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Community of Christ

# The Peacekeepers



Association for Ministry to Military Personnel Newsletter **December, 2008**

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## TIM'S SERVICE

by Tim "K9" Kunzweiler, President

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Is it just me or is the calendar really zinging along at a quick pace? As I write you this note our 2008 is fast becoming a memory as we are preparing for the U.S. Thanksgiving remembrance. This past Sunday (23 November) my Beaver Creek congregation joined with Dayton, Ohio Saints for a shared service and Thanksgiving potluck. I hope you felt the Spirit's touch when a Dayton member offered heartfelt prayers on behalf of all service men and women. Believe me, especially at times like Thanksgiving you're thought of often, and with the greatest love and respect. Feasting, family togetherness and our many blessings are prominent in what people associate with this particular holiday. I also always encourage our review of why we offer thanks – and who our thanks should be offered to. No matter what else we do to celebrate this holiday let us all offer thanks to the source of life's blessings. Our many blessings come from the Lord – who also set the standard for giving when he came to earth as man, and – for our sakes – sacrificed all. A greatest gift is God's redeeming love.

Just a little further along on my calendar is the Christmas celebration. This year's Christmas will certainly be a day in which gift giving can also be a meaningful part. I wonder if you are aware of what your gift of service means to all of us "back here?" By your selfless sacrifice – serving in uniform, and often far from home, we are kept (and in some cases – being set) free. Thank you for that gift! Like for many of our service members, my Christmas memories are not always associated with my own home – or of my own family. Too often the service member finds himself/herself far from home and familiar loved ones. Yet, anyone near us can be blessed by Christ-like love we may freely offer. If you happen to be far (physically) away from family and home this year, may you take comfort in knowing that our Lord was also "deployed"



far from home on a mission, planned long ago, to rescue us!

Soon after the New Year starts (January 20<sup>th</sup>, in fact) we will observe Inauguration Day in the U.S. If you are a service member in the U.S. military you've doubtless heard about all you can and cannot do in association with political activities. What you might not have heard much about is something I'd encourage you to participate in daily: offering prayer for our elected leaders. No matter what our political affiliations are, post-election, we have a Commander-In-Chief to support. The President of the United States needs our prayers, as the duly elected leader of a nation. All national leaders need prayer. Indeed, all sovereign nations need our prayers – that we, as God's people, will look to the Master for the right path appropriate to our respective futures. Spiritual, economic, peace and justice matters all weigh in the balance.

In Christ – Victory! May God bless all Peacekeepers.

Tim "K9" Kunzweiler, President.

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The Holiday Mail for Heroes program is a wonderful outreach effort and a great way to acknowledge the sacrifices of our men and women in uniform. This program is in conjunction with the Red Cross and allows people a means to forward holiday cards to our service men and women stationed in the current conflicts around the world as well as those in military and VA hospitals.



Holiday cards should be mailed to:  
Holiday Mail for Heroes  
P.O. Box 5456  
Capitol Heights, MD. 20791-5456

All cards must be postmarked no later than December 10. Cards should not be mailed or delivered to Walter Reed Army Medical Center.

**The Community of Christ Association for Ministry to Military Personnel is dedicated to bringing ministry to Community of Christ members serving on active duty world-wide.**

You may also send cards and letters to:  
Volunteer Services  
Wilford Hall  
2200 Bergquist Dr., No 1  
Lackland AFB, TX 78236

Peacekeepers may be interested in attending the 24-25 April 2009 "Lessons from the Iraq War" conference on Graceland University's Independence Campus (1401 W. Truman Road Independence, Missouri. 64050-3434). The conference is co-sponsored by the Community of Christ Seminary, the Center for the Study of the Korean War and the Peace and Justice Team of the Community of Christ. For more information visit the website of the Center for the Study of the Korean War at [www.koreanwarcenter.org](http://www.koreanwarcenter.org).

Directory for wounded warriors, families, caregivers launched AFNS 11/18/2008 (<http://aimpoints.hq.af.mil/display.cfm?id=30057>) WASHINGTON (AFNS) -- Department of Defense officials here Nov. 17 launched the National Resource Directory, a collaborative effort between the departments of Defense, Labor and Veterans Affairs. The directory is a Web-based network of care coordinators, providers and support partners with resources for wounded, ill and injured service members, veterans, their families, families of the fallen and those who support them.

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## Curt's Column

by Curt Heaviland, Vice President

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The election is now history. I hope that each one of you had a chance to vote and express your preference for commander in chief. No matter if you won or lost it is now our duty to support him in his efforts.

