

CROSSFIRE



THE MAGAZINE OF THE MILITARY CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP OF AUSTRALIA † NUMBER 16 SPRING 2007



A new ADF Bishop | Support to Chaplains | A Word from the Gulf



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from the editor,

David Rose



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 Mick Mumford



Welcome to another edition of Crossfire, the ADF's only Christian magazine. Once again a great job from David Rose and the staff of Defence Publishing. In the last edition we finished our series on Ethics with articles from Cardinal George Pell and Bishop Tom Frame. In this edition we commence a new theme over the next year, covering each of our ministry objectives. In this edition the focus is on support to our Chaplains. Ever wonder what the ADF would be like without Chaplains? Ever wonder what service in the ADF would be like without the support of Chaplains? MCF believes the ministry of the Chaplaincy is vital to military Christians and indeed the success of the ADF. But who supports the Chaplains? We do! Recently I parachuted into Shoalwater Bay with soldiers from my Battalion as part of Exercise Talisman Sabre. Before we left our Padre, John Sanderson, said a blessing over us. Now, it is probably not a usual thing for most organisations in the ADF to have a Padre to bless the unit before they go to work, but it is for 3 RAR and always has been. And the response from the paratroopers? Noone laughs, solemn heads bow, eyes close, hopes are lifted for the success of the jump and the welfare of the paratroopers. Paratroopers face their own mortality every time they jump; that tends to focus you on what is important in your life. Fortunately for us, God is there, and his most visible presence is the Chaplain. It has been said that there are no atheists in foxholes. I don't know about that, I've been in some pretty Godless foxholes, but as long as the foxhole has a Chaplain in close support I doubt the number of atheists in it will increase! After you have read this magazine go and find your nearest Chaplain, tell them how special they are in the ADF and ask them how you can help. God has called them to this mission field, the least we can do is stand with them as brothers and sisters in Christ.

March hard for the Lord,

Mick Mumford

Chairman

congratulations

- › Len Eacott, AM Anglican Bishop to the ADF.
- › MAJ Thomas Bielenberg and his wife, Raylee, on the birth of their son Timothy David.
- › Our patron, RADM Ruting on his retirement.

honours and awards

Order of Australia

Member (AM) in the Military Division

Chaplain Peter John O'KEEFE

For exceptional service to the Royal Australian Air Force as a Chaplain

Conspicuous Service Cross (CSC)

Lieutenant Colonel Michael Anthony MUMFORD
For outstanding achievement as the Commanding Officer of Battle Group Faithful on operation ASTUTE

Conspicuous Service Medal (CSM)

Chaplain Timothy Noel BOOKER
For outstanding service as the deployed Chaplain to Battle Group Faithful, Operation ASTUTE and the 3rd Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment

Chaplain David Ernest JACKSON

For outstanding service as a Chaplain to the Australian Army while serving with SASR at Swanbourne.

who pays for MCF Australia?

MCF is funded by free-will and tax-deductible donations from its members and members of the public. Donations can be sent to the MCF office: MCF-A Department of Defence Campbell Park Offices, CP4-3-046 Canberra, ACT, 2600 Australia.

ADF members can make allotments to MCF (allotee number 122), or funds can be transferred directly from your bank account to the MCF account with DEFCREDIT (Account name: Military Christian Fellowship, BSB: 803-205, Member number: 66126, Account number: 20514572). Your contribution will help support the work of MCF within the Australian Defence Force.





pray, pray, pray!

by Len Eacott, AM Anglican Bishop to ADF

"...as you also join in helping us by your prayers, so that many will give thanks on our behalf for the blessing granted us through the prayers of many."

Mick Mumford asked that I might pen a few musings on how MCF members might best support the chaplains serving in the ADF. An extract from words of St Paul in his second letter to the Corinthians come quickly to mind, "...as you also join in helping us by your prayers, so that many will give thanks on our behalf for the blessing granted us through the prayers of many." (2 Corinthians 1:11 (NRSV))

Paul, in earlier verses, was reflecting on those times in his own ministry and in the lives of individuals and communities when the light of God's presence is faded or when problems prevail. He affirms that his ministry to others exercised only by the grace and power of God, is reinforced and strengthened by the prayers of others.

Paul is determined to accumulate every possible blessing for others to whom he ministers, and thus it is to supportive and encouraging intercessory prayer that he calls the people of Corinth.

I am convinced that God desires that His people are united in mutual intercession offered in the name of his Son, so the people of God serving in the ADF ought to earnestly offer prayerful support for the chaplains in their own prayers and ministrations to those sailors, soldiers, or airmen and women found to be despairing and hurt by life's experiences. And do so, not for our own glorification or thanksgiving, rather "that there may be a sea of upturned faces as a widespread thanksgiving goes up to God on our behalf for the gracious act for which He has done for us." (W.G. Rutherford, St Paul's Epistles to the Thessalonians and to the Corinthians)

So brothers and sisters in Christ, pray, pray, pray!

18 July 07



biking through the Bishopric

three of the modes of Bishop Mark Burton



by LCDR Antony Underwood

The Padre's Bicycle has been an institution in the RAF and RAAF virtually since these services became armed forces in their own right. I know it has been in the RAF because 'the padre's bicycle' has been mentioned in a few old B&W movies (usually in the context of having been stolen).

And virtually every RAAF chaplain I've met has had this form of conveyance as a faster means of transport across the vast expanses of an air base than shanks's pony. It probably stems back to the era when automobiles were more expensive, less common and less reliable than they are today and priests or vicars became bicycle-borne, showing their adherents a cheap, reliable and healthy form of transport.

Two RAAF padres I can remember became familiar figures on their pedalpower machines – the Anglican a familiar sight on his Reverend's Rocket and the Roman Catholic priest (almost) omnipresent on The Chariot of the Gods.

I suspect bicycles achieved similar popularity with the clergy on major RAN and Army establishments... but perhaps less now than in the past. There are indications though, that one of the preferred forms of transport nowadays – at least for senior gentlemen of the cloth – is the motorcycle. Chap Burton joined the RAN Reserves around the turn

of the millennium but soon transferred to the PN serving in HMAS Cerberus before being sent for duties in HMAS Melbourne on deployment to the Gulf. Chap Burton returned to take up chaplaincy of the Recruit School at Cerberus before taking up duties, at short notice, on board HMAS Kanimbla for Operations Sumatra Assist I and II which followed in the wake of the tsunami and earthquake in Banda Aceh, Sabang and Nias.

