

TODAY'S MAN

Fall 1987



ROYAL RANGERS

A Dream Come True

by Johnnie Barnes



Twenty-five years ago we stood on the threshold of a new concept for winning and developing boys for Christ. We had the handbooks, the plan, and the goals—plus a lot of hope and lots of dreams.

The question in many minds was, “Will the Royal Rangers program work? Will this endeavor be worth all the effort?”

After 25 successful years, this ministry has proved its worth many times over by producing the highest of all assets—the conversion and Christian development of boys!

The priority goals of Royal Rangers from its beginning have been reaching, teaching, and keeping boys for Christ. The evangelism of boys, the spiritual development of boys, and the conservation of boys in our churches and for future leadership has been the chief intent of the program. Adherence to these goals has produced tremendous results.

Each year thousands of boys are saved and filled with the Holy Spirit. One estimate is that over 250,000 boys have made decisions for Christ over the past 25 years.

One pastor wrote, “When we started Royal Rangers, we had less than ten boys. After a few months, our group has grown to over 100. What a thrill to report that 28 of these boys have made decisions for Christ. The majority did not attend our church before we began Royal Rangers.”

Another minister stated, “I thought this was just another program to keep boys out of mischief. But after seeing 11 of our boys accept Christ at a campfire devotional during a campout, I realize that Royal Rangers has unlimited evangelistic possibilities.”

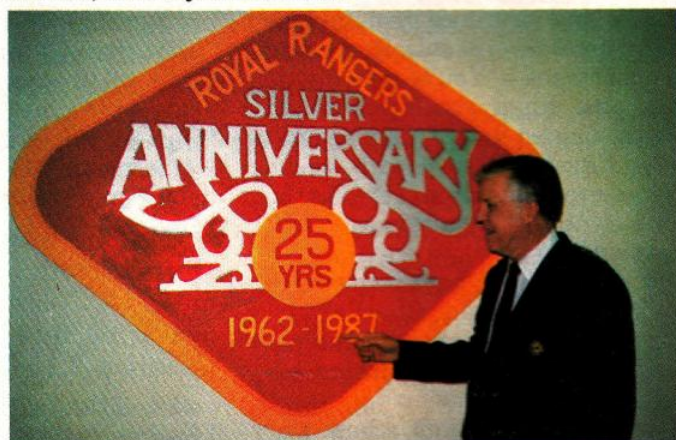
Reports indicated that entire families were being won

for Christ. I recall during one rally a man standing and testifying, “A few months ago my son joined the Royal Rangers in this church. A few weeks later he gave his heart to Christ. He told my wife and me about his experience, and through his influence we started attending church. Today my wife and I are both saved and filled with the Holy Spirit.”

Sometime later a pastor friend came by our booth at General Council and stated, “We have won nine new families for our church through Royal Rangers—and we just started! We’re going to win more! Royal Rangers has opened doors to reach outside families like nothing else we’ve tried.”

Our office has continued to receive a flow of such testimonies over the years. Annual reports from local outposts indicate that boys are won each year in almost every outpost.

The Royal Rangers ministry has impacted the lives of thousands of youth around the world. The program has now spread to 42 countries of the world. It is estimated that over 800,000 boys have passed through the program since its inception. These boys all pledged, “With God’s help, I will do my best to serve God, my church, and my fellowman.”



I have had a dream of an army of Royal Rangers around the world lifting high the banner of Jesus Christ, making an impact on their generation for God. Thank God, that dream is now becoming a reality.

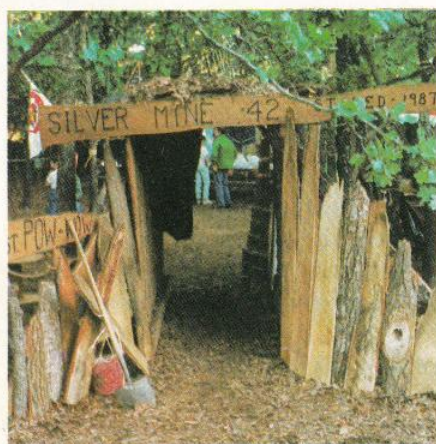
What is the secret of the phenomenal growth of this ministry? It is an unswerving commitment to contribute to the development of the total boy—spiritually, mentally, physically, and socially. Blending outdoor camping and recreational activities with maintaining a personal interest in the spiritual well-being of each

boy has enabled Royal Rangers to grow and minister effectively as an arm of the church.

Every week throughout our country and in many countries of the world, thousands of men and boys are involved in Royal Rangers. From the Straight Arrows, to the Buckaroos, Trailblazers, and Air, Sea, or Trail Rangers, boys are shown the light of God's love through the dedicated leadership of our Assemblies of God men. These are men willing to receive leadership training to prepare themselves for this opportunity to minister.

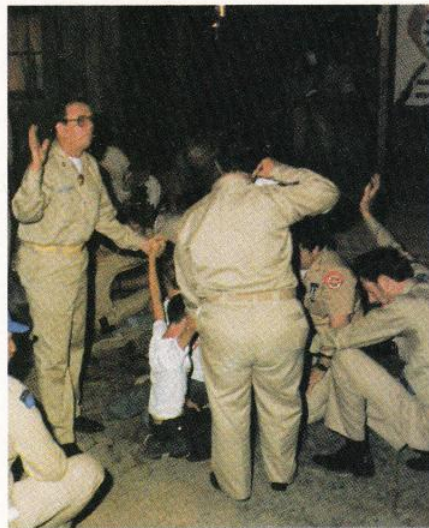


The Leadership Training Course, launched early in the program, contains practical training on all phases of the Royal Rangers ministry. Over 30,000 men have enrolled in this training.



Every year Royal Rangers leave their hometown assemblies to enter our Bible and liberal arts colleges. Others are already in the work force

and are serving our churches in responsible positions of leadership. Many men who participated in Royal Rangers as boys are now finding renewed interest and fulfillment as local outpost commanders. And some Royal Rangers grow up to become pastors and missionaries.



Through personal counseling, outpost meetings, campfire devotions, rallies, and pow wow evangelistic services, thousands of boys have started the greatest of all adventures—the adventure of living for Christ.



Recently, at our National Camporama in Eagle Rock, Missouri, I stood on the steps of the lodge and



watched the boys pass by in review. My heart was full as over 3,000 faces passed my view.

My good friend Fred Deaver, leaned over and remarked, "John, we have come a long way in 25 years."



I thought of the:
... Bright-eyed boy who proclaimed, "Commander Barnes, the Royal Rangers is the greatest program in the world!"
... Top-notch Rangers who rushed into a burning jail and released the only prisoner, then assisted two police officers who were overcome by smoke.

... Many dedicated leaders who have given of their time, their treasure, and their talent.
... Spark of vision that began 25 years ago that has flamed into a God-anointed ministry to boys.

A tear trickled down my cheek. I looked at Fred and answered, "This is something God has done."

With the same faith and hope of 25 years go, we look to the future.

