The General stresses importance of authentic soldiership at book launch

By Kevin Sims

“A very different event” is how the Chief of the Staff Commissioner Lyndon Buckingham described the live-streamed launch of two significant new books at International Headquarters (IHQ) in London, England. Unlike a normal book launch, the event was not intended to promote sales—for now the books are being provided free to every Salvation Army soldier worldwide—but to highlight the importance, value and potential of soldiership itself.

Called to be a Soldier—Exploring the Soldier’s Covenant is the successor to Chosen to be a Soldier (also known as Orders and Regulations for Soldiers of The Salvation Army). Compiled with the support of the International Theological Council, the book’s easy-to-read content focuses on each of the “I will…” statements of intention that form the Soldier’s Covenant by outlining the possibilities and opportunities of life as a Salvation Army soldier. Published as a companion to Called to be a Soldier is Day by Day—Call to Mission, written by Commissioner Robert Street, which considers what following Jesus looks like in today’s reality. Both books will be available in more than 50 languages and dialects, ensuring as many soldiers as possible can journey together in exploring the implications of soldiership.

Because of COVID-19 restrictions, only a limited number of people could attend the launch in person, and it was noticeable that the spots were given not primarily to commissioners but to lower-ranked IHQ officers and staff (many of whom are also soldiers). As General Brian Peddle made the event was not intended to promote sales—for now the books are being provided free to every Salvation Army soldier worldwide—but to highlight the

Project Advance

An update on the territory’s restructuring process

The Central Territory is at a pivotal time as it seeks to become more effective in mission by sharpening the focus on its Mission Imperative, “More people, more like Jesus,” and considering ways to reorganize its structure for maximum Kingdom impact in the 11 Midwest states that comprise the territory.

Underway since 2019, the endeavor to assess how the territory can strengthen and grow the holistic mission through reorganization recently was dubbed “Project Advance,” to capture and clearly express the end goal.

“Simply put, we think we can use resources better to be more effective in mission and leverage resources for the glory of God,” said Lt. Colonel Jonathan Rich, territorial program secretary.

The colonel is the territory’s liaison with consultants from Group Newhouse, a management consulting firm which began working with the territory this summer to evaluate the division model by thoroughly analyzing the assumptions, data and recommendations coming from the Territorial Reorganization Task Force which was co-led by Commissioner William Roberts and Assistant Chief Secretary Lt. Colonel Paul Smith. The company is taking a deeper dive into the possibilities of how reorganization of the territory can increase efficiency by freeing up financial resources and personnel to be reallocated to support frontline ministry and then will make recommendations.

To ensure that the best direction is taken, all possible territorial reorganization options are being reviewed and relevant input is being sought from Central Territory officers, soldiers and employees who may voice suggestions and concerns about Project Advance by writing uscadvance@usc.salvationarmy.org. A detailed communications plan and timeline are being developed. Watch for more updates in Central Connection.
“Never Forget”

by Colonel Janice A. Howard
Territorial Secretary for Leader Development

I remember sitting at Star Lake Camp in New Jersey, 20 years ago—September 11, 2001—being at National Headquarters in what seemed to be an important meeting. In my sixth year serving as territorial social service secretary, I was there as part of a national committee.

One of the members received a phone call from home, informing him of a plane hitting the nearby Pentagon. Like so many others we first thought it was a tragic accident but through television coverage discovered the World Trade Center in New York City also had been hit. We watched in disbelief as it became clear this was a terrorist attack. As the magnitude crystalized, we grew restless; surely there was something we could do other than watch this tragedy unfold.

By late morning three of us drove to the Pentagon. Our uniforms gave us immediate entry. The fact the U.S. Army officer in charge was a graduate of my alma mater, Asbury University, also may have affected our relatively easy clearance into the very midst of the attack area. I remember praying the Lord would somehow use us in this crisis but had no idea what that would mean.

We had multiple opportunities to support and pray with survivors and first responders. The head of military chaplains at the Pentagon initially had been conducting training on the other side of this huge edifice and had been spared. While his colleagues had perished. Distraught, he sought solace which we were hopefully able to provide. As though it were yesterday, I remember encountering a first responder who was sobbing after finding a woman who died sitting at her desk. “She could have been my mom,” he cried. We did our best to support and pray with survivors and responders alike.

I still get emotional and wonder how we got through it. In 2 Corinthians 2:16 the Apostle Paul talks who is competent to deal with these challenges. He concludes in chapter 3, verse 5 that we are not competent of ourselves, but our competence or sufficiency comes from God alone.
by Major David Dalberg

On September 11, 2001, my wife and I were serving as national disaster service coordinators. When I reflect on that time, I think about the numbers. I’m not referring to the over 3 million meals served by The Salvation Army or the eight months and 19 days of 24/7 service at Ground Zero, the medical examiner’s office, and Staten Island landfill. The numbers that rush to my mind are 2,749 civilians, 343 firefighters and 87 Port Authority personnel who died; only 20 people were recovered alive.

I reflect on the families that were changed forever; children who lost a parent, parents who lost a child, grandchildren who lost a grandparent, grandparents who lost a grandchild. I think about the pain and grief that 20 years later is still deeply felt, a hole in the heart that never mends.

I reflect on retired firefighter Bill Butler who was one of 12 firefighters who lost a son on 9/11. From day one until the middle of February, Bill came to “the pit” to dig for his son’s remains. The 35,000-square-foot soft-sided tent became his second home, and we became family. Bill described The Salvation Army’s volunteers as “angels of mercy and grace.”

