

MMI NEWS

SPRING
2023

Helping military Christians in armed forces around the world follow Jesus Christ



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UP FRONT

Sue Millard

TEAM LEADER PRAYER AND COMMS



Dear Friends and supporters,

Welcome to the Spring MMI News. Spring is a time of new growth, of seeing seeds which have been hidden in the ground, burst into life, bringing colour and joy into our lives. In this edition I hope you will be amazed and encouraged in the same way, with the examples of ministry seeds, some laid long ago, bursting into life.

The Madagascar Mountain Top Interaction, aimed at young, serving South Africans, had a young German 1st Lt, alumnus of MMTI 2019, on the directing staff. A visit to Ethiopia found astonishing growth and development of MCF Ethiopia, over the four years since the last visit. In Gabon the regional team leader for Francophone Africa found a community of military Christians eager to learn how to be an MCF and how to structure chaplaincy. In India, the Regional Team Leader and in country co-worker, an Indian Pastor, travelled on a ministry road trip, stretching from Nagaland (in the NorthEast) to Kerala (in the South) where the MCF-India annual conference took place – although they did fly in the middle! In Europe, the eighth Adria interaction took place in Croatia. There is so much more that couldn't be included, such as the visit to Ukraine by General Roddy and trustee Richard Downes.

As this MMI News goes to print, the Romanian MCF have just run their first Ski Retreat, in slightly dodgy snow conditions, where four people made a commitment and invited Jesus into their

lives. We are now expectantly looking forward to The Gathering – 'A weekend in Heaven' in Lebanon at the beginning of April, which you will be able to read about in our next edition.

There are now so many opportunities for MMI to minister or to support MCFs in our regions of ministry in Africa, Europe, Middle East and South Asia, all of which need prayer and financial support. Please consider if you would like to support any of the ministry you read about in this MMI News, if so, please see pages 20-21 for details.

MMI is now registered with the UK Charity Commission as a Charitable Incorporated Organization (CIO) and has a new registered charity number. This has led to the need to close the existing charity bank accounts and to open new accounts, which were opened on 1st January 2023. The old accounts cease to exist on 31 March 2023. Please see the Financial Support page at the back for the new bank details, and if you support by standing order or direct debit, please make sure you have changed the details. We are aiming to raise an additional £36,000 in this financial year for continuing and new ministry. Please pray for resources to be available.

As I write, our CE-TL General Roddy is at home making good recovery from recent surgery. We anticipate he will be fit for duty sometime after Easter – but do keep him in your prayers.

In all these things we Praise and Thank God.

Sue

Madagascar Mountain Top Interaction (MMTI) 22.

MMI FIELDWORKER AFRICA EAST AND AFRICA SOUTH COLONEL (RET.) HERMANN MEYER,



Several Bible passages in the Old and New Testaments tell us that mountains are a special place for encounters between God and man. They show mountains to be places of revelation (Mount Sinai), of instruction (Mount Horeb), of rescue (Mount Ararat), of enlightenment (Mount of Transfiguration), of resisting temptations (Mount Quarantal), of prayer (Mount Tabor), of strengthening and effective and sustainable spiritual preparation for all people who have accepted Jesus as Lord in their lives.

The highlight of the Madagascar Mountain Top Interaction (MMTI) 2022 was undoubtedly the fascinating two-day hike on the ridge and over the steep lava slopes of Triteriva Mountain, including a chilly night in military tents on the top rim of the volcanic crater lake. Noah, a local Malagasy mountain guide led the group up the mountain and on his chosen paths MMI-fieldworker Hermann conducted an insightful prayer walk with several stations (praise & pray), and hiking sections (reflection with a prayer mate).

A total of 30 participants from four countries came to Antsirabe (approx. 180km south of the Madagascan capital Antananarivo) to spend one

week in fellowship together, to receive preparation and equipping as emerging Christian junior leaders within the armed forces, police, gendarmerie and civil security forces of their respective nations and for the places where God wants to use them.

Three senior staff officers from Madagascar, South Africa and Germany as well as one former TMTI 2019-graduate, and an "Aumônier" of the Malagasy Chaplaincy made up the five-strong Directing & Teaching Staff. They trained the young military Christian Joshuas in many ways. Around a core of a three-part series on ethical-military issues, practical topics including the Role & Leading of Small Groups, Pray & Plans, Inductive Bible Study, Conversational Prayer, Relationship and Collaboration between MCF and Chaplaincy, were discussed and practiced. The framework for the Mountain Top Interaction, which has been carried out in the AMCF region since 2003, is based on information about the origin, vision and mission of the AMCF, an association which has spread worldwide and is spiritually active in around 170 nations. The multiple tasks and outreach of AMCF's Primary Support Organizations - ACCTS, MMI, MSO were also presented.

Daily morning devotions before breakfast

and nightly end-of-day praise and worship sessions were conducted by the delegates themselves. Two lectures - "Being a Christian and being a soldier - an ethical contradiction?" and "Christian Ethics in Military/Police services and especially in armed conflicts" were delivered at the invitation of the Madagascar (MDG) MoD by MMI-fieldworker Col Hermann MEYER and 1st Lt Erik Geisensetter, who as a young officer himself addressed the cadets of MDG security forces with extraordinary authenticity.

