

CROSSFIRE

THE MAGAZINE OF THE MILITARY CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP OF AUSTRALIA † NUMBER 28 † MARCH 2017



Hope | Assignment | PTSD and Moral Injury



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From the editor...

Mr David Coleman
(david.coleman1@defence.gov.au)



Please send me a short story of your experiences as a Christian in the military and highlight what God has done for you!

Articles for Crossfire should be no more than 500 words long and focus on military Christian issues and experiences. Stories from operational service are especially encouraged.

Submissions should be in electronic format 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.

Cover image by: CPL David Said.

Australian Army soldiers fire a mortar on the 'enemy' during Exercise Chong Ju at Puckapunyal training area.

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Chairman's Report

LTCOL Jamie van Heel



"... but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint." Isaiah 40:31 (NIV)

I'd like to welcome LTCOL David Horton and Mr David Coleman who joined the MCF Council and thank LTCOL Scott Watkins and Mr Kenny Delamore for their service to the Council in 2016.

Mr Michael Nott our National Administrator has been employed in the role now for two years. He is adding value with his administration and ministry skill sets.

MCF is hosting the National Day of Prayer for Defence on 01 Apr 17. This is a spiritually significant event for Australian Defence Organisation. The day is focussing on praying for the safety of deployed service men and women, their families, and those who have recently returned from operations. Additionally, prayer is being offered for ADF culture, the implementation of the Pathways to Change strategy, Chaplains, and Defence senior leaders. Thank you to those who are facilitating people in your region to pray for specifically for the Defence issues. Last year there were 29 groups who met across Australia and abroad to pray for Defence. Can you meet with others in your region this year to uphold the ADF in your prayers? If so, please advise the MCF Office mcf.office@defence.gov.au.

The MCF Seminar titled 'Hope' was conducted on Saturday 21 May 16 at RAAF Base Williamtown. It was exciting to hold the first MCF National Seminar outside of Canberra. I'd like to thank Sam Hays for his leadership in coordinating the seminar and for inviting the local pastors to a dinner on the fri evening to raise the profile of ADF Christian ministry in Williamtown. Many of our Service men and women are suffering Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) from the physical, mental and spiritual wounds that have received on operations or during their training.

As Christians we have our hope in Jesus. We should want to tell others about the hope we have in Jesus and how he can assist them in their recovery process. At the seminar, the guest speakers included: BRIG Dan Fortune (Patron of MCF), CHAP Rob Sutherland, Mr Dave Hodgson Ex Rhodesian Special Forces and Entrepreneur, SQNLDR Paul Simmons F/A-18 Fighter Pilot and Instructor and CPL Andrew Summers and his wife Tina who are PTSD Advocates. Articles from their presentations are included in this Crossfire magazine.

On Fri evening 19 May 17 we will be profiling ADF Chaplaincy and Christian Military Ministries to Bible College students and interested personnel at the Sydney Missionary and Bible College (SMBC). This will be a great evening which I would encourage you to attend and share the ADF mission field with the next generation.

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. The MCF 'Forgiven' seminar at the (SMBC) will be held on Sat 20 May 17. All of us have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. The enemy wants Christians to dwell on their sin and make them feel trapped and unrighteous for Christian service. God's plan through Jesus Christ is for us to turn to him and be forgiven so we can live victorious lives through Christ. The seminar speakers include BRIG Dan Fortune, (Patron of MCF), Mr Berni Dymet (ex Army officer and CEO of Christianity works) and Mr Mathew Kratiuk (former bikie with an amazing testimony). The speakers will share how their lives have been transformed through being forgiven by God's grace and how God can use you in his service.

It was great to hear AVM Clements, then Commandant ADFA share about his Christian faith at the 2016 Defence Christians Dinner. At the dinner a new Covenant was signed between the leaders of the Christian military ministries. The next Defence Christians dinner is scheduled for Friday 15 Aug 17 in Canberra. We are privileged to have Andrew Hastie MP, member for Canning and previous Special Forces officer as our guest speaker.

MCF have been the recipients of three years funding to grow the ministry. As part of this growth to show that MCF is worth investing in, we are trying to grow our membership and finances by 10% per year. Over the next few months we will be advertising MCF in the Service Newspapers and Australian Christian Radio. We have updated our website to make it more contemporary and user friendly. As part of our strategic plan we are aiming to have 100 of our membership who commit to praying for, promoting and resourcing MCF. If you would like to be an MCF Centurion with the other 46 MCF members who have already committed too, please visit our website www.mcf-a.org.au and hit the donate button. I pray that you have a rewarding and Christ centred 2017.



Reflections on the Defence Christians' Dinner 2016

SQNLDR John Herrmann



The annual Defence Christians' Dinner was held at the Southern Cross Club in Canberra on 5th August 2016. This night of fellowship, lovely food, comradery and inspiration was enjoyed by current and ex-serving members, family and friends and those involved in Christian ministry in Defence. Our thank you to all involved in organising the dinner.

So what did I learn? What deposit have I in my heart after being together for this occasion? As I reflect on the night, I have a sense of encouragement to pursue my walk in Christ as the person God made me and to honour God in my vocation as a serving ADF member. I am encouraged in our collective prayer for God watching over our ADF mission, asking His protection over those on Operations and to be with loved ones at home.

Our guest speaker, AIRCDRE Alan Clements, Commandant ADFA speaking on Resilience in Leadership made reference to having a view for what God thinks of us, which as Christians will help draw us to God for inner strength. I am reminded from scripture about how God can help us and indeed how He already knows so much about us,

*.... All the days ordained for me were written in
your book before one of them came into being.
Psalm 139:16b NIV.*

Many people from the regions are unable to travel to Canberra for these dinner occasions. Do you have a desire to encourage, see unity and bring opportunities to connect a wide range of people in a social setting with an interest with Defence Christians? If so, perhaps why not consider working with your local Defence Christians' network to organise a dinner for your area also? I leave you with some further thoughts,

Leadership: *ADF leaders develop individual, team and unit capabilities – including individual and team resilience and ability to handle operational stress.*

*Chapter 3, ADDP 00.6 Leadership in the ADF,
22 Nov 2007.*

Comradery *is the spirit of friendship and community in a group, like the comradery of soldiers at war who keep each other upbeat despite the difficulty of their circumstances. Who is a comrade? A close friend or a fellow soldier — in other words, someone who comes to mind when you say, "We're in this together."*
<https://www.vocabulary.com/dictionary/comradery>



Resilient Leadership

AVM Al Clements



Some might think, "Why does a fighter pilot need God?" When someone has reached, what is seen by many as, among the very highest achievements in our world, why would you need to have a hope and faith in God? This question is not just about being a pilot; it's about being any successful person - why do you need God? The Bible talks about how the rich can't see their need for God, but the poor do. When people looked at me before I became a Christian, they looked at me as someone who had a wife and two daughters, a fighter pilot, Commanding Officer (CO) of a successful squadron; and they may have thought "Wow he's successful". But inside I could see all my failures and all those things that I had done wrong. Here inside I was this mess of a man and part of my transition into being Christian was that I learnt to accept this mess of a person. Just because there's this success suit sitting on the outside of somebody it doesn't reflect the inside. To me in Christianity, in leadership, in resilience is this strength that comes internal to you. It's not about what you do or the job you have. It's about the type of person you are. Everybody needs that spiritual link which, in my view, is that which is found in Christ.

I was deployed in 2002 and worked for somebody from whom I would say I learnt more about leadership than I've learnt from anybody else; but it wasn't because I felt they were necessarily

good at it. I also learnt a real lot about myself at that point: that I had placed a lot of my self worth on what I did and what people thought about me. I had that stripped away from me by this person at the time. That had a major impact on this seemingly strong fighter pilot capable person to have all that self worth stripped away. I really had attached my self worth to my performance and my job. It sounds dumb, but a lot of men in particular do that. It's about being the alpha male, about being this person that's better than everybody else; capable, respected, looked up to. I had that taken away from me. The worst bit about it was, in addition to it having knocked me significantly and ending up in depression, needing help (not that I knew at the time); my marriage and relationship with my kids were being detrimentally affected, all because of the way that I'd been treated. I didn't feel valued, useful, or that anybody wanted me as part of the organisation. To feel that way I think impacts on your resilience and knocks you to your core; because back then, I didn't have the view of myself that I was unique, that I was created in God's image, and that it really didn't matter what that person thought of me - particularly when it wasn't true! So it took a while for me to get past that. That, I think, has shaped the way that I try to treat other people and try to be a leader. It's actually trying to build them, to try and make them feel valued and feel wanted.

Leadership is intensely personal. You cannot lead by:

1. not being yourself
2. not making it a personal thing.

To lead others you have to be able to lead yourself. To lead yourself you need to know yourself and the biggest part of that is accepting yourself. I know God created me unique (thank goodness - my wife says you don't need any more of me around) with strengths, weaknesses, failures, and successes. All these things are part of me and I need to learn to accept them, God created me and accepts me - so why can't I?

Once I'd come to accept myself it made it easier to lead myself. It makes it easier to think "that's okay to not be successful in that area" or "that's okay to have someone who's better than you in a particular way." And once you learn to accept yourself, then you can accept others. You can look at others in a different light and actually lead them in a different way. Leadership is intensely personal but it's personal about how you serve others. That's the biggest thing for me about leadership: you have to know yourself, you have to accept yourself. If you can't accept yourself then there's no way you can really lead others positively.



I've used the word CHRIST as an acronym to think about leadership in a Christ-like manner:

- Courage
- Honour
- Respect
- Integrity
- Service
- Teachability

If I can behave in a way that embodies these, then that helps me in a practical way every day to be a good leader. One of the things I try to do is keep my emotion out of anything that occurs. That doesn't mean I don't get upset or angry, but I try to remove that - get myself back in a place where I'm with God in a way to make decisions. In terms of day-in-day-out decisions, I know I don't always get it right; but I desire to embody each of those values in how I treat people, how I make decisions, and how I'm involved in anything that occurs within the Academy, whether it's a decision on policy or decision on what's going to happen to somebody.

Now just because you are a Christian doesn't make you soft. You can be firm, but you've got to be fair and stick to those values. Each time I measure my decisions against those values: does what I am doing or what I am saying relate to those values?

My wife is much better at keeping me focused. One of the things she asks me is "Are you doing it in your own strength?" When you are making a mistake or trying to deal with it, "Where are you going for help now?" Going to God is the most important thing at such times. Think about "How did I get there? Why didn't I invite God to be involved earlier? Why aren't I going to God now for recovering the situation?"

It is important to bring our daily circumstances to God - openly on our knees and turning to him, metaphorically or physically, saying "I'm sorry, this is where I am. I don't know how to get out of here. Please help." If we do that and we're really truthful with

it, not just paying lip service, Christ will send his Holy Spirit to help with the problem. It might not be taken away! It may still be there, but the fact that the Holy Spirit will make good out of everything offers the only way to deal with these sorts of things; certainly in a spiritual and strength sense.

