The General expressed deep gratitude to the Roberts for their example and service, and commended them to the crowd as true servants of our Lord Jesus Christ. He said, “When they said yes to the Lord, they meant it. And when they signed a covenant that said we will go wherever we are needed, whenever we are needed, they’ve proved it. They proved that what they signed all those 45 years ago means something. And we want to salute two outstanding leaders of The Salvation Army.”

The service was held at the Dearborn Heights, Mich., Corps, in their home division, Eastern Michigan. Led by Commissioner Harold Hinson, it began with a parade of flags representing the countries where the Roberts have served including the United States, Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay, Kenya and the United Kingdom.

Tributes highlighted the Roberts’ authenticity, compassion, generosity, dedication, joy and unequivocal trust in God to direct their lives and ministry. Representing officers were Lt. Col. Lonnie and Patty Richardson, while Lt. Colonels Mickey and June McLaren represented friends. Representing the family were the Roberts’ daughters, Becky Hurula and Barbara Steffes, who cleverly wove together lessons from their parents’ ministry through song with the help of the Roberts’ grandchildren. The musical presentation was full of memories and laughter and concluded with the entire family singing, “The Family of God.”

In response, Commissioners William and Nancy Roberts shared experiences and insights from their journey. “We could not have written a better story for our lives,” said Commissioner Nancy. Commissioner William added, “We have learned that there is value and fulfillment found in serving—leading by serving.”

Dr. Joseph Baunoch, the Roberts’ nephew, shared a beautiful vocal solo, “His Grace Still Amazes Me.”

Continued on page 8
On the fringes of faith

by Lt. Colonel Renes Smith
Assistant Territorial Secretary for Personnel

I love this time of year! Oh, I know the pace can be frenetic or even chaotic. There are baskets to fill, gifts to buy, kettle stations to put out and pick up, money to count, programs to plan—the list goes on! Still, there’s excitement in the air, and I can’t keep joy from bubbling up!

Have you ever noticed there are distinct moments when people are more open to hearing about God? Early in my orphanage I realized occasions like the birth of a child or death of a loved one presented moments when people on the fringes of faith seemed most open to hearing about God’s love. These were non-negotiable ministry moments for me. They were sacred, holy opportunities not to be missed.

I think Christmas is also a time when people on the fringes of faith crack open the doors of their hearts to the message of God’s love.

Just thinking about past Christmases and the opportunities I’ve had to share my faith fills me with joy. Every Christmas season God has put people in my path who have been ready to hear about His love. They have been in nursing homes and hospitals, at a table registering for Christmas assistance, at a civic party, volunteering, picking up food baskets, counting money at the corps or running the coin machine at the bank, checking out my groceries, wrapping gifts during a women’s auxiliary meeting or praying at the altar on an Advent Sunday.

We Salvationists are blessed. God has provided us unique opportunities to connect with people. While we are undoubtedly busy, people on the fringes of faith, who are ready to hear about God’s love, are right in front of us. Many meet us at our front door.

Are you ready? There’s someone who needs to hear about Jesus, someone who needs to know God loves them. Are your eyes wide open? There’s someone waiting around the corner. Seize the opportunity to share Christ!

‘Let me tell you why you are here. You’re here to be salt-seasoning that brings out the God-flavors of this earth. You’re here to be light, bringing out the God-colors in the world. God is not a secret to be kept. We’re going public with this, as public as a city on a hill. If I make you light-bearers, you don’t think I’m going to hide you under a bucket, do you? I’m putting you on a light stand. Now that I’ve put you there on a hilltop, on a light stand—shine! Keep open house, be generous with your lives. By opening up to others, you’ll prompt people to open up with God, this generous Father in heaven.” Matthew 5:13-16 (The Message)
Twenty years later, Bandmaster Ray Everitt revived his parents’ idea and asked his wife, Dorothy, to host a refreshment period afterward. The carol sing was a hit and introduced the community to the corps’ newly dedicated building.

Today the carol sing attracts an average 350 people, according to Majors Kirk and Carolyn Schuetz, corps officers. Special guests are featured each year, ranging from Army singers and musicians to local church or school choirs or other music groups. Volunteers assist with decorating, band and corps members donate cookies, and advisory board and women’s auxiliary members help serve.

