

CALL TO DUTY

VOL. 1, ISSUE 1

NAME CHANGE



Name changes happen for a variety of reasons, and are common in our society. According to Legal Zoom, people change their names for various reasons. A few of them are: not liking their current name, a desire for a less or more “ethnic” name, for religious reasons, or making a political statement, among others. ¹



In a traditional American marriage (i.e., one man, one woman according to God’s plan in Genesis 2:24), the bride assumes her new husband’s last name for her remaining married life. When a child is adopted into a new family, he or she will receive a new name, either first or last names or both. Sometimes, changing the name of a person takes some adjusting, while in other cases, say like, going into the Federal Witness Protection Program, can be a life-altering, drastic, and complete transformation. Thus, a new identity is borne and rebranding takes place.



But what’s in a new name? After all, it is *only* a name ... or *is* it? Just ask Abraham (Abram) or his wife, Sarah (Sarai), when God changed (altered) their names, or Paul from his former self, Saul (transformed). In all three cases, God had BIG plans for each one which entailed name changes to better reflect their mission. (See Genesis 17 and Acts 13)



Since this publication that you are reading right now was established many years ago, it has carried the name “Military Messenger” in an attempt to communicate relevant messages from God’s word to our global military audience. To this end, we will continue but with the modified name of “**CALL TO DUTY.**” This new moniker reflects God’s summoning His chosen people to carry out His mission of delivering the good news of Jesus Christ to mankind, to turn from their sins and call to faithful living. Being duty bound carries “a responsibility to do something because it is legally and morally right to do it ... because it is part of your job.” ²



Many Americans feel a “call to duty” or serving our country in uniform (perhaps this was your case, as it was mine way back in 1972), and especially after 9/11. Those who serve in the National Guard or Reserve respond to the “call to duty” and activation when required. Likewise, God has called you and me to active duty in His spiritual army, the church. Move Out! *God’s Army Strong!*

¹ “Name Changes.” (<https://www.legalzoom.com/articles/top-10-reasons-people-change-their-names>)

² “Duty.” (<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/duty>)



EDITORIAL: AN ARMY OF ONE... ANOTHER



The Army adopted the slogan of “An Army of One” in 2001, to shore up its dwindling recruitments. In theory, it was a good idea but in reality... well, it just didn't quite work out.

In God's spiritual army, the church—every Christian soldier—

while unique and highly-valued (enough for Jesus to die for), is expected to work together in fighting our common enemy, the devil, and his evil forces. Not only does a one-man army concept *not* work in real life, Christians trying to engage the enemy alone are bound to succumb and become a casualty of spiritual warfare.

It is foolish to think we can live each day without the support of fellow Christian warriors and trying to get by without donning God's armor (e.g., spiritual battle rattle) found in Ephesians chapter six. It also takes every person using his or her spiritual KSAs—knowledge, skills, and abilities or talents—to help defeat the enemy and live victoriously in spiritual freedom. Notice there is no “I” in **TEAM**; rather, it **Takes Every Available Member** to

fill the ranks of God's army to form an effective fighting force.

Many people, including Christians, often prefer to go it alone John Wayne style—just “me and (maybe) the Lord.” Satan loves this kind of brashness, as it makes his job so much easier to discourage and defeat you. Don't be fooled: whether you realize it or not, his sinister spiritual snipers have you in their sights and are locked, cocked, and ready to rock! Being alone without a spiritual battle buddy to back you up, you're a ready-made target. To put it another way, Satan is like a stalking lion (1 Peter 5:8), quietly surrounding its prey, ready in a instant to pounce and devour its next MRE (meal-ready-to-eat).

Several terms are frequently used in the military that reflect a personal and professional bond: comrade-in-arms, brother-in-arms, battle brother, wingman, and shipmate. The Army assigns its soldiers a “battle buddy” to assist them in and out of combat, someone they can trust with their life. These cohorts are skilled in keeping an eye on one another and make sure they do the right thing; they also provide camaraderie and a fraction of emotional and physical support.

