

Military might is the pride of a nation. Many nations often put their armed forces on display in the form of grand parades, as has been seen in film footage from China, the former Soviet Union, Korea, and many others. The United States' military, too, has a proud tradition. America claims the status of "super-power" primarily because of its military strength.

The formation and maintenance of the armed forces was one of primary roles as laid out in the U.S. Constitution, as well as a primary purpose for American tax dollars. Article 1 Section 8 of the Constitution states, "The Congress shall have Power To lay and collect Taxes, Duties, Imposts and Excises, to pay the Debts and provide for the common Defence and general Welfare of the United States ... To raise and support Armies ... To provide and maintain a Navy; To make Rules for the Government and Regulation of the land and naval Forces; To provide for calling forth the Militia to execute the Laws of the Union, suppress Insurrections and repel Invasions; To provide for organizing, arming, and disciplining the Militia, and for governing such Part of them as may be employed in the Service of the United States, reserving to the States respectively, the Appointment of the Officers, and the Authority of training the Militia according to the discipline prescribed by Congress..."

At the time of the formation of the United States of America, two great super-powers ruled large portions of the world both on land and sea: Great Britain and Spain. Their military prowess, their tactics, and their dominance were indisputable. The founders knew that a strong army and a strong navy would be absolutely necessary for this new country's preservation. Of course, no constitutional provision was made for an air force, because that technology could not even be imagined.

As the 20th century began, the Wright brothers made the first controlled, powered and sustained heavier-than-air human flight, and the militaries of the world at once set forth to add this new, third dimension to warfare.

By World War I, military use of aircraft was emerging as a viable and effective form of warfare, and the great potential was just beginning to be seen. Though still in its infancy, as it were, air warfare in World War I saw the use of Zeppelins and airplanes, and introduced the art of dog fighting, of which the legendary exploits of Manfred von Richthofen, the German flying ace better known as the Red Baron, are indelibly inked into the pages of history.

King David's 3-D Army

Written by David McNabb

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Over the past century, military air technology, while not replacing the need for a strong army and navy, has proven to be an equally essential dimension in modern warfare.

The Scriptures are full of mighty military leaders. Great men and women like Abraham, Joshua, Gideon, and Deborah led their forces to great military victories. One such hero was David, the son of Jesse.

As a young man, he tended the flocks of his father, and defended the sheep against threats, killing both a lion and a bear to protect the sheep in his charge. When he was sent by his father to visit his brothers who were serving in the army, he found the army of Israel cowering in fear before the champion of the Philistine army: Goliath of Gath. He volunteered to answer the enemy's challenge, and confront him on the battlefield. "And David said unto Saul, Thy servant kept his father's sheep, and there came a lion, and a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock: And I went out after him, and smote him, and delivered it out of his mouth: and when he arose against me, I caught him by his beard, and smote him, and slew him. Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear: and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he hath defied the armies of the living God. David said moreover, The LORD that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine" (1 Sam. 17:34-37).

When David stood before the giant, he told him, "This day will the LORD deliver thee into mine hand; and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee; and I will give the carcasses of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth; that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel. And all this assembly shall know that the LORD saveth not with sword and spear: for the battle is the LORD'S, and he will give you into our hands" (1 Sam. 17:46-47).

God gave David and the army of Israel the victory that day as a result of David's attitude. The women of Israel sang songs of his exploits, and he became a famous general. But his fame led to Saul's distrust of him, and made him a virtual enemy of the state. For the remainder of Saul's life, David was forced to hide from Saul, and defend himself against the constant attempts to take his life.

This rift between Saul, the king of Israel, and David, anointed to be king by Samuel after Saul was rejected by God, caused the people of Israel to choose sides. It was time for David to prepare himself to lay hold on his own prophetic destiny.

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In 1 Samuel 22, David retreated to the cave Adullam, where his brothers, proven soldiers, joined him. That is good, because any general knows that he needs to surround himself with experience and strength. Saul, commanding the full force of the Israelite army, had made himself David's enemy. David needed to amass his own three-dimensional army. David, however, knew that the battle was not his, but the Lord's, and God's idea of a formidable fighting force may defy conventional wisdom.

So, what was the 3-D army that David raised, and which he would lead to victory after victory, and, ultimately, to the throne of the kingdom of God? "David therefore departed thence, and escaped to the cave Adullam: and when his brethren and all his father's house heard it, they went down thither to him. And every one that was in distress, and every one that was in debt, and every one that was discontented, gathered themselves unto him; and he became a captain over them: and there were with him about four hundred men" (1 Sam. 22:1-2).

David was looking for a few good men. Who answered his call? Those that were in **distress**, in

debt

, and

discontented

! While it does not sound like what we might call "Israel's finest," it was what God provided to the man after his own heart. Why? Because David, alone, would care for these outcasts of Israel as he had for his father's flocks. David did not reject or refuse this rag-tag bunch, but embraced them and gave them a home, a job, and a hope. And why not? It is not by might, nor by power, but by the Spirit that the enemies of God stumble before the Lord's host!

When Jesus, the son of David, came, who was drawn to His message? Was it the religious champions of His day, the Pharisees and the Sadducees? No. It was the distressed, discontented and indebted outcasts of the society. It was the blind, the lame, the deaf and the dumb. It was those possessed with unclean spirits. It was the poor and the sinner.

God never changes. James said, "Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?" (James 2:5).

Today, God is again preparing a people for His name. Again, God is raising up an army of laborers in His field. You can turn on the television or listen to the radio, and see and hear

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today's great champions of Christianity. But shall not this same Lord, who chose the 3-D army of David over the host of Saul, and who came to preach to the outcasts as recorded by the Gospel writers, do the same in our day?

I say unto you, "YES!" The words of Jesus ring true throughout the ages, "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight. All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him. Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11:25-28). "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" (John 6:37).

Let us not, then, look for God's champions through the eyes of man, but through the eyes of God, who regardeth not the rich more than the poor, for they are all the work of His hands. Amen.