

*Found in the Desert Place*  
Calvary Chapel ministries  
inspire revival at Marine base in  
Twentynine Palms, CA.

Story by Bob Makin  
Photos by Lisa Pascua

After three years in the U.S. Marine Corps, Sgt. Andrew Maddox felt his soul drying up. He had just returned to the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center, an isolated base in California, called Twentynine Palms. Andrew was a nominal Christian, but he was thankful for God's protection during his training in the Mojave Desert and two combat tours of fighting in the deserts of Iraq.



Sgt. Andrew Maddox

While listening on the radio to Pastor Raul Ries of CC Golden Springs, CA, he felt the Lord's conviction and was compelled to rededicate his life to the Lord. Andrew also felt a calling to be used in a powerful way for God on the base.

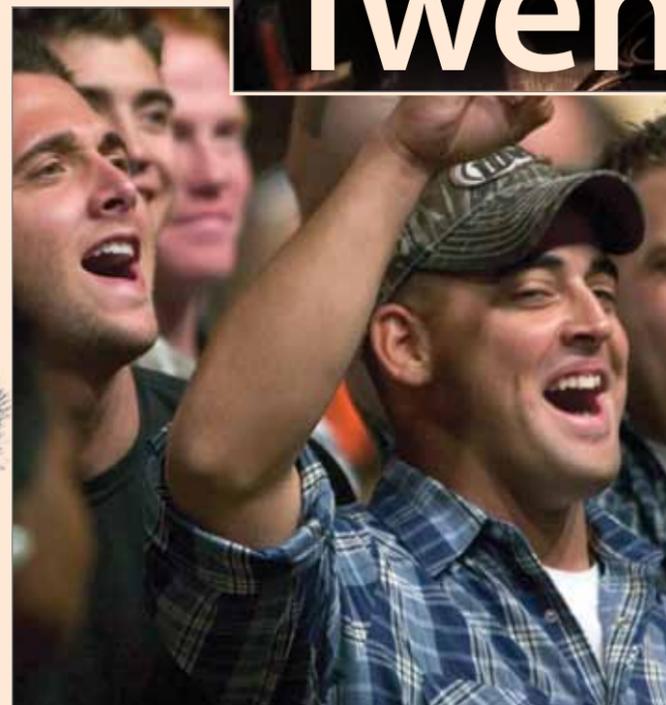
The base, like most military bases, has problems with discipline. "Over 10,000 people have nothing to do except train to go to war and get into trouble there [at Twentynine Palms]," Andrew said. "The average age of the Marine infantryman there is about 20. They are the nation's cutting-edge fighting



# Twentynine Palms

More than 14,000 Marines, family members, Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center in

and friends attended the Somebody Loves You Crusade held at Twentynine Palms, the Southern California. Many gave their life to the Lord. Disciple, a Christian heavy metal band, performs at the outreach held this



Marines enjoy Christian music.

force, so the base is a revolving door for Iraq and Afghanistan. Death is ringing in their minds every day." The Base Command deals with various issues like driving under the influence, divorce, suicide, fatalities, killed in action, substance abuse, and domestic violence. According to Military Ministry (www.militaryministry.org), a division of Campus Crusade that was designed to assist chaplains in spreading the Gospel, the suicide rate is up 30 percent among servicemen, making the rate for servicemen twice the national average.

Just two days after Andrew's rededication, he got a call from military police about a friend of his on the base. After five combat

tours, Andrew's friend was one of many soldiers suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder with a marriage on the verge of breaking up.

"They said they just had a serious incident and needed to keep him in my room to help him out," Andrew said. "I was like, 'Out of 250 random rooms, Lord, You choose mine? Let's go to work.'"

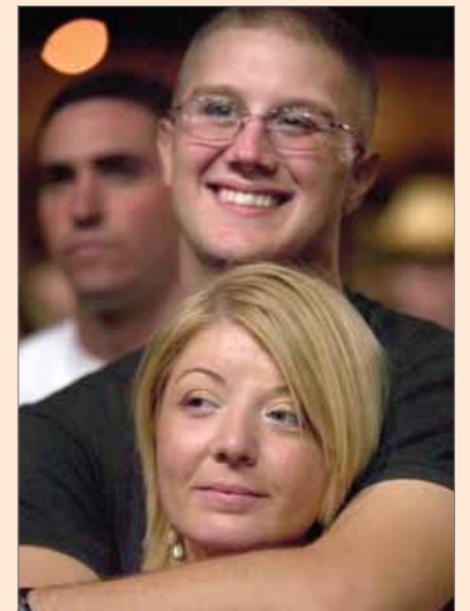
Andrew continued, "His experiences were horrifying. I did two [tours], and I can't even imagine five. I thought about how I could help him. The military was sending him to various counseling classes, but I knew the real remedy was Jesus."

Though Andrew had never met Raul Ries or been to his church, he felt a kinship with him. Andrew had heard Raul share about his experiences as a Vietnam veteran on the radio and felt that his friend would be able to relate to him. Andrew brought his friend to CC Golden Springs in Diamond Bar, CA. Previously, Andrew had no affiliation with Calvary Chapel.