Christians serving in the military also need a spiritual battle buddy, those who will watch out for each other's welfare. Be An Army of One... *Another*. ~ EL

LEADERSHIP LINK

AUTHORITY

Jesus, probably the best leader in all of history, demonstrated His leadership by His authority, not His power. Authority is the ability of one to influence people to perform their best while power would demand the action of people and expect their performance.

I am certain you are thinking, well, Jesus was uniquely gifted to influence people. Yes, indeed He was; however, I submit to you that He also possessed the power to command people to do the will of His Father, but, other than the Great Commission, I don't think there is another account where Jesus used His power to actually influence people. He certainly used power to command illness to leave, demons to be expelled, weather to be altered, as well as other miraculous signs. But He only used this display power in those instances for God's honor and glory, not for any benefit that He might receive.

The apostle Paul was another great leader of his time and influencer of people. He provides us with a laundry list of traits that leaders should display in order to establish the respect of authority they desire. Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness,

goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control (see Galatians 5:22-23a).

Compare these qualities with a list of attributes some very influential leaders in the country have developed in their think-tank groups in regards to good leaders; honest, trustworthy, good role model, caring, committed, good listener, hold people accountable, treat people with respect, encouraging, positive enthusiastic attitude and appreciate people. Note how similar these lists are.

Are you displaying the traits of a good leader? If not, why not? In the very same context in which Paul provides the list, he goes on to say, “*against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other*” (Galatians 5:23b-26).

Mel Caraway is retired from the U.S. Army and is a graduate of the Bear Valley Bible Institute in Denver. He serves as the Associate Editor of **Call to Duty**. He and his wife, Caren, worship with the Littleton Church of Christ in the Denver area. You can reach Mel at mgcaraway@comcast.net.

AS YOU WERE...

"... three words spoken quickly by non-commissioned and commissioned officers who choose to drop rank and get to business, is meant to put troops 'at ease.'"

~ <http://militaryexperience.org/as-you-were-vol-1/>



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CALL OF DUTY

SPIRITUAL WARFARE

Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground...

Ephesians 6:13

Pray
Through
Stressful
Difficulties
(James 1:2-8)

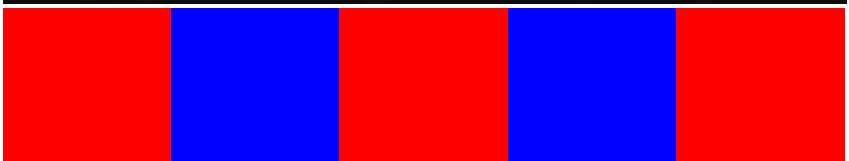
HAND-TO-HAND COMBAT

WHAT THE HEART HAS ONCE KNOWN.
 IT SHALL

NEVER FORGET

I have loved thee with an everlasting love.
 JEREMIAH 31:3

SPIRITUAL FITNESS



BATTLEFIELDS & BLESSINGS

Bible in a Zip-lock Bag

Corporal Will Brandon, U.S. Marine Corps

TO OUR HORROR, the corporal to whom we had given the AT-4 fired off an illumination round from his M203 grenade launcher, but because of the wind, the round drifted back toward us. Its tiny parachute carried it back to the ground, completely giving away our position.

"We were dead for sure now," I thought. I just knew the enemy tanks would loom out of the dust and darkness at any moment ... "Can you see anything?" I asked. "No, nothing yet, too much dust," Mejia replied. "Take a break. I'll wake you if anything happens."