The talks were delivered the first time to around 900 and the second time to around 700 cadets. Both topics were of such importance that those responsible for teaching and training at AcMil⁽¹⁾, ENSOA⁽²⁾ and PolAc⁽³⁾ asked for the presentation documents to be provided. According to the deputy commander of AcMil, Christian-ethical education will be integrated into the training programme in a much stronger and more purposeful way. In addition, a workshop was held with a mixed group of international MMTI-delegates and AcMil cadets on "How do I want to be recognized as a Christian soldier in my unit?". With these unexpected opportunities for two presentations and one workshop, God opened wide a gate to spiritually realign both the present cadet-classes of Military/Police and their trainers and to equip them in a helpful and sustainable way for their future tasks.

A special gift from God was the participation of three MCF-members from the Comoros Islands, whose names are not mentioned here for reasons of personal safety. Our Comorian (COM) brothers and sisters have to live out their Christian faith in secrecy and in underground church conditions - just like the first Christian fellowships 2000 years ago. They are in constant danger from openly anti-Christian attitudes and targeted measures of persecution and reprisals. The three COM delegates said that they would return to their home country strengthened and equipped in many ways from participating in MMTI and through the loving and intensive

exchange of faith with other military Christians from the international arena. Even hard blows that struck two COM MCF-families before and during MMTI were absorbed by God's grace, embraced by HIS boundless love and soothed by HIS deep fatherly comfort. With corporate "Prayer for Africa South Nations" and a closing ceremony in the presence of Vice-Admiral Antoine de Padoue Ranaivosseho (the second highest-ranking soldier in the Madagascan armed forces) together with other leading representatives from Army, Police, Gendarmerie and Civil Public Security, individual certificates were presented to all delegates, and MMTI 2022 was concluded.

Special thanks to the Vondrona Miamamila Kristiana (VMK), which, as MCF of the host nation, prepared and organized the complex organization and logistics of this challenging interaction, which was held in three languages, English, French, Malagasy. Gratitude also for the outstanding support of MDG Military in and around Antsirabe garrison.

The successful implementation of this blessed leadership interaction was on one hand, the conclusion for Captain (ret., SA Navy and former AMCF VP AS) Peter Louwrens and on the other hand, the entry for Maj Gen Niriniaina Ramasitera (MDG Airforce) in the precious role of AMCF Vice President for the Africa South region. Peter and Niriniaina can be considered to be the fathers of the new format of T/MMTI.

(1) Academie Militaire,

(2) Ecole National des Sous-Officiers de l'Armee

(3) Police et Gendarmerie Academie

Opposite page Left-Right:

1. 1st Lt Erik Geisensetter (CoV) teaching staff on MMTI.
2. MMTI Logo.
3. Hermann and directing staff team.

MINISTRY in the COUNTRY of CANDACE QUEEN of ETHIOPIA

MMI FIELDWORKER AFRICA EAST AND AFRICA SOUTH COLONEL (RET.) HERMANN MEYER

Acts 8:27-39 tells a story of how God uses people to witness for Jesus. Apostle Philip was led by God to help bring the Gospel of Salvation to the African continent through an unnamed court official of Candace, Queen of Ethiopia. Philip witnessed to and even baptized this man on his way from Jerusalem to his home country.

Four years after MMI's last military mission trip to Ethiopia, Hermann had an opportunity to revisit the country of Africa's first Christians on his return journey from MMTI 2022, from Antananarivo to Frankfurt via Addis Ababa. This was an ideal opportunity to renew the contacts he and RTL AE & AS, Revd. Max Mupondi, had previously made with the Ethiopian MCF. In this visit, Hermann wanted to find out the reasons why contact with Christian soldiers in Ethiopia was becoming increasingly difficult and even sometimes broken off for several months. The welcome by Pastor Gashaye Nuessa at the airport in Addis Ababa and the reunion with Col Eshetu Desta and members of the MCF-board was very warm, and brotherly fellowship in the Lord was quickly restored.

How has Ethiopian military ministry developed in the 4 years?

In 2009 individual local MCF-chapters



were merged into a national Ethiopian MCF, officially the EDCWIM (Ethiopia Defence Christian Workers International Ministry) with 6 provincial MCFs (each led by an Executive Director) and the national board of 13 people including 1 active staff officer at ministerial level as chairman (Col Eshetu Desta). This very lively and active MCF has continued to grow with God's blessing and now includes 53 local groups with a total of 3,500 – 4,000 members. Even when deployed as a peace-keeping force in South Sudan (UNMISS) and Somalia (AMISOM/ATMIS), the Holy Spirit made it possible for two additional Ethiopian MCF-in-theatre groups to be formed.

Formal recognition by the Ethiopia MoD took place in 2021, and one year later official recognition by the Ethiopian Gospel Believers Council was granted, which also brought legal recognition and admission into the national community of Christian groups in Ethiopia.