"The cool thing is that my friend served in the 1st Battalion, 7th Marines Regiment in Afghanistan and Raul served in the 1st Battalion, 7th Marines in Vietnam, so they both served in the same unit," Andrew said. His friend was dealing with marital issues and some of the same issues Raul had



A little girl shares her patriotism.

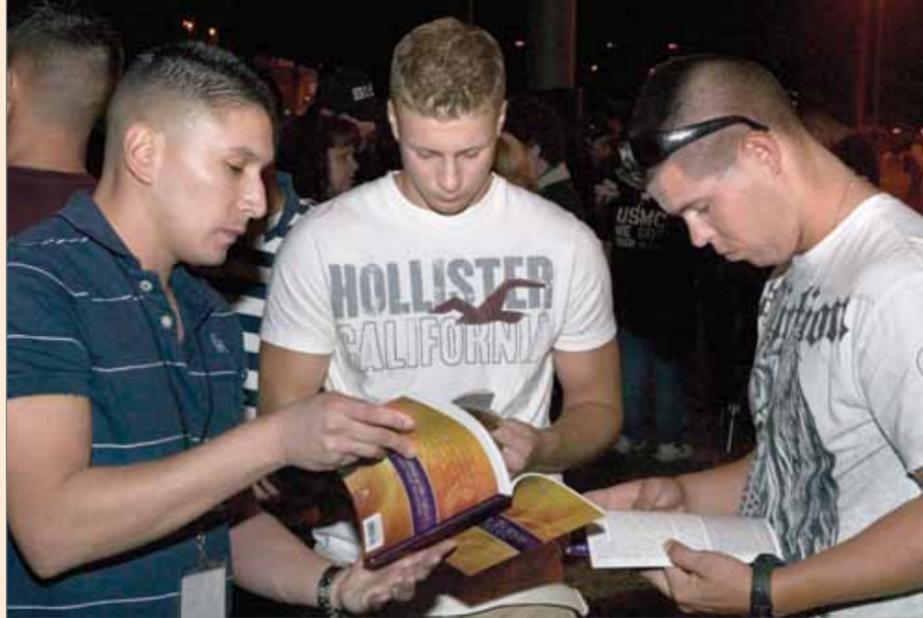


A couple looks on as they enjoy the evening of music and message of hope.

related about his own return from Vietnam. "Both had to deal with combat issues from serving in the Marine infantry ... I just felt like I had to give Raul a call."

### A Concerted Event

Raul Ries is the featured speaker at public evangelistic crusades with his Somebody Loves You Ministries. "When I found out about Somebody Loves You Ministries," Andrew continued, "I talked to Raul about the



A counselor, left, reviews new believer materials given to Marines after they made a decision to accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.

base at Twentynine Palms. He said, 'I think we should do a tour down there.' I said, 'If I have to bring my friends here [to CC Golden Springs] every Sunday and Wednesday, that would be fine, but if we could get something going there at the base, that would be perfect.'" After several meetings with the base commander, base senior chaplain, and legal office, Somebody Loves You Ministries was given permission to hold a Christian outreach at the base on October 25, 2008.

Dave Ford, leader of the FrontSight military ministry at CC Golden Springs, commented about expectations for the outreach, "Given all the issues in the military with multiple tours of duty overseas, post-traumatic stress disorder, the suicide rate up, and marriage issues, they said they had tried many things ... the senior chaplain was hopeful that it would be successful in reaching Marines." Senior Chaplain Dave Starkey, Calvary Chapel's first ordained military chaplain, told Raul that unless the event drew more than 350 people, the Marine Corps would not invite Somebody Loves You Ministries back for another such event in the future.

### Ministries Band Together

Base personnel reported that the Somebody Loves You concert was the largest event in the training center's history. More than 14,000 Marines, family members, and friends showed up at the outreach, with many of them giving their lives to the Lord. Andrew provided his testimony, preceded by performances of the Christian hard-rock band Disciple and country star Darryl

Worley, who played his 9/11-inspired hit, "Have You Forgotten?" Riders for Christ Motocross also were on hand, along with a 250-member motorcycle contingent. Raul then shared the hope of Christ and gave an altar call.

The Armor of Light military ministry of CC Costa Mesa, along with the men's ministries from CC Golden Springs and Joshua Springs CC, manned a giant barbecue. With hundreds of families in attendance, children patiently waited in line for face paintings and balloon games. Several youngsters asked Jesus into their heart after the Gospel was shared via a wordless book game.

The booth of CC Golden Spring's new FrontSight military ministry was busy all day. Many Bibles were given out to Marines with notes of appreciation written on the inside cover of each. Many Marines and family members asked Jesus into their lives. Among the many Marines and family members that FrontSight volunteers ministered to was a father from Texas who, having lost his son two months earlier in Iraq, sobbed in the arms of one volunteer while men and women gathered around him to pray. One woman stopped by the prayer booth asking prayer for her son, who had lost both legs in Iraq. Wives requested prayer for their husbands serving in Iraq, as did Marines for their families who would soon be without them due to imminent deployment. Others asked for strength to deal with drug and alcohol rehabilitation. Marines waited in lines for prayer and for the gift of a Bible.