After Joyce passed on I decided to see if I could keep my head on straight. As a result I made a trip to the west coast to see my brother who is 10 years older than me. I figured that I had better get on the ball before one of us decides to leave the planet. It was really a great trip as I had just bought a new Chevy 1500 truck. The driver's seat was more comfortable than the easy chair in the TV room, so all I had to do was sit and steer for the most part.

I also visited my daughter in Battle Ground, Washington. I had the opportunity to attend church in the Vancouver congregation. It was a great experience and of course the people were very friendly and made me feel welcome. That's one thing we can always be assured of. No matter where we go our congregations are happy to see us and make us feel welcome.

Enough of the updating. We now must turn our attention to the time when we celebrate Christ's birth. The older I get the more I can appreciate what he did for

us by giving his life so we could live a life as God would have us do. I recognize the fact that my life has not been one that could compare to His but I also recognize the fact that he still loves me and will accept my contributions.

It is my hope that I can exemplify His teachings in all my dealings. I have the opportunity to do some of that in my job as a security officer. There are two ways I can go about it. One is to recognize that all who enter the mall are God's children and are to be treated as such. Second is to be patient and be helpful whenever possible. There are occasions when I must be forceful in my dealings but even then I can remember they too are God's creation.

It is my wish to you that the season we are now entering will be one of Joy and above all safety for each one of you no matter where you are. May the Lord keep you from harms way.

GOD BLESS,  
Curt

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## Kid Stuff

by Mary Yocum

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While running errands the other day Dominic let me know he needed to pee, (he's so literal). Looking around I saw no place close to take him so asked if he could wait.

"We're almost there. Can you wait just a few minutes?"

With a deep sigh he answered in a tortured voice, "Cawabonga Dude!"

(Which I interpreted as being a tough job even for Ninja Turtles).

We just returned from Branson, Missouri where we took in several shows. Early in the week we went to the Duttons. They have a big family and asked little Dominic and a couple of girls from the audience to come on stage with them. For the rest of the week Dominic asked at each show, "Are they ready to choose me now?"

It reminded me of how lucky we are to know that we are already chosen by God. Christ chose each of us when he died for us on the cross.

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## Greetings from Afar by Scott Gaitley

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Hello Everyone,

It is Saturday night in Iraq, and my highlights of the evening were a 40 min



walk and Bingo, however I did win a round and split \$25.00 with the other winner. Earlier today, I had my degradation briefing, which is a program to eliminate birds from the base area, especially from the flight line. Had to have an explanation of where I can go, where I cannot, the safety rules and guidelines so that I will know the protocol of the base. There have been many bird strikes recently, which cause a lot of damage to our aircraft. Therefore, whoever volunteers, gets to go around base for as long as they want and shoot birds. & nbsp; This may sound morbid to some, but is very practical and gives military members something different and constructive to do, kind of like a portable video game. Yes, they have to bag the birds and dispose of them. Now the interesting thing about the various species of birds is that the Smithsonian Museum in the states wants the various species and information pertaining to their habits due to limited documentation of birds from this region.

This week has been enlightening for me, since I have had access to many diverse sources of data. First, Iraq and the Middle East region have valid reasons to be concerned about Iran. They are influencing the economy by buying out Iraqi businesses, militarily providing arms and payments to insurgents so that they could continue attacks on coalition forces here in Iraq. When we finally pull out of here, I strongly believe that Iran will gradually take over!

Second interesting point that I found out about is about the detainees here in Iraq. They are being screened and employed to facilitate income for their families, instead of taking money from cell leaders and Iran financiers to make IED's and wage attacks against us, they are given an opportunity to make an honest living for their own futures, with many positive results.

Third, you may hear on the news of the turmoil among Iraqis around the country, however, that is mostly to do with the Kurdish up in the northern regions waging a battle for an independent territory for themselves.

Fourth topic is the amount of intelligence obtainable in this country, it is mind-boggling!

We know names of those involved, locations where they live, which ones to keep an eye on, when shipments of war materials will arrive, and where they are hiding weapons caches. Like I said in my previous letter, the Iraqis are helping us in many ways.

The US and coalition forces may not have handled this country effectively in the beginning, but they sure are doing a good job here now. It is near impossible to trust the news media back home. That is one reason I wanted to come here to learn what exactly is going on. It was the same in Afghanistan; you hear one thing via the news and actually see something else. Was it wrong

for us to come here in the beginning and invade Iraq? Who has the right answer on that one, I do not. Anyone can speculate, the news media manipulates and our government, well that is a whole other issue. Regardless, we are here still and the Iraqis have made some progress, and they have a long way to go. They need to find valid ways to build up their economy, Saddam Hussein focused on the military and ignored the people of his country, in that regard we are helping these people, and teaching them how to help themselves.



