

A Chronology of My European/Asian Revival While in the Military

My Plans Had All Been Redrawn By God for Me, and I Didn't Know Where They Were Taking Me:



I had committed my life fully to Christ, February 13, 1960 at 19 years of age, I had been saved and understood what salvation was at the early age of about three years old. I did know and understand about salvation but during those 16 in-between years. I had to grow up a little before I would totally commit my life to serving Christ, or before I even knew what that meant. After my commitment, it has been an interesting journey. I learned a lot spiritually during the following years. As a young teenager, I had become frustrated with life, developing many faith related questions. Being frustrated, I finally made up my mind that what I had been taught about God was either the truth or it was a lie and should be tested. Even as a youngster, I faced things head-on because, I had somehow learned to love truth and I simply, refused to believe in a lie. At the time, I honestly and pointedly questioned God and He did, through a series of events, prove Himself to me and there has never been a doubt since. In 1960 after my total commitment, God had helped me to get a job doing exactly what I loved doing, then as those lessons of life that God gives us come and go, God had helped me to do other things like, learn trigonometry without any schooling, only a helpful friend, in order that I would be able to keep and do my job, He helped me to learn to manage my money and in early 1966, I had been praying about and planning to become a missionary to Mexico, and South America, studying Spanish, getting debts paid off, then, all of my plans had been abruptly changed, when the U. S. Army sent me greetings and an invitation to come and be with Uncle Sam's military.

Growing Spiritually:

At the time (1966), I was maturing and growing spiritually in the Lord. God had several lessons that He was teaching me and in reality, till this day, (2014) He has really never stopped. I cover some of those lessons in story form, included within this booklet of, "Ron's Memories", "My Journey Into Serving Christ," "My Strange Encounter with a Demon," "Ken My Coworker," "The Five Dollar Miracle," and others, these are all stories that happened to me and I was slowly, OJT (On the Job training) learning about the things of my Christian faith and how they relate in this world. Today, and most of my life, I've been what theologians would call a fundamental, Bible believing Pentecostal Christian with a touch of Baptist thinking to flavor the pudding. I've always enjoyed the real things of God, and I've embraced His value system that He's had written within the Bible. Even to this day, I've really never trusted many men to teach me theology until they've proven themselves to me and even then, I question almost everything. Most men seem to have their own agenda and want us believe in their way whether it's



right (provable) or not. So, if what they say seems to be relevant, I will test every word they speak with the biblical Word of God before accepting what they say. Gut feelings or personal interpretations or even some miracles are not enough for me, let's look it up, prove it, then, form an opinion. God has always, wonderfully, honored that attitude for me with good solid understanding, and yes, I may seem a little fanatical or strong to some but, I do understand what I know to be truth. Truth and truth only is what I need, and the rest is still there

waiting to be honestly sought out. Find the lie and truth will surface somewhere nearby, discernable, but we seem to always need to ferret it out.



My First Assignment as an Officer in the Military:



Now, it was late 1967, and I had gone through a tough previous 1-1/2 years, being pulled away from my missionary goals and study, away from a good job, having been drafted into the Army, going through basic and advanced military weaponry training, working at Fort Ord, California as a Buck Sergeant pushing troops for a few months then, going through OCS (Officer's Candidate School) finally graduating as a 2nd Lieutenant. Now, I had been assigned in Europe to the 2nd Battalion, 7th Field Artillery in Augsburg, Germany. Yes, it had been a busy, trying time, and although it seemed like some things in my life had been abruptly interrupted, I didn't know it at the time, but God had another plan that I was only learning about day by day as I walked the path that He had planned for me. I had been in Augsburg only one day and it had been about five days since I'd been in a good worshipful, Holy Spirit filled, prayer service or place to fellowship with God as I usually did daily. It seemed like an eternity since I had been able to pray with someone that believed like me and sought God's presence and feel the warmth of His precious Holy Spirit embracing Himself around me. I had always received a lot of strength from that and I was beginning to be spiritually hungry for it again. I had hung out at the chapel an hour or so prayerfully, but the chaplain and his staff were not very spiritual and had not shown much interest even in their conversations about God. When I mentioned his Holy Spirit they had seemed uncomfortable in talking with me and there was really no relationship at all. Dry was the way things seemed to be with no heartfelt fellowship, that's the way that the Army's chapel program had always seemed to be to me, dry.



I had reported into my unit ready to go to work, however, it was late in the day so, they told me to come to work tomorrow. I walked prayerfully around the post just before dinner, and after reporting in. As I was walking, I asked the Lord to help me find a Christian brother that would be my prayer partner so that we could have Christian fellowship. *"Father, I know that your people are everywhere on this planet, so, please Father, help me to find a brother in Christ that loves you like I do, here at this duty station."* And as I was walking, and praying, suddenly, I heard the barking voice of an ASA (Army Security Agency) First Sergeant, dismissing his company of men for their week-end passes.



