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An Army Within the Army

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 (Delivered at Christian Endeavor Banquet, Fort Belvoir, Va.)

THIS occasion demonstrates two very significant facts to me: one, that we have still among our young men in this country a representative number of Christian torchbearers; two, that in the army there are men in numbers who have not declared a moratorium on their Christian professions. We of middle age and beyond sometimes fear that the impact of the secular spirit and enterprise upon most young men has proved beyond their resistance and that none but a disheartening remnant is left to stand positively and courageously upon the Christian teachings of their homes and church. The number of you before me tonight suggests that this judgment is in error, that for any appearance to the contrary our Christian young men are still a force with which society must reckon. There is the further impression that war calls for sterner ideals than those a Christian Endeavor Society instills, and that for the duration Christian "softness" had better be forgot. But you men sitting before me wearing the Christian Endeavor ribbon on your coats belie all this, and happily so, for where in all the world do men need more those inner fires, those deep resolves, those passionate loyalties born of the Christian religion than when they are about a job like yours?

"Ye are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hid." This is my message to you tonight and to Christian men in the army everywhere. As little as you may think it, you are God's representatives in the army. Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings in her latest book, *Cross Creek*, a series of sketches of life in a primitive settlement of Florida, tells of a young Northern white woman of culture who some twenty years before fell in love with one of Cross Creek's males who, being a good-for-nothing, broke her life. She lost everything but her character and

her courage. One day Martha, a Negro character of Cross Creek, who served without charge, said this: "She shames most women, don't she? I does all I can for her, 'cause me and the Lord is all she's got to look out for her, and the Lord ain't exactly put Hissself out." She was mistaken. Whenever she put herself out for this woman, God put himself out. For in this world of men, it is *men*, men like you and me, through whom God must work. We are the lamps through which his light must shine; we are the army by which his battles must be fought.

Now that you profess by your presence here tonight and by the ribbons you wear to your Christian commitment what can you do in the army to keep your light burning?

First, you can *live* the Christian life. It is not impossible even in the army. During two years of service in World War I, I saw convincing evidence that a man's personal conduct while a soldier need not fall below the level which marked his life as a civilian. I saw operate upon the hour by hour life of the soldier in the Argonne and in Paris the same restraining influences of home and church which influenced him as he had walked the streets of his home town in full view of its citizenry. It can be done. God is in camp as well as in the city, in the streets of Tunis of Sydney or Monrovia just as in the familiar paths of our home communities. He is there depending upon those who have committed themselves to him to be the vessels of his light. You bear this responsibility.

You can also *teach* the Christian life. It is obvious that as generously as the Government has provided chaplains, chaplains are too few to reach all the men. Even if there were a chaplain to every soldier the Christian soldier would still carry a responsibility as message bearer to his fellow soldier. His message can prove often the most convinc-

ing message—the message from man to man, soldier to soldier, layman to layman.

You would be astonished to know how many men are waiting for such a message—a word of advice, of caution, of enlightenment about the Christian life. But you answer, "What can I teach; what do I know about the mysteries and the intricacies of religion or the religious life? I am myself but a novice." And so are we all but novices. There is one simple thing, however, that all of us can say to men about religion and there is no more important thing we can say. It is that religion boiled down to its essence is loyalty, loyalty to what men believe to be of supreme worth in the world. And the Christian religion in its essence is loyalty to the life of love, of fellow-feeling, of brotherliness, of selflessness as taught and lived by Jesus of Nazareth. Any man, the least soldier in the army of the nation, can understand this and understanding can teach it. You men of the Christian Endeavor bear this responsibility.

Finally, you can *share* the Christian life which is but another manner of saying you can live it. "For I was hungry and ye gave me to eat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me to drink." Here is the supreme act of piety, the profoundest Christian precept—sharing what you have with your fellowmen. It can be a cup of water or a slice of bread. More often it will be the sharing of your gladness with another, you sharing yourself in another's sorrows. It will be the bearing of another's weakness upon your shoulders, the lending of your strength to another's right arm.