It's interesting that much of the current research in militaries around the world is now talking about spiritual fitness. Everyone needs spiritual fitness to be able to do their job. Like any fitness, you have to train; and I'm the worst offender. I always turn up when I've messed up, not when things are going well. Spiritual fitness is about maintaining that relationship with God all the time - when things are going well and when things are going bad. You need to maintain that relationship all the time.

It's okay to make mistakes. It's about how you then recover. It's about how open and transparent you are about the mistake. There are many decisions I've made as a leader, as a CO, that weren't necessarily based on the six principles from the CHRIST acronym. Being able to stand up in front of my people and say, "I made that decision and that was wrong for these reasons", and accept responsibility for that, helps you recover and get going a lot quicker. The challenge is when it is something very obvious. Then you start to wonder what other people are thinking about that decision I've made. It's really tough for a leader who has made a bad decision. Being open and transparent; but leaning on, and heading back to the Vine all the time is really important.

I haven't known up to now what God has planned, so I'm not sure I can predict what He has for me in the future. What I can say is since really coming to faith and relaxing in who I am, my career has gone far further than I could ever have imagined. So all I could ask for prayer for my future is that I maintain that faith in God, relax in who I am; and if it goes further as a career, that's great. If it doesn't, then that's okay as well as I'm sure God will order my steps. He brings things into the places they need to be. In the end, if it's Helene and me, and my girls (and we're living next to an airfield), I'll be pretty happy.



MCF Hope Seminar 2016

BRIG Dan Fortune, DSC and Bar



This seminar was an important opportunity to talk on the theme of hope. Our Christian based faith can support those who have had challenges from their operational service in the area of mental health. I think the issue of moral injury and spiritual wellness is broadening now and being more formally recognised by the mental health and medical fraternity as an important element of total soldier fitness and total wellness and the seminar and the theme of hope provides an important uplifting message.

Isaiah 40:31 (NIV)

For 'those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.'

Jeremiah 29:11 (NIV)

'For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the LORD, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.'

In my personal experience on operations, and having had some challenges on return from significant operational services, my faith has been a foundation for dealing with those challenges and for reflecting on service: Dents in the Soul is a video that some of you will be familiar with, those sorts of themes of faith and how you can work through those challenges based on that foundation I found invaluable.

When you are on operational service you tend to be confronted with your own mortality, in putting people in harms way, or in making decisions to take life or sparing life, can be very confronting, particularly upon reflection and those sorts of themes as well as others will be an important part of

the conversation I hope we have. Going forward I'm convinced it's an important area of discussion defence Christians can play in the broader narrative around mental health.

As I've consistently outlined I don't think there's a higher area of priority in the ADF for operational mental wellness. It's a significant area of resource being provided by Defence leadership and it's increasingly recognised that spiritual wellness is an important and comprehensive part of mental wellness. In my day job as the Director General of Military Information I'm involved in work with the joint health command in developing communication strategies for the revised mental health and wellness plan and it is increasing recognised that the 'spiritual dimension' is part of the broader comprehensive approach in that discussion.

We as Defence Christians have a legitimate and important voice in that discussion.

It is certainly an area that I intend to continue on working in advocacy and debate and I'd welcome and appreciate your ideas and support on how we can continue to do that well.

As I conclude I commend the rest of the articles to you.

I thank all the speakers for the seminar who have allowed their presentations to be published in article form.

I thank Corporal Andrew and Tina Summers for their commitment to this seminar and for the advocacy of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and the perspective of spouses is an important part of the discussion. We also have great mentors in Chaplain Rob Sutherland and Chaplain Robyn Kidd and their particular insights and perspectives. Rob I know from our service together on operations in particular his guidance and mentorship during my own deployment as a CO in Afghanistan in 2008 was valuable. A highly respected chaplain with lots of experience of operational service in special forces. I'd also like to thank Squadron Leader Paul Simmons and Dave Hodgson for their contributions having people with your backgrounds, insights and experiences, will be valuable and will certainly generate some challenging discussions on a range of issues around how our Christian faith supports our journey through mental wellness after operational service.

Though I was unable to be there at the seminar in person I am glad I was able to share a few thoughts via video by way of introduction. I'd like to thank Sam Hays and his team and LTCOL Jamie Van Heel as the chairman for all their preparations and hard work in bringing together the 2016 MCF Seminar on Hope.



Defence Family Needs and Church Responses

Chaplain Mark Willis



I am currently the Command Chaplain at Joint Health Command, working in the Directorate of Mental Health Psychology & Rehabilitation, ensuring, amongst other things, that spirituality is included in the ADF Mental health and Well-Being Strategy.

The ADF and in particular the Air Force is currently involved in a number of operations. We have quite a number of assets deployed at any one time; from C17s, C130s, KC30 refuellers, P3s, the Hornets and Wedgetail – great aircraft doing a great job. But for every aircraft out there and for every pilot in the seat there are many, many ground support members who keep them in the air. And behind both the pilots and support members are their wonderful families and loved ones.

We are going to consider some factors that influence a military families well-being and then some things those in local area churches, might like to consider in order to help these families live life and live it to the full.

A quick snapshot of some of the issues people face:

When someone gets sick (physical, mental) their medical categorisation is adjusted or downgraded as we call it. So if you break a leg, you need time to heal, you cannot deploy, you could receive a MEDCAT downgrade. When better, you receive an upgrade. However, if your injury/illness is such that it will not heal and there is no prognosis of recovery to deployment standards then you go before a Central Medical Employment Classification Review Board (CMECRB) in order for a decision to be made if you can continue service in some capacity. It can take quite a while. And many do not get a positive outcome at the end.

A number of veterans have to face some nasty business where they are fighting, as do the analysts who are removed from direct conflict yet who watch, report and control situations. I can certainly predict that a number of them will return with a moral injury, if not PTSD.

Another common factor with Defence members and their families is the posting cycle. They may only be in a location for around two years.

MWD(U) (Member With Dependents Unaccompanied) – married separated ... and if any turn up at church and say they're married separated, don't panic, it just means when their husband/wife is posted, the family has chosen to stay in their current location while the military member moves alone to the new posting. Families may choose this for various reasons – family stability, access to medical services, maintaining the spouses job and so forth.

That brings me to a term we know as 'Emotional Arrival'. It can take various family members different times to emotionally arrive in a new location, to start to settle in.

- Member – two to four weeks (same uniform, job, often with known workmates)
- Our children – six weeks to three months (settle into school, find new friends, join a new sporting team)
- Our partners (generally wives) – three to six months (find a new job, doctor, hairdresser, ladies Bible study group, etc)

So what can you do? What can those in local churches in the area do to help?

Well it's pretty simple really ... you can, and should pray for them, yes, pray for them. And that's where I finish ... not really. I could, because prayer is actually the key to seeking God's



guidance in all that you could do for the military members in your area.

I'm going to use a mnemonic, and it is **PRAYER**.

P Prepare

- How many military members in your congregation? your street? the suburb around your chapel?
- Understand the posting cycle and what that might mean. Every 2/3 yrs a posting might happen.
 - (a) It's hard
 - (b) Neighbours often don't put effort in
 - (c) Churches are wary, reluctant to use – they're just blow-ins
 - (d) Six months from out-posting, locals switch off - subconsciously
 - (e) Why put effort into knowing, involving, training, etc if only here for 2/3 years.
 - (f) Try and get a feel for the deployment cycle in your area, (not all are the same for instance the Wedgetail folk can be sent on multiple short deployments).
- Defence families are usually reasonably close-knit (maybe look at keeping family units together in Sunday school).
- Airwomen/men, soldiers, sailors vs. Officers

R Reach Out

- Advertise your presence at the base, DCO welcome days, local rag, letter box drops ...
- Organise a welcome to area BBQ or Dinner ... pack of goodies (not Oprah style, but take good hints from the locals).
- Maybe the local ministers can get together for a fun day.
- Ask the local Chaplains to come and speak (endorsed by sending churches).
- Organise a special focus on Defence Sunday (Sunday before Nov 11)

A Action

'Dear children, let's not merely say that we love each other; let us show the truth by our actions.' 1 Jn 3:18 (NLT).

- Welcome the stranger
- Introduce them to others – similar family/interests
- Help them find a home group
- Establish a 'grand parent' program
- Run a military wives Bible study group
- Men's adventure activity

- Pop around and mow the lawn
- Take a meal over
- Respite care by taking children to footy, skating, etc – and here's the hint, don't ask if they would like you to do something for them – most are very resilient, been through this before and can cope. Just turn up with that casserole, or big bag of fish'n'chips, or the lawn mower.
- Do note that when on deployment the Government does pay well, so when considering doing things for military families which may cost, remember it's not about money, it's about love.

Y (Give of) Yourself

- Your genuine love and care will shine through
- Take on a new friendship, even though you know it is only for a short while
- Defence families are often separated from family of origin and childhood friends – we just love it when we can make friends in a new location.

E Encourage

- Use Defence Sunday to identify, recognise, and pray for Defence families
- From time to time send out an encouraging email – especially if their partner is deployed.
- Kind word

R Resources

- Google – Military Wives Bible Study
- Buy – The Five Love Languages for Military Personnel
- Use the local Chaplains for ideas
- When a family is leaving the area, contact a church in the receiving area vouching for them.
- Appoint a Deacon/Elder/??? As the 'Deacon for Military Affairs' or as we'd call it, a DMA.

There it is: **PRAYER**

Prepare

Reach out

Action

Yourself

Encourage

Resources



Though I Walk Through the Valley...

CPL Andrew Summers

My name is Corporal Andrew Summers of the Royal Australian Air Force. I'm currently posted with my young family to RAAF Base Wagga Wagga in NSW. I began my military career in the Royal Australian Army as an infantry soldier. After transferring to the RAAF, I deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan in 2006 and 2008. Returning home, I suffered with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) for eight years.

The PTSD first began affecting me after my first tour of duty. I lost a Canadian friend within the last week of my tour. As a bagpiper, I volunteered to pipe his remains at a Ramp Ceremony to send him home to his family. It was the first of what was to be many over the two tours.

Initially, I covered up the nightmares and the grief. I used alcohol as a sleeping aid to try and avoid the nightmares that came every night. Over time my condition worsened until one night I attempted suicide. Tina, my wife, was out with family, my boys were in bed and I had the booze and the pills ready to go. I looked up and saw my wedding photo and photos of my two little boys and I made a bargain with God. I told Him, "If you are real like my wife says you are, you need to stop me. If you do, I promise you I will serve you for the rest of my life. I give you 24 hours." I figured I could always try again the next night.

Tina had no idea what I was planning. The next day she knew I was a mess, but still felt like she had to be at church for some reason. After the service, she met someone new and discovered he was a psychologist in the Army, Captain Alexander Thornton, stopping in on his way through to his next posting. She asked to speak with him about me and she gave him my work details so I could get the help I needed. Years later we found out that the psychologist normally travelled inland opposed to the coast road that our town was on and that he didn't know why he felt to go that particular route. He was in the exact place that God wanted him to be in order to intervene in my life and save it. The Captain connected me with Jo, a psychologist at Singleton Army Barracks.

