I had banked further to the left I'd be too steep and would plunge into the water below.

I thought I had started my turn to 240 heading. But the hard choice—the right choice—was to believe the instruments. For a split second I had lost my focus on what was really important. That quick glance outside at the wing light on the night clouds was just enough of a distraction to cause vertigo—a potentially fatal disorientation. Struggling to bring my jet back around for my first night trap, I took a deep breath as I called on the Lord—and let go of trusting my own senses. Refocusing on the instruments, I finally made a successful landing.

**God's Word is like that main gyro on a jet's instrument panel**—it doesn't lie, always has the right answer. Just as I had to let go of trusting my wayward senses to instead trust my jet's main gyro, so too must we in our Christian walk constantly align our life glide path with the Word of God.

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*PO3 Kenneth Abbate, USN photo*

An aircraft launches from an aircraft carrier during night flight operations.

Safely aboard ship, soaked in sweat, thankful for simply being alive, I climbed out of the jet now safely tied down in the parking area. With the jet's engine still running, my friend Mike McCarthy "hot switched" places with me in the cockpit, climbing in for his first go. As I entered the ready room below deck, the ship's PA system suddenly blurted out, "off the bow, plane in the water, plane in the water!" It was Mike! Why had he flown into the water? Was it what I had similarly experienced? I confessed, "Lord, there but for Your grace I would have gone. Thank You for helping me to trust those instruments!" Heartsick, I prayed for his wife as flight ops were cancelled that night while we mourned the loss of a fellow naval aviator.

I "night qualified" a month later, eventually accumulating more than 100 night traps on 223 combat missions while surviving enemy fire during the Vietnam War.

I frequently think about the lesson I learned during my first night carrier landing and how it relates to trusting God through his Son and His Word. Proverbs

3:5-6 says, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight."

God's Word is like that main gyro on a jet's instrument panel—it doesn't lie, always has the right answer. Just as I had to let go of trusting my wayward senses to instead trust my jet's main gyro, so too must we in our Christian walk constantly align our life glide path with the Word of God: "Your word, Lord, is eternal; it stands firm in the heavens.... If your law had not been my delight, I would have perished in my affliction" (Psalm 119:89, 92). ✂

Clay Thomas retired in late April as OCF's White Sulphur Springs conference center director after nearly twenty-five years of faithful service. In this article adaptation of his 2011 Allegheny Section Conference speech, the former Navy pilot recounts the spiritual lesson he learned of trusting God, during his first—and harrowing—night carrier landing.

## Breaking bread together at OCF/Valor ROTC Retreat

by CADET DOM BARRALE

Do you ever wonder what constitutes Christian fellowship? It can be a seemingly difficult, elusive ideal because the emphasis we place on particular aspects of fellowship shifts throughout the varying stages of our lives.

Perhaps we all were simply over-thinking the issue. Army, Air Force and Navy cadets and mid-level officers encountered the person and work of Jesus Christ in a real and powerful way at the annual OCF/Valor Midwest ROTC Retreat in February, and experienced a key aspect of fellowship we often lose sight of—breaking bread together. The Pine Lake Camp, Iowa, staff helped create a positive environment where we felt comfortable enough to freely engage with one another, the meal times a vehicle for rich conversation.

Army Colonel David Buckingham spoke on God's character and personal vocation, setting the scene for the more than eighty cadets, cadre and family members in attendance to think deeply about what it means to be a Christian in the military.

One focal point—looking at who God is, and who we are in comparison—prompted conversations throughout the entire weekend, as did the Luke 15 prodigal son parable on grace—grace that goes against worldly standards and takes on shame and humility to demonstrate pure love. As the prodigal's father took on shame—the cultural taboo of bearing his legs—when pulling up his garment to run toward his son, so too God humbled himself in the incarnation to run towards his own creation (Philippians 2:6-8). All weekend we wrestled with this: why would an utterly



OCF/Valor Midwest retreat photo

Cadets at the OCF/Valor Midwest ROTC Retreat breaking bread together, both in meals and Communion.

holy, immutable, and infinite God even consider extending grace to human beings so flawed, they'd never be able to love Him like He deserves to be loved?