There is armed unrest in parts of Ethiopia. In the north in Tigray province, the political party that lost in the last parliamentary elections is striving for political and territorial autonomy. In the south of the country, the armed forces are targetted by armed para-military forces of the political opposition. Despite the resulting commitment of MCF-members on active duty to protect and maintain security in their country, the MCF evangelistic work continues with

- Monthly prayer group of EDCWIM's board;
- running weekly prayer meetings in the majority of MCFs on a local level;
- Welcome Program for UN-Peacekeepers from South Sudan and Somalia;
- Trauma and PTSD-therapy program for



Ethiopian Tigray Veterans in cooperation with LHM (Lutheran Hour Ministry);

- Distributing Bibles to military Christians in co-operation with the Ethiopian Bible Association;
- Training on how to witness, proclaim the Gospel and share the Word by distributing Bibles in the Military,
- Preaching the Gospel to 8,000 soldiers outside military installations resulting in 1,600 baptisms;
- Subcontracting 5 missionaries who, due to the lack of structured chaplaincy, carry out the pastoral care for military personnel and their families at several garrisons.

These great blessings from the Lord are having enormous effects on the Ethiopian MCF's spiritual and numerical growth. However, there are major challenges to face too:

- Military lay-preachers lack a solid foundation of biblical knowledge and understanding. In armed forces without a Military Chaplaincy, qualified spiritual training is indispensable.
- The payment of the full-time missionaries and the finances for all activities of the Ethiopian MCF are exclusively provided by monthly contributions from MCF-members and by Christian local supporters. Neither government, churches, nor social institutions participate financially in the support of this valuable work of the MCF

for their country.

- Christian soldiers are disadvantaged in the officially "religiously neutral" armed forces.
- Due to the strict ban on practising religion within the official military framework and also due to lack of the MCF's own infrastructure, the Ethiopian MCF is dependent on renting public rooms for meetings, for spiritual training activities and fellowship.

A Vision was received and discerned! This vision for EDCWIM shows God's kingdom in the vineyard of the Ethiopian armed forces in the form of the unfettered preaching of God's Word by men and women in uniform. The vision shows a central place where Christian soldiers and their families will come together to be spiritually trained, to receive Christian education for their children, to heal those suffering from PTSD and from the physical wounds of combat, a place to gather in Jesus' name, to rest and to strengthen and to receive the Holy Spirit anew. A place where the Joshua generation of Christian-inspired military leaders receive ethical education.

How to put the Vision into action?

In the eyes of the board of EDCWIM, this vision should take physical form through the construction of a Christian Centre for Training, Charity, and Conventions

(CCTCC) in order to expand the building of God's kingdom – in Ethiopia and throughout the East African region. MCF Ethiopia is ready to answer the call to become a Lighthouse MCF for this geographical part of the region.

Col Eshetu Desta has taken the first step: he has asked the mayor of Addis Ababa to make land available for the construction of the CCTCC. Hermann has established contacts with MCF South Sudan, where our brothers Revd Martin Ajugo and Sgt Thon Michael Jongkuch-Kur already have extensive experience in caring for war orphans and for soldiers with PTSD, as well as experience in reconciliation work between hostile ethnic groups and religions in the two Sudanese countries. Initial contact has also been made with St. Matthew's Anglican Church in Addis Ababa.

Hermann was further encouraged when speaking to around 80 young military Christians at Debre Zeyt Defence University during a Sunday Service. He realized nearly all of the military students as well as some of EDCWIM – board's younger members understand and speak English. So within just 4 years God has cleared the language barrier between Amharic and English that had previously prevailed.

page 6: Meeting Pastor Gashaye at Addis Ababa airport.

page 7: EDCWIM board members with Hermann

Page 8: Top: Col. Eshetu Desta preaching at Defence University service. Left: Worship with the students.



May God support the precious work of Ethiopia MCF and may HE bless everything that is according to HIS plan and that serves to build his kingdom in the armed forces of East Africa.



Major-General Niriniaina Ramasitera, The new AMCF Vice President for Africa South introduces himself.

Gen Niriniaina is a serving officer in the Madagascar Air Force, a Member of the Cabinet of the Minister of National Defence and Head of the Coordination Cell for Restructuring the armed forces. Gen Niriniaina took over from Captain (Retd) Peter Louwrens, S Africa Navy on 1st September



"Arise, be enlightened, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord will shine upon you... For the isles are waiting for me." (Isaiah 60:1,9)

I come from a so-called Christian family living in Antananarivo and I was raised on Christian teachings: Go to church on Sunday for worship and get back to normal life during the week...

I became an Air Force fighter pilot officer in 1986. I married Dorothea in 1989.

On October 14th, 1995, I met Jesus personally, and I decided to choose eternal life with Him. From that moment, our lifestyle totally changed because Jesus got us to live His full peace in our lives.

In 1998, Jesus confirmed to me His choice through Isaiah 60:1,9, calling me to be His servant to fulfil His mission and He inspired me to serve in excellence whilst giving HIM the glory.

My first experience with the VMK (the Malagasy MCF) was the construction of a military chapel for the Arivonimamo garrison when I was the

commander of the Arivonimamo tactical airbase and the local VMK from 2010 to 2013. I became President of VMK in 2018. When I was appointed as the AMCF VP Africa South from 1st September 2022, I understood that GOD IS FAITHFULL, and that HE had chosen his servant. I am confident that HE is guiding me to HIS vision for Africa South and accompanying me for its fulfilment.

