

# CALL TO DUTY

## VOL. 3, ISSUE 3



### THIS ISSUE'S THEME:

You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. 2 Timothy 2:3



I attended the US Army Ranger school in 1987. Back then it was 58 days long and took place in southwest Georgia, the mountains of northern Georgia, the desert in Utah, and the swamps of Florida. It was the longest and toughest 58 days of my life. I knew that if I endured and finished, I would earn the coveted Ranger Tab (I did). The "Tab" is a testament to one's willingness to do hard things and excel in military tasks.



In 2 Timothy 2:3 (NKJV) Paul warns Timothy, "You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ". In chapter 3 of 2 Timothy, Paul explains that there would be perilous times ahead for Timothy. He told Timothy that sinful men would creep in (vv 2-7) and that "evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived" (v 13). In verse 14, though, Paul warns Timothy, "But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them."



Finally, Paul tells Timothy what his reward would be if he endured and continued as Paul instructed him. In 2 Timothy 4:8 Paul says that just as he (Paul) would receive a crown of righteousness and that all who have loved His appearing would receive this crown. While some may desire earthly rewards (like the Ranger Tab), those who endure like a good soldier of Jesus Christ will receive a crown of righteousness. The crown is a testament to those willing to do hard things and excel in Christ.

~ Tony Turner



## MILITARY OUTREACH & ENCOURAGEMENT



House to House  
Heart to Heart

# THE DEBORAH RICE MILITARY OUTREACH FUND

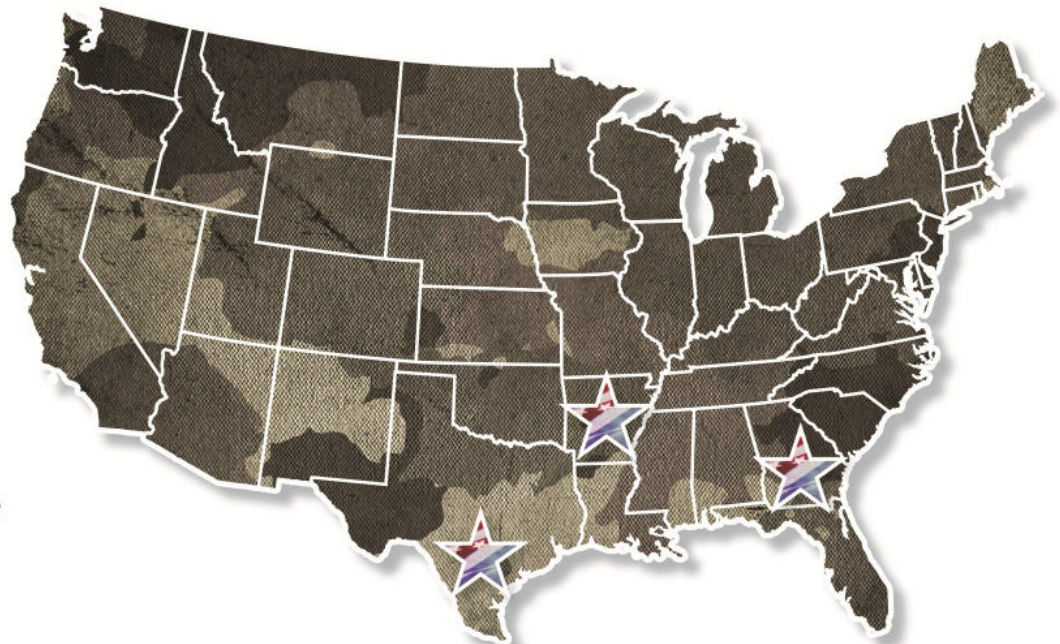
Deborah Rice, lovingly known as Ms. Deb, worked with House to House and Polishing the Pulpit for over 15 years. Her son is in the Army, and she was very patriotic. She loved America, and every year we celebrated Veterans Day and Memorial Day with her. In October 2021 she suffered a brain aneurysm. She fought for her life until February 4, 2022. To honor her, we have set up a donation fund to send out HTH to military bases in her honor. For every dollar given, at least three copies will be sent out around a military base, to seek and save the lost (Luke 19:10).

You can donate here: [housetohouse.com/mrs-deb-memorial-fund/](https://housetohouse.com/mrs-deb-memorial-fund/).

As donations come in, we will send more HTH copies to additional bases across the continental United States (CONUS for military folks). As we send to new bases, we will add stars representing those areas.

"My parents we converted while serving in the USAF. Because of someone's diligence to spreading the gospel, my family are thankfully Christians. My parents both work for the church and I now work at House to House spreading the gospel."  
—Ahren Steis

We are honored to have known Ms. Deb, and we are better for it.