Perhaps God established earthly fatherhood to help His creatures better understand how we relate to our heavenly Father—so that in turn, we might have a small picture of His infinite love taking form in the person of Jesus Christ (John 3:16). I was blessed by the small glimpses of COL Michael Runey's indescribable love for his son, joyously smiling as Caleb reveled in the chance to shoot targets on the shooting range. It was a moment every son

desires to have with his father, and every father desires to have with his son.

My group of guys discussed this at great length over Oreos and Pop-Tarts, snuggled up in our army-issued sleep systems at the highest point of the compound in an old shack. We thought it would be cool to wake up to the sunrise. We began to see how understanding ourselves as rooted first and foremost in our status as the heavenly Father's children directly affects our ability to receive His grace. Our core identity rests in God's love for us—not in anything we do.

The retreat could not have

ended more appropriately than when we all joined together for the breaking of bread and drinking of the cup in remembrance of Jesus. It was such a blessing for us Christian men and women to gather together at the ROTC retreat and talk about the Gospel.

Dom was the Wheaton College ROTC program cadet chaplain, and recently graduated as a newly commissioned officer. Wheaton ROTC works with Upper Midwest Valor rep Bob Holthouse in putting together the annual seven-state Midwest OCF/Valor Retreat.

Understanding ourselves as rooted first and foremost in our status as the heavenly Father's children directly affects our ability to receive His grace.



Lewis-McChord OCF photo

The Lewis-McChord OCF group prays for a captain deploying to Afghanistan.

*Prayer warriors needed! Join in with other OCF members as together we contend for God to powerfully move OCF's ministry and each other's lives.*

**Pray for OCF ministry...**

**Conference Centers**

Spring Canyon and White Sulphur Springs summer programs: leaders, staff members, speakers and attendees.

**Council/Home Office/Field Staff**

- OCF's Over the Top Extreme Adventure: an invitational event raising funds to help finish the

Spring Canyon phase of OCF's Growing & Building Campaign—debt free.

- God's wisdom, power and discernment in carrying out the staff's daily ministry responsibilities and duties.

**Academies & ROTC**

Clear vision, wisdom, patience, and endurance for our OCF leaders/teams at the service academies and college ROTCs.

**Pray for OCF members and friends. . .**

- For all our military men and women entering the active duty

ranks as newly commissioned officers, especially for our OCF members: wisdom, favor and the courage to live out their Christian faith.

- For those wrestling with life's many struggles, including issues of health, family, employment and multiple deployments.

**Pray for our nation and world...**

- For God's life-changing hope and power to fill those who wrestle with PTSD and suicidal thoughts.

- For fresh fire from the Holy Spirit to pour down on all people, opening resistant hearts to receive the Good News of Jesus Christ in unparalleled ways.

**HOW CAN WE PRAY FOR YOU?**

→ OCF sends out a monthly "Power in Prayer" guide that contains specific, in-depth prayer requests from OCF members and for the ministry efforts of OCF. To sign up as a prayer warrior and receive "Power in Prayer" or to submit a prayer request, go to [www.ocfusa.org/contact/request-prayer](http://www.ocfusa.org/contact/request-prayer)



**SOUTHEAST/MIDSOUTH REGION OCF/ VALOR ROTC CONFERENCE—NORTH CAROLINA**

ABOVE: *Applying the armor*—More than thirty cadets, officers and guest speakers were on hand at Camp Dixie, NC, for the Southeast/Midsouth Region OCF/Valor ROTC conference in February. OCF’s Tim Wiseman (back row, fourth from left) and other leaders organized the “spiritually rich weekend” that focused on Ephesians 6:10-20’s full armor of God discourse.

**ROCKY MOUNTAIN SPIRITUAL FITNESS ROTC RETREAT—COLORADO**

TOP RIGHT: *Faith and Fun*—Young adults from four Colorado universities enjoyed a March weekend together at the fifth annual Rocky Mountain ROTC Spiritual Fitness Retreat. OCF Council member CH(Maj) Dan Forman, USAF, spoke on servant leadership principles from Acts 3:1-16. Lt Col Tom Falconer, USAF (Ret.), led the event at OCF’s Spring Canyon conference center.