I remember a specific challenge with the New York City Restaurant Association which felt The Salvation Army was taking business away from their members. After considerable negotiation, we agreed to purchase 5,000 meals a day from area restaurants, and the Restaurant Revitalization Program was established. Just before the closing of Ground Zero, more than 60 restaurant owners came to thank The Salvation Army for saving their businesses.

I remember Rosemary Cain, a volunteer whose son was lost on 9/11. In the midst of her grief and pain she wanted to do something in his remembrance, so she daily served firefighters, not only feeding them but listening intently to their experiences and struggles, and drawing personal strength from their relentless determination.

My primary responsibility for eight-plus months was to coordinate Salvation Army leadership personnel from across the United States and Canada. After the first couple of weeks I would fly home on Friday evening and return on Sunday afternoon. During the week I would evaluate our 24/7 operation and negotiate with the territories the best persons to fill positions for the next rotation. A sacred part of my responsibility was to identify and secure the right person for the ceremony of releasing identified remains to families with dignity and respect.

After several weeks, canteens serving at Ground Zero were replaced by makeshift facilities at each end of the pit. One cold Monday morning in late February as I got into the vehicle transporting me to the site, I wondered “Will this ever be over?” As we arrived at the first shack on the northside, a Canadian officer greeted me with a huge smile. Intrigued, I asked, “What’s making you so happy this morning?” He pointed to a lawn chair and said, “That chair is making me happy this morning.” Concerned, I replied, “Tell me why that chair is making you happy.”

He shared that 45 minutes ago one of the guys working in the pit came in for his regular morning visit and said, “I’m ready.” “Ready for what?” the officer asked. The worker responded, “I’m ready to accept Jesus into my heart.” That lawn chair became an altar.

On May 30, 2002, I was honored to be one of 10 Salvation Army representatives who attended the ceremony officially closing Ground Zero. As I stood at attention alongside other Salvation Army officers, I understood for the first time that our God-ordained mission for this horrific event was complete. I was deeply honored to represent the hundreds of other officers who had given servanthood ministry during those challenging days.
Royal Oak Citadel aims to lift up Jesus

We are a people connected to God through prayer, the study of God’s Word and Service. We claim God’s promises and lift up Jesus so all are drawn to Him. —Royal Oak, Mich., Corps Vision Statement

Last year our corps felt it was more important than ever to live out our vision statement: keeping prayer, Bible study and service the priorities above any program while keeping everyone safe. It took creativity and a committed team of people every week to make it happen.

During this difficult time when people were sick, scared, grieving and lonely, it was essential to pray for each other. We were guided not only by our vision statement but Galatians 6:2 (ESV) which encourages us to “bear one another’s burdens.” Our corps officers, Captains Peter and Catherine Mount, and then Captains Kory and Heidi Strand, hosted a weekly prayer time live on Facebook.

Small group Bible studies are an integral part of our corps for learning God’s Word and building community. During the lockdown it was vital that these small groups, including Bible studies, continue, so they went virtual to provide friendship, support and strength to members when we couldn’t meet in person.

“I made the decision to join a small group over a decade ago, and it has been an integral part of my spiritual development,” said soldier Abby Johnson, whose dad, Dale (former corps bandmaster) passed away last year. “In times of great joy and in times of deep sorrow and grief, my community has come alongside me to offer love and support—and to ultimately point me to Jesus.”

We served families in our community as they turned to us for food. Captains Kory and Heidi Strand

Ensuring contactless delivery, they drove up and honked their horns so food could be taken out to a table in the parking lot where they could retrieve it. Pivoting to meet the greatest need, the corps assisted many families who had fallen behind with rent and utilities. We also changed the corps afterschool program for K-8th grades to an E-learning center which was set up to keep kids safe all day with tutors available to help them log in to their virtual classes and with schoolwork.

We also served each other. Since members couldn’t come to the corps, we went to them. We took gifts of pretty kitchen towels to moms for Mother’s Day and dropped off Easter and Advent boxes to children with fun activities to learn scripture centered on those celebrations. Older adults and shut-ins received devotional and baked goods.

“We divided the corps directory into three geographic areas, filled up our gas tanks, loaded up the gifts and spent the day driving to our corps families’ homes,” said soldier Leslie Engle, who also works as corps administrative assistant.

“How fun it was to surprise our corps ladies with a sweet gift and a short drive-way visit. Big smiles, happy greetings, ‘miss you’, ‘stay safe!’, ‘you’re not forgotten!’”

Worship services went virtual and were held on the corps’ front porch. When we enrolled seven new soldiers outside, all the neighbors could watch. Recently, our worship focus was the Gospel of John. Together, corps members memorized John 20:31 (ESV): “but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.” We celebrated the last Sunday of the series by wearing t-shirts printed with this verse.

Since COVID-19 mandates have been relaxed in Michigan, we can worship together fully again, but as we move forward we’re considering what programs and services implemented last year should continue and how we might change others. This past year we have been reminded of what is essential—the gospel of Jesus Christ! Royal Oak Citadel is determined to remain gospel-centered in all we do that we may “lift up Jesus so all are drawn to Him.”

1,744 days and counting

by Captain Heidi Strand

Let’s be honest. Transitions can be difficult. Adding in the many layers of the pandemic has made this even more apparent. My husband, Kory, and I strongly felt the weight of this as we were farewelled from Olathe, Kan., and began a new journey in Royal Oak, Mich., last year.