“The entire event is an evangelical outreach with a devotional message, scripture reading, dramatic Bible presentation, prayer and Christian songs and carols, as well as some secular carols,” Major Kirk continued.

He concluded, “We expect this year’s event to be particularly memorable as we recognize Ray and Dorothy Everitt for their outstanding service and contributions to the community over the years.”

For the second year at the Cross Generations Corps in Blue Island, Ill., soldiers, trained in evangelism and ready to share their faith, are helping at the toy shop. It’s a result of a STEPs (Strategic Tool to Engage Potential) goal of having 10 soldiers trained in evangelism and ready to share their testimony with families at the Christmas toy shop. “It was the first time many of our corps people participated in any efforts of Christmas distribution,” said Captain Bersabe Vera, who reported her soldiers were able to talk and pray with every family.

“We want to reach people for God and bring them to The Salvation Army,” said the captain.

In an effort to build her soldiers’ confidence in evangelizing, Captain Bersabe asked Major Joseph Wheeler, then-territorial evangelist and spiritual formation secretary, to teach on evangelism one Sunday after the worship service. The training was a success and soldiers reported they were more ready to reach out and pray with others.

Last year the Cross Generations toy shop served close to 400 families, 100 at a time in hour-long increments. The focus was on family, community and prayer. As soon as a family came into the corps, they were ushered into the chapel for a welcome, prayer, devotional and short Christmas performance. After the performance, families were given the opportunity to pray with soldiers who were standing ready in the chapel, thanks to their training. More than 25 families sought prayer, and four families have since attended a worship service.

Captain Bersabe plans on continuing this more family-oriented approach with outreach and prayer during the Christmas toy shop every year.

A bridge to Blue Island
Helping others: a Christmas

Each holiday season Salvationists spend thousands of hours helping make a happier Christmas for others by sharing the Good News of the birth of Christ and providing practical assistance. Many people in our communities join with us, some making it a lifelong tradition, even one that’s passed down generations. Here are just a few we thought you should meet.

Generations of generosity

by Samantha Hyde

The Murphy family’s history of volunteering with The Salvation Army reaches back at least six generations. Porter Murphy became a living legend among central Indiana bell-ringers, manning his kettle on behalf of the Kiwanis Club with unmatched enthusiasm. His bright pink bell-ringing hat and way with kids made an impression on thousands of shoppers at Indianapolis’ Castleton Square Mall.

“Dad taught us to be involved,” explained his son Bill. “And if you couldn’t put your money there, you put your heart.”

After Porter’s passing, Bill and his brother David decided to “tithe back to the community.” They started with an hourly sponsorship of the WIBC Radiothon benefitting The Salvation Army Bed & Bread Club in Indianapolis, but it wasn’t long before they were ready to tackle more hands-on work that would pass along the lesson of giving to the next generation.

“Our parents learned things that, fortunately, our children never had to learn the hard way,” said David of the values he and his brother witnessed first-hand. “They didn’t hesitate to try to help people who really needed a hand, people who were doing the best they could but just needed a boost, something to push them along in a more successful life.”

The extended Murphy family signed up to volunteer at Coats for Kids at the Indiana State Fairgrounds, an event coordinated by The Salvation Army that helps thousands of kids stay warm each winter.

When the family learned that gloves and hats often run out before the end of the day, they decided to start a new tradition of giving with an annual donation of 3,000 pairs of gloves and 3,000 hats. Now four generations of Murphys help kids choose the perfect hats and gloves each year.

“It’s one of those rare opportunities where you do something, and you get an immediate positive response,” recalled David. “A child’s face literally lights up when they put on that hat that you gave them.”

In 2014 David Murphy connected The Salvation Army with a U.S. Army Reserve unit based out of Indianapolis. During the live broadcast of the WIBC Radiothon, the Murphy family helped stuff hundreds of Christmas stockings for Indiana soldiers overseas in Africa and the Middle East. The care packages were such a success that the Murphys have made a donation to help package more stockings this Christmas. They’ll be back during the 2015 radiothon this month to help assemble the new care packages.

The Murphys continue to find creative ways to give time, talent and treasure to help The Salvation Army in central Indiana.

