

## from the desk of...Fear of the unknown

*By Shelley Hill, Lt. Colonel*

In the run up to Halloween, the media is full of advertisements for scary movies, costumes, decorations and anything else that will bring a bit of fear as well as an increased heart rate. I am not one to put myself into a situation that will make me scared. Even the Tower of Terror at Disneyland is a ride I avoid at all costs!

Recently, my husband, Dusty, and I visited Camp Redwood Glen in the Golden State Division. One evening, Dusty wanted to take a walk before dusk. I told him that I didn't want to go too far because it was beginning to get dark. We started walking out toward the wilderness camp area and then around to see the high ropes course. The ropes course was a bit further and I really didn't want to go any deeper into the woods, particularly as darkness began to descend. Eventually, however, I agreed to proceed.

As we walked around the corner toward the course, I heard a rustling in the grass. It was clear to me that something was in the grass ready to jump out and attack us. I started to get very nervous. My heart started pounding about 100 beats a minute. I wanted to get out of there and get back to camp. I kept thinking: Just run, and run fast! Precisely when I expected something scary, big and ferocious to emerge, I noticed that the sound was coming from a family of small quail settling down to roost for the night.

As I walked back to camp a bit unraveled—but also embarrassed by my minor meltdown in the shadows—I was reminded quickly of the words from Psalm 34:4 that say, he delivered me from all my fears (NIV). This is so true—when we have God on our side, we don't need to fear whatever may come our way.

The Salvation Army Song book contains many songs that speak of God's abiding presence. One of my favorites is song number 653. The words of the verse and chorus are based on Isaiah 41:10:

Fear not, I am with thee, O be not dismayed,

For I am thy God, I will still give thee aid!  
I'll strengthen thee, help thee, and cause thee to stand,  
Upheld by my gracious omnipotent hand.  
No, never alone, no, never alone,  
He promised he never would leave me,  
Never, no never, alone.

Dark alleys, scary movies and the unknown future are nothing to fear when we travel through life with a God who has promised to stand alongside us during times of fear and difficulty. My prayer for myself and others is that the assurance of God's presence and perfect love drive away any fear, worry or stress that may come our way. We are never alone...and that is reason for courage and confidence—the perfect anecdote for fear and trepidation.