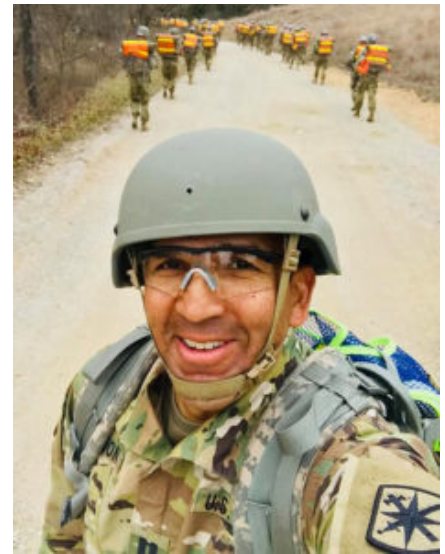


Army base sees 1,459 professions of faith since March

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FORT LEONARD WOOD, Mo.—Capt. Jose Rondon, a U.S. Army chaplain, believes “there is nothing more exhilarating in life than seeing people come to Christ.” This year, Rondon has experienced quite a bit of exhilaration, with more than 1,400 professions of faith in Christ recorded at Fort Leonard Wood.

Rondon summarizes his part in the effort in one word—intentionality.



Capt. Jose Rondon is U.S. Army chaplain at Fort Leonard Wood in Missouri. Rondon has seen more than 1,400 professions of faith in Christ at Fort Leonard Wood since he started serving at the facility.

(Photo from Jose Rondon's Facebook page via BP)

It's about being intentional with words and with how he treats his fellow soldiers, he insists. So, when a staff sergeant first approached Rondon and asked to speak with him, the chaplain knew the sergeant wasn't asking for words of wisdom but for listening ears.

"To be intentional is to be faithful to Christ and obedient to his Great Commission," Rondon said. "But we will not succeed in making disciples until the lost make the first step to follow Christ as their Savior. To be intentional not only means to preach Christ's word in the chapel, but to be sensitive to the Holy Spirit to share his message of reconciliation if and when the time fits."

Rondon listened to the staff sergeant, and then he prayed with him to receive Jesus Christ as his Savior. Rondon did the same thing when another senior non-commissioned officer asked for the chance to talk to him about spiritual matters. This soldier-leader also asked Jesus Christ into his heart.

Listening and help others start trusting

"My two soldiers and friends from our current battalion at Fort Leonard Wood in Missouri came to Christ because their lives were in need of the Savior," he said. "All of us at some point need to be a listening ear, to help others to start trusting and believing in anything again, especially when our wounds are so deep that we lose respect for many around us.

"They talked to me about their lives, because they respected me and noticed I really cared for our soldiers like I always do during my pastoral rounds. I invited them both to a meal. God always opens great doors like

this when we listen to people without interrupting. We show them how much we care by being there for them whenever they need it most.”

In both conversations, a chaplain and a sergeant spoke about their lives.

“Instead of asking them whether or not they knew they were going to heaven if they died today, I simply said: ‘I see that you need Christ in your life. He can not only help you to deal with the challenges of daily living, but he can also save you from an eternal death because of your sins,’” Rondon said. “They both agreed they needed Christ to come into their lives forever and to have his presence to deal with life from that moment on.”

Because of his reputation for being intentional in his ministry, many have come to hear Rondon share the gospel on Sundays.

“We have seen 1,459 soldiers come to Christ since March of this year,” Rondon said. “God is doing great things at Fort Leonard Wood among the hundreds of soldiers who have come to know Christ personally.”



Retired Maj. Gen. Doug Carver, executive director of chaplaincy for the North American Mission Board, said what is happening at Fort Leonard Wood is not an exception. He reports 1,348 military chaplains endorsed by the Southern Baptist Convention are at work.

“Our troops, who are increasingly hungry for truth and relevancy in their lives, are finding a faith that works through a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ,” Carver said. “The current spiritual awakening at Fort Leonard Wood is indicative of a great move of God taking place within the Armed Services today.”

Carver reported:

- More than 2,000 troops gathered in Doughboy Stadium at Fort Benning, Ga., at Easter.
- Army chaplains are baptizing an average of 70 soldiers every basic combat training cycle at Fort Jackson, S.C.
- The U.S. Air Force chaplaincy recently rolled out a new program called FaithWorks, a collection of evidence-based programs and materials promoting spiritual resilience for airmen and their families.
- The military has built more chapels since 9/11 than any other period of American history except for World War II.

In the past two years, Southern Baptist military chaplains have reported tens of thousands of professions of faith and thousands of baptisms, he added.

“Historically, God has often used the military as a catalyst for revival,” Carver said. “Many attribute the spread of Christianity in the first century to Roman soldiers deployed throughout the Roman Empire. The Lord is answering our prayers for revival within our military communities. I’ve prayed for over 40 years for our troops and their families to experience the reality of Jesus Christ in a new and fresh way.”