He was chaplain aboard and ministered to the needs of the shocked dispirited ship's company of Kanimbla after the Shark 02 Sea King tragedy on the island of Nias in April, 2005.

As well as taking up motorcycling on his new Triumph, Bishop Murray plans to spend more time sailing, bushwalking and playing the most fiendish weapon ever invented – the bagpipes.

Pics show (l. to r.): Chaplain Mark Burton conducting Sunday service on board HMAS Kanimbla pic by LSPH Bill Louys; consecrated as a Bishop at the chapel of Claremont's Christ Church Grammar School; and astride his Kawasaki with retiring Anglican Bishop David Murray on his black Triumph Bonneville (with sidecar). (PICs courtesy of The Anglican Messenger)

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.



my story

by Principal Chaplain Eric Burton, CSC



We are taught from an early age not to talk about ourselves and yet there are times when we need to tell our testimony or story of how God has dealt with our lives. This is not boasting but a very powerful tool in helping others to discover faith. The bible is replete with stories of how God has touched lives and each story, including ours, is the continuing great story of God's intervention in our lives. I offer the story of my struggle to faith in the hope it will encourage you.

I was baptised and confirmed in the Church of England – in England – as a young boy. I was 11 years old at confirmation and most of our class went through because it was the done thing – and I must admit that most of it went over my head. What confirmation did do though was to cement in my mind that religion must be important to some people. I bought a cross as a kind of good luck charm.

I emigrated to Australia and joined the RAN as a radio technician at age 15. During phase training I met a so called born again Christian – Lance – who repelled me. He was my cabin mate at HMAS CERBERUS and he was far too keen. What developed though was an appreciation that even though I did not believe his kind of faith – HE DID. After some months of being talked to by Lance I became unsettled in my unbelief. What was particularly annoying was the thought

that my 'good life' was not good enough for God and that I needed to believe in Jesus. After some confusing weeks I went to see the Chaplain. I was already impressed by the Moody Fact and Faith films that had been shown by the chaplains at recruit school, but secretly hoped that he would say that Lance was a fanatic and that I would not need to change. This was not so and I made a commitment to follow Christ by way of a tentative and stumbling prayer in the Chaplain's office.

My father was in the Navy as a Communications CPO and when I went home to tell him I was a Christian he was disgusted. He believed that Christianity was for weak people and warned me to stand on my own two feet and not get mixed up with religion. He to church and wait outside. One day he went in, intrigued by the speaker, who was the manager of Sydney airport. He was uncertain how such a competent person needed God. The result was he made his own commitment that day. At that time I was at sea on the aircraft carrier HMAS MELBOURNE as a 19 year old – I got a telegram that read "rejoice with me Son for I am born again". I was quite overcome because I believed that Dad was too tough for God and could not and would not be changed.

At sea a number of fellow sailors used to come up after relationship break downs and personal difficulties – I really did not know how to help them as I was young and had not even had a girlfriend at that stage.

After a few years at the transmitting station in Belconnen, Canberra I had the sneaking suspicion that God wanted me as a full time worker for Him. I did not see myself as a clergyman but resistance was useless and so I left the RAN as a sailor and studied theology for three years. I came back into the RAN as a chaplain after 11 years and nearly 20 years ago now.

There are a couple of lessons and encouragements in telling the story of how God has touched our lives

- › never give up in prayer for family and friends
- › telling YOUR story from time to time; speaking it out will confirm it to yourself and others; perhaps you can ask your minister to tell your story in church next Sunday.

Be encouraged to keep going as you reflect on YOUR story.



encouraging military wives to live Christian lives

by Janet Mumford



"Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work: If one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up! Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone? Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken."

Ecclesiastes 4:9–12

In my last article we looked briefly at the fact that storms will come in our lives. The Bible doesn't say IF a storm comes, it says WHEN a storm comes (Matthew 7:24–27 and Isaiah 43:2–3). On the Base at which my husband serves there are always wives dealing with the "storm" of deployment. As I speak to the wives from 3 RAR I remind them that although deployment is never easy, it can be made easier when they have at least one friend. As our opening verse reminds us, two are better than one. When we have our bad days a friend can pick us up and encourage us. When our friend has her bad days we can pick her up and be an encouragement to her. The value of a friend is Biblical. A Christian friend is even more valuable as they can pray for us and offer a Godly perspective when we lose ours! Do you realise how many military wives there are who don't have a Christian friend? I'm sure that you are all aware that there are many struggling wives and girlfriends who would benefit greatly from a Christian friend. One day recently I was chatting with different military wives at separate events and each one made the comment "I know you understand". Each one has friends but was making the point that other military wives have a greater understanding of what they are going through than some of their civilian friends (as wonderful as they are). By the time I heard it the third time God had my attention! For those of you who may think

you don't have much to offer another military wife, think again! Just the fact that you understand and that you empathise and are willing to listen may be all that they need. We should never underestimate the ministry of encouragement that we can give by listening and offering some uplifting words.

As Christians we need to have other Christian friends who can encourage us and lift us up, but can I challenge us to also consider how we can be a Christian friend to others: women who have never had a Christian friend; women who are lonely; who are facing storms; who are struggling in some area of their life. Of course it is often a sacrifice to step out of our comfort zone (particularly when we might be facing our own storms) but isn't that what we are called to do? We are called to be the salt and light in the world and we can only do that as we reach out to others with the love of God (Matthew 5:13–16). We have opportunities to reach military wives with that unfailing love in ways that many other Christians don't. There are women who are hurting, will we be the hands and feet and heart of Jesus and go to them?

Shalom,
Janet Mumford
solidrockmin@optusnet.com.au



experiences of a chaplain

by CHAP Clyde Appleby, RAN

Participation in the weeks of intensive work-up training and assessment was a very demanding time for all onboard HMAS TOOWOOMBA, including myself. In a real attack, the Chaplain would be very busy giving comfort to the injured and attending to the dead and dying. Not being able to realistically exercise these ministries left me looking for other ways to 'pull my weight' whilst remaining free to attend to casualties. Nevertheless, the opportunity to integrate into the ship's company, to become part of the team, was invaluable and by the time that we sailed on 4 January 2007 I felt a part of what seemed like a very friendly ship's company.

