



Christian perspectives on life in the military

COMMAND

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SPIRITUAL COMMISSIONING

**Sent out to serve the nation
and the Lord.**



Building Christian military leaders, families, fellowships...*for a lifetime*

76 years and counting...

What an amazing year it has been, to be able to reflect on God's lavish goodness over the past 75 years to and through the ministry of Officers' Christian Fellowship. I enjoyed being able to **COMMEMORATE** what He has done, **CELEBRATE** what He is doing, and most importantly, **COMMIT** to what He wants to continue doing through OCF to the military!



**DAVID
WARNER**

Executive
Director

I am grateful to those on whose shoulders we stand on today, those great cloud of witnesses who were obedient to the Lord's calling to establish an Officers' Christian Union in the U.S. on 31 December 1943, and in doing so, paved the way for all of us today. Consider our founders' intent, as stated in the "Certificate of Incorporation," of "utilizing the Spiritual Force of the union (fellowship) to help all ranks, grades and ratings to come to an increasing knowledge of Jesus Christ, our Lord, who to know is life eternal, and to this end to stimulate and encourage members in definite and regular prayer, Bible study, and Christian witness, for their mutual improvement and growth in grace."

As COL Mike Tesdahl, USA (Ret.), OCF's Interim Executive director wrote in OCF's **CONNECTED** newsletter (July 2010), "our founders deliberately determined that the truths of God could best be manifested to the military through peer relationships among its leaders because of their unique impact on the institution." OCF was "a unique call by God to provide ministry structure to the timeless truth that Christians are to be 'ambassadors for Christ' in their spheres of influence"—the military society.

Tesdahl summarized, "We are not missionaries to the military, as if we were outsiders exercising our military skills in some kind of tent-making ministry that affords us opportunities to witness. We are members of the profession of arms who are Christians. 'Christian' is the adjective; our Christianity modifies how we live and lead, and yet we are wholly committed to our military vocation and oath of office."

What a charge this is to us, especially in today's environment! While the culture has changed, the freedom to express our faith is challenged, and the knowledge of Scripture continues a downward spiral, I believe our founders' intent rings truer than ever! It's now our privilege, opportunity, and charge to carry this banner forward as we move ahead to the next 75 years.

In the last issue of **COMMAND**, I discussed the first of four modules of OCF's Integrated Faith Project (IF Project)—Personal Transformation. The IF Project is an online resource, created to achieve OCF's God-given vision and mission of sending out Christlike leaders who successfully integrate their faith into all aspects of

their lives and make a positive impact on the military community. Personal Transformation is the critical discovery of our personal identity in Christ. That identity is at the core of who we are, what we believe, how we act, and how we interact with the world around us. Let's now take a look at the IF Project's three other modules of integrating Faith & Profession, Faith & Family, and Faith & Community.

Faith & Profession: The key thought here is to be the same person with the same motivations in every aspect of our lives. It is seen in our lifestyle, our words, our social awareness, our relationships and other influences, and the strength of our commitments. It's a wholeness characterized by servant leadership, selfless service, compassion, and love for all, with our witness being primarily through our professional excellence.

Faith & Family: Our greatest calling card is how we live our lives for Christ, and our families can be guideposts to others on what a Christian family looks like. I recently had the privilege of doing daily devotions with 2 of my grandchildren while visiting them on vacation. The first words out of their mouths as they burst into the room every morning were, "Can we do the devotion?" Mealtimes began with our 2 grandchildren singing a prayer they learned in Hawaiian. At night before bed, my grandson brought his favorite book for me to read to him—a children's Bible. Our hearts were filled with gratitude to God to see how faith was integrated into every part of their day!

Faith & Community: As Christians, we are charged with making a difference in the places where the Lord has planted us. As OCF members, united by our Christian heritage and charged by God to make something happen (Acts 1:8), we expect this community to be dynamic—a change agent, active, motivating—a force to be reckoned with!

As OCF members, we **COMMIT** ourselves to what the Lord continues to call us toward "engaging military leaders in biblical fellowship and growth to equip them for Christlike service at the intersection of faith, family, and profession." OCF will have a positive impact for Christ throughout the military society by our Christlike leaders who integrate their faith into all aspects of their lives. ✝



USCGA OCF photo

USCGA OCF

The cadet leadership team is motivated for the Lord this year unlike any other year. All the leaders came and made it a priority to be there instead of an obligation preventing them from going off with their first friends. After four years, there is a strong community across all the classes, who want to encourage one another and serve one another. God has done some neat things in the hearts of these leaders. Jesus set himself apart primarily to invest in the lives of his 12 disciples, not the masses. We need to be listening for our 12.

Carl & Christy Crabtree // OCF Field Staff

Maxwell-Gunter OCF

Tim & Kim Tormey // OCF Field Staff

This is from a new CV-22 pilot, who wrote me, "I am sorry that it's been almost a month since we connected and you shared your podcast (OCF Crosspoint: A Difficult Story of God's Goodness, Episode 33, <https://www.ocfusa.org/2019/04/difficult-story-033>) and testimony of God's faithfulness in your life. What a blessing to meet you and your family. I cannot even

begin to describe how deep this podcast went for me, not only having flown the MV-22, but how God is using you. I am convicted at how nothing I've done or where I am is to my credit or strength. I was convicted of how much pride I have that needs to be replaced with God and humility towards him. I just really wanted to say thank you. I am amazed at God's goodness to you and your faith in Him, and I desire that in my own life."

Fort Leavenworth OCF

Jim & Christina Harbridge // OCF Field Staff

It has been busy as Christina and I transitioned from retirement right into "Bring In" activities. Our first big event was the Neighborhood Bible Study Kick-Off Conference to encourage interested families to help establish, host, or lead Bible studies, by giving them practical tools for praying for their neighborhoods, inviting

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others, and leading a study. Ten couples attended the 2-1/2 hour workshop. We spend a great deal of time laughing at my continual struggles doing all of these over the years. In the end, it was definitely successful—all but one couple agreed to serve in some fashion. We participated in the Spouses Club Super Sign Up, PAIR Day, and The Protestant Chapel Community Bring-In Celebration. These events are important to show that we are a part of the community and offered unique opportunities to meet and develop a relationship with a ministry partner here in the community. Protestant Women of the Chapel graciously invited me to speak at their first meeting. I had the pleasure to explain what OCF is and how we support them here at Leavenworth and beyond. It was awesome and a little intimidating speaking to about 160 strong Christian women, but it produced a new family to participate in one of our off-post neighborhood Bible studies.

USMA OCF

Colin & Amy Wooten // OCF Field Staff

Pray, Discover, Obey sessions informed our approach to kicking off the year with ministry team and cadet small group training. With time always a constraint at USMA, we kept the training, which consisted of vision casting and sharing best practices/collaboration, to two hours. We

review the “play sheet,” a two-page vision-casting document to help small group leaders understand the intent of the ministry efforts. The small group leaders have the authority to lead their groups as they wish to meet the needs of those the Holy Spirit brings to them. Each small group is different, just as it is in the broader OCF. Special thanks to COL Jason Musteen, CPT Josh Bowen, and CPT James Beebe for leading the three breakout groups during our training session. The ministry team and cadet leaders have done an excellent job getting the year off and running.

