

MISSION OR MAINTENANCE? by Carl McMurray

The US military has thousands of cooks and chefs that are hard at work in field and on bases around the world turning out heaps and piles of food for our servicemen and women. They are trained food specialists and it is said that many have such skill and knowledge that they should have their own four star restaurants. Nutritious food is absolutely necessary for the health and well-being of our armed forces. But training cooks and developing chefs is not the mission of the armed forces.

I'm told that our military system encourages enlistment by offering training in a variety of high tech fields and incentives to attend college after serving. An educated or vocationally trained individual is certainly an advantage to his community and society in general and is more independent himself and better able to care for his own needs and the needs of his family, without a doubt. But the mission of the armed forces is not to educate or train people for civilian life.

One of the oldest rivalries in football is the ARMY Black Knights team from the US Military Academy at WestPoint versus the NAVY Midshipmen from the US Naval Academy. These teams compete with Big 10 teams. Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corp bands play in parades and state events on a regular basis and stir our hearts with their patriotic efforts. Entertainers are regularly shipped to front lines to sing, dance, and use their comedic routines to encourage the morale of our servicemen and women. But note, football, music, and other entertainment is not the mission of the armed forces.

All the above are helpful and some are downright necessary to the smooth operation of our military as they go about their MISSION, i.e. attacking, destroying, and protecting the nation from our enemies. That is the mission of our armed forces. War is their business. The rest is maintenance.

The same is true of the church. We are a spiritual army following our Captain. Encouraging one another is like feeding our spirits with nutritious food and is absolutely necessary. The church will not long exist without loving one another and serving one another. That's why we took up the challenge this year of "Considering one another," from Hebrews 10:24. While we do this however, let's not forget that as necessary as "maintenance" is, our mission is still our Captains mission, "seeking and saving the lost." While we're looking inward, let's lift our eyes once in a while to view the lost around us on every hand. The field is still white unto harvest.