Soon after sailing, I commenced a weekly Bible Study with five or six officers and sailors regularly attending. In addition I started a nightly encouragement e-mail (short bible passage, reflection and prayer) which I sent to the 'Toowoomba Fellowship Group'. This group started with nine and was to grow to 28 as I added names, including officers and sailors that I met on other coalition ships in the Gulf. Both of these activities were a blessing for myself and, I trust, others in the groups.

Establishing a routine once we sailed was important. Each day I place into Daily Orders a 'Chaplain's Thought for the Day' and historical items for 'This day in the Navy'. Walking around the ship just to be available to the sailors and to continue to develop relationships was an important activity each day.

Other regular activities included pastoral counselling, the need for which varied throughout the deployment, and presentation of material on life skills, the Muslim culture, and the emotional cycle of deployment either at Divisional meetings or in Daily Orders.

Church was held in the sickbay twice a day every Sunday at sea. Serving on the lunch line in

the galley was a pleasant activity that not only helped the cooks, but also provided another opportunity to talk to sailors.

All of this kept me very busy and left little time to get bored.

I always maintained that I never had 'nothing to do' – whenever there wasn't something else to do, then I would get out to engage in a ministry of presence! Although not the healthiest place to be (passive smoking dangers) the 'smoking pit' was often the best place to get into conversation with the sailors.

Our patrols were very much the same thing day after day for about three or more weeks without any break as we protected the oil platforms and conducted ship boardings. For most of the officers and sailors, the days were very tedious, and tiredness would set in with the long watches that they kept.

Tiredness led to reduction in tolerance and so we had to constantly watch morale. The only things to break the monotony were the occasional replenishment at sea to top-up fuel, stores and fresh food.

Most of the time, the sailors would be just looking forward to the next port visit, when they would have a chance to catch up on sleep and have a little fun. Many of them would book into hotels whenever they had leave while in port, so that they could enjoy some respite off the ship. It was interesting to see how the simple little things in life became so valued – things such as being able to shower for as long as you like, not having to wear thongs in the shower, and being able to sit in bed and watch TV.

Mail was regularly received, either from the replenishment ship or by helicopter. Parcels from home were always received with joy

and anticipation. Even though I did not really need anything, it was always exciting to receive a package to open. Whenever there was no package for someone, I would see the disappointment on their face.

When in port, I would usually go to an Anglican Church service ashore. This gave me an opportunity to enjoy a full worship service and to receive some feeding for a change. I always met some interesting people, mainly British expatriates; and would learn something about the side of life kept hidden from the tourists.

Some of the other ships in the area, particularly the US Coast Guard (USCG) cutters and some US Navy ships, did not have a chaplain onboard. So, on occasion, I would be transferred by the 'Holy RHIB' (rigid hull inflatable boat) to lead church services and provide pastoral care. These were always times of blessing for me. Just to get off the ship for 'a drive in the country' (as I called it) was a blessing in itself.

Celebrating Easter in the middle of the Muslim world, and close to where the events actually occurred, was an awesome experience. One service on the fo'c'sle of a USCG cutter while surrounded by many local fishing dhows was, I thought, a great witness to the Muslim fishermen that Christians also take time to worship God and pray. Another service on the flight deck of a USN ship was also an experience that I will always treasure. The lay leaders had planned a great service with music and singing, including a very moving solo on the Easter events and singing of The Old Rugged Cross, which I led.

Other memorable experiences were a Nias Memorial Service held on our upper deck just before sunset, and an Anzac Day Dawn Service held while alongside in Abu Dhabi.



in the North Arabian Gulf

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A question often asked is, "Who cares for the carer?" ie what ministry support is there for the chaplain at sea? It is really up to the individual chaplain to maintain his own spiritual health and growth. Internet connection, which might otherwise have provided opportunities to log onto church websites, was limited and very frustrating. I found that the Anglican 'Daily Services' in the Anglican Prayer Book were very helpful, as were daily devotional readings.

Mutual pastoral care among all chaplains in the operational area is important. I always sought to establish e-mail contact with the other chaplains and whenever possible, while on patrol, I would visit other chaplains or host them onboard my ship. One of my most valued moments was an opportunity to read Morning Prayer together with a RN chaplain.

On Toowoomba I was very much blessed by being well supported by my CO and the HODs, and I had a very cooperative cabin mate. On the other hand, a chaplain on another Coalition ship was inhibited in effectively carry out his ministry through having to share a cabin with an officer who would not willingly allow him to use the cabin and laptop.

I believe that prayer support when in ministry is essential. I was blessed to be supported by faithful praying folk from three churches, as well as my immediate family. However I was inhibited in providing specific prayer requests because out-going e-mails were often stopped by the OPSEC (Operational Security) system and were then read before release.

Nevertheless, I believe that the fact that this deployment has proven to be such a valuable experience, with so many blessings, is due very much to the prayer support of my 'land based support group'.



Challenges to Chaplaincy

presentation to the ADF Christian forum | held at ADFA 15 November 2006

At the National Emergency Services Memorial in Kings Park, inscribed on the rear side of the memorial we find the following words:

GRIEF HUMANITY COMMUNITY HOPE
VIGILANCE READINESS COORDINATION
SERVICE HUMILITY VOLUNTEERISM
PREVENTION COOPERATION
CAMARADERIE TRUST CAPACITY AWE
VULNERABILITY COURAGE SKILL
COMPASSION SUPPORT HONOUR
RESILIENCE RECOVERY SPIRIT

Enduring qualities that described the service of the Emergency Service encapsulating the spirit of its service within our community.

These qualities, in addition to our own ADF values, describe well the distinctive character of ADF ministry and Christian service.

Perhaps with the one addition: Faith

ADF Chaplaincy

It's Core Description: **UNITY IN MISSION**

MISSION:

To Witness to the Kingdom and work for its spread in the ADF

To be Apostles and Disciples of Jesus Christ witnessing to his death and Resurrection in our lives

To bring military members and their families to Jesus Christ

To establish the mission of the Churches in the military environment

To support military members and families in living out their Christian

Vocation incorporated within their military vocation.

