



Cops on the street

**Stories of Faith
AND Courage FROM
COPS ON
THE STREET**

GRANT WOLF



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Battlefields & Blessings: Stories of Faith and Courage from Cops on the Street
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Published by God & Country Press, an imprint of AMG Publishers
6815 Shallowford Rd.
Chattanooga, Tennessee 37421

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Print ISBN: 978-0-89957-112-6
ePub ISBN: 978-1-61715-103-3
Mobi ISBN: 978-1-61715-105-7

First printing—November 2010

Cover designed by Michael Largent, Indoor Graphics, Inc., Chattanooga, TN
Interior design and typesetting by Reider Publishing Services,
West Hollywood, California

Edited and proofread by Rich Cairnes and Rick Steele

Dedicated to all the men and women around the world
who ever have taken the oath “to protect and serve.”

*For he is God's servant to do you good.
But if you do wrong, be afraid,
for he does not bear the sword for nothing.
He is God's servant, an agent of wrath
to bring punishment on the wrongdoer.
Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities,
not only because of possible punishment
but also because of conscience.
Romans 13:4, 5*

ONLY A MOMENT

Dedicated to those who lost their lives in the line of duty

*Dear Lord,
It was only a moment,
but in that moment of madness our world changed.
In that moment countless lives were changed,
hearts were broken, and names previously unknown
are now spoken with reverence.*

*In only a moment the Line of Blue stretching out across our nation
was broken—that hard, fast, steady line was breached.
In moments like these all citizens become a part of the Line of Blue.
Momentarily we feel defenseless—but only for a moment.*

*In only a moment the Line of Blue re-forms,
drawing a circle around us to restore our hope.
Our tears dry, our broken hearts are comforted,
weak knees strengthened and sanity restored—
the Line of Blue—our shield of protection still stands.*

*The moment passes, but in that moment
we mourn for the life that was taken and grieve for the survivors,
remembering the sacrifice made to protect and serve.*

*It was only a moment—but they are gone,
a sacrifice made to give us a future.
We pause in our sorrow reflecting what might have been . . .
but then we press on for, by the Grace of God,
the Line of Blue still stands!
Amen!*

Chuck Boman, Author
Chaplain for Lake Oswego, OR, Fire and Police,
Milwaukie Police, Oregon City Police, and West Linn Police

ON BEING A MAN

Officer Todd Keilbach

Belleville, IL, Police Department

FATHERS teach us how to be “men,” but I grew up without a dad. Perhaps a “manly job” would teach me, so I became a police officer. I cussed a lot, spit tobacco, was angry, and “became a man.” I worked hard, held down two jobs, won several awards and commendations, and provided for my family. I also became selfish and developed a hardened heart, causing hardships in our marriage. What I didn’t know was that “looking like a man” and “being a man” are two different things.

When I became a man, I
put away childish things.
1 Corinthians 13:11

We were on vacation when our daughter Alli woke up sleepy and with a slight droop on the right side of her face. We didn’t think much of it and went to the mall in Paducah. There we tried to get her out of the car, but she couldn’t walk or use the right side of her body. We needed help *fast*, but didn’t know where to go. That’s when God took over. At an emergency care center a woman dropped everything to lead us to a good hospital. I crumbled when the doctors said my 5-year-old might have a brain tumor. She was airlifted to St. Louis while the rest of us spent the next three hours driving. I was helpless with the weight of the world on my shoulders; I couldn’t even be at her side.

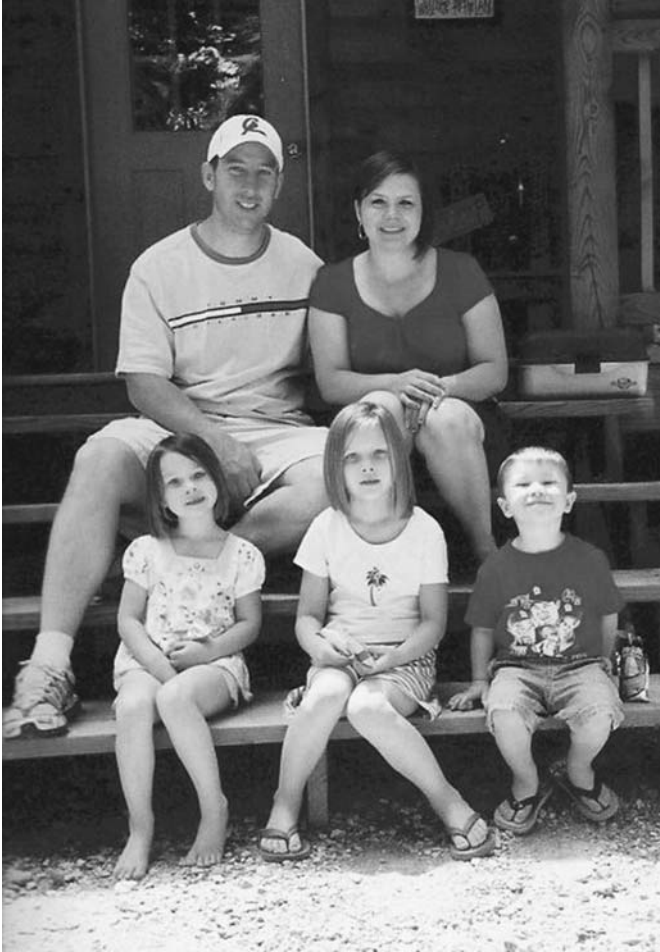
Next day our pastor came to St. Louis to be with us and pray. During our agonizing wait he told me, “You are not in control and can’t handle or fix it on your own. You need to pray and turn it over to God.” So that’s what I did. Later that day we found it was not a brain tumor but a stroke. God had taken control, and suddenly we had hope again. In a few days she was much better, and today there is little effect from the episode. But I still had a major issue to resolve—making our marriage whole.