"Gentlemen, as you're getting ready to go off-post for the weekend, I ask that, you all remember who you are and who you represent. We are all ambassadors of this great nation whose uniform we are wearing, so, conduct yourselves accordingly. I have read the records of every man standing in this formation, and each of you claim to know Jesus as your savior and you've each personally claimed to me that, you serve Him so, conduct yourselves accordingly. If you need me, I'll be here, or with my family in my quarters, just call, I'm here for you, if you need prayer, I am here." Needless to say, I was surprised and just stood there with my mouth open, I had just asked for the Lord's help in finding a prayer partner and not a minute later I heard this, apparently a Christian, First Sergeant talking to his men, wow! This may be my answer standing there in front of me. I decided to wait until he had dismissed his company formation so, I just stood there



waiting. After the First Sargent was finished, he sharply turned around and walked my way, to go past me into his orderly room.

He was one of the most well groomed and dressed NCO's (Non Commissioned Officers) that I had ever seen, all military creases in his uniform, no wrinkles anywhere, spit shined boots, polished brass belt buckle, etc., as he was about to walk by me, he whipped a crisp, sharp hand salute on me. I could tell that, he was a very proud soldier and evidently an excellent example of what a soldier should look and act like, to his men. You could tell that he set high standards for soldiering and it was easy to see that the men respected him. I answered his salute just as proudly as his had been, "First Sargent, do you have a minute?" I asked. A quick no-nonsense response from him followed, "What can I do for you sir?," Then, I said, "I liked what I heard you tell your men First Sargent, I liked it a lot. I feel like we're going to be friends. Are there any more dedicated Christians like you around on this military post? I'm new in Germany and I'd like to be introduced to some of them, do you perhaps, have a Bible Study group, maybe?" He said, "I know one other very dedicated Christian sir, he's one of the chaplain's assistants on another military post nearby, and we do fellowship often but I'm sad to say that, we have no study group of any kind," he said. Then I said, "I'm in need of some godly fellowship. Maybe we could begin a weekly Bible Study and fellowship together." "What night sir, my family and I are available most nights around 1,900 (7:00 p.m.) hours, and where could we meet sir. I said, "Why not at my quarters, as an officer I have more than adequate space," and that seemed good to First Sargent Horace Miller, my newfound Christian friend. "I might find one or two others that may come," he said. "We're in bad need of some good fundamental Bible teaching around here, I hope you're a teacher sir." I said, "I'll try just about anything once, but we'll probably just teach each other for a while, who knows what God will do, we're coming together in His name and in His love, that's the most important thing, we'll leave the rest up to Him. The Chaplains worship program really isn't cutting it right now for me, and I just need prayer partners and anyone that loves and is serious about serving our Lord will be welcome as far as I'm concerned." That was the beginning of what would be a wonderful relationship between two Christian brothers in the Lord. Yes, who could know what two dedicated Christians would end up doing in God's marvelous plan for things?



The Augsburg Christian Fellowship begins:



That Tuesday evening, we met at my apartment in the officers section of our government housing for soldiers assigned in that area. First Sargent, Horace Marshall and his family, Chaplain's Assistant, Specialist E-5, James Davisie of nearby Flack Casern military post, with his family, me, and my wife, a total of 3 men, 3 women and 4 children. It was the beginning of a relationship that would affect all of our lives and the military community, not only among the people in the Augsburg, Germany area, but three other German cities, Munich, Ansbach, Grafenwoehr and their large American military communities for several years to come. From the beginning, we each had an attitude of love and respect for each other and our families. I was the only Commissioned Officer, and thus, the official

leader of our group (only because I was a Commissioned Officer) but there were several enlisted people that were truly a great help and certainly, better leaders than myself as they loved God too.



Week two, I had to get extra folding seats as we had almost 20 people, yes, there were truly others that wanted more of God in their lives too and as they found out about us, we grew weekly. By the time I had been in Germany about two months, my friend, and



eventual brother-in-law, Reverend Mervin Walker came by to visit us in Germany. He was on an around the world missionary trip, checking on missionaries that our Church, Gospel Lighthouse Church in Dallas, Texas supported and because he was traveling our way, he stopped by our Tuesday evening bible study and gave a bible lesson to around 52 of us in my apartment, it was beginning to get crowded. When we had grown to around 65 or 70 people and had standing room only on Tuesday evenings in my apartment, the head Chaplain of the Augsburg Area (Captain Lockie), in early June 1968 came to see me and offered to sign his Flak Casern Chapel (Photo on left above) out to me on Tuesday evenings if our group would keep it clean and support his Sunday school and Chapel program, I discussed this with Horace, James, and our other brothers and sisters in the Lord and yes, we were all ready for a better, more comfortable place to study and worship so, we all agreed simply because we had grown so much.