We have 4 daughters who are all married and a grandson. My household and I chose to SERVE the Lord (Joshua 24.15)

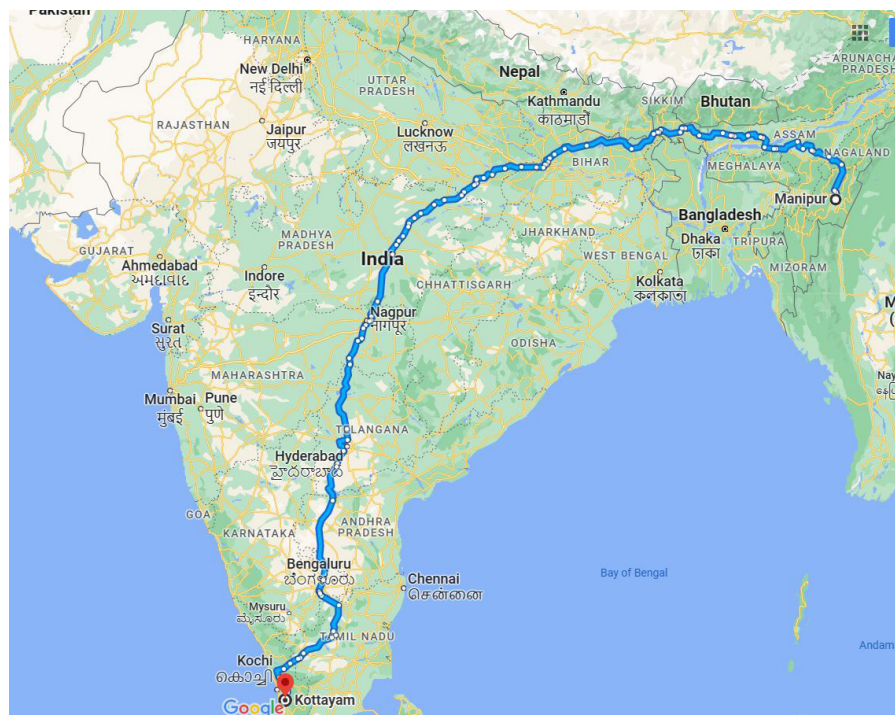
To God alone be the Glory !"

The India Road Trip 22.

REGIONAL TEAM LEADER SOUTH ASIA

Emirates flight 540 from Edinburgh via Doha, touched down in Kolkata International airport at 0200 on 2 November. A smiling co-worker was there to meet the plane. He had flown in the day before from his home in Bihar.

duty. The previous year, the General had tragically lost his only son to Covid. Over dinner the conversation turned to war in Europe. 'It was naïve to think there was any morality in war', seemed to be the prevailing view. Nations in conflict did whatever was necessary to achieve the aim. '



The first formal event in India was dinner with two former Indian Army Generals. One had commanded the all-India Forces in Jammu-Kashmir. Prior to sitting down to eat, there was a short NE India Zoom conference. Dinner was an excellent mix of Bengali and British cooking, prepared by one of the Generals in the absence of his wife on family

The morality of the war in Ukraine was the key appeal to MCF-I veterans at the Pan India Conference the following week. We were immediately on the "back foot" and felt it necessary to reflect and pray about the conference address. To this end the wisdom of several people of God who we prayed with over the ensuing week, was re-assuring.

A couple of days later in Manipur we met Colonel retd John. He insisted on buying dinner. Colonel John is ex Bihar Regiment. He pointed out that his Regiment took part in the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857 which he referred to as the First Indian war of independence. He is a likeable, energetic, intelligent man. He was not supportive of the proposition that Russia is morally wanting over the conduct of its war in Ukraine.

In Kolkata there was an exhibition on Indian Nationalism in the impressive Queen Victoria Palace. The exhibition eulogised Subash Chandra Bose who led the Indian National Army (INA). Chandra Bose was educated at Cambridge. He lived in Germany in the early 1940s and became leader of Indian POWs captured by Rommel. When Germany invaded Russia, he went to Japan by submarine! At its height, the INA had 63,000 men in arms. At Imphal the INA fought for Japan and lost. Allegedly, Subash Chandra Bose was killed in a plane crash in 1945. A huge sculpture of him was built recently outside Kolkata airport. This Indian nationalist sentiment may feed into the current pro Russia narrative on Ukraine.

On our last day in Kolkata we met a young Sepoy serving with one of the Indian army Gookha Battalions. He had been rejected by his parents in Nepal when he became a Christian. He had served in Ladakh on the Chinese border. His CO and RSM were apparently bludgeoned to death by Chinese troops in a border confrontation. Our young Sepoy's next posting was to Nagaland where we were heading.

In Dimapur, Nagaland we were accommodated in a school by Pastor Peter. Peter's brother was a former Captain in a police/border Commando force – known to Mark Hibbert-Hingston's church in UK. Nagaland is one of the poorest regions in India. Their desire to be independent seems unrealistic. Roads, water and electricity supply are all neglected. Around 80 percent of the population are nominally Christian, and the men apparently, are "not interested in doing anything!" We visited the war memorial in Kohima and met a retired Christian Deputy Inspector General, Nagaland Police. We briefed him on AMCF and discussed the war in Ukraine.