I got involved in a Bible study, *A Measure of a Man*, and my life started to change. I began reading the Bible and wanted to learn so badly I read it in six months! I found that being a man is about spiritual growth, loving



Belleville, IL,
officer's patch





Todd Keilbach family

your wife, and loving your children. It's about sacrifice and responsibility, about being a leader and following Christ. Now I no longer need what the world calls "manly," for I've learned those things are really childish. I've exchanged cussing and chewing for a yielding heart. I didn't have a dad to teach me how to be a man, but I have a heavenly Father who continues to do so every day.

BOARDED BY MY HEART!

Sergeant Randy Poel

Grand Haven, MI, Department of Public Safety

A HOCKEY player since I was a kid, I still skate a couple of times a week and currently play in a Saturday night league. “Boarding” is what happens when an opponent knocks you into the boards surrounding the rink. This night I was “boarded” by my heart!

I was skating and (according to teammates) dropped my stick, lurched forward, and then fell straight backward, hitting my head hard on the ice. I suffered a mild concussion. An off-duty fireman ran out onto the ice to treat the injury, while my friend Nate noticed my breathing changing rapidly. He quickly called for an AED (Automatic External Defibrillator), but my breathing declined so rapidly it stopped before they could hook it up. After the first shock I flatlined and CPR was started. After three or four minutes of CPR, the AED analyzed me again and delivered a second shock. This time it brought me back into a life-sustaining heart rhythm. Paramedics arrived in approximately seven minutes, and rushed me to a local hospital. Once stable, I then was transferred to a heart center thirty miles away. Two days later, a heart catheterization was performed that showed I had an inch-and-a-half blockage of the left anterior descending artery, sometimes called “the widow maker.” It was too large to stent; I needed bypass surgery. Eight days after I collapsed the surgery was performed, and four days later I went home to recover.

Commit to the LORD whatever you do, and your plans will succeed.
Proverbs 16:3

There were so many “God moments” throughout this ordeal. Nate was one of the few who knew the rink had an AED, and he knew how to use it. He hadn’t planned to stay for my game, but had anyway. Why? He wasn’t there when I skated the previous Wednesday. What if it had happened then; could anyone else have helped? With no prior signs or symptoms of blockage and at my age (I turned 48 the day after the surgery), a situation like mine is unusual. The doctors said it had been building up for decades. I had been a high school and college athlete, and could have died as a youth during practice or at a game. I think my being active in sports all these years has helped, but I truly believe God still has plans for



me. One is that my wife and I want to raise funds to put AEDs in all the hockey rinks in West Michigan.

Prayer has played a prominent part throughout my ordeal, and will continue to do so. I have been a Christian for a long time and know God is watching over me. Yes, he still has plans for me, and I want to be faithful to his leading.

J A N U A R Y 3

PUNK OR LOST SOUL?

Sergeant Chuck Gilliland

Dallas/Ft. Worth, TX, Airport Police

ONE COLD night a call came in: “moving domestic disturbance.” Dispatch had a caller on the phone behind a vehicle where the driver was beating the passenger. Even the flashing blue lights of our patrol cars didn’t deter the driver in his violence. After officers separated the driver and the female passenger, they discovered the two were also in business as pimp and prostitute. He was arrested and taken to our jail.

After a long, tiring shift I headed for my car. Walking out I saw the boyfriend/pimp sitting in the front lobby. He was short, skinny, and dressed skimpily in a tank top and shorts. He had pulled both arms inside the shirt to keep warm. I always have Gospel tracts in the pocket of my uniform and thought to myself, *If anyone needs a tract, this punk does.* I headed toward his chair. When I gave him the tract, my “You need to read this” probably sounded more like a command than a request! I got in my car thinking, *You really are a good Christian. Could Jesus have done any better?* Then the reality of my self-righteous actions became clear!

