

AMEN NEWS

American Military Evangelizing Nations

AMEN Team News

We welcome **Ray Deck (U.S. Air Force)** to the team as Key Man at Aviano Air Base, Italy. He will be serving the congregation that meets there on base.

LT Katharine Pardew (U.S. Navy) was promoted to Lieutenant! AMEN would like to congratulate her on this outstanding achievement! She serves as Key Woman at Rota Naval Base, Spain.

Congratulations to **COL Shane R. Reeves (U.S. Army)** on his promotion to the rank of Colonel! He and a large group from the West Point church, where he serves as Key Man, traveled to Albany, NY on Veteran's Day. They led a worship service for the Clifton Park church of Christ. He reports it was a rich time of fellowship with the brethren there, especially for the cadets to join with other Christians in the area and build community. Shane's highlight of the Fall season however, was the baptism of **Cadet Joe Cilenti** which caused great celebration in the church. Welcome to our new brother in Christ!

Connecting with our Military - Can the Church do Better?

No one could ever accuse the Apostle Paul of being a spiritual lightweight, especially when it came to the integrity of the Christian community. On one hand, he could demonstrate the gentleness and patience of a doting parent as in 1 Thessalonians 2:7; but when needed he could also be direct, hard hitting and protective of the believer's fellowship as seen throughout 1 Corinthians. Christian fellowship for Paul is a major expression of the grace procured by Jesus' sacrifice, Ephesians 2:11-22. Anything threatening that fellowship must be dealt with quickly and severely. That is shown in 1 Corinthians 5:1-8 regarding a brother involved in a sin that would astound even the pagans. Paul's response to the apathy is worth reviewing. First, he tells the brethren to come together, then to know he is with them spiritually if not physically, and to rest assured the power of the Lord is present with them. With this they are to hand the offender over to Satan in hopes of redeeming his soul, 1 Corinthians 5:4-5. What I find in this is the vital importance of connection, what the New Testament writers would call "koinonia" or community. Terrible things happen when we lose connection!

"Anything threatening that fellowship must be dealt with quickly and severely"

AMEN's focus is on the integrity of the Christian community for believers serving in the military. Our brothers and sisters in uniform need connection with a local church family but it is not as simple as it sounds. Some falsely believe all one needs is to pick up a directory (Cont. pg. 2)

Team News (cont.)

We welcome **Aaron Haygood** of the Burkburnett church of Christ. He will serve as Key Man for Sheppard AFB in Wichita Falls, Texas.

Other Outreach News

Paul Fisher of the Waynesville church of Christ reports on the worship service @ Fort Leonard Wood in the North Iowa Chapel. This congregation has been in place since the 1950's. They celebrated several baptisms this year with 3 soldiers being baptized the last weekend in November! They have given 2k Bibles to soldiers in their mission to support our military men & women. Members come from all around the area and are very active in worship services. Many see it as a highlight of their week.

Ed Linebaugh, US Army (Ret) of M.O.R.E (Military Outreach & Encouragement) – Ed spent three weeks in Belgium, Germany, Holland, and Poland strengthening the Lord's church. Visiting multiple Chaplain's offices at U.S. military installations to inform them of the ministry's program to send teachers around the world to help churches of Christ. While in Germany he also attended the Euro American Family Retreat in Rothenburg, and spoke at the Kaiserslautern congregation.

If you are interested in becoming a **Key Man/Woman** for AMEN please email us at:

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or google a local church and the service-member can connect. Not so! This view ignores the cultural distinctions of military life shaping the warrior and his or her family. I was reading a Facebook blog of Air Force veterans describing what it was like to transition to civilian life. Many had gone through multiple divorces, spiraled into alcohol abuse, waded through depression, and fought off suicidal impulses. At issue was their ability to "fit back into civilian life" and missing the connections they had within the military community. Some had grappled with this lack of connection for decades, and combat veterans had even more intense experiences with which to cope. The veterans admitted the VA helped and peer to peer support was of great value. No one ever mentioned the church or using spiritual resources. Yet they sit in our pews week after week burying their experiences deep inside. Most preachers, ignorant of military culture, often have little to say to address the world in which our military and veterans live. The justification of war, frequent deployments, family separation, fear of becoming a casualty, loneliness, exposure to trauma and numerous other issues go unanswered in church lessons. To be sure the majority of military members are not handicapped by post-traumatic stress, they adjust quite well. They live stable and productive lives raising their families and serving God. The challenge for the Church, however, is to speak to these areas of military life as the means to connect our servicemen and women to the family of God. The Apostle Paul would have it no other way!

About AMEN News

AMEN News is published quarterly for members of the church of Christ serving in the U.S. Armed Forces and for those interested in military ministry. AMEN is a missionary effort of the Manchester Church of Christ, Manchester CT.

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