“The Salvation Army struck a tone and a chord with me,” said Bill. “Because of not only the great work they do in the community, but their efficiencies in putting the money right where the need is. Obviously there’s a lot more need than we can possibly fulfill, but they’re always standing in the breach.”
Ringing half a century

This Christmas season marks 55 years of ringing bells at kettles for 80-year-old Bud Schmitt, who is known throughout the Peoria community as one of The Salvation Army’s biggest proponents.

“Our kettle campaign would not be the same without the help and leadership from Bud Schmitt,” said Chris Kennedy, Heartland divisional development director. “He has organized the effort of the East Peoria Rotary Club for over 35 years and has a handwritten log for each location and the amount raised by the members and their families.”

Bud attributes his dedication to volunteering for The Salvation Army to the influence of his father, who served in WWII and returned with a fondness for The Salvation Army because of the care and commitment the Army showed to men in uniform. Bud and his brother also experienced firsthand the same dedication and care when they served in WWII.

As for Bud’s support during the kettle campaigns, he simply said, “Somebody has to do it, and it might as well be me!”

Thanks to Bud’s efforts the 45-member East Peoria Rotary Club is the top fundraising organization in the community. In its years of volunteering, the club has raised over $300,000, which far exceeds amounts raised by any other service organization.

In recent years Bud has taken on additional responsibilities working with the area kettle coordinators to orchestrate delivery of kettles at check-out counters, restaurants and gas stations. Bud’s unyielding loyalty to the Army even meant once scheduling his kettle routes and collections around major surgery.

Paying it forward

This month Cindy Traylor completes 23 consecutive years serving at The Salvation Army Toy Shop distribution in Grand Rapids, Mich. Not only that, but in the last five she has recruited her daughter, Jamie, 23, to join.

Jamie, who has watched Cindy volunteer for years—not just with The Salvation Army but for other organizations and philanthropic events—didn’t require much convincing to get in on the action. It’s something she’s seen bring joy not only to others but to Cindy as well. “Serving just makes you feel good,” Cindy said.

Both Cindy and Jamie love their yearly task of table host leader, where they ensure clients have the best possible selection of age-appropriate gifts. They’re motivated by seeing the happy looks on parents’ faces when they find the perfect toy.

“When you see a parent get the perfect gift, and it makes their day, it makes you feel great,” Jamie said. Cindy added she loves to think of all the children she is making happy on Christmas morning.

Aside from this, Cindy has an even more personal motivation she believes brings her back to this particular ministry year after year.

“Growing up my family was really poor. My parents didn’t have any money, and I remember at Christmastime all the other kids were so happy, but it wasn’t a joyful time for me. I was worried, ‘Would there be any presents for me?’” recalled Cindy. She felt the pressure and anxiety of going back to school, having someone ask what she’d received and not being able to answer.

“I don’t know if people are really aware of what this ministry means for a child,” said Cindy. “I know what it means. To give a child a gift and know that it will make them smile and feel special is really important to me.”

Toy time!

Mary Jo Williams’ matter-of-fact attitude about serving is refreshing, if not a little unusual. Not only is she in her 35th year of volunteering at The Salvation Army Toy Shop in Minneapolis, Minn., where she manages, organizes and sorts the warehouses’ toy donations, but every year she gives up a week of vacation to do it!

“I’ve never seen what the big deal is about it,” said Mary Jo, who has worked at a social services organization for the last 37 years. “I’m just doing what I’m doing because I enjoy it, and if nothing else, you do it because you can.”

Mary Jo was born and raised in Minnesota, and her parents always encouraged giving back. Now in their 80s, they still volunteer for community groups to this day. Mary Jo’s daughter volunteers regularly as well.

“Sometimes I hear folks say they can’t find the time, but you have to make time for what’s important. That’s real life,” she said.

When Mary Jo started 35 years ago she was the youngest person on the team and enjoyed it from the beginning. Her avenue to volunteering at the toy shop was just about as unassuming as her attitude about serving there—she found a help wanted advertisement in the local paper.

It clicked with her work schedule at the time, and given her background in social services, she was happy to serve people in need and work behind the scenes.

“It’s a hard situation to have to depend on the community for your kids’ Christmas. I enjoy making this easier on everyone—especially the parents,” she said.
730 and Beyond prompts possibilities
by Captain Rachel Stouder

The 730 and Beyond Conference provided an excellent opportunity for both the convergence and divergence of paths leading to the acceptance of God’s invitation to full-time ministry. While the weekend’s emphasis was clearly on officership, delegates could choose one of three different tracks to future leadership.

