

from the desk of...Going home

By Edward Hill, Lt. Colonel

Not too long ago I went on a whirlwind trip to Denver, Billings (Mont.), Spokane (Wash.), and Coeur d'Alene (Idaho) in order to tour various Salvation Army ministries. Every stop along the way deepened my appreciation for the incredible diversity of ministry taking place in these key centers of the Western Territory. On the day I was leaving Spokane for home, I woke up at about 5 a.m.—extraordinarily early for me—with an overwhelming desire to visit Lewiston, Idaho.

I checked my GPS and learned it was about 124 miles from Spokane, or what the GPS estimated would take two hours and 38 minutes. I figured I could make it in two. I began to do the calculations in my head. If I left at 6 a.m., I could get to Lewiston by 8 a.m., spend an hour or so, and then return to Spokane by 11 a.m., allowing just enough time to return the rental car, check in at the airport, and comfortably make the noon flight. Once I committed to that plan, I sprang into action.

I had long thought about returning to Lewiston, an isolated town nestled near the confluence of the breathtaking Snake and Clearwater rivers in Eastern Idaho. My parents served there as corps officers from 1959-1962 and both my sister Laura and I were born there.

As I drove down Highway 195 south, I reflected on my parents' faithful ministry in Lewiston. I had seen pictures of them leading street meetings, enrolling dozens of junior and senior soldiers, dedicating children and playing in the corps band. What would I find now? I had not been there for 50 years!

Today, I was finally going home. I made my approach down the hill into the valley below. With a lot of help from my GPS, I found the Army and, boy, was I impressed. The Lewiston Corps is a spacious and beautiful facility located on one of the main roads of town. I soon met up with Lewiston Corps Officers Captains Ralph and Peggy Guthrie, who generously gave me a lightning tour of the programs and services of the corps, which ultimately reach thousands of people every year. My time was short, but I was thrilled to learn about the amazing presence of the Army in that community.



I left Lewiston that morning with a great sense of satisfaction. The Army is thriving. I was reminded that throughout the entire Western Territory, including in relatively small and out of the way places like Lewiston, the mission of the Army is moving ahead with great effectiveness, due in large part to the faithfulness of dedicated officers, soldiers and community members.

Lewiston is not really home for me anymore. Indeed, I am reminded by the words of Paul that as believers our home is nowhere to be found on this earth, but rooted in our relationship with God through his Son. Paul writes in Philippians 3:20: ...our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ.

We reside in a great and wonderful territory, but a more wondrous place is in store for all of us whose faith is placed in a God who resides everywhere and who generously seeks to lavish his love and grace upon his people.