In summary, I call upon you of the Christian Endeavor to attempt with all your strength to be Christians now as always and to do all within your power to help your fellow soldiers to be Christian and to remain Christian. I call upon you to be an army within the army, an army of Christian spirits fighting ceaselessly for the preservation of goodness in your own hearts and in the hearts of the men beside whom your lot is cast.

The Chaplain's Ministry

By Chaplain George F. Rixey
Executive Officer, Office Chief of Chaplains

THE office of chaplain in the American Army had its inception during the Revolutionary War when General George Washington issued the first call for American ministers of the Gospel to serve as chaplains. Chaplains, for Brigades apparently, were appointed intermittently from 1776 to 1838 when Post Chaplains, who served likewise as school teachers, were authorized. These numbered 20, later increased to 30 in 1849. Appointment was invested in a Council of Administration in the Post where the chaplain was to serve. Pay was \$40.00 per month, and four food rations together with quarters and fuel.

During the war with Mexico a chaplain was authorized for each Regiment of volunteers. Post Chaplains were made available for this duty. During the Civil War a chaplain was appointed for each volunteer regiment and for each General Hospital. During this period the chaplains were given the rank of Captain of Infantry without command and were placed on the same footing in respect to pay, allowances, and emoluments as were other officers of the Army in corresponding grades. In 1901 the distinction between Post and Regimental Chaplains was abolished. Later legislation authorized chaplains to be commissioned as such. Chaplains are now appointed at the rate of one per approximately every 1200 men and officers. They may hold all grades from First Lieutenant to Colonel.

In 1920 the Office of the Chief of Chaplains was established. His duties include investigation into the qualifications of applicants for appointment for chaplain and the general coordination and supervision of chaplains' activities. He prepares suitable training material; makes recommendations affecting proper denominational distribution, and sees to it that chaplains maintain a satisfactory

ecclesiastical standing in and relationship with their respective denominations. As pertains to chaplains he performs all the normal duties of a Chief of Branch or Service.

The basic cause for the chaplaincy of the United States Army is to be found in the recognition by our congressional and military leaders that the spiritual and moral qualities of courage, patience, self-denial, loyalty, endurance, team-work, and self-sacrifice all enter into the character of the well disciplined soldier. These, as well as many other spiritual qualities must be possessed by the soldier, individually and collectively, if the Command, whether a squad or an army, is to reach the highest peak of effectiveness. Intelligent men, including wise military leaders, recognize that such qualities in men, including soldiers, find their origin in and emanate from God, and that they are developed, sustained, and strengthened through obedience to His ordinances and by the operation of His Grace. The practice of the tenets of his faith as found in God's Holy Word develops in the individual that moral self-discipline which is the requisite of the highest type of military character. Further, the comfort, consolation, and confidence afforded the faithful soul in the practices of his religion are not only most efficacious to Him individually but they form the surest foundation on which to build the morale most needed by the Command and most desired by the wisest Commanders. Such morale goes beyond that nurtured solely upon food, important as it is, entertainment and physical well being. This was and is demonstrated by the patriots of Valley Forge and the patriots in the new conquered and oppressed nations of Europe.

I. Federal statutes and the policy of the War Department as expressed in Army Regulations, the Directives of the higher Command, and the administration functions of the Chief of Chaplains, demonstrate that the exercise of his ministerial function is the primary duty of the chaplain and his major contribution to the welfare of the Command. He is expected, either through his own ministrations or by obtaining those of others,