Back in Dimapur, we met a retired Major, the first Naga lady to be commissioned into the Indian Army. She is married to a Hindu officer and heads up an Indian Army veteran's pressure group that speeds up pensions and Government compensation for war widows. We also met a local police Chaplain who asked us for a copy of the teaching materials on military Christian ethics.

Our next stop on the India road trip 2022 was Manipur. Our host was Pastor A R who is Indian Nepalese and is supported by the Australian MCF. After dropping our bags off at a hotel, we went immediately to AR's church on the edge of the Assam Rifles Barracks. They had laid on a 2.5-hour service with a small choir and a voluble praise band. Because of power cuts the music broke down several times but this in no way inhibited the praise. We had some part time soldiers and families from the Assam Rifles border force in the congregation. Also in attendance was the wife of a military doctor with the Assam Rifles. She works for local

government in cases of stress in the military – suicides and depression among serving soldiers and their families. She stressed the need for good chaplaincy in the Indian Army especially in times of war. Present too was the Warrant Officer Chaplain to the Assam Rifles who seemed to be highly respected.

The lead pastor of the Assam Rifles group, Pastor John spoke for about 10 minutes. He was rejected by his family when he became a Christian. He has a passion to pray for the people protecting the nation of India. He was pleased to pray for an end of the war in Ukraine. Pastor John had set up a group called the Military Christian Mission (MCM). They offer prayers for families and soldiers deployed on operations. He sees God's Kingdom coming on earth and MCM being a small part of the Kingdom.

The next India road trip stop was Kottayam in Kerala (3 days by car, 4 days by train. We flew.) About 60 MCF-I had gathered for the Pan India Conference. We attended the MCF-I morning prayers. The NCOs prayed most fervently. The goal for this pan India Conference suddenly became clear. It was to harness these wonderful, united, fragrant prayers, in an appeal to Almighty God, to end the war in Ukraine.

We were staying at the Christeen Retreat Centre in Kottayam. For the past 25 years this RC centre has run courses for teens. The principal is an amazing Godly woman who was very happy to work with MCF - I. The programme for the 3-day Retreat consisted of frequent times of worship, prayer and Bible teaching. There was some excellent teaching especially

from a former Group Capt IAF. Following a presentation on Military Christian Ethics and the Ukraine War, there was a 25-minute prayer time for a just end to the war. The prayers were both uplifting and encouraging. Some women who were associated with the Indian Army said they would pray regularly for Ukraine.



On the Sunday following the Pan India Conference, we were invited to talk at the Pentecostal Seminary at Kottayam. There were about 200 students gathered. We gave a word and a talk about military ethics in the Ukraine war. The College Principal led prayers for a just end to the war in Ukraine.

Before departing Kerala, we visited a former Indian Army Sergeant's church. There was another opportunity for prayer and praise with a gathered group of Christians. As we left, a recently retired Indian Army tank commander told us he too would pray for an end to the war in Ukraine. The tank he had commanded was a Russian build T90.

At the end of the India road Trip 2022, our Indian co-worker flew to Kathmandu to attend the Nepal MCF annual conference.

Praise God for the MCF -I conference and opportunities to meet and fellowship with many Christians in the Military in India.

Page 10: The 'road trip', from N.E India to Kerala in the South.

Page 12: A Wg Cdr Regt Indian Air Force retd, teaching at the MCF-I conference with Blesson.

This page. Right. Outreach to Military Families in N.India. Pastor Blesson speaking.

Below: MCF-I Leaders present a Bible to the President of India





"Camo" ministry in Gabon.

MMI REGIONAL TEAM LEADER FOR FRANCOPHONE AFRICA ERIC MANDILLE

The 10 day visit, 26 Feb to 8 March 2023 by Eric Mandille MMI RTL and Augustin Tchenkoua CCruMM leader for Africa, focused on meeting military Christians and on support to the functioning chaplaincy.

After 3 months of online preparation, the first contact with Gabon brothers and sisters in Christ was an overwhelming warm welcome under the leadership of Dr Stanislas Batsielili, head of Campus Crusade (CCru) in Gabon. Stanislas is a former Physician, who 20 years ago was called to serve the Lord and developed the Military Ministry for CCru in Gabon.

Gabon is predominantly Christian with a majority of Roman Catholic (RC) parishes and an increasing number of various Protestant denominations, mostly Pentecostal or Charismatic. The relationship between political authority and churches has evolved since former president Omar Bongo died in 2009. He was an RC born Gabonese convert to Islam. His son Ali Bongo Ondimba,

the current president, has a tolerant attitude, and is helping to develop the ministry in Gabon. Consequently, Pastor Thierry Mabiala, a Pentecostal minister, Head of Bible Alliance Gabon and Chief of Protestant Chaplaincy, is leading a process to develop the Protestant Chaplaincy with better training for their specific ministry.

It is important to understand that in most cases Chaplains in Africa have no salary and no resources for activities. They rely on Christian support organizations and the Military for activity, food, housing and transport support. Pastor Thierry has addressed the issue in the past at MoD level, but there was little interest in further development.