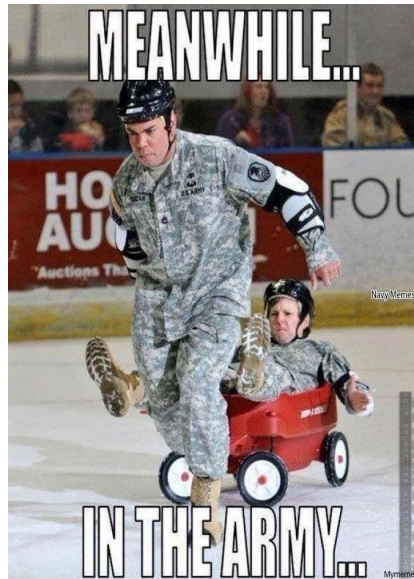
I pulled a small zip-lock bag from my uniform's left breast pocket. Here I kept a pocket-size Bible the USO (United Services Organizations) distributed at Aviano Air Force base in Italy, where we stopped en route to Kuwait. Also in the bag was a plastic wallet-size picture holder with photographs of my girlfriend in Ohio and my family back

in Manitoba, Canada.

After reading several versus [sic] from the Psalms, I returned the Bible to the bag and looked at the photo album. In my mind I said goodbye to everyone I loved. Then I returned the pictures to the bag and prayed. I thanked God for the life he had given me, my parents, and the people I loved. I asked God to take my life into his hands and do with me what he willed. When I finished, I closed my eyes, laid down on the bench, and miraculously fell asleep.

"I lie down and sleep; I wake again, because the LORD sustains me. I will not fear the tens of thousands drawn up against me on every side."
(Psalm 3:5-6)

Cook, Jane Hampton, Jocelyn Green, John Croushorn. *Battlefields & Blessings. Stories of Faith and Courage from the War in Iraq & Afghanistan.* God and Country Press. Chattanooga, TN. 2009. pp.15-16

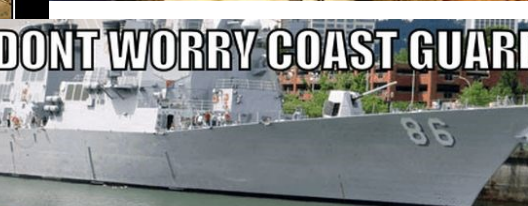


THE DARK SIDE HAS A PENSION PLAN!



MARINE CORPS MOTIVATION

It often comes from the mouth of a Senior Drill Instructor.



What could be a more stupid task than swabbing the flight deck?

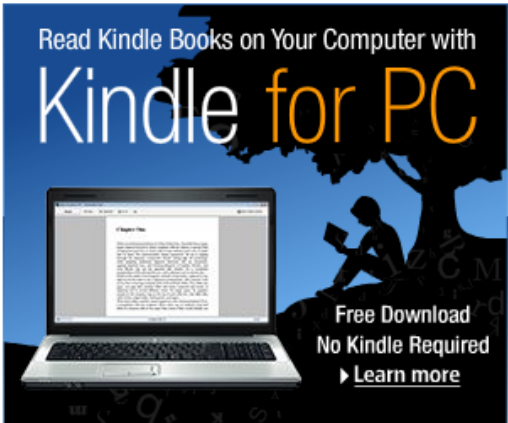


Swabbing the flight deck while it's raining.

