“‘You’re in the Army Now’”(1980)[1]

David M. Kennedy

Shortly after the declaration of war on April 6, 1917, Major Palmer E. Pierce, an aide to Secretary of War Baker, settled uncomfortably into a chair under the inquisitorial gaze of the Senate Finance Committee. Before the Senators lay a bulky sheaf of documents, presenting in fine detail how the War Department anticipated spending the three-billion-dollar appropriation it was requesting. What, inquired Chairman Thomas S. Martin of Virginia, were the principal items in this unprecedentedly vast and confusing budget? Major Pierce began to recite. “Clothing, cots, camps, food, pay....And we may have to have an army in France.”

“Good Lord!” interjected Martin. “You’re not going to send soldiers over there, are you?”

Martin had reason to be startled. With other Americans he was still absorbing the President’s unexpected request for an army to be raised by conscription, a radical departure from the traditional reliance on volunteering, and from Wilson’s own previously expressed position. Now came the suggestion that the conscript army was to be sent overseas——a yet more drastic step that few, whether civilian or strategist, had seriously contemplated. Those two questions——how to bring a large military force into being and how best to use it, once created——troubled the public and policy-makers alike in the spring of 1917.

On the first issue the battle lines had long been drawn. Since at least 1914 Americans had hotly debated the merits and demerits of universal military training, or UMT. Some advocates of that policy, especially military men, saw it simply as a means to strengthen the nation’s armed forces in an increasingly unsafe world. But to that rather straight-forward proposition many proponents had added a host of other arguments about the allegedly salubrious social effects of military training: it would Americanize the immigrant, nurture the values of efficiency and “service,” and overcome class antagonisms. In time those latter arguments came to dominate the discussion, and the debate on UMT became a debate about the fundamental character of American society, a debate about the meaning of equality and freedom, democracy and individualism, in the modern world. “Universal training,” George Creel exclaimed, “will jumble the boys of America all together, shoulder to shoulder, smashing all the petty class distinctions that now divide, and prompting a brand of real democracy. Look at Switzerland! Look at France!” France, indeed, ever more heavily invested with sentiment and symbol in the American mind, inspired many enthusiasts for UMT. “In France,” wrote playwright Augustus Thomas, “I saw a much finer democracy than our own...a finer intercourse between the different social stations...fraternal compliance without mockery or condescension. And after a while I came to learn that that relationship had been acquired by men of those classes working in fine equality in their military training.”

But others saw not *égalité et fraternité* in the proposals for universal service, but a “heresy——Prussian to the core——that the State is a kind of overlord which should compel its citizens, instead of inducing them willingly to give.” Military service, said the opponents of

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[1] David M. Kennedy, “‘You’re in the Army Now’,” Ch.3 from *Over Here: The First World War and American Society* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 144-190.

UMT, did not encourage democracy and individual autonomy, but taught lessons of subordination, and slavish deference to authority. Indeed, when UMT advocates talked, as one typically did, of "Groton and St. Mark's boys" and "boys from the slums of Philadelphia and New York" each developing "a different attitude toward the other class," in the intimacy of their shared pup tents, they seemed in fact to offer military service not as a means to achieve equality but as a substitute for it, a way to reconcile the different social orders to the enduring fact of their difference." It was no accident, said the opponents, that the principal organizations spreading the UMT gospel were dominated by the wealthy and the privileged. The National Security League, critics accurately charged, was funded by some of the nation's most powerful industrialists. And the Military Training Camps Association, along with the League the most prominent pro-UMT organization, was notoriously an upper-class affair. It had grown from the so-called Plattsburg Camps (named for the first encampment at Plattsburg, New York, in 1915), summer séances of well-to-do businessmen and college boys training at their own expense to be military officers.

"Make no mistake about it," said Amos Pinchot, indefatigable foe of compulsory service. "Conscription is a great commercial policy; a carefully devised weapon that the exploiters are forging for their own protection at home, and in the interest of American financial imperialism abroad....[B]ack of the cry that America must have compulsory service or perish, is a clearly thought-out and heavily backed project to mould the United States into an efficient, orderly nation, economically and politically controlled by those who know what is good for the people. In this country so ordered and so governed, there will be no strikes, no surly revolt against authority, and no popular discontent. In it, the lamb will lie down in peace with the lion, and he will lie down right where the lion tells him to....This, if we cut through the patriotic pretext and flag-waving propaganda, is the real vision of the conscriptionist."