USNA OCF

James & Juli Baca // OCF Field Staff

This month marked the recommissioning of 21 Maryland Avenue, a/k/a Maranatha Mansion (see page 17). It was a great event and even better to see so many supporters and midshipmen there. Thanks to all of the support from so many! ENS Kevin and ENS Lisa Urness, USN, who were temporarily assigned to USNA after graduation, devoted so much time to fixing up the house, including painting the new fence which Blaine Fletcher built (also Class of 2019) perfect shades of Navy Blue and Gold. At the end of September, we had several plebes over for dinner. It was an opportunity for them to get to know each other a bit and for us

to get to know them better. We even had a few upper class show up to say hello to these Class of 2023ers.

USAFA OCF

Steve & Rita Wade // OCF Field Staff

So much is happening here. At the first SPIRE meeting, we had 143 folks—standing room only. The OCF upper class cadets are excited to reach out and faithfully, lovingly invite and bring their friends and squadron mates. The USAFA Ministry Team couples are so engaged with their classes. Their care, mentoring, teaching, encouraging in the Lord is mighty and effective. Matt and Karen Brandt (and a lot of cadet help) renovated their barn into a meeting space. Cadets love to get away to the barn. Every time we all come back together—joy fills the air. We do have a sweet fellowship in this body of Christ. And at a first time event organized by Paul and Cindy VanderWeide, who provided all the food and games, 115 cadets had a great time relaxing, fellowshiping, playing some yard games, and hearing the Word of God taught. All in the beautiful creation of Colorado. What could be better? Praise the Lord for all the people at USAFA OCF who give so much! Keep them and their families in your prayers!

WEDDINGS

1st Lt Jennifer Cutler, USAF, married **LT Stephen Cresswell, USCG**, 4 August 2019. Their home is San Pedro, CA.

LT Bradley Davis, USCG, married **Lauren Schaeffer**, 7 June 2019. Their home is Clearwater, FL.

LT Grant Johnson, USN, married **LTJG Hannah Zachman, USN**, 19 May 2019. Their home is San Diego, CA.

2d Lt Katherine Little, USAF, married **Capt Benton Alexander**,

USAF, 4 August 2019. Their home is Las Vegas, NV.

TAPS

Louisa Buxton, 14 June 2019, Lakewood, CO. Louisa was the widow of **Cleo “Buck” Buxton**, OCF’s first general secretary (executive director) of the then-Officers’ Christian Union.

CDR Frank Cole, USCG (Ret.), 22 May 2019, husband of **Ginny Cole**, Littleton, CO.

Becky Conzelman, 6 April 2019, wife of **CDR James Conzelman**,

USN (Ret.), Littleton, CO.

LtCol Robert Marshall, USMC, 20 April 2019, husband of **Jana Marshall**, Owens Cross Roads, AL.

Barbara Pensyl, 22 August 2019, Buffalo Mills, PA. Barb served as the head cook at OCF’s White Sulphur Springs Conference Center for nearly 25 years.

CAPT James Prout Sr., USCG (Ret.), 13 September 2019, husband of **Geraldine Prout**, Versailles, KY. He served three terms on the OCF Council.

COL William Pinson, USA (Ret.), 12 August 2019, husband of **Helen Pinson**, Fayetteville, NC.

LTC John Richards, USA (Ret.), 7 January 2019, husband of **Rosa Richards**, New London, NH.

Doreen “Sam” Uber, 9 April 2019, wife of **CPT Robert Uber, USAR**, High Point, NC; mother of **Lt Col Matthew Uber, USAF (Ret.)**, Lebanon, PA. Bob and Sam Uber served as the Program Director Couple at WSS from 1992 to 1997.

Pensacola OCF

Chet & Michelle Arnold // OCF Field Staff

The Wednesday night home Bible study crowd continually morphs. One night two new people let us know they were planning to attend. One of the two invited some friends—and 9 new people showed up! Gotta love that! We average 22-24 people, plan food for 30, and one night we fed more than 40! We ran out of the planned meal and went to the leftovers! No one complained. And there were 10 regulars not in attendance, otherwise it would have meant a call for pizza delivery. It's a good problem to have. This is a vibrant and constantly changing group. One of the singles just got married and brought his new wife to the group. Another of the singles is engaged and asked us if we do pre-marital counseling. We met her beau the week before this photo. He does not live here so we'll be counseling via the Internet.

Puget Sound & Family Outreach OCF

Larry & Bobbie Simpson // OCF Field Staff

We joined 32 military families assigned to JBLM for a fun-filled Military Family Week at the Malibu Club in British Columbia. With a theme that revolved around "identity," we served as small group leaders and were able to engage couples in group discussion, as well as during social and recreation time. The Lord graciously provided safety, spiritual renewal, and fun for all participants. Malibu Family Week partnership is with Young Life, so we are able to establish lasting relationships with couples and assimilate some into the ministry outreach activities of OCF. Although the week does not have an evangelistic intent per se, one person indicated a decision for Christ, while several others indicated life-changing experiences.

WSS OCF

Paul & Dawn Robyn // OCF Field Staff

September kicked off "Second Summer" for WSS. From Labor Day

Weekend through Columbus Day Weekend in October (about 6 weeks), we basically have guests the entire time; during that timeframe, there were only 2 days/nights without guests in the hotel! That's a huge praise, that we are able to serve so many. During September we hosted 8 retreat groups, 2 Adventure Weekends, 2 camping retreats for a Christian school, 1 Career Transitions Workshop, and our Fall Volunteer work period. I want to mention a huge thank-you and recognize the WSS team here as well, because all of this was accomplished while training and onboarding our new EXSEL class. We subscribe to the theory that the best way to learn how to swim is to be thrown into the deep end of the pool. No "crawl, walk, run" here—we hit the ground running when we come back from the summer stand-down and it doesn't stop! We also hosted 2 Adventure Weekends in September—a canoe trip and a rock climbing/rappelling weekend. This program continues to be a great venue for one parent and one child to get away and have some quality time together, centered around an adventure activity. **Help us get the word out about these Christ-centered, life-changing opportunities!**

Spring Canyon OCF

Kim & Kari Ann Hawthorne // OCF Field Staff

This past summer we had our first two "exclusive use retreats." First, Ransomed Heart Ministries purchased the sole use of our facilities and services to host its Become Good Soil Intensive for 125 men. Later, it was the Adventures of the Heart Men's Retreat that hosted their Expedition for 86 men. For Summer Celebration, we had eight weeks of fantastic ministry, and RMH had nine weeks of phenomenal impact on cadets and midshipmen. Father Teen Adventure had three weeks for sons and two weeks for daughters, as fathers and their teen/young adults renewed their commitments to their relationships and went home refreshed and equipped to serve God. My hat is off to all the year-round and summer staff who enable this ministry to happen.

Council News

Class of 2022 election results

The OCF Council reported the election of the Council Class of 2022 at its meeting earlier this year. New council members who started a three-year term in June are: Capt Dan Abney, USMC; COL Steve Berger, USA; RDML Donna Cottrell, USCG; MAJ Jen Gonser, USA; Capt Amari Holt, USAF; Col Mike Moyles, USAF (Ret.), and CAPT AJ Reiss, USN. OCF Council officers are: MajGen Mel Spiese, USMC (Ret.)—President; COL Ric Schumacher, USA (Ret.)—Vice President; LTC Steve Schmidt, USA—Secretary, and COL Rob Jassey, USA (Ret.)—Treasurer.