I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine you did for me. Matthew 25:40

I turned around and returned to the station. I had some clean clothes in my gym bag and a box of Gideon Bibles. I got a tee-shirt and Bible and headed back inside where I immediately gave him the tee-shirt. I told him I was off-duty, not operating in an official police capacity, and asked if I could talk to him. When he said “yes,” I reached toward the tract I’d given him and asked if I could read it to him. He nodded agreement, and





DFW Officers Chuck Gilliland and David Hornsby

we read through it. In the process the “punk” began to look more like who he really was—a lost soul desperately trying to find his way home.

After a long conversation and going through the Roman Road to Salvation, he prayed to receive Christ. He told me his grandmother had repeatedly tried to get him to go to church with her, and he would tell her he would go the next Sunday! As I left we hugged, exchanged phone numbers, and promised to pray for each other.

Now I felt a different kind of satisfaction—not *self-righteous* but knowing I serve a God who gives second chances to people like that young man and me—a God who loves me and other sinners with the deepest love possible. God puts people in my path who need me as much as I, unknowingly, need them. Together we serve one another and him.



WE'RE JUST LIKE YOU—ALMOST!

Constable Merv Tippe (Ret.)

Regina, Saskatchewan

COPS AND non-cops (we call them “civilians”) have a lot in common. Cops get married, have families, fight the battle of the budget, deal with leaky roofs, and fix kids’ bikes—in short, just about everything people do everywhere. Oh, yes, we also are called names, get shot at, generally aren’t paid as well, and often are on call 24/7. But that’s okay—we chose this career.

There are also differences in how we can demonstrate our Christianity. Because of work schedules we sometimes can’t attend regular church services, especially if we have permanent Sunday assignments. But we do have the opportunity to witness and be a Christian example to the homeless, wayward juveniles, prostitutes, criminals we catch and put in jail, etc.

Some of us teach Sunday school or lead small-group Bible studies. This story is about an experience my wife and I had leading a group in our home when I was in my late 20s. Our pastor asked if we would lead a

group, and we said “yes.” I was policing in a small town in the Canadian “boonies” where Christians were in the minority and we didn’t know what to expect. Our group started small, but it grew.

One couple had visited our church a few times but their attendance was sporadic. I got acquainted with the husband, and God put it in their hearts to attend. At the end of their first night with us they both made decisions for Christ. What an encouragement! Before they left, the wife asked if she could bring her unsaved parents the next week. Of course we said “yes,” and her parents came. After a lengthy question-and-answer session, both her father and mother prayed to receive Christ. The younger couple asked if they could bring still another couple the following week. The wife of that couple was a believer, but the husband was not. They

Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.
Matthew 28:19, 20



came to the Bible study and, praise the Lord, he, too, committed his life to Jesus before leaving that night. No question about it, God was blessing the seed we planted!

Yes, cops and civilians are alike . . . and different. What we have in common are the same Father and the same Great Commission assignment:

J A N U A R Y 5

CANCER BROUGHT THIS COP TO CHRIST!

Patrolman Hetzel (H. D.) See

Elyria, OH, Police Department

DARLENE HAS cancer and the prognosis is not good!” The doctor’s words went through me like a knife. My wife was truly a saved Christian, and I’d often asked her to pray on my behalf. Though I was unsaved and didn’t think God would hear me, I got down on my knees and prayed, “Darlene is too good for you to take; she deserves to live.”

With her fast-growing cancer, there was little hope for Darlene. Even so, she was amazingly strong, while I felt like I was dying inside. She often encouraged me and calmed my breaking heart. I still wasn’t sure my prayers would be heard, but prayed constantly. I was so consumed with grief I got on my knees again and prayed aloud, “God, if you will let her live, you can take my life in exchange.” With new experimental treatments, Darlene began slowly to improve. After nearly two years, Darlene was in remission. My relief was indescribable. But, recalling my bargain to offer my life for hers, I was concerned that soon God would be “calling in my marker.”

Even though I was only 39, I felt I’d better get ready. I thought the hardest question God would ask was why I hadn’t taken time to read the book he wrote—the Bible! I’d made other feeble attempts to read it, but this time God created a hunger in my heart for his Word. I really began to understand the Scrip-

tures, and the more I read, the more God worked on my heart. While still thinking God was going to call in my marker, something compelled me to

Therefore if any man be
in Christ, he is a new
creature: old things are
passed away; behold, all
things are become new.
2 Corinthians 5:17



read the Gospel of John. It shook my world! God showed me he didn't want to take my life, but instead wanted me to give my old life up to him and be born again (John 3:3). A third time I got down on my knees, this time to ask God to forgive my sins. When I accepted Jesus Christ as my Savior, the old Hetzel died and the life I once knew no longer existed. God had called in my marker, I had become a "new creature" (2 Corinthians 5:17 KJV), and he began to show me a world I had never seen.