Both President Wilson and Secretary of War Baker had shown decided coolness toward the idea of conscription. Baker owed his very office to Wilson's rejection in 1916 of the pro-conscription views of the previous Secretary of War, Lindley Garrison. As in so many other matters of policy, Wilson only reluctantly modified the voluntaristic premises that always informed his thinking. Though be might not regard conscription as a capitalist plot, the President shared the feeling that compulsory military service somehow violated what Pinchot called the "American ideal," that it debauched sacred tradition and forced America toward the hated "old European system" of coercion and regimentation. As late as February 1917, both Wilson and Baker had affirmed their faith in the volunteer system, and refused to endorse proposals for universal training. Yet in the same month they had authorized the drafting of a conscription bill, and in May the Selective Service System went into operation.

Several considerations prompted this abrupt reversal. At first, Wilson may have considered such a bill no reversal at all, but simply a precautionary measure to equip him with stand-by powers if volunteering failed to bring the armed forces up to desired strength. The evidence also suggests that a cardinal purpose of the conscription legislation as originally conceived was not to press millions of men into military service but to effect an overall manpower policy. Here England offered an especially compelling example. The British had refused until 1916 to resort to the draft. In the first two years of the war they had seen their best-educated and most talented young men rush willy-nilly to the colors and as quickly and haphazardly die in the mud of Flanders. That non-policy wrought a terrible loss of leadership cadres that seriously crippled the British military effort (and, as some observers were later to argue, permanently deprived postwar British society of adequate political leadership). Britain had also felt the massive disruption of economic production, as skilled and unskilled, needed and unneeded, replaceable and irreplaceable workers all volunteered indiscriminately, leaving yawning breaches in the industrial lines on the home front.

The same casual waste menaced the impending American war effort. Already the greatest enthusiasts for American entry were to be found among the educated classes, the Plattsburgers and college men thought to be best fitted for command. At Princeton University a mass meeting had to be convoked in late March 1917 to restrain undergraduates from flocking to the recruiting stations. Moreover, random volunteering would only exacerbate the already disruptive effect on industry of rapid turnover. There were “many forms of patriotic service,” said the President and “the military part of the service was by no means the only part, and perhaps, all things considered, not the most vital part. Our object is a mobilization of all the productive and active forces of the nation and their development to the highest point of co-operation and efficiency....The volunteer system does not do this. When men choose themselves, they sometimes choose without due regard to their other responsibilities. Men may come from the farms or from the mines or from the factories or centers of business who ought not to come but ought to stand back of the armies in the field.” The idea of the draft, Wilson told another correspondent, “is not only the drawing of men into the military service of the Government, but the virtual assigning of men to the necessary labor of the country. Its central idea was to disturb the industrial and social structure of the country just as little as possible.” Such remarks suggested that in the early spring Of 1917 the President did not contemplate the draft primarily as a device to raise a huge army and field it in France. Conscription was to serve primarily as a way to keep the right men in the right jobs at home.

But, despite the persuasive logic of those considerations, had it not been for certain political developments, the administration might well have postponed resorting to conscription. Anti-draft sentiment was strong in Congress, especially among Representatives from the South and West who comprised the bulk of the Democratic majority. Many Democratic leaders in the House noisily opposed the Administration’s proposed draft legislation. On April 18 the House Military Affairs Committee reported out a military manpower bill that rejected conscription in favor of volunteering by a 13-8 vote. Wilson might have accepted a compromise that permitted at least an interim trial to the volunteer system, had not his arch-rival Theodore Roosevelt been busily establishing himself, with strong Republican backing, as the country’s most visibly eligible volunteer. Attended by prodigious publicity, Colonel Roosevelt and his old comrade General Leonard Wood had since early February been organizing a volunteer division——later expanded to a corps——that they envisioned as a kind of showcase specimen of American virility. Some staff positions they intended to offer to scions of the French nobility, as a gesture of respect for the memory of Lafayette. But most of the officers——indeed most of the enlisted men——would be Ivy Leaguers. Places of special distinction were reserved for the descendants of prominent Civil War generals. There would be a German-American regiment and a black regiment (officered by whites). This brave all-American band, with the old Rough Rider at its head, would swiftly move into the trenches, where its vigor and dash would instantly bolster the French and terrorize the Hun.

