

CROSSFIRE



THE MAGAZINE OF THE MILITARY CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP OF AUSTRALIA † NUMBER 19 CHRISTMAS 2009



Christians Deployed | New Charmain | MCF Regions



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Who pays for MCF Australia?

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Your contribution will help support the work of MCF within the Australian Defence Force.



From the Editor,

CMDR David Rose, CSM RAN

(david.rose4@defence.gov.au)

Please send us a short story of your experiences as a Christian in the military. Highlight what God has done for you!

Articles for Crossfire should be no more than 500 words long, focus on military Christian issues and experiences, avoid denominational commentary, and will be subject to approval from the National Council before publication. Photos are encouraged and should be of maximum resolution to ensure production standard. All submissions should be in electronic format. Stories from operational service are especially encouraged.



Chairman's Report

by James van Heel



First of all, I'd like to thank LTCOL Mick Mumford, the outgoing chairman for his leadership over the past five years. Mick has accepted a full time full time ministry position in Brisbane, having completed a graduate diploma in divinity this year. Mick has provided strategic direction for MCF through Operation

Fruitful Tree; created a new MCF web site www.mcf-a.org. au, introduced the Centurion program for those who commit to pray for, support and provide financial resources to MCF and he has assisted in ensuring that the 2010 council is well represented. Although Mick has transitioned from full time to part time Army service, he will continue to lead an MCF group at Ennoggera on Monday lunchtimes. Janet Mumford has not only supported Mick in his role as Chairman, she was also the prayer coordinator for MCF and initiated Solid Rock Ministries to support military wives. If you have read Operation Fruitful Tree 2010-14 and would like to contribute towards advancing the kingdom of God in the Defence Force, I'd like to hear from you.

I'd like to thank the outgoing committee members CAPT Greg Colton, CHAP Barry Porter, CHAP Col Acton and CAPT Katie Chapman for their service on the MCF committee this year and welcome the new committee members into what will be an exciting journey in Defence Christian ministry next year.

I'd like to provide some introductory details on myself to give you an understanding of where I have come from and where I would like to take MCF. I grew up in Sydney and attended an Anglican Church in Baulkham Hills prior to attending a Hillsong youth group a couple of years prior to joining the Army through the Defence Academy in 1987. I graduated from Duntroon in 1990 into the Ordnance Corps. I attended MCF groups in Moorebank, Singleton and Randwick Barracks prior to leading an MCF group in Vic Bks Melbourne from 1997 to 1999. I joined the MCF Council in 2001 as the Army rep prior to accepting the vice Chairman role in 2003. On 18 Nov 09 I was elected Chairman, a role that I believe that God has been preparing me for over a number of years.

I am married to Jo, a New Zealander who I met in 1994. We married at the end of 1995. God has blessed us with two boys, Joel and Jonte who are four and one respectively. We live in Nicholls and attend Cornerstone Christian Church, a congregation that we have attended for the past nine years. At the Church I lead worship and am in the leadership team of a youth group for 12-16 year olds.

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Farewells

CHAP Clyde Appleby (retired), Helen Rose, MCF Staff Worker, Mick Mumford, Chairman MCF, Janet Mumford, Prayer Coordinator

Promotions

MAJ Mark Jobst to LTCOL

Marriages, Engagements and Birthdays

Peter and Trish McKay's daughters: Elysha recently married Jonathan Cole on 5th December 2009 in Canberra and Janelle (and Geoffrey Xeros) had baby Sebastian on 16th September 2009.

LT Donald and Mrs Christie Howes had baby Zechariah Donald on 26th November (Thanksgiving) at 5.10pm weighing 3735g (8lb 6oz). Brother to Josiah, Sarah and Elise. Christie has been part of Solid Rock Ministries at Duntroon.

FLTLT Nathan Runham married Georgina on the 31st October.

Mr. Russell Bielenberg celebrated his 70th Birthday on the 30th June.

Congratulations to you all.

New Positions

PCHAP Eric Burton is now Vice President, AMCF.

TPR Jonathan Belmonte (Jon Belmonte, previous Staff worker's son) has joined Australian Army Aviation Corps (AAAvn) at Latchford Barracks

Vales

Passed to our Heavenly Father - lone Kenneth formerly of England OCU and Canberra who died in Benora Point NSW in June. (Her Husband Bob Kenneth has been a faithful supporter of MCF since the early 1970's and in his grief has returned to England to take lone's ashes and to be with his daughter for a time).



Russell Bielenberg (L) and Peter McKay (R)



Donald and Zechariah Howes



CDF Christmas Message

by Air Chief Marshal A.G. Houston, AO, AFC



Christmas is a special time in the lives of all Australians and for most of our people it will mean a well-earned rest with families and friends. For those who will spend their Christmas serving at sea, at home, or abroad, I especially thank you and your families for your dedication and service. For Christian members of the Defence Force Christmas is a special occasion, not just for holidays but also for its great spiritual importance, and I wish you, the members of the Military Christian Fellowship, a very special Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Chairman's Report ctd.

The theme for this Crossfire magazine is deployment. Deploying to other nations for warlike or non warlike service is unique to the military and other organisations such as the Federal Police. When you are deployed, you are separated from your family, church community and comforts of life that you often take for granted. We have a unique opportunity when deployed to be the christian community to other deployed personnel through supporting the chaplains, providing hope that we have in Christ to others who may be seeking God or interested in pursuing faith in circumstances where their lives are at risk. I was fortunate to have the opportunity to serve six months in Sudan as the Australian Contingent Commander. I have provided an article within this edition that you may care to read.

We are blessed within Defence to have a number of Christian Military ministries. These include the Chaplains, Fighting Words, Navigators, Red Shield Defence Services, Everymans, Solid Rock Ministries and the Military Christian Fellowship. It was great to see representatives from most of these organisations at the MCF sponsored Defence Christians Dinner on the 4th of Sep this year. I was fortunate to attend the Fighting Words National Conference in Wollongong in late September. Fighting Words are a biblically based, evangelical Defence ministry who are making a big difference in the kingdom of God through teaching and equipping Defence personnel at training bases in Canberra, Wodonga and Wagga. I am excited to hear that the kingdom of God is advancing through Defence military ministries.

The theme for the next Crossfire magazine will be, 'How do we cope with grief?' I'd ask that if you have a personal story where you have come through a difficult situation or are still working through a difficult situation and are open to share your story that you contribute to our next edition.

God Bless
James van Heel
Chairman

VCDF Christmas Message

by LTGEN David Hurley, AO, DSC



The ADF will celebrate this Christmas in the far-flung reaches of our world; from Afghanistan, to the Indian Ocean, to the Asian Pacific region. While for most servicemen and women it will mean time off and celebration with family and friends, for many it will mean time away and they will celebrate instead with their mates and close colleagues. To the members of the Military Christian Fellowship, and especially those away from their families this Christmas, I thank you for your commitment to the nation and I wish you all a very Merry Christmas, a Happy New Year, and God's blessings on you and your families in 2010.



Farewell from Mick Mumford

by Mick Mumford



It has been my privilege to lead the MCF Council for the last five years and I now leave you in the very capable hands of LTCOL James van Heel. Since I assumed the role of Chairman in 2004 the ADF has changed markedly. Thousands of soldiers,

sailors, airmen, and Defence Public Service staff have served overseas in places like Iraq, Afghanistan, Timor Leste, and the Solomons. We have lost mates to both accidents and enemy action and thousands of families have been without a husband, wife, brother, sister, father, or mother for long periods of time. At the same time MCF has been blessed with increased membership, giving of resources, and higher ADF profile. Perhaps this is due to the fact that mortality is a real question for this generation of serving personnel, and very real answers can be found in Jesus, reflected through the witness of Christians in the ADF. Perhaps MCF is just being obedient to the call God has upon it and so is growing to meet the demands and plans of God. Perhaps it is a bit of each, or none. But whatever the future holds for the

Fellowship it is my hope that MCF members continue to do their crucial God-given task of supporting military Christians, bringing a message of salvation to those who want to hear it, and by partnering with the vital work of the ADF Chaplaincy.