My counselor Jo is a person my family and I trust. She gave me the tools that I needed to function in society. She helped me talk through my feelings and I never felt like she judged me or thought less of me. Jo helped me to communicate with Tina how I was feeling, what I was thinking and sometimes sharing experiences that had the biggest impact on me.

At the same time as receiving counseling, we decided to try a new church, now called Overflow Church, Medowie. It was extremely difficult for me to walk into the church, my anxiety levels were high and it took courage to even walk through the doors. However, once I walked into the church I felt safe, as if I were covered with a warm blanket. I'd given my life to

Jesus years earlier, but I'd walked away from Him and only ever came to church whenever I felt like it. All that changed when He saved me from suicide and as a man of integrity I kept my promise to serve Him for the rest of my life.

It was at this church that I met some great men in a men's group who met together weekly to worship and pray for each other. It was during these nights that a lot of my spiritual healing took place. Each part of my healing process involved visits to Jo my psychologist and the healing work of God, often through these godly men. During this time I found a lot of comfort in certain bible passages, in particular "but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint." (Isaiah 40:31) and Psalm 91 was a source of great comfort.

Living with PTSD was a very difficult time for myself and for my family. My condition improved, but was triggered again after the siege in Sydney. It became impossible for me to go to the supermarket without having a massive panic attack, to the point that I couldn't do the most basic of things, like take a basket from the pile, or figure out how to drive a car. I lived in a state of hyper-vigilance whenever I wasn't at home or at work. Visiting family in Sydney itself was petrifying.

It was in my quiet times with God that I felt Him asking me to go to a mosque and confront the very people I'd been terrified of, and hated in equal measure. It took me three weeks to find the courage to speak to Tina about it. She set up a meeting with the Imam of the largest mosque in Sydney, preparing him for what I wanted to do, and I travelled to them with my friends from church. At the mosque I asked the Imam to forgive me for my hatred of his people. He replied, "I hugged you when you came in, didn't I?" While we sat around a table speaking, my anxiety levels went from the highest they'd ever been to non-existent. It was truly a miracle. I was healed of PTSD. To this day, I haven't had a single symptom of PTSD.

I haven't forgotten the lessons PTSD taught me. My passion is to speak out and break the stigma of mental health and encourage people to get help. I have done two pack marches over the last couple of years to raise awareness for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. I encourage anyone who is suffering from PTSD to get professional help, but also to call out for help from Jesus, who rescued me from suicide and ultimately healed me of PTSD. He loved me as broken as I was. He took me, saved me and made me new thanks to His love and goodness. I know that if He can do it for me, He can do it for others.

I know that I also wouldn't be where I am at today if not for the heart-felt prayers of my wife. The power of prayer can't



be underestimated. I ask those who believe to pray for all members of the Australian Defence Force, in particular for the members suffering from PTSD and other mental illnesses; pray for hope in hopeless situations, for the courage to continue the mental health battle and for the family and friends who support them to do so in love and grace. Together, let's pray

that all will accept Jesus' invitation: *"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."* (Matt 11:28)



Assignment

Dave Hodgson



Having an assignment helps bring purpose and hope back in people's lives. The assignment is not always easy, it can seem to be mission impossible, just like everything we had to do in the SAS, but it is always doable because God applies the favour. This is more than the broad context of being a good Christian. A broad assignment would be the Great Commission: let's go and take the gospel to everybody, and teach them what Jesus taught us. These are things for all of us. Within that we each have our specific assignment. Other people are relying on us to do our assignments whether we know it or not. We have been put on this earth for special things to do and other people actually rely on us to do it.

Our individual life experiences are a training ground for us to do our assignments. God has given us natural gifts, things that we are good at in our DNA, at our core. I'm an entrepreneur so I'm naturally good at doing entrepreneurial things. Everybody has gifts within them that they are good at. Some people are good at building things. Whatever our gifts we need to learn

to use those gifts. Here's some examples out of the Bible, 'Noah there's a flood coming I need you to build an ark' that's an assignment; 'Joseph there's a famine coming I need you to get my people into Goshen in Egypt where there was fertile soil' that was an assignment; 'Moses there's an emancipation coming, I need you to get my people out of Egypt into the promised land'.

Imagine you were the new marketing manager at Coca-Cola. You would have to abide by the Coca-Cola code of conduct in the workplace - no sexist behaviour, no smoking in the office etc. But that's not the reason you are there, that's just the code of conduct - that's just how you are expected to behave. The reason you are there is to be the marketing manager. If you don't do your job then the business is going to suffer - and eventually you're going to get sacked. The assignment or role was to be the marketing manager and it's no different in Christianity - as a Christian we are called to live by the Christian code of conduct - loving our neighbour, not gossiping, and so forth. But there's an assignment that God wants us to do within this and if we don't do that then people who were depending on us are going to have consequences and we will have to answer for it one day.

My life's training has been immense adversity from the age of 4 years old right up until 10 or 15 years ago and even now running a reasonable sized company and massive worldwide ministry there's still adversity with all that. But my life's training has equipped me for that. I expect it and can deal with it. For you, it is important that you do your assignment. Naturally if it's your gifting and your life's training - no one else can do that. You have a unique purpose; God wants you, not someone else.

To unpack this further, let's have a look at the journey of Joseph (see Genesis 37-50). There are three key reasons Joseph was so good at his assignment. Firstly, he understood his assignment and accepted it. Next, he knew it had to be him who did it. Finally he knew that people were depending on him to do it.

One of Joseph's natural gifts was to understand dreams from the Lord. That wasn't a gift that emerged 13 years later when he was in gaol. He was born with that gift. He knew what those dreams meant. He was able to interpret and to get his nation and family into Egypt. Also Joseph had been trained in management. A gift of reading dreams and gift of management, which is why he went on to manage the biggest economy in the world in those days. But he also had a level of moral rectitude that no body else had.

You might expect this kind of assignment to fall to the oldest brother. That was Reuben - Reuben had already slept with his Father's wife Bilhah (Gen 35:22) - there was no way on earth he



was ever going to get past Potiphar's wife - he just didn't have the moral foundation to do it. Next was Simeon and Levi - they'd wiped out the Shechemites because they raped their sister (Gen 34). That is tantamount to an international crisis - there's no way these wild, unruly, unwise brothers are going to do any good managing Egypt. I could go on. Despite the challenging path ahead it had to be Joseph that took on this assignment. He couldn't fail as his family would starve otherwise.

In like manner the Lord said 'Noah it has to be you that builds this ark'. 500 years old the only righteous man left standing on the earth - had to be him. 'Moses get my people out of Egypt'. Imagine what Moses thought when God told him to do that - you must be crazy I killed one of their officers, they are waiting for me back there and I've also got a speech impediment. The Lord was saying you don't just walk into the palace, you lived there for 40 years, you know everybody, you've got all those relationships, you can get into the palace - no one else can. You've also lived in the desert for 40 years with the Midianites this is where you are bringing the people, they went back through that same land (just like SAS desert training) and you have this incredible gift of leadership. So it had to be him. Just as it had to be Esther - 'Go to talk to the king on behalf of the Jews'. If she goes to make supplication for the Jews and if he rejects her she gets executed. She's not allowed to do that and the king hadn't called on her for 30 days. But Esther's life experiences led her to this point; her gift of beauty, she had the training of a queen, she knew how to do it and she was a very shrewd and clever woman and she went and did it and it worked.

Don't be intimidated by assignments. We aren't all called to take over the planet - I've mentioned some really big ones from the Bible just because we know them. However we all work at our own level of gifting and our own level of life's experience so assignments can be small, can be big, can be multiple, and can vary. But we just need to get engaged with what God would have us doing. I think that the safest place any of us can be is doing their assignment. If Noah didn't do his assignment he would have drowned. If Joseph didn't do his he would have starved. If Esther didn't do hers they would have all been wiped out. It's much, much safer doing your assignment than not doing it.

'You must not let the circumstances destroy you! Too many in the kingdom are counting on you to come through this because of the calling on your life!'

This statement sums it up. A Christian business man Os Hillman was told this. He was an author and a publicist working for magazines, very high achiever, but things went wrong in his life and he lost all his money, his wife left him, his kids left him, he was right at the end of his tether and

*“For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.
Ephesians 2:10 (NIV)”*

about to give up and a mentor came to him and said this to him. That sunk in and he picked himself up and went on to become what I would say is one of the most influential devotional writers in the Christian business world. He writes a free devotional <http://www.marketplaceleaders.org/tgif/> and is making a big impact. The point being his life's training has brought him to where he is - his gifting is publishing and writing, he had been trained as a lay pastor beforehand and he had now been right through the pit experience and that was his life's experience - which he can now help other people going through that pit experience. So it had to be him.

I now want to share with you an SAS operation from the Rhodesian SAS from a long time ago (1976) that I was on and this will show you the importance of individuals in an assignment. I'm not here to big note or to glorify war but want to use this as an illustration

The following took place at the confluence of the Zambezi and Luangwa rivers in Central Africa in what is now modern day Zimbabwe. It was Rhodesia in those days. Zambia and Mozambique had declared war on us amongst other countries. We were at war with all our neighbours except South Africa to the south.

Across in the town of Zumbo there were three ferries, quite big boats and they were ferrying terrorists into Rhodesia. We were being invaded. Thousands of terrorists were coming in they were killing our civilians, killing our farmers, blowing up our oil depots, that was the war that we fought. Our job



'You must not let the circumstances destroy you! Too many in the kingdom are counting on you to come through this because of the calling on your life!'

in the SAS was to go behind enemy lines and tidy them up. So we arrived at Kanyemba on a Thursday night late in 1976, eighteen of us, to the distress of the garrison that was running Kanyemba because as soon as we leave they get bombed cause we tended to stir up the hornets a bit. It was Thursday night deliberately as we had to get prepared and then go in on the Friday night. Friday like everywhere else in the world people have a few drinks including soldiers, and it's easier to do stuff if they are all lying around drunk in the parade square. So there we arrived and we crossed the river the next night - eight of us went across so ten held the camp - that's our covering, our protection. So we went across and put the canoes on the north bank of the Zambezi. Two guys were left behind, hidden in the bush to look after them. Now there are six of us. Six guys now moving along the banks of the Zambezi; down towards Zumbo. Zumbo had a massive garrison, many

thousands of FRELIMO troops: these were freedom fighters if you will that had been fighting the Portuguese army. Now the Portuguese had since pulled out and FRELIMO had taken over. They'd been at war for about 20 years. All of these guys were very experienced. As well as several thousand FRELIMO troops there were also ZIPRA and ZUNLA Terrorists which are the ones we were fighting against. These terrorists were getting onto those ferries at night and crossing the river and killing our Civvies. Our assignment is to stop them killing our civilians by blowing up the ferries. So it's Friday night and everyone in the cities in Rhodesia are all down the pubs and clubs, rugby matches are going on. They have no idea what's going on behind the enemy lines - there's six young guys heading through Zumbo and sneaking around. They'd gotten so drunk the flag was still flying in the parade square which is a big no, no in the military. As we went down towards the ferries, we left guys at key points along the way. Now there are only two of us to go down onto those boats and blow them up. It's not easy to blow up diesel, and these were diesel powered boats. So we had specially designed charges, and we had to put them on those engines and on the tanks, and those boats weren't empty they were full of drunken troops. So we had to creep on there, arm those charges, get on the next vessel and so forth. Then head back where we'd come from, collecting the pairs of guys, then back through Zumbo and across the Zambezi. It was as we are paddling back at first light the whole thing blew up. This set the incursion back in that part of Mozambique for many, many years. You can't swim across that river - it's full of floating handbags, you need a boat.