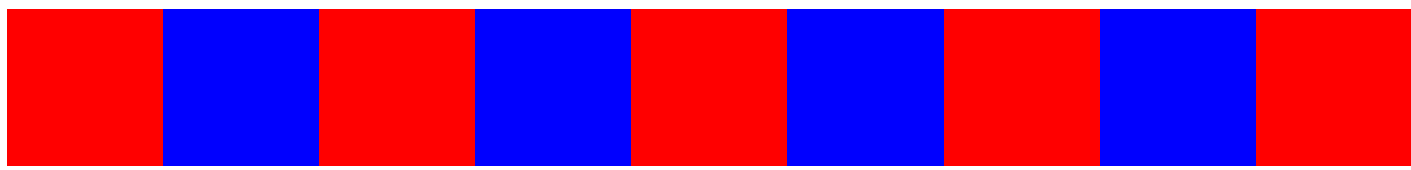
NEW MILITARY MINISTRY BOOK



“Spiritual Battle Rattle: God’s Armor” and its subsequent volume, “Spiritually Wounded Warriors,” are tools to help Christians serving in the U.S. Armed Forces, along with their families, whether living abroad on a military installation in Europe or Asia, deployed to a combat zone, on sea duty, or at home in the States. Whether serving in the military or not, the reader will find these books timely, useful, and encouraging in their daily lives. Living the Christian life while serving in the military can be very difficult and challenging, yet it can and must be done. There are tremendous blessings awaiting those who choose to humbly serve on active duty in God’s spiritual army. All who have helped write these books have honorably served in the Army, Air Force, Navy, and Marine Corps; many having retired from their respective service branch. Contributing authors share their unique military background and experience, in addition to their knowledge and insight of the Word of God, the Holy Bible. By serving and encouraging one another, Christians can be strong--God’s Army Strong!



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COUNSELOR'S CORNER

“PLAN B”

The military and most civilian companies and agencies are all about having contingency plans—what needs to happen “if.”

The past year or so has definitely challenged what we thought was going to happen in our life. My plans changed and I'm sure yours did too when the pandemic hit. It changed a lot of things.

That's easy to point to and look at for something that has affected everyone and everything. But let's get personal. Do you remember the day you discovered or realized your life wasn't going to turn out quite the way you thought? Maybe you've thought you'd be promoted by now or have that dream assignment or be at this level or making this much money.

Our plan A comes to an abrupt stop, and you're not sure if there even is a plan B . . . Sometimes the disappointments are clearly our fault—we made a poor decision or took the wrong path. Sometimes another person's poor decisions are to blame. Sometimes, honestly, it's a little of both. And then, there are the times when life just seems to suddenly fall apart with no explanation.

So, what do you do with a shattered dream or an unmet expectation? What do you do when your life isn't turning out the way you thought it would or should? If you are experiencing a “why is this happening?” situation, try using this question to get perspective. What can I learn from this? This may strike you as a cliché because you've heard it before, but there's a reason why you keep hearing it. It's a powerful question; it puts you back in control of the situation and might even give you wisdom to better handle or even avoid similar situations in the future.

All too often growth comes through struggle. Moses, Abraham, David, Job, Joseph, and Peter (to name only a few) all faced their moments of struggle and grew in the process. Psalms 119:72 says *“It is good for me that I was afflicted, so that I may learn Your statutes.”* Turning negatives into positives is part of God's job description (Romans 8:28) and you become part of that by asking this question. What does this make possible?

This question may be even more powerful than the first one. Asking this question moves you from thinking about the past, over which you have no control, to the future.

I can't think of any better example than in the Old Testament book of Ruth. A quick re-cap: Naomi has to leave her homeland (Judah) and all that she knows because of a famine and journeys to land (Moab) that is different for her, her husband and two sons. Then in the midst of that her husband dies, then 10 years later, both her sons die. This is no small situation in what we call the patriarchal age. As a widow she has no name, no identify and no rights and will probably live her life out as a beggar.

All this in just the first five verses of chapter one. So she starts the move back to Judah, but she's moving back with no future and no hope, as she tells her daughters-in-laws: *“You must go back, my daughters,’ Naomi answered. ‘Why do you want to come with me? Do you think I could have sons again for you to marry? Go back home, for I am too old to get married again. Even if I thought there was still hope, and so got married tonight and had sons, would you wait until they had grown up?’”* (Ruth 1:11-13)

The one daughter-in-law eventually leaves, but the other, Ruth, says: *“Don't beg me to leave you or to stop following you. Where you go, I will go. Where you live, I will live. Your people will be my people, and your God will be my God. And where you die, I will die, and there I will be buried”* (Ruth 1:16,17). Ruth had experienced similar catastrophes as Naomi had; she had lost a husband, but was willing to go to a foreign land and leave everything and every one that was familiar.