It hurt not being able to hug our people in Olathe as we said goodbye. It was frightening to think of trying to get to know a brand-new congregation through masks and social distancing. Yet, in the uncertainty, God has remained faithful!

We had a decision to make. Would we live in fear and worry during this time of chaos? Would we be defeated in this “season of no,” focusing on all the things we were unable to do? Or would we allow ourselves to be filled with hope, knowing God could transform this to a “season of yes”?

Paul’s prayer in Romans 15:13 (NIV) says, “May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.”

Our focus for this past year has been HOPE! We have chosen to be grounded in the conviction that God is faithful and His loving kindness never ends. He is working for our good and for the good of the people we serve! Our role as believers is to trust those promises, to take Christ at His word when He says, “I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full!” (John 10:10, NIV). This is possible for us now!

What has this meant practically for our officership? It has meant that while a number of our church family could not attend in-person worship, God has been faithful and provided us the time, energy and creativity to reach out and develop relationships.

Also, while many in our church family have experienced great loss during this year, God has been faithful by providing divine bonding moments which have enabled us to better pastor those who grieve. It has brought us close to many very quickly.

There has been so much God has allowed us to say “yes” to, and we would have missed out on the joy of it all if we hadn’t first said “yes” to His call for our lives. Our cup overflows.

by Rochelle Holman and Melanie Mowers

Seven new soldiers are enrolled on the front steps of the Royal Oak, Mich., Corps.
clear, this was an event to recognize that, if an army was only as good as its supply chain, so the success of The Salvation Army depends primarily on the steadfastness of its soldiers—and he included himself in that number.

Live music with congregational participation was not possible because of restrictions, so viewers worldwide were treated to a reminder of the spectacular version of “Joy in The Salvation Army” from the “A Joyful Army” session that launched the Boundless International Congress exactly six years ago to the day.

The Salvation Army’s internationalism was recognized through prayers in their native tongues from Captain Chaliramiva (India), Major Loveth Onuora (Nigeria), and Ashleigh Hunter (UK). Captain Charles gave thanks for God’s “inclusive calling,” which ensured every person has a purpose. Major Loveth prayed God would “breathe life into all the pages of these books” so that all who read them “will feel the touch of your Spirit which will transform their lives for your glory.” He thanked God for the “scattered Army, united in you” and called on the creator to “take our lives…our whole lives.”

Appearing in a video, Lt. Kiyoshi Higaya from Japan shared how he had come to worship at The Salvation Army. His first contact with the Army came at a conference in Misorum, India, where he describes the Salvationists as he met as “shining.” It was there he felt God calling him to become a Salvationist, too.

Another video, this time from The Netherlands, showed the sharing of faith between the generations. Junior soldier Methé introduced viewers to Mia, her grandmother. Together they explored why Mia’s faith is so important to her, and Mia learned the “beautiful solution” that her grandmother feels safe being loved by God.

The value of young people’s faith and prayers was highlighted by the Chief of the Staff, who pointed out the meeting room’s bunting made of more than 300 prayers that had been sent by young people from around the world. He encouraged viewers to explore inter-age “life-giving” spiritual conversations and shared news of a new card game, Faith Talks, that has been created to work through questions that might arise during the reading of Called to be a Soldier.

Another testimony came from François Nsimigana from Rwanda. He spoke about his early years when he attended a Roman Catholic church to please his mother but thanked God for leading him to The Salvation Army. He shared his understanding of how being a soldier was following the will of God as shown in the Bible, emphasizing the importance of evangelism and striving for social justice.

On a video Commissioner Bronwyn Buckingham, commissioner for youth and children, conversed with Patti Mwahule, a Zimbabwean Salvationist who worships at Upper Norwood Corps in the UK. Patti spoke about the vital role she played by Salvation Army soldiers in the world. She highlighted the importance of integrity and visibility, adding: “If we don’t share what we stand for, nobody will know what we are.”

Reflecting on being part of two different cultures in the UK and Zimbabwe, she warned against imposing our own cultural understandings on other peoples. “God accepts all of his children from all over the world,” Patti concluded.

The General began his message by celebrating a mobilized Army serving in Christ’s name. He recognized the difficulties being faced around the world, particularly those caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, and declared: “Ours is a soldier’s task—pressed into service; saved to serve.”

He explained that Called to be a Soldier and Day by Day provide opportunities to “reconnect what it means to be a soldier,” adding that the time had come to move away from soldierhood being a “rite of passage” or simply an obligation. “We will be able to serve others with authenticity,” he declared.

“I am asking that all soldiers make themselves available and sacrificially share in God’s mission in the world,” he said. “I celebrate that, in the midst of a great spiritual warfare, God is doing a new thing—and He calls us to join Him in mission. The call is amazingly great and its significance is enormous.”

He concluded: “May God bless every soldier and each engagement in his mission to win the world for Jesus.”

The final words went to Commissioner Rosalie Peddle, world president of women’s ministries, who shared a prayer of dedication, thanking God for calling The Salvation Army “to be a dynamic force for good in this world.”

See your corps officer for a copy of the books.
Compassion Under Fire

Within a half hour of the first plane hitting the North Tower of the World Trade Center, Salvation Army canteens were on site to support first responders. In the nearly nine months that followed 39,000 Salvation Army officers, soldiers, staff and volunteers served 3.2 million meals and provided emotional and spiritual care and practical resources to support thousands of recovery personnel, as well as providing food, clothing, financial assistance and other crucial social services to survivors, victims' families and others who were affected. Operations at Ground Zero were The Salvation Army's largest mobilization on U.S. soil. Here, three of the many who served share their reflections.