In late May of 1968 my pastor's from Dallas, Texas, the Reverend & Mrs. (Nell) J. C. Hibbard on one of their own world missionary tours, checking on their missionaries in the field, that our Church supported, came by and he preached the first sermon to our Fellowship group in our new Chapel home. Our group had grown to just under 500 people, by now, Gospel Lighthouse church in Dallas was supporting us by sending us teaching literature and they had appointed me as a licensed minister out of Gospel Lighthouse Church. This carried a lot of weight with the Army Chaplain's Corps. Soon after that, Chaplain Lockie told us that our support of his Sunday school program had caused the Sunday School to grow from less than 400 in attendance on Sundays to over 1,200 (an average) people. God was blessing our Fellowship and others along with us. Within the U. S. Army Chapel program, others around Germany were watching us grow and be blessed.

The Munich Christian Fellowship Begins:



Yes, others around Germany had taken notice of Chaplain Lockie's Chapel and Sunday School program's growth in attendance, and upon questioning Chaplain Lockie, he told them about our Christian Fellowship and how that God had been blessing us and how those blessings were rolling down-hill into his program. In mid-summer (July 1968) shortly afterward, the head Chaplain (Major Guthrie) over the Munich, Germany area Chaplain's program paid me a visit and asked if we (our Augsburg Fellowship) would help him to get a Fellowship like ours started in the Munich area among the U. S. Military people there. Munich was only about 30 kilometers (around 18 ½ miles south) away from Augsburg so, we talked it over with our Augsburg Fellowship people and we set up a

personal visitation program for a few weeks, for our Augsburg Fellowship members to systematically go and visit the people in the Munich Military housing area, and invite them to our new Munich Fellowship. We got Wednesday evening's at the Munich Chapel signed out to us for our Munich Fellowship meetings. In about four to five weeks, we had very quickly grown to just under 600 people in Munich. I was told later by Chaplain Guthrie, that the Fellowship in Munich had impacted the Munich Chapel and Sunday School program similarly and proportionally to how our Fellowship had affected the Augsburg program and as it did, others around our German, Bavarian area had been watching. I wish that I could give you exact numbers because that is important to some people, but to us they were simply not important at the time, we generalized then, to each other, and I am generalizing to you now but I sincerely believe that I am well within 7% to 10% of the true numbers if that is important. Bottom line, God was blessing wildly beyond our expectations in people's lives and we were all growing in God. We had found and were ministering to around 1,100 people weekly, plus to those in the Chaplain's Chapel and Sunday School program in Augsburg and Munich since February of that year and as others around the German-American Military Community watched, we all grew and were blessed in God.



The Ansbach Christian Fellowship Begins:

In September, the head Chaplain (Captain Ellis) over the Ansbach area just about 128 kilometers (80 miles) north of Augsburg came to see me. Ansbach is near the old German city of Nuremberg and Chaplain Ellis wanted his Ansbach Chapel and Sunday School Programs to grow like Augsburg and Munich's. He agreed to sign the chapel out to us on Thursday evenings for Fellowship meetings and bible study. Our Augsburg and Munich Fellowship people quickly picked up the torch and ran with it, and the Ansbach Fellowship was born. Shortly, Ansbach, being a smaller military community was running just under 300 at their weekly Fellowship Services and these people were also hungry for a real touch of God in their lives. Others around Germany were still watching and coveted the presence of God in their lives too.



Grafenwoehr, Germany was a U. S. Army and German Military Training Center that was located about 160 kilometers (100 miles) north of Augsburg. Each of our American military units trained in Grafenwoehr two or three times each year. If we were not training, our unit's officers and NCO's were making test teams and testing other military units on their mission assignments. By now, because I was good at the military's artillery mathematics, I had been transferred to a nuclear capable Honest John Rocket Unit, the 1st Battalion, 34th Field Artillery that was stationed on my same military post in Augsburg so the Fellowship was not affected by my transfer of military units. I traveled to Grafenwoehr often to have my unit tested and to test other units as one of the test team leaders.