Thank you for all your support, prayer, and encouragement, both to me personally and to MCF over the last five years; and I wish you and your families, wherever they may be around the world, a very special Christmas.

March hard for the Lord, always.

Mick Mumford
Chairman

CHAP Abbott's bequest for Christian literature

by James van Heel and Helen Rose

CHAP Doug Abbott bequeathed funds to the Military Christian Fellowship for Defence Christian literature in 2001. Doug was a foundation member of the Officer's Christian Union (Australia) in 1959 and was honorary secretary for two and half years. He was very instrumental in organising character training for the Defence Force and in 1976 was awarded a Churchill Fellowship.

The funds that Doug bequeathed to MCF have been used for the past 10 Crossfire magazines and have now been fully expended. Over 10,000 Crossfire magazines have been printed over the past five years.

The Crossfire magazine (MCF's signature magazine) will continue to be produced and printed next year however MCF will be running a budget deficit to do this. I would encourage you to make a tax deductible donation to MCF for the printing of Crossfire

magazines. We are seeking 30 people to make a \$100 donation to cover the printing costs of 2 Crossfire editions in 2010. This \$100

donation will enable 50 Crossfire magazines to be printed.

God Bless



Tributes to Peter Boreham

a faithful MCF member

I served with Pete Boreham in East Sale for a few years. Pete was a very energetic officer and was a willing volunteer for a few different tasks, outside of his primary role. Pete volunteered to be a member of the Base Combatant flight at East Sale when it was first established. His enthusiasm and energy often inspired those who served with him, I say 'with him' because when he was part of the BCF, he was just one of the blokes and gals. Outside of the BCF, Pete quietly went about his work and was highly regarded by all his work mates. I also knew Pete through our Christian journey, never one to 'shove Christianity down a person's throat' his manner was always about displaying the Christian message by his actions. I was very sad to hear of his passing, knowing that I never took the opportunity to know him better, but isn't that always the case.

Phil Essex-Clark

I first met Peter on posting at RAAF Base East Sale in 1999; he was the local MCF Area Representative and hosted a good sized group that met in the (now demolished) child playgroup building. Pete, humble and enthusiastic, energetically promoted MCF. He was particular to liaise with managers and was pleased to promote the cause of Christ within Defence. I recall the good representation of ranks that attended the MCF meetings; this added depth and contributed to a sense of fraternity.

At that time Peter and his wife Heather, and their German Shepherd dog were happily living on base at Sale and would enjoy regular evening strolls amongst the large swamp gums well populated by sulphur crested cockatoos. I recall at that time that Peter required surgery, which although successful, resulted in significant hearing loss. Peter experienced a bit of a roller coaster ride of emotion through that time, but was delighted to learn that this impairment did

not prejudice his RAAF service at all. I'm sure this experience only strengthened the great affection that Peter held for the RAAF.

Peter's involvement in the Information Technology sphere led to what was to be a challenging posting to Puckapunyal. Challenging partly because he was the only "blue suiter" on the entire base. At the time I suggested to Peter if it could be easier for him to wear camouflage clothing, given the Army's strong preference for uniformity? Pete cheerfully rejoined that he would prefer to wear his "bulletproof blue"!

Peter and Heather were then posted to Point Cook, which I think was a happy time for them as I seem to recall that Heather had previously lived around the Laverton area. I know that Peter enjoyed his time instructing at RAAF College and I'm certain that his professional, thorough approach would have been appreciated by staff and students alike. After my family and I posted to the Northern Territory our contact with the Borehams diminished somewhat. Later I learned that Peter & Heather had been posted to RAAF Base Wagga Wagga, and Peter (ever faithful) once again became the Area Representative. I think Peter was well gifted for the training environment.

If I recall correctly, Peter was originally a (central) Gippsland boy, hailing from a dairy property at Labertouche, which was recently affected in the Black Saturday bushfires.

Peter loved his flying and Heather generously supported him in his passion. I was shocked and a little numbed by the news of Peter's death; you don't want to think of your friends as being anything other than that "bulletproof" character that Peter jokingly alluded to years earlier.

Heather and Peter were together for all of their adult lives and were truly great friends. I know that Peter's greatest concern would have been reserved for her. Now God's faithful servant Peter has moved onto his reward (which I am quite sure would be impressive)

and heaven has the pleasure of his company. We look forward to seeing you there friend.

Jonathan Laird

Area Representative
HMAS Albatross

The MCF Small Group Code of Conduct

As a member of an MCF small group I will:

1. Respect the denominational differences of all Christians within the ADF. I will not argue denominational doctrine or question denominational beliefs.
2. Allow all members of the group an opportunity to speak regardless of spiritual maturity.
3. Respect rank during MCF meetings unless invited not to.
4. Invite local Chaplains, and members of other Christian groups, to be part of MCF meetings.
5. In group studies respect differences in bible translation and interpretation. Studies of the bible are not to involve books or passages of the Bible that denominations contest.
6. Apply wisdom in the demonstration of Spiritual gifting where there is potential to cause offence to members present.
7. Respect the authority of the small group leader, regardless of rank and uniform.



Chaplains Corner

By Chaplain Murray Earle



Hi,

I am Chaplain Murray Earl (DGCHAP AF), the recently appointed Chaplain Representative on the MCF Council.

MCF is important to the whole ADF (and especially the Chaplains) because as an organisation it is representative and expressive of the Christian life. Somehow MCF is meant to benchmark a kind of life that is ... somehow different. How is this difference lived? Unfortunately and fortunately it is lived by ordinary people like you and I. 'Unfortunately' because MCF is only as effective and consistent to the message of Jesus as you and I are consistent and effective! 'Fortunately' because the message of Jesus is all about flawed human beings, just like you and I, who are called to be ambassadors for Christ in the military context. You can read about this in 2 Corinthians 5.

God in Christ took a great risk in subcontracting the task of being Christian in the ADF to you and me. What a risk analysis went on in the mind of God in trusting the purposes of heaven to very mortal people

like us – yet it happened! We have to live that life in the military, not just on Sunday. MCF is one mode by which we can encourage and support each other.

Some people criticise MCF, and stand off from being involved because of past experiences of personal and theological difficulties. However, these problems are inevitable as we all make life difficult for someone every day of the year. Whether it be pushing our way into the path of others in merging traffic, failing to get the paperwork done in a timely manner when we know someone is waiting on it, or not doing the dishes when they need to be done; 'do unto others and they do unto you' is the default position. Being awkward, selfish and imperfect is a given. The reason we as Christians need to belong to our church and MCF is to learn forgiveness for others who are critical and who cause us pain. We can do exactly the same to them.

MCF is one conduit by which we can learn more about ourselves as military people. It is not an easy task; changing our lives is the hardest thing we will ever do. We need God's action to change; and we need the help of others (military people the same as us) to connect the dots of our lives. MCF is a context where the military life with all its pressures and joys can be expressed to each other and, in a supportive way, the contradictions and conundrums explored.

Whether you are new to the military or been around for years, may I invite you to become involved in MCF in 2010. There are many ways 'to do' MCF, and to be creative with your chaplains in finding ways to care for and support one another and to make a difference. Contact the MCF office on 02 6266 4950 or ann.lock@defence.gov.au for information on becoming an MCF member.

It's the end of the year and we have a new MCF Staff Worker, Ann Lock, who has good and creative plans for MCF 2010. We need to

pray for MCF and Ann in their support of us as Christians in the military. MCF will be as effective as the degree in which we support each other for this is the Christian way and we all have a part to play.