Council nomination period starts in November

The seasons for both the nomination of candidates as well as the OCF Council election itself have changed. The nomination period for candidates who will run on the Class of 2023 ballot is in November, with the election taking place throughout February 2020. OCF regular members (present/former officers, officer candidates, cadets and midshipmen) are eligible to vote; each nominee must have an endorsement from at least three members. Endorsements can be submitted online. Those elected to the Class of 2023 will serve a three-year term on the Council beginning 1 June 2020. The OCF website will have comprehensive candidate information in preparation for elections in February of 2020. [Submit nominations online at ocfusa.org/nominations](https://ocfusa.org/nominations) until 30 November. Visit this URL for more info. For more information, contact heidi.martin@ocfusa.org or 800-424-1984.

2020 Spring Council meeting

OCF Council's spring meeting will take place 25-27 April at OCF's White Sulphur Springs Conference Center. OCF members are invited to attend. For additional information, contact Heidi Martin at heidi.martin@ocfusa.org or 800-424-1984.

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White Sulphur Springs photo

EXSEL internship applications due

Applications are due 28 February for the EXSEL Discipleship Program at OCF's White Sulphur Springs Conference Center. EXSEL is a unique, year-long opportunity of Christian service, discipleship, ministry and growth for young adults ages 18 to 24. For more info, visit whitesulphursprings.org/exsel.

2019 Spring Council meeting wrap-up

The OCF Council met at White Sulphur Springs in late April for a weekend filled with prayer and excellent fellowship. The session, which started with a time of Pray, Discover, and Obey (PDO) by Rich Goldsmith, launched into meetings that covered a variety of topics.

The OCF Council approved amendments to update the OCF Constitution, which were ratified recently by a vote of OCF regular membership. Colin Wooten, USMA OCF Field Staff,

delivered an exciting update on the Timothy Project, which is focused on keeping young officers engaged in OCF as they leave their commissioning sources and enter the military mission field. Steve Schmidt provided the Council with an update on the search for OCF's next Executive Director.

Because it was his 21st and final Council meeting, Rich Goldsmith provided some reflections and advice to the Council. He has also been active in an OCF Bible study for the last 47 years and has served OCF in numerous positions.

Rich, thank you for your wisdom and dedicated service to the Lord's Kingdom through OCF!

OCF Council President Emeritus event at WSS

Former OCF Council Presidents were honored as emeritus in conjunction with the End Of Summer retreat at OCF's White Sulphur Springs Conference Center in August. "All they wanted to do was serve Christ," said Brig Gen David Warner, USAF (Ret.), OCF's Executive Director, of the honorees. "They will accept the President

Emeritus title reluctantly because all they wanted was for Christ Jesus to be glorified."

Past OCF Council presidents attending the event were MG Clay Buckingham, USA (Ret.); RADM Grady Jackson, USN (Ret.); LTG Robert VanAntwerp Jr., USA (Ret.); CAPT Art Halvorson, USCG (Ret.); and MG Jim Coggin, USA (Ret.). Speaking on behalf of OCF Council was current president MajGen Mel Spiese, USMC (Ret.).

Three of the past 4 OCF Executive Directors who served for OCF Council Presidents were represented as well: Lorraine Pettijohn, widow of Paul Pettijohn; David & Lori Warner, and Lt Gen Bruce & Melissa Fister, USAF (Ret.). Fister was the speaker for the retreat weekend.

The family of Lt Col Ward and Bobbe Graham, USAF (Ret.), were also on hand for the dedication of a Heritage House room honoring their parents' lives and legacy. Ward's varying OCF staff positions included that of WSS Program Director, as well as his extensive travels with Bobbe to visit OCF local groups and contacts.

Emcee CAPT Chris Blake, JAGC, USN (Ret.), said that the presidents' leadership of OCF was one of faithful "I will most gladly spend and be spent" service. "The ministry of OCF is not one of priests, hierarchy, or church but brothers and sisters leading and living in fellowship together," said CAPT Blake.

"It was a God-honoring and God-glorifying weekend," said Paul Robyn, WSS Director. "We thanked and praised Him for all that He has accomplished through this ministry and the many faithful leaders that have served over these past 75 years."

Ministry News

'Heart and soul of ministry' Louisa Buxton dies at 96

Louisa Buxton, widow of Cleo "Buck" Buxton, OCF's first general secretary (executive director) of the then-Officers' Christian Union, joined her husband in heaven in the arms of the Lord Jesus Christ on 14 June. She was 96.

A registered nurse, Louisa's support of her husband and the ministry included

ministry mailings and editorial work with The Bulletin, the COMMAND magazine forerunner. When OCU conference center ministry started in 1962 at Spring Canyon, Louisa's family noted that her "delicious meals kept thousands of people fed" and "multiple medical needs were handled out of her small tan suitcase."

"Louisa was always good-natured, fully committed to Buck and to the OCU/OCF ministry," said CAPT Terry Grant, USCG (Ret.), former OCF Director of Finance. "Buck and Louisa were the heart and soul of the ministry," said Grant. "She was a jewel."

Read the full article at the OCF website: ocfusa.org/2019/07/louisa-buxton-she-was-a-jewel/

Changes to COMMAND in 2020

Because of the extended coverage of the OCF 75th anniversary special issue in this past spring's issue of COMMAND magazine, it was decided there would be no summer issue. Plans are now underway for COMMAND in 2020, which include a new look. Because of escalating postage and printing costs, COMMAND will be dropped back from 3 issues to 2 in the coming year.

Register now for Winter Retreats

Christmas season is special, but it is even more special to celebrate at OCF's White Sulphur Springs and Spring Canyon Conference Centers. Come experience the joy of the season as we celebrate the birth of Christ in warm fellowship with other believers. With a sleigh load of activities and the cozy quietness of snow on the mountains, these winter retreats are waiting for you!

White Sulphur Springs

For more information or to register, visit the WSS website: whitesulphursprings.org/winter-retreat/

Week 1, 22-26 December

Speaker: CH(LTC) Erik Gramling, USA
Topic: "Great Characters of the Christmas Story"
Join your WSS family as we look anew at

the greatest story ever told: a real story about real people in real trouble, all in need of a real Savior.

Week 2, 26-30 December

Speaker: Dr. Dan Hart
Topic: "The Knowable God"
The coming of Jesus was God's forever proclamation that He can be and desires to be known. We will be challenged to pursue a deeper, more complete knowledge of and love for the knowable God.

Week 3, 30 December-2 January

Speaker: Dr. Michael Sprague
Topic: "Is There Hope for America, Your Family, You?"
Hope is not in technology, money, politicians, religion. Hope has a name and it's Jesus Christ. Let's journey with the person and teaching of Jesus to start the New Year with zest, purpose, and hope.

Spring Canyon

For more information or to register, visit the SC website: springcanyon.org/winter-sports-retreat/

Week 1, 19-26 December

Speaker: MAJ Dean Rizzo, USAR
Topic: "Rejoicing with Christ!"
Rejoicing in the Lord a powerful weapon and part of worshiping God—not just a suggestion or a good habit. Paul's letter to the Philippians reminds us why rejoicing in the Lord should be a part of our daily routine. Don't miss out on this access to joy beyond imagination!