**MAXWELL-GUNTER AFB—ALABAMA**

*Contend for the faith*—Mentoring, various Bible studies; healthy, transparent interaction in chapel settings and leaders’ homes—these are just some of the glimpses into the busy ministry at Maxwell-Gunter AFB. OCF field staff rep Houstoun Waring (standing) and this Bible study group together explored Matthew 7 and Jude for timeless nuggets of God’s unchanging truth.





**WHIDBEY ISLAND HALF MARATHON—WASHINGTON**

*A fun fundraiser*—Running shoes were laced tight as six OCFers, including Puget Sound OCF field staff rep Larry Simpson (second from right), hit the pavement for the Whidbey Island Half Marathon in April. All Puget Sound OCF groups participated in the “fun fundraiser” where over \$3000 was raised to support ministry efforts such as their local OCF chapter and the Spring Canyon phase of OCF’s Growing and Building capital campaign. Larry’s 2:09:39 time shaved twenty-eight seconds off his 2009 pace.

**SPRING BREAK MISSION TRIPS**

*Servant leading*— On the mission field building houses and sharing Christ’s love to kids and locals were a few of the ways cadets and midshipmen from the service academies’ OCF groups spent their spring breaks. USAFA OCF cadets (shown below) were Christ’s hands and heart in the Dominican Republic, Sweden and in a Habitat for Humanity outreach. USMA cadets were also sent by the Lord to the Dominican Republic, and New York, while USNA midshipmen ministered as His own in Jamaica and Poland.



**TRAVIS AFB—CALIFORNIA**

*Road trip*—It was a California “House Party” road trip in March for OCF’s director of ministry advancement Mike Tesdahl (left). He and Ray Johnson, committee co-chairman on OCF’s Growing and Building capital campaign, visited every known OCF small group between Los Angeles and San Francisco. This Travis AFB OCF’s weekly lunchtime study, a “refreshing all-ranks mix,” is co-lead by Capt Joshua Locke (not pictured) and Capt Kate Veseth (fourth from left), who also serves on OCF Council.



*Photo credits (clockwise, top left opposite page): OCF/Valor ROTC conference photo; Puget Sound OCF photo; Kaitlyn Sanborn photo; Travis AFB OCF; Maxwell-Gunter OCF photo; Tom Falconer photo*

**Minnesota OCF annual dinner draws more than 90**

More than ninety retired and active duty officers, ROTC students, enlisted personnel and five Gold Star families were on hand for Minnesota OCF's annual dinner in February where they heard retired Air Force Chief of Chaplains, Major General Cecil Richardson, speak on illustrations drawn from the life of Samson.

Both General Richardson and the evening's entertainer, country music artist Rocky Lynne, "were excellent—two home runs," said Maj Karl Bakke, USAF (Ret.), who along with other team members heads up one of OCF's most active groups in the nation. "Many of the cadets and others were challenged and encouraged to fully follow God in all that they do."

Activities beyond the annual dinner are quarterly luncheons, fundraisers, and a volunteer service project providing an opportunity "for everyone to hang out and get to know one another a little better," Bakke said.

An OCF steering/advisory committee, overseeing current activities while coordinating future ones, includes CH(COL) Ken Beale, USA (Ret.), Fort Snelling Chapel's head chaplain, and Capt Ann Feist and Capt Amy Nordquist, both of the Minnesota Air National Guard, who "have done a lot of work for our activities," Bakke said.



Travis Miles photo

**MINNESOTA OCF ANNUAL DINNER**

Major General Cecil Richardson (center left) was the keynote speaker at the Minnesota OCF's annual dinner in February. Core leaders for MN OCF include (left to right) Ann Feist, Ken Beale, Karl Bakke, and (far right) Ann Nordquist.



Fort Campbell OCF photo

**BROWN BAG LUNCH AT FORT CAMPBELL**

Attendees at a monthly Fort Campbell brown bag lunch take a mid-day break from their often-demanding active duty schedules to enjoy Christian fellowship with each other.

**Fort Campbell hosts monthly brown bag lunch get-togethers**

A monthly brown bag lunch get-together in the Fort Campbell, KY, community was launched late last year as a way to foster fellowship among believers and seekers and promote OCF.

