



RALLY
CORNERSTONE CONFERENCE CAMPGROUNDS
BROWN SUMMIT . NC
October 2-4, 2009

UNITED TO SERVE

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The crisp morning air brought with it wisps of campfire smoke wafting its way across the swales and gentle slopes and through the hundreds of tents and lodges. Dancing on the smoke was the sweet smell of breakfast for the campers spread out over the clearing behind the Cornerstone Conference Center in Brown's Summit, North Carolina. Then, it began. At first it was a strain to hear it, but as one made their way toward it, it grew louder. Then, even closer, the sound of a



**PH Cornerstone Conf. Commander
 Michael Hubbard and Worship Leader
 Larry Fraser**

guitar could be heard, then a voice. And when the Royal Rangers crested the small hill behind the lodges, it became the unmistakable sound of joyous praise and worship echoing between the buildings and off the distant trees, and hills. And it was calling the campers to join the chorus and sing praises to the King!

This was the opening scene for the 2009 North Carolina Rally, bringing together over eight hundred campers from six denominations of Royal Rangers from all over the state. The theme of the Rally, "United to Serve," was evident in the varied outpost numbers and district and conference strips stitched

on the uniforms of the Rangers. NC Rangers have been breaking down denominational barriers for several years, and this Rally, as Pentecostal Holiness (PH) Cornerstone Conference Commander Michael Hubbard said in his opening remarks, was "ten years in the dreaming, five years in the talking, and one year in the planning." The culmination of that dreaming, talking, and planning was the bringing together of the major denominations in the state that share the Ranger ministry. Assembly of God (A/G) NC District Commander Brady Allen declared during his morning devotion,



**800+ Campers at Opening
 Ceremony**

“This morning, we are one outpost!” This was the first ever gathering in North Carolina history of all denominations of Royal Rangers, perhaps even in the United States. “But it won’t be the last,” added Hubbard, “the North Carolina Rally will be held every four years.” Allen’s devotion centered on Jesus’ instructions to his disciples to feed the five thousand gathered. “Jesus said, ‘Give them something to eat,’ Allen said. “This Rally is our gathering, and Jesus is here to spiritually feed us,” he added.

After tearful greetings from Pentecostal Free Will Baptist (PFWB) National Commander Jerry Barnes, and PH NC Conference Commander Andre Davenport, the campers were released to their commanders to begin the day’s festivities. They walked away from the ceremony to more soulful praise and worship sung by Larry Fraser, Jr. Many retreated back to camp to finish breakfast. Others lingered at the headquarters building to find out their assignments for the day. The boys were eager and ready to get the day started.

After breakfast, the fun began. Climbing the step ladder to strap into the Giant Swing, Discovery Ranger Harrison Toole of Martinsville, VA, of Mercy Crossing Church of God (COG) OP-005, said he was “a little scared.” As the ladder was pulled away, and the command was given to heave-ho on the rope that pulled him higher, his look of anxiety began to change. Imperceptibly at first, his mouth began to turn up at each end, with the beginnings of a smile. Then he nodded, much like a bull rider does just before the gate swings open at a rodeo. With the nod, the safety shackle was pulled loose and off Harrison went, over thirty feet in the air! Swinging like a giant pendulum, his smile grew larger with each swing. After the swing had slowed to a stop, and the ladder replaced, he climbed down and began taking off his safety gear. When asked how it felt, Harrison replied, “Different - what an adrenalin rush! It was fun – but a little scary, too.” But he quickly added, “It was less scary after a couple of swings though.”



Discovery Ranger Harrison Toole of Martinsville, VA getting last minute instructions on the Giant Swing

While Harrison was challenging himself on the Giant Swing, another group of Rangers were facing their own challenge. Lieutenant Commander (Lt. Cmdr.) Luis Rojas, Knightdale, NC, of OP-201 from 1st AOG in Raleigh was laying down the gauntlet for his boys. They were observing the Wall Climb that they would tackle later in the day. Lt. Cmdr. Rojas said that this Rally was the best things for the Rangers to come along in a long time, maybe ever. He said, “I love it. The boys love it. We love it!” With Rojas were nineteen boys and for men from the OP, which is part of the Southeast Spanish District.