In the “Experience” track, candidates for the 2018 sessions tasted life at the College for Officer Training for most of the weekend while the “Discover” track exposed prospective candidates to the array of Army ministry opportunities and the “Explore” track encouraged and informed those who believe they’ve been called to officership in the near future.

The conference began on a Friday evening with united worship and a message from Lt. Colonel Ralph Rakiewicz. During Saturday morning devotions, Major Tricia Taube, territorial candidates’ secretary, urged delegates to yearn for contentment while the “Explore” track split into three groups to visit the Chicago North Side Adult Rehabilitation Center, the Chicago Englewood Corps Red Shield Center and the Metropolitan Division’s Emergency Disaster Services warehouse. Many delegates reported how amazed they were by the scope of ministries they observed and some gained new perspectives on how God could use them in the Army.

Major Taube concluded, “Candidates’ weekends are for people who are asking themselves hard questions about ministry and service and who are open to the possibility God is calling them to officership. It’s a safe environment for asking questions and addressing their individual concerns in community with others seeking direction for their lives.”

Sneak peek at college life
by Makayla Broer

Friday night worship at the 730 and Beyond Conference was great, but the really exciting part for me came at the evening’s end when those of us registered in the conference’s “Experience” (candidates) track departed to stay at the College for Officer Training (CFOT) for the rest of the weekend.

On Saturday morning, Major Steve Yoder led prayers and spoke on the differences between a calling from God and a good idea of your own. “If it’s hard, beyond your wildest dreams and outside of your comfort zone, then it’s God’s idea. He’ll never call you to what you can handle because then you won’t need Him.” He then asked us to chew on three words, “Who am I?” The rest of the weekend would be about turning questions into exclamations, he added.

We learned about life at the CFOT from classes, spiritual formation and community to childcare, food service and uniforms. It was great to get insights from cadets, making me even more excited to be part of it!

After a whirlwind tour of Chicago, that evening Lt. Kelly Hanion, Uplin, III., corps officer, challenged us to live with convictions of steel.

I left the conference feeling full of joy, peace and excitement about my calling. I was blown away by the intentionality of every person involved in the event, which was filled with glorifying God and listening to the Holy Spirit.

Christmas in the trenches
This year with the 40th anniversary of the end of Viet Nam War, we share a Christmas reflection by Major Herb Fuqua.

The 115 degree heat had melted into the high 90’s by Christmas Eve 1968. It was my fifth night in Viet Nam. Jungles and rice paddies would be my home for the next 360 days. My new companion? An M-60 machine gun. I had been assigned as a ground pounder in the 25th Infantry Division.

A small band of us “new guys” were in green cots and ordered to stay in the confines of a small out-door barbed wire holding pen.

As a lifelong Salvationist I would normally be found on Christmas Eve playing my horn at a red kettle stand. My mind drifted back to 1966 in downtown Minneapolis where our brass ensemble, comprised of Steve Feldman, Major Harold Hulthen and Bill Roberts (son), filled the 10-degrees night air with notes of hope pointing to the Christ of Christmas.

A famished mosquito eating supper on my sweaty 20-year-old neck snapped me back to the present and my incredible loneliness. The haunting question resurfaced, “What would happen to my beautiful young wife, expecting our first child in eight weeks, if I didn’t make it back?”

Suddenly, “Joy to the World” pierced my thoughts and the sticky darkness. It was being played by a brass quartet on the back of a U.S. Army truck going by. The arrangement sounded so familiar. In Viet Nam? Could it be?

Begging the sergeant guarding us for permission to run after the truck, I yelled up to the first cornet player, “What music books are you using?”

“I have no idea,” the soldier shot back while flipping to the familiar green book cover of The Salvation Army’s Caroler’s Favorites.

“Hey, I know that book inside out! God bless you guys and have a Merry Christmas!” I hollered as they rolled down the path.

As I walked back to my “holding pen” with a grin and a warm heart, God put His hand on my shoulder and whispered “It’s going to be OK, Herb. I am with you and so is your beloved Salvation Army.”