The whole country (not that they knew it) were reliant on two men and the other six guys who were trained for their roles. Everyone had a role to play and it was important that each do their role. This is an example to see how important it is that we each do our assignment.

In like manner people are reliant on us to do our assignments that God has called us to. Everyone in God's kingdom has a role to play. Take the challenge and use your gifts, your life's experiences, your training to get on with that which God has for you.



Fit for Purpose

SQNLDR Paul Simmons



Proverbs 16:9 (NLT)

We can make our plans, but the Lord determines our steps.

The Lord laid on my heart to look today at the concept of 'Fit for purpose'. In the military we talk quite a bit about this concept. The FA-18A model that I fly, affectionately known as "the Classic", is coming to the end of its service life. It's becoming obsolescent in the emerging threat environment we find ourselves in from a survivability perspective. By 2022 when it is phased out it will have lost its "fit for purpose" tag. From another perspective however it's still very fit for purpose as it allows us to train the next generation of warriors that we are going to put into our next front line fighter, the F-35. Fit for purpose can mean many different things and can be applied from many perspectives.

Today I want to use the "fit for purpose" concept and apply it to our lives as Christians. I believe personally, as Christians, all of us are fit for purpose for God not only made us to live but also gave us a specific purpose to fulfil on this earth. With that as a given, the real question is how, through what process and how long will it take for us to develop as and to get to the place where we are actually being used for and in our purpose effectively.

A concern I have with the western church today is that everything is focused within the four walls or on our own circumstances. While I understand this is a sweeping statement, I hear us talk about metrics, talk about growth, talk about the number of programs we've got running or talking about prosperity. When I compare it to Jesus and his ministry I cannot see the parallels because everything He was about was outside the four walls and about those who did not yet know His saving grace. Jesus was all about getting out and reaching those who were unlovable or for some reason unattractive

while simultaneously saving his most venomous attacks for the religious people who tried to put him in the 'church' box! And we wonder why we are struggling as a western church body to engage with our society and those around us. We want "them" to come into an environment that's completely foreign, we want them to take on a language that is completely new and then suddenly become servants in the "House" while leaving much of what they knew behind them... and we wonder why that's not particularly attractive??

I believe we need to be a body of Christians that are full of life, empowered and full of the Holy Spirit and absolutely excited for the purpose for which we are placed on this planet for and wanting to share the joy of a relationship with Christ with others. I also passionately believe that as we grow into all of what Christ created us to be, while loving and blessing those we come into contact with we will become magnets that attract others to search for a relationship with Jesus.

Let me illustrate my point with my personal experience. I have flown aircraft for 30 years and I have been in the military for 27. My journey to where I am today is a longer story but and I've been fortunate enough to fly fast jets and I love that... when I fly I genuinely feel God's pleasure. To me my best worship time can be whilst flying. In fact one of my best worship times was when doing some training in East Sale and conducting some missions down in Tasmania in the late 90's. It was late one afternoon and I was taking a young pilot on a training mission when his aircraft went unserviceable on the ground. It was a perfect autumn afternoon and despite my wingman breaking my boss said "go down and fly the plan but just relax and enjoy, you do a lot of work as the fighter combat instructor in the squadron and you don't get this opportunity often". So fast forward 45 mins and I'm approaching Cradle Mountain from the north





at low level (100m), pretty slow at 700 km/h and I am relaxed and peaceful and enjoying the stunning beauty. It's fairly calm, I'm comfortable and as I approach the rocky upslope I simply increase some power, pull up the side of the mountain and smoothly roll upside-down going over the top of the mountain to keep on my way...all while I'm having an amazing praise and worship time. I then proceeded over to the west coast, turned north and climbed up to 50,000 feet where you can just start to see the curvature of the earth and it's dark (you see the stars even late in the afternoon). Even after all these years the memory brings a smile to my face and I know this is what I'm meant to do, I feel His pleasure when I do it with all my heart and soul and my passion for my purpose is magnetic

But the question is how do we find that place of peace and purpose, that so called "sweet spot" of service? The reason for answering the question is important because it's in that sweet spot that other people feel the presence of God in your life. It's in that sweet spot where you are doing what's in your DNA that people go 'whoa what's going on with you and in you?' and where the pleasure and blessing of God flows. One of my best friends and a fellow fighter pilot will testify to this as he observed my Wife and I over many years and at a critical time in his life, when many things were on the line he came looking for Jesus and now his life, marriage and future have been radically transformed by the saving grace of Christ and power of the Holy spirit.

As we examine further the concept of "fit for purpose" I want you to consider that Christ has not called us to the concept of just being a Christian in the church but being a Christian and being the church in our environment and to those around us. Lets look at two men from the bible who lived at the same time as Jesus. Both were tax collectors and both encountered Jesus during his time walking the earth, were radically changed and made "fit for purpose" but in very different ways. The two are of course the disciple Matthew and Zaccheus. Matthew has an encounter with Jesus and what does he do? It completely changes the course of his life. He goes from being a tax collector through to being a disciple of Jesus and finding what he was created for and being made fit for that purpose. Yet the other, Zaccheus has an encounter with Jesus that transforms him but it leaves him in his purpose. While we don't hear of him again as far as we know he continued to be a tax collector but radically changed and it's his story that I want to spend some time examining.

Luke 19:1-10 (Amplified)

Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through. 2 And there was a man called Zaccheus; he was a chief tax collector [a superintendent to whom others reported], and he was rich. 3 Zaccheus was trying to see who Jesus was, but he could not see because of the crowd, for he was short in stature. 4 So he ran on ahead [of the crowd] and climbed up in a sycamore tree in order to see Him, for He was about

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National Day of Prayer for Defence 2017



The National Day of Prayer for Defence is on Saturday 1 April 2017. All who have a heart to pray for Defence are welcome to join us in Canberra at the Duntroon Chapel, or remotely in the regions either on the day or in the week preceding. Please join with us and uplift the Australian Defence Force to God. Since 2011 MCF has sponsored a National Day of Prayer for Defence, which has supported around Australia. About 30 regional or international groups prayed for the ADF in 2016.

Why Prayer is Needed

Many Australians have died in the line of duty serving to protect the security of our nation. Jesus said in John 15:13, "Greater love has no one than this that he lay down his life for his friends." Many families have been impacted by such tragic losses. Others are impacted by the challenges of helping those returning with injuries both physical and emotional such as post traumatic stress disorder. We need to support such people and uphold them in prayer.

God also calls us to pray for our leaders and we need to pray that our senior policy and decision-makers bring a selfless approach to their responsibilities like those who have given their own lives in service to Australia.



The Vision

The National Day of Prayer for Defence aims to be a strategic spiritual event for Defence Christians and those who have a heart for defence to be mobilised to lift our Defence personnel and leaders up to God.

Organise a group to pray

Become a National Day of Prayer for Defence Contact now. Contact the MCF Office at mcf.office@defence.gov.au or 02 6266 4950. Then your email address and location will be added to the website so people will know who to contact to participate.
www.mcf-a.org.au

The Format

Download a prayer book from www.mcf-a.org.au. Structure and facilitate a prayer session suited to your group or arrange for some of the prayer points from the booklet to be included in your regular weekly bible study group. It is that easy. Adapt the prayer booklet to your local setting.

Themes include:

- Defence culture and training settings;
- Deployed personnel, Defence members and families and injuries;
- Senior leadership, chaplains, and Faith Under Fire Course;
- Defence Christian military ministries.





Application for Membership of MCF-A

To ensure that members of MCF agree to the basics of Christian doctrine, applicants must, in accordance with the MCF Constitution, sign the following Statement of Belief. This Statement is based on the 381 AD Nicene Creed; the most commonly used statement of Christian faith in the history of the church:

I believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen. I believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father. Through Him all things were made. For us and for our salvation He came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit He was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man. For our sake He was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day He rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son he is worshipped and glorified. He has spoken through the Prophets. I believe in one holy catholic (meaning universal) and apostolic Church. I acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sin. I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. I believe that Holy Scripture is inspired by God and is the authority in all matters of faith, teaching, activities and personal conduct concerning MCF.

Name: _____ Signature: _____ (or write 'I agree' if electronic copy)

Date: _____ Employee No: _____

Rank or Title: _____ Preferred First Name: _____ Surname: _____

Defence Site: _____ Building, Floor, Room Number: _____

Street: _____ Suburb: _____

State: _____ Postcode: _____ Country: _____

Telephone: work () _____ Mobile: _____ Home () _____

Email work: _____ ☐ Preferred Email

Email home: _____ ☐ Preferred Email

I apply for **Ordinary Membership**: (tick one)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> I am a member of the ADF: Army | <input type="checkbox"/> I am an ex member of the ADF: Army |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I am a member of the ADF: Navy | <input type="checkbox"/> I am an ex member of the ADF: Navy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I am a member of the ADF: Air Force | <input type="checkbox"/> I am an ex member of the ADF: Air Force |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I am a member of the ADF: APS | <input type="checkbox"/> I am an ex member of the ADF: APS |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I am the spouse of a member of the ADF: Air Force, Army, Navy, APS (circle one) | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I am the spouse of an ex member of the ADF: Air Force, Army, Navy, APS (circle one) | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I am an accredited representative of a ADF philanthropic organisation: (which one) _____ | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I am a civilian who currently works alongside ADF personnel at: (Location) _____ | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I am a civilian who has previously worked alongside ADF personnel for at least one year at: (Location) _____ | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I am currently residing in Australia and am a member/ex member of the Armed Forces of (name of country) _____ | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I am none of the above and apply for Associate Membership ; therefore, I cannot vote at the AGM. | |

Return to: mcf.office@defence.gov.au or:

Dept. of Defence, Military Christian Fellowship-Australia,
Campbell Park Offices CP3-1-160,
Northcott Drive,
CAMPBELL ACT 2612

Alternately membership forms can be filled out at <http://mcf-a.org.au/membership/>

MCF Centurions make a difference in the ADF

Rank/Title: _____ Name: _____ Employee ID: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Town/Suburb: _____ State: _____ Postcode: _____

Email: _____ Mobile/phone: _____

As an MCF Centurion I:

- 1) Commit to pray weekly using MCF's prayer calendar.
- 2) Commit to financial support of \$10, \$20, \$50 or \$100 per fortnight.
 - ☐ Have arranged an auto transfer of \$_____ (fortnightly / monthly / yearly / 1 off)
to MCF's Defence Bank Account
Account name: Military Christian Fellowship of Australia (First 3 letters = MIL),
BSB 803205, Account number: 20380708.
 - ☐ Give Via Online credit card: <http://mcf-a.org.au/donate/>
 - ☐ Do/Do not (circle one) please contact me in 12 month's time to renew my pledge.
- 3) Agree to promote MCF by displaying MCF advertising provided to me in my local area and church.
- 4) Do/Do not (*circle one*) wish my name to be listed in Crossfire magazine.
- 5) Do/Do not (*circle one*) wish to have my name listed on the MCF website.
- 6) Do/Do not (circle one) wish to receive a Centurion Pack of signature items including a Centurion mug, an MCF Centurion lapel pin, a 15%-off coupon for Koorong bookstores and a book.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Return to:

Department of Defence, CANBERRA
Military Christian Fellowship of Australia
CAMPBELL PARK OFFICES: CP3 -1-160
Northcott Drive
CAMPBELL ACT 2612

For further information ring MCF Administrator on 02 6266 4950 or email mcf.office@defence.gov.au.