The Grafenwoehr Christian Fellowship Begins:

In September of 1968 the Chaplain (Captain Jordan) over the Grafenwoehr military Community area gave me a call. He told me that my military unit was scheduled to come to Grafenwoehr for training in October, 1968 and wanted to know if we could help him get a Fellowship started in the Grafenwoehr military community that was like our Augsburg/Munich/Ansbach Fellowships. This was a little more complicated as the distance was a bit of a challenge to our people in our three Fellowships but we talked about it and we all agreed that as we went to train or to test in Grafenwoehr, we would all be supportive and work to build another Christian Fellowship in Grafenwoehr, Germany. As each member of our various Christian Fellowships came to Grafenwoehr to be trained or to test others, we would, as time would allow from our military duties, work to build the new Grafenwoehr fellowship and we were successful.

We had one woman, Rolestas Ellis, her husband was a Sargeant E-6 stationed permanently at Grafenwoehr. Rolestas had Captain Jordan's approval and under his leadership, she had agreed to oversee the Fellowship when Horace, James or I were not there. She was a hard worker and loved the Lord with all of her heart and that fellowship varied in attendance each week of between 150 and as much as 600 people dependent upon what time of year it was but it was always busy. We worked with people of all, and I do mean literally all denominations. Surprisingly, there was very little dissension. We all learned and we all respected each other.

Our Augsburg Fellowship Helps to Build a German Church for German Worshipers:



In January, of 1969, my family and I were invited to Switzerland. Roy Strickland of the Church of God out of Cleveland, Tennessee (not the snake handlers) invited me for a week, to come and teach their students at their International Bible College near Schaffhausen, Switzerland, about what we had done to build our military Fellowships in Germany. They, as many others were interested in quantity and numbers, this never bothered me however, because people that loved God were getting their spiritual needs met. Switzerland was a beautiful setting, and we spent a week there teaching the students about what we had done in building our Fellowships in German Bavaria. Basically, I taught them that the most needed ingredient was to do what the Bible says to do in the last set of instructions that Jesus ever gave his disciples before he left the earth; *Mark 16:15 - And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.* And to always have a searching in their hearts for the truth of God, and truth alone. God will do the rest as He knows His will, far better than the rest of us, first, they needed to get His seal of approval on a project and then, it will always succeed.



I ended our week there in the school by challenging the students to come to Augsburg and go to work building a German Church there with us. I



offered them the use of my personal family quarters as we had six bedrooms, to live in with me and my family free of charge, by now I had adopted my two children so, I just needed their help with the house-keeping and that was no problem. A couple of weeks later, four German students from the Bible College that had been encouraged by our visit, took me up on my offer to help them. A senior student, Brother Kurt Sach, a boy from Bremerhaven, Germany was to be the pastor of the new church. Another senior student, Sister Edith Nycloygen (spelling may not be correct) a big strong single German girl from Frankfort, Germany came to help along with two others each week that would switch places with two other students at the college. I had a six bedroom apartment provided by the U. S. Army that, the students lived in with my family and I. We fed and bedded them, washed their clothes, provided baths, etc., they provided their own transportation, and sometimes my family helped with that too.



We had a wonderful experience together building the German Church. Pastor Kurt with his fellow-students, me, and some of our Augsburg Fellowship went to work immediately going into downtown Augsburg, handing out gospel tracts and preaching on the street corners, Kurt was a very dedicated man. Within three weeks he had rented a building in old downtown Augsburg. It was an old restaurant, they cleaned it up and made it ready to use. Our U. S. Army Chaplain Lockie that was over our Augsburg Army Chapel program provided benches and pews out of what the Army calls their quarterly droppage program and got new ones for his chapel in the process. With the help of our Headquarters Mess Hall Sargent, Sargent Mims, we furnished the kitchen with eating utensils', pots, pans, dishes, tables as well as other furniture for their kitchen and the church lobby. This was also out of the U. S. Army's quarterly droppage program. Within a few weeks we had the German Augsburg church up and going. Gospel Lighthouse Church in Dallas, Texas gave the Augsburg church help with teaching literature and the German's responded in a wonderful, worshipful way. At the last count, Brother Kurt told me that he had just over 200 people in attendance each service and they were growing, and again, God had done a wonderful thing. Those Germans too, loved God and wanted His truth in their lives. Admittedly, this was one of the more wonderful times of my life as it was obvious that God was working and we were a small part of its' happening, what a wonderful privilege. I had been there almost two years now, going home was on my horizon, but God had been dealing with me regarding my taking another U. S. Army assignment before leaving the military.