God bless the ADF this Christmas and all who believe that in Christ is life and light, truth and hope. May all of us be confronted by his presence in a new and exciting way this special season.

With good regard
Chaplain Murray Earl



Deployed!

by Janet Mumford



“When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; And through the rivers, they shall not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned, nor shall the flame scorch you. For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Saviour.” Isaiah 43: 2 – 3.

Deployments!! They are never easy and we all have our stories to tell. How do we handle them? DCO, Psychologists and Chaplains have some wonderful information on the various aspects of deployment...feelings before, during and after and common issues that children face. These are great resources that can be very helpful.

As a Christian I know I can also depend on God to help me. The above verse is the one that I clung to the first time my husband deployed. At the time we had 3 young children. Our eldest was in 1st grade and our youngest was 2 (need I say more!). She switched between having a dreadful stutter and some rather challenging behaviour patterns over the 6 ½ months my husband was away. In the end I decided the stutter

was the better of the two! We lived over 1000 kms from our nearest extended family so a helping hand from family on a regular basis was not possible.

One of the things God impressed upon me when Mick deployed was to look out for others. If I would bless others and look to their needs, then He would look to mine. He encouraged me not to become too self focused or to look at my circumstances too closely. I made a decision to be outwardly focused and use whatever I had to bless others. One thing I had was more time. Because Mick wasn't around my life was a bit more flexible...no cooking big meals for dinner! I was able to use my time to mind someone else's children or to offer a helping hand to someone. I was able to use my time

to make a meal for another to help ease their load. I was able to use some of the extra money we were receiving to be a blessing by buying a bunch of flowers or a little gift for someone. As I looked outwards and gave of what I had, God provided for my needs.

Sometimes I would forget and start looking inwards and feel sorry for myself. Things never went well when I did that! At times it seemed like the rivers might overflow and I wondered if my 2 year old would be traumatised from her experience. She is now the most delightful 12 year old with a wonderfully compassionate and caring heart. Her stutter was completely gone a short while after Mick returned.

The second time my husband deployed I knew what to do. Once again I looked outwards. Who could I help, who could I bless? This time I had five children but some of them were older so I could include them. They too looked...who can we bless and offer God's love to? We had some fun together and they were times to cherish. Was it easy? No!! But God will walk with us through the waters and fire and help us. If we ask Him, God will walk with us through deployments and He will help us through.

When we follow God He helps us and gives us His grace. We can walk through the fire and not be burnt. Can I encourage you to seek God and be obedient? He will help you and guide you through your deployment walk.

Bless you,

Janet Mumford

solidrockmin@optusnet.com.au

P.S. MOPS (Mothers of Preschoolers) is a wonderful Christian organisation that offers mums a break once a fortnight. Children are cared for while mums have a couple of hours of adult conversation, craft and encouragement. See if there's one in your area!



Making the most of your leave

By Katie Chapman

In October of 2008 I was looking at my Christmas holidays and wondering what I was going to do. I have been overseas each year since 2004, so I knew I wasn't going to remain in Australia. I had felt God calling me to explore volunteer work, so I looked on the internet at volunteer organisations; particularly in Africa because I thought African children were so cute! But the cost was really expensive. I then explored other possibilities outside Africa, but everything was still very expensive. I knew I had to find a Christian organisation to volunteer with; then the costs shouldn't be so high.

My Padre then walked in and we started talking and he suggested I look at something called rainbow house (or something) in Thailand, as he knew I had been there a few times and could speak a little bit of the language.

I found it on the internet, and it was perfect! Rainbow House is an orphanage run by the Christian Care Foundation for Children with Disabilities that works with abandoned disabled children and adults in Thailand. They have an orphanage where they develop orphans for adoption and they also have placements in the government orphanages. The cost was very minimal, the charity was Christian based and I was going somewhere where I wouldn't be completely out of my comfort zone. What a blessing and gift! I sent my application, applied for a visa, and within two weeks it was all arranged and I was off. Nothing is impossible for God (Mt 17: 20-21)!

The time span they normally want volunteers for is a minimum of three months. As such, the foundation was a little hesitant to have me volunteer for only five weeks, but I knew five weeks was a very long time, in military time that is!

From the moment I arrived God blessed me abundantly! I was able to understand and communicate with the Thai staff and the children and was able to converse and fit in straight away. My military training definitely paid off, as I was the only person strong enough to lift and carry a particular bunch of women down the stairs to their wheel chairs. This meant these women, who hadn't been outside for over a year and who had not seen anything but a wall in that time, got to come outside, see movies, and watch t.v. Even just to get a hug from someone was incredible



to them. I found myself going straight into an Individual Military Appreciation Process when I arrived (can you believe it!) I analysed the volunteer accommodation and the government home where I was working and came up with my situation, mission, execution and admin and log. It was something like this. . . .

Situation: Charity organisation, volunteers predominantly 18 - no life experience. Unqualified Thai staff - with good hearts, disabled children & women who need help. Thai government staff - all Buddhist - cannot offend them.

Mission: Improve conditions in volunteer accommodation and government home NLT my ETD (5 weeks) in order to show the love of God and spread the good news.

Execution: Use my income to purchase items and create stores, such as re-useable teaching aids. Repair broken household items, such as toilets. Teach Thai staff and junior volunteers

about things such as oral hygiene and cleaning routines for the orphans. Learn more Thai IOT communicate better. Befriend government staff.

Admin & Log: I needed stores, money, motivation, time & some guidance from the big man upstairs.

Comd & Sig: God was the boss and I did what he told me. He made the path easier by softening the hearts of those around me - which made access to all the girls so much easier.

In the space of five weeks we made blackboards (big ones for a teacher and little ones for the girls), we had toothbrushes for every girl and an oral hygiene routine in place, we made a communication book for the girls with severe cerebral palsy that had exceptionally limited movement, we topped up the resources of the CCD room, I would visit the girls in the government home almost everyday and play the guitar and sing songs to them about God and his love for them and we made fairy bread and jelly slice (big hits I might add!) for the government home.

Another really good impact I got to make in the 5 weeks I was there was that the intellectually disabled girls (who predominantly 'care' for the physically disabled girls in the government homes) started copying the things I would do. This meant they were a lot more gentle with the physically disabled girls. They stopped jamming food down their throats still they choked in order to feed them, they stopped dragging them across the floor to shower them, they stopped hitting them around the head for no reason... I could go on and on, but the point is - God sent me there for a reason. Often other volunteers would just walk away when the disabled girls would do something bad, but God gave me the patience and the

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ability to communicate with them and teach them better methods. It was definitely from God too because I can tell you right now, I am not normally patient!

I did, however, intimidate some of the other volunteers. They couldn't understand how I just went out and did things. I explained it was God, and the military training – what a good combination I say!

They were regularly amazed by the things I did on my own initiative and by the time I left I was known as 'the Australian Army girl'. God had equipped me and trained me for years before, knowing I was

going to go there and do what He needed me to do. Man! Isn't that just awesome?!!!

One of the best things about the whole thing for me was that I got to experience God's love channelling through me to the girls. I can't really explain it, except that I was a vessel, and through me God showed them His love. It was particularly evident when I would walk into the room. Their eyes would instantly turn and face me, see me and follow me around. When I moved toward them they would smile and keep staring. I know this had nothing to do with me, because I looked exactly the same

as the other volunteers, God was using me for something else, and it was incredible – and I will admit – quite scary.

There is a downside though. When I returned to Australia, I felt empty. I mean completely empty. After experiencing God's love moving through me, everything seemed so, empty. This has been a big turning point in my Christianity. For the first time ever, I actively sought God. Normally I stray a little bit, then God sends a gentle reminder to me that I've wandered off a little. But I could only have one response to the emptiness; to seek God's kingdom.