## God Meant It For Good

“I am sorry, your baby does not have a heartbeat.” Those are the hardest words I have ever heard. I was in my first year of service and looking forward to attending Ranger School in a few months. I expected to come home from training just in time to welcome our baby girl into this world. Those words changed all of those plans and ushered in a season of grief and soul-searching. I’ve never met a soldier who didn’t have a story about overcoming hardship in training or combat. For me, the most difficult part of being a soldier was balancing the tension between serving my family during a time of loss and continuing to serve effectively as a soldier. I saw career and advancement opportunities pass me by as I struggled with grief and doubt.



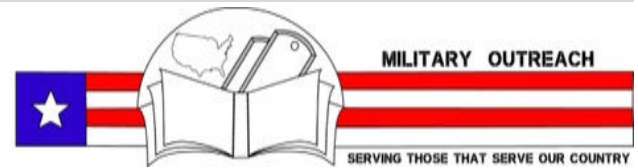
I wonder what Joseph thought while he was trapped in a hole, chained, and made to be a slave. One minute, he was the apple of his father’s eye; the next, he was betrayed by his brothers and sent far from those he loved.

The story of Joseph affirms the truth Paul states in Romans 8:28, “And we know that all things work together for good to those who love

God, to those who are called according to His purpose.” (NKJV) What is the core message Paul is sharing in Romans 8? I believe it is this: God can take both the good and bad moments in our lives and use them to fulfill His will and our GREATER good. I emphasize the word greater because, in the moment, hardships are tough. Nobody should pretend otherwise. My situation was tough. War is tough. Joseph’s pit was tough. The cross was tough. But we have this promise: ultimately, God can turn our hardships into something good. How? I don’t know. But I believe He can because He is God. And He’s proven it again and again.

He proved it in Joseph’s story. We can all be thankful the Holy Spirit moved Moses to write Joseph’s reflections on all he had gone through. “As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today.” (Genesis 50:20, ESV). He proved it in my story as well. During that time, we leaned in close to our church family, sought God more deeply, and I was encouraged to start preaching. I recovered in my career, but through tragedy, I found a different calling—to serve God as a minister. We serve a great God who can do more than we could ever imagine, even taking our hardest battles and using them for our good. People may mean things for evil, but God ALWAYS means it for our good. Let us keep moving forward, knowing that God’s goodness is GREATER than the sum of our hardships.

Mike Green currently serves as the Dean of Students at the Southeast Institute of Biblical Studies in Knoxville, TN. He has spent the last two decades serving the church in various capacities to include church planting, preaching and youth ministry. Mike holds a B.B.S degree in Bible and an M.A in New Testament. Prior to entering ministry full-time Mike served five-years as a U.S. Army Ranger with the 75<sup>th</sup> Ranger Regiment. He and his wife Natalie have been married twenty-four years and have six children. They are members of the Karns Church of Christ in Knoxville.



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## Keep Your Eye on the Goal

Paul endured hardships that we cannot understand and will likely never see (2 Cor 11:23-28). While Paul made it clear that he was not in doubt about his objective, he acknowledged that he hadn't "arrived". He said he would "press on...to the goal for the upward prize" (Phil 3:12-14). His knew his mission.

Matthew 5:11-12 is an echo of James who tells us to consider it as joy to overcome temptations because it allows us to practice perseverance (Jas 1:2-3). So, in hardship we must maintain our sight on the goal and keep moving. In that way we become examples to those about us when we don't buckle to the stresses and difficulties of life. We are encouraged, even in difficulty, because Jesus overcame the world (Jn 16:33)! That is the promise we share.



I regret that as a young Christian I found myself choosing between the temptations of the world and God's way. To be sure, temptations in life do present hardships. I knew how I should live, but I let worldly influences lure me away from my goal. In some cases, it was other young Christians who led me down a slippery slope to sin. At other times, it was the just influence of the world. In either case, I sinned. I gave in to temptation. I made a choice. It never started as "I plan to sin", but Satan had me believe I could dabble around the edges and still be OK. I lost sight of the goal in order to go along, to be liked, to please myself. I'm sorry for that, and I've repented and asked for forgiveness.

However, no hardship in my life was greater than the test to my faith in a family crisis. I could not understand, "Why?". I questioned everything: myself, family members, the church, and even God as I searched for answers. There were no answers that satisfied. For months I struggled. I went through the motions of living, but there was no joy. I kept everything to myself; I didn't even share my true feelings with my wife. But through it all I never stopped praying, and I slowly realized that I was praying for answers rather than the comfort God supplies. Job kept asking God, "Why?". His questions were misguided. God reminded Job of His wisdom, power, and greatness and the inability of man to understand His ways (Job 38-40). That is still so today.

I finally realized that I am called to faithfulness and to trust in God and not on my understanding (Prov 3:5-6). My focus was misdirected toward what I sought rather than persevering through the hardship and focusing on the objective of eternity with God, our Father (Heb 13:14). No military force would think of entering a battle without armament and a clear objective. As good soldiers of Christ we, too, must be ready to press on through the trials we all face toward that eternal goal.