To witness as a team of chaplains to the gospel imperative:

Jn 17:21: *May they be one Father, as you and I are one.*

UNITY:

KINGDOM imperative Powerful

Disunity – scandalous and destructive to mission and ministry

The Chaplain is a person of COMMUNION





by DGCHAP-AF, Chaplain O'Keefe

Hallmark of the ADF Chaplain

1. A Person Of God

In words adapted from the Book of Sirach:
In the midst of the Church he opened his mouth and the Lord filled him/her with the Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding.

In the midst of his people the Chaplain sanctifies and leads his people
Role of teacher, teacher, sanctifier and pastor and servant.

A shepherd in the midst of his/her flock.

Two Perennial Images:

NT: the Chaplain, Priest and Pastor - In the midst of his/her people

The Last Supper Image: the Chaplain like Christ ties an apron around his waist and begins to wash the feet of those he serves.

The Chaplain, a person of God among men and women in the ADF must often walk a tightrope in maintaining the right balance in his/her relationship with God and his/her involvement with God's people.

The balancing of a hyper-active pastoral life that needs to flow from and be nourished by a strong interior life.

The chaplain must be seen as a man of spirituality and solid prayer.

The Chaplain needs to establish himself/herself as a person of God, first and foremost, as a military officer in second place. He/she combines two vocations: Consecrated person and the vocation of a military officer.

Young people and members of the ADF will be drawn deeper into faith and to vocation if they see the chaplain as a man of deep spirituality and sincere prayer as exemplified in his personal peace, articulated through his godly and mature wisdom and action.

Unlike most pastors and ministers within their church structures, the full time ADF Chaplains are removed practically from the support offered by a strong ecclesiastic community or parent Church structures. He or she can lack a Church framework to balance his/her interior life and the demands of pastoral ministry in the ADF.

2. Missionary vocation

ADF Chaplaincy is a vocation within a vocation, a truly missionary vocation.

In most cases 75% or more of our people in uniform are young adults 18-30 years.

They reflect cultural and religious attitudes of people of their age –Some of which confront us: Moral relativism, religious indifferentism, materialism, hedonism etc.

Yet the landscape is not bleak:

This generation of young adults is seen as one of believers but not belongers.

They are open to things spiritual... do not have an overt hostility to establish religion but relatively few are interested in joining a religious denomination.

To reach this group with the Gospel of Jesus Christ and with the gifts of the Church is truly a missionary challenge, well worth all the resources, effort and expertise we invest, and the ADF invests through ADF Chaplaincy.

But it demands a *missionary attitude*.

3. A pastoral person

To be an effective pastoral person, a chaplain must be or have:

1. *A clear understanding of his/her vocation to ministry* – See it as the pivotal, integrating element in his/her life, one centred in prayer and with an abiding love of people.

2. *Be of human maturity and commitment*: He/she needs to know the depths of the human heart, be able to *create trust and cooperation, and express serene and objective judgement*. Be a *bridge* rather than an obstacle to others in personality and temperament so that others may meet Jesus Christ. As a *person of communion*, he or she must be able to relate to others, be perceived as *thoughtful, loyal, respectful of every person and honest*.

In dealing with people of different religious outlooks and cultural diversity, there is no excuse for ignorance or prejudice, he/she needs to be open, flexible and common sensed, qualities that can't be presumed in every minister even after years of ministry.

3. *Have a proven pastoral track record* in order to be an effective pastoral person in the military environment made up of professional, competent and well trained people.

4. *Come to know well, respect and use for the benefit of his/her pastoral mission, the traditions and ways of the military culture. The chaplain needs to be immersed in the military culture.*

5. *Possess a well educated moral conscience* so as to situate himself/herself both as the bridge, advocate and prophet of Christian and human values in a military organisation. He/she ministers in supporting ADF members to form and exercise their moral conscience in the necessary choices that they must make.

6. *The Chaplain is called to be a agent of peace and justice*, exemplifying Kingdom values, the call of Jesus and representing his/her church's mission in the world.

7. *Vocation of Service*: The Chaplin needs to exemplify the Call to service in Christ. This empowers the call to service within the ADF culture.

4. Denominational identity

All ADF Chaplains come from parent Faith Groups, represent their Churches in ADF ministry and are grounded in the traditions of their particular faith group.

The Churches have always willed to provide for the spiritual care of military personnel and their families for they form a distinctive social group that requires a concrete and specific form of pastoral care.

Each chaplain is sent and commissioned by their parent church to minister, provide religious rites and sacraments and pastorally care for ADF members whose vocation is custodians of peace and justice in the ADF.

Each chaplain is obliged to remain steadfast to his vocational commitment as a minister/priest of his/her Church and as such to renew constantly priestly vows and commitment to ministry within the parent Church.

His/her identity as a chaplain is found in the Church's 'setting aside' for ministry within the ADF.

continued next page



ADF Chaplaincy

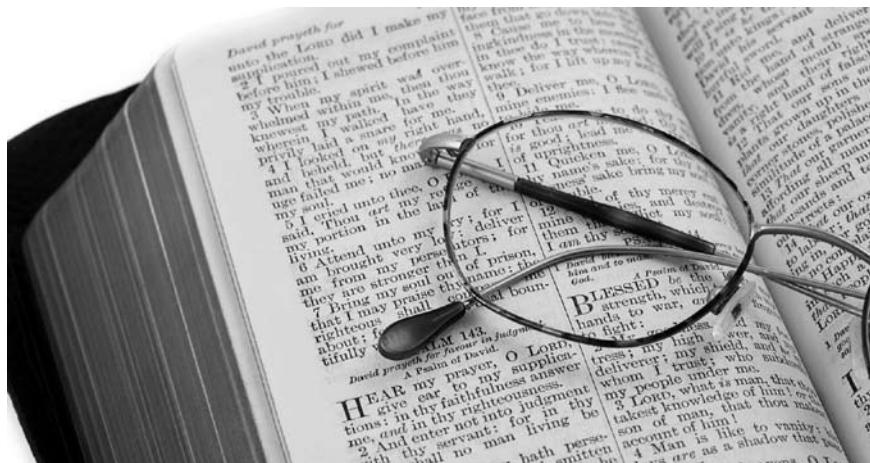
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5. Ecumenical framework

There can be a temptation that the chaplain's denominational belonging be subordinated to a 'general' non denominational ministry which some advance as the unique element of ADF ministry.