Coordinated through the 2nd Brigade Combat Team rear detachment chaplain, CPT Daniel Isfan, USA, the idea for these fellowship gatherings was spearheaded by MAJ Kwenton Kuhlman, USA. OCF local reps, LTC Greg and LTC Lucy Lane, USA (Ret.), have been involved in many aspects including publicizing the events across post.

The brown baggers take place 1145-1245 at Fort Campbell's Memorial Chapel on either the last Thursday or Friday of the month, featuring speakers and topics ranging from a pilot talking about his Navy SEAL days to a retired pastor detailing his service as a chaplain during World War II. OCF's executive director, Brig Gen David Warner, USAF (Ret.), spoke at the January 2014 event.

→ For additional information about the brown bag luncheons at Fort Campbell, contact the Lanes at [lanenormang@hotmail.com](mailto:lanenormang@hotmail.com).

**Taps**

**Capt Jeffery Riddlebarger, USAF**, 14 August 2013, husband of **Lynn Riddlebarger**, Colorado Springs, CO.

**Cynthia Pickett**, 28 February 2014, widow of **Maj Donald Pickett, USAF (Ret.)**, Colorado Springs, CO.

**Marlene Koenig**, 9 March 2014, wife of **Col Joe Koenig, USAF (Ret.)**, Dayton, OH.

**LtCol Marvin Gardner, USMC (Ret.)**, 21 March 2014, husband of **Amy Gardner**, Colorado Springs, CO.

**LTC Don Butler, USA (Ret.)**, 8 March 2014, widower of **Vida**

**Butler**, Seymour, TX.

**Births**

**Brea Abrahamson**, 2 March 2014, daughter of **Lt Col DJ and Kate Abrahamson, USAF**, South Korea.

**Annalise Joy Bouren**, 24 February 2014, daughter of **LTC Kevin and Adra Bouren, USA**,

Dupont, WA.

**Audrey Michelle Dittmar**, born 14 March 2014, daughter of **CDR Josh and Christa Dittmar, USN**, Hollywood, MD.

**Riley Elizabeth Exline**, born 2 February 2014, daughter of **MAJ Peter and Jessica Exline, USA**, West Point, NY.

## Council wrapup: God is on the move

by **COLONEL SCOTT FISHER**  
United States Air Force

“Christ is risen!” As Christians we celebrate those three words of Easter that give meaning to our lives and purpose to our OCF ministry. Eighteen of your Council members met on 10-13 April, just before Resurrection Sunday, at OCF’s White Sulphur Springs Conference Center—joyously watching winter give way to the new life of spring. The change of seasons was also evident during the meeting as we witnessed the “changing of the guard” of some dear brothers and sisters in Christ: our WSS conference center director couple, several field staff couples, and special council members.

As we rejoiced in their faithful service, God blew us away with those He called to carry the baton forward, reminding us from our meeting’s key verses that He is able: “To him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy—to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen” (Jude 1:24-25).

Your Council considered how best to influence the changing environment in which we serve, strongly agreeing we should always stand for truth, but deciding that as we engage a fallen world with grace, we should emphasize the things we stand for more than what we stand against. We thanked God for the blessings this past year of personnel and finances, and for the clean audit OCF once again received. We set the strategic priorities for 2015: calling, faith-sharing, development and growing, as we discussed the importance of our identity in Christ and ensuring each of us truly understands how to integrate faith and profession in today’s military.

As we went through *Pray, Discover and Obey*, we were cautioned that too often we pray and then want God to obey our will. We explored that over 142 times in the Bible God states, “Out of Egypt...” He continually reminded His people of the amazing things He had done in their past not so they could idly rest there, but that with expectation they could look forward to the future and what He could accomplish through them. God has used OCF powerfully in the past, and He is on the move today! Join with us together in prayer so we can hear from Him how and where He would lead us in the future for His glory. The task before us is big, but our God is bigger. “He is able—and He is risen indeed!”

### OCF Council elections start 1 September

Elections for OCF Council, Class of 2017, 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 of your emails in our database.

The September issue of *COMMAND* magazine will contain abbreviated candidate information and voting information. Starting in mid-August, the OCF website will have comprehensive candidate information. Eligible members may vote online or request a hard copy ballot.