A sustaining presence
by Major Mike McKee

In October 2001, I began my first of two deployments in New York City to assist in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks. While time has blurred many details, etched in my memory are sights that cannot be unseen and the pungent smells at Ground Zero. The grief in the eyes of first responders is impossible to forget, but so is God's faithfulness.

I served as a chaplain, working in "the pit" at Ground Zero to provide support and encouragement for the FBI, police, firefighters and heavy machine operators who were removing debris, recovering human remains and preserving evidence. Whenever human remains were found, I would perform a short but dignified memorial service to honor the life and selfless sacrifice of the fallen and to ask God for His grace, mercy and sustaining presence to be with those who were left behind to carry on. Very often, these ceremonies provided precious opportunities to witness to men and women individually as they asked questions about why God allowed this to happen.

One particularly difficult Monday morning, we found the remains of a firefighter just after we started our shift. After calling for firefighters from around the area, we performed the memorial service, which was always an emotional event. As the ambulance containing the flag-covered body of the hero firefighter pulled away, a call came that remains of a police officer had been recovered quite a distance from our spot; they were looking for a chaplain to perform the memorial service. A Gator was quickly sent to get me.

Arriving at the other side, I saw a large group had gathered, including a surprising number of non-uniformed civilians and, unexpectedly, New York City Police Commissioner Bernard Kerik. Since the deceased policeman was still wearing his badge, they knew who he was. I was introduced to his wife, who was sobbing uncontrollably, and spoke with her briefly and prayed with her. Then we held the service. Afterward, I went to a nearby aid station to decompress and regain my composure and called my father to unburden my heart. Feeling a bit better, I knew I needed to return to my post so I ended the call by asking my dad to pray that the little I was able to offer somehow be a blessing to the heroes who were faithfully serving in such dire circumstances.

As I hung up and turned to leave, I came face-to-face with the biggest firefighter I had ever seen. He apologized for having listened to my comments, and, with tears in his eyes, he hugged me and said he couldn’t imagine how I could continue working without the love and concern demonstrated by the service of The Salvation Army. He had recognized God working through us.

When I recall my time in New York, I can’t help but be reminded that while I was working to be a practical expression of the Lord’s unfailing love, grace and mercy to those who desperately needed it, God provided encouragement and affirmation to me when I needed it the most. God has promised He will “never leave us nor forsake us.” His faithfulness during the 9/11 response confirmed this for me beyond a doubt, and I will be forever grateful.

Serving in the Red Zone
by Linda Burkle, PhD

I was sitting in our weekly Divisional Finance Board when a colleague interrupted to say a plane had hit one of the World Trade Center towers in New York City.

One week later I was in New York with a ministry team. The ash and smoke that permeated the air served as a vivid metaphor of the profound collective grief and shock that hung over the city. Every breath of air tasted of death. Spontaneous memorials of photos of loved ones killed and missing, flowers and other objects dotted the cityscape. Parking garages filled with cars covered with ash served as reminders of those lost. There were so many questions and no answers. The World Trade Center was reduced to rubble, a ghastly specter—all that remained of the crown jewel of capitalism. New York City, the global epicenter of finance and wealth, staggered with a sense of vulnerability.

It was like nothing we had endured, and we had no experiential compass to navigate the situation and our responses. Thus, the focus of our ministry as crisis intervention responders...
was addressing the emotional and psychological needs of people living in unbelief, shock and grief.

In November, I was back in New York as Red Zone coordinator at Ground Zero. A life-changing experience, it became one of those 'hinge' moments in time between what was and what is. The pile of rubble in September had become a huge smoldering pit, a 30-foot deep "deconstruction site." In some spots the temperature exceeded 1,000 degrees. Mingled with mangled metal and twisted steel were ashes and corpses of victims—an ever-present reality etched on the faces of those working around the clock in this strange "gated community" where ID badges were scrutinized for entry. Twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week large dumping trucks came and went, filled with debris and decaying human remains, to a dump site called "fresh-kill," an eerily ironic name indeed.

My life existed within the perimeters of the Red Zone and my hotel room nearby. As Red Zone coordinator, I managed our 24-hour-a-day feeding and hydration sites. No matter the hour, the Red Zone was bustling with the activity of heavy earth moving equipment, trucks and cranes. Construction workers, police officers, firefighters and countless government regulators filled the area. We fed them hot meals, made sure they were hydrated, sat with them on breaks, listened to those who wanted to talk, and provided clean socks and new boots when the soles were melted away. I reminded our team each day that our #1 job was to "give them Jesus."

Perhaps my most poignant memory is one day at 1:30 a.m. when the remains of a firefighter had been discovered and excavated from the "pit." I watched in silence as the body bag was hoisted up, then draped with an American flag. Standing in reverence, I joined two lines of firefighters and police officers as the remains passed between us. I recall holding my Bible to my chest and quietly reciting the 23rd Psalm as my tears fell. The faces surrounding me wept without tears; there were none left.

My most meaningful ministry
by Lt. Colonel Robert Webster

Recently attending my nephew's wedding, I was asked, "Colonel, what has been the single most important thing you believe you have done in your ministry?" After thinking for a minute, I responded, "Serving as a chaplain with the Fire Department of New York (FDNY) after the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center buildings in Manhattan."

For me, this site will be remembered forever as Ground Zero, "hell on earth" for its intense heat and smells of destruction and decay—a place where God wept as we cried over thousands of lives lost and carnage that hadn't been seen in the U.S. since the attack on Pearl Harbor. A 110-story building utterly unrecognizable in a graveyard of twisted steel and pulverized concrete.