A letter box for the king of kings and its expectation

This year we have celebrated MCF's 50th anniversary, as mentioned in our Easter edition. This article looks into some of MCF's history through the lives of Russell and Helen Bielenberg.

By Helen Bielenberg



Russell had taken over as the secretary of Officers' Christian Union (OCU) in 1972 when we lived in Duntroon. In 1974 when he was posted out of Duntroon to Army Office we moved to Melba where all the mail of OCU then came into the letter box shown in the photograph. You might recognise that it is an army ration tin and since we were buying our house, the lid was economically made from my biscuit tray.

The mail came mainly from Chaplains and the women from Britain who had supported the British Prayer Groups and had helped in

Soldiers' Houses in the Second World War. Russell and I have always worked as a team and would pray when we were short of money for stationery and these people would send money. It was always a blessing to see \$50 to pay for postage and stationery. All the committee meetings were in Sydney and we would plan it all by mail. By this stage the membership was changing and many cadets and then young officers wrote to us also sharing their lives, their joys and their struggles.

The standard of our box has been questioned by Australia Post. It is actually the second ration tin as the first tin rusted while the first supporting post rotted out and also had to be replaced. The locals blew up many other boxes in our area and for its sentimental value we have kept it. It is necessary to have a big box as we receive mail from the Military Christian Fellowships of many countries including USA, England, Singapore, Portugal and Spain. In 1991 when we began service with the MCF of Spain, the office of MCF was moved out of our house to the Department of Defence, firstly in Northbourne House and later to Campbell Park. Others had received

mail during these years to help us through sickness, when they were secretary or when Ian Sarah was staff worker.

I will share with you some of the most touching letters received in our letter box. In 1976 Russell and I received a letter of invitation for the world conference to be held in Virginia, USA. We wrote back to say that we did not have the money and Russell did not have the leave. In a very short time the OCF of the USA sent a cheque for \$1,500. I was so excited that I rang Russell at work to tell him; after I hung up I opened the mail from the OCU of England and they said that if Russell had his fare to the USA then the money they included could be used towards my fare. I had never experienced any gifts like this in my Christian walk before. Russell encountered his boss in the corridor and told him about the gifts. The brigadier asked, "Are you going?" to which Russell replied, "If you give me leave, sir." The boss immediately promised the leave, so Russell completed the application for leave form, and nearly ran it down to his office within minutes. We were by God's grace able to put the OCU of Australia on the



world scene at that conference. It was there, too, where we received more of a vision for international ministry which eventually led us into our current work with ACCTS (Association for Christian Conference Teaching and Service) which supports the world-wide Association of MCFs.

In 2007 we wanted to hold the South West Pacific AMCF regional conference but there seemed to be little support from anywhere. We have spent large amounts of our own money for military ministry over the years and do not have as much of our own money now, so rang a friend to pray with us. The next day

in the precious letter box were two cheques from the same person; one for \$5,000 dollars for the conference expenses and another for \$1,000 for our own ministry expenses. These gifts gave us the confidence to proceed with the conference, and enabled us to go from Canberra to Brisbane to inspect and book the conference centre in Brisbane and then run the conference. Other gifts later arrived to allow sponsorship of delegates from some of the smaller Pacific countries and Timor Leste.

Don't get the idea that we rejoice only when financial gifts are sent. We are very fortunate to receive wedding invitations for children

of former cadets (shows our age!), and as life takes its toll we receive reminders to pray for those in need. Just recently we received a letter to say that a retired chaplain's wife has Alzheimer's disease and that their address has changed to a place of higher care. Our hope is that we will receive a letter from one of our readers containing an offer to help us with leadership training and development of weaker MCFs in the Pacific Region and perhaps beyond. Chap Eric Burton, the new Vice President for the SW Pacific needs your help and ours.

May God bless your mail.

Offering a hand of hope

By Chaplain Gary Stone



Chaplaincy is very much a ministry of presence. It requires us to be present physically with people in their work places, to be present emotionally to them in their life issues, and to represent the presence of God with us in the journey of life.

My Chaplaincy visit to Timor from 4 to 11 Feb 08 was planned on the basis of all others. I was to get around and visit our AFP and ADF members, as well as doing some community Liaison with our Timorese hosts.

I spent my first 5 days getting about the many locations, in Dili and in the districts, where our members were serving. With members in country generally working 7 days a week, the opportunity to take some time out to say hello and hear news from the Chaplain is normally quite welcome, especially for the people in the districts experiencing cultural isolation and infrequent news from home. Invariably people have issues they want to get off their chests, and questions about their future they want to ask.

Every trip we Chaplains also find time to meet local community leaders, including local clergy and humanitarian workers. In my case

in Timor I meet up after work with the staff of an organization I founded called Friends and Partners with East Timor, www.fpet.org.au. For the last 8 years we have been involved in meeting community needs through building schools, and health centres, training teachers and health workers, installing water tanks and being a friend to those in need.

Another special treat for me is to catch up with my son Michael who is military and national security advisor to President Jose Ramos Horta. Michael was featured on the 9 April 07 episode of the ABC Australian story, titled the "Peacemaker". During a previous two and a half year deployment with the Defence Cooperation Programme he put enormous energy into learning the local languages and developing relationships with local people, such that when the May 06 crisis erupted he had a major role in community dialogue and facilitating peaceful resolutions to conflicts. After completing his tour of duty in Feb 07 he was personally requested to return to Timor by Jose Ramos Horta when he was elected President in Jun 07.

After completing all my visits on this trip, I preached at the Sunday Mass for UN and International personnel, and was invited to dinner with President Horta and his staff. Having got to know him quite well over a number of visits now, one can't but be inspired by his vision, energy and resilience in building a new country from the ashes

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of 99. I was particularly touched by his personal priority to eradicate poverty – the real source of many of Timor's current problems.

Early on the morning of 11 Feb, I was sitting in the departure lounge of Dili airport when Michael rang me with the shocking news that there had been attacks upon the President and Prime Minister. The President was very seriously wounded with multiple gunshot wounds and now at the ADF medical facility where Michael had brought him. The President was concerned for, and wanting me to provide spiritual support for his mother and other relatives in Darwin, who had planned to come to Dili that day for a holiday. I offered to come back to the medical facility but Michael asked me to go direct to Darwin where I could support the wider family and where the President would be med-evaced on a Care-flight as soon as he was stabilized.

I arrived in Darwin, located Mrs Horta and her family members and prayed with them before we drove to Royal Darwin Hospital. The developing news of the President's condition was alarming to us all. He had been hit by up to 3 high velocity rounds in the torso and had needed over 9 litres of blood. Having had training and experience in dealing with gunshot wounds in my Army career, I knew a trauma of this magnitude would not normally be survivable.

Arriving at the hospital's Emergency Department shortly before the President's ambulance arrived, the Director of the Hospital came down to brief us on what they would be doing. He apologized that none of us would be able to see the President for several hours while life saving surgery was undertaken. To my surprise the family spokesman jumped in at this point and insisted that as soon as Jose arrived, the Chaplain (me) be given the opportunity to pray over him. So it was with some sense of awe that as soon as his gurney was pulled into triage, I was able to stand beside him, lay a hand on his head, and hold his right hand, and pray prayers for miraculous healing for him. Admittedly at this time there would have been hundreds and thousands praying for him in other places, but I was able to put flesh

to those prayers and minister physically to the severely wounded man fighting for his life. I was able to offer a hand of hope.

I returned to the family in the waiting room and embraced them. I shared with them what I had seen and done, I prayed again the prayers I had prayed over Jose, and we joined together in praying the Lord's prayer in their native Tetum. I was touched by the love this family had for each other, and the hope they had in God. We then kept vigil in the waiting room for further news. We talked, we sat silently, we held hands, and we wept.