to provide appropriate religious services for the Command whenever the same may be practical. These include formal or informal religious services on Sundays or weekdays—Bible Classes, Missions, administration of the Holy Communion, Baptism, etc. In short, he should be the shepherd of the flock entrusted to him, so far as his own religious convictions and those of the men whom he serves will permit. That this is being done in a remarkable degree is evidenced by these figures. Chaplains' Reports reveal that during August, 1942, 62,911 church services were held for United States troops throughout the world with a total attendance of 3,638,060. When the soldier could not come to church the chaplain went to him on the march, on the high seas, in camp, in isolated gun positions, on tropical isle or in arctic waste, in the desert or in cathedralled city. Sacraments were administered on 42,219 occasions with 431,069 participants. 3,150,880 persons consulted with chaplains on matters of a pastoral nature. Chaplains made 48,646 hospital and guardhouse visits during the month. "For I was sick and ye visited me, I was in prison and ye came to me." Matthew 25:3-6. In addition, chaplains solemnized 3,851 marriages, officiated at 758 infant baptisms, heard 5,359 professions of religion, including adult baptisms, and distributed 222,032 Testaments and Bibles.

It is significant that less than one-tenth of one percent of the 4,000 chaplains on duty have indicated to the Chief of Chaplains, by letter or otherwise, that they feel misplaced or disappointed in their work as chaplains. Hundreds have stated in one way or another that their service as chaplains have given them the most satisfying and richest spiritual experience in their lives. The fact that the chaplain comes into the Service with the ecclesiastical indorsement of his denomination, and that the War Department, his Commanding Officer, the soldiers, and his church expect him to be first of all, and above all, a man of God, a true exemplar of the religious ideal, motive, and conduct, contributes in so small measure to this result.

The second important function of the chaplain's ministry is to "Serve as friend, counselor, and guide to all members of the Command to which he is assigned, regardless of creed or sect." (4b AR 60-5). The chaplain is the one man in his organization to whom, outside of military channels, the soldier may go with his problems. The good chaplain makes himself always accessible day or night to his men. If the men find that such is not the case the chaplain has failed in his function and has seriously impaired his usefulness to the army and to the One in whose name he was commissioned to serve in the army and out.

To be able to render acceptably such a service the chaplain must know human nature—its weakness as well as its strength, Army Regulations and customs as well as his Bible. He must possess sound judgment as well as enthusiasm; must consider his obligation to his Commander and the government as well as that to the man who seeks his help; must be a man of knowledge and experience as well as of sympathetic understanding and charity; must have tolerance as well as sound piety; and must be willing to share with the soldier his hardships, to "Endure hardness as a good soldier of the Lord Jesus Christ," 2 Timothy 2. Such a chaplain will inevitably receive the respect, confidence and devoted loyalty of the men he serves. Commanders have said, "Such a chaplain is the most useful and valuable officer a Commander can have in his unit." Just the mere presence of such a chaplain brings comfort, consolation and steadfastness to an organization. To know he is in camp or on the battlefield is alike an inspiration and a benediction to the soldiers.

In faithfully performing the foregoing functions the chaplain finds two marvellous opportunities opening as a door, disclosing entrancing and inspiring vistas. "Behold I have given before thee a door open, which no man can shut." Revelation 3:8. The first is the opportunity through sermon, address, conference, counsel, and example to instruct the soldier in the fundamentals of civic and

social morality and to guide him in an intelligent translation of his civic responsibility into the military action required to effectively preserve the civic freedoms, guaranteed to him by the basic and constitutional principles on which our government and civilization rest, from their threatened destruction involved in the possible, nay, formerly prospective success of the present enemies of our nation and the ideologies actuating them.

Early in the emergency a Reception Center Chaplain reported that the most frequent questions asked by inductees were: "Does the nation have the right to force me to take this training?" and, "Why should I be here?"