My Next Assignment, The Republic of South Viet Nam:



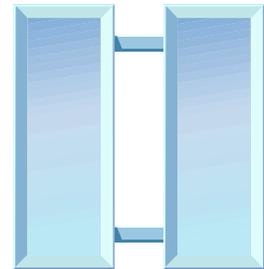
All of my life from early childhood and into my late 20's as an adult, I had a reoccurring dream and I had a lot of fear because of it. It probably began in my mind when I was a child. Growing up, during those World War II years, my father had been a U. S. Marine. He served in the Pacific theatre during that time; see him 2nd Marine from right, in photo on the left acting as a



Marine “Gunny” on an artillery mission. My grandmother and I would pray together for him every day and petition God for his safe return to us. I guess that between our prayers and hearing the radio news reports from the war front, it had, had its effect on me as a child. In my reoccurring dream I would always be in an aircraft flying around, making an air-assault on an enemy position somewhere, and during the assault we would be hit by enemy fire, we would fall to the earth and crash at which time I would wake up in a cold sweat in my bed. From my earliest memory as a child, I knew that when we crashed, I had died, and it was all over for me on the earth. For this reason, still harboring the fear caused by those dreams, while I was still in Germany, I had decided to get out of the military to avoid going to Viet Nam when my family and I left Germany to return to civilian life. After all, I had served my required time in the military so why not go back home to my good life in the good old U. S. A?



Now, suddenly I was beginning to have new dreams, this time from the Lord. In my dream, He would ask, “Do you trust me?” Then I would say, “God, you can do anything, I trust you completely and would do anything that you told me to do.” “Would you trust me and volunteer to go to Viet Nam if I asked you to go?” Then I would say, “Lord, I’ll probably die like in my dream, if I go to Viet Nam. I have a new family that I’m raising, they need me badly. Are you sure this is something that you want me to do?” In my mind, I was still sure that I would die if I went to Viet Nam. Then I would wake up thinking about what God had said, “Will you trust me?” Finally, after several nights of the same dream, I gave in and I told God that I would go to Viet Nam, but only, if I knew that it was truly Him that was asking me to go but only, if I knew that it was His perfect will, and not my own imagination. Then, He asked me, “What would it take for Him to let me know it is His will for me to go to Viet Nam?”



I thought a while then I told God that, because of His favor in my life, I had received every promotion in the military before it was normally due. Then, I asked God for what seemed at the time, to be an impossible thing. I asked God for the Department of the Army to tell my commanding officer there in Germany to offer me a promotion to the rank of captain but only if, I would volunteer to take a tour of duty in Viet Nam. In my mind I felt that this would normally be impossible to do because the Army did not ever do that sort of thing. Rising in rank from “buck private” to “captain” in less than four years was almost impossible anyhow, and that was what I would be asking.” At the time, six years in the Army was a fast-track promotion to making captain and at the time, I wasn’t even on the Army’s list for promotion to captain. I had only been a 1st lieutenant for less than a year and barely knew how to spell “lieutenant” much less being one. So, I told God that with that condition satisfied, I would go to South Viet Nam, if that was what He wanted from me.

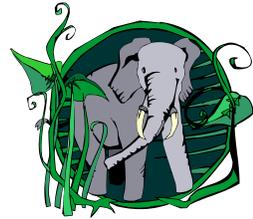
Promotion Miracle:

That very next morning after Reveille formation, my colonel, Colonel Foreman, called me into his office. He told me that he had, had a strange Twix message from the Officer Personnel Records office



in Washington D. C. and that he had been authorized to offer me a promotion to captain on the condition that I volunteer to take one tour of duty in the Republic of South Viet Nam. He said that I may want to talk it over with my family then, let him know. I didn't hesitate, I immediately said, "Sir, I will take the promotion, when will I have to report in to Viet Nam." Don't be hasty son; talk this one over with your wife. No Sir, I said, I already know where all of this is heading; I believe that God has a plan for me and this is His doing and no one else's so, I will take my promotion. Bottom Line, 30 minutes later, I was promoted to the rank of captain two years ahead of my

contemporaries in the officer ranks and given orders to report into Viet Nam, January of 1970 to Headquarters Battery, 1st Battalion, 4th Field Artillery, in Tan Ann, South Viet Nam. I was first, to proceed to the Panama Canal Zone, and go to Jungle Warfare school then, take a 30 day leave in the continental United States then, proceed on to South Viet Nam for a one year assignment. At the time, in my mind, my biggest question then was, "What possible kind of glory could God get out of the likes of me going to war in South Viet Nam?"



January, 1970 through May, 1970:



I arrived in South Viet Nam the first week of January, 1970. For the first two weeks I was assigned to duty on Battalion Staff as an S-3 Air Officer. I basically controlled all air traffic of the Firing Batteries (5 of them) of our Artillery battalion. We were air mobile artillery, a 105mm Howitzer (gun) unit. We would haul artillery Howitzer guns and our 105 mm artillery ammunition to specific places via helicopters and fire artillery in support of our Navy, Marine, Army infantry, and cavalry units wherever they were fighting. As I learned how our military sector in II Corp was situated, the third week my time there, I was assigned as Executive Officer to "B Firing Battery of the 1st Battalion, 4th Field Artillery, where I would eventually become Battery Task Force Commander.