Whilst our ecumenical environment in ADF ministry is a real plus, valued and vital witness to the Kingdom and certainly appreciated by most chaplains, it constantly requires working at, effective teamwork, basic respect for one another's traditions, trust and openness. We grow through each other and our world/religious view enhanced.

True ecumenism guarantees deep respect for each other's faith group allegiance including its doctrine, principles of faith and religious practices.



It requires that each chaplain be free to minister denominationally in the first instance and facilitate for the other so that we cooperatively work together expressing our diversity and richness in unity.

Effective team ministry is built upon a wholehearted respect for each other's faith group traditions and cooperatively working together in unity of purpose for the good of our people.

Undue proselytisation is not acceptable.

6. Formation /teaching mission

Chaplains are called to be disciples of Jesus Christ and apostles, pastors, shepherds, evangelises, leaders and teachers within their respective faith groups and across the ADF...

Given the operational tempo of the ADF at present, it is so easy for the chaplain to be so caught up in his/her training for deployed ministry, that other needs cannot be met including family ministry and the training/formation of lay/non ordained members of the ADF in the Faith.

There is a requirement to evangelise and re-evangelise a most promising segment of our church membership which is often pre-evangelised by the natural virtues inherent in our military ethos.

This is a priority which cannot be over looked.

Obstacles to effective ADF Chaplaincy

Chaplains can loose the edge, their religious identity and drift from faith group identification some obstacles to effective chaplaincy include:

- 1 Loss of vocational intent/focus
- 2 A fragmented Chaplaincy – Lacking focus, leadership, structure and unity
2. Hyper active pastoral ministry devoid of prayer and interior spiritual nourishment.
3. Social Worker mentality
4. Careerism
5. Excessive individualism v Team
6. Functionary v Evangelizer
7. Lack of faith group care through RACS
8. Lack of self care

ADF Members with their families are sought to live their Christian vocations as *servants and custodians of people's security and freedom*. When they truly exercise their military vocation, ADF members truly contribute to the *establishment and maintenance of peace*.

The Christian Churches serve military members and their families in the provision of chaplains from the various faith groups so as to enable members to exercise their basic right to the practise of faith.

Through the best possible delivery of pastoral care, chaplains assist members in their Christian growth as military members through the provision of worship and ritual, a ministry of presence and in support of trusting relationships, marriage, family life and career.

The Chaplain has the obligation to remain committed to his/her consecrated vocation, be the devoted pastor in providing the best possible pastoral care for ADF members so that the men and women of the ADF can grow in personal holiness and exercise their vocation calling as peace makers and agents of security and freedom on behalf of our nation.



a word from albatross

by Naomi Spencer



In this meditation I am quoting from Scripture Union Bible reading notes, Closer to God, from 2005. I do hope you can experience a refreshing with it.

'There's a river. It's wide, clear, deep and full of life. Its water is fresh and crystal clear and, unlike most rivers or seas, clear water doesn't mean it is barren. It carries life and it gives life. Life courses through it. This river moves with purpose. It doesn't meander aimlessly, it surges forward with expectancy. If you didn't know any better, you'd think it was joyful, the way it ebbs and flows along. The creatures it sustains certainly are – fish

leaping, otters playing and there are people enjoying this river too. Swimming, plunging, just floating along in its current, gazing up at the deep blue sky above.

But not everyone's enjoying this river. There are some who stand on its banks. They're being left behind. Don't they realise what they're missing? Why won't they join in? Why won't they ease themselves gently into the water? They seem to be afraid. Perhaps they feel unworthy or guilty, thinking they don't deserve this privilege. Their feelings / thoughts hold them back like an invisible ball and chain.

Close your eyes for a moment and imagine you're standing on the river bank. How do you feel about this river of life? The Spirit is calling you to immerse yourself completely, to get drenched. If you're afraid or feel you don't deserve such an honour, visualise Jesus himself inviting you in. He knows all your fears and failings, but still you are welcomed.

Now, imagine how the crystal clear, cool water would feel on your skin as you begin to wade into the river. It's unbelievably refreshing! Feel the weight of your body being lifted from you as the water starts to carry you. Let go of all your concerns, all your thoughts, everything that makes up your life. Give them to Jesus. Just 'float' there for a while, enjoying his presence.'

At MCF we love to encourage everyone in their faith walk. We don't always have the answers, but we trust in God's provision.

Now for a riddle sent by someone

Eighty percent of Kindergarteners solved this riddle, but only 5% of Stanford graduates figured it out! Can you answer the following question?

What is it?

1. The word has seven letters...
2. It preceded God...
3. It is greater than God...
4. It is more evil than the devil...
5. All poor people have it...
6. Wealthy people need it...
7. If you eat it, you will die!

Did you figure it out? Try hard before looking at the answer. Have you got it yet? Give up?

The Answer is: NOTHING!

NOTHING has 7 letters.

NOTHING preceded God.

NOTHING is greater than God.

NOTHING is more evil than the devil.

All poor people have NOTHING.

Wealthy people need NOTHING.

If you eat NOTHING, you will die.

Don't feel bad if you have to admit that you couldn't solve it and had to look at the answer.

Each of us is a vital thread in another person's tapestry; our lives are woven together for a reason.

MCF meets every Tuesday during school term at lunchtime at the Chapel's Overflow Room at HMAS ALBATROSS for fellowship, sharing and prayer.

All welcome. Enquiries to Kath at ext 1535 or Naomi Spencer, MCF Area Representative at naomi@shoal.net.au



MCF PRAYER CALENDAR

September – December 2007



Bless you and thank you for continuing to pray for MCF! We ask that you pray the points on this calendar once a week, on the week commencing the date listed. 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. Our unity with these other organisations is very important. We are all part of Christ's body and each serve a different function to His glory. It is wonderful to be able to bless these organisations with prayer and practical support.

3 September

- › For strong partnerships and anointing on the relationships between chaplains, local churches and military Christians.
- › For those chaplains who are MCF members, that they would be supported and encouraged by members of the MCF.
- › Fighting Words. Pray for Mike Hanlon to have the mind of Christ as he leads this ministry. Pray for many to receive salvation through this ministry.