Only the Lord knows how Salvation Army band books ended up in Viet Nam. All I know is sleeping on a green Army cot in 95-degree mosquito-infested heat on Christmas Eve wasn’t so bad after all.
Words of Life

January – April, 2016

The Power of Prayer

Prayer is the theme for this year’s Words of Life. This edition zeroes in on the power of prayer as seen at work in three Old Testament books: Genesis, Deuteronomy and Leviticus. In the New Testament we focus on the beauty of the Lord’s Prayer. Prayer’s power is also seen in the Psalms and Proverbs, as well as in various songs and hymns. Guest writer Colonel Henrik Andersen takes us into the Easter season. May the Holy Spirit continue to remind us of the power of prayer in our everyday lives!

Words of Life, The Salvation Army’s international devotional by Major Beverly Ivany, is available from Resource Connection (shop.salvationarmy.org or 1-800-937-8896) or digitally from Amazon.com

Send season’s greetings

It’s easier than ever to send Christmas greetings to Centrals serving internationally.

Captains Jonathan and Catherine Fitzgerald
Serving in Jamaica

Captains Sergii and Tatiana Kachanov
Serving in Canada

Captains Christopher Marques
Serving in Japan

Major Cynthia Shellenberger
Serving in Australia

Captains Andrew and Melissa Shielis
Serving in Latvia

Visit our “Get Connected” website for email and postal addresses.

It’s been a privilege

“T’s not about me. It’s about serving a very faithful God. What a privilege it has been,” said Major Barbara MacLean of her retirement. This edition zeroes in on the power of prayer as seen at work in three Old Testament books: Genesis, Deuteronomy and Leviticus. In the New Testament we focus on the beauty of the Lord’s Prayer. Prayer’s power is also seen in the Psalms and Proverbs, as well as in various songs and hymns. Guest writer Colonel Henrik Andersen takes us into the Easter season. May the Holy Spirit continue to remind us of the power of prayer in our everyday lives!

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Commissioners William and Nancy Roberts join with their daughters, grandchildren and his father to sing, “Family of God.”

Promoted to Glory

Major Merritt “Mick” Hartley

Major Merritt “Mick” Hartley was promoted to Glory on September 22, 2015. He was 79.

As a child and early teen, Mick ran with a rough crowd. At age 17 he left school to join the U.S. Air Force. While serving in Wichita, Kan., a pretty blonde named Barbara Fellers caught his eye, and he asked her out.

Mick and Barbara were married and attended Wichita West corps officers, Captains Ray and Pauline Wert, paid them a visit, since Barbara had once attended the corps. Although Mick initially resisted, he and Barbara, along with their four boys, eventually started attending the corps, where Mick gave his life to the Lord.

The Hartleys entered training in 1964. After being commissioned in 1966 they served in corps appointments in the Kansas and Western Missouri, Heartland, Western and Indiana divisions. In addition to ministering, Mick Hartley loved music, and their family band performed for national and divisional events.

Mick later served in the territorial property department, at the St. Louis, Mo., Harbor Light Center and retired in 2000 as the Grand Rapids, Mich., Adult Rehabilitation Center director. After retirement he continued to work as a counselor and chaplain in substance abuse programs.

Major Hartley was preceded in death by Barbara and their youngest son, Anthony. He is survived by his sons, Merritt R. (Florina), Major Curtiss (Sandi) and Gregory (Angie); a daughter-in-law, Vicky; 10 grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

Major Mrs. Barbara McClure

On August 15, 2015, Major Mrs. Barbara McClure was promoted to Glory.

Barbara was born in March 1932 in Spartanburg, S.C. Starting at a young age she attended the church of Christ, and when she was 16 years old a Salvation Army officer led her to Christ at a crusader’s meeting in Union, S.C.

While attending youth councils, she felt her call to officiate. After a short time of falling away in her faith, she returned to the corps with even more determination. Before entering training she served in youth ministry, as a member of the band and often led Sunday worship songs and testimonies.

Commissioned in the Southern Territory in 1953, Barbara served in Texas, North Carolina and Oklahoma before she married Walter McClure in 1956. Their marriage was blessed with one daughter and three sons, and together they served in corps in Oklahoma until 1970 when they transferred to the men’s social services ministry (now adult rehabilitation centers).

In 1974 the majors transferred to the Central Territory, where they continued in men’s social services, retiring in 1986.