The scheme was as politically dangerous to Wilson as it was militarily daft. In all probability, the aging Colonel and his ill-trained hodge-podge of glory-seekers would have blustered about in France, and, if the fates were not too cruel, retired with minimum harm done to the Allied cause and only a few lives squandered. Yet there was also a chance that Roosevelt might contrive to make this martial buffoonery appear to be the stuff of genuine heroism and adventure——a demonstration of patriotic success which Republicans could be expected to use to bludgeon the Democratic administration. Accordingly, Wilson determined to nullify the possibility that Roosevelt might lead a volunteer division to France by largely foreclosing all forms of volunteering. At the President's urging, congressional Democrats beat back a Republican amendment to the Selective Service bill that would have instructed Wilson to give Roosevelt an independent command. "If Roosevelt or any other Pied Piper can whistle 25,000 fanatics after him, for Heaven's sake give him the chance," Representative Augustus Gardner pleaded in vain. After weeks of wrangling, the legislators agreed on a provision that merely permitted, but did not require, the President to accept Roosevelt's offer. Wilson lost no time in declining. "This is not the time," be announced on signing the Selective Service Act into law on May 18, "for any action not calculated to contribute to the immediate success of the war. The business now in hand is undramatic, practical, and of scientific definiteness and precision."

The final legislation allowed for volunteering only in the Regular Army and Navy and in the National Guard, but not in the new "National Army," where the great bulk of men (77 percent of the eventual wartime total) would be required. The law thus had the additional merit, in the administration's eyes, of containing the size of the several states' militias, which were thought to be heavily Republican in character, their "roots firmly planted," said the *New York Times*, "in the partisan organization of the States."

But though the new army was now clearly to be raised by conscription and subject to direct federal control, the Selective Service System was not without elements of voluntarism and localism. The first order of business was to compile a national roster of eligible men in the designated age-group between 21 and 30. The government quickly decided that the only expedient way to proceed was somehow to induce the men to come forward and register themselves. It was not at all certain that this scheme would work. Memories of Civil War draft riots haunted the administration; Senator James Reed of Missouri starkly predicted that the streets of America would run red with blood on registration day, June 5. "I am exceedingly anxious," Newton D. Baker wrote the President, "to have the registration and selection by draft conducted under such circumstances as to create a strong patriotic feeling and relieve as far as possible the prejudice which remains to some extent in the popular mind against the draft by reason of Civil War memories. With this end in view, I am using a vast number of agencies throughout the country to make the day of registration a festival and patriotic occasion." Governors, mayors, chambers of commerce, and state councils of defense joined in concerted patriotic incantation to urge young men to the registration places on June 5. Wilson himself struck the keynote of this gigantic propaganda exercise when he proclaimed, somewhat disingenuously, that the draft was not really a draft at all, but a "selection from a nation which has volunteered in mass." But just to be sure that this mass volunteering went smoothly, the President requested every man, whether he is himself to be registered or not, to see to it that the name of every male person of the designated ages is written on these lists of honor."

The administration, in thus launching the Selective Service System amid contrived hoopla and presidential appeals for citizen vigilance over eligible registrants, had vitiated one of the System's supposedly premier virtues. Many persons had favored conscription because they feared that reliance on volunteers would necessitate the dangerous whipping up of patriotic emotion. Coaxing millions of men voluntarily into the armed services, Walter Lippmann cautioned the President, would surely require "a newspaper campaign of manufactured hatred that would disturb...the morale of the nation." Reluctantly, Lippmann concluded that conscription was "the only orderly and quiet way to accomplish what may be the necessary result." Similarly, the Boston banking house of Lee, Higginson and Co. felt that volunteers would come forward only if the government and the press concocted an unjustified sense of crisis. The country, the bankers urged, "cannot be thus wrought up without a grave and wholly unwarranted disturbance of business. Now that is exactly what we ought to avoid. Calmness, resolution and the application of common sense and business prudence, rather than intense emotion, are what is going to win this war." Wilson had expressed such sentiments himself when he rebuked the flamboyant Roosevelt in favor of a draft that would be "undramatic, practical, and...scientific."