### The Spirit on the Move

Two years before, a seed was planted when nearby CC Joshua Springs became involved at a base non-denominational service called Christ Chapel. Since its formation in October 2006, the Calvary-like service has grown from 40 to 240.

"It's not just about the size of the number, but the testimony of the Spirit that is at work," said Chaplain Emile Moured, also known as Chaplain Mo. "People are able to come to the base and see that something is going on at the chapel other than just somebody preaching at them for an hour. It is a viable and healthy body of Christ that children and wives can plug into, not just with good, solid preaching but small groups and women's ministry."

The services were originally started by Chaplain Dave Starkey, who is now the U.S. Armed Forces Chaplains Board endorser for chaplains from Calvary Chapels on the West Coast. Now the base's senior chaplain, Chaplain Mo worked alongside and then replaced Chaplain Starkey upon his retirement several weeks before the outreach took place. By then, both men had developed a strong relationship with CC Joshua Springs, so much so that their youth pastor, Chris Wagner, added the same duties at Christ Chapel to his ministry a year-and-a-half ago. Chaplain Mo said Chris' impact on the chapel has been huge.

"He's done a fantastic job," Chaplain Mo said. "Now families can come to the chapel and stay because they have something for their teens. When people come to a church, if they have teens, the first thing they look for is to see if they can get their kids plugged into something. If not, they look elsewhere. Chris added that in just a really great way. I think he is the best thing to happen to the chapel." Chris said he is excited to see that



The evening ended with counselors praying with Marines and their families.



Sgt. Andrew T. Maddox, 21, Cleburne, TX, received the Bronze Star while stationed in Korea. He went above and beyond the call of duty during his deployment to Ramadi, Iraq, when he taught himself Arabic and became the sole interpreter for his company. With his help, Weapons Company vastly improved stability and relations with the Iraqi people. Photo by Cpl. GP Ingersoll

the youth are hungry for the Word of God and desirous to share it. Many evangelize on the base, inspiring peers and their families to come to the chapel.

"These kids have become so faithful and consistent," Chris said. "You can see that Jesus is at work in them."

One young man, Taylor Hale, felt led to disciple, which is not surprising given that his father is a chaplain. Knowing what it felt like to have his dad in harm's way, Taylor witnessed to his friend Steve, whose father was still serving in Iraq.

"At first, Steve didn't want to have anything to do with church, but I kept asking, and he said, 'All right, I'll go,'" Taylor recalled. "You could tell that he missed his dad; that's how everybody is. Before, you could tell that he was a lot more nervous. When he started coming to youth group, he didn't talk about it as much. He's dealing with it better now, especially with his dad coming home soon." Taylor and Steve recently formed a worship team, which has made the youth group even more popular, according to Chris.

Chaplain Mo has been told that the base is in the midst of its greatest revival since the terror of 9/11 briefly brought many to question their relationship with God. But this

time, the revival isn't likely to wane soon since an established Christian ministry is on base to minister to families.

### Formal Organization for the Base's Christ Chapel

In March, Chaplain Moured joined forces with Senior Pastor Jerel J. Hagerman and Assisting Pastor Jackie Roberts, both of CC Joshua Springs, to develop a pastoral team, a church council, a statement of faith, and a memorandum. These are designed to protect the non-denominational service as a faith-specific service. The memorandum was signed by the base's chief of staff, making it policy.

"Anyone who wants to pastor this service has to be vetted through Calvary Chapels and Associated Gospel Churches, my endorser," Chaplain Mo said. "These two bodies function as semi-invisible good shepherds. If someone tries to take over the congregation, they can say, 'No go.'" Chaplain Mo continued, "CC Joshua Springs has been invaluable to us. Jerel is like, 'Whatever you need. For us, this is the biggest mission field.' Those guys have hearts as big as the world."

### FrontSight Ministries

The impact of the Somebody Loves You concert and the growth at Christ Chapel paved the way for CC Joshua Springs to start their

own FrontSight ministry. Implemented with the help of the FrontSight ministry at CC Golden Springs, Joshua Springs' FrontSight launched its website in March and will begin meeting in May. The ministry is committed to ministering to the spiritual and emotional needs of active duty and former military personnel and their families.

"FrontSight also is for the wives, parents, and loved ones of those who serve overseas as well as military veterans," Dave Ford said. "We have Bible studies, small-group prayer meetings, and we maintain a prayer list." CC Golden Spring's FrontSight prayer list contains 11 pages of people serving overseas.

"Many good things come out of this, such as support for the GIs who suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder," Dave continued. "Some come back so messed up, they don't have the faith to think that they're fit for heaven." The goal of FrontSight ministries is to be a light in the dark for servicemen and their families. ☺

**FrontSight Ministries**  
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