There was more fighting than I like to talk about but our American troops were up to the task and they bravely fought wherever they went (see my No. 1 gun crew in photo to the left). As we would go through the villages and hamlets, I was seemingly helpless. Constantly in contact with the people (see photo below, right). I couldn't talk the language, and had to use an interpreter to get my point across to the people as we would go from place to place, they were such



sweet innocent people and they all needed Christ.

Then one night feeling helpless and frustrated, I felt so helpless and wanted to witness to some of the Vietnamese about Christ, I prayed and asked for God's help: *Father, I don't speak the language or know the customs, and it's useless to use an interpreter that is a Buddhist to tell his people about Jesus. Lord you and only you know what will help me to be a witness for Christ here. Give me a solution, I will only be in Viet Nam or Cambodia (we had invaded Cambodia May 17th, 1970 and at the time we were fighting there) once in my life time, and I will probably never return. "Please Father; let me leave a testimony for Christ here in Southeast Asia so that when and if, I am an old man, I will know that I have not wasted my time here. Please God, let this time in Viet Nam and Cambodia count for something positive for Christ, and don't let my time here be wasted here."*



The very next morning, I was calibrating my metrological equipment and registering my guns to make sure of their accuracy for any fire missions we might have that day. While lying on my stomach, adjusting artillery fire, one of my troops came to me dragging me a field phone, wired back into our Tactical Operations Center. "You have a stateside phone call sir, and she will only talk with you so when I found out where you



were, I told her that I would get the field phone to you and here it is, it sounds important," said the radio technician, and it was. When I answered the call, it was my pastor's wife, who was a surrogate mom to all in our Church, Sister Nell B. Hibbard, she was a woman tuned into God. "Ronnie," she said, "Have you been asking God to help you find a way to testify to the people in Viet Nam and Southeast Asia?" "Yes Mam," I said, "I've had a real burden on my heart to witness for our Jesus here and do something besides bring death and destruction to these precious people." Then Sister Hibbard said, "Then I was right, and I knew it. For the past few nights I've been holding you up in prayer, and I had a vision of you, on your face on the ground saying, *"Please Father; let me leave a testimony for Christ here in Southeast Asia so that when I am an old man, I will know that I have not wasted my time here. Please God, let this time in Viet Nam count for something positive for Christ, and don't let my time here be wasted."* Then I said, "Yes Mam, as usual, you are right on, that was my conversation with God, and may He bless you for whatever you're planning to do."

Then Sister Hibbard said, "Yes, Ronnie, I've been in contact with the "World Missionary Alliance" people in New York today and I have a box of 50,000 gospel tracks and a number of Bibles in the Vietnamese language on the way to you as of this morning. They will be delivered to their office in Saigon in a few weeks, and then she gave me the address. Gospel Tracks, great! This gave me a wonderful idea. A certain percentage of the ammunition that we shot had American propaganda leaflets in it.



My men and I would load it into the artillery rounds then, shoot it out over the enemy, spreading thousands of leaflets out over a combat area.

This was an opportunity that I didn't want to miss and we were going to use it. The story of the Prodigal Son was a favorite of the Vietnamese people. Department of the Army even started a program regarding the leaflets. The program would basically offer a Viet Cong

enemy soldier an opportunity to come in to us, and bring us his weapon. We would pay him/her for their weapon then, to help them become useful citizens to their country, we would train them in some kind of vocation, and we had a good number to choose from, like a clerk, a computer draftsman, a mechanic, a nurse, or poultry farmer and other training to choose from. We had put several schools together and the Viet Cong were coming in, in big numbers. That year I was told by CID (Central Intelligence Division) that at least nine Communist divisions came in out of the field because of the program. I have no doubt that some Viet Cong did take advantage of our program but knowing the Army Intelligence people like I do, the numbers sound somewhat embellished to me. At any rate, we had a good productive program and God had done some wonderful things once again.



May 1970 through December 1970:

My Artillery Battery had been assigned to support the 1st Calvary Division in the Cambodian Invasion of May, 1970. With the invasion of Cambodia completed, we went back to our operations in the III Corp area of South Viet Nam. Our Government was beginning what they called the Vietnamization of the war where we were basically training the Vietnamese to fight their own wars so that we could go home. My unit, 1st Battalion, 4th Field Artillery was to return/reforge back home to the United States. I had not completed 7 months in country so, I was reassigned to finish my tour of duty to 2nd Field Forces Artillery in Bien Hoa near Siagon where I assumed command of what they called S-5 Operations. The story behind this shows how quickly things can change when God is in what is going on.