But the purposefully dramatic cultivation of intense emotion became nevertheless a cardinal method in the operation of the military draft, as did official encouragement of vigilante activity aimed at non-registrants and "slackers." Secretary of War Baker, like so many of his colleagues in the administration, tended to compensate for his reluctance to exercise formal authority by urging the vigorous excitement of public opinion. Nor was the contrived festival atmosphere of registration day the Secretary's only concession to that characteristic wartime practice. Like McAdoo at the Treasury, Baker and his Selective Service administrator, Provost Marshal General Enoch H. Crowder, were careful students of the American Civil War. The Union Army's experiment with the draft, they knew, had been a disaster, providing fewer than 6 percent of Union troops and provoking wide and deep resentment of the inequitable system of exemptions and often arbitrary and high-handed enforcement. The worst feature of the Civil War draft, Crowder concluded, was its administration by military officers, a policy that "bared the teeth of the Federal Government in every home within the loyal states." So fierce had been the antagonism toward those uniformed officials that nearly a hundred of them had been killed or wounded, and vicious rioting, particularly by the Irish in New York City, had attended the military enforcement of the draft.

The lesson was not lost on Baker, who insisted that the World War I draft be administered locally, by civilians. The country thereby avoided the unpleasant scene, as the chairman of the Senate Committee on Military Affairs put it, of "a board, sitting up there on a platform, we'll say, composed of five or seven captains and majors and lieutenant colonels, deciding who should fight for our country." Instead, Crowder explained, the setting up of local boards "put the administration of the draft into the bands of friends and neighbors of the men to be affected....[I]t was the enunciation of the true democratic doctrine of local self-government." The boards had political utility, too, Crowder shrewdly noted, as "they became the buffers between the individual citizen and the Federal Government, and thus they attracted and diverted, like local grounding wires in an electric coil, such resentment or discontent as might have proved a serious obstacle to war measures, had it been focussed on the central authorities. Its diversion and grounding at 5000 local points dissipated its force, and enabled the central war machine to function smoothly without the disturbance that might have been caused by the concentrated total of dissatisfaction." Most significantly, creation of the local boards constituted a brilliant public relations stroke, deepening the illusion of willing individual service and community control that Wilson had so fetchingly conjured when he spoke of the nation volunteering "in mass." Crowder helped to perpetuate that appealing fiction in a postwar assessment of the Selective Service System: "Conscription in America was not...drafting of the unwilling," he wrote, echoing Wilson. "The citizens themselves had willingly come forward and pledged their service."

This insistence that the draft was in reality a voluntary affair should not be dismissed as willful buncombe, though the government was assuredly not above a little pious flummery to gain the confidence of a public whose acceptance of conscription was in considerable doubt. But Wilson and Crowder, when they dwelt affectionately on the term "service," were engaged in something far more significant than a transparent publicity ruse to sell the draft. Few words were so widely bruited in American society in the World War I era as "service," and it is a matter of some importance that the term was incorporated into the official title of the draft agency. "Service" was a kind of rhetorical vessel into which were being poured the often contradictory emotional and political impulses of the day. "The spirit of service," said Crowder, was the "spirit of America...the yearning of its inner consciousness. Everywhere Americans agreed that a commitment to "service" was an attribute of the national soul that the war had quickened. Social worker Felix Adler observed that the conflict had generated a "high wave of service," and sometime socialist A. M. Simons professed to see the drive for social service" displacing the profit motive as the mainspring of American life. "The ideal of service," intoned Herbert Hoover, was a "great spiritual force poured out by our people as never before in the history of the world....Do we not refer to our veterans as service men? Do not our merchants and businessmen pride themselves in something of service given beyond the price of their goods?" The "rising vision of service," Hoover concluded, was the "social force that above all others has advanced sharply during these past years of suffering...service to those with whom we come in contact, service to the nation, and service to the world itself."

A word so reverently repeated had obviously been heavily freighted with meaning. Some of that meaning derived from the quite natural wish of Americans, like all peoples, to think well of themselves——especially to think of themselves as an exceptionally altruistic nation. But to a still greater extent, the wide currency of the term "service" reflected the particular dilemmas of the historical phase through which American society was then passing. Men like Wilson and Crowder and Hoover and many more in their generation, including *New Republic* editors Herbert Croly and Walter Lippmann, were acutely aware that they were negotiating a passage between individualistic and collective eras. In his famous book of 1909, *The Promise of American Life*, Croly had argued that the central problem of the age was somehow to substitute an ethos of cooperative nationalism for the obsolescent credo of narrow self-interest——without sacrificing the positive aspects of individualism. Croly therefore called for the application of "Hamiltonian means to Jeffersonian ends," a phrase that neatly bespoke the paradoxical character of the problem that absorbed him. So was "service" a fittingly ambivalent term, at once connoting the autonomy of the individual will and the obligation of the individual to serve a sphere wider than his own. For men deeply committed to individual freedom, but increasingly forced to recognize the necessity of cooperative endeavor, "service was a marvelously reconciling concept, seeming to stand midway between two equally insistent and apparently incompatible value systems. Small wonder, therefore, that the word crept into the discourse of the day whenever those systems threatened to conflict. In this perspective, calling the draft Selective Service and insisting on its voluntary character were not simply propaganda gimmicks. They vividly signified that the society was plagued by painful ideological tensions, made still more acute by the demands of the war.