10 September

- › For Chaplains within the ADF. For opportunities for them to share the gospel, for hearts and minds to be open as they do so. For Christ to speak through them as they meet with and counsel members of the ADF and their families.
- › Retired MCF members. That their gifts and wisdom would be used within the MCF framework.
- › Everyman's Ministry. That every financial and material need be met, for many to be drawn to the centres and for those ministering to have discernment as they show God's love to each person.

17 September

- › For all our military leaders. That they be men and women with servant hearts, respectful of those they lead and mindful of the responsibility that they carry.
- › Families of MCF members. For Godly friendships, a church home & opportunities to use their spiritual gifts.
- › For the AMCF conference in Brisbane 20 – 23 Sep. For Christ to be glorified and many lives and countries impacted as a result of the Conference. That new MCF's would be formed in those countries that don't have one.

24 September

- › Pray that military chapels would be used to their full potential to reach out and be a blessing to our ADF community.
- › For those Chaplains who are MCF members, that they would be supported and encouraged by members of the MCF.

- › Salvation Army. That the Representatives would have many opportunities to witness for Jesus. That God would guide and bless them in their support to the ADF & provide for their material needs, welfare & spiritual growth. That they would stand true to God's word & be filled with His peace.

1 October

- › ACM "Angus" Houston, CDF, his family & his staff. For strength, wisdom in decision making & safety when travelling.
- › MCF chairman Mick Mumford & his family. That they shine out the glory of God as they serve Him.
- › Soldiers for Christ – praise God for these men and women & their heart to serve via Catholic lay ministry. Pray for new doors to open as they complete their studies and for favour as they reach out to those on the bases they are posted to.

8 October

- › The Minister for Defence, Brendan Nelson. For wisdom & discernment as he makes decisions concerning our defence force. For safety as he travels.
- › MCF council members. Give thanks for those that serve military Christians in this way. Pray for wisdom, discernment & clear direction from God as they serve.
- › Chaplains. Pray for these men & women that they find favour with those with whom they work & that many doors would open for the gospel to be presented.

15 October

- › The Chiefs of the Army, Navy & Air Force. That they would have good counsel & support, wisdom & discernment as they lead our defence force.
- › MCF staff worker Jon Belmonte and his wife Leah. For protection as Jon travels, for many opportunities for him to encourage and reach MCF members, for God to continue to shine through Jon and bless his work as he connects military Christians around the country.
- › Everymans. For those in leadership to have courage, strength and God given opportunities to advance this ministry into new areas.



22 October

- › For all of our military leaders. That they be men and women with servant hearts, respectful of those they lead and mindful of the responsibility that they carry.
- › Deployed MCF members. That they keep the faith, hold on to what is true and grow spiritually as a result of their experiences.
- › Salvation Army. For Mel Stephens as she leads this organization. For wisdom, discernment, strength and good health.

29 October

- › Chaplains. For Christians within the ADF to provide friendship, fellowship and encouragement to our Chaplains as they serve our military.
- › Leaders of MCF groups. That they would be empowered by God in the role they fulfil. That they & their group would be a powerful witness to others around them.
- › Fighting Words. For many to come to Jesus as a result of this ministry.

5 November

- › Pray for protection of our Navy personnel. Pray for opportunities for Christians on bases and ships to be salt and light to those around them.
- › MCF AGM (14 Nov). Pray for God's will to be done in this organization and for those God has called to be elected into the various council positions. For the AGM to glorify God.
- › Navigators. Pray for the cadets being discipled at ADFA (the future leaders of our military) that they would grow into all that God has for them.

12 November

- › Defence Community Organization (DCO) Give thanks for the provision of DCO to our military families. Pray for those who work in DCO that they will have the strength & understanding & capacity to help all who come to them.
- › FCMM (Forum of Christian Military Ministries) meeting (14/15 Nov). For a spirit of unity & encouragement amongst the organisations that meet to share. For a great time of fellowship amongst these Christians.

- › ACCTS (Association of Christian Conferences, Training & Service). For Russell and Helen Bielenberg as they serve in this ministry. For strength, health and wisdom as they reach out to others.

19 November

- › Pray for many lives to be touched & changed through the "Alpha for the Forces" programme being run on various bases. Thank God for this outreach tool. Pray for God's word to go forth unhindered, to accomplish that for which it was sent & for it not to return void.
- › Families of those MCF members who are deployed. For continued strength, protection & spiritual growth. For the body of Christ to be a practical encouragement to those in this situation.
- › Solid Rock Ministries. That the groups in Canberra, Holsworthy and Townsville would be given many opportunities to reach out to military wives with the unfailing love of Jesus.

26 November

- › Pray for protection for our Air Force personnel. Pray for Christians to be shining lights on RAAF bases.
- › MCF prayer warriors. Pray for their spiritual and physical protection. Give thanks for the increasing number of prayer warriors. Pray for more!
- › Reserve Chaplains. Give thanks for these men & women who are willing to serve in this way. Pray that they would feel part of the military Christian network, that they would receive the friendship & fellowship that is helpful for them & that God would continue to empower them as they serve Him.

3 December

- › Pray for protection for our Army personnel. Pray for Christians on bases to be good witnesses.
- › For more MCF workers. Pray for an increase in the number of MCF groups that meet, for more leaders & for more "willing hands".
- › Soldiers for Christ. Pray for Chaplain Gary Stone as he trains & equips these men & women to "know Christ better and make him known".

10 December

- › Pray for all our training institutions. That there would be unity amongst the Christian organisations represented, that God would be glorified & that many would turn to Christ.
- › Chaplains who are MCF members. That they be encouraged & blessed as a result of their involvement with MCF.
- › Salvation Army. "Grant many opportunities for these representatives to witness for Jesus. Guide & bless them in their support to the ADF & provide for their material needs, welfare & spiritual growth. May they stand firm in the truth of your word, keep their eyes on Jesus & be filled with His peace."

17 December

- › Deployed military personnel. As they face Christmas away from family pray for their protection & that the truth concerning Christmas would be revealed to them. Pray that they would feel appreciated for the sacrifices that they make.
- › Retired MCF members. That they would feel valued & their wisdom & experience would be passed on to the next generation.
- › Navigators. For National Director Mike Johnson, for strength, wisdom and good health as he leads.