The Centurion program commenced in 2005.

We are aiming for 100 centurions to carry the Lord's work forward in MCF in 2019.

Alternately Centurion forms can be filled out at <http://mcf-a.org.au/become-a-centurion/>



UPCOMING EVENTS

mcf-a.org.au/events/

ADF CHAPLAINCY & OTHER DEFENCE MINISTRIES

INFORMATION EVENING @ SMBC

19 MAY 2017



DEFENCE CHRISTIANS' DINNER

Friday 15 September 2017

Canberra Southern Cross Club Woden

Keynote speaker: Andrew Hastie, MP



to pass through that way. 5 When Jesus reached the place, He looked up and said to him, "Zaccheus, hurry and come down, for today I must stay at your house." 6 So Zaccheus hurried and came down, and welcomed Jesus with joy. 7 When the people saw it, they all began muttering [in discontent], "He has gone to be the guest of a man who is a [notorious] sinner." 8 Zaccheus stopped and said to the Lord, "See, Lord, I am [now] giving half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anyone out of anything, I will give back four times as much." 9 Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this household, because he, too, is a [spiritual] son of Abraham; 10 for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost."

Lets be straight, Zaccheus didn't get that money by being a good guy, he got it through extortion and he took more than he was entitled to. He was a despised part of the government institution, he had power and he used that to make his money. While he was certainly rich and he could wield power over the people, he got no respect from them due to his corrupted character. This is the context for the story.

So this rich and corrupt official hears that this man Jesus is coming to town. For some reason Zaccheus feels a compulsion to interact with Jesus. When he goes to see Jesus he cannot for there's something in his way – he is short and there are many people lining the road. So why didn't he just push his way to the front? What was it about his position in society that left him unable to use his authority as an official to get to the front of the line and see Jesus? Was it guilt? Was it the aggression of the crowd because he had extorted them for so long - possibly? Its would have been easy for Zaccheus to go 'Oh it's too hard...there's a mountain in the way' but there is something about this Jesus that brings a certain compulsion to see Him and he is determined to do whatever it takes.

So this short and despised tax collector, likely wearing a robe of some sort, decides to climb a tree. Not a particularly regal thing to do for a leader but he thinks that it doesn't matter; there is a compulsion to see Jesus. So he positions himself outside "the box" of what would be considered appropriate for a man in his position, up a tree in a robe and looking over the tope of the crowd while he now waits. I don't know how long that process was yet what we know is that he positioned himself intentionally to see Jesus and in response to Zaccheus' determination Jesus comes to him.

While Zaccheus is thrilled at this interaction with Jesus and his new dinner guest the people are muttering amongst themselves that Jesus has gone to be the guest and lodge with a man who is pre-eminently a sinner. There was no respect or love for this man yet Jesus connected with him in a very public way and without reservation.

Through this interaction with Jesus we know that Zaccheus is radically transformed and his life, the families' lives and the community are all positively affected by it. His encounter was initiated by a strong desire to interact with Jesus, a willingness to position himself up a tree despite his job / standing and

after encountering Him, allow change to enter his life that enabled him to become "fit for purpose" as a tax collector and a blessing in his community. The way Zaccheus fundamentally changed and operates now would be a salvation bringing process to that entire community. One interaction with Jesus and this man is now on his assignment and helping change his family and community.

I believe that this story illustrates the crux of what we are on about as MCF and as Christians in the military community. Does it mean that as a Christian and a fighter pilot I must now run around and kowtow to everybody? - no absolutely not. I pride myself on being one of the more aggressive fighter pilots out there. I work with a lot of 21 year olds and I can tell you they are strong and fit, they are smart but they lack experience and wisdom and it is my job to develop that. We teach, train and mould them as effective warriors who have a real understanding of the responsibility they have. In my environment you need areal sense of compassion and understanding that what you do taking life is not anything which should be taken for granted, nor treated flippantly. I still passionately believe my current God given assignment is with military aviation and until He directs my paths otherwise I shall continue to do it to the upmost of my ability and remain fit for purpose.

So back to where we started, the premise that we are all called as Christians into the body to fulfil a purpose. There are people who are called into the church to serve (who have that fit) and have it function vitally and that is brilliant. If that is your purpose go for it. But there are a lot of people that have guilt or a feeling of judgement because they are not serving madly in the church or an overseas mission but instead have a passion to reach those in their work and local community. The reality is that they are actually in relationship with people who are lost and they have an assignment outside the four walls of a church building.

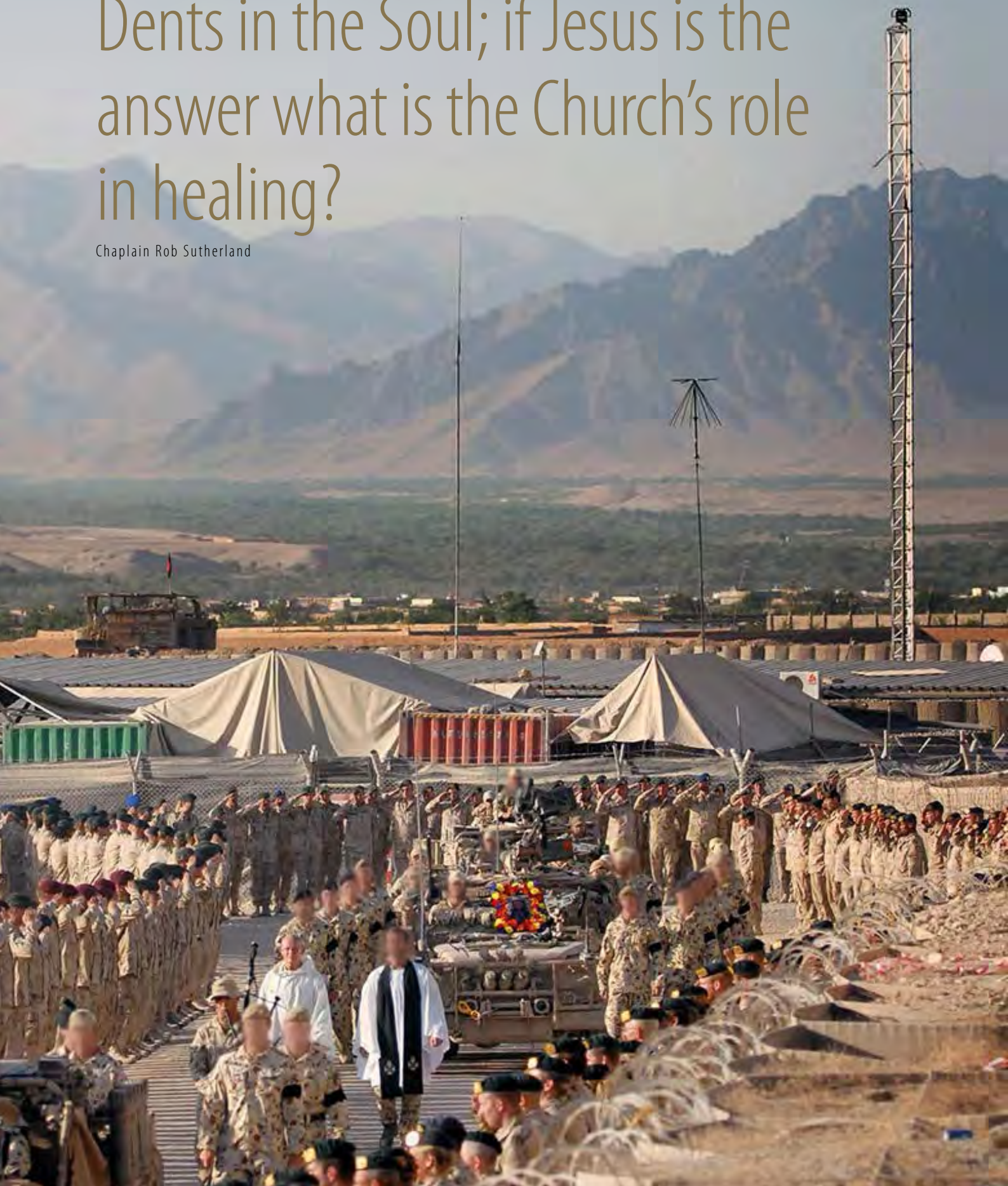
My heart as a Christian in Defence is that it's not about me running around and loudly trumpeting my faith. It's about me being professional, it's about me being very good at what I do and being passionate about what I do. It's about leading sacrificially so that others would succeed and become better than me. It's about bringing to them the love of Christ where and when needed. Where there's brokenness and where there's hurt being able to sit, listen, talk and if they're open, to pray for them. It's about treating all with the love and dignity that Jesus gave and gives us daily.

He's called us to be "fit for purpose" and our service right now is on assignment in the military; to be Spirit filled Christians that are very good at what we do, who love people and who serve and lead sacrificially. When we operate like that people can't argue with our ideology. He came as he said to seek and save the lost and He's called us as fit for purpose in the military to do the same thing and that's my passion. While your fit will not be the same as mine, let me encourage you to seek God's purpose in who he made you to be and don't be afraid to position yourself outside "the box" in order to do that.



Moral Injury, Spiritual Wounds and Dents in the Soul; if Jesus is the answer what is the Church's role in healing?

Chaplain Rob Sutherland



I thoroughly enjoyed my time as an infantry officer. I served in the 'long peace', joining the Army after the Vietnam War and transferring to the Chaplains Department just before everybody went to East Timor. As an infantryman, I didn't deploy; however, as an Army Reserve Chaplain I deployed twice to Bougainville with the peace monitoring group, and as a Regular Army Chaplain I've had five overseas operational deployments including Timor Leste and Afghanistan.

I hope that you are as proud as I am of the young men and women that we've sent away to war on our behalf. They are fine Australians, well selected, trained, and equipped, and they've done great things; but the reason I'm so proud is the way they've done it. I've seen their compassion and concern for the people of Bougainville, Afghanistan and Timor Leste. I've seen their calm, restraint, mercy and their love. We don't go to these places to make them into Australia. We go to help people to have the freedom to be who they decide to be.