For all its ambiguity——perhaps because of that very ambiguity——the administration's approach to the distasteful business of military impressment was largely successful. Nearly ten million men presented themselves at their local polling places to be registered on June 5, and the day, somewhat to Secretary Baker's amazement, went by without serious incident. With an almost audible sigh of relief, Baker wrote to a friend on June 9 that "the registration was really a very remarkable demonstration." He took special satisfaction from the fact that Senator Reed's sanguinary predictions had not come true. Then at 10:00 A.M. on July 20, a blindfolded Baker drew the first draft number from a huge glass bowl in a ceremony at the Senate Office Building. College student tellers drew more numbers throughout the afternoon and evening, until by two the following morning a national "order-of-call" list had been compiled and telegraphed to local boards throughout the country. By September, the hastily thrown-up camps began to receive the first draftees, and Baker continued to speak of the system's smooth operation with a certain air of wonderment. When the Assistant District Attorney of New York wired that New Yorkers were supporting the draft with "an enthusiasm never anticipated six weeks ago," and that "the system is working to perfection," Baker happily passed the word along to the President, with the still partly incredulous notation that some initial feeling against the draft "has disappeared apparently."

Despite Baker's somewhat surprised self-congratulations, the Selective Service System was not trouble-free. Some of the trouble came from Baker's colleagues in the highest circles of government. Secretary McAdoo, for example, groused that his "friends" were inadequately represented on the draft boards in New York state. Later, wearing the hat of Railroad Administrator, McAdoo harried Baker for blanket deferments for railroad employees. Fuel Administrator Harry Garfield and Food Administrator Herbert Hoover pushed similar claims for men working in the sectors under their control. Hoover protested "the operation of the draft law against men who may be styled 'key men' in agriculture, that is, men of the foreman, manager and ownership type." Such men, said Hoover, "have too much patriotism to themselves make application for exemption," and should be exempted as a class. General Crowder made short work of that argument. "Our experience," he told Baker, "is certainly not that patriotic scruples are very materially decreasing claims for exemption." Accepting Hoover's suggestion, he dryly observed, would simply mean that "we should have a great many new owners of very small agricultural enterprises."

A still greater source of difficulty lay precisely in the institution of the local boards, Baker's prize contrivance. Intended to be sensitively responsive to local conditions, they were also susceptible to local political pressures, and not immune to local prejudices. Many aggrieved Democrats, including the President, complained to Baker that Republican governors were abusing their appointment power by placing party hacks on the exemption boards. Republican Governor Martin G. Brumbaugh of Pennsylvania was the most fiercely resented, as he seemed to be pursuing a deliberate policy of fastening Republican-dominated boards on all the state’s most loyally Democratic counties. And in Fulton County, Georgia, a board proved so flagrantly discriminatory——it exempted 526 of 815 whites, and only 6 Of 202 blacks——that its members had to be removed.

If such instances of willfully unjust administration of the draft were few, inequities inevitably arose from the poorly guided discretionary power of the boards, from the haste with which the original legislation had been drawn, and——most conspicuously——from the very character of American society. The law, for example, exempted men with dependents. Many boards construed that provision to grant deferments to virtually all married men, a practice that launched a nuptial boomlet in some communities. Other boards applied a much more rigorous definition of dependency, inquiring closely into the wife’s means of support, her employability, help available from relatives, and the family’s assets. Not surprisingly, this kind of prying into personal affairs often provoked resentment. And in the absence of a uniform national standard, the induction rate of married men varied throughout the several states from 6 to 38 percent. Senator Hiram Johnson (whose son-in-law was denied an exemption) was only one of many persons deeply offended at this snooping and arbitrariness. “The draft law,” he growled, “was being administered in such fashion as to make it unfair, unequal, partial, and discriminatory.”