Shortly before midnight, the surgeons briefed us on the progress of their surgery. They were confident of a successful outcome provided infection could be avoided.

On the day following, the family were given their first opportunity to see Jose. One by one I was invited to take them in, holding their hands and we stood beside him, still sedated in an induced coma. We prayed with him, talked to him, (sometimes comatose patients can still hear you), touched him and wished life into him. As the hours went by we got to know each other better, shared stories of our families, and waited patiently for more news. Numerous visitors started arriving offering their condolences. Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Stephen Smith spoke wonderfully to the family and Presidential staff on behalf of all the Australian people, assuring them of our concern for both Jose and Timor. At the same time C130 aircraft flew over head delivering AFP and ADF reinforcements into Dili.

Wed 13 Feb saw Jose receiving more surgery, and more positive reports of recovery. By this time the family had stabilized themselves emotionally, and were confident of a positive outcome. The effects of weariness started to see them needing some rest, and I thought it was an appropriate time for me to return home. I arrived back in Brisbane that evening to be met by Chap Roger O'Donnell and my wife Lynne. Coincidentally or providentially, Roger was en route to the Solomon's and we shared a meal, providing me with a necessary debrief. Roger and I had kept in touch by phone throughout the crisis. Ministry can never be a lone ranger activity. We need to support each other.

Jose is now back on the job. His first directions to our son Michael were to forge ahead with his plans to eradicate poverty. He is grateful to God for the many many people who assisted in his treatment. I am humbled to have been one of them. May all who read this know your Chaplains will be ready to help you and your family in any of the life crises you may have.

Marching

By Anon

So dusty the horizon from the sun
Marching along, marching along
No cloud in the sky, no rain from his eye
Just marching along, marching along...

Who is this by my side
A soldier who knows not why
Who is this in command
Allow Your wisdom in his hands
Just marching along, marching along

Where is this place where we have come
The borders here are foreign
The ground we march is not our own
When will we march home

Don't forsake me
Allow me to breathe
Mercy upon my soul
My heart is your gold
Don't forsake me
Dust is all I see



Why has He brought us together, for what purpose?

By James van Heel



I'd like to share with you an opportunity that was presented to me some 3 years ago which saw me leave my family and Australia for 6 months – a difficult choice and one that Jo supported me in however we did not know what it was like to be separated with a child for this period.

I believe that God selected me for an opportunity that relatively few people could have access too. At the time, I thought that it was coincidence, I now know it was not.

If you were looking through God's eyes, knowing who you are, your passions, your weaknesses and life experience, where should you be salt and light in this broken world? For me, it was definitely not in Africa as I had my hands full in Australia, or so I thought.

At short notice due to an injury to a fellow Army officer in Dubai, I was requested to consider a deployment to Sudan. With Jo's blessing I accepted not knowing what I was really getting myself into. God Knew.

Sudan is in NE Africa. On a map of Sudan – Countries bordering it include Egypt to the North, Ethiopia to the East, Uganda to the South and Chad to the West. The weather is extremely hot and there are plenty of dust storms and disease.

My role was Australian Contingent Commander and Senior Logistic Officer to the Force Commander. I am pictured here with some of the 15 Australians that I was responsible for at the Commonwealth War Grave in Khartoum just prior to our departure on Remembrance Day.

Part of my role was to escort visitors from Australia – There were many and varied visitors including the now Prime Minister who was then the opposition Foreign Affairs minister.

The reason for the UN Mission in Sudan is to restore peace between the Sudanese Armed Forces (Arab muslim forces) and Sudanese Peoples Liberation Army (Native African and predominantly Christian).

There were a number of situations that I won't go into in any detail however, there were times that I did not know whether I would be returning to Australia through local incidents and the potential for incidents to occur. It was comforting to know that God was in control and that I could place my cares onto him for my own safety and that of those whom I was responsible for. Thankfully, none under my command were casualties however there were many times where this could have been the case.

It was great to receive MCF deployment packs that I could take with me throughout the different sectors that I would visit. The deployment pack has a gospel and some notes from some sporting stars who have also chosen to live a life for God. We all have challenges and the Christian life is not easy. It is reassuring though to know that your creator is on the journey with you, no matter where you go. It was a reminder that there were people back in Australia who were praying for me.

I lived in an apartment block in Khartoum about 3 km from the airport with some other Australians on my contingent.. At the back of our apartments was a dusty field that was enclosed by a 2m concrete wall. As I was on the 4th floor, I often heard the noise of a number of youths playing soccer and would often notice how fanatical they were, with yelling and athletic stunts when one team was to score a goal.

I had a sense that I should jump the fence and gesture to them that I would like to join in the soccer game – having crossed the fence, I was at their mercy with approx 300 of

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what I thought was to be Sudanese youths on the oval either playing soccer, playing cards, drinking coffee etc

To my surprise, my gesture was accepted and so began my journey into their lives. I was soon advised that this dirt field was in fact going to be the place where the next Ethiopian Embassy was to be built and those who were allowed on the land were Ethiopian refugees, that were not well treated by the Sudanese locals to their country of origin and faith, which was Christian, not Islam.

Fortunately, a few of the Ethiopians spoke English and I started to build a relationship with them. Those who did not know my name called me hawaja (which apparently means white man).

Over the next five months my I spent more and more time with them. Initially it was just playing soccer for an hour. It then grew to having cups of Ethiopian coffee with them. We then exchanged songs and dances into the early hours of the morning. I could not believe that I was accepted by them as they were normally very suspicious of foreigners, especially from western nations.

Adil became a special friend. He invited me to his humble dwelling where his mother, 2 brothers and his sisters family lived. They shared a one bedroom run down home with 10 of them. Adil slept outside under the stars.

He had often said to me that he would not get married and have a family because he would not be able to provide for them. His sister with a 12 month old child had to work 7 nights a week selling tea on the street. My allowances for a week were more than they would earn in a year.

Adil had mentioned that his brother had had enough and was planning to leave Sudan through Libya to catch a boat to Italy. Adil had told his brother not to do this however the conditions were such that he believed he had no choice. He would try to get to Europe, work hard and then send money back to his family so they had enough money to eat.

I would meet Adil every day on the football field at about 5pm. This day he was not there and a couple of his friends came to tell me that something bad had happened to his



brother. I said to his friends that I must go to see him. I soon found out that his brother and his brothers girlfriend had died with another 200 boat people when their boat had sunk. My heart sank. I now had a totally different opinion about refugees and boat people who were trying to escape their country and head for Australia.

I went to Adil's house that was packed with friends and family all mourning with the family. Some people asked what is this white man doing here mourning for the family. Adil and my friends were quick to say this is a white man with Ethiopian blood. He is one of us.

Beatitudes Matthew 5:4-10

Changes for me included having more compassion for those who are less privileged than ourselves. I learnt that happiness does not come through possessions. It is through relationship with those around you and being part of the community.

God prompted me to get involved in leadership of the Youth Group again in my local church.

He also confirmed to me that I was to continue to serve in Military Christian ministry as clergy or through MCF. God has placed me in the military for his purposes, not my own.

If you were looking through God's eyes, knowing who you are, your passions, your weaknesses and life experience, where should

you be salt and light in this broken world?

I'd like to challenge you to consider what your mission field is within Defence and your local community.

Character lessons I learnt through my time in Sudan were

- Jump over the fence into the unknown
- Take time - people are important and valuable to God no matter what colour, race or religion
- Celebrate with those who celebrate
- Mourn with those who mourn
- Open up your heart
- Live the life God has prepared for you in humility



Staff Worker sitrep

Staff Worker Report (January through to October)

by Helen Rose



God has been so good to me in my time with MCF. I officially stepped into this position in January. Jon Belmonte was so helpful in the handover. I managed to work an average of 10 hours a week for the first six months of the year and then due to family circumstances have probably been averaging five hours a week up until November. Ann Lock has easily stepped into this role and has just picked up the reins so quickly. Ann, may God richly bless you in this role for Him.

