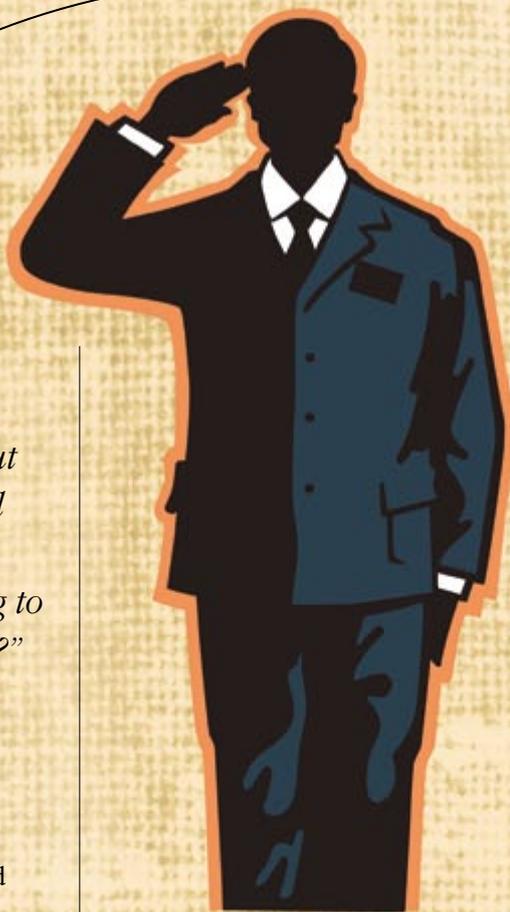


The Most Powerful Army



I planned to become an officer in the army. But when I thought about my future, I remembered my mother's question, "When are you planning to serve a full-time mission?"

By H. Daniel Wolke Canales

Ever since I was little, I was fascinated by the stories of Church leaders who served in the armed forces. Many of them have been war heroes and great examples of valor and humility in their home countries. Their experiences inspired me to participate in my country's military.

When I was 13, I entered a school known for its strict military discipline and infantry training. My schedule was demanding. I often was so exhausted by the end of the day that my scripture study and seminary participation seemed impossible.

By my second year at school, I had made plans for my life: upon finishing school at age 18, I would go directly into officer school and graduate four years later as an officer in the Guatemalan Army. All my wishes and dreams seemed to be coming true.

One day I told my mom about my plans, and she asked, "When are you planning to serve a full-time mission?" From that day forward her question lingered in my mind every time I thought about my future.

I still had a rigorous schedule, but I started to show more interest in my spiritual training. I started attending seminary, working with the full-time missionaries, and participating in Church activities. Following the advice of my older brother who was serving a full-time mission, I also began reading the Book of Mormon.

When I was training to be a paratrooper, we had very intense training each day. We would get back to our barrack almost crawling, but I always

found the strength to read the Book of Mormon. Daily reading of the scriptures strengthened my spirit and helped me continue with my training.

One evening several of my friends gathered around my bed to ask me some questions about the Book of Mormon and the Word of Wisdom. It was my opportunity to be the best kind of soldier—one who defends the truth and brings freedom through a firm and convincing testimony of the Book of Mormon.

When I was 19, I enlisted again in an army—the army of God, the most powerful army of all. I had the privilege of standing shoulder to shoulder with the valiant elders and sisters of Zion in the battalion of the Mexico Puebla Mission. Girded with the armor of God, we proclaimed the gospel and fought for liberty with courage and strength.

We are fighting against the hosts of darkness, but the victory belongs to God. I want to continue to be a brave soldier, enlisted for our King. We have powerful weapons: the Book of Mormon, the Holy Ghost, and the fulness of the gospel. We are led to victory by living prophets. If we train and prepare ourselves for the coming of our Savior, Jesus Christ, He will give us crowns of honor in celestial glory. **NE**