Further problems stemmed from the quota system established in the original legislation, which provided that the draft calls should be proportionately levied from the several states on the basis of total population. But that provision ignored the presence in the draft-age population of two and a half million “non-declared” alien males——men without preliminary citizenship papers who were automatically exempted from military service. Howls of protest went up from the “native” residents in those localities where non-declarants were heavily concentrated. One New York draft board member complained that only about half the registrants in his district were declarants or citizens, and “this slightly more than 50% will have to furnish the quota for the entire number.” In Brooklyn, another board discovered that nearly a quarter of its registrants were non-declared Russian immigrants. “The major part practically defy us,” the board angrily reported, “while many of them shrug their shoulders, laugh at us and say, ‘What are you going to do about it?’” This situation was plainly intolerable to the board members. “While the flower of our neighborhood is being torn from their homes and loved ones to fight,” they raged, these “miserable specimens of humanity...remain smugly at home to reap the benefits of the life work of our young citizens.”

Those inequities in the draft were only the beginnings of the Army’s problems with the nation’s millions of immigrants. So polyglot were the American armed forces that some Europeans spoke deprecatingly of the “American Foreign Legion.” A condescending story of the day had it that when an officer at Camp Meade pronounced the roll of immigrant recruits, not a single man recognized his own name, but when the officer sneezed ten men stepped forward. The *Stars and Stripes*, the doughboys’ newspaper in France, reported that the AEF censors were required to scan letters penned by American troops in forty-nine different languages. By some estimates, nearly one draftee in five was foreign-born.

American society as a whole had not arrived by 1917 at any settled attitude toward its immigrant members, and it was scarcely surprising that the military authorities failed to formulate a consistent policy toward foreign-born soldiers during the war. At first the Army relegated non-English-speaking recruits, along with others deemed unfit for combat, to “depot brigades,” where they were assigned to menial chores in the various stateside camps. But many people saw military service as a means, at last, to effect “Americanization”; that, indeed, had been a principal argument put forward by the proponents of universal military training. Bowing to pressure from those sources, the Army eventually established “development battalions”—— special units for substandard but “remediable” recruits. There the men received instruction, usually from a YMCA volunteer, in the English language and American history and government. Recognizing the effectiveness of the Army’s Americanizing methods, the government in 1918 simplified naturalization procedures for men in military service.

But if the development battalions promoted a measure of ethnic integration, other pressures pushed the Army in the opposite direction, toward the formation of ethnically segregated units. At Camp Gordon, Georgia, Slavs and Italians were organized into two distinct companies, commanded by officers familiar with the relevant tongues and even graced by cooks competent in their respective cuisines. “It may rightly be claimed that such segregation of races into regiments, etc., does not make American citizens,” said a staff report, “and possibly this is true, but we are not in this war to make more American citizens, we are in to win the war.” Some foreign governments and “governments-in-exile” exerted more pressure in the direction of separatism when they requested permission to recruit their own nationals resident in the United States. Those efforts focused especially on the minority nationalities of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, technically enemy aliens, but eager to do battle against the Dual Monarchy for the sake of Polish or Yugoslavian or Czechoslovakian independence. Partly to preempt those requests, and recognizing the political impact of fielding “large, powerful, nationalistic units” against the ethnically fissured Austrian forces, Congress in July 1918 authorized the formation of a “Slavic Legion” in the U.S. Army. The swift ending of the war in November, however, cut that experiment short.

Toward black men the white military authorities displayed still greater uncertainty, a compound of fear and contempt. Much of the initial resistance to the draft legislation had come from anxious white Southerners frightened at the prospect of training blacks to arms. Senator James K. Vardaman, peerless racist from Mississippi, snarled that the conscription of blacks would put “arrogant strutting representatives of the black soldiery in every community.” “The average white person,” one black veteran accurately recalled, “whether buck private or general, didn’t want Negro soldiers.” Secretary Baker may have wanted black soldiers, but he bluntly stated that “there is no intention on the part of the War Department to undertake at this time to settle the so-called race question.” Hence the United States armed forces would continue to be, as they had always been, rigidly segregated along racial lines. But that policy, never officially questioned, posed particular problems for the huge conscript army the War Department was raising. At what level——company, regiment, division——should black troops be segregated? Where should they be trained? How should they be used? Should their officers be black? Baker and his staff found no answers to those questions in the first months of the war. When the four Regular Army and eight National Guard black units were quickly brought up to full strength by volunteers in April, all enlistment of blacks stopped. Further black volunteers were simply rejected, and conscription of blacks was postponed. Meanwhile, the War Department struggled to define its racial policy. Several options were debated: concentrating black draftees in two all-black Southern camps; stationing a single black regiment at each of the sixteen National Army cantonments; giving blacks preliminary training only at the eight camps in the North, then dispatching them quickly to France (where, said General Tasker Bliss, “we do not apprehend trouble arising from social differences”), for service as labor troops and stevedores.