Friday late afternoon I returned from almost five days in Baghdad, it was a most enlightening experience. One cannot overlook the destruction of war and the oppressive tyranny that Saddam brought to the people of Iraq. Let us see if I can set the scene for you.



Imagine a resort, built around a lake, with massive structures and upscale living that one would normally find around water in the states. Here the structures are palaces and large homes for important people of the Ba'ath Party, or Saddam's elite followers. Add a theatre on water, two large houseboats, small roads that connect all structures around, and trees galore. Except this is a gated community complete with high adobe walls, guard towers, and barbed wire fences that keeps out the local population prying eyes. Now this lake took quite some time to build, they removed the dirt to provide sufficient depth for the lake and are now piled high in the sky, and are the tallest mass around standing at least two hundred feet, and this includes a base that is approximately a mile in circumference. In order to fill the lake, the Tigris River that supplied the entire city of Baghdad with water, was diverted for three days so that this lake could be filled and the local population went without water. Around this lake is the Perfume Palace, justifiably named for the perfume that permeated the air when the coalition army entered in 2003, it was the Ba'ath Party brothel. Then you had the Victory over America Palace, built for Saddam's victory over the US, I believe after the Kuwait invasion in 1990. Al Faw Palace where Saddam stayed while in Baghdad is actually quite beautiful inside, and I did

have my picture taken in his large throne/ chair that Saddam received as a gift from a leader from another country. Then you cannot forget the mother in law house, which every palace surely needs. Down the lane from the Victory palace there is the Flintstone Village, a quite cool design concept complete with miniature apartments and served its purpose for kids, but not for the reason it was built. Story around here is that is was



built for kids whose parents were killed by Saddam, lovely isn't it? In addition, far from this lake is Saddam's personal wildlife preserve, which of course he hunted on, yeah a contradiction in terms.

Around Sather Air Base you have numerous other military camps, such as Liberty which has the largest and best stocked base exchange in the entire theatre; Cropper, Victory, Slayer, Striker, Deutsche, are just some other names around the south side of Baghdad. The air base is attached to a portion of Baghdad International Airport, which is more commonly known in Iraq as BIAP. There are at another two dozen coalition camps throughout Baghdad. I have personally seen coalition forces from New Zealand, Denmark, Tonga, Rumania, South Korea, Bulgaria, Great Britain, Poland, Australia, and Macedonia since arriving in Baghdad.

While in Baghdad, I learned many things during my short stay mostly involving things that are still mind blowing. When Saddam controlled the country of Iraq his primary focus was obviously the military and making himself more money. The basic utility systems suffered and are limited to what they can produce due to antiquated piping, and insufficient mechanical systems – a couple of the biggest reasons why this country is lacking public utilities. Not only are public utilities effected, oil production is not as high as it could be for a number of reasons, mostly due to corruption and inadequate systems to provide the oil to the tankers, along with improper quality assurance for the product and the list of problems go on.

War on terrorism is going quite well, in fact it is quite impressive what has transpired in the last year here. I met with a group of people assigned to DOMEX which means Document and Media Exploitation, this group is used strictly for building a case against possible terrorists and later those that are detained. What I can say is that they utilize captured documents, cell phones, and computer memory sources to see that the individual may end up captured or continually detained as the case may be. I spent some time with those who work in the JIDC – Joint Interrogation and Debriefing Center, which facilitates all steps in the interrogation process from screening to release, for all detainees brought to Baghdad Theater Internment Facility. Discussed with analysts from both the Sunni and Shia teams the political impact that each of these two religious groups were having in Iraq. When it comes to knowing the bad guys, all resources available are utilized from human intelligence sources, modern technology in many forms, news media, and aviation assets. This all means that weekly the bad guys are being caught on a regular basis. The numbers show how the capturing of key insurgents decreases effectiveness of the terrorist organizations, they are lacking in funds and are resorting to criminal activities in order to gain money to purchase weapons. Those who try to recruit, arm with weapons, or manipulate others in becoming terrorists are monitored and dealt with.

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**Available in an E-mail and a "snail mail" edition.** Active-duty military members who join the association can receive either edition for free. Non-active-duty "sustaining" members receive either edition with a paid membership, **\$10.00, due in April.** Archive newsletters also available on our Web site: <http://www.cofchristpeacekeepers.org/>

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