In my view the Australian Defence Force (ADF) cares well for the physical health of sailors, soldiers, airmen and women. The battlefield survival rates for Australians are among the best in the world. From a mental health perspective, I don't see any one in the world doing much better than we are. The estimate is that about 20% of our veterans will suffer some form of mental health disorder at some stage of their lives. Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is the most common condition, with about 8% reportedly suffering from PTSD in any single year.

Some suggest that everyone has PTSD to some degree. PTSD is a problem; I can personally describe its debilitating effects. Those of us with PTSD do road rage really well and we're terrible to live with, but PTSD is just one of the many mental problems that we can come home with and perhaps it isn't the worst. Adjustment disorder, depression, sexual dysfunction, sleep loss, anger and various fears and phobias are not nearly as well recognised. ADF screening of people on return from operations and psychological help afterwards are pretty good. The ADF mental health support is good and has been improving for the last decade and a half. We have pretty good treatments for PTSD. However these figures can't account for all the behavioural issues that we are seeing in our veterans.

If only about 20% have a diagnosable mental health condition, this doesn't account for the behavioural issues we are seeing in many more people: unwarranted, inappropriate behaviour in far more than are suffering from PTSD. PTSD is diagnosable and treatable but I don't think it is the biggest danger. It's embarrassing and painful, and often not fun to live with. People with PTSD may drink and fight too much, over react in apparently innocuous situations, and even suicide; but I don't see anything in PTSD in itself that is the likely cause of most suicide.

Fundamentally PTSD is an overdone fear response. Little things remind us to be overly afraid. In my view guilt, shame, feeling worthless, unlovable, unable to love, feeling betrayed, abandoned and unable to trust anyone or anything, and seeing no hope in the world or in things that you believed in; these are much more likely reasons for suicidal behaviour. I see

these and depression as the biggest health issues facing our servicemen and women, and our veterans.

Recent psych research with US marines who are suffering a combat or operational stress reaction, determined that only about 10% had PTSD as their primary issue. 40% had a newly described condition that the researchers named Moral Injury. If the ADF rate of PTSD in any given year is about 8-12%, then I would expect Moral Injury to be about 40%. No ADF research has been completed into Moral Injury, although I believe there's some underway.

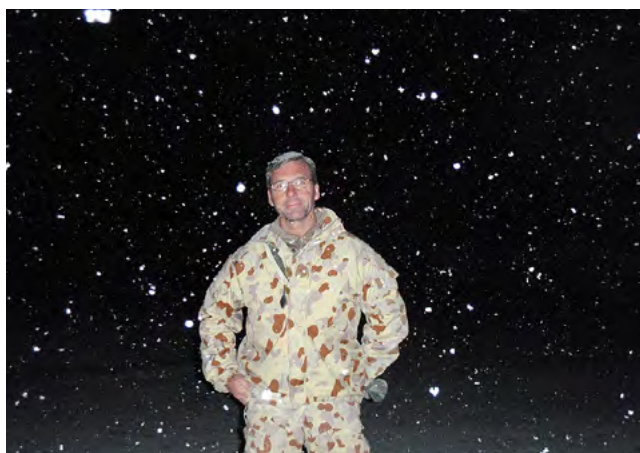
It has been said that everyone comes home from operations with dents in the soul. This doesn't mean everybody is incapacitated by these dents, but everyone is affected by what they've seen and done, or by what's been done to them. Most soldiers recover quite naturally and well; but for some, the guilt, shame, betrayal and shattered worldview destroy their lives and families, and can lead to suicide.

This concept of Moral Injury has drawn attention to the place of spiritual belief in our lives, what we see and do, and what is done to us. While the definitions are not yet agreed - particularly in Australia - this new category is helpful. My definition of moral injury is: the injury that occurs to our spirit or souls when we see or do, or can't or don't stop, or have done to us, things which are contrary to what we believe is right and good. The fact that Australian servicemen and women are suffering moral injury could be seen as positive because it says we believe in good things; however, the results of this injury can be devastating - shattering our faith in what we believe, hope in a good future, love of God and families and ourselves, trust in God and others and ourselves, understanding of what's right and wrong, and self worth and righteousness.

I'm intensely proud of our Australian servicemen and women. I have spent well over a year deployed with them. I'm proud of the restraint shown by our young men and women, when they've decided not to fire, how they adhere to their rules of engagement even when under great pressure. Yet most of our Service men and women come home feeling guilty. Some feel guilty for coming home when their mates didn't. Some report feeling guilty for coming home or being made to come home when the job isn't finished.

One group who find it hardest are our engineer search operators. They move ahead of a convoy in search of improvised explosive devices (IEDs). They are brave and dedicated, always under pressure, and they feel responsible for protecting their mates; but it's just not possible to find everything. The Taliban are good at what they do and know the land better than we ever can. The engineers are under pressure by convoy commanders to clear faster - faster than they would like to. Their commanders know that if the convoy moves too slowly they'll get ambushed, even more IEDs will be laid in their way, or perhaps the intended target of the patrol will just escape. Speed is important but speed is the enemy of search. When an IED is missed, the engineers can feel guilty, can feel they have failed to protect their mates. We might say that they have no reason to feel guilty; but they also feel betrayed at the same





time by their own commanders even when those commanders are also doing the right thing.

Coming home, some feel guilty for not fixing Afghanistan. Some feel guilty having experienced abject misery, poverty, and suffering; and coming home to our own wealthy homes and families. The wounded can also feel betrayed. Despite the best medical care in the world our wounded often end up feeling betrayed and abandoned.

These spiritual wounds are seen in behaviours. This is how we, from the outside, can identify those with spiritual wounds. We see suicidal behaviour, self-harm, risk taking behaviour, anger, broken relationships, hopelessness, giving up on life, people isolating or withdrawing, or substance abuse. Those suffering or experiencing these wounds experience them on the inside as feelings. Sufferers can feel guilty or ashamed, grief, loss, they feel angry, betrayed, abandoned, forsaken, unlovable, or unable to love even those who are closest to them and whose love has sustained them on the deployment. They can feel hopeless; that life is pointless.

I work with a parish based church group called Warrior Welcome Home. The title is deliberately chosen, because this is what we want to do. We want to get our wounded warriors, recognise them as warriors, and welcome them home. We believe that spiritual wounds can all be healed. We bring a Christian response to the situation. The love of God can break through to those suffering spiritual wounds (see Mark 2:3-12). We believe that the Jesus of the gospel brings meaning and healing.





Remember Jesus' cry upon the cross - 'My God, My God why have you forsaken me?'. Jesus, the only innocent to have ever lived, the only one to have loved God the Father perfectly, was hung on a Roman cross. Betrayed by one of his own followers, but also by the religious leaders and his own people. He was abandoned by his closest friends who even denied that they ever knew him. He was betrayed by the judicial and ruling authorities, and he even felt that God had forsaken him. When I introduce soldiers to this reality of Jesus death, they can start to believe that Jesus can understand how they feel.

Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. John 3:17 (NRSV)

I believe spiritual health is a life-giving relationship with the living God through the body of Christ. At times the body of Christ on earth, the church, has proved to be a weak link. Some churches have treated soldiers, wives and families very hurtfully. Military families can feel unwelcome in churches. Some wives have been made to feel by churches that their husband's issues are their fault. One wife described it like this, 'I was at church and this woman came up to me and said if you just had more faith your husband would get better.' How can PTSD be a wife's fault?

As a part of Warrior Welcome Home, we take service people and often their partners and to a beautiful part of the world.

Our parish runs our retreat on Sydney harbour and we feed them wonderful coffee and great food and maybe some red wine. We take them on some fun activities and we try to spoil them, to love them. At the end of our retreat we have a simple dinner with about 100 people from our parish and community who just say 'thank you'. This has had a profound effect. One veteran responded in tears after the dinner "that was amazing!...I've just had the kids from that table say thank you for what you did and thank you for your service.... my own children have never thanked me for what I've done. For the first time I feel thanked and valued."

I believe that God can heal and God can give life. I believe that this is the reason Jesus came into the world and lived and died. Warrior Welcome Home gives space and we listen. We believe that God's Word is light to the world, shining into every darkness, and no darkness will ever overcome this light. Even the darkness that our servicemen and women and their families feel, God can overcome. We have seen that the Spirit of God can and does heal in this world. We help veterans and their families to share their stories, their pain, their hurts, and let God make meaning of what has happened. We've found that the simple love of God breaks through into the souls of soldiers and their families. We've found that if we can bring our wounded friends to Jesus, he can and does heal them. God's love – in this case the love of people from a normal parish church - love works.



Hope on Deployment

Chaplain Robyn Kidd whilst on deployment in the Middle East Region joined us via Skype at the Hope 2016 MCF Seminar. She was interviewed by MCF Vice Chairman LTCOL Scott Watkins.



SW What does a day in the life of a chaplain look like on Deployment?

RK It's pretty varied. I do shift work. One week I do day shift and the second week I do late shift. On the day shift I'm out and about visiting - a lot of walking occurs here; an awful lot of walking on gravel and sand. So it's just getting out and visiting all the units, it's driving down to the flight line and checking out our guys in those areas, it's sitting in on briefings and making sure that our leaders in the headquarters are also being cared for because there needs to be a good balance between making sure that our leadership know that I'm praying for them everyday and also making sure that our guys that are out there doing the frontline work are also being cared for. Late shift is pretty much the same but it gives me an opportunity to reach the B shift that during the day are holed up sleeping. It's a completely different environment here at night; it's a bit more relaxed with a bit more time to chat.

SW You are in a unique situation with people in an equally unique situation, how do you get the opportunity to minister hope to the soldiers, sailors, airmen, air women that you see on a daily basis?

RK I guess it depends how you define hope. I think that most of the conversations I have here are about hope in some way. Some hope that I am praying for them each day and knowing that is enough. Sometimes it's people hoping that they'll get through their 15 hour shift without falling over. For some it's about hoping that in the next mail delivery that there might be something for them. Hope is a very broad concept here. I have conversations with a number of pilots about their hope for Australia as a country to be a place of peace to live out Christian values, that places unconditional value on every single life; man, woman, little girl, little boy. I think that sometimes bringing the hope of Jesus is about simply listening. Life can go pretty crazy hectic and I think to offer that gift of listening is a blessing in amongst flying periods, and orders and briefings and logistics deliveries and aircraft coming and going constantly. One of my favourite people Eugene Peterson says when you enter the soul and the spirit of somebody by listening to them you uplift them rather than by telling them something. I think listening here is a great thing. To say to people "What are your hopes for while you are here?" is a really good question to ask from any point at any level.

SW Have you seen God working in special ways over there?