In view of the basic military policy of our nation throughout its history, in reference to service in the militia, such an attitude reveals a failure of family, school, and church to properly instruct our youth, certainly a definite proportion thereof, in the basic responsibilities of citizenship. It appears to the writer that during the previous training of the present generation of young adults and youth the agencies mentioned above have unduly emphasized possible deficiencies of our system of government and did not properly emphasize its fundamental excellencies. With pride and confidence the statement is made it now appears to the writer that since Pearl Harbor the soldiers inducted into the Service have no doubt, either as to the desirability or the necessity of defending our freedom, or as to the price to be paid—death if need be, in order that such freedom may be preserved for those dear to them. Before the unhesitating and willing gallantry of the soldier of our present army, demonstrated in the jungles of Bataan and Guadalcanal, we should bow in humble and grateful thanksgiving, asking God's forgiveness, if need be, if through any past act or word of ours they came confused and psychologically unprepared to this crisis in our national life, in which we depend upon them for our salvation. To the chaplain comes the extraordinary privilege of interpreting to these potential saviors of our nation how the high qualities of true citizenship and sound morality may be transmitted into military virtue

and effective military action. He is the teacher and guide who will be able to help the soldier retain the moral standards, the proper appreciation of moral values, and the true perspective of citizenship needed to bring him properly prepared for the task of resuming his civilian responsibilities with a deeper and more intelligent conception of what true citizenship is and the price with which it must be bought.

Many believe that after we have won this war, serious changes—economic, social, and political, will occur in our nation and in the world. In whatever degree such changes may take place, it is undeniable that the men who win this war will have an increasingly dominant role in shaping them. Their attitudes will have been fused in the forge of their war experience and shaped by the convictions derived therefrom. No greater task can come to a minister, who is also a patriot, than to have some part in the fashioning of the convictions of men who are to fashion what we hope and pray will be a better nation and world.

The second opportunity, one which should bring calm ecstasy to the true man of God, is to be in truth God's Ambassador to men who are willing to endure even to death that their nation and their loved ones might live as they would have them live in freedom and security. The chaplain brings the church to the soldier. Whatever joy, inspiration, conviction, consolation, faith, and hope the church through instruction and training has given to the soldier is nourished in his privation and danger through the ministration of the devoted chaplain. His presence in camp and on battlefield is incontrovertible evidence that the church lovingly and devotedly follows him with its ministry, willing to match sacrifice with his sacrifice, as well as to offer its concern and prayers. The consecrated chaplain is the surest guarantee the church can have for the preservation of the soldier's confidence in the church as an organization, which ministers to men under all conditions of their moral life, and as an integral part of the nation's life. It will be a

dark day for the church and for our nation, if the American soldier comes out of this conflict with the conviction that while he fought to preserve moral and spiritual values for humanity the church was inactive or indifferent to the moral worth of the struggle itself or to his sacrifice of time, energy, and possibly health and career. Should this occur, we might win this war so far as the economic and political issues are concerned but we may well lose it so far as concerns the conservation of our spiritual life. If so, Christianity will be the victim and not the victor. The chaplain who, as a faithful servant of God, ministers to the soldier is, I believe, as profitable a servant of his church as any other of its servants. Possibly time may reveal him to be the most profitable.

There are remarkable evidences of a profound interest in religion among the soldiers of our army. Chaplains tell of having more conversions than they had in civil life. To the joy of the chaplain in nurturing the faith of those who are in the fold of the church is added the ecstasy of seeing many souls born into the Kingdom. After this war is ended many of them will return as true and faithful servants bringing ten or four talents for their Master's approval. By their labors will the church be strengthened and enlarged.

In addition, because the chaplain ministers, regardless of creed or sect, to men, who in common danger, common sacrifice, and mutual dependence have learned to trust and respect one another, regardless of their religious beliefs, he is in a position to render a distinctive service in the further development of ecumenical Christian fellowship. One may pray with hope and expectancy that from the united effort of all our people, with that of our allies in this conflict, there may come to all a deeper understanding of our varying religious beliefs and motivations, a surer confidence in the others' moral integrity and a more inclusive charity to all men. Should this be the rich treasure which the Army chaplain brings to the nation, the Church, to humanity, and to God, the Father of all men, thrice blessed is He.