I was privileged to work alongside the FDNY men and women responsible for the recovery of those who died. When the remains of firefighters were discovered, a large procession was formed to honor the heroic sacrifice of individuals who gave everything when they ran into the building to save others.

I would gather everyone together to pray the Lord's Prayer and even give last rites which I learned how to administer as a proxy for Catholic priests who were on site but not permitted on the pile. It was a high honor that I did not take lightly. We prayed and cried and then encouraged those working to continue as there were so many more to find. Following our time of prayer, I was given the privilege of leading the procession as the firefighters would carry the remains of their brother to the temporary morgue down the hill. I will be forever grateful for my brother in Christ, Major Monty Wandling, who was alongside me, keeping me strong and lifting me up before the Lord.

Indeed, it was only through the Lord's strength that I could complete such a mission. So, 20 years later I remember those days as though they were yesterday, and tears flow as I write this reflection. I am often reminded of the events of 9/11 when I walk by a construction site and smell concrete dust, or I unexpectedly smell diesel fuel. I remember. It's burned into my heart and mind, as are the lessons I learned: to be thankful for each day, to forgive others, to love unconditionally.
by Karen Young

Our world is filled with complexities. We encounter challenges in our diverse human interactions around gender, class, race/ethnicity, language and culture. It’s easy to veer off course because of potholes of polarization and wonder if we can affect any lasting change for good.

Still, opportunities for ministry abound, and the invitation to build relationships and ministry partners across our differences persists. As Christ’s followers, we have a complementary charge and there is no better time for us to learn how to bridge our differences in just, compassionate, grace-filled and informed ways. Planned by the territorial intercultural ministries department, the ONE Conference’s theme “Inclusion: See. Hear. Embrace.” is designed to encourage, stretch, renew and equip delegates. We hope it will open new possibilities for ministry and refurbish dated practices. Learning how to engage in intercultural ministries—and developing lifelong skills to do it effectively—is needed no matter your ministry area.

The conference (October 15-17, 2021) will be virtual, but some things will be familiar. Breakout sessions and united gatherings will bring voices to inform, invigorate and provoke to good works. Among them will be Daniel Hill, multiethnic church pastor and author; Elizabeth Conde Frazier, practical theologian, pastor and author; Brenda Salter McNeil, professor, author, and racial reconciliation practitioner for over 30 years; and Ken Wytsma, founder of the Justice Conference.

If you’ve never been able to attend the ONE Conference, we hope this year’s virtual event makes it possible. The registration fee is only $20 per person. Invite a guest, and you can register that guest for free!

Join us from your home or better yet gather with friends or colleagues and enter into the conversation. And be sure to participate in the territorial worship experience on Sunday morning.

When the conference has concluded, we hope you’ll ask: “What is God calling us to do, be or change in our areas of service and ministry as a result of what we have seen and heard?”

For more details and registration information, visit the USC Intercultural Ministries Facebook page.

Ken Wytsma
Daniel Hill
Elizabeth Conde Frazier
Brenda Salter McNeil

Pyle named Paul Harris Fellow

Major Robert Pyle was presented with the Rotary International Paul Harris Fellow Award by Brooklyn Center, Minn., Rotary Treasurer and Secretary Cathy Ballot. He was cited for exceptional service to the community during the pandemic when he was the Minneapolis Parkview, Minn., corps officer.

Named after Rotary’s founder, the award represents a $1,000 contribution to the local chapter made on the major’s behalf to the Rotary Foundation which supports a wide array of programs and services across the globe like vocational training for teachers establishing an early childhood education center in South Africa and treated mosquito nets and medical services that prevent malaria in Mali.

The Brooklyn Center Rotary Chapter is a small group but a mighty force for good in their community, including ringing bells at kettles and helping families in need at the toy shop during Christmas. Most recently, they donated food to the Northern Division’s massive food drive in March.
Envision a building plan 30 years in the making. It would be easy to give up when it seems no progress is being made. This was not the case with the soldiers and other members of the Grand Haven, Mich., Corps. Their faithfulness and patience have paid off.

This spring more than 100 people joined corps members, divisional and territorial staff, the advisory board, Mayor Robert Monetza and city council members to dedicate the addition of a community center that will expand the corps’ outreach and programs. The building adds 5,800-square-feet and includes a gym, commercial kitchen, office space and multiple classrooms.

James Brunner, advisory board member and capital campaign co-chair, recapped the process, thanking everyone for their hard work and time. Mayor Monetza shared his appreciation of The Salvation Army’s work in the community, while corps officers Majors William and Heather Holman reiterated through song, “every word He promised is true, what I thought was impossible I’ve seen my God do.” The program concluded with Lt. Colonel Richard Amick, then territorial secretary for business administration, sharing his memories of the corps, including his wedding in 1979. He noted changes the corps has seen over the years and encouraged attendees to do whatever they can because even a little can make a big difference, as evidenced that day.

The process leading to the community center addition had been arduous, including a capital campaign that began in 2016 with then-corps officers Majors Jay and Sally Davis and a committee of community members. They set out to raise $1.1 million to build a new gym and community center. With the goal reached, in November 2019 the Holmans broke ground for the much-needed expansion, but demolition to begin in March 2020 was halted by the COVID-19 pandemic. As soon as the work could start, bulldozers came in, the ground was dug, and the foundation was laid. Approximately 12 months later, the new building was completed.
A catalyst for greater service capacity

by Kevin Ellers
Central Territorial Disaster Services Coordinator

I was standing in the kitchen, a bagel in one hand and a glass of orange juice in the other as I watched the first plane hit the World Trade Center (WTC). I instinctively knew this tragedy would change the field of emergency response and The Salvation Army forever but never imagined it would be the starting point of God redirecting me into full-time disaster work.