24 December

- › Pray for a renewal of the use of military chapels. For their full potential to be met, for new ministry opportunities & for strategically placed men & women to implement them.
- › Families of MCF members – particularly those who are currently posting to new locations. Pray that they quickly establish Godly friendships, a church home and are given opportunities to use their spiritual gifts.
- › Solid Rock Ministries. That God would bless this ministry in the coming year with opportunities to reach military wives in Bases where currently there are no groups meeting.



by Steve Hislop

ALPHA, a 15 session practical introduction to the Christian faith designed primarily for nonchurchgoers and new Christians, has again, been run at Russell Offices. The ALPHA Express course, specifically adapted for Service environments where time constraints prevent a full 2-3 hour session each week, was conducted during the lunch hour once each week from late May.

A "small band of merry men and women" participated and the discussions were lively and, sometimes, deep and often personal. Participants were comforted in the assurance that "what is said in the room, remains in the room".

The "weekend" session at week 6 was conducted on Saturday 7 July at the RMC Duntroon chapel with all personnel in attendance - a great outcome. Once again discussions were lively and the different opinions of each participant was listened to with understanding and compassion.

This course benefited from the presence of Miss Ngaira Smith from Calvary Hospital who was a regular attendee at Holy Trinity Church, Brompton UK under the tutelage of the Reverend Nicky Gumbell. Her support and guidance was invaluable to all participants and she has agreed to conduct the next course at Russell Offices commencing in late August.

ALPHA provides an environment where participants can express their feelings, beliefs and concerns without reproach. It is important, however, that conflicts of faith or religiosity are not allowed to dominate; the focus should always be on Jesus Christ and his Word.

Participants have expressed their gratitude that ALPHA has been made available to them. Nearly all were looking for some avenue to investigate their current faith and commitments and ALPHA has given them that.

On a national front:

- Alpha National have provided training to 15 RAAF chaplains.
- A further Alpha training day occurred in Holswothy during late July 2007.

Please pray for Alpha and any other courses that seek to make known the relevance of the Christian faith to our people and their families.

staff worker sitrep

by Jon Belmonte

Dear Brothers and Sisters.

The last few months have been a challenge. But with prayer, faith and total reliance on God's provision, every thing has proved to be better than I could have been imagined.

I was able in early May to visit the following bases.

- Singleton
- Tamworth
- Oakey
- Bulimba
- Amberley
- Enoggera
- Canungra
- Evans Head

I was also able to meet our many MCF members, Chaplains and their respective Commanding Officers. There a great things happening out there; and it is fantastic to see how our Lord is working. I feel truly privileged just to be a witness to His mighty works.

Oakey, Enoggera and Amberley are presently in the revival stages of MCF groups, and we have received the full support of the Commanders in those locations. We seek your diligent prayers in support of those who are standing up in the cause of Christ at the various bases.

We have also reached that time of the year, Tax time.

"Render to Caesar; that which is Caesar's."

Your donations to MCF will greatly assist in the promotion of Christ's Kingdom within the ADF. Your donation will also assist with your deduction to the Tax Department. This theoretically means that you get your money back and the taxation department funds MCF. That is a blessing for all of us.

Western Australian MCF groups are now operating at RAAF Pearce, Irwin Barracks, Swanbourne Barracks, HMAS Stirling and we are just in the planning process for another MCF group in WA.

Let us not forget Tasmania either, I have had some recent contact with a member who is preparing to start MCF meetings in Hobart.

We are still also in great need of assistance, prayer and support for the upcoming AMCF

Conference to be held in Brisbane between the 20-23 September 2007. This blessed gathering will have Christian representatives from most of our Pacific and Asian neighbours. See: conference.mcf-australia.org.au

Do you have a Priest, Minister or Pastor who would be interested in ministry to our Defence Force Reserves? Encourage and support them to make contact with the respective Principal Chaplain for either the Navy, Army or Air Force.

I am sorry for the rather short and brief SITREP for this edition; however I would strongly urge you all; to please read my testimony in this edition in relation to the last few weeks.

Please Pray for:

- The new Anglican Bishop to the Defence Force, Bishop Len Eacott.
- The Defence Force members assisting in World Youth Day, with the Catholic Diocese of the Australian Defence Force
- Families and loved ones of those deployed
- Those who your work with, and your neighbours

Reading: Psalm 121

In Christ's service

Jon Belmonte

National Staff Worker



God's grace

by Jon Belmonte

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ.

God is good! I personally have been extremely and bountifully blessed by a magnificent and glorious God, especially in the last few weeks.

My planned staff worker visit to Queensland on the 12th of May, hit a snag when I attended my GP as part of a regular check up on the 10th. I had complained about a painful lump over my right eye, and on the same day was immediately referred to a neurosurgeon. So such my 30 minute consultation ended up becoming several hours in Canberra Hospital for tests and medical imagery. Which revealed that I required surgery for the removal of a fluid type cyst within the sinuses. This was a complication that had developed over the years from frontal skull plates relating to an incident back in 1995. The cyst was threatening to burst into the brain and surrounding cavity.

Surgery was scheduled for 14 days time, on the 24th of May and the scenario envisaged by the medical professionals was not overly optimistic. I was going to have a section of my skull removed, then the cyst excised and a piece from my hip used as a bone graft to replace where the cyst had been.

My wife and I discussed the situation and I explained to the surgeon that I would cancel the Queensland visit. After an explanation to the surgeon of the who, what and where that is MCF, I was medically cleared to go on light duties. We immediately contacted our fellow MCF members and informed them of what had developed. A wonderful group of MCF prayer warriors, Christian supporters and Church congregation committed myself and family to avid prayer.

My simple prayer to God was "I am in your hands and whatever, wherever and whenever you direct Lord, I shall go, and we (family) are in your hands"

We spent Thursday and Friday discussing and praying about the Queensland visit.

We received the answer and I headed to QLD on Saturday. Please read the Staff Worker SITREP in this edition.

On Monday, just after morning prayers and while on my way to visit CHAP Snape of Oakey, I received news that my surgery had been rescheduled for the 31st May.

I returned to Canberra a week later on the 14th May. The support and wishes from members of MCF and those whom I know with the ADO

was amazing. My non Christian friends asked if there was anything they could do, I would always advise them to pray. They would ask if I was worried or nervous and I would honestly tell them, 'No, I am in my Master's hands'.