RK There are those times when we have to send people home because some sad things have happened and in the beginning of my deployment we had a lot of those. When you sit and pray about that situation and see at times how we have been able to get people home in quite miraculous timeframes it was always one of those things that makes you go 'thankyou God that you were able to do this - that this all came together and that that person is now on their way home'. Even though they are often going home to something awful it's hard not to understand the hand of God in that process. Even in the midst of such pain and sorrow it's hard not to see God in that. I think that big picture - I can see that God is here in this

global effort to eliminate a terrible way of life for many, many people. I see that as the work of God on earth: to eliminate that suffering; to be instruments of peace and to share the Jesus story as our motivation for doing that. I think on quite a lot smaller scale of the chaplaincy ministry that happens here where we are. I get to work alongside USAF chaplains. I'm on their preaching roster and so that opens up an opportunity for Australian troops to sit in a real building, not a tent with proper seating and to hear God's message of love and hope and encouragement to them. Helpful networking occurs because the USAF Chaplains run lots of Bible Studies and things like that, that people can get involved in and God's hand is in that - it gives people hope and strength and encouragement. Though our facilities are quite limited we are able to tap into those around us and that's a gift of God to us.

SW In having conversations about Jesus have you been able to see or can you speak about how Jesus can assist those who are struggling?

RK I personally believe that there is no situation in which Jesus is not able to help. I think that no matter where you are in life to be able to stop and pray for that peace which passes all understanding at any moment of our day and to know that we have that intimate connection with Jesus is an amazing thing. I think I have probably had more Jesus conversations with perhaps USAF people then what I do with Australians and that's understandable from a cultural perspective. I think that what I get back is that we must have our chaplains around us. Our chaplains are valued in terms of that - someone actually said in the camp a couple of months ago - that just knowing you are here, seeing your face around, seeing you walking the hanger floor it's that reminder that we are not here alone - that there's a bigger picture happening. So even people who would not confess Jesus as Lord - you still have that ability to be the hands, the feet, the words of Jesus to people wherever you go. We have many faiths represented here - not just Christianity of course. I see all those faith systems bringing people a large amount of comfort. But I think for us in Jesus that it doesn't matter where you are you can stop, pray, and find peace. That's what I see in how Jesus can help us with our struggles because we know that Jesus himself struggled - we have the greatest model ever of suffering. We know that this is someone who understands us intimately, personally and who can lift those burdens. I think that having our Bibles around - I make sure that they are around in welfare spaces - reading the word of God is the light that shines in our darkness and I encourage people to do that. I have lots of little cards lying around that are just things that are easy to pick up and to read because the words of Jesus just drive my life and my motivation comes from his life and his love for me. We try to reflect that back out.

SW Robyn thanks so much for this opportunity. It's remarkable that we can sit here and speak to you on the other side of the planet and that we can be talking about a Saviour who is living and active in all our lives regardless of where we are on this earth and it's been a wonderful blessing to be able to talk to you.



Trauma

CAPT Chris Booth (chaplain in training)



Trauma is a broad concept that affects individuals deeply around the world and this breadth means that there is a high chance many of our soldiers, deployed or not, suffer from trauma. In the following we consider the wound of trauma, the bandage of the Gospel and the method of application.

The Wound

The word 'trauma' stems from a Greek word *τραῦμα*, meaning a wound. Diagnosis of specific types of trauma can be varied and the traumatic events at the cause can span: war related events, sexual abuse, political abuse, relational abuse, physical abuse, tragedy, accident and divorce. All of these sources can create 'wounds'. So when we consider trauma and moral injuries for our soldiers, sailors and airmen, we need to broaden our scope.

Wounds created by trauma vary in severity, but all achieve a single effect: the disruption of a person's 'system of meaning'. When someone's 'system of meaning' is disrupted, fundamental questions of life, existence, belief and meaning are questioned and as Christians we have a critical role to speak into that space. Furthermore, there is an associated feeling of being uncontrollably helpless due to and during traumatic events. This leaves trauma sufferers not only questioning their system of meaning but their belief in their ability to cope at all. It doesn't take a rocket surgeon to figure out that a fighting force suffering from this critical problem isn't going to function. From a fighting force perspective, we want our troops to think of themselves with labels such as soldier, sailor, airmen; not divorcee, alcoholic, angry guy. From an eternal perspective we long for more: to find their identity in Christ.

The trauma affects a person's heart, although it often is covered up by their expression through head and hands. The issue of trauma can be one that is covered up, or camouflaged, within our ranks as we may (inwardly at least) classify people as angry, depressed, erratic, unreasonable and generally difficult. That out-of-character Diving Under the Influence (DUI) incident from PTE Bloggs cannot be written off as an isolated event. Even as hardened military leaders, we must identify that the deeper issue is a heart one.

Clinical help (including a possible need of medication) can offer much needed support and should not be negatively stigmatised. Deeper to this support, as Christians, we know that it is the Gospel has power that can provide real healing to these wounds. But how? A bandage applied incorrectly won't stem the bleeding, or fix the problem. We have considered the wound so now let us think briefly about the bandage we are applying, and how we might apply it.

The Bandage

We know that the right system of meaning anyone should hold to, is to be centred around the Gospel of Christ. When considering what bandage we need to apply, Christians can look towards:

- a) Christ as the reconciler and healer of our hearts. A Christian system of meaning knows that our core heart issue is sin. Christ dealt with sin on the cross, and even when we feel helpless we can look to him and know 'while we were still helpless, at the appointed moment, Christ died for the ungodly' Romans 5.8 (HCSB). Christ came so our disorientated hearts might turn to him and be healed. Even when our identities have been shaken by trauma, he came to call us to be identified in Christ (Ephesians 1.3-14) who is one with the 'Father of mercies and God of all comfort' (2 Corinthians 1.3).
- b) Christ is the source of our power: 'I can do all things through him who strengthens me' Philippians 4.13 (NRSV). Trauma doesn't strip us of any power, but reveals that in our weakness God's power is made perfect (2 Corinthians 12.9).

The Christian gospel is actually tailor-made for sufferers as the core understanding of meaning is found in the narrative of the Bible. The wound trauma creates in disorienting our identity and tearing our hearts, is healed and given direction by Christ. So we should rush out and wrap our guys up with this truth. We should shout it from the rooftops and issue out directives. Right?



The Application

Suffering and grief flow from trauma, no matter the form. Like a healing wound, pastorally, time is needed. Carson notes that in the midst of suffering 'the most comforting "answers" are simple presence, help, silence, tears. Helping with the gardening or preparing a casserole may be far more spiritual an exercise than the exposition of Romans 8:28. This rubs against our natural impulse to deliver a tangible fix to their problem, or as Carson touched on, rush to the bible verse that solves the dilemma. Yes, the trauma almost certainly disturbed their 'system of meaning', and the Gospel is profoundly important to that, but time and sensitivity are needed. This may prompt the Christian response to be driven by their hearts for the Gospel, but have a more outwardly passive response with our hands, at least initially. Driven by the love of God (in Jesus Christ - Romans 8:39) revealed in the Bible, we might first pick up the vacuum cleaner or the pot of tea than a Bible. If, however, the goal of our caring for them is not to point them to the Gospel of hope – the one that promises that we will one day be raised, wounds healed, with Jesus in heaven (1 Corinthians 15), we are wasting our time and letting our men bleed out.

The Australian Defence Force is filled with individuals who struggle deeply with issues of trauma in their life. The solution to trauma is the Gospel, but recovery from trauma may not occur until God indeed wipes away every tear (Revelation 21). While we wait for Jesus to return, learning about trauma and how the Gospel can speak into this suffering may aid with our care of those we come in contact with. Perhaps our approach to our troops should be 'slow is smooth and smooth is fast'. Deliver the urgent Gospel message while recognising the complexity of timing.

MCF-A Centurions

Thank you to our generous supporters, both Centurions and Donors. We have not reached our goal of one hundred Centurions yet. Currently there are 46 Centurions: 37 listed below, with 9 not published to remain anonymous. MCF also has 28 Donors. If you would like to become a Centurion, please fill in the Centurion form provided on page 19 or at <http://mcf-a.org.au/become-a-centurion/>.

LTCOL (Ret'd)	Russell	Bielenberg
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CHAP (Res)	Eric	Burton
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AB	Luke	Eglinton
Mrs	Rhonda	Farag
WO2	Martin	Fisher
BRIG	Dan	Fortune
CPL	Jason	Gardner
Ms	Susan	Hannigan
Mr	Sam	Hays
SQNLDR	John	Herrmann
LTCOL	David	Horton
LTCOL (Ret'd)	Alan	Howes
Mr	Jon	Laird
CAPT - Army	Peter	Liston
CFN	Cam	Lovering
LCPL	Beau	Macleane
Mr	Warren	McGuire
LCDR	Anne	Mena
MAJ	Marcaus	Muller
SQNLDR	Adam	Paull
Mr	Jim	Phillipps
LCDR (Ret'd) & Mrs	Steve & Jan	Plumb
Dr	Doug	Randell
RADM	Trevor	Ruting
LT (Ret'd)	Max	Schibrowski
CHAP	Gary	Stone
CMDR	Dan	Sutherland
LCDR	David	Sutherland
WO2	Darren	Thomas
LCDR	Bruce	Vandeppeer
LTCOL	Jamie	Van Heel
LTCOL	Scott	Watkins
LT	Shannon	Watson



Forum of Christian Military Ministries

The 2016 Forum of Christian Military Ministries (FCMM) was conducted over two days at the Stromlo Christian Church Hub in August 2016 just prior to the Defence Christian's Dinner. It was facilitated by LTCOL Phil McMaster of the Navigators. The Forum is an annual gathering of various military Christian ministries that meet together and share what God has been doing in their organisations, pray for each other and to produce and maintain strong ties of unity.

Like the 2016 seminar Hope was also the theme for the FCMM and as well as hearing updates from various ministry leaders we had the privilege of hearing from special guests who challenged us in how we might be concerned for those in our circles who are suffering and need the hope of Jesus in their lives. We heard about facing cancer, the impacts of PTSD and practical ideas of how we can be supporting Defence members in our midst. In addition we also were joined by some international guests: Phil Exner from ACCTS in the USA and Al and Linda MacKinnon from Military Life in NZ. Having the extra insights was valuable.

Prior to having dinner together, Al (from Military Life) shared on the Thurs evening about some of the challenges in juggling family, Church and ministry commitments. This provided an insightful view of our dependence on God and making sure that our family are our priority ministry.



An important feature this year was having the current ministry leaders renew the FCMM covenant as a recommitment to unity between the ministries. The last time this was signed was 2002. This declaration of unity was publically signed at the Defence Christians' Dinner on the Friday night. We serve one God together and want to work together for his kingdom; and this covenant and the yearly Forum are great ways to keep reminding us all of our unity in Christ and challenging us to find ways to work together more into the future.

The next FCMM is planned to be conducted in Canberra in before the 2017 Defence Christians' Dinner. It will be hosted by MCF.

Forum of Christian Military Ministries - Contact Information

Military Christian Fellowship of Australia

Equipping, encouraging and supporting Military Christians to build the Kingdom of God in the ADF.

02 6266 4950 | mcf.office@defence.gov.au | www.mcf-a.org.au

FOCUS Military Ministry

Building the Kingdom of God through people in the Military.

02 6112 8053 | network@focusmilitary.org.au | www.focusmilitary.org.au

The Australian Navigators

Lead On.