As the Department contemplated those choices, its calculations were suddenly scrambled by the eruption of racial violence involving black troops stationed at Houston, Texas. Seasoned black Regulars of the 24th Infantry’s 3rd Battalion, insulted and harassed by the city’s Jim Crow laws, went on a rampage on the night of August 23 and shot to death seventeen white civilians. Southern politicians, seeing their worst forebodings bloodily fulfilled, exploded in wrath. The Texas congressional delegation begged “that all negro troops in Texas be removed at once and that they be kept out of Texas permanently.” Mississippi’s Senator John Sharp Williams was soon demanding “that colored troops be sent to Cuba for training.” After announcing that no black draftees would be called until the situation in Houston was cleared up, the War Department proceeded to mete out justice to the black troops that was both terrible and swift. The 3rd Battalion was disarmed and sent under arrest to New Mexico. Courts-martial were quickly convened to try over a hundred men. On December 8, thirteen troopers were condemned to death. Three days later, well before an appeal could even be got, under way, all thirteen were hanged.

The riot and the Army’s rapid retribution stunned the black community. Its leaders feared the War Department might now bow to Southern pressure and permanently suspend black enlistments. At the urging of Tuskegee Institute principal Robert R. Moton and prominent Northern philanthropist Julius Rosenwald, Secretary Baker called a conference on August 31 of “men interested in the Negro question.” Out of this meeting came Baker’s decisions to appoint Emmett J. Scott, a capable moderate of the Tuskegee persuasion, his special assistant for Negro affairs, and to create a black combat division. The War Department also finally determined to disperse black recruits throughout the camps, including those in the South. At last, on September 22, the first draft call for blacks was issued. Carefully segregated during their journey and after arrival, they began to appear in the camps. White fears were allayed somewhat by the assurance that at least a two-to-one ratio of white to black trainees would be maintained in all integrated camps. That policy meant that even the lone black combat division, the 92nd, would not be trained in a single location, but was to be scattered through seven cantonments. Unique among all the divisions sent overseas, it never assembled as a division in the United States, which was to prove but one of many handicaps when the men of the 92nd reached the trenches in France.

The sole exclusively black camp was the one for training black officers at Des Moines, Iowa. Blacks had been barred from the Plattsburg officer-training encampments before the war, in part because Plattsburg patron General Leonard Wood gagged at the idea of candidates “with whom our descendants cannot intermarry without producing a breed of mongrels; they must at least be white.” Fourteen officer-training camps had opened after the declaration of war, but none admitted blacks, and it had begun to appear that the Army intended to commission only white officers. Black fears of that prospect had deepened in June when the Army rather high-handedly relieved from his command Lieutenant Colonel Charles Young, a West Point graduate and the senior black officer in the Regular Army. Confronted with those facts, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) had tempered its usual insistence on integration and had importuned Baker to establish a separate training camp for blacks. Some black leaders had assailed the idea of a "Jim Crow camp," but NAACP officials Joel Spingarn and W. E. B. Du Bois knew that a segregated facility was the only realistic possibility. Their persistence had resulted in the establishment in July of a black officer-training program at Fort Des Moines. In October, it graduated a single class of 639 officers, all below field rank. Those men were then assigned to the 92nd Division, whose superior officers remained white. The Army frankly regarded the 92nd as an experiment, and had no immediate plans for additional black combat divisions. There was little further need for black officers, so the training camp At Fort Des Moines was closed.

Only one of every five black men sent to France saw combat, while in the AEF as a whole two out of three soldiers took part in battle. "The mass of the colored drafted men cannot be used for combatant troops," said a General Staff report in 1918, and it consequently recommended that "these colored drafted men be organized in reserve labor battalions." And so they were, taking up the most menial tasks in the Army as in civilian life. They worked as stevedores in the Atlantic ports and common laborers at the camps and in the Services of the Rear in France.