On the Thursday 31 May (my D-Day), my wife and I arrived at the hospital at 0600hrs; I went through all the usual work up and was calm about the situation. This is when I met a young intern who had recently become a Naval Reserve Medical Officer. We had a great conversation and he showed interest in learning more about MCF.

When I returned to the waiting room dressed in a blue gown and blue scrubs I knew wife was now feeling a little uneasy. As we prayed, our Minister arrived and helped to place her at ease. I was then informed by staff that I was on a roster system for surgeons and staff and that after the operation I would awake in the Intensive Care Unit and after 36 hours move to the Neuro ward for six days.

This is when the head of nursing staff stated 'you must know someone important in the hospital'.

Why? we enquired, and were informed that my staff schedule for surgery was:

- The Head of the Neurosurgery Department
- The Head of the Anaesthetics Department
- The Head of Ear Nose ad Throat
- A visiting Fellow of Surgery and the Plastics Team.

We replied that it was due to prayer, and received a quizzical look, before she quickly departed.

My wife and Minister left and within a few minutes I was wheeled away to theatre.

I can remember that the last thing I said as I shuffled onto the theatre table was "Lord I am in your hands".

When awoke later that evening and was feeling sedated and had no pain, staff informed me that I was not in the ICU, but had been brought to the Neuro ward.

On Friday morning 1st June, I was visited by the surgical team and informed that the surgery ran extremely smoothly and was relatively uncomplicated. That explained that they had removed the frontal portion of my skull, removed the cyst, obliterated the sinus membranes and put me all back together with some titanium hardware. I also did not have a piece removed from my hip.

When was asked about my pain, I replied "I am sore, but I'm not in pain, and I am fairly comfortable". Staff removed my pain medication



administering machine and surgical drain that afternoon.

Saturday the 2nd, saw me doing 15 minute walks around the floor, and walking up and down a flight of stairs with the Physios.

Sunday, before breakfast I had my IV drip removed and was allowed to go by myself to the hospital chapel. Upon my return to the ward I was informed that I was being discharged on Monday. Staff commented about how rapidly I was recovering from my surgery. So on Monday afternoon I returned home, and spent the month on convalescent leave, Though I did sneak into the MCF office and did some emails and mail for three hours on the 19th of June and was medically cleared for full duties on the Friday the 29th June.

During the last few weeks God has answered prayer, prepared the way, guided surgeons, watched over and protected my family and me, granted me a pain free and miraculous recovery and allowed me to witness to hospital staff and patients, standing as a testimony to His unwarranted Grace and blessings.

Here is a documented and factual outline of God's unceasing care and love for His creation.

"Lord God, whatever you ask, I will follow, for I am in Your hands"

In Prayer, read Thessalonians 3:1-5

May God bless each and every one of you.





ANMM P00220

the perimeter

by Jon Belmonte

The Perimeter, in the Infantry, is a circle of men. It is half a section, platoon or company. One half is on guard, staying vigilant, watching for the enemy, while the other half rests, sleeps and carries on with life as it is. They are more than just men; they are a brotherhood in uniform.

They share their plans, dreams and hopes with each other. In hard times, they share their sadness, fears and pain. They face the enemy together, some like brothers, others like fathers and sons, and always as true friends. They find a commonality in each other that binds them to one another in a bond that lasts a lifetime.

As time passes, they will leave the service and each other. They will travel many different paths of life, some to prosper well and others not so well. Somewhere in life's travels, some of these men find themselves lost in the world, confused, dazed, scared, unhappy and searching for something; something they are not even sure exists. They are not soldiers anymore; they are called Veterans, Old Diggers, Mates, Buddies.

Somehow, in their search, they once again find others like themselves. They find brothers of the past, brothers from the Perimeter. We are that Perimeter, we are seen as the circle of safety in their searching times. We need to stand tall and defend them, We need to tell them of the saving grace which is available through Christ. Christ is the one who laid His own life down, so that all those who accept Him may have eternal life. Share your faith and support them in prayer.

MCF date claimers

- › **AMCF Conference** 20-23 September 2007
- › **Forum of Christian Military Ministries** 12-14 November 2007
- › **MCF AGM** 14 November 2007

AMCF Conference

Don't miss this opportunity to join with Australians and other nations from the Pacific, USA and UK in the experience of this conference.

Learn of the challenges facing us all and become partners with them. The nations with attendance confirmed are Australia, East Timor, Korea, Micronesia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, UK, USA, and Vanuatu. There is still space if you would like to come. Full details and registration form are available from [conferences.mcf-australia.org.au](#) Serving personnel should contact Russell Bielenberg on rhibelen@actewagi.net.au for a letter from the MCF chairman seeking approval to attend on duty.

Can't attend for service reasons? You can contribute to the attendance of Pacific representatives by making a tax-deductible donation to the MCF marked "for AMCF conference".

The conference begins with registration at 3.00pm on Thursday 20 September and concludes after lunch on Sunday 23 September.

Please pray for all visas, passports, service approval, air fares and support for the Pacific nations to be provided well before the conference. Pray, too for countries we still need to hear from, which do not have an MCF: Cook Islands, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Palau, Samoa, Solomon Islands, and Tuvalu.

Canberra Christians in Defence BBQ

On 2 May 07, the MCF Canberra Area Representative, Mr Peter McKay organised a BBQ for MCF members and their friends. Over 50 people attended the BBQ which was held at Russell Offices. The BBQ was a great way for defence personnel in Canberra to meet in a relaxed environment.



The MCF Staff Worker, Jon Belmonte (pictured in the photo) and his wife Leah provided a great sausage sizzle with salad and drinks. Peter McKay welcomed MCF members and their guests to the BBQ and LTCOL Van Heel, the vice Chairman of MCF-A provided some information on MCF-A and weekly activities in the Canberra region. LTCOL Van Heel mentioned the Defence Christians Dinner scheduled for Fri 31 Aug 07 will be another opportunity for Christians in Defence and their friends to meet together.

LTGEN Hurley (CCDE) and RADM Ruting (MCF Patron) were guests at the BBQ.



area contacts



in the next edition of Crossfire:

- › Support to Christians in the ADF
- › Canberra Christians Dinner
- › AMCF SW Pacific Regional Conference



Feeling tired – running out of fuel?



*I will run and not grow weary . . .
I will rise up on eagles wings.*

Check out the Bible! – Isaiah 40 Verse 31