I had the privilege of being the National Staff Worker at the beginning of Mick Mumford's time as Chairman for MCF and now right at the end of his five year term. Mick has headed MCF with vigor and godliness to see God's work grow in the Defence Force through MCF. Crossfire had laid dormant for a number of years but has re-emerged under his leadership. I just want to thank Mick and Janet for all their hard work for the Lord through MCF and Solid Rock Ministries (SRM). There are many testimonies about Mick's work and one of the obvious ones is the great new web-site.

LTCOL James van Heel and Mr Darryl Gibson have worked consistently and diligently as well through this year as I have been working in this role in assisting me in the Office. Thank you both for your support this year and to James for his long and continued service to

MCF. He's been involved for a very long time and I want to wish him all the best as the new Chairman. May God richly bless you as you step out for him.

We have continued to receive new Membership Applications consistently throughout this year. RAAF Williamtown would have to take the prize for the most new members. Well done Williamtown.

The prayer warriors, lead by Janet Mumford have been busy praying about all different matters of things over the course of the year. There are now 41 Centurions. Thank you to you all for your continued support to MCF. We hope you enjoy this Christmas.

David (my husband) is ramping up for the Christmas Crossfire edition. MCF also put out an Easter Edition of Crossfire this year. When one of these editions is being put together the office is kept very busy and then when they're sent out we find out how many people have moved and yet to tell us their new address. If you've moved again just flick an email to ann.lock@defence.gov.au.

I have had the opportunity to visit the Campbell Park Area Rep Mr David Coleman and their group this year and to meet recently with our Orchard Hills Area Rep Mrs Luanne Mills. Thank you to all the Area Reps for their continued work for the Lord through MCF.

MCF and SRM had a table at two of the DCO Open Days in Canberra this year, February at Staff College at Weston and in May at HMAS Harman. We had lots of people come up to our table and we gave out Crossfires and Applications plus stickers for the kids and chocolates for the mum's.

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to serve God and you all through MCF this year and a special thanks for my husband David in supporting me in this role.

From our new MCF Staff Worker

By Ann Lock



Hello, my name is Ann Lock and I am your new Staff Worker. I am enjoying learning the ropes of this new role and particularly meeting MCF members from around the country. As happens in our lives God has surprised me with this new opportunity, in a nice way of course!

One of my favourite films is the Lord of the Rings trilogy. In the first film of the series, the hobbits Sam and Frodo set off on a grand journey to rescue the Ring from enemy hands. Sam especially had lived a very predictable life in the familiar surrounds of his home, the Shire. With a heart full of doubt as they approach the back gate of home, Sam pauses and says "if I take one more step, I will be further from home than I have ever been before!"

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Life has been, and is, a grand journey for me, and many times I have felt like Sam. God is always in every step, urging me forward to follow Jesus in a way which is compelling, surprising and full of delight. Let me tell you a little bit of that grand journey.

About 12 years ago I began sensing that I was being called into pastoral ministry. This was a surprise as I had a career with Qantas Airways which had fabulous travel opportunities. At the time Garry and I were members of Woolloomooloo Baptist church, which had, and still has, a vital ministry with the most marginalised people of inner Sydney. Sensing this emerging call to ministry I left my glamorous job with Qantas to coordinate the Women's Space, part of Baptist Inner city Ministries and a drop in centre for women working and living on the streets of Kings

Cross. I also began studying for a Bachelor of Theology at Morling College. These were very big steps through the back gate!

To follow the call to ordination I moved to Melbourne in 2001 and joined the pastoral team at Brunswick Baptist Church. The grand journey with God continued as my role progressed to Pastoral Team Leader at Brunswick. It also took me on several short visits to the Thai Burma border to work with the ethnic Karen people living in villages and refugee camps. I was ordained in 2004 and by this time fully involved in the life of my church and the wider Baptist Union. One of the delightful surprises from God in this time was the call to be chaplain for the Community of Transfiguration, a Baptist Monastic order in Geelong, Victoria. This role continues today.

This time last year I stepped through another gate just like Sam and announced my resignation from Brunswick Church. I had no idea where this was going to lead except that I would move to Canberra to join my husband Garry who was by now DGCHAP N. Garry and I had worked in separate states for 10 of the last 15 years and we were tired of the difficulties of that life style; something I am sure many of you understand. It's been a good move, though meant leaving 2 of our 3 adult sons in Melbourne. Another son lives in Perth.

I look forward now to the next stage of this grand journey which God is leading me through. As I step into this role as your Staff Worker my prayer is that we, as followers of Jesus, will grow and learn together, especially in our roles in the ADF.

Edinburgh MCF

By Ian Spencer

I thought I would drop you a line to let you know what has been happening here at DSTO Edinburgh and RAAF Edinburgh. We have two groups that regularly meet, one on Wednesday in the Base Chapel (mostly uniformed people) and one on Thursday on the DSTO site (mostly scientists). Both groups are going strong with Kathleen Wallace overseeing the groups on the RAAF Base and I tend to be the go to guy at DSTO (although I attend both and am looking after things when Kathy is away.)

Going back to Easter we hosted a hot cross bun morning tea at DSTO and invited everyone to come along and learn about who we are and what we do. This was great, we had one of the chaplains from the base, Yogananda Juste-Constant, come and play his guitar and lead us in music of praise. The Chaplains at Edinburgh are often at the meetings and are a great support for us.

At DSTO we have a very active and committed group of Christians that are working hard to bring the Word to everyone there. For a long time they were silent due

to the secular nature of a big scientific organisation like DSTO but since the MCF has arrived and given them a vehicle they have overcome all resistance and it has emboldened them. Please pray that the Holy Spirit guides them and the Father blesses their work. They have arranged a number of presenters to come and speak at DSTO on Christian matters and each time we have had good turnouts, and not just Christians.

In April they arranged for Dr Allen Meyer to speak on matters of sexuality (Poster enclosed).

In June they arranged for DSTO to hold a lunchtime quiz to raise money for the local St Vincent De-Paul (Fred's Vans feed the homeless and the hungry nightly). We took up some money and donated a prize for the quiz and managed to get promotional material placed on all the tables and had a couple of minutes allocated to speak to the crowd about MCF. This was a great event and raised much needed funds for Vinnies.

Retired Brigadier Jim Wallace has spoken to the DSTO audience about how his faith helped him in his 32 yr military career. As you

know Jim was one of the founding members of MCF and was the CO of the SAS. He is now the managing director of the Australian Christian Lobby.

Most of the work done in organizing these events has been by Dr Daniel Solomon and Dr Brendan Kirby. The funding for these events has been done by voluntary donations with the shortfall (rarely any) made up by these two gentlemen.

I have also been using the MCF hard question series from the website for discussion and they are proving to be very popular sessions.

In addition to the MCF meetings I have started having a dedicated lunchtime prayer meeting, only myself attending at the moment but I am getting prayer requests and people are starting to take an interest.

Well that's about it, we have many more things planned. Please pray for us and that the fire of the Holy Spirit will ignite the hearts of everyone here.

God bless



Williamtown Christian network advocates

By Sam Hays

On Tuesday 15 Sep 09 at the RAAF Williamtown chapel, Christians from all over the base, leaders from local churches, and local military unit leaders celebrated the commissioning of 15 Williamtown Christian Network Advocates. The Williamtown Christian Network (WCN) is simply a local name given to Military Christian Fellowship at RAAF Williamtown. The duties assigned to the WCN advocates are:

- Be a point of contact within their unit/organisation for communication of local MCF activities
- Foster and promote Christian faith within their unit/organisation
- Support their unit/organisation objectives in prayer
- Support Chaplaincy visits and activities within their unit/organisation
- Attend MCF activities and leadership meetings where work routine allows

The MCF leadership vision at WLM concerning advocates is to:

- Provide a structure in which to develop Christian leadership, accountability, communication, fellowship and culture in the work place in the RAAF Williamtown area,
- Increase awareness of Christian faith and presence to individuals, units and local Defence organisations in the RAAF Williamtown area, and
- Strengthen the body of Christ in the Williamtown area and the relationship with local churches.
- Eventually have two advocates in each unit/organisation on the base and surrounding area.

