

A Plea for Prayer – September, 2015 – No. 152

We would appreciate updates on the location of our military because of continued unit movements.

Note: This list and plea will be updated and expanded as God gives information and grace. While this prayer plea is posted on the Internet, every effort is made to keep information appropriately private and with minimum information on mission, units and location. All requests, news and update information should be sent to the editor at: Coie.1@opc.org

Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends (John 15:13). Let us come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need (Hebrews 4:16). And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever (Isaiah 32:17).

The request continues. Please pray for our OPC men and women, sons and daughters who are in harm's way, about to be in harm's way, and who support those in harm's way. *The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much (James 5:16b). Pray without ceasing (1 Thessalonians 5:17).*

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Prayer focus: *Peace, be still*

And when they had sent away the multitude, they took him even as he was in the ship. And there were also with him other little ships. And there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full. And He was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow: and they awoke him, and said unto Him, Master, carest thou not that we perish? And He arose, and rebuked the winds, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. And He said unto them, Why are ye so fearful? How is it that ye have no faith? (Mark 4:36-39)

There are few metaphors for challenging times more apt than being on a little ship tossed about by a raging storm. The little ships represent our own feeble efforts to save ourselves, and are totally inadequate for the powerful winds and waves of a great storm. In this passage, our Lord is a passenger in a little flotilla crossing the Sea of Galilee when such a storm arose. The disciples' cry for help – "carest thou not that we perish?" – is actually more of a complaint against the Lord, than a request. Don't you care?! We also know from the Lord's eventual reply to them – "how is it that ye have no faith?" – that the disciples did not believe the Lord could actually do anything about the storm! Considering the impertinence of this question, it is truly an act of loving grace that the Lord so readily demonstrated His power and calmed the seas.

Our soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines are confronted with daunting challenges every day, whether stationed at home, or abroad. Physical danger, difficult work, long hours and dealing with separation from loved ones are comparable to riding out a big storm in a "little ship." There is ever the temptation to fear and lose faith. Isn't it a temptation in times of trouble for our prayers to turn into faithless complaints against the Lord – "carest thou not?" But what glorious comfort is the thought that the Lord might deliver us, as He did the disciples, from all trouble and alarm despite our faithlessness!

The Lord also sets an example of how we ought to ride out life's great storms – He slept! It was the sleep of perfect faith and peace, and it is promised to those who trust in Him. "It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows: for so he giveth his beloved sleep." Psalm 127:2. He ever calls upon us, just as He did His disciples at the end of this passage, to enjoy the peace that comes through greater faith in Him. As the great hymn by Louisa M.R. Stead intones: "Tis so sweet to trust in Jesus, just to take Him at His word; just to rest upon His promise; just to know 'thus saith the Lord.'" May we all pray the final prayer of that hymn's refrain, "Jesus, Jesus, precious Jesus! O for grace to trust Him more!"

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Please pray for our valiant men of war to call out to God continually for strength to enable victory over the enemy and that they will continue to be well equipped for battle. And please pray that our nation will be led by humble leaders who call on the name of the Lord and rule righteously that we might have peace. Please pray that God will *show himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him*. Pray that they will fear only God and not man and be of a good courage. Pray that they will be bold as a lion and that the wicked will flee. (Prov. 28:1)

Pray as we battle forces both foreign and domestic in our long war; plead with our God to make a way of escape from defeat, from losing heart in the battle and that in doing so, God will restore us as a nation to His righteousness. Pray for the gracious and needed gift from God of genuine national repentance; especially from the iniquities of abortion, supporting homosexuality, the widespread disregard of the fourth commandment and rejection of the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

Continue to pray that we will recognize the true nature of the enemy. Be not weary in hoping, praying and waiting to see the salvation of our great God whose new mercies come every morning! Pray that the Gospel may continue to have free expression. Pray that the culture of death will be defeated and that our nation will stand united and will endure in the defense of freedom. Please continue to pray for the spouses, children, parents and siblings of our warriors. Pray for the families of the fallen and for the wounded that they may all endure and come to rest and trust in Christ. May they defend our nation's liberties as guaranteed by our Constitution with stalwart hearts and minds!

May we be "**animated to pray by the certain hope of obtaining our requests.**" Calvin

Special Note: We are working through our lists of those serving and believe that we currently have only two in harm's way, with the balance redeployed. If you see an error in this assumption, please let us know giving both first and last name.

We also will be working through the complete lists of personnel, so if you spot any listed as serving that have retired, transferred to reserve status, been discharged, or you no longer have any contact, please let us know of these status.

We have lives precious to us in harm's way: Neal and Samuel.

We believe based on probable time of deployment, that Andrew (two), Brett, Bryan, Chris, Christopher, Daniel, David (two), Doug, Douglas, Gabriel, Isaac, Jack, Jim, John, Nicolas, Noah, Paul (two), Rachel, Ray, Robert (two), Samuel (another), Scott, Sebastian, Stephen (two), and Chaplain John Carter have all returned safely. New deployments are shown in **bold**.

