

F&C

FOR GOD AND COUNTRY



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Comments and/or articles are welcome and should be sent to the attention of the managing editor. Include your full name, social security number (for payment purposes) and complete mailing address with all entries. Sorry, items submitted will not be returned unless you include a stamped self-addressed envelope. Authors may be paid for articles and/or photographs used in this publication. Stock photographs used in this publication are obtained from Photos.com unless otherwise noted.

The National Service Organization is the official military-relations office of the Adventist Church. Its primary mission is to provide resources and spiritual support for Seventh-day Adventist military-related personnel.

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Serve the LORD with gladness: come before his presence with singing.

Know ye that the LORD he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.

PSALMS 18:1-3

TRANSITIONS

By Gary R. Councell, Associate
Director/Military Endorser

Summer months often mean moving for military members and their families. Having made twenty moves, Joyce and I have experienced the dynamics of such transitions.

After securing economy quarters, Joyce left Los Angeles with three small children to join me in Giebelstadt, Germany. On that first overseas flight, the plane developed engine trouble (fire), resulting in an emergency landing and passengers making emergency exits. Delayed in the days before emails and cell phones, I waited a day for the family to arrive in the Frankfurt International Airport. Of all the problems in the world, that probably was not one of them, but for us at the time the incident caused some temporary consternation.

Military Permanent Change of Station (PCS) orders often mean putting household goods (HHG) in storage, entrusting your HHG to commercially contracted movers, then trying to resolve claims for damaged and missing items. Children switch schools and friends; spouses must turn another house into “home,” locate new resources and find a new job. If you have served in the military for even a few years, you know the scenario.

Moving causes change in life. Change creates stress and stress can bring disharmony to even the best of relationships. It can interrupt plans, goals and lifestyle. Change is part of living, and as a constant fact of life, we must learn to cope and manage it well, or it can become a negative, controlling force.

Humans are creatures of habit, and we soon develop those habits and routines that are convenient and make us as comfortable as possible. When change threatens our present lifestyle, we react with the natural defense mechanisms of fight (resist) or fright (deny or flee). Even positive events like graduations, weddings, birth of a child, promotions, new assignment (one you always wanted) bring stress that accompanies such change.

Change surfaces emotions that are often directed at those we feel closest towards and are safe: spouses, children or friends. Those feelings can be constructive or destructive. Negative responses usually take the form of fears, often unfounded, and anger, often unjustified. That anger can be externalized towards others, or internalized and expressed as withdrawal, inactivity and depression. Some try to mask their anger or fear with alcohol and illicit drug use. These reactions are unhealthy and harmful.

Genesis 12 relates the story of Abram leaving Ur in Iraq for an undisclosed location called a “Promised Land.” Imagine receiving a Request for Orders (RFO) like that! “Sarai, we’re moving. I just got orders – from God! I’m not sure about the new assignment, but it is supposed to be a better place.” What kind of emotions would that evoke?

“Abram, how can some unknown place out West be better than Ur? Ur is the capital of the Chaldees and center of Sumerian culture. We have shopping, schools, temples, friends and family here. This is our home. I don’t want to leave.”

Imagine moving without the support of a Transportation Office and Atlas, Mayflower or United van lines. Have you ever tried herding hundreds of animals on a long expedition at an average of ten to fifteen miles per day? Though “Father of the Faithful” and a “Friend of God,” YAWEH had to repeatedly reinforce His “orders” to Abram, first at Ur, then Haran and later in Canaan. Abram’s Permanent Change of Station (PCS) took him nearly 1,500 miles over the hump of the Fertile Crescent down into the “Land of the Amorites.” The Promised Land contained no Holiday Inns, McDonalds or shopping malls. Ancient historical narratives describe the land quite differently than we see it today. The cities were walled fortresses. The inhabitants were pagan idolaters, yet hospitable. No wonder when drought dogged the land, Abram headed for Egypt and the comforts of civilization. Abram and Sarai were much like you and I. Their experience has similarities to our handling the stress of transitions and offers some insights for us as Christians:

1. Accept change with a positive attitude – it is basic to life, promotes growth, stimulates interest, aids discovery, opens opportunities, gives adventure and enhances quality of life. Look for good and see the proverbial glass as half full instead of empty.

2. Prepare for change by recognizing the negatives – it can threaten one’s accustomed level of comfort and security, cause inconvenience, hardship and expense, create stress, and produce defensive responses. Jonah reacted the opposite of Abram.

3. Become solution-oriented rather than problem-fixated. During their wilderness sojourns the Children of Israel longed for the past and the “flesh pots of Egypt.” See Numbers 11.

4. Believe you are a child of God. The Scriptures declare over 3,500 promises of what God will do for us. He does not lie. When has God ever failed you?