Week 2, 27 December-3 January

Speaker: Lt Col Paul Homan, USAF
Topic: "Science and the Bible"
Does modern science—upheld in our society as ultimate truth—contradict or affirm the Bible, which we know is the ultimate source for truth (John 17:17)? We'll examine modern science based on a biblical worldview, touching upon several current scientific and biblical topics. ❄️

OCF Honor Fund

As the year draws to a close, a donation to the OCF Honor Fund helps the ministry in its kingdom work for God to military men and women. Gifts can be given to honor someone, an achievement, or an event, or may be made in memory of a deceased loved one or friend. OCF will send a letter to those being honored or to the families of those being memorialized, and their names will be listed in a future issue of COMMAND magazine. For more information, visit ocfusa.org/honor-fund

HONOR

Gary Gramling

By Mr. Jeff Philpott

Fisher Watkins

By Mr. & Mrs. Ronald J. Roth

Jada Lester

By Mr. & Mrs. Willie Bryant

2d Lt Holly M. Martin, USAF

By Ms. Heidi J. Martin

Al Shine

By Mr. & Mrs. Charles P. Llewellyn

Cadet Daniel Macune

By Mr. Charles W. Macune III

CAPT and Mrs Michael W. Patterson, USN (Ret.)

By Ms. Janet Adolph

CAPT Gordon E. King, USN (Ret.)

By Mrs. Gordon King, USN (Ret.)

CDR Carl and Christy Crabtree, USN (Ret.)

By Ms. Mary M. Stone
By ENS John L. Benton Jr., USCG

CDR Darrell Brown

By Ms. Patricia A. Snider

CDR Richard L. Zahn, USNR (Ret.)

By Ms. Barbara Kronewitter

Col & Mrs. Edward Roberts

By Mr. Mark Roberts

Col Larry Simpson, USAF (Ret.)

By LTC & Mrs. Benny C. Schulteis, USA

Dr. Martin C. Carlisle

By Mr. Reagan A. Mullin

Dr. Robert Spoede

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

Francisco Cebrenros

Melanie Allen

By 2LT Jason C. Black, USA

ENS Perry Reed Jenkins Jr., USCG Gary and Sandy McNeal

By Mr. & Mrs. Perry R. Jenkins

Heidi Martin

By Maj Gen & Mrs. Frederick H. Martin, USAF (Ret.)

Jim Barrack

By COL & Mrs. Gregory V. Barrack, USA (Ret.)

Jim Groves

By LTC & Mrs. Bryan N. Groves, USA

Josh Rice

By Mr. & Mrs. Andrew L. Malone

Joshua and Lindsey Bowen & the Class of 2019

By Ms. Susan G. Bowen

LCDR Thomas and Shirley Uber, USN (Ret.)

By Anonymous

LT Zachary Kunkle

By Mr. & Mrs. Fred W. Kunkle

LTC Tyson Edwards, USA (Ret.)

By Mr. & Mrs. Charles P. Llewellyn

LtCol David Jaquish, USAF (Ret.)

By Col. & Mrs. Douglas W. Jaquish, USAF (Ret.)

Mark Stubenhofer

By COL & Mrs. David B. Batchelor Sr., USA (Ret.)

Melba and Joe Rogers

By Capt. Lauren E. Stevens, USAF & Mr. Justin Stevens

MG and Mrs. Clay Buckingham, USA (Ret.)

By CAPT & Mrs. Arthur J. Reiss, USN

MIDN Noah Pollock, USN

By Ms. Susan D. Pollock

Mike and Ceil Edwards

By Mr. & Mrs. Richard Grogan

The USAFA Ministry Team

By 2d Lt Anna C. Demoret, USAF

The Norman Family

By the Jesse and Tashie Craft Family

USCG Vietnam Veterans

By CAPT David L. Powell, USCG (Ret.)

USMA Class of 1978

By COL & Mrs. Kim R. Kadesch, USA

Will and Peter Harrod

By COL & Mrs. Timothy D. Harrod, USA (Ret.)

William Han

By Ms. Gye Han

William Dean Lee

By Good Shepherd Community Church

Kiara Pierson

By Ms. Lisa H. Pierson

COL and Mrs. Arnold Ahnfeldt Jr., USA (Ret.)

By Merrill and Beryl Jacobson

(CH)COL Peter R. Sniffin, USA

By Mr. Edgar D. Sniffin

Bob and Jane Baer

Rev. Arthur E. Woolley

By Mr. & Mrs. Michael Stenberg

MEMORIAL

LTG Howard D. Graves, USA (Ret.)

By Mrs. Gracie Graves

1LT Jonathan Shine, USA

By MG & Mrs. Michael J. Nardotti Jr., USA (Ret.)

Barbara Pensyl

By Col & Mrs. Charles O. Cox, USAF (Ret.)

Barbara Doyle

By Mr. Brian Doyle

CAPT Irvin W. Lindemuth, USCG (Ret.)

By Mrs. B. Carolyn Lindemuth

Capt Mark R. McDowell, USAF

By Capt. Christopher D. Peterson, USAF

CAPT Michael Dallam, USN (Ret.)

By CAPT & Mrs. Paul D. Ims Jr., USN (Ret.)

Carolyn Groves

By Mr. & Mrs. Arthur D. Kennedy

Carolyn Groves

Linda McKaughan

Betsy Teuton

By LT Kimberly M. Gates, USCG

CDR Frank K. Cole, USCG (Ret.)

By Mr. & Mrs. Richard R. Young

CDR John C. Adamson, USN (Ret.)

By Mrs. Kristina T. Adamson

COL and Mrs. Homer H. Bowman, USA (Ret.)

By Mr. & Mrs. Warren Soper

COL Earl L. Casner Jr., USA (Ret.)

By CDR & Mrs. Clifford S. Perrin, USN (Ret.)

COL J. Wesley Loffert, USA (Ret.)

By CH(COL) & Mrs. Paul L. Vicalvi, USA (Ret.)
By Ms. Cynthia Frame

CW4 Ralph Thompson, USA

By Maj. & Mrs. Neil A. Slattery, USAF (Ret.)

Dr. Scott Hardin**James Ellen****Candice Nolan****John H. Beaird Jr.****Laverne Hunt****Robert G. Cook****Judge Harry Barnes**

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

Earline K. Johnson

By Mr. & Mrs. John P. Cress Sr.

By Pediatric Emergency Medicine Associates

Forest S. Norman Jr.

By Tyler High School Class of 1956

By Anonymous Donor

By Church of Christ in Friendswood

By Mr. & Mrs. Carl E. Dillon

By Mr. & Mrs. Gary E. Harris

By Mr. & Mrs. James L. Smothermon

By Mr. & Mrs. James W. Womack

By Mr. & Mrs. John E. Thompson

By Mr. & Mrs. Milton Arnold

By Mr. & Mrs. Richard L. Bockart

Geraldine L. Satterfield

By CH(MAJ) Steven W. Satterfield, USAR

Hope Raimer

By Mr. Edward A. Raimer

Irene Holland

By CDR & Mrs. Richard L. Zahn, USNR (Ret.)

By Mrs. Mary G. Ferris

James Murphy, USAF

By Mr. & Mrs. John M. Saul

Janet Gustin

By COL & Philip N. Gustin, USA (Ret.)

Jean Sniffin

By Mr. & Mrs. Ron Gedney

LT Roy E. Seaman, USN

By Mr. & Mrs. Delbert S. Elliott

LTC John D. George Jr., USA (Ret.)

By COL & Mrs. William R. Calhoun Jr., USA (Ret.)

By Col. & Mrs. William E. Schepens, USAF (Ret.)

By Dr. & Mrs. Daniel W. Schepens

LTC John L. Richards, USA (Ret.)