The Gabonese MCF structure is loose and informal. Most joined the fellowship to pray for and join the Gabonese delegation attending the annual RIMP (Rassemblement International Militaire, a French chaplaincy Protestant conference) in

southern France. There was some confusion about the role of an MCF versus a Chaplaincy, which this MMI visit was able to clarify.

The need to meet regularly and to support each other by prayer had been identified by former leader Françoise Nzurollé but when she retired from active duty the need to find a successor (a familiar concern in every Christian organization) became a show-stopper. Now, there is a light of hope. During this combined MMI and CCruMM conference, together with the distribution of camo Christian literature, former Army Colonel Dieudonné Mdoungou was motivated to take on the leadership. The fact that he is a former Colonel helps many soldiers to feel safe in joining the fellowship.

The development of an MCF is conditioned by the religious and military history of the country. Gabon has been mainly influenced by an RC Church organization, where priests within their own hierarchy have accountability for religious practice. In the Military, according to this French type of pattern, the leadership expects

the chaplain to be fully accountable for any praying or fellowship activity within barracks.

Pastor Mabiala was crystal-clear that the MCF in Gabon should be hosted by the Chaplaincy structure. An informal organization or a Chaplaincy subdivision called Gabon MCF seems to be the appropriate way ahead for Gabon. We discussed the kind of organizational support MMI could provide – such as delivering MCF booklets, motivating Gideons to deliver camo NTs to Gabon, providing written legal status to help official recognition, within Chaplaincy.

Gatherings could be with Chaplains in barracks, but if gathering without a chaplain, meetings would have to be on other premises. Colonel Dieudonné has some plans for this. Twelve new members joined the MCF and they have connections with other Military Christians so there is hope and expectation for development.

This MMI visit had two major impacts on the (not state funded) Chaplaincy situation; first it gathered together some of the chaplains at the same location (a sort of pastoral gathering), and identified a specific training common to chaplains with different theology backgrounds.

The Chaplain of the Republican Guard organized a visit for us to the unit HQ. With Chief Chaplain Thierry, we met the deputy commander, a colonel and a former French officer, who confirmed a specific need for a common training for all chaplains, Protestants, R. Catholics and, if they agree, with Muslims, in Gabon. We presented him a camo NT, a devotion calendar and prayed for him.

As with similar International Association of Evangelical Chaplains (IAEC) training in Ghana, or Benin, this



Page 14: Gabon MCF group.

Page 15: Col (retd) Dieudonné Ndoungou.

Military Christian training for Chaplains is a good opportunity to share the Gospel with African Imams, and this is probably the first if not the only experience they have of discovering Jesus. The training, if agreed, will happen after the August presidential elections. The colonel was impressed that the training programme claims no money apart from feeding and housing the trainers during the 2-week period.

Our team is convinced that it is crucial to combine the effect of:

- camouflage cover literature (booklets, NT, Bibles, Devotion calendars)

- training
- direct witnessing
- prayers

This "camo" ministry is essential and at the core of Military Ministry communication.

A book in "military fatigue" means "the Gospel is for you as well, soldier!"

The fascination of all military personnel, Private to General, Christians or non-believers is stunning!

Praise the Lord for giving the will and resources to print and deliver his Word. The key factor is to combine the different ways of doing this. Each activity alone would have far less impact. This sounds just tactical common sense for any military leader and is most fruitful in our Military Ministries International field.

A short 10 day but efficient trip allowed us to discover a typical francophone country where a vibrant Military Christian Community is ready to witness with the help of an organised and led MCF and Chaplaincy. We remain deeply thankful for the excellent preparation work carried out by Dr Stanislas Batsielili, director of CCru Gabon. We are looking forward to the Chaplains training, later in the year.

May the Lord Bless the Security Forces of Gabon and our Brothers and Sisters in Christ!

Meeting at the Republican guard HQ



A new AMCF Vice President for Francophone Africa: Brigadier Charles SEZAN from Benin.



Brigadier Charles Sourou Sezan took over the role of AMCF VP for Francophone Africa from Colonel Daniel Njoya (Cameroon) in November 2022. He was born in 1961 in Porto Novo, the capital of the Republic of Benin. Married and the father of 4 children, he was for many years director of the Benin Customs and is now the Finance Ministry deputy. His professional training includes various academic degrees in France and Belgium in Customs and financial matters, as well as a full career. From coast guard customs to highest governmental position, his career and reputation as a man who can be trusted has put him in a high position to fight against corruption and to preserve the interests of his country, the Republic of Benin.

Benin Customs are a paramilitary force focused on the main resources coming to the country through one of the biggest harbours in Africa, the Port of Cotonou, as well as its close maritime approaches.

Charles Sezan gives thanks for the

one thing which changed his life: coming to Christ in 1998. From there on, the Lord used his position to raise him to be the President of a vibrant MCF - the AFAEB (Association des Frères d'Armes Evangéliques du Bénin). He has a degree in Theology, is a pastor at the Bible Church of the Holy Spirit (EBSE in French), and he attended the IAEC (International Association of Evangelical Chaplains) Chaplains' training.

Brigadier Sezan's AMCF responsibility covers 15 French speaking nations (in the circle on the map) out of 24 in Africa, in the Western part of the continent.

Praise the Lord for having given him the anointing for this responsibility.



