

USAFA CADETS IN POLAND

Why Spring Break Trips?

ACCTS, working in partnership with Officers' Christian Fellowship groups in the U.S., hosts annual Spring Break mission trips for cadets and midshipmen at U.S. service academies to help them:

- 1. See their military careers as callings from God.*
- 2. Learn to integrate their faith in their careers.*
- 3. Develop a vision for international military ministry.*
- 4. Start and build relationships with Christian military peers in other countries.*
- 5. Develop a knowledge of and appreciation for the people, culture, and hopes of the nations they visit.*

These visits are part of our overall goal of encouraging and building up the next generation of military believers in all nations around the world.

Four U.S. Air Force Academy cadets, led by Lt Col (USAF) Matthew and Karen Brandt, participated in an ACCTS Spring Break trip to Poland in March. ACCTS linked them up with military Christians in Poland, who arranged their in-country visits to the Polish Air Force Academy, lodging at a local seminary, and visits to other cultural and military sites in their nation. Colonel Brandt states, "Our hosts, Igor, Darek, Daniel, and Peter, have been such a blessing to us, and I've found their stories very interesting to be sure. I never thought I'd enjoy having dinner with a MIG and Sukhoi driver!! Truly men of God. And brothers in Christ!"

The group's visit to the academy chapel was a highlight, providing an opportunity for interaction with Polish cadets and students. The U.S. cadets briefed the Polish cadets on the U.S. Air Force Academy and how they live out their faith there. A very engaged question-and-answer time followed, as well as good inter-personal discussions between U.S. and Polish cadets. The cadet group was also given an escorted tour through the academy to learn about its history, and had the opportunity to use several flight simulators.

The group's trip to Auschwitz-Birkenau was a sobering experience which affected the cadets and leaders deeply. "We witnessed pure sin at its deepest root. From remnants of those who were murdered to the disturbing complicated agendas of those murdering, our team left with no appetite for lunch and a reserved discussion of simply 'why.' We may never know that answer, but as retired and future military officers, both Polish and American alike, we agreed that hate is never the answer."