My life as an officer, husband, father, and friend was changed forever when I accepted God's offer to be his child. I still agonize over the pain and suffering Darlene had to endure with her cancer. But I never shall regret how it brought me to new life in Christ.

J A N U A R Y 6

AN ANGEL IN DISGUISE

Sergeant Cameron J. Grysen

Houston, TX, Police Department

UNLESS YOU'VE spent four weeks working through the weekends in a big-city police department dealing with five murders, you probably have no concept of the stress I was under. Instead of recuperation time I got a surprise: a major gang shoot-out with one death and no witnesses. After two more days with almost no rest I received another gift: a man found shot dead on the street with no witnesses. On my way out I prayed, "Lord, I'm tired and just can't take anymore. If nothing else, please give me a witness!"

I realized the probable suspects were in a gang under investigation by a task force for several robberies and murders. I asked the task force leader to come with me, but he was running several warrants and couldn't get away. I worked twenty hours straight until early the next day, but still had no witnesses. I headed for home with sleep in my grasp when my cell phone rang: "Come back to the office."

The SWAT unit had run their warrants, arrested several suspects, and then gone to breakfast together. Their waitress asked what they were up to, and they told her of the case and their arrests. She replied, "What a

Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.
Hebrews 13:2 (KJV)



coincidence! My best friend witnessed a murder about that same time!” They got her name, picked her up for me, and we all met at the station. We showed her a photo spread of the suspects, put together by the task force. Without hesitation and with great confidence, the witness pointed to three suspects. “I never forget a face,” she said.

I thought of James 5:2, 3, which reads, “You have not because you ask not and when you do, you ask amiss.” No doubt about it—I had a need, asked the only One who could help, and he answered my prayer. Oh, yes, do you recall the Scripture about “entertain[ing] angels unaware” (Hebrews 13:2 κJV)? Well, my witness’s name was—you guessed it—Angel!

J A N U A R Y 7

PAINTBALL? I DON'T THINK SO!

Lisa Lerner, wife of Officer Chuck Lerner

*Law Enforcement Missionary
El Paso, TX*

COPS ARE a strange breed, aren't they? I had just spent the most nerve-wracking 143 minutes of my life when my officer husband called, telling me what he'd just gone through as if it were the most awesome paintball game in his life! God bless him!

We had been married for a year, and I'd only been a born-again believer about three years. It was 1990, and Chuck was an El Paso street patrol officer. I was working at Walgreens on one side of the Franklin Mountains, and Chuck's patrol area was on the other side. The TV in the store was on, when the newscaster interrupted the program with a breaking story: A GI home on leave was shooting at police with a high-powered rifle out the windows of his house. It was in the area where Chuck was working! I remembered that Chuck had volunteered to work undercover on a special residential patrol that day, and he wasn't wearing his body armor vest. Call it “woman's intuition,” but I knew he was there!

One of my co-workers was a guy who attended church and believed as I did, so I went to him and told him what was happening. We began to pray. There was no one I could call, and even though I desperately wanted



to go to the scene, driving there like a mad woman wouldn't help. All the streets would be blocked off, and I probably couldn't get within blocks of where the incident was happening. Besides, I couldn't change or control the situation, and I wouldn't be walking by faith. Perhaps what happened next was a definitive moment in my spiritual growth: I realized only God could save my husband's life, and no one could take it from him unless God allowed it. I placed my full trust in the Lord and no one else.

Those who know your name will trust in you, for you, LORD, have never forsaken those who seek you. Psalm 9:10

The next 143 minutes were the longest I can remember. I kept on working, made small talk with customers, watched the TV, and prayed. Holding the tears back, I just prayed, trusted, and waited. Then Chuck called! He *was* at the scene, had taken cover in one of the wheel wells of a car parked in front of the house, and heard the bullets going over his head! SWAT had deployed tear gas, captured the subject, and taken him to jail. No officer was injured, and Chuck was okay. God is faithful!

J A N U A R Y 8

A SERVICE CALL

Lieutenant Sean A. Gill

Macomb, MS, Police Department

*The radio sounds, a familiar voice, a service call dispatched.
Responding, deep in your heart you know
it is not the same as the last,
and not the same as the first.
It is not the first, and it is not the last.
Again the radio sounds, the familiar voice is God's,
His Holy Spirit dispatched,
prompting you deep in your heart,
to respond to a call for service,
the Service Call of God.*

SPEAKING TO a group of men at a local church, I sensed in my heart to share with them a different perspective about law enforcement