Just across the meadow, tucked into the woods near the Frontiersmen Camping fellowship (FCF) village was the Paintball Course. This pitted Outpost teams against other outposts, and sometimes teams were made up of multiple outposts. Boys from OP-19, Crossroads Christian Fellowship of Jacksonville, OP-41



Nathan Davis and Rangers from OP's 19, 41, and 70 prepare to do paintball battle.

of Henderson PH, and OP-70 of Marion PH made up the bulk of the boys in the woods on one session. Nathan Davis, age 10, said, "It was good. It was the first time I've played paintball. I think I got a few of them. I even think I got a tree! I came prepared though, I wore two shirts and two pairs of socks to keep it from stinging."

Later in the day, back at the Climbing Wall, OP-201 returned to face the challenge that Lt. Cmdr. Rojas had laid down earlier. Several of the boys decided not to take the easy path, but to take the path less travelled. They made their way over the obstacle known as the "doghouse." After Julio Cituentes, 16, of Knightdale, and 15 year old Kevin Cortez made the trip over the doghouse look easy, 9 year old Matthew Doniz was determined to make it also. The first leg of the trip, up the sheer wall underneath the doghouse he accomplished with ease. But, at 9 years old, with a considerably shorter arm reach, Matthew soon ran afoul of the doghouse. But with all the scrappiness, and then some, of the older boys, he never gave up. As the other Rangers from OP-201 stood below and shouted encouragement, Matthew slowly worked his way over the doghouse and finally conquered the outcropping. After achieving that milestone, the remainder of the climb was easy, as was the rappel down from the top of the climbing tower. Once on the ground, Matthew announced, "I was scared. But I felt like I accomplished something today. I was pretty nervous on the way down, though. But with God's help, I made it."



Matthew Doniz works his way around the doghouse at the Climbing Wall.

Many boys were overcoming their fears and accomplishing things they never thought they could do. The Archery Range produced three experts that hit the bullseye. The Obstacle Course, ably manned by Commander Ken Krueger of OP-175 from Goldsboro, was also a huge hit with the boys, who kept coming back to try and better their times. Krueger remarked, after watching Tyler Miller, 11, of OP-04 in Thomasville, complete the course for the third time, "This is the reason we're commanders. It's all about the boys."

Later that night, after one of the most spectacular Council Fire lighting ceremonies ever,



PH National Commander David Moore expounded on the theme of the Rally when he told the Ranger and Commanders gathered, "You matter! Like a puzzle piece, you have to do your part, because you matter to the whole puzzle. All the pieces must come together in unity to make a whole puzzle. God has a purpose for each of us, as we all fit into the whole."

The following morning, at the final assembly before the remaining events were finished, Commander Barnes told the assembled Rangers, "Unity is the key. God's plan is for us to live in unity. That's why unity is the rally theme." Then he instructed each Ranger and commander to take one of their Rally patches, and go trade it with another Ranger or commander that they didn't know. The patches were equipped with stickers on the back for names and addresses, so that each ranger would now have the other's information. Commander Barnes said this was so each could pray for the other. And then it happened, as these new friends were coming together in unity, each began laying hands on the

other, and joining in prayer. Most vowed to pray for their new friend even after the Rally was over.

Commander Hubbard then closed the ceremony in prayer. There were still games to be finished, and Zip Lines to be ridden. But each Ranger was changed. Each knew he was part of a larger puzzle. But the big puzzle doesn't have lines or denominations on it, just love for Christ. Those lines had been blurred, then completely erased, during the course of the weekend. Perhaps, just perhaps, each Ranger and commander will return to their church, and the unity found at Rally 2009 will remain in their hearts. And the MPact Girls, Youth ministries, Deacons, Board members, and Pastors will catch the vision of Unity that the Rangers brought home. There is but one body in Christ - and we all matter! We're all important to the body, and it really isn't important anymore what denomination we are. And that will be the enduring legacy of this first ever United to Serve Rally.



Commander Hubbard closes the Sunday morning assembly.