

Employee Shares LifeWay Materials With USS Enterprise Crew

Bill Peter, special projects coordinator in the direct marketing department of LifeWay Christian Resources, is extending the reach of LifeWay to the high seas.

Peter was invited aboard the aircraft carrier USS Enterprise as part of the U.S. Navy's Leaders to Sea program. According to the Navy's description, the program "invites key leaders from all sectors—corporate, civic, government, education, nonprofit and service—to embark in a Navy warship at sea." Peter was selected to join the USS Enterprise serving in the Atlantic.

The Enterprise, called "Big E" in the Navy, is perhaps best-known for her first deployment in 1962 holding the American blockade in the Cuban Missile Crisis. The Navy's 11th heaviest supercarrier has an aircraft capacity of 90 and was one of the world's first nuclear powered carriers. Guests of the Enterprise must arrive and depart on the ship's landing strip.

"I found out about the opportunity, contacted the Navy office of community outreach and began the process," said Peter, a member of First Baptist Church, Hendersonville, Tenn. He traveled to Mayport, Fla., where he climbed aboard a C2 Greyhound, a small prop plane designed to take off and land on an aircraft carrier, which carried him the rest of the way.

"When they give you the advice to brace yourself, you need to take that advice," Peter said, describing the experience of the Greyhound landing on the Enterprise. "If you are prone to motion sickness, you do not want to do this."

Lt. Fred Holcomb Jr., a Southern Baptist chaplain serving on

the Enterprise, was one of Peter's guides on the carrier. Knowing this in advance, Peter prepared for his trip by acquiring various LifeWay resources to share with Holcomb and his fellow chaplains.

"I took Holcomb an Apologetics Study Bible," Peter said. "I thought he would enjoy it; I have enjoyed studying mine with my son. I also took him an audio version of *Jesus Calling*."

Peter said he studies the Apologetics Study Bible with his teenage son every night and thought Holcomb's son, who is close in age to his own, might enjoy doing the same with his dad.

Peter said Holcomb expressed a particularly deep sense of gratitude for a copy of the movie *Courageous* and the *Courageous* Bible study materials.

Sailors on deployment aboard the Enterprise are often separated from their families for extended periods of time, Peter explained. Some report having marriage problems, often magnified by their time apart from their spouse. Holcomb and the other chaplains frequently counsel and pray for husbands struggling to be leaders at home while on deployment. Holcomb told Peter the *Courageous* study materials would have an immediate impact.

"These guys are on six-, eight-month deployments," Peter told Holcomb. "The challenge for you is taking *Courageous* and challenging dads to be good fathers and husbands."

Even before Peter left the Enterprise, Holcomb had passed on his copy of the Bible study.

"Before I left he had shared [the Bible study] with someone in his office," Peter said. "He didn't say who it was, but said they were going through a difficult time in their marriage and thought it was something they could use."

Holcomb, well known across the ship and affectionately called “Chaps” by the other sailors, served as the Leaders to Sea tour guide for much of Peter’s 24-hour visit on the Enterprise.

Near the end of Peter’s visit a sailor in the engine room called out, but he wasn’t calling for Chaps. “Are you Mr. Peter?” he asked. “Thank you for bringing the *Courageous* Bible study. I have been looking forward to doing that.”

Peter, now an honorary crew member of the USS Enterprise, said the LifeWay resources will help Holcomb share encouragement and truth from God’s Word with nearly 5,800 sailors aboard the “Big E.”