Adria Interaction Croatia: Connecting and Growing in fellowship

REGIONAL TEAM LEADER EUROPE: REV. GROZDAN STOEVSKI.

This was the 8th Adria Interaction. God granted a blessed, Spirit-filled event. Adria Interaction is organized by the Military Christian Fellowship of Croatia, "UVVID" (Udruga Veterana, Voinika i Domoljuba – Association of veterans, soldiers and patriots), in partnership with MMI.

The 8th Adria Interaction opened with a time of praise and worship, led by Dalibor Sver, supported by Grozdan Stoevski (MMI), Carmello Damico (Italian MCF) and Francois Bouyssou (French MCF).

On the first day the whole group went on a guided tour of the beautiful city of Pula (about 2 hours by bus), and explored the amazing underground system of tunnels, used for defence in

war, as well as the city fortress and Roman amphitheatre. There was also a visit to a private vineyard and farm. This trip provided a great opportunity for the participants to get to know each other and to enjoy fellowship together.

The day of teaching focussed on the theme of War and Peace – in the church, led by Pastor Vatroslav Zupancic; in the family, led by Slavica Stoevska and in light of the Bible, led by Grozdan.

A highlight of this day was the opportunity for each MCF delegation to give a short presentation sharing about their organization and country, which was much appreciated by everyone.

It was a great encouragement to see the next generation of military Christians, led by Capt Alexandra Nebunu (Romania MCF), being serious about their faith and in close fellowship dreaming together about joint European activities for the summer. It was also a privilege to share some experiences and to pray together with them:

"This has been another blessed gathering and I am especially grateful that God has brought among us some new and young faces".

Dražen Hrženjak, President of the Croatia MCF, and MMI co-worker in Europe.

'Who is your neighbour', the second documentary film which Dražen has produced in the last couple of years was shown and enjoyed one evening.

The interaction closed with a service, with the Word brought by Niels Woodstra, President NCOK (Dutch MCF) and volunteer co-worker with the

MMI Europe team.

This was definitely a prayer-based and Spirit-led international gathering of military Christians. Despite the complex international situation in Europe, Adria Interaction brought together representatives from different European countries, including Croatia, Italy, Romania, the Netherlands, UK, Turkey and Bulgaria. Adria Interaction'22 served as a space for young military Christians to connect and grow in fellowship, to pray together and dream together.



Above: Group of Young delegates

Below: Drazen and Ian Lington, UK army chaplain.



A letter from Vasily Khimich, Leader Ukraine Protestant MCF

Dear Prayer Warriors,

January and February was a very intense time for us as we ministered to the military and their families. During this time there was often no electricity and the Internet did not work. Often air raid sirens sounded and there were missile and drone attacks. However, during this time:

1. We had many meetings in our office with military personnel, their families and military widows.
2. Two officers who had been in Russian captivity for more than 9 months came to visit me:
 - Captain G, I have known since before 2014. He is a brother in Christ and a member of the Ukrainian MCF. He was taken prisoner in Mariupol. While he was in a Russian prison Captain G found a Gideon New Testament and later a Bible. There were 100 prisoners of war in his barracks and G organized a time of prayer and Bible reading every morning and every evening. These meetings were attended by up to 50 people. While being a POW G lost 22 kg (48 pounds)!
 - First lieutenant V, who I was with on two missions near Mariupol. The second time was six weeks before the city was invaded. It was then that V heard about God, with some irony. After his release he told me that while in prison he had discovered a lot of completely new values for himself. He also told me that he had looked forward to his release from captivity because he really wanted to meet with me. This gave me great encouragement as God showed me through this officer that our ministry is very important. V had lost 12 kg (26 pounds) while in captivity.
3. Widows came individually and in groups to our office. We often met with groups of 5-8 women at a time. We had a hot lunch prepared for them, we talked, had a Bible lesson, sang Christian songs, and each was given a bag of groceries when they departed. Churches from Germany provided Christmas gifts for each of them.
4. I also prepared documents for brothers in Christ who had already entered military service as official chaplains with the rank of officer. The first group of chaplains, 30 people, are now studying at the Institute of the Ministry of Defence of Ukraine. Due to the war this is a very short 6-week intensive course.
5. I was only able to have one short mission to the soldiers in the East.
6. I visited wounded soldiers in the hospital. I was privileged to give the Lord's supper to one of our brothers.
7. I sent several dozen boxes to the front containing warm socks, clothes, blankets, coffee, cookies, sweets and food for soldiers and chaplains.
8. I continued to give a short message from the Bible with a short explanation every morning to many soldiers and their families and to many Kiev pastors via the Internet.
9. On my birthday, two colonels, the Head of the Chaplain Service of the Armed Forces of Ukraine and his deputy, came to my office to congratulate me. They gave us a large bouquet of roses and a plaque. I was pleased because I understood that this was a token of gratitude for my service to my many chaplains who serve in the armed services.

Please keep us in prayer as your prayers are highly valued and appreciated.

Vasily <><

A new AMCF Vice President for West Africa: General Mike Akaptsu from Ghana



General. Mike Akpatsu joined the Ghana Military Christian Fellowship in 1998.