→ For more details, contact Susan Wallis at 800-424-1984, or [susan.wallis@ocfusa.org](mailto:susan.wallis@ocfusa.org).



Photo by Christie Halvorson

### FAREWELL TO THE THOMASES

Longtime friends and fellow Christian brothers and sisters in the Lord gathered over the 26-27 April weekend to honor CDR Clay and Marty Thomas, USN (Ret.), who retired after nearly twenty-five years of service at OCF’s White Sulphur Springs conference center. The new director couple, LTC Paul and Dawn Robyn, USA (Ret.), were also welcomed aboard during the weekend’s events.

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.

by Mr. and Mrs. Delbert Elliott  
by Mrs. Patricia Miller

**Don and Cindy Pickett**  
by Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Balph

**Cindy Pickett**  
by Mr. and Mrs. Lowell Skabo  
by Anonymous  
by Mr. and Mrs. Norman T. Warwick

by Ms. Nancy E. Rudisill  
by Lt Col & Mrs. Terrance L. Stokka, USAF (Ret.)  
by Mr. Warren D. Slagle  
by Mr. & Mrs. David C. Johnson  
by Mr. and Mrs. Randall C. Haynes

### IN HONOR OF...

**Dr. Robert Spoede**  
by COL & Mrs. Travis H. Small Jr., USA (Ret.)

**Clay and Marty Thomas**  
by COL & Mrs. Travis H. Small Jr., USA (Ret.)  
LtCol & Mrs. A. J. Diehl, USMC (Ret.)

### IN MEMORY OF...

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

**Lt Roy E. Seaman, USN**  
by Mr. and Mrs. Delbert Elliott

**Lt Col Guy Eric Pulliam, USAF**

**Cynthia Dianne Pickett**  
by Mr. & Mrs. Timothy Hendrich

**Naomi Ingram  
Jane Wright  
Dennis L. Shackelford  
Leon L. McConathy  
Nancy Turner**  
by CAPT & Mrs. O. W. Camp Jr., USNR (Ret.)



# Join us for OCF's Over The Top Adventure

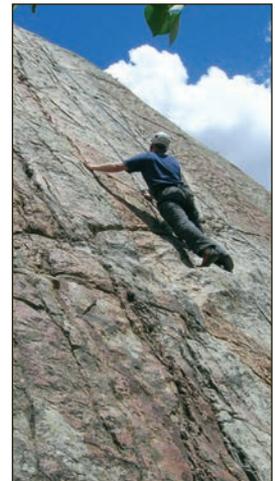
If you missed the previous two extreme challenge adventures, you don't want to miss this one



Come be part of the 2014 OCF Over The Top Adventure, an extreme-challenge event for men and women with an over-the-top mission to help fund the final phase of Spring Canyon renovations. Participants must be in good physical condition and will experience Colorado back-country adventures in the heart of the Rockies involving hiking, rock climbing, horse-back riding, camping, fishing and off-road exploration on all-terrain vehicles. All expenses are covered once

arriving in Colorado. Trekkers will build new friendships with like-minded men and women, will make life-long memories and will enjoy the deep satisfaction of leaving a personal ministry legacy that will likely touch the lives of thousands of people in the years to come.

**Contact Mike Tesdahl for more information: 800-424-1984 or [mike.tesdahl@ocfusa.org](mailto:mike.tesdahl@ocfusa.org).**



*Photo by Kim Hawthorne*

## Fort Shine newest lodge at Spring Canyon

More than 100 people attended the Memorial Day dedication of Fort Shine (left, shown in early May), the second new lodge at OCF's Spring Canyon Conference Center, now vastly upping the capacity for more ministry opportunities. The holiday weekend's festivities included the recommissioning of the original Fort Shine, named in honor of 1LT Jonathan Cameron Shine who paid the ultimate price with his life while serving in Vietnam. Now renamed Cornerstone Lodge, the original Fort Shine will house the summer staff. A soft opening of Fort Shine took place 16-18 May for an OCF-hosted chaplains and families retreat, and in late April, the Spring Canyon Advisory Council checked out the inside progress of the new lodge.

