

Waking Up in the Woods

My years in the Tennessee National Guard required two weeks of camp each summer, spent mostly at Fort Stewart, Ga. Half of that time was allocated to bivouac in the Okefenokee Swamp, the sandy-soiled, alligator-laced, tall-pine forests surrounding the military post.

While on those training exercises, the first sense to attract our attention each morning was ... *smell!* Wafting through the forest and into the opening in the tent was the delightful aroma of bacon, sausage, and especially a fresh pot of coffee being prepared in the makeshift mess hall. It aroused the sleeping soldiers and produced a memory like no other.

Years later, as I encounter fellow Guardsmen who shared that experience, the talk often turns to those mornings as if we are reliving them, almost capable of smelling the coffee right then. It is a wake-up call we fondly cherish. Admitting that I have a reputation for fondness for coffee today, its beginning is rooted in those military day-starters.

All of us have moments like these that provide a platform for memories that are special to us. These classic times of pleasure linger in our minds, much like the smells of a delicious breakfast on a long-ago camping trip. The first call of the morning brings us into the new day and helps us set the pace and tone for the tasks ahead.

In the spiritual realm, as followers of Christ, could it be that we experience wake-up calls in our lives that are far more than just reminiscing?

Our wake-up calls, lessons learned, and deserts crossed with God's help and presence can turn those experiences into opportunities that allow God's loving plans for our lives to shine through us to a lost and depraved world.

Isaiah shouted: "Arise, shine!" Share the joy of your faith and knowing Christ with others. There are many who will otherwise never awaken to become a child of God unless you let them see your happiness of knowing our Lord.

Arise, shine, for your Light has come, and the glory of the Lord rises upon you (Isaiah 60:1).

– Beecher Hunter