Conrad Slate enlisted in the Army Reserve while in college and later transferred to the Air National Guard. He went to Officer Training School and completed 31 years of service retiring as a colonel. He served a variety of positions starting as a Military Policeman. He served in the Security Police, in Public Affairs, in NBC warfare training, and a variety of staff positions, retiring as Deputy Chief of Staff for Support Services. He is a member of the Karns Church of Christ in Knoxville, TN where he is active in jail ministry

Nowhere in the Bible does it tell us that being a Christian will be an easy life. When we add the military aspect to a Christian, the hardship intensifies.

We have and will be tested as Christians in the military. I walked away from God before I entered the Military. When I returned to God I lost several friends. They had seen that I was changing. I did not do the things that we used to do. Things that Christians should not do. I was accused of being better than them. It is not true, I was trying to be better than I was and to glorify God in my words and actions.



It is difficult being a Christian in a hostile environment. But as Christians, we must endure and act the way Christ did when He faced hardships.

Sometimes our hardships stand in front of us, yelling and screaming obscenities in our faces. As a Senior Master Sergeant in the Air Force, I was a fighter squadron Superintendent. I faced many hardships to protect those that work for me. When the SOF (supervisor of flying) would stand a foot from my face, yelling and screaming obscenities, dissatisfied because of a problem, it was very difficult not to yell back. Instead, I acted as Christ would act and just stood there. When the problem was fixed,

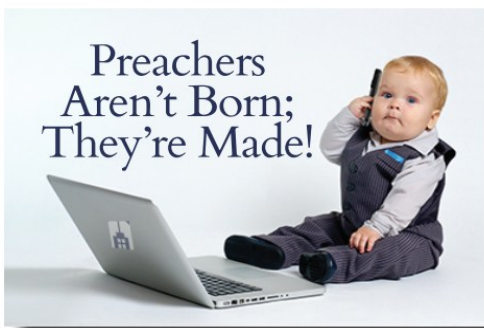
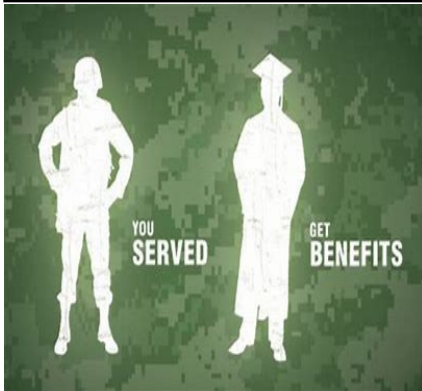
the SOF was bearable, but he would yell at me whenever things didn't go the way they should.

After months of enduring this hardship, the yelling happened less and less, until he was talking to me instead of yelling at me. There is a reason for us to endure hardships. It allows us to let the light of Christ shine through us, giving God the glory and being the example the world needs.



Greg James grew up in the Air Force and lived in Utah, Louisiana, and South Dakota before entering the active-duty Air Force in 1991. He transferred to the Reserves as an Air Reserve Technician in 2001. Greg was in air operations with heavy and fighter aircraft deploying to Desert Storm, Iraq, and Afghanistan among other deployments and TDY's. He met and married his wife Tammy while she was active-duty Air Force, and she got out when their son was born. Greg retired from the Air Force Reserves in 2017 after 26 years of total service and graduated from Brown Trail School of preaching in 2016. Greg served as the associate minister for the Greenmount Rd congregation in Belleville, IL and served as the pulpit minister for the Briar congregation in Briar, Texas before relocating to Jackson, Tennessee. They are members of the Crosswinds church of Christ.

# TRAIN FOR MINISTRY!



**“How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?”**

Romans 10:14



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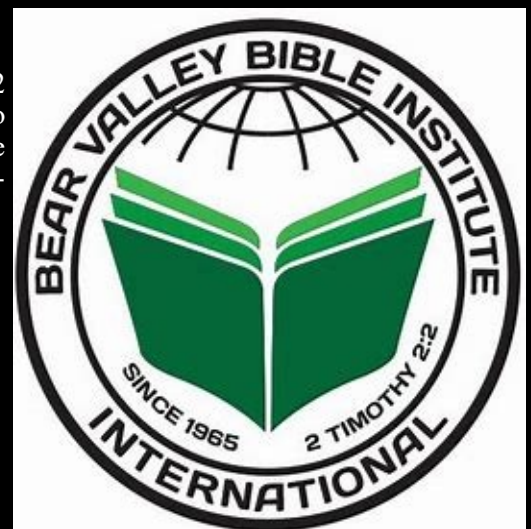
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### **"The Christian Soldier's Creed"** (adapted from "The Soldier's Creed")

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

**GOD'S**  
**ARMY**  
**STRONG!**



### **GOD'S ETERNAL PLAN FOR YOU**

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

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

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

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

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

**CONTINUE** to live faithful to God until you die or Christ comes again: 1 Corinthians 15:50-58; Revelation 2:10

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AFFIX STAMP



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

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