



## Never Off Duty

**A military chaplain describes how a compassionate God hijacked his meticulous plans**

*Chaplain (COL) Scott McChrystal (M.Div. 1984, pictured center) is the AG military/VA representative. McChrystal is a 21-year chaplain who has served on many fronts, including Vietnam and Bosnia.*

**G**od's ways are higher than ours. The Lord reminded me of this during a recent trip to Kuwait.

Not long ago, Chaplain (Major) Geoff Alleyne (pictured left), an Army chaplain stationed in Kuwait, invited me to minister to personnel stationed there. Any soldier going to or coming from Iraq or Afghanistan passes through Kuwait.

It's no secret that the needs of our troops serving there are immense. Chaplain Alleyne and I worked diligently to craft an itinerary to maximize ministry opportunities.

God showed his faithfulness at every turn. I had the privilege of preaching numerous times, including an Easter sunrise service at the largest military installation in Kuwait. We visited virtually every camp in the country, meeting with many high-ranking officers and noncommissioned officers and encouraging chaplains and their assistants during a training session. The Lord saved some, renewed others and encouraged many.

But God's plans included much more. He placed needy, hurting people in my path throughout the entire trip. While heading to Kuwait, I met an Indian college student. The Lord

used our discussion to plant spiritual seeds in this young Hindu's mind.

While eating with troops, I met a young soldier who had experienced a lot of hurt. She was depressed about health issues that were making her deployment miserable, and her efforts to get proper medical attention were not working. The Lord used our conversation to remind her that he cares. I learned later that, as a result of Chaplain Alleyne's efforts, she was sent to Germany to see medical specialists who could assist her with her condition. She wrote him a joyful email message expressing her profound thanks and appreciation.

On my return flight, I met an impressive Muslim who served as the supervisor of the flight attendants. Midway through our trip, he invited me to join him in first class because he needed to tell me something. His eyes began tearing as he shared about his captivity under Sadaam Hussein. This man had been captured while serving with a Kuwaiti Army unit. The details of his six-month ordeal are too horrific to share, but clearly he suffered

from Posttraumatic Stress Disorder. As we ended the conversation, he presented me with a gift, a hug, and an invitation to meet his family the next time I was in Kuwait.

My plane's late arrival in Cincinnati would delay my return to Springfield. As I stood in line at an airport restaurant, a man next to me suddenly slammed his bag to the ground. I opened a conversation with this farmer from Ohio who was irate over having to spend the night in

Cincinnati due to a cancellation. We sat down at a table, and he poured out his frustration. After the first twenty minutes, I could see that this

67-year-old divorced man simply needed to know that someone cared. I assured him that God cares. By the time I got up to leave, the man's mood had completely changed. He invited me to visit him at his farm and told me that if I ever needed anything, just let him know.

I thank God for the ability to plan. But be sure of this—when the creator of the universe wants to touch a life, he takes our plans and reshapes them to fit his own.

---

**"In his heart a man plans his course, but the LORD determines his steps."**  
*Proverbs 16:9*

---