He rose to the position of President of the Fellowship in 2016. Under his presidency, the Fellowship made a dramatic revival. With the support of the then Chief of Defence Staff, Lt Gen Obed Akwa, the Fellowship sponsored the largest delegation to the Pan African Conference in Abuja in 2017.

General Mike organised the Chaplains Training Course in Accra with participants from Ghana, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, and the Gambia. He has led and initiated many ministry activities amongst the security services in Ghana.

Under his leadership, the Fellowship was established in all the units of the Ghana Armed Forces. The MCF has been extended to the Ghana Police Service, the Ghana Prisons Service, Ghana Fire Service, Ghana Immigration Service, and all sister security services in Ghana.

Gen Mike has participated in IAEC and MEO programs in the USA and South Korea.

He is married to Mrs Ivy Akpatsu, and they are blessed with four young men.



Meeting with Eddy Amponsah, MMI RTL West Africa in Feb 23.



MISSION AND VISION STATEMENTS:

VISION

To see what God might do if every military Christian had someone to stand with.

MISSION

Helping Christians follow Jesus Christ in Armed forces around the world.

MMI PAUSE 4 PRAYER
online May tbc

15 - 18 June 2023
RIMP
France

9 September 2023
Supporters' Day
UK

18 - 21 May 2023
European Military Christian
Meeting (EMCM)
Czech Republic

12 - 15 October 2023
Adria Interaction
Croatia

Autumn 2023
Chaplain's Training
Gabon

Sept / Oct 2023
TMTI
South Africa

8 - 11 June 2023
Turkish MCF Annual Gathering
Turkey

15 - 25 June 2023
MEO
S Korea

August 2023
Summer Adventure Retreat
Bulgaria

MMI Praying Daily
17.00 BST
for Ukraine/Russia
on zoom.
*Request link from
prayer@mmi.org.uk*

Want to support our work?

Prayer Support

Prayer is the foundation of everything we do in MMI and we have various ways to share and 'fuel' prayer. Here are some of them:

PrayerLink

Be a part of our e-mail PrayerLink. Urgent or immediate prayer needs and reminders to pray for planned activity are e-mailed in a short, succinct form, straight to you. To sign up, email prayer@mmi.org.uk to add your name to the MMI prayer support base.

TPB - The Prayer Brief

31 prayers covering ministry activities and regional needs for four months. One short prayer for each day of the month (current TPB Mar-Jun 23) available with the MMI News or from prayer@mmi.org.uk.

Pause 4 Prayer

Spring and Autumn (currently online) - an opportunity to pray with those ministering in our regions.

Next Pause for Prayer morning:

May 2023 TBC

Annual Supporters Prayer Day

Next one 9 Sept 2023.

More detailed prayer needs and answers to prayers are shared at our prayer days. Regional Team Leaders (RTLs) and MMI field workers brief on recent activities, difficulties and future plans; international guests are invited to provide in depth and contextual information on prayer needs.

Praying for a Region

If you would like to pray for a specific region (Africa, Europe, Middle East, S Asia) or a country within one of these regions, you can join a

regional prayer group who meet to prayer together on-line. Currently we have English, French, Portuguese and German speaking groups as well.

For more details on how to support MMI through prayer, look at our Prayer page on our website. www.mmi.org.uk

We need both prayer and financial support to be able to continue our ministry to the military.

Financial Support

If you would like to support the ministry financially, even just £10 a month (by standing order) would make a huge difference to what we are able to do.

You can also donate

a one-off gift through the mmi.org.uk website with give.net, or

by bank transfer

by sending a cheque to the office.

You can also designate a gift for any of the projects, activities or regions you have read about.



WAYS TO GIVE

Set up a **STANDING ORDER** via your online banking – you're in control of how much you give and when.

By **BANK TRANSFER**

Our **NEW BANK DETAILS** are:
Military Ministries International
Account number: 63332268
Sort code: 20-11-43

GIVE ONLINE: at www.mmi.org.uk

SEND A CHEQUE: payable to
Military Ministries International.

LEAVE A LEGACY: If you wish to know more about leaving a gift in your will please contact us.

Your support, no matter how small can help us, through Jesus Christ, to give every military Christian someone to stand with.



Madagascar - more MMTI fun!
Above Left: camping on Mt Tritriva.
Above Right VP AS Niriniaina and
 FW Hermann are enjoying coworking



Co-worker Martyn Reay
 pausing to reflect in Sierra
 Leone, where he is church
 planting.



RTL Paddy was able to
 meet up with Mariana
 Rosca in Moldova, while
 there with his church helping
 refugees.



**MMI Team & Trustee
 Retreat:**
 Left and right praying for
 the MMI regions.
 Below: very boggy prayer
 walk.



India co-worker Pastor
 Blesson on the India Road
 Trip 23.



Chad: Chaplain Marc Tonigar sharing the
 Gospel. His chaplain's vehicle is his
 mororbike.

Front Cover: Trustee Richard Downes praying for a group at the Romania Ski Retreat.

BACKPACK

This season's thought to take with you
and share ...

Even if the grounds for hope seem scarce,

**When we trust in God
we overflow with a powerful hope.**

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace
as you trust in Him, so that you may overflow with
hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Romans 15 v 13

