



Olive Branch International
Humanitarian Service to the International Military Community

March, 2007

Dear Friends of OBI,

Christ-centered Humanitarian Assistance Continues in Sri Lanka

Following the tsunami disaster in December 2004, OBI mobilized resources to support the work of the military involved in recovery efforts. That was only the beginning. The work in Sri Lanka has developed into one of most comprehensive programs in OBI history related to support of the active military. Early on, OBI shipped a forty-foot container of medical equipment and supplies to help upgrade the capabilities of the rehabilitation hospital to treat disabled soldiers. The support continues. Sri Lankan program manager Bill Barko and Richard Stiliha are currently working with the commanders of both the Sri Lankan Army and Air Force in the following areas:

- *Training and leadership development program for pre-command and staff college courses and senior operational and medical leadership.*
- *Support to military members who have lost limbs or have been paralyzed due to the conflict with the Tamil Tigers*
- *At the request of the Ministry of Defense, a Home-Building project for soldiers who lost their dwellings due to the tsunami is to be completed in late April, and the Secretary of Defense, brother of the President, has requested support for several other programs*



Greeting the Secretary of Defense (2nd from left)

Medical and Family Support Training Programs Support the Sri Lankan Military

The Sri Lankan Army suffers casualties daily. The war with the Tamil Tigers demands a high level of readiness. Casualties are frequent.

- *In April 2006, the Commander of the Army escaped an assassination attempt.*
- *In June, the Deputy Chief of Staff (a War College grad) was assassinated.*
- *OBI volunteers including Bill, Richard, and Vic Salazar risked their lives to work with the military in February. They brought support in the areas of counseling, suicide prevention and management of depression, pain management, alcohol and drug abuse prevention, combat stress, building and maintaining strong families, and community support programs.*



While in Sri Lanka OBI works to under-gird the Military Christian Fellowship in their initiatives as well. Here you can see Dick and Bill giving bibles to an Air Force Officer for use with Air Force Military Christian Fellowship. In the last several years the MCF has grown significantly. As a result of OBI's efforts in Sri Lanka, the Maldives have asked to receive similar training and are willing to pay to receive this training.

Join us as We Change Lives!

If you are interested in supporting programs such as this one in Sri Lanka (or in other South Asian countries like Singapore and Taiwan or elsewhere -- in Ukraine and other former Soviet-bloc countries,) I encourage you to use the enclosed reply card and return envelope. See the calendar below for a more complete list of future events. You may also give on-line at www.olivebranchintl.us. Keep in mind that all Olive Branch programs are underwritten by individual donors and are used as designated. We have a very ambitious program in 2007 that requires active support from people, like you, concerned about offering Christian-centered humanitarian assistance to military and military-family members in need around the world.

May the Lord bless you all for your faithful prayer support and giving as "OBI changes lives." Thank you for being such an important part in our prayer and financial-support teams.

Yours in Him,



Bruce G. Kittleson, President

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OBI HIGHLIGHTS FOR 2007

- FEBRUARY** Review of **Sri Lankan Recovery Efforts** by Barko, Stiliha and Salazar
- MARCH** Bruce attends **Senior Military Chaplain's Conference**, Hilton Head, SC
- APRIL** Dick Stiliha, **Fellowship of Christian Military Ministries-**
at Glen Erie Conference Center, Colorado Springs, CO
- MAY** **Sri Lankan Dedication of Homes for Soldiers** and continuing Leadership Training at the request of their Secretary of Defense
Clergy Training in Ukraine with CH (COL) Glen Bloomstrom and other OBI volunteers and staff
- JULY** **ESL Camp for Military Teens in Ukraine**-OBI sending 20-volunteers
- AUGUST** **Ukrainian teens visit US** to practice English and encourage them in faith.
Visit of MCF Vice President of Southern Pacific Area
(former Commander of Sri Lankan Army)
Dick Stiliha speaks at **International Association of Suicide Prevention**, Killarney, Ireland
- OCTOBER** **Women's Conference in Ukraine**-20 member team.
Sri Lanka Leadership Development Training Courses and Amputee Care Assistance Visit
Visit to MCF Taiwan.
- NOVEMBER** **Commander of the Sri Lankan Army and His Spouse Visit U.S.**

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STAY IN TOUCH THROUGH OUR ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTER: If you are not currently receiving our electronic newsletter, please go to our website to sign up. You will also receive Bruce's itinerary and occasional prayer requests, if desired. We would love to include you in this new feature! Go to www.olivebranchintl.us and click on the box to join our e-mail mailing list.