- Thank you for your prayers for your Committee on Chaplains and Military Personnel as they met via teleconference on 8 August, which we believe God blessed in so many ways. We elected officers including:
 - Chairman - Ch (Lt. Col.) Richard M. Dickinson, MEANG, Ret.
 - Vice Chairman – Col. Mark W. Rogers, USMC, Ret.
 - Secretary – CAPT Michael W. Jennings, USN, Ret.
 We also appointed Richard M. Dickinson as Editor of the *Plea for Prayer*
 Please give thanks to God for these brothers willingness to serve and continue to pray for us as we transition various duties on the Committee in coming months.
- From Chaplain Cornelius Johnson, and member of the CCMP, a note that he has transferred to the Navy Chaplain Corps. "I start my Officer training on 23 August in Rhode Island and then an eight week chaplain school training in Fort Jackson, South Carolina. My last day in the AF was 3 August. I was commissioned into the Navy 4 August, and I begin Navy officer training 23 August." In November he heads for the green side in CA. [Welcome aboard!]
- Update from LCDR Stephen Parker CHC USN Ret. received via the PSC, concerning his wife's recovery from a bad fall: Carolyn's recovery is slow. It is tough learning to not put any pressure on either leg, when they are there. It will probably be a week to 10 days before we/she can fly home, if that is possible. Pain and moving the muscles is the big barrier. She will be wheelchair bound for 4-5 months and slow progress to "normal or new normal" after that. I am okay, doing what I need to do. When we get a discharge date, I will let you know. We are praying about what we need to do and whether she can fly home at that time. So that gives you an idea of what we are thinking through. Thank you again for your concern and prayers, Steve.
- The revision of DADT presents difficulties for many Christians, both those serving in line positions and those serving as chaplains. Therefore we urge you to pray:
 1. For all who serve in our military who name the name of Christ,
 2. For all Christian chaplains who serve not only the military but also their churches under creedal statements of faith and belief,
 3. That the implementation of this legislation will be just and righteous,
 4. That the heretofore moral standards of our military will not be severely denigrated by those of good moral character leaving this godly calling,
 5. That the Committee and Commission will have wisdom in order to protect those who serve. Praise God that the Commission has adopted additional protections for our chaplains. Please pray that God will grant a powerful and sustained protection for our chaplains from this revision.
 6. That our military, which has taken an oath defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies foreign and domestic, will not be diminished or perish,
 7. That this trial will not also in time descend on the pulpits of our land.

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Chaplains' Reports:

Ch Capt Phil Hollstein III, USAF, deployed to Greenland. The summer was wonderful in Greenland, getting adjusted and meeting the people at Thule AB. Ministry here involves mostly personal interaction around base and during morale events. There is an island mentality (close-knit, informal) that exists among the 150 or so Airmen on the base. There is really nothing off base, so people are around each other all hours of the day for work, play, and meals. Now as we enter the fall, the sun is finally beginning to go down every day. I expect the needs of the base to change as weather gets colder and we enter the dark season.

Prayer Requests: Please pray for people's spirits during this sometimes lonely time, and for restraint of sin as the normal checks of accountability are not present here (being that this is a remote location). Please pray also that the chapel's ministry will stay focused and that we will reach the Lord's sheep faithfully, as well as being a positive influence when the dark season arrives. I'm thankful I get to visit my family for two weeks during September, and covet your prayers for them as well during the months of our separation.

EMAIL: charles.hollstein@us.af.mil

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Please Help Us Get the Word Out

As you know, the Presbyterian and Reformed Commission on Chaplains and Military Personnel (PRCC), of which the OPC is a member denomination, must raise the financial support necessary to continue to recruit, endorse, and care for our PRCC Chaplains in the field. There is one source of revenue that is available to us by way of the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) that does not cost our churches anything. But it does require our churches to help us get the word out to folks who probably want to know.

The CFC is the "United Way" for Federal Employees (Military Personnel, Federal Courts, Federal Civilian and Post Office Employees). When these folks are encouraged by their Federal Employer for 100% participation, they can now choose to direct their CFC gifts to support our Chaplains through the PRCC! All they have to know to direct their payroll deduction gift to us is our **MNA/PRCC CFC #38370**. (Gifts to PRCC are handled through the PCA's Mission to North America - <http://pcamna.org/chaplain-ministries>.)

Please communicate this to all the Federal Employees in your sphere of influence. The Campaign takes place in September, October and November, so please include this information in your church and presbytery bulletins, newsletters, and bulletin boards during that period. Email PRCC for more information & sample bulletin insert: ChaplainMinistries@pcanet.org.

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Pray that President Barack H. Obama, will guide us as a nation in righteousness that is according to God's Word, and that he will *be just, ruling in the fear of God* (II Sam 23:3b). Pray for those who lead our warriors, from those in the cabinet to the NCO in the field, particularly for all those who name the Name of Christ.

Pray for those who serve us, that their courage, strength and wisdom will not waver or fail, that their actions will be swift, victorious and *bold as a lion* (Proverbs 28:1), that God will grant them safety and bring them home to their families. Pray for their wives and families, that as they are without their loved ones, they may endure and support them. Pray that we will minister to the families in the stead of those who serve. Pray for their testimony to the lost. Please pray both publicly and privately.

Pray that our **chaplains will be bold** in the ministry of the Word – that precious Word that not only tells how we can have life eternal, but also instructs how we are to live! Pray for all our members who serve, that the light of the Gospel will burn brightly in their lives.

In His hands, Richard M. Dickinson, for the OPC Committee on Chaplains and Military Personnel with the Prayer Focus by Col. Mark W. Rogers, USMC, Ret.