02 8814 5006 | nav_office@navigators.org.au | www.navigators.org.au

Solid Rock Ministries

Christian support groups for military wives/female partners.

0412 720 069 | solidrockdefence@gmail.com | www.solidrockministries.com.au

Red Shield Defence Services

Welfare & Morale support with a listening ear.

Practical and spiritual support through God's love.

0407 830 488 | <https://salvos.org.au/rsds/>

Everyman's Welfare Services

Living and Proclaiming the Message of Christ to Defence

02 6055 2988 | admin@everymans.org.au | www.everymans.org.au

Army Chaplains

Provide religious ministry and pastoral care to service members and their families.

www.army.gov.au/Army-life/Health-and-welfare/Chaplaincy-support

Air Force Chaplains

Provide religious ministry and pastoral care to service members and their families.

<http://airforce.gov.au/chaplains>

Navy Chaplains

Provide religious ministry and pastoral care to service members and their families.

www.navy.gov.au/chaplains



Forum of Christian Military Ministries Covenant

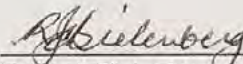
Recognising that all who in Christ are members of the one body, and that our ministries are often co-located, we will make every effort to:

- Love one another
- Pray for one another
- Encourage one another
- Support one another
- Meet with one another
- Communicate with one another
- Coordinate with one another
- Cooperate with one another


In accordance with the scriptures, to the end that Jesus Christ might be glorified.

Signed 5th August 2016 by:


Association for Christian Conferences
Teaching and Service


Russell Bielenberg

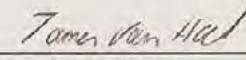
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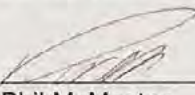
FOCUS Military Ministry


Pete Ritchie

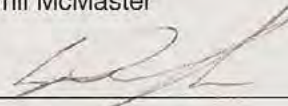
Military Christian Fellowship


James Van Heel

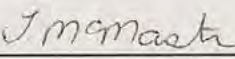
Navigators Military Ministry


Phil McMaster

Red Shield Defence Services


Lyndley Fabre

Solid Rock Ministries


Julianne McMaster



Hope for the future and hope for now

Michael Nott

Hope is most definitely future orientated – we hope for what we don't yet have; we look forward to the future hope we have been promised. Yet this hope is very much a now thing. It's not 'pie in the sky when you die' wishful thinking. It's not a hope in empty promises or a result of 'blind faith'. We have a strong and secure hope based in the promises of our faithful God. We have seen through history (both the Bible and our own past) that God is completely trustworthy in the things we can observe and measure; and so our hope is secure in the things that have not yet come to pass. It is in the future security of our hope that our every day should now be impacted. If I truly have confidence that in the future God will do something, then surely that impacts me now. Let us consider how our future hope should change us now.

Hope	Impact on now
An eternal future with God	Living as citizens of heaven now. Ephesians 2:19, Philippians 3:20 If we are citizens of heaven then surely that will change our behaviour. We should be less caught up in the things of now that won't last and rather than that we will be focused on the things which will last.
Salvation	Having a sure hope of salvation should lead us to proclaim it, rejoice in it, embrace it and wait for it, amongst other things. 1 Chronicles 16:23, Psalm 13:5, Luke 19:8-10, Lamentations 3:26. We are to put on the 'Helmet of Salvation' – guarding our brains because we know it to be true. Isaiah 59:17, Ephesians 6:17, 1 Thessalonians 5:8
Reconciliation	Having been reconciled to God in Christ we should be keen to call others to be reconciled also. 2 Corinthians 5:18-20
Restoration	God is at work in restoring and so ought we. We should be seeking to restore relationships, to bring restoration to broken people, and to be people who work for peace and fullness. Amos 9:11-15
Redemption	The price of our redemption was the blood of Jesus and since we have been bought at such a price, this should impact the way we live now. Ephesians 1:7, 1 Peter 1:17-19, 1 Corinthians 6:19-20
Hope of the Gospel	We hold fast to the truth we have from God and don't just run after the latest fads. We don't change the gospel to suit culture, what people like, or the latest theory. This 'good news' creates a desire that the gospel be known, and can lead us to lay down our rights and seek to be all things to all people. The gospel should not change but we should be willing to change for the gospels sake. Colossians 1:23, 1 Corinthians 9
Hope beyond Death Hope in Resurrection	No need to fear death. Ezekiel 37, 1 Corinthians 15:54-58 If we truly trust in the resurrection (combined with our sure hope of salvation) then surely death has indeed lost its power over us. We don't need to fear for ourselves if we are in Christ. We might well and healthily be concerned for others who don't trust Christ but for us death holds no fearful sway.
New/Transformed Bodies 1 Corinthians 15:35-44 New/Transformed Heavens and Earth 2 Peter 3:10-12 Revelation 21:1 Genesis 2:15	The image of the future in the Bible for God's people is not floating on clouds in some non-bodily angelic form. Rather we hope in a bodily and fulfilling resurrection on a new earth where God dwells with his people. This means for now we should value the bodies God has given us, not that our bodies will be exactly the same, but rather that we know that they are valuable, for although God will transform them he isn't casting them aside. Like our bodies the earth is also important and should be treated with respect. God created us to be stewards of the Earth and all that's in it. It may not be the same as what it starts and will be drastically cleansed as by fire however once again there is a continuity there that says the earth is important.



Hope	Impact on now
Hope of the second coming of Christ	Jesus is coming back and so we are to be waiting patiently, but we are not to be idle. We are being prepared by doing what we are called to do now. Titus 2:13, Matthew 24:36-47, 2 Thessalonians 3:6-7, 11
Hope of Glory Colossians 1:27	Our hope is not some bland, boring thing. It is true and grand and glorious and should lead us to step out with boldness and rejoicing. 2 Corinthians 3:7-13, Romans 5:2
Hope of Righteousness / Justice Galatians 5:5	We long for a time of justice and righteousness when all will be made right. This desire for such a time should lead us to desire this now and we should seek to bring about justice and righteousness in all corners of society and in peoples lives. This will involve both bringing the gospel message to people as well as bringing social justice. Justice and righteousness is concerned for fullness and wholeness or people and looks to all aspects of this. As well as this it should lead us to prayer as we desire the time that everything will indeed be made right. Psalm 9:18, Revelation 21:4
God's love, faithfulness and grace	The hope we have in God's love, grace and faithfulness can lead us to hope (even in the midst of our failings, our stumbles and our weakness). It can keep us going when in our own efforts we know we would fall. Lamentations 3:21-24, Ezra 10:2.
God's plans	Even if we don't always understand why things might be happening the way they are now we can hold fast to the hope that God has good things in mind. Love him, trust him and give your worries and concerns over to him. Jeremiah 29:11, Romans 8:28.



More could be written here, but this provides a glimpse of the way our hope in future realities should be very much a now thing. I know personally that I find it hard to let such future hope impact me the way it should. Too often I find it easy to focus on that which does not last, which does not take joy in our hope and that does not point others to our hope. Please be praying for me and for one another that we would indeed respond to our great hope in a way that is good and right and worthy of this hope to which we have been called.



Administrator's report

Michael Nott



I have now experienced the key events of the MCF calendar twice. Though some aspects of my role may have become somewhat routine; it has nevertheless been an enriching process as I have continued to gain appreciation for the active service of many in seeking to reach their defence force peers for the gospel. We have big gaps and many challenges, but this is something we can all play a part in. I particularly enjoyed last year's seminar and feel that there were a great and varied group of speakers. I also felt that 'hope' was a good theme unifying the various talks together; which for those who missed the seminar will likely see throughout this edition of Crossfire.

In terms of things to report on, membership at writing is at 649 members. We have been considering how to expand our membership and improvements have been put in place with the recent redevelopment of our website which provides a simplified membership application process via web form.

We still are encouraging members to sign on as Centurions to support MCF through faithful prayer and financial support.

Thank you to all our Centurions as well as the many others who support MCF in so many ways. We have continued to use a couple of social media channels (Facebook and Twitter) and have been working on providing relevant, engaging and helpful content. If you have further thoughts in this area please don't hesitate to contact us at mcf.office@defence.gov.au

The idea of individual MCF groups running their own events, such as a dinner with guest speaker, has been proposed. Events like this can be used to link up with others in your area, to encourage and to reach out. We would love to resource as many such initiatives (of various sorts) as possible if you think that such a thing might be helpful in your region.

Another thing I hope to do is work on the development of ADF-relevant Christian literature, media, and resources. Though I have time to assist with such things as part of my role, I don't have a military background and so would appreciate for those who do, and who have stories and knowledge to share, to be a part of such a process. There is a huge range of topics that we can be looking at including: evangelism; church support for military members and families; physical, mental and spiritual health; deployment resources; testimonies; and so on. Remember our greatest resource is not our website, this magazine, nor our social media presence (though these can definitely be good things) – the greatest resource is you! All the many individuals, who in your own ways, encourage others, sharing your lives and witnessing to the truth found in Christ.



MCF-A Representatives

With the wide spread nature of Defence, MCF has Area Representatives who aim to connect with members and others in their local area. Some will have a small group that you can be put in touch with. Some MCF-A groups remain in touch via emails, others meet regularly.

To begin a group, please contact the MCF office at mcf.office@defence.gov.au and it will be listed on our website www.mcf.org.au

As Defence is a very 'moving' employer (as in postings), the names below often change – so please be willing to step-up and fill a vacancy. The leader of the group ensures that all members and those on their email distribution list are aware of the activities of their group and receive encouragement through their email contact.

At time of publication vacancies exist at every Defence Base, Installation, Ship, etc that is not listed below! Please be in touch.

ACT

Brindabella Business Park

Ms Millie Milliken
colleen.milliken@defence.gov.au

Campbell Park Offices

Mr David Coleman
david.coleman1@defence.gov.au

Russell Offices

Mr Glenn Thomas
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NSW

Coffs Harbour Area

LTGEN (Ret'd) Barnabas Masih
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DSTO Sydney - Eveleigh

Mr Timothy Dell
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Holsworthy Barracks

CHAP Ricky Su
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Orchard Hills

Mr Peter Toland
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Penrith

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RAAF Base Williamtown

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NT

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QLD

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HMAS Cairns

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RAAF Base Amberley

LAC Fred McAneney
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RAAF Base Townsville

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SA

DSTO Edinburgh

Hampstead Barracks

Keswick Barracks

MAJ Geoff Robertson
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TAS

Anglesea Barracks

Derwent Barracks

NHQ Tasmania

Warrane Barracks

CHAP Scott Sargent
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Kokoda Barracks

Patterson Barracks

Youngtown Barracks

Padre Steve Cloudsdale
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VIC

Bandiana

Chief Commissioner Ken Matthews
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Mrs Pam Smith
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WA

Leeuwin Barracks

Irwin Barracks

Campbell Barracks

SGT Jim Skett
james.skett@defence.gov.au

If your area is not listed and you are interested in starting a group, please contact the MCF Office at:
mcf.office@defence.gov.au
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Dept of Defence
Canberra ACT 2600
02 6266 4950



Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.

Romans 12:12