At the time I was working in the Kansas and Western Missouri divisional social services department and leading our crisis response team. Simultaneously, I was working on my doctoral degree project which was focused on training pastors to respond to the many crises they faced in their churches. I had started working with the International Critical Incident Stress Foundation to develop training curriculum on grief, crisis and trauma. The Salvation Army was preparing to develop a new standardized National Disaster Training Program (NDTP) that would be implemented in the four U.S. territories and the Canada and Bermuda Territory.

After serving in New York City at the WTC and in the Family Assistance Center, I had a new understanding of the critical role The Salvation Army played in providing services and emotional and spiritual care to first responders and survivors. Because of our unique and comprehensive service footprint in communities during “blue sky” times, The Salvation Army is uniquely prepared to respond to small and large crises in “grey sky” times.

As a result of my service after 9/11, I started my doctoral project over and totally focused it on helping train mental health professionals, crisis responders and clergy to provide emotional and spiritual care in times of disaster, crisis and trauma. I became the first territorial disaster training coordinator and worked with the national team to set up and develop curriculum for the new National Disaster Training Program. My work continued to expand when I later became the territorial disaster service coordinator.

The lessons learned from 9/11 impacted the Central Territory in many ways, acting as a catalyst for building even greater service capacity and leading to:

- Ensuring Salvation Army disaster operations utilize the standardized incident command system used by both police and fire departments
- Recruiting and training high-level disaster leadership to serve in key roles within the incident command system
- Developing standardized training courses
- Developing a national disaster training and volunteer database that can track resources
- Creating a territorial standardized disaster program evaluation tool to ensure that divisional disaster programs strategically develop key aspects of their operations,

resources, relationships and infrastructure
- Enlarging our fleet of vehicles to provide coverage across the territory
- Taking the lead role nationally to develop a comprehensive emotional and spiritual care curriculum and emergency response certification program
- Building strong relationships with key nonprofit and private sector companies to expand resources
- Integrating The Salvation Army Team Emergency Radio Network (SATERN) to strategically enhance emergency communications in disaster operations

These developments allowed us to provide extensive resources to the Southern Territory during the next major disaster services relief event after Hurricane Katrina. The Central Territory continues to develop disaster services by working strategically with other programs like social services and the Ray and Joan Kroc Corps Community Centers to train and build capacity so we can continue to meet the needs of communities in times of crisis.

Seeing God’s Mercy

by Shirley Lawson-Carr

When I heard of the first plane crashing into the World Trade Center, I was shocked and pierced my heart—my daughter-in-law, Dana, worked in one of the towers. In a day before cellphones were considered essential, it was hours before we received word she was safe. She was able to get away before the building fell and walked nearly 100 blocks to catch the ferry to her home in New Jersey.

Grateful Dana had been spared, I wanted to help others however I could. In December, I volunteered for two weeks in the giant feeding tent at Ground Zero, serving food, cleaning tables and working in the warehouse section filling orders to go to the rehydration sites. Several times during my service a bell sounded to indicate a body had been found in the rubble and we observed a moment of silence out of respect for the dead. Those were emotional moments for all of us.

It wasn’t until I was assigned to drive a Gator to deliver food and drinks to the crews working around the pit that I witnessed the devastation first-hand. As I navigated around broken asphalt and piles of debris, at times having to search for a way through to my destination, I was struck by the despair all around me. Memorials lined the streets; people grieved and owners of closed businesses stood outside the destroyed buildings still in shock. It was humbling. Though I could go into the pit, I declined. The destruction on the streets was more than enough for me.

In the midst of sorrow and devastation, I also saw God’s mercy and faithfulness as He provided what each of us needed to carry on. I was blessed to meet and work with some amazing, selfless people, including two with whom I have remained friends the past 20 years. As I reflect on that awful day and the opportunity I had to serve, I am in awe of how God sustained us, brought us together and worked through us in that terrible circumstance. He is good.
Partnering in pandemic

by Michelle Defrusha

When Majors Dale and Mary Hunt, then Aberdeen, S.D., corps officers, heard there was a need for volunteers at a COVID-19 vaccination clinic this spring at the Lake Traverse Reservation near Sisseton, S.D., they packed the canteen with snacks and water and headed 100 miles east.

Along with volunteers from the corps, the Hunts helped to register and interview tribe members and other local residents who showed up to receive a vaccine. The two-day clinic and subsequent food distribution were a collaborative effort between the corps, territorial emergency disaster services (EDS), the Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate Tribe, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

According to Indian Health Services, an agency within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the pandemic has disproportionately affected American Indian and Alaska Native populations, which have had infection rates more than 3.5 times higher than non-Hispanic whites and are over four times more likely to be hospitalized.

After contacting partners in the field and assessing feedback from Allison Renville, spokesperson for the tribe’s COVID-19 response team, it was determined the tribe needed facemasks and other personal protective equipment (PPE), as well as supplies to stock a new COVID-19 isolation center that recently was constructed to help minimize the spread of the virus on the reservation.

“We ended up donating 2,080 food boxes, facemasks, hand sanitizer and other PPE, as well as a few shelter items for their isolation center,” said Benny Benedict, territorial disaster services resource coordinator.