While in Cambodia, my artillery battery had been supporting troops of the 1st Calvary Division in combat operation there. We would usually fly our howitzers and ammo in, land on a hilltop, set up our guns there with Communist forces we had driven off of the top of the hill, waiting at the bottom all around our little hill and we would fire in support of U. N. Troops (U. S., Aussies, South Korean, etc.) until they had swept by us and on to the next village or hamlet. We would hold our position until the U. N. Troops had swept past us, driving Communist out of their positions at the



bottom of our little hill away. We would stay until we were given another hill to air assault and land on to support our troops.

One day, General William Rosson was in the air observing our pounding of a target with an artillery barrage for some Army Rangers. He was very impressed and flew back to my Battery to interview me. He was a very emotional man, when he got out of his helicopter; he came to me with tears in his eyes saying how impressed he was with our excellent artillery. **A hilarious confession here**, our men often played a

game to keep spirits high while in combat. They would shoot fire missions then, once a week or so, they would judge each gun crew on their performance that week, and the gun crew with the highest number of points would be served dinner and be pampered by the other crews for a day for winning, and they were very competitive. The day that General Rosson came by to visit us, the gun crews were trying something different. Normally, artillery people in a combat zone do not even iron their clothes; they will usually wear a rough pair of grubby trousers or shorts without a shirt and do their jobs. On this particular day they were competing with each other for points and the whole Battery of men were wearing starched fatigues, spit polished boots, neckerchiefs, each to look better than the other gun crews and in addition to shooting well, they looked the part of spit polished gentlemen artillerymen or as we jokingly, will often say in the artillery, "We artillerymen are what lends dignity to what would otherwise be a vulgar brawl." Just a little military rivalry, please understand.

Needless to say, when General Rosson happened in on us, he was shocked by all of the formality within our Battery. He raved and bragged on and on. He shook my hand over and over for having the kind of esprit de corps that we had in our unit. What was really in the works was that God was giving me His favor in the eyes of the general which I really did not deserve as my men were the ones that were doing this thing. Later, that afternoon, General Rosson flew back into my unit and came to me. "Captain," he said, "If you could have any artillery assignment in Viet Nam that you wanted, what would it be? Would it be a 175mm track unit (The military's largest working Gun at that time, a privilege for any military commander to command) on the DMZ (De-Militarized Zone) or something like that? An officer like you should be somewhere like that." "Sir", I said, "I am a Christian and I guess I am really a missionary at heart, please do not ask me that question if you do not want a truthful answer." "If you want to put me where I want to be, put me somewhere with the Vietnamese people so that I can tell them about my Jesus, and I will be happy" "What?, that doesn't make sense, an artillerymen like you, a missionary?" "Sir, you asked, and I told you, I'll do you a good job wherever you put me because as a Christian, that is what God expects of me. Where do I want to be? If I have a choice, put me with the people and give me what I need to help them to learn about Him." General Rosson then tearfully said, "My mother was a lot like you, she talked just like that a lot, and then he left saying no more. Shortly thereafter I was reassigned to 2nd Field Forces Artillery in Bien Hoa.

For the remainder of my time in Viet Nam, I did go out into the villages and hamlets, gathered intelligence information, passed out tracks, & bibles to village leaders, and did other helpful civic projects for the people. We taught them triangulation defense techniques for the protection of their



villages, we taught them how to build foot bridges, health hygiene, how to grow different kinds of crops, we moved an orphanage from an insecure location in the south, northward to a secure location, and most important of all, we taught them about Jesus when we could. As I was nearing the time for me to go home, we had built up a reputation for our little unit. In