By Mrs. Rosa L. Richards

LTC William (Dan) Dantzler Jr., USAR (Ret.)

By Ms. Deondra Chamberlain

By LTC & Mrs. Robert W. Deckard, USA (Ret.)

By Ms. Wendi Y. Jones

LtCol Marvin D. Gardner, USMC (Ret.)

By Mrs. Amelia J. Gardner

LtCol Robert W. Marshall, USMC

By LTC & Mrs. Harold R. Winton, USA (Ret.)

LtCol Thomas Hemingway, USMC (Ret.)

By Anonymous Donor

MAJ William F. Hecker III, USA

By COL & Mrs. William F. Hecker Jr., USA (Ret.)

MG Charles R Sniffin, USA (Ret.)

By Mr. Edgar D. Sniffin

MG Robert H. Buker, USA (Ret.)

By Mrs. Ethel H. Buker

Mrs. Jonie Snow

By CAPT & Mrs. David L. Drake, DC, USN (Ret.)

Mrs. Joyce Allen Patrick

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

Nancy Spoede

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

Rachael Wade

By Ms. Thelma J. Elgersma

Ralph Martin

By Ms. Melinda M. Martin

Ralph Phillips

By LtCol & Mrs. Paul L. Gillikin, USMC

Robert S. Bruce**Mrs. Carol J. Kalmbacher**

By Mrs. Karen Bruce

Sue Ash**Cleo Buxton****Paul Pettijohn****LTC John D. George Jr., USA (Ret.)**

By LTC Robert W. Ash, USA (Ret.)

Trevor Coffman

By LTC & Mrs. H. G. Vaughan, USA (Ret.)

Carl Teague Jr.**Jeanette Morgan****Jane Shackelford****Barbara Scurlock****Bill Scurlock****Hattie Duncan**

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

COL Leroy D. Hammond, USA (Ret.)

By LCDR & Mrs. John K. Hahn, USCG (Ret.)

Betsy Teuton

By CAPT & Mrs. Bryan K. Finch, CHC, USN (Ret.)

By ENS Abigail A. Culp, USCG

By ENS Jonathan S. Dillard, USCG

By LT Justin P. Sherman, USCG

By LT Patrick C. Weaver, USCG

By Mr. Robert B. Sanford

Andrew Baer

By Melvin Baker

By 2d Lt Ross R. Stark, USAF

By AB Josiah S. Bedrosian, USAF

By The Anna M. Vrla-Fulgham Separate Property Trust

By CAPT & Mrs. Samuel L. Tate, USN (Ret.)

By CDR & Mrs. Aaron P. Rouland, USN

By CDR & Mrs. Steven R. Nichols, USNR (Ret.)

By CH(COL) & Mrs. Randall C. Dolinger, USA

By Church of the Ascension

By COL & Mrs. Robert A. Baer, USA

By COL & Mrs. Carl D. Porter, USA (Ret.)

By COL & Mrs. Daniel C. McMillen, USAR (Ret.)

By COL & Mrs. Patrick Sullivan, USA

By COL & Mrs. Shane Deverill, USA (Ret.)

By CPT & Mrs. George T. Rabb, USA

By CW5 & Mrs. Alfred L. Rice, USA (Ret.)

By LT & Mrs. Walter A. Reynolds, USN

By Lt Col Clifton G. Hertel, USAF (Ret.) & Mrs.

Joanne Hagadorn

By Lt Col Julie M. Turner, USAF (Ret.)

By LTC & Mrs. Douglas G. Perritt Jr., USA

By LTC & Mrs. Michael E. Bigelow, USA (Ret.)

By LTC & Mrs. Thomas W. Hughes, USA (Ret.)

By LtCol & Mrs. William G. Wright, USMC (Ret.)

By MAJ Jane F. Baer, USAR (Ret.)

By Mr. & Mrs. David A. Ham

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USCGA OCF photo

Spiritual commissioning ceremonies are “the culmination of four years of faith” surrounding the ministry efforts by OCF Field staff to the graduating cadets and midshipmen they’ve mentored at the service academies. These USCGA graduates from the Class of 2019 are among the new officers being sent out “as lights for Christ in a dark world/military.”

OCF leaders recount importance of spiritual commissionings

BY OCF COMMUNICATIONS

It’s the pinnacle moment of graduation, when cadets and midshipmen raise their right hands and swear in solemn oath “to support and defend the Constitution of the United States.” Soon afterwards, they’ll put feet to that substantive pledge, sent out to serve their nation as officers in the operational military.

The newly minted second lieutenants and ensigns who were involved in OCF

Bible studies and activities at the service academies are also sent out in a dual calling—the privilege of serving God as His ambassadors in uniform. The capstone event of the years of pouring the living water of Christ into them by OCF leaders at the service academies is a spiritual commissioning ceremony. And as USMA OCF Field Staff rep Colin Wooten underscores, “There is no better visible way to demonstrate the integration of faith and

profession than to prayerfully and publicly dedicate the first day of one’s professional life to Jesus.”

COMMAND asked Wooten and his colleagues—Steve Wade (USAFA), Carl Crabtree (USCGA), and James Baca (USNA)—about the spiritual commissioning ceremonies held when those they’ve earnestly mentored and disciplined are about to step into their military careers.

“Through the spiritual commissioning, the midships gain more understanding of what it means to be a Jesus follower as an officer, and it gives them focus and a mission to accomplish. It is also an act of encouragement and the final step in this part of their journey to help them stay close to God.”

—James Baca, USNA OCF

What is a spiritual commissioning ceremony? Why does OCF place value on it?

Wade: It is a culmination of a four-year phased curriculum that prepares cadets to serve the Lord in their profession, and a personal commitment to continue to serve Him, integrating faith and profession.

Wooten: It's a short ceremony after USMA's graduation that offers the second lieutenants the opportunity to publicly dedicate their professional pursuits to Christ's glory.

Baca: The spiritual commissioning is a culmination of a kind, a time for them to reflect on their time in OCF growing closer to God and becoming a better leader. It isn't all encompassing, but it is the last official event for midshipmen prior to commissioning.

How did it come about, who's involved?

Wooten: We believe it started as a bar pinning ceremony during John George's OCF Field Staff tenure that has since evolved to a spiritual commissioning ceremony.

Wade: Ours is loosely patterned after the Oath of Office they take upon being commissioned as second lieutenants. Ministry team couples, who have been with and have mentored and encouraged the cadets of the graduating class for the past four years, give a final charge to the class and administer the spiritual commission.

What exactly goes on?

Wade: We do our spiritual commissioning at the end-of-year banquet, where all four classes and our ministry team come together to celebrate God's blessing and work throughout the year.

Wooten: Ours takes place in the historic Cadet Chapel after graduation. We have a guest speaker and bring the graduates up to affirm their commitment to Jesus. Then the graduates have hands laid on them as

they are prayed over by the many loved ones, friends, and others in attendance.

Crabtree: Our spiritual commissioning takes place two days before graduation during a lunch at the Officers' Club with a guest speaker. Ministry volunteers and family gather around the cadets to pray over them.

Why does your ministry place value on the commissioning?

Baca: This is a biblical principle. Jesus sent out his disciples multiple times. Similarly, through the spiritual commissioning, the midships gain more understanding of what it means to be a Jesus follower as an officer, and it gives them focus and a mission to accomplish. It is also an act of encouragement and the final step in this part of their journey to help them stay close to God.