The Central Territory also used grant funds to purchase a 40-foot storage container that the tribe used to store pandemic-relief supplies. After the clinic concluded, tribe elders invited the Hunts, their staff and volunteers to return to the reservation in July for a powwow and expressed interest in collaborating with The Salvation Army on other EDS initiatives.

---

New take on Donut Day

by Craig Dirkes

Hundreds of Salvation Army volunteers in St. Paul and Minneapolis, Minn., delivered donuts to their personal heroes this summer on National Donut Day. Each volunteer picked up two boxes of donuts, courtesy of Cub Foods, at their nearest Salvation Army. The Salvation Army in the Twin Cities organized the event as a way for people to show love and appreciation for those who make a positive difference, such as first responders, veterans, medical professionals, teachers, church members and neighbors.

---

October Prayer Calendar

My Prayer List

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Bible Reading</th>
<th>Pray for The Salvation Army</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Friday</td>
<td>1 Thess. 4:13-18</td>
<td>Austin, Minn., Corps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Saturday</td>
<td>1 Thess. 5:1-11</td>
<td>Spain and Portugal Command</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Sunday</td>
<td>2 Thess. 1:3-12</td>
<td>Bramson, Mo., Corps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Monday</td>
<td>2 Thess. 2:1-12</td>
<td>Chicago Kroc, Ill., Corps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Tuesday</td>
<td>2 Thess. 2:13-17</td>
<td>Columbus, Ind., Corps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Wednesday</td>
<td>Psalm 115</td>
<td>Des Plaines, Ill., Corps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Thursday</td>
<td>Proverbs 25:15-28</td>
<td>USA Southern Territory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Friday</td>
<td>1 Timothy 2:1-9</td>
<td>Escanaba, Mich., Corps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Saturday</td>
<td>1 Timothy 4:7-16</td>
<td>Fort Wayne, Ind., ARC*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Sunday</td>
<td>1 Timothy 5:1-8</td>
<td>Grand Rapids Fulton Heights, Mich., Corps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Monday</td>
<td>1 Timothy 6:3-10</td>
<td>Hilldale, Mich., Corps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 Tuesday</td>
<td>Psalm 119:165-175</td>
<td>Character Building Ministries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 Wednesday</td>
<td>Proverbs 26:1-16</td>
<td>Kansas City, Mo., ARC*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 Thursday</td>
<td>2 Timothy 2:1-13</td>
<td>Lawrence, Kan., Corps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 Friday</td>
<td>2 Timothy 2:14-26</td>
<td>Zambia Territory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 Saturday</td>
<td>2 Timothy 3:14-17</td>
<td>Marietta, Wis., Corps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 Sunday</td>
<td>Psalm 121</td>
<td>Minneapolis Central, Minn., Corps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 Monday</td>
<td>Proverbs 26:17-28</td>
<td>New Albany, Ind., Corps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 Tuesday</td>
<td>Hebrews 1:1-14</td>
<td>Local Officers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 Wednesday</td>
<td>Hebrews 2:5-18</td>
<td>Plymouth, Mich., Corps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 Thursday</td>
<td>Hebrews 2:1-6</td>
<td>Japan Territory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 Friday</td>
<td>Hebrews 2:7-19</td>
<td>Rockford Temple, Ill., Corps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23 Saturday</td>
<td>Hebrews 9:11-18</td>
<td>Southeast, Mich., ARC*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24 Sunday</td>
<td>Hebrews 9:19-29</td>
<td>St. Louis Gateway, Mo., Corps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 Tuesday</td>
<td>Hebrews 11</td>
<td>Whitston, N.C., Corps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27 Wednesday</td>
<td>Hebrews 12:1-13</td>
<td>Women’s Ministry Embrace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28 Thursday</td>
<td>Hebrews 12:14-29</td>
<td>India South Western Territory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29 Friday</td>
<td>Hebrews 13:1-17</td>
<td>Jackson, Mich., Corps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 Saturday</td>
<td>Proverbs 27:1-14</td>
<td>Omaha North Side, Neb., Corps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 Sunday</td>
<td>James 1:2-18</td>
<td>Metropolitan Division</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Go to www.salarmycentral.org
If you follow the prayer calendar during the year, you will have read through the Bible!
Serving at Pier 94
by Major Gloria Stepke

During my service in New York City, I encountered many people whose lives had been upended by the tragedy. I was assigned to work in social services on Pier 94, where The Salvation Army and other agencies were set up to offer assistance. I met business owners who had lost their stores or offices because they were located in buildings close to the World Trade Center. One had spent his savings to continue paying his employees for as long as possible and now needed assistance himself. Another could no longer tailor or create clothing because the dust had settled into her sewing machines, ruining them. Yet another, traumatized by the experience of being underground on the subway when the attack happened, could not bring herself to ride the trains to work or to take her son to his weekly therapy and doctor’s appointments and needed help with cab fare.

Every story was heart-wrenching, but it was in an apartment on the West End that I encountered the two people whose story left the deepest impression. The apartment belonged to an elderly Jewish couple who had called our social service station and asked if someone would come visit them. Not knowing their need or even if we were supposed to do home visits, a social worker and I took a cab in the cold and snow to the address and found ourselves outside a large building in a nice area of the city.

We were welcomed into the home by a gentleman who introduced us to his ailing wife. The couple told how they had worked hard to provide a good upbringing for their two children and were very proud of what they had accomplished. In their old age, however, their only income was her pension checks, as he did not receive a retirement benefit, so for many years they had relied on their son to help with the cost of their rent.