There's no real indication she asked or even thought about this question, but the result was the same: she was open to what was possible. If you don't know the rest of the story, then I encourage you to read it. You will see God's hand unfolding events that she would not have even dreamed were possible.

So, when plans/goals/dreams go awry, two questions that will help you see there really aren't any Plan A or Plan B -- *“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”* (Jeremiah 29:11).

Darren Crowden retired from the U.S Air Force and works for the Defense Logistics Agency at Redstone Arsenal in Huntsville, Alabama. He has a Masters Degree in Mental Health Counseling from Amridge University, and uses his education and vast experience to minister within, and outside, the church. Darren has previously served as an elder of the Lord's church in Pennsylvania for many years. He and his wife, Jennifer, are active members of the Chase Park Church of Christ in Huntsville, Alabama. You can reach Darren at cnerrad@yahoo.com

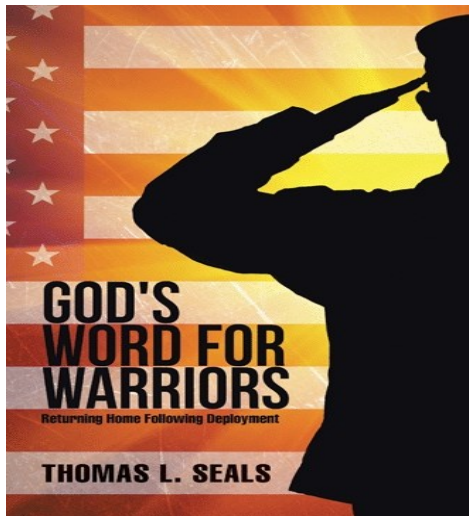
GOD'S WORD FOR WARRIORS

“BE QUIET: FEAR NOT (ISAIAH 7:4)

Recently, in the midst of our present challenges concerning the coronavirus, my young grandson responded to the voices of fear surrounding various conversations from the concerns of individuals: “Why are we so worried? If we die we will be with Jesus!” Very simplistic, I might think, but in reality a great truth for believers. I am reminded of the words of Scripture that Jesus uses when he states that from the mouths of young children come words that “still the enemy” (Psalms 8:2).

I do not wish to minimize the emotion of fear, for fear is a wholly normal sensation. It can be a most useful feeling, even a life-saving emotion when it moves us away from dangers to our well-being. Yet, fear can become disproportionate and become a problem in that it can be paralyzing. I borrow from, and take out of context, the words of Rudyard Kipling: “If you can keep your head when all about you are losing theirs....and if you can trust....” things will be viewed in a different manner. To illustrate, I offer the following simple suggestions:

1) Share your feelings with others, above all, with God:



**HEROES DON'T
WEAR
CAPES....THEY
WEAR DOG
TAGS.**

~shields of strength

“Cast all your anxieties on him, for he cares about you” (1 Peter 5:7). Our Father knows our anxieties exist and desires for us to share them with him.

2) Accept brief periods of fear for such are an indispensable element in our humanity. Even the Apostle Paul had such anxiety in his life at times (cf. 1 Corinthians 2:3). The key is learning to fear the right things and at the right time.

3) Learn to live for today. Jesus said, “Do not be anxious about tomorrow....Let the day's own trouble be sufficient for the day” (Matthew 6:34) Most of what I fear in the future never comes to pass.