Each advocate was endorsed by his/her local church senior leader and most of these local churches leaders were represented at the commissioning service, which provided an opportunity to lay hands on and pray for their relevant advocates. There was a great presence of the Lord in the commissioning service that included worship provided by

one of the local churches and an encouraging message from Coordinating Chaplain Peter Friend. We appreciate the blessing that comes from the Lord when local MCF-A groups function in unity with local churches for the cause of Jesus Christ in their region.

The commissioning event was favorably covered by the local Fighter Force Newspaper with the heading "A Move Towards Christianity." The article was very balanced and supportive of the church in general.

The WCN advocates commissioned were:

SQNLDR James Rea, SGT Rolf Just, FLTLT Adam Paull, AC Daniel Shaw, FSGT Brett Piggott, FLTLT Vicky Bezuidenhout, Mr Peter Ingram, Mrs Cynthia Cole, SQNLDR Peter Lee, Mr Mark Yoemans, SQNLDR Andrew Munden, Mr Jonathon Webb, Mr Trevor Babore, Mr Roger Reeder, FLTLT Chris Poley.

For more information about this initiative, please contact MCF Area Rep at Williamtown Mr Rod Peet on (02) 4964 5030.



WCN Advocates being prayed for by their local church leaders



Coordinating Chaplain Peter Friend Preaching the Good News at the WCN Commissioning Service 15 Sep 09



News from Canada

By Dick Barnes of ACCTS

The Canadian MCF annual meeting and conference took place in Ottawa during the weekend 23-24 October 2009. Lt Col Jay Janzen, recently returned from his second tour to Afghanistan, gave a fascinating PowerPoint presentation on Faith and Military Operations: Mission, Challenges and Opportunities. He clearly described their mission in Afghanistan (to increase the

solidarity of the Afghan people's support for their government while at the same time removing the insurgent influence over the people), described the opportunities for ministry to his soldiers (asking important life questions, living in close confines), and addressed what is working (prayer, rapid deployment kits, the chapel, and their chaplains). Jay underscored the fact that

Canadian Forces regulations prohibit the discussion of religion with the Afghan people; however, they do watch how he conducts himself, and if someone asks him, he is ready to respond.

ACCTS Seoul Korea report

By Helen and Russell Bielenberg

Dear Supporters,

General Lee Pil Sup, a retired five star general from Korea, is the president of the Association of Military Christians and every five years a meeting of his 14 Vice Presidents and staff of supporting organizations including us is held. There are three purposes for the meeting:-

- a. To have fellowship and strengthen bonds
- b. To evaluate the progress of AMCF over the last five years
- c. To plan for the next five years.

My main purpose in going was to support the retiring Vice President (VP) Chaplain Allen Neil and wife Lynette and Principal Chaplain Eric Burton as he was prayed in as the new VP. Eric and I flew on the same plane to Seoul and he was soon at home in the fellowship. It was very rewarding to be asked to pray for Eric by General Lee as he called out those he wanted.

General Lee has a walking stick as a result of a back operation last year but this did not stop his enthusiasm or his belief in peace to make a better world. The Conference was run by Professor Oh and no cost was withheld as a gift to the visitors. The Military Support Organisation of Korea, which also supports AMCF as ACCTS does, paid all expenses in Korea. Because I was an international woman who was alone, I was given a female pastor to care for me the whole week.

The three retiring VPs gave a testimony and all said that General Lee was a friend and carer:-

Allen Neil spoke about his time in the Middle East and his safety with explosives going off near him more than once.

General Mwaniki of Kenya spoke of the progress and formation of the Kenyan fellowship.

Admiral Lei of Taiwan told of these three miracles in AMCF. (On his slow walk to the dais, he stopped and saluted General Lee; amazing love was found at this conference).

1. He was jailed wrongly and General Lee flew to Taiwan and knelt in the jail and prayed; the admiral was released without explanation soon afterwards.
2. He went to England and fell whilst showering and later found out that he had broken his back which God has now healed.
3. He had pneumonia and was healed. In one of these times in hospital, General and Mrs. Lee went to the Intensive Care Unit and knelt; Mrs. Lee prayed and the admiral was healed. As the admiral is now dying of cancer and had come to tell his message before he died, it was an emotional time and Eric was first to his feet to applaud.

In the last five years two new MCF's have eventuated from the AMCF conference which we ran in 2007. These countries are Micronesia and Palau. We are also grateful for the friends and colleagues with an international interest who helped us run that conference. Bishop Sacro representing

the Philippines informed me about a former student of the Australian Defence College whom we had sponsored. We were able to do Bible study with him and has since become a Christian. He is now the Chairman of the MCF of the Philippines which brings us great rejoicing. Russell and I have had the privilege of travelling to see Allen and Lynette many times in the seven years of Allen's term. God has enabled us to encourage them through their trials.

There were two VPs and their wives there from Latin America, I was able to interpret for them especially at meal times. I often came to the end of a meal time and was just starting to eat as there were so many interesting stories to translate. Praise God for my Spanish. I prayed for healing in times of pain; prayers which God graciously answered quickly.

One excursion was to a forest; Korea was bare of trees after the war and one of the retired soldiers said that in the war he had kept warm burning the trees and they had eaten from the forest. A fifty year reforestation plan sees Korea green with forests now. Another excursion enjoyed was a river cruise, and I also went on a visit to an old palace, while those who arrived before me were able to go on a tour of the war memorial and the city tower.

After the five day conference I had a night home stay in a Korean home. After this home stay it was time to go to a hotel near Paul Yonggi Cho's church for a service on





Chaplain Allen Neil and Lynette retiring Vice President for the SW Pacific and Chaplain Eric Burton who is now in the position and Helen Bielenberg.

the Sunday, then on the Monday there was the first Christian ethics/military conference in the Baek Seok Christian University. I have conference books on all discussions if anyone would like to read some of the material from conference and seminar.

As the new Vice Chairman of the South Pacific, Principal Chaplain Eric Burton is seeking support for the international scene and encouraging Australians in this outreach. It has been proposed that there be a regional AMCF conference in 2012. We will continue our work with ACCTS to help him in his new position.

Please pray for our continued strength, health and financial needs as we continue this work.

Yours in service,
Helen and Russell Bielenberg.

Defence Christians dinner 2009

Equipped for the battlefield we call... 'life'?

Each year a Defence Christians Dinner is held, co-sponsored by MCF and other Defence Christian ministries. It is a wonderful opportunity for everyone to get together and share their experiences of being a Christian in Defence. This year's dinner was no exception with a great bond of fellowship and mutual support seen amongst all the Defence ministry groups. In September 2009 over 160 people attended the dinner in Canberra. Our Patron, LTGEN David Hurley, and his wife attended and made a presentation to Helen Rose in recognition of her efforts as the MCF staff worker.

The keynote speaker for 2009 was Berni Dymet, CEO Christianityworks. Through his radio programs, Berni is heard by over 10 million people each week, in 120 countries around the world. He graduated from RMC Duntroon in 1980. After ten years ADF service

he established his own IT consulting firm. In 2004, Berni entered into fulltime ministry, as CEO of the global media organisation Christianityworks.

You are all encouraged to come along to the next dinner planned for Friday 3rd Sep 2010. You can look forward to a great night of fellowship and insight into what God is doing through our Chaplains and various other ministries.

