

Maybe Military Should Organize Bake Sales, Not Schools

The grocery stores' circulars in the newspaper caught my attention one recent slow morning in mid-August.

I began to wonder how things might be different if certain fortunes were reversed. Instead of "back-to-school," it's "back-to-basic-training" discount offers.

Imagine, if you will:

- At Ingles, earn \$1,000 for mops for the Navy, boots for the Army, when you use your Advantage Card. And keep your eyes out for our "Box Tops for Top Guns" special deals to ensure cockpit decal maintenance.
- Harris Teeter's brand purchases maintain a steady supply of camouflage face grease for our special forces. Don't forget to relink for special deals at Lockheed Martin. Soldiers count!
- Bi-Lo offers tools for troops. Every one of the more than 800 U.S. military bases outside the U.S. have benefited from this unique program, netting more than \$9 million in free equipment for every branch of the service.

Meanwhile, back in Washington, D.C., these headlines from major media outlets:

- Fox News: "Whining base commanders grouching again about the amount of personal money they have to spend decorating barracks."

- NBC: “Congressional leaders unable to round up votes necessary to defeat another multimillion-dollar ‘supplemental’ military appropriation. The Speaker of the House claims Department of Defense budget already ‘bloated’ with unnecessary pork.”
- ABC: “Senate Health, Education and Labor Committee hearings underway for alleged corruption in ‘no-bid’ contracts to fulfill ‘No Soldier Left Behind’ spending.”
- CBS: “Pentagon brass say ‘bake sales no way to adequately fund quality national defense.’”
- Associated Press: “Investigative reporter uncovers widespread complaints by Marine officers that merit pay is tied to low combat injury reports and exaggerated readiness testing.”

Written with thanksgiving for the teachers and educational administrators who know that knowledge is more than information, that character is not subject to cost analysis and that learning potential exceeds the boundaries of test results.

A few “fast facts”:

- “The emotional stress teachers are dealing with seems to be at an all-time high. In fact, a national survey shows that 58 percent of classroom teachers describe their mental health as ‘not good.’ And another survey confirms that nearly two-thirds feel their jobs are ‘always’ or ‘often’ stressful – roughly double the rates of stress experienced by the general workforce,” said Elizabeth Mulvahill in her article, [“Why Teachers Quit.”](#)
- “Almost a quarter of the teachers who have qualified since 2011 have already left the profession, according to official figures that have prompted further concerns about the pressures on the profession. Of those who qualified in 2011 alone, 31% had quit within five years of

becoming teachers, the figures show,” [reported](#) Michael Savage, policy editor for The Guardian.

- A 2018 Gallup poll revealed “that almost half of teachers (48%) in the U.S. say they are actively looking for a different job now or watching for opportunities,” [noted](#) Shane McFeely, a researcher at Gallup.
- “Public School Teachers Quitting at Record Rate: ‘I Had to Quit for My Sanity,’” a Newsweek headline [declared](#), while The New York Times [stated](#), “94 Percent of U.S. Teachers Spend Their Own Money on School Supplies, Survey Finds.”

Don’t just thank a teacher. Argue for a different definition of national security.