Crabtree: It culminates four years of faith and begins being sent out as sheep among wolves, where they will need to be as innocent as doves but shrewd as serpents, as lights for Christ in a dark world/military.

How is it important to growing Christian military leaders?

Wade: Growing Christian military leaders takes place during the cadets' time at USAFA. The spiritual commissioning is both a recognition of that growth and a commitment to take what they've been taught and put it into action wherever God sends them.

Wooten: Like a wedding, it is a ceremony of a key life moment. Real growth comes before and after the ceremony.

Baca: It is a time for them to remember those aspects of their last four years which have equipped them to have the impact in the fleet they desire.

What does it mean to you to experience it?

Wooten: It is hugely emotional for me to be present at such a special moment

on such a special day in the lives of the participating graduates and their loved ones. It may be the last moment these classmates will ever be together again. I am especially moved during the time when the graduates are prayed over by their loved ones. It is a sending out—a commissioning—as our script says, “The laying on of hands symbolizes a spiritual ‘sending forth’ for a lifetime of service to Christ.” In doing so we replicate how Barnabas and Saul were commissioned by the Holy Spirit in Acts chapter 13.

Baca: It's very encouraging on two fronts. First, to see the midships wanting to commit themselves to living a life that glorifies God. It's not guaranteed they will, but our hope is they will use the spiritual commissioning as an altar of remembrance (which is why we give them coins). And it's also great to see so many of their families and friends in attendance to support them.

Wade: We are encouraged by seeing others walking with the Lord and delighting to serve Him. We are thankful for how God has faithfully worked in so many lives.

What have you seen in the lives of your cadets who went through it?

Wooten: It's difficult to say what impact it has. Again, it is just a ceremony, but one which many parents in particular tell me afterwards how meaningful it was for them.

Baca: I would say that the midships who have chosen to attend the spiritual commissioning have continued to serve. Whether this is causation or correlation, it is difficult to know. However, even if it is the latter, we hope that it orients them and is the final step in preparing them for service in the fleet.


Wade: I think it's another small reminder to them that God has a plan and a mission for them in life. They can look back on the event and in harder times, perhaps, be encouraged to persevere in their calling. 



Photo by PO1 Fred Gray, USN

Downrange stressors—such as great responsibility, danger, fatigue, and loneliness—make the need for Christian fellowship an even more critical must-do. Ask and invite others to meet up, even if informally to talk about things and pray. Overseas military service can become periods of great spiritual growth by connecting with fellow believers and focusing on Christ.

Three officers share top tips for finding fellowship on deployment

BY ANDREA PLOTNER

Christian fellowship is always important, but especially downrange. The origins of OCF grew out of this need, thanks to Captain John Trotter. Trotter was an Englishman posted to British India, experiencing loneliness and spiritual isolation in a perilous location. Upon his return to England in 1851, he established an “Army Prayer Union for Officers and Men.”

In the New Testament, the Greek word for fellowship is *koinonia*. It communicates the necessity of being together for mutual benefit. Far-flung assignments often involve great responsibility, danger, fatigue, frequent relocation, deprivation, and more. Considering these stressors, the need to gather is even more compelling.

But fostering Christian community requires time and energy, usually in short supply. Below are edited excerpts from three modern-day Trotters. Meet Capt Daniel Abney, USMC; LT Justin Sherman, USCG; and COL Laurence Mixon, USA (Ret.). Be encouraged and equipped by their stories as they share best practices for prioritizing small group fellowship downrange.

Capt Dan Abney: Recognize the Need for Fellowship

Andrea: Describe struggles you faced on deployment.

Capt Abney: On my first deployment, I

hardly had anyone I could share spiritual struggles with. That was very difficult. On my second deployment, I had a great many fellow believers, which made the deployment more bearable.

Andrea: Describe your calling to be a small group leader.

Capt Abney: When I was attending the University of Central Florida, I had a fellow Army ROTC cadet ask me to go camping with him and some other Christians. The trip was led by a retired Army lieutenant colonel named Kevin Pilgrim. I wasn’t a believer, but the event sounded fun. I started attending the local OCF study thereafter, which began my trajectory towards Christ.

My life was never the same, all because someone had the courage to ask if I wanted to come to a Bible study. I think my calling stemmed from that experience. I remained connected with OCF because of the impact it had on my life. I didn't know OCF as a large ministry. I knew it as the Pilgrim family inviting me into their home, or CAPT Mike and Arden Patterson, USN (Ret.), in Pensacola hosting dinner and a Bible study at their house every week.

Andrea: What encouragement do you have for someone who is deployed or will deploy?

Capt Abney: Remember what it was like to feel isolated on deployment and remember that almost everyone else is probably feeling the same way. It only takes a little effort and courage to ask people to meet together. It doesn't have to be formal; you don't even have to study the Bible (although that would be helpful). You could just meet to talk about how things are going and any struggles you're facing. In my experiences, honest conversations happen when believers gather around. It may be a little work wrangling people together, but the rewards more than outweigh it.

**LT Justin Sherman:
Go In With a Plan**

Andrea: Describe struggles you faced on deployment.

LT Sherman: We've been pretty blessed out here in Bahrain. The Christian community is quite vibrant and welcoming. LT Josh Payne (one of my closest brothers in Christ) and I have integrated nicely into the fellowship of believers. We've met and become friends with a considerable number of men and women, military and local, who collectively support us as we carry out our duties—military, spiritual, familial, etc. There are always small levels of loneliness, heightened concern about safety, and frustration with lack of access to some of the typical comforts of being back stateside. But that comes with the territory.

Andrea: Describe your calling to be a small group leader.

LT Sherman: Josh and I joined OCF as

FIND A GROUP

Heading out from your local group? Check the OCF Directory for groups that may be where you're PCSing: ocfusa.org/directory/

START A GROUP

No local group where you're PCSing? Start one! The OCF website has tons of tools to help you get a fellowship gathering going: ocfusa.org/toolkit/

STUDIES FOR A GROUP

What does God's Word say about the concept of calling and the military profession? Or living a godly life in all circumstances? Those two Bible studies and several others are available at the OCF website ocfusa.org/studymaterials/

cadets at the Coast Guard Academy. At one retreat, our speaker talked about "planting our flag" early wherever assigned. He encouraged us to look into church options, OCF, and other Christian fellowship BEFORE arriving at our new duty station. I've always done that when transferring to a new unit or for extended temporary assignments, and I've seen the benefit of it.

Andrea: What encouragement do you have for someone who is deployed or will deploy?

LT Sherman: Remember, being a small group leader is easy! There are no requirements to have a certain number of people or meetings. Put your name out there, start a group. If it fizzles out, no harm, no foul—at least you tried something—and then pray for God's direction into how you can continue to foster fellowship and growth opportunities while deployed.

**COL Laurence Mixon:
Small Groups Strengthen
The Leader & The Led**

Andrea: Describe struggles you faced on deployment.

COL Mixon: During four deployments my biggest struggle was connecting to my wife and children in a meaningful way

[though technology helped]. I fought loneliness and isolation by maintaining a small, close group of prayer partners during each deployment. Ironically, deployments were always periods of spiritual growth for me. God put service members and civilians along my path who needed the Gospel and spiritual encouragement. The opportunities to minister to others helped me grow tremendously.

Andrea: Describe your calling to be a small group leader.