Who is invited?

All people connected with Defence (military, trainee, civilian or contractor), their family and friends are invited to a night of good food, interesting and inspirational speakers, entertainment, and prizes. More information on the dinner will be posted on the MCF website as it becomes available.



MCF Prayer Calendar

Jan – Mar 2010



Thank you for praying for and with MCF and we hope this prayer calendar is useful. You may like to pray the points on this calendar during the week starting on the date shown. In general, each week has three points, the first relating to all those in Defence, the second relating more specifically to members of MCF, and the third relating to other Christian organisations who also minister and witness to Defence personnel.

3 Jan

- › Pray for safety in travels and refreshment over the leave period. For consistent time with God.
- › LTCOL James Van Heel – Chairman of MCF as he directs the Council that he would be faithful to God and be wise in his decisions.
- › Chaplains. For a refreshing time over the break. For those who are moving to settle into the new areas and churches well. For faithful proclamation of the gospel.

10 Jan

- › For those deployed – safety, faithfulness to families and commitment to their tasks.
- › Pray that the Christmas edition of Crossfire magazine will be an encouragement for Defence Christians and for those who are seeking Christ.
- › The next Forum of Christian Military Ministries is being held in Feb. Pray for Russell Bielenberg as he organises this event which brings Defence ministry leaders together. Ask for the discussion time to be fruitful.

17 Jan

- › For those in authority in the ADF to lead well.
- › CAPT Mark Bali – Secretary of MCF for his relocation to Canberra with his wife Debbie and for his input to the MCF Executive.

- › Pray particularly for those arriving at ADFA and other training establishments – for early contact with Christians who are willing to share Christ with them and mentor them. For those who are Christian to be faithful in trying times. For contact with those interested in studying the Bible.

24 Jan

- › The Minister for Defence, John Faulkner. Thank God for his wealth of experience. Ask God to give him wisdom in his leadership and decision making.
- › Pray for the right people to be appointed by Council for the prayer Coordinator and Crossfire magazine editor roles.
- › Give thanks for our nation, Australia and ask God for continued freedom to be Christian and to share the gospel with others.

31 Jan

- › Those marching into new jobs; that they can quickly pick up the knowledge they require and work to the best of their ability, particularly those newly graduated.
- › Thank God for CHAP Murray Earl, the Chaplain's representative on the council. Pray for daily guidance for him, and for help to share the gospel with many others, for His Glory.
- › Salvation Army. Thank God for the work of the Salvation Army – 'The Sally Man'. Pray for opportunities to present the gospel.



7 Feb

- › Pray for those who have lost loved ones. For comfort. That they might seek God.
- › Pray for council Members' Representatives MAJ David Williams and Mr Sam Hayes. For their example and speech to honour you.
- › Fighting Words. Praise God for the break that Mike Hanlon has had and pray for renewed vigour to begin this year. Ask for strength to labour for Christ in the harvest fields.

14 Feb

- › Pray for those who have moved that they will connect with new churches in their community to fellowship. Help them to use their own gifts to build up the body of Christ.
- › Pray for council Members Representatives MAJ Mark Jobst and CHAP Owen Davies. For their example and speech to honour you.
- › Everyman's Ministry. For many people to be drawn to the centres and for those ministering to have discernment as they show God's love to each person.

21 Feb

- › Ask God to help MCF members be instruments through which others come to know Jesus.
- › Give thanks for Darryl Gibson's re- election and faithful work as the Treasurer.
- › Solid Rock Ministries. Pray for Solid Rock Ministries in the work with military wives and partners that it would shine as a light in the world, glorifying God.

28 Feb

- › Pray for opportunities for you personally to pass on the gospel both at work and at home.
- › Pray that MCF members will encourage, support, and develop other Christians in the ADF, especially when deployed.
- › Reserve Chaplains. For faithfulness to God's word and opportunities for preaching the gospel.

7 Mar

- › Pray for those who are deployed, for safety and perseverance. Challenge them to think about their mortality and where they stand with you.
- › Pray for the support (and do support) Christian ADF Chaplains in their work in the military.
- › Navigators. For faithful preaching of God's word, one to one - that God would build His kingdom.

14 Mar

- › Pray for LTGEN Hurley and thank God for his patronage of the MCF. Ask for him to make wise decisions as VCDF.
- › Pray for Christian faithfulness of MCF members, both in word and deed.
- › Red Shield Defence Services. Pray for the RS Defence Services. Pray for wisdom and discernment and for good relationships with all whom they serve.

21 Mar

- › Pray for the CDF, ACM Houston. For wisdom, strength and good counsel.
- › Pray for MAJ Thomas Bielenberg in his duties as the Vice Chairman that he would support the Chairman well and serve God faithfully.
- › Thank God for the civilian members of MCF. Pray that they would continue to support, encourage and bless those serving in our military.

28 Mar

- › Pray for the Chiefs of the Army, Navy & Air Force. That they receive good counsel and support and that they have much wisdom and courage as they serve our military.
- › Pray for Ann Lock, the new MCF Staff Worker that she will be used greatly by God in this position and that she develops strong relationships with area contacts.
- › Pray for the Association of Christian Conferences, Teaching and Service (ACCTS) – for a couple to come alongside Russell and Helen Bielenberg in their work in the Pacific region.

If you have any prayer points, please send them to Ann lock, our Staff Worker at ann.lock@defence.gov.au or 02 6266 4950.



The Word at work

By Sam Hays

At this I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, "Do not do it! I am a fellow servant with you and with your brothers who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." Revelation 19:10 (NIV)



Sunrise at Newcastle Ocean Baths courtesy of Mr Stephen Allen (used with permission).

Every testimony we share about who Jesus is and what he has done in and through our lives and the lives of others, prophecies God's intent and nature to all who will hear. God's acts reveal His ways, and His ways reveal His nature.

This kingdom principle has implications for every area of our lives as believers. I honestly think it is a vital principle that we need to get by revelation and then act on it. Our capacity to remember what God has said and done in our lives and throughout history (the testimony) is a primary key to our success in sustaining a Kingdom lifestyle.

My desire is to share testimonies of Jesus with you each week in the Word@Work. The most relevant testimonies that can encourage our readers will come from you. So I'm inviting you to email me your stories (no more than 300 words) that testify about the power of Jesus with permission to share them in the Word@Work.

Recently a 4 year old boy named Ezekiel here in Medowie NSW (near RAAF Base Williamtown) was struck down with a severe respiratory problem and then he developed Swine Flu. He was in intensive care with a breathing tube struggling for his life. The whole church in our area (believers across many congregations) mobilised in prayer and fasting for this boy. Christians on the base here at Williamtown met in the chapel one lunch time and declared life and healing in the name of Jesus over this boy. God heard our prayers and Ezekiel was healed; he is now home and doing well.

God is so good and His nature is to heal the sick! Every where that Jesus went he healed the sick. Then He said "If you've seen me, you've seen the Father". We can always be confident when we pray for the sick that it is God's will to heal them.

Have a great week as you go about being led by the Spirit and grasping opportunities to share a testimony about Jesus in your life. You will be prophesying God's intent into the lives of those listening.

The Word@Work is intended to inspire your faith in your workplace. Please email testimonies (no more than 300 words) to samuel.hays@defence.gov.au of how God is using you in your sphere of influence. Spread the word about The Word@Work to your curious colleagues. To Subscribe or Unsubscribe, please reply to samuel.hays@defence.gov.au



Area contacts

Have your details changed?

Have you moved, been promoted or changed your name?

To stay in touch let the MCF Office know:

ann.lock@defence.gov.au or 02 6266 4950



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Not sure what's around the corner?



*You can't go wrong with the full armour of God –
take a look at the Bible Ephesians 6:10-18*