

SASRA (Soldiers and Airmen Scripture Readers Association)

What SASRA means to me – Peter Terreil



“So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him”. Matthew 24:44

“But how can they call on him to save them unless they believe in him? And how can they believe in him if they have never heard about him? And how can they hear about him unless someone tells them?” Romans 24:44

My childhood was a bit strange—so I grew into a very confused teenager. My stepfather asked me what I wanted to do—‘What do you think of the RAF?’

‘Yes, OK, I’ll do that.’ I joined Boy Entrants at Cosford at 15 1/2 years old—I was a misfit—no friends and got beaten up once or twice.

After qualifying as a Telegraphist, I went to HQ Transport command at Upavon for a couple of years, then Singapore. I had pseudo friends but felt lonely. The airman opposite me in my billet, my senior in years, got on his knees each night and quietly prayed.

My witness (for myself) was of a horrible brat, but to me the praying man was amazing to dare to kneel to pray in sight of all the other unbelievers.

He invited me to a service at his church, and I was too shy to say ‘yes’ - though I hid any such weakness as shyness.

In loneliness, and confusion of what the world required of me, I became depressed. I tried praying the Lord’s Prayer, which I had learned at school, and afterwards asked God, “If you are there Lord, prove yourself to me.”

The next day, a group who were friends with the airman who prayed, asked me to join them and go to a special service. Well, they seemed pleasant, and I had asked God to ‘prove’ Himself, so I shyly and reluctantly said ‘Yes, OK.’

I heard a South African evangelist called Richard Green speaking in a crammed packed full Gospel Hall and he put God into context for me. I received Christ as my Saviour—not there, I was far too timid, but when I got back to the camp.

The group who had taken me to the meeting were members of SASRA—
The Soldiers, Airmen’s, Scripture Readers Association.

They nurtured me, introduced me to other Christians who invited me to their homes and, looking back, that was quite a sacrifice for them.

I had joined SASRA, and I wrote to the secretary in London with news of our group. The letters were published in the SASRA magazine—you can find a copy of current SASRA magazines in Emmanuel Church.

When I returned to England at RAF Mt Batten, I began to back slide with non-Christian 'friends' and stopped going to church. Amazingly, the SASRA secretary, Capt. May remembered me, Phoned missionaries at Aggie Westons and told them "Peter Terrell has dropped off the radar." In my room overlooking Plymouth Sound, I heard a voice, "Does anyone know a Peter Terrell?" The Missioner (to seamen) - Mr. Gledhill, had found me.

So, I was pulled back from the brink of disaster. God moves in mysterious ways, His wonders to perform. God did not let me go – praise God.



SASRA has representatives covering the UK. Ours is Matthew Glass from Weston Super Mare. He is invited to various churches in the South West where he presents SASRA with videos, a slide show, talk, and a table of illustrations, books, magazines and Bibles—printed mugs and badges to encourage people to support thirteen Scripture Readers who take services with Army and Airforce chaplains with the permission of camp commanding officers. They tour barrack rooms and speak to young men and women about a Wonderful Saviour. They invite men and women to their family homes (just as I was). They demonstrate the love of Christ. They also go on yomps and manoeuvres with the men. They even do parachute jumps!

I cannot tell you all about it here, but here is a link to the SASRA website:



<https://www.sasra.org.uk/>

I commend this work for your prayers and support.

SASRA changed my life!

As I grew up my ambition was always to be a policeman. Leaving school at sixteen and a half there was a two year gap before I would be called up as a National Serviceman and it was almost impossible to get a decent job in that period because employers knew you would not be permanent. I found out that I could cut that period in half by signing on as a short term regular for three years, which gave me the advantages of extra pay, choice of Army, Navy or Air Force rather than where they put me, and the choice of job. I asked for Royal Air Force Police as preparation for coming out into the regular police.



I soon found that the Forces could be a lonely place for a committed Christian, especially on a small base with no other Christians. I became a SASRA member and that gave me a support and back-up that made all the difference. Throughout my service SASRA was an invaluable contact as I changed camps, went on training courses, etc. and I always knew that if I sought out a Scripture Reader I would always find a like minded evangelical Christian. Even so I found my spiritual life was slipping.

One thing that SASRA did was organise a house party at the Keswick Convention, and serving members of the forces were given free accommodation for the week. If you don't know of the Keswick Convention, it is an annual convention (three separate weeks) with leading international speakers, concentrating on holiness and depth of Christian life. All hotel, boarding houses and camp sites are taken over, mainly by Christian organisations and missionary societies, to cater for 10,000 every week.



1955 at Hedley Court—I'm the one on the right

As the Air Force provide a travel warrant to your leave address, I thought this was a good dodge to get a free holiday in the Lake District, but the Lord had other ideas! A week living with other Christians, an abundance of top quality, deep teaching, and the Lord's skill at organising situations had its result. During that week



with SASRA the Lord challenged me about my commitment to him and called me to dedicate my life to spreading the Gospel. So much for my plans to become a policeman! Instead of devoting my life to bringing criminals to justice, I found I was destined to bring lawbreakers to grace!

Scripture Readers - SASRA Scripture Readers Across The United Kingdom

All Scripture Readers have served in one or other of the Armed Services. They are all committed Christians and gifted evangelists. They have undergone a period of training and assessment before being deployed to a station with the agreement of the Ministry of Defence.



Meg Atkinson MBE
RAF Brize Norton



Roddy Macleod
Inverness



Tiaan de Klerk
Defence Training
Centre Lyneham



Gavin Dickson
Edinburgh Garrison
and Leuchars
Station



Paul Curd
Chepstow



Jim Henderson
Aldershot



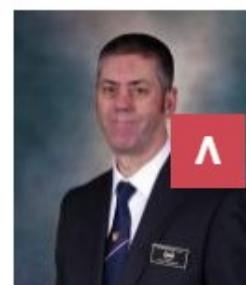
Steve Curley
Colchester



Tracy Blackwell
York



Chika Onugha
Kendrew



Kevin Wadsworth
Gibraltar Barracks,
Minley



Lee McDade
Infantry Training
Centre Catterick



Lee Philipson
Winchester and
Perham Down



Dave Hossack
Salisbury Plain

Prayers for SASRA

Please join in these prayers for SASRA

Soldier and Airmen Scripture Reading Association

Pray for all Church Parades, services, etc. that will be held on military bases today and for those leading them.

Pray for SASRA Scripture Readers, Chaplains, Padres and others responsible for the spiritual life on bases.

Pray for all Christians serving in the forces, that their lives may be a testimony to their colleagues.

Pray for all servicemen in war zones and other dangerous situations, that they may be courageous.

Pray for the distribution of the SASRA magazine and literature that it might encourage Christians and spread the Gospel. Pray for funding the organisation to pay Readers and staff, SASRA HQ, premises and literature, should be sufficient.

Pray for the Keswick convention, and especially for any servicemen attending that it will deepen their spiritual lives.

Pray for the mental and spiritual health of all those serving in our forces as they face many conflicting pressures.

Prayers provided by Stanley Porter