5. Trust, exercise faith based on the evidences of past care.



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MY CHRISTIAN JOURNEY AS A SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST

By Dr. Tom Waters

EDITOR'S NOTE: The following article is Part Two of a four part series that For God and Country will feature during 2007.
Part II - Another Trial – My Dream-Pilot Training

As a TSgt (with promotion orders for MSgt) in the Illinois ANG, I had been accepted into the Stuart School of Business at the Illinois Institute of Technology. I was also given a partial scholarship and accepted into the AFROTC program to be commissioned a second lieutenant upon graduation. Also along with this was my dream to become an Air Force pilot if I could get an “age waiver” and be accepted into pilot training. I prayed that the age waiver would be granted. I also requested a waiver that I be exempt from the traditional four or six-week AFROTC Summer Camp since, as a senior NCO, I felt it was a waste of government funds to “teach me” how to wear the uniform, AF Customs & Courtesies, and other things about the Air Force that I already knew. My instructor, Major Hinkle, told me that my chance of getting exempted from summer camp was “slim to none.” Both waivers were submitted to Brig. General White through the Professor of Aerospace Studies (PAS). General White assured me that he would take my “case” to the Pentagon.

School (full-time) and work (full-time) along with working in the church kept me very busy but still able to trust the Lord each day to guide me. The wonderful day came when Pastor Robert Jones in Chicago, Illinois finally baptized me as a Seventh-day Adventist Christian on October 23, 1971.

I determined then that I would serve the Lord with all my heart. I also realized that if I was selected for pilot training I would not be able to remain faithful to God because I would have to train six days a week with only Sunday off. But that was my dream and I needed to know if it was also God’s dream for me.

One Monday in January 1972, the Professor of Aerospace Studies (PAS) called me into his office to congratulate me since my age waiver had been approved and he told me that I had been selected for pre-pilot training as a college AFROTC Cadet. He also informed me that I had received the *first ever* exemption from AFROTC Summer camp. God truly is good.

I went home and prayed about the pilot training approval. I called the pastor and some of the church members. We all prayed together that the decision made to accept (or reject) the pilot training offer would be made to the glory of God.

On Tuesday, I informed the PAS that I *could not* accept the pre-pilot training slot. My dream to serve God was stronger than my dream to serve myself.

The day before being commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant, I received my BS Degree from the Illinois Institute of Technology in May 1973.

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6. Seek God’s will. Communicate via prayer and listening to God. He has promised to guide and direct us. Psalm 32:7-11. How can we expect the Lord to help us if we have no intention to follow His leading? God uses a picture puzzle to reveal His plan for us:

- a. Scriptures – conform to the principles of God’s will as revealed in His Word.
- b. Holy Spirit – guides us into all truth and the way we should go; the Comforter.
- c. Conscience – values educated by the Bible.
- d. Common sense – not everything spiritual tastes bad or causes privation.
- e. Circumstances – opened and closed doors.
- f. Counselors – committed Christians; safety in a multitude of advisors.
- g. Support groups – network, family, civic, clubs (hobby) and chapel/church.

7. When laid out singly, apart from one another, no picture emerges. Until they are joined together they are an incomplete revelation of God’s will, but when interlocked, they form a more composite picture of God’s plan. In this process of discernment we should ask ourselves three questions that are vital for knowing our own wills and how they relate to discovering God’s will.

- a. Am I spending time daily seeking to learn God’s will?
- b. Am I trying to discern God’s will, or am I merely wanting God to rubber stamp and sanction my own will?
- c. Do I have the courage to do God’s will once I know what it is?

The bottom line is trusting God no matter what the circumstances, or how convenient or comfortable it is. He is Sovereign and can bring good out of difficulty. Isaiah 65:24 says, before we call, God answers. He has more ways to care for us than we can imagine. He is our God no matter where we are on this earth and in whatever situation we find ourselves. I firmly believe we can depend on Him, because as we commit our ways to Him, He will direct our steps... “God never leads His children otherwise than they would choose to be led, if they could see the end from the beginning and discern the glory of the purpose which they are fulfilling as co-workers with Him.” *Ministry of Healing*, page 479.

More Abundant Retreat

by Chaplain Gary R. Councill

Jesus promised “more abundant life.” John 10:10. Elder Jim Coffin shared how that promise of extra zest in living can be experienced. Elder Coffin was the keynote speaker for the 2007 AMSC-Europe religious retreat at the Armed Forces Recreation Center Edelweiss Lodge and Resort in Garmisch, Germany, 22-25 May 2007. One hundred five attendees enjoyed fantastic fellowship, great food, gorgeous scenery and inspiring devotionals. Though those were wonderful elements of the 54th consecutive Adventist retreat for military members in Europe, the four days revealed other exciting events.

For more than a year the Kaiserslautern Adventist Military Chapel Worship Group has organized Adventist Youth (AY) activities for its many children. Under the leadership of Dr. and Mrs. Tom Waters (Fe), the Adventurer and Pathfinder “Eagles” Clubs provided members a fully developed program that would rival any clubs of their size in the States.