4) If you have a copy of my book, God's Word for Warriors, take a few minutes and read chapter 7, “Overcoming Fear and Anxiety.” This will give you further insight into this subject-matter of fear. Fear is a common experience in our lives, but fear does not have to control one who lives in an atmosphere of faith. The same Jesus who calmed the Sea of Galilee will also redeem us from our fears. I close with this hope-filled promise from God's word: “We know that in everything God works for good with those who love him” (Romans 8:28). ~ Tom Seals

VETERAN'S MINISTRY RESOURCE

**Founder/President/Executive Director
GOD'S WORD FOR WARRIORS**

Tom served in the USMC from 1957-1960, with the 3rd Marine Division in Okinawa, Japan, followed by several years with the U.S. Government in Europe. He is a former 28-year Professor of undergraduate Bible courses as well as Biblical ethics and textual studies at Lipscomb University in Nashville, TN and has served as Chaplain to campus Veterans. He received his BA in Biblical languages from Lipscomb in 1971, his M.T.S. degree from Wesley Seminary in Washington, D.C. in 1976, and his D. Min. degree from Memphis Theological Seminary in Memphis, TN, in 1999. In addition, Tom has completed post-doctoral work in Pentateuchal Studies and in Religion, Politics and Social Issues from Vanderbilt University. He has published Proverbs. Wisdom for All Ages, Sermon on the Mount for Modern Living, The Quest for Spiritual Maturity, and God's Word for Warriors. He has served as pulpit minister in Virginia, Tennessee, and Colorado. Tom is actively involved with the Instituto Biblica Interamericano in Lima, Peru, serving as International President.

<https://www.godsword-forwarriors.org/>



American Military Evangelizing Nations

A worldwide ministry of the Manchester Church of Christ

OUR MISSION

- ◆ To support the spiritual growth of the members of the U.S. Armed Forces.
- ◆ Provide opportunities for Biblical knowledge, worship, fellowship, service and evangelism.
- ◆ Fulfill Jesus Christ's call to the Great Commandment (Matthew 22:37-39) and the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20).

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"The Christian Soldier's Creed"
 (adapted from "The Soldier's Creed")

I am a **CHRISTIAN** Soldier.
 I am a **SPIRITUAL** Warrior and a member of **GOD'S** team.
 I serve the people of every nation and live the **LORD'S** values.
 I will always place **GOD'S** mission first.
 I will never accept defeat.
 I will never quit.
 I will never leave a fallen **BROTHER** or **SISTER**.
 I am disciplined, **SPIRITUALLY** and mentally tough, trained and proficient in my **SPIRITUAL** tasks and drills.
 I always maintain my **SPIRITUAL** weapons, my **SPIRITUAL** equipment and my **SOUL**.
 I am knowledgeable and I am proficient in the **SCRIPTURES**.
 I stand ready to deploy, engage, and **LOVE** the enemies of **GOD** in close combat.
 I am a guardian of **SPIRITUAL** freedom and the **LORD'S** way of life.
 I am a **CHRISTIAN** Soldier.



GOD'S ETERNAL PLAN FOR YOU

HEAR the word of God: Romans 10:9-14; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:16-21; Revelation 2:7; 22:18-19

BELIEVE in Jesus as Savior of world: John 3:16; 14:6; 14:23

REPENT of your sins: Luke 13:3,5; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 8:22; 17:30; Revelation 2:5, 16, 21,22; 3:3, 19

CONFESS Jesus before others: Matthew 10:32-33; Romans 10:8-11

BE IMMERSUED into Christ for forgiveness of your sins: Mark 16:15-16; ts 2:36-47; 22:16; Romans 6:3-11; 1 Peter 3:18-22

CALL TO DUTY
(BASE 2 BASE, HEART 2 HEART)

A PUBLICATION OF
 Military OutReach & Encouragement (M.O.R.E.)
 S.E.A.L. (Spiritual Education and Leadership) Training
 Farley Church of Christ, Huntsville, Alabama

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH
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House To House, Heart To Heart is a monthly American magazine. HTH is a customizable, 8 page, color, Christian magazine that works exclusively with Churches of Christ. The publication is printed every month for a total of 12 issues a year and is directly mailed into homes. Each issue contains gospel lessons, and biblical stories. HTH is printed in English, French, and Spanish with other special translations such as Korean.

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