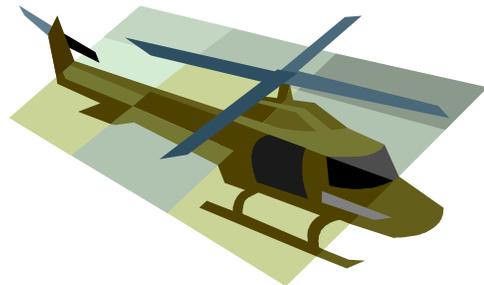


addition to doing the things listed above, we would also fly out over battles in the field and throw out gospel tracks and American propaganda by hand. Gospel Lighthouse Church in Dallas, Texas was very supportive in financing of the Bibles and Tracks that we put into circulation in Viet Nam even after I left the country. My crew is shown in the photo, left above and lower right on the page, **Front row:** left to right, RVN Republic of South Viet Nam Sargent (Former V.C. Lieutenant), Nguyen, Dac. (Former Viet Cong, with us now as an interpreter), Sargent Nguyen, Te Duc. **Middle row:** Left to right, South Vietnamese Interpreter, Sargent Dat, South Vietnamese Interpreter, Sargent Ho, South Vietnamese, (former V.C.) Interpreter, Sargent (Forgot Name), South Vietnamese Sargent Tu, interpreter. Third or Top Row left to right: American Interpreter, Specialist E-4 Lewis Humphries, U. S. Army Captain Ronald Underwood (me), U. S. Army Sargent Jernigan, NCOIC. The girl in the photo on the lower right on page 12 was what we called a Tiger Scout. She was a former Viet Cong woman that had changed over to the American/South Vietnamese side. I could never decide whether I trusted her or not and so, I trusted her with anything that we didn't mind the V.C. knowing about, I guess that I will never know for sure. She was intensely interested in knowing about Jesus and we taught her as much as we could, you never know what might be a turning point in her life, I still pray for her when I think about it.



About two months before my tour of duty was over, it was time to begin thinking of going home. Prayerfully, I had begun to ask God for a replacement to keep up the work that we had begun. I was really concerned because it really needed to be a born-again Christian that served God and loved His ways. I was setting in the officer's club having dinner one evening, a U. S. Army Chaplain walked up to me and asked if I was the Captain Underwood with the group that gave out Bibles and Bible tracks. "Yes", I said, "We do that among other things, why do you ask?"

I am Chaplain (Major) Spencer, I am new in country and I'm looking for a way to leave a testimony for Christ in this country while this sick war is going on. It would mean a lot to me if you would take me out on some of your trips into the province to visit the people so that I can see what you do there. I understand that you and your group of people have been quite successful so far and that you're going home to the U. S. A. soon. Maybe you could use some help from an old Disciples of Christ preacher that is missionary minded and loves God. Needless to say it but, God had provided for me an answer to my prayers again. I had been assigned, one helicopter, a ¾ ton, and a 2-1/2 ton truck in which I carried out my small limited missions in Long An Province, Chaplain Spencer was able to expand our small ministry into most of the III Corp area of South Viet Nam into a total of 10 provinces. I suppose that we'll have to wait until we see the Lord to know how many lives that we affected while we were there, but it was a wonderful opportunity to preach the Gospel of Christ to that part of the world in addition to working with some wonderful people.



Reassignment U. S. Army Continental United States:

I had expressed a desire to return to civilian life so after I returned home to the continental U. S. A., I was assigned to be the Commanding officer of the Military Examining and Entrance Station in Dallas, Texas for a year before being discharged. A year later, when Chaplain Spencer was leaving Viet Nam to come home himself, to Fort Huachuca, Arizona for reassignment, he reported to Gospel Lighthouse Church and to me that he didn't know an exact number for sure but he felt that he and our group had been able to hand out some 2-1/2 million more pieces of literature and bibles to the people of South Viet Nam. He thanked us for our support and for our people letting God use us in preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ to that part of the world. I thank God, and will always be grateful for the privilege of being a small part of it.



Well, I hadn't died in Viet Nam in an air assault as I had thought and my reoccurring dream had predicted for so many of my years. The dream turned out to be a lie from Satan. He had tormented me all of my life with it as he will often do when someone is working for God in some way. I can think of several times when I probably should have died when we were up in the air taking incoming ground fire but then, the promise of Romans 8:28 comes into focus and I relied on it daily at the time: *And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.* At the time, I was working for God, doing His will, and nothing evil could touch me. I would rather be safe in God's hands, in the hottest of combat and be in God's perfect will than to be

out of Gods will at home walking peacefully down a sidewalk in the good old U. S. A. Yes, I had trusted God and He had delivered me numerous times and in many wonderful ways. I loved Him then, and I love Him now. He'll do the same for anyone that will care enough to put Him first and obey Him in the things that He leads you into. Go! Christian, Go!, Listen to Him then, don't be afraid to lead the way, read the last chapter in His great book (the Bible), WE WIN!

The Soldier's Psalm, the 91st Psalm was, is, and always will be a promise that I live by:

1. He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.
2. I will say of the LORD, *He is* my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust.
3. Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, *and* from the noisome pestilence
4. He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth *shall be thy* shield and buckler.
5. Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; *nor* for the arrow *that* flieth by day;
6. *Nor* for the pestilence *that* walketh in darkness; *nor* for the destruction *that* wasteth at noonday.
7. A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; *but* it shall not come nigh thee.
8. Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked.
9. Because thou hast made the LORD, *which is* my refuge, *even* the most High, thy habitation;



10. There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.
11. For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.
12. They shall bear thee up in *their* hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.
13. Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder: the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet.
14. Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, because he hath known my name.
15. He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: *I will be* with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him.
16. With long life will I satisfy him, and shew him my salvation.



Ronald A. Underwood

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