COL Mixon: In 2006 at the Air War College, Col Mike Martin, USAF (Ret.), helped me overcome my past and forever changed my life and walk with Jesus. I spent a great deal of time with OCF members and eventually started leading a weekly OCF student small group study. When I received notice in 2010 of a year-long deployment to Afghanistan, I knew I would hold an OCF small group there. I shared my plans with a couple other OCF members also deploying. Upon arrival, I posted a flyer in the dining facility, the chaplain's office and some common areas announcing the start of a Bible study. These people became my family away from family. We supported each other when life events occurred in theater and at home. The group became the people I would "see" during difficult days and with a simple smile and nod communicate that God loved us and we loved each other. Priceless.

Andrea: What encouragement do you have for someone who is deployed or will deploy?

COL Mixon: Remember the Bible tells us that "Iron sharpens iron" (Proverbs 27:17) and directs us to maintain strong fellowship with other believers (Hebrews 10:25). Starting a small group strengthens the leader and the led. It just takes a mustard seed of faith to start a group.

About Andrea

Andrea, who was involved in military women's ministry for 22 years as a military spouse, is co-author of the companion Bible study book for women *Thriving Not Just Surviving, Deployment Perspectives for Today's Military Families*. She is now spearheading an online Bible study community for *Planting Roots*, a ministry for military women.



New Hampshire OCF photo

Top to bottom:

New Hampshire OCF

It was fun under the summer sun as the NH OCF team gathered for its 4th Annual Ice Cream Social, held at the home of Hunt and Stephanie Kerrigan. The group enjoyed a time together of “great story telling and fellowship, some music—and after prayer, ice cream, with lots of toppings,” said leaders Peter and Susan Burdett.

Homestead Air Reserve Base OCF

Attendees of this OCF fellowship group are from the U.S. Coast Guard Maritime Safety and Security Team Miami, Special Operations Command South, 482nd Fighter Wing, and Det 1, 125th Fighter Wing (Florida Air National Guard). The group studied the book of John’s account of Jesus’ “seven signs and His seven ‘I am’” statements.

USAFA Class of 1999

Lt Col Terry Stokka, USAF (Ret.), (front center) who served as Field Staff rep at USAFA OCF for 10 years, recently hosted a breakfast for the USAFA OCF Class of 1999 graduates, who were gathered for their 20th reunion. “We had a wonderful time with about a dozen grads,” he said. “One grad said it was like having the cadet Bible study all over again with the guitars and music.”



Homestead OCF photo



USAFA OCF Class of 1999 photo



USMA OCF photo

Top to bottom:

USMA OCF Mission Trip

Earlier this year, a team of 39 served God as His hands and heart to others in the Dominican Republic on USMA OCF's annual mission trip over spring break. Ministry work included building two houses, ministering to an especially needy family in a remote village, street evangelism, and spending a day at the beach, where four cadets were baptized.

Fort Leavenworth

Fort Leavenworth's Discipleship Training Breakfast program kicked off the year using OCF's Integrated Faith Project (IF Project) as a base for its study. About two dozen people attend regularly, reports OCF Field staff rep Jim Harbridge, although "the expansion of mandatory PT to three days per week has definitely impacted student attendance this year. I am definitely praying that...more students will be called to DTB and focus on spiritual growth."



Fort Leavenworth OCF photo

Top to bottom:

Graham Room Dedication

The family of Lt Col Ward and Bobbe Graham, USAF (Ret.), was on hand for the dedication of a room in White Sulphur Springs Conference Center's Heritage House to honor their parents' legacy of servant leadership. After coming to Christ through OCF, the Grahams embarked on a lifetime of service for the ministry. In addition to holding varying staff positions, including Eastern Conference Center Program Director and Naval Academy representative, Ward and Bobbe traveled together extensively by private plane to visit OCF local groups and contacts.



WSS photo

OCF Council President Emeritus

Former OCF Council Presidents were honored as emeritus in conjunction with the End of Summer Retreat at White Sulphur Springs Conference Center in August. Former presidents on hand for the event were (l-r): MG Clay Buckingham, USA (Ret.); RADM Grady Jackson, USN (Ret.); LTG Robert VanAntwerp Jr., USA (Ret.); CAPT Art Halvorson, USCG (Ret.); and MG Jim Coggin, USA (Ret.), as well as former OCF Executive Director Lt Gen Bruce Fister, USAF (Ret.), who was the retreat weekend's keynote speaker (right). Also in attendance were current OCF Council president MajGen Mel Spiese, USMC (Ret.), and the OCF executive director couples who served these presidents at varying points during the 1972-2019 time frame represented at the event: Lorraine Pettijohn, widow of Paul Pettijohn; Fister and his wife, Melissa; and Brig Gen David and Lori Warner, USAF (Ret.).



OCF Communications photo

Fort Worth OCF

For the first time ever, Fort Worth OCF has combined spiritual forces with Gateway Church, led by Dr. Robert Morris, to sponsor a Veterans and Family of Veterans small group fellowship. Leaders CW3 David and Christel Ammons, USA (Ret.), report it's a "dynamic and exciting group" gathering "weekly to honor our veterans, have fellowship, and grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."



Fort Worth OCF photo



USNA OCF photo

Top to bottom:

Maranatha Mansion Ribbon-Cutting

God and His goodness were celebrated at an open house and ribbon-cutting earlier this fall at USNA OCF's Maranatha Mansion with the completion of the first of 3 phases to restore the house. All mechanical systems, living and sleeping areas, and the kitchen were updated for this hub of ministry outreach to USNA that also serves as the home for the USNA OCF Field staff. Funds are needed for the remaining two phases, which include outdoor areas and the restoration of the carriage house for expanded ministry opportunities. Over 40 years of dynamic OCF ministry of transforming countless lives by the love of Christ has taken place at the historic Annapolis, Maryland, home.

Ohio State

"Christlike service at the intersection of faith, family, and profession," is the goal of OCF's mission statement. For ROTC cadets and midshipsmen, it's through the grassroots efforts of OCF local leaders that these future military leaders are engaged and equipped through biblical fellowship and growth toward Christlike leadership. This OSU OCF group, led by Gwynn and Kit Vaughan (far right), heard MG Don Riley, USA (Ret.), speak on selfless leadership and enjoyed a Friday dinner and Saturday brunch served by the Vaughans.



OSU OCF photo

Send us your Ministry In Action group photo

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

3 podcast episodes you should hear

BY JOSH JACKSON

Director of Communications &
OCF Crosspoint podcast host

“Welcome to OCF’s Crosspoint podcast. This is the podcast dedicated to sharing stories of military life at the intersection of faith, family, and profession.” That’s how I opened episode 1 of the podcast back on January 28, 2018. While the introduction to the show has changed a couple times in the 45 episodes since then, the purpose of the biweekly podcast has not—sharing stories of military life at the intersection of faith, family, and profession.

Since the show first launched, I’ve produced, edited, and hosted most of the podcast episodes—not an easy task for someone with a print journalism and design background—and I’ve been blessed to have several of my coworkers step in a few times to share duties as host.

The idea for the podcast started in the fall of 2015, as the communications team discussed utilizing new technologies to send relevant content to OCF members that was educational, informational, or inspirational. Over the next two years, the prospect of an OCF podcast gained momentum as the team researched equipment requirements, developed story ideas, cleaned out some basement closet space to set up a studio, and better educated ourselves on podcasting best practices.

