



Our Field Report

May 2011



John & Betsy Sargent
jsargent@missionstomilitary.org

Dear Praying Friends,

HOSPITAL VISIT . . . I recently had the privilege of visiting U.S. Marine Corps *Captain Matt Kutilek* (pictured at left) at Portsmouth Naval Hospital. While on patrol with his infantry unit in Afghanistan, Matt was shot in his right thigh, by a sniper, trying to shoot one of Matt's Marines 14 months ago. He told me that his Navy corpsman saved his life by putting a tourniquet on his leg within 15 seconds. Matt has had 10 surgeries to repair his leg, yet he has a very positive spirit, has a good testimony for Christ with his Marines, and is an example of the fine young people who selflessly serve our country by serving in our military. I would like to ask you to pray specifically for Matt and his wife, and also the other military people who go in harms way daily for our protection.



TRIP TO UKRAINE . . . As the apostle Paul used his Roman citizenship at crucial times to further the Gospel, so Betsy and I used my retirement from the Marine Corps Reserve on this trip to Ukraine that took place in March and April.

- **Our trip across the Atlantic:** The first part started at Dover Air Force Base on March 20th as we are now eligible to utilize military space available seats on military flights internationally. We went to the base, checked in, and inquired about flights to Europe. It happened that the next day we began shooting at Libya, which caused all of the flights across the Atlantic to change, so we were not able to get a flight for two days out of Dover.

We next checked on flights out of Norfolk, Virginia, and found a flight going from Norfolk to Naples, Italy, leaving on Tuesday, March 22nd in the evening with about 100 seats available. We drove down to Norfolk Naval Station and were able to catch that flight across. It was in a chartered airliner the military uses to transport troops to overseas duty stations, and had some free seats. Betsy and I paid a total of \$32.20 in federal taxes and meal costs for that flight to Naples, Italy.

In 1974, I had been in Naples, Italy, while on active duty in the Marine Corps, and it had not changed much since then. Upon arriving, we tried to buy train tickets to Kiev. We were not able to do that, so we bought tickets to Munich, Germany. We travelled from Munich to Kiev by commercial air.

- **Time teaching in Ukraine:** There were seven (7) students at the Belaya Tserkva Bible College,

where I taught 1, 2 and 3 John. Three were already pastors, and the others are preparing for the Lord's service. **At right is a picture of them at lunch, with Betsy and our translator Zhanna (far left).**

Sergei, the student sitting on Betsy's left, was a sergeant in the Russian army, and is preparing to return to Russia to serve the Lord. One of the students is from Belarus as well. Our week with them was invigorating, with lots of discussion and questions about different things. We were blessed to have a small part in their lives. Amazing note: we noticed that when we arrived in Ukraine, it was like the Lord turned our Russian on like a light switch; it was there, functional, and we had no problems communicating the entire time we were there.



- **Trip to Sevastopol:** After the teaching session, I travelled down to Sevastopol to visit with *Sasha* and *Peter*, our co-workers, both of whom are retired Russian naval officers. During my time with them, I met *Ahmed* (pictured at left), an Egyptian muslim student at the nuclear institute, who came to Bible study. We had an excellent opportunity to witness to him, and ask him what was the big problem between God and man (sin), and then who would pay for his sins? I told him that Mohammed did not die for his sins, but Jesus Christ did. He asked for this picture to be taken (pray for him as he is not yet saved, but is thinking about it).



In addition, *Sasha* recently sent me this picture of Russian Sailors who stopped at his "Creation" display to ask about it. He has found this to be a very effective way to engage people, who have been taught evolution all their lives, in conversation leading to Jesus Christ.

- **Last week in Belaya Tserkva:** Brother *Bruce Tuttle* asked us to stay an extra week and be the driver, helper, and what-ever else was needed for *Pastor John Conover* from Reading, Pennsylvania, which we were happy to do. We had some wonderful fellowship times at the table in the evenings, talking about the Bible and how the Word of God was impacting the students' lives. It was a joy for us to be his servants for a week. There were several opportunities for us to speak at Ukrainian Baptist churches.



- **Return trip to the U.S.:** We flew commercially from Kiev to Frankfort, Germany. Our seminary classmate and dear friend, *Rod Kidd*, met us at the airport, and we went to lunch together and caught up on things since we had seen him last. He drove us to Ramstein Air Force Base (the next time you complain about gas prices in the U.S., remember that gas in Germany is \$9.00 a gallon!!! **That is NOT a misprint!**)

At Ramstein, we were able to board an Air Force C-17 cargo

plane going to Charleston, South Carolina, that stopped at Gander International Airport, Newfoundland, Canada to refuel. It was about 70F when we left Ramstein, and it was -10F when we landed in Canada! WOW, was it cold! For this flight, we paid a total of \$8.50 for two box lunches and that was it. **On the previous page, bottom left, is a picture from the plane**, Betsy has her coat on because it was cold in the plane, about 40F or so. Think of riding in a freight train and you have the general idea - but the cost made it worth it! From Charleston, we rented a car, one way, and drove back to Norfolk, about an hour or two ahead of the tornados that devastated the East Coast recently. **Praise the Lord for His timing!**

Our first "space a" military trip was an adventure that we would do again. In total, we wound up spending considerably less than we would have to fly commercially (a total of \$40.70 for both of us to cross the Atlantic both ways!), and all of the money that was saved will go directly to Sasha and Peter for evangelism and discipleship in Ukraine, every penny of it.

One of the highlights of the time at the Bible college was hearing the students' testimonies at the end of the class. The "new creation" aspect of the Christian life was very evident. Looking at them now, you would never imagine the ruin their lives had been, humanly speaking.

One of the students, *Roma*, told us he had used drugs so much that he had been clinically dead twice, but his life was so transformed by meeting Christ as Savior that he gave the home that his father had bought, to the church to be used for God's glory, and is already serving as a pastor.

Another, *Anje*, told us he had broken ALL of the Ten Commandments. He mentioned that when the weather was cold and damp all of his bones, which had been broken, were very painful. When asked how they had been broken, his only comment was that he had lived a very bad life. He had been homeless, without a country, living on the street, and all this by age 25. Now, he has a thirst for the Word, and ardently searches the Scriptures to understand more of the One who saved him.

Still another, *Gena*, had been an alcoholic, whose wife also became an alcoholic because of his influence. They had a child, the wife died, and the child was taken from him. A woman, who hired him to do some work in her house, witnessed to him and invited him to church; he trusted Christ as Savior and became a new creature.

Another, *Sergei*, had been a star wrestler who fell into drugs and became so ill that he was in and out of consciousness, with major organs failing from the abuse he did to himself. While waiting to die, he found life in Jesus, was discipled by a missionary in his home city, and wanted to study the Bible. Most had some traumatic event in their past but you would never know by looking at them now. Praise God that HE sent Jesus to save SINNERS to rescue us from the brink of Hell. The verse about those who are forgiven much, love much, took on new meaning.

Sometimes people ask us if we are retired. No, we are still actively serving with MTM, not retired, but actively visiting Bible colleges and churches, seeking new laborers as well as maintaining the Ukraine ministry.

We thank each of you again for your love, your faithful prayer support, and your financial support that makes it possible for us to continue to serve the Lord with Missions to Military.



John and Betsy
JOHN AND BETSY SARGENT
MISSIONS TO MILITARY