The day of the attack, their son was in the towers. In poor health himself, he died attempting to get out of the building after his legs gave out and he could no longer fight the panicked crowds flooding the stairwell.

We stayed with the couple for a few hours and arranged to provide rent assistance for them. Before leaving, I asked if I could share scripture and prayer with them, and they gratefully accepted.

When asked why they had chosen to reach out to The Salvation Army their answer was simple. On a vacation overseas many years before, the couple had enjoyed the company of a woman who shared their tours. Her kindness and godly spirit had made such an impression on them that when they needed help, they sought it at the organization in which she was an officer—The Salvation Army.

Their story was a reminder to me that we never know what effect our actions have on others. I pray I will always be a witness and blessing.

Working in the Warehouse
by Major Jose Gonzalez

I had the opportunity to be deployed and provide service and expertise at the center of it all the following spring. I was organizing disaster relief for a flood in my area when I received that phone call, but I did not hesitate. Even though I wasn’t sure what I’d be walking into, I knew it was where I needed the most.

My official role was as the logistics point of contact for the warehouse. People from all over the United States and Canada wanted to help and gave generously. It meant there was an overwhelming amount of in-kind donations to sort and organize. Six staff members and 20 volunteers worked long hours throughout the week to stay on top of it, but it was still chaotic at times.

Each day the four main relief sites would fax a list of needed items, which we gathered and loaded onto trucks for delivery. Often this included socks and boots for those working at Ground Zero since months later the site was still hot.

The first time I visited Ground Zero, shock and realization washed over me. Within minutes, the world came to a complete stop as I overheard someone say a body was found and it was time to pull them out of the pit; my heart sank with grief and sadness. It was the first of many times I witnessed a body draped in the American flag being ceremonially carried up and put in an ambulance to be taken to the morgue. Each time was very emotional.

Later, I assisted The Salvation Army to furnish the flags that provided dignity for the dead.

Although my role was mainly behind the scenes, the experience changed me. At a time when demand was great but physical and emotional resources were limited, my critical thinking skills were challenged and honed, and I learned how to better create and develop meaningful connections with people through times of deep loss and dire need. At the end of my service, I carried these lessons with me.

Two decades later, the memories are still fresh in my mind, and I am humbled and blessed to have been able to proudly serve.

Promoted to Glory

Major Nancy Barlow

Major Nancy J. Barlow, 83, was promoted to Glory on May 30, 2021, surrounded by her family. Nancy was born the daughter of William and Mary Barlow in Elizabeth, Pa. She graduated from Elizabeth Forward High School in 1955 and went on to study at Fort Wayne Bible College in Fort Wayne, Ind., graduating in 1960. That same year, she entered the School for Officer’s Training in Chicago, Ill., and was commissioned with the “Soldiers of Christ” session in 1962.

Nancy dedicated her life to doing God’s work. She served in corps throughout the Midwest for more than 40 years before retiring in September 2002 from her final appointment as associate corps officer at the Chicago, Ill., Park Manor Corps. Nancy was preceded in death by her best friend, Major Mary Postma; older brother, John; brother-in-law, the Rev. John R. Kennedy II; nephew, Johnny; and great-nephew, Keith Lippy. She is survived by her sister, Sara Kennedy, brother, James; sister-in-law, Betsy; and several nieces and nephews.

Major Elaine Jean Rowan

Major Elaine Jean Rowan, 89, was promoted to Glory on May 17, 2021. Elaine was a strong, sharp-witted woman who befriended everyone.

Elaine was born on May 30, 1931, in Duluth, Minn., to Leo and Wallace (LaValle) Rowan. Elaine’s journey with The Salvation Army was a lifelong endeavor. As a teen, she felt a calling to be of service to others by becoming an officer. In 1954, she entered the School for Officers’ Training and was commissioned in 1955 with the “Soul-Winners” session.

Elaine spent the next 41 years using her gifts of evangelism, mercy and service in her corps throughout the Midwest, at the Emergency Lodge in Chicago, Ill., and at the Booth Residence in Omaha, Neb. She retired in 1996.

Those left to cherish her memory include her niece, Karen; great-nephew, Jeff; dear friend, Ann Lucas; and many more family members and friends.

Major Carl Reed

Major Carl Kenneth Reed, 79, was promoted to Glory on May 30, 2021. Carl was known for his love of people and storytelling. He was deeply concerned for the salvation of others and eagerly shared the story of Jesus’ love and forgiveness.

He was born to Reason and Mable [Shinkle] Reed on April 7, 1942. In his youth, Carl began attending the Elwood, Ind., Corps by playing on its basketball team. At youth council, he responded to the call to officer and joined the Future Officers’ Fellowship. He entered the School for Officers’ Training with the “Servants of Christ” session and was commissioned in 1963.

Carl married sessionmate Carol Harshbarger on July 3, 1964. After serving more than 37 years throughout the Midwest in corps, adult rehabilitation center (ARC) and divisional appointments, the Reeds retired in 1999.

In retirement Carl worked at the ARC and soldiered at the Flint Citadel, Mich., Corps where he taught the soldier recruits’ class. Carl is survived by his wife; children, Claudia [Rob] Simpson, Beth [Tim] Simmer; Major Charlotte Hall, Major Barbara [L. Rob] Owen, Major Brian [Heidi]; brother, Ron; son-in-law, John [Marge] Simmer; 12 grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.