We pursued this channel of distribution because podcasts are a way to distribute new content in a new way—audio, a format that OCF had never tried before. Practically all our content up to that point was either print or web-based, and such content requires eyeball time. However, an audio podcast requires only that you listen, which can happen most anywhere, whether you’re out for a walk, commuting to work, or burning some calories at the gym.

Over the past 46 episodes (at the time of this writing), listeners have been treated to a wide range of topics and guests with a focus on some aspect of the military life. If I were to share my top three episodes, here are the first three that come to mind:



OCF Communications Photo

Subscribe to OCF Crosspoint

OCF Crosspoint is a biweekly podcast dedicated to sharing stories of military life at the intersection of faith, family & profession. OCF Crosspoint is available on a number of podcast apps. Some of the more popular places you can find the podcast are: **Apple Podcasts, Google Podcasts, Stitcher, and TuneIn**. You can also subscribe with RSS by copying/pasting the following link into your favorite podcast app: <http://ocfcrosspoint.libsyn.com/rss>

Episode 33: A Difficult Story of God’s Goodness. In this episode, Maj Tim and Kimberly Tormey, USMC (Ret.), shared a story of what they referred to as “God’s goodness and kindness to them,” and the story largely centers on part of Tim’s difficult deployment to Iraq in 2014 that ultimately ended in tragedy. What makes this episode so special, aside from the amazing story that the Tormeyes shared, is that I set it up in a narrative style instead of an interview format and layered the story with various musical and audio cues.

Episode 41: Incredible Hope Amidst Suffering, with Michelle Qureshi. Michelle is a graduate of the United States Coast Guard Academy, and she served 9 years in the military. Her late husband, Nabeel Qureshi, wrote two NY Times best-sellers, “Seeking Allah, Finding Jesus” and “No God But One.” Nabeel died in 2017 after being diagnosed with stage 4 stomach cancer in 2016. Michelle’s story is one that deals with such topics as stress, hardship,

and discouragement, but more importantly, how she has experienced what she calls “incredible hope amidst suffering.”

Episode 14: The Scars of Moral Injury. While PTSD seems to grab the headlines and bulk of attention, LTC Tom Schmidt, USA (Ret.), sat down with COL Dave Batchelor, USA (Ret.), in the faculty lounge of the US Army Command and General Staff College, where COL Batchelor shared the candid story of his personal struggle with moral injury—a psychological trauma that has similarities with PTSD.

Those are just three good stories among the dozens of episodes available, and I encourage you to find a story that resonates with you and then tell me about it—I’d love to hear from you. Be sure to check out the boxed information above to find out more about subscribing to the podcast. If you have an idea for a guest, topic, or story you’d like me to consider on a future episode, send an email to podcast@ocfusa.org.

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karen.fliedner@ocfusa.org.

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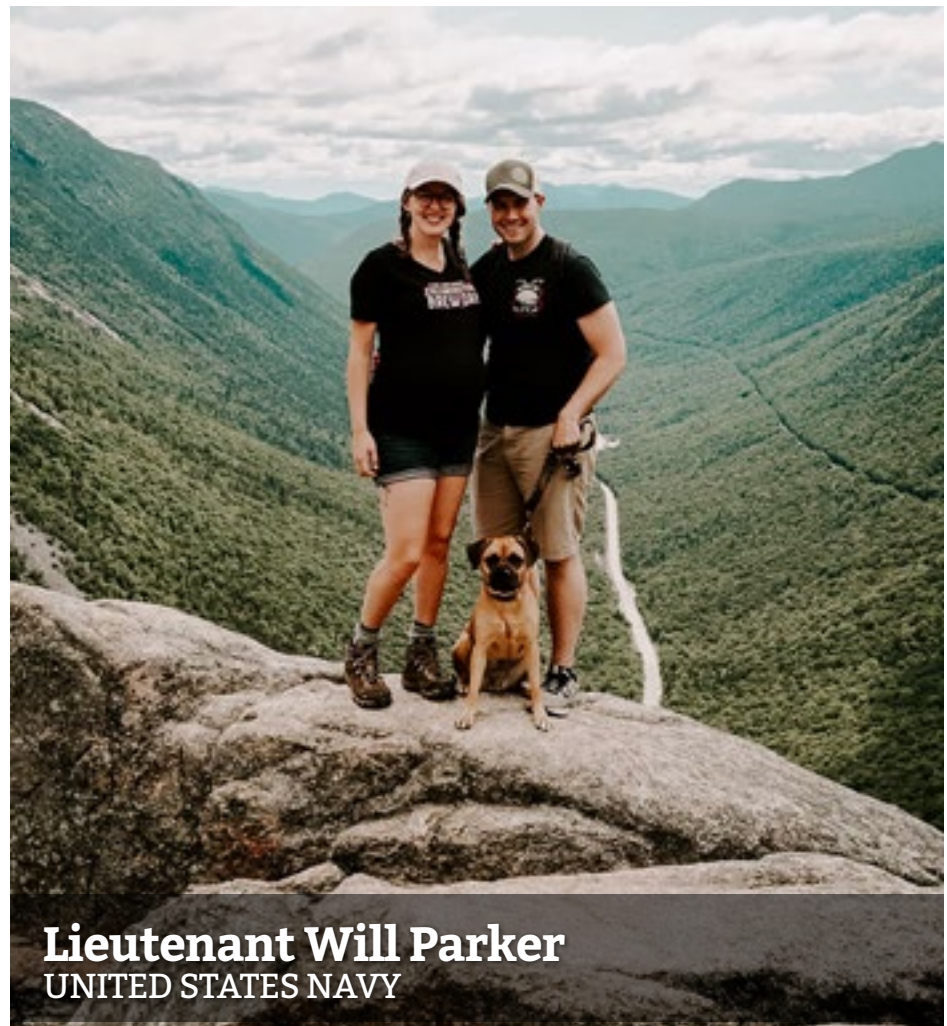
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Lieutenant Will Parker UNITED STATES NAVY

Came to OCF: I joined OCF as a plebe at the Naval Academy after our good family friend COL Mike Tesdahl, USA (Ret.), told me I should check it out.

Why OCF: OCF isn't about helping us to be just better believers, or just better officers. It is about helping us to integrate our faith and profession so we can be Christian officers who are committed to sharing the Gospel and ministering to the military.

Why a military life: The military needs Jesus. It's a great mission field to be part of for as long as you are called. To be honest, I am at a point of my Junior Officer tour where I am burned out and frustrated with the Navy and am considering getting out to be able to focus more on my family. It's tough, because I see a continued need for

spreading the Gospel in the submarine community, but I also see a need for me to be at home more to lead and serve my family.

What's on your bucket list: Take my family camping in Yellowstone National Park.

Best advice given you: "If you put God first everything else will fall into place"—Bryan Burt

Most memorable places visited: Shenandoah National Park; St. Mary's Glacier, Colorado.

Life Bible verse: "... and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also" (2 Timothy 2:2, ESV).

An American flag is draped across the top of the image. Below it, on a white wooden plank background, are decorative orange leaf-like flourishes. In the bottom corners, there are clusters of autumn leaves in shades of orange, yellow, and red.

Thank You!

As OCF looks toward 2020, our focus is on the hundreds of volunteers who make this ministry possible. Thank you for giving so generously of your time, talents, and treasure to further God's Kingdom through OCF.

Conference center volunteer (work weeks, guest ambassadors)

Service academy ministry team members

Small group fellowship host or leader

Mentoring ROTC cadets/mids

Local and area leaders

...and so much more!