# Navigating between Scylla and Charybdis

Our challenge is to hold secular, religious responsibilities in proper tension



**MIKE  
TESDAHL**  
Director  
of Ministry  
Advancement

**S**cylla and Charybdis were mythical sea monsters noted by Homer. Scylla was a rock shoal on the Italian side of the Strait of Messina and Charybdis was a whirlpool off the coast of Sicily. They were perhaps an arrow's flight from each other so that avoiding Charybdis meant passing too close to Scylla and vice versa. Odysseus had to navigate boldly but wisely...

...*And so did Jesus.* In Matthew 22:16-22, Jesus sees right through the schemes of the Pharisees and Herodians, who dissembled innocence to conceal their true motivations. Jesus reminds them that the Jews were subject to Caesar, who demanded nothing of them but his rightful tribute—paid with coins stamped with his own image—for the expenses of government and defense. Jesus suggests that spiritual things like worship, prayer, obedience and discipling, on the other hand, belong rightly to God. The rights of Caesar and the rights of God need not be in conflict. “When they heard it, they marveled.”

...*And so do we.* The early church father and theologian Tertullian wrote, “Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s; that is, give to Caesar his image stamped upon his coin, and give to God his own image stamped upon you; so that while you render to Caesar the coin which is his due, you may render your own self to God.” As Christian military leaders, we are not faced with Odysseus’ two equally bad choices; the body politic is not opposed to faith or faith to the state. Our challenge is simply to hold our secular and religious responsibilities in proper tension so that we meet our military obligations in a manner that is wholly consistent with our Christian value system. Romans 13:1-7 is clear on this subject and underpins one of OCF’s Spiritual Pillars:

**Integrating Faith and Profession.** We call Christian officers to integrate biblical standards of excellence into their professional responsibilities. OCF recognizes and affirms the unique responsibilities, expertise, and ethical values of the officer corps. We affirm an officer’s adherence to his oath of commissioning. We believe that devotion to duty is both an appropriate biblical imperative and a means of establishing credibility to speak to other military members about spiritual matters.

Integration is not multitasking, although it might feel that way at times. Integration is combining multiple things into one harmonious and integral whole. That is the essence of biblical leadership. Scriptures tell us to lead diligently and humbly, serve sacrificially, shepherd eagerly. Paul reminds us that our authority as government representatives comes from God, and that authority is granted for the welfare of those we serve. Our military is a values-based institution; those values closely parallel biblical teachings and should be among our leadership imperatives.

In *The Way of the Heart* Henri Nouwen asks, “What is required of a man or woman who is called to enter fully into the turmoil and agony of the times and speak a word of hope?”

OCF actively equips and encourages Christian military leaders to engage the times. Will you join us with your time, talents and treasure? 

**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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Home office address: OCF, 3784 S. Inca St., Englewood, CO 80110-3405  
OCF website: [www.ocfusa.org](http://www.ocfusa.org) Phone: 303-761-1984 Fax: 303-761-6226  
Toll Free 800-424-1984 e-mail: [ocfdenver@ocfusa.org](mailto:ocfdenver@ocfusa.org)

**Publisher/Editor:** [Michael.Edwards@ocfusa.org](mailto:Michael.Edwards@ocfusa.org)  
**Managing Editor:** [Karen.Fliedner@ocfusa.org](mailto:Karen.Fliedner@ocfusa.org)  
**Senior Graphic Designer:** [Josh.Jackson@ocfusa.org](mailto:Josh.Jackson@ocfusa.org)



**CF# 10531**

be a part of ocf's 2014 summer camps

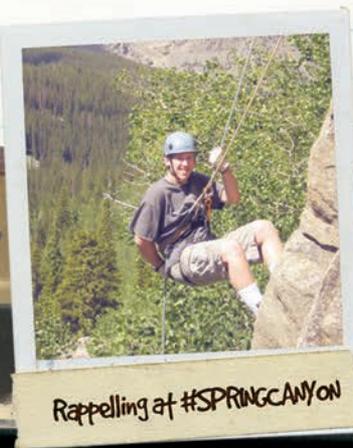
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New Friends... #SummerAtTheSprings



Rappelling at #SPRINGCANYON



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