This is a first for overseas military church members. The Sabbath School program snapped to a start with the “Eagles” marching in full dress uniforms, presenting the colors, reciting pledges and demonstrating their achievements towards earning AY classes and honors. Actually, the program was an investiture / promotion service for the young people in all AY classes from Busy Bee through Companion. Chaplain Gary Councill, Associate Director / Military Endorser of Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries gave a brief overview of youth work in the Adventist Church and presented a challenge to the newly invested young people. We salute all the leaders of the K-town group for their vision, care and loving labor in behalf of their youth.

At the close of the worship hour, Dr. Martin Feldbush, Director of Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries in the General Conference, spoke about the wonders of marital commitment and love. Then he invited Chaplain and Mrs. Gordon Weidemann (Janet) to join him and presented them with a special gift for their golden wedding anniversary, which was 4 August 2007. They were completely surprised, even though most guests had signed the anniversary card. Their fifty years together is a model of the values that make marriage what God intended.



On Sunday, after the AMC Directors presented an overview of their department’s work on the global, national and regional levels, families took advantage of a clear alpine day to head for hills. Some hiked, others ventured to the top of the Zugspitz (Germany highest mountain), a few squeezed through the narrow trails of the Partnachklamm, while others shopped or just relaxed. All too soon Monday devotions were over, and brothers and sisters in Christ’s Remnant Church were driving towards home.

Presently, four Adventist Military Chapel Worship Groups offer Sabbath services and other church activities in Europe. You are most welcome to attend and become a part of these fellowships:

1. Aviano, Italy.
2. Kaiserslautern / Landstuhl / Ramstein, Germany.
3. Schweinfurt, Germany (formerly Wurzburg group that recently closed)
4. Schwetzingen and Heidelberg, Germany.

Also, an English-speaking civilian church meets in Darmstadt, whose members were once part of a military group that met on Pioneer *Kaserne* in Hanau before that installation closed.

In addition to Chaplain Gordon Weidemann, AMSC Director and ACM Field Representative for Europe, two Adventist military chaplains are serving in Germany:

Chaplain (Major) James Drake, U.S. Army, works at Pulaski Barracks, Kaiserslautern, Germany; and Chaplain, Major David Buttrick, U.S. Air Force, arrived 30 June 2007 at Geilenkirchen NATO base near Aachen, Germany. These three chaplains wish to know you and are your pastors. Please get to know them.



Known Adventist Fallen Heroes

Global Response to Terrorism

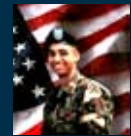
As of July 2, 2007

FIRST OFFICER LEROY W. HOMER, JR., died on September 11, 2001, in Shanksville, PA. He was the first officer on United Flight 93. Homer was a 1987 Air Force academy class graduate, 31st Squadron. He served as a captain in the Air Force, flying the C-141 Starlifter, and was a veteran of Desert Shield and Desert Storm. Later, he was assigned as part of support operations in Somalia. Homer achieved the rank of Captain before his honorable discharge from active duty in 1995.



He continued his military career as a reservist, initially as an instructor pilot with the 356th Airlift Squadron at Wright Patterson AFB, Ohio, then subsequently as an Academy Liaison Officer, recruiting potential candidates for both the Air Force Academy and the Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps. During his time with the Reserves, he achieved the rank of Major.

PFC. DIEGO FERNANDO RINCON, 19 of Conyers, GA, died of injuries sustained in a car bomb incident on March 29, 2003. He was assigned to the 2-7th Infantry, 3rd Infantry Division, Fort Stewart, GA.



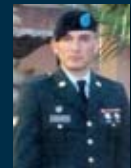
SGT. WILLIAM S. KINZER, JR., 27, of Hendersonville, N.C. died January 26, 2005, in Ad Duluiyah, Iraq, from injuries sustained when a rocket-propelled grenade hit his patrol. Kinzer was assigned to the 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Infantry Division, Schweinfurt, Germany.



SSG STACEY MASTRAPA, 35, of Apopka, FL, killed June 16, 2004, during a mortar attack when mortar rounds hit his camp in Balad, Iraq. He was assigned to the 351 Military Police Company, 95th Military Police Battalion, 16th Military Police Brigade, Army Reserve, Ocala, FL.



SPC. JONATHAN D. CADAVERO, 24, of Takoma Park, MD died February 27, 2007, in Baghdad, Iraq, from wounds sustained when an improvised explosive device detonated near his vehicle. He was assigned to the 2nd Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry), Fort Drum, NY.



PFC. JOEY T. SAMS II, 22 of Spartanburg, S.C., died March 21, 2007, at Camp Buehring, Kuwait, of injuries suffered when he was pinned between two vehicles. He was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, Fort Benning, GA.



SSG DAVID MEJIAS, 26 of San Juan, Puerto Rico, died April 1, 2007, in Baghdad, Iraq, of injuries sustained when an improvised explosive device detonated near his vehicle during combat operations. He was assigned to the 2nd Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, Fort Drum, NY.



PFC. TRAVIS F. HASLIP, 20, of Ooltewah, TN, died May 19, 2007, in Baghdad, Iraq, from wounds sustained when an improvised explosive device detonated near his vehicle. He was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, Fort Hood, TX.