The Selective Service System also treated blacks unfairly, especially with respect to exemptions. Thirty-six percent of black registrants were pronounced eligible for service, compared with only 25 percent of whites. In part that differential derived from the effective ban on black volunteering, which left the black pool of able-bodied men, in contrast to the white, undepleted by voluntary enlistments. But to a great extent the inability of blacks to secure exemptions at the same rate as whites owed to their inferior position in American society. Historically barred from the skilled trades, blacks could claim few deferments on grounds of industrial indispensability. It was a particularly cruel irony that many black family men were too poor to claim the usual exemptions for husbands and fathers. Their meager army pay and compulsory family allotment, which might provide up to fifty dollars a month to an enlisted man's wife and children, would actually *increase* many a black family's income, wiping out any claimed deferment on grounds of economic dependency. In the end, blacks, who comprised 10 percent of the population, made up 13 percent of draftees. Crowder and the War Department earnestly tried to operate the draft in a fair and impartial manner, but no system could nullify inequities that inhered in the very structure of the society. As in other wars, the distribution of draft exemptions in World War I tended to parallel the distribution of civilian privilege, and the obligation of service fell disproportionately on the powerless and the poor.

Some men resisted their military obligation outright, many for reasons of conscience. The Selective Service Act exempted from combatant service members of "any well recognized religious sect or organization...whose existing creed or principles forbid its members to participate in war." On its face that provision seemed liberal enough, but in practice it frequently proved unfair and harsh. Uninstructed about what denominations qualified as *bona fide* pacifist sects, the local boards, as in the case of dependency exemptions, often ruled arbitrarily on the sincerity of a claimant's conscience. Then, too, the law at first made no provision for non-religious exemption, leaving many men——humanitarian and political objectors, or German-Americans loath to take up arms against their own blood——without legal refuge from the draft. Moreover, the government neglected for many months to stipulate what alternative service might be substituted for combat duty. As a result of that neglect, 20,000 conscientious objectors certified as sincere by their local boards were inducted into the Army, sent to training camps, and held there until suitable non-combatant service should be defined.

Putting the objectors under military authority, especially in the charged atmosphere of the camps where tens of thousands of men were being trained for combat, was undoubtedly the most callous feature of the government's policy. The War Department officially instructed camp commanders to segregate the conscientious objectors and treat them with "kindly consideration." But the aim of that policy was not to make the dissenters feel comfortable. Rather, it was to induce them, as the Adjutant General noted, to renounce their objections and "give their best efforts to the service of the United States as soldiers." The policy had some success, as more than 16,000 of the certified objectors, declared by their boards to have a legal right to accept only non-combatant service, decided after a period in camp to relinquish that right and take up arms. Some, no doubt, were persuaded by "kindly consideration." But others were humiliated and hazed, jeered and cajoled, until their consciences could accommodate war. The Civil Liberties Bureau badgered the War Department to define non-combatant service and get the men out of their ill-defined limbo in the camps, where they were generally regarded as quirky recalcitrants whose wills must be broken. Finally, in March 1918, the President designated suitable non-combatant activities. He also for the first time permitted the local boards to recognize other than religious scruples against military service. In June, a Board of Inquiry was established to make uniform determinations about the status of objectors already in the camps.

All those measures evidenced the government's good intentions toward objectors. Baker told the President that their numbers were small enough that the administration could comfortably adopt "a very generous and considerate mode of treatment." After the reforms of early 1918, religious objectors from established sects who accepted service in the Medical, Quartermaster, or Engineering Corps had little trouble. Some were also later furloughed to work on farms. But things went hard for those objectors unable to convince the Board of the authenticity of their church or the sincerity, of their beliefs. Indeed, the Board seemed at times, like some camp officers, hell-bent on shaming men out of their declared convictions. Major Walter G. Kellogg, one of the three members of the Board, regularly asked claimants if they had bought Liberty bonds or Thrift Stamps, and, somewhat less pertinently, if they were inclined to "drink," "smoke," or "go around with women." He scolded one claimant for belonging "to some nut society" and told him he did not deserve to live in the United States. He opened an interview with another by saving: "If I didn't know that you were a conscientious objector, I would take you for a good wholesome boy."

Things went harder still for the "absolutists," who refused on either religious or political grounds to do anything, even answer roll call, under military command. A handful of these men——Civil Liberties Bureau Chief Roger N. Baldwin was the most notable——managed to have their cases tried in civil courts. But most of them were inducted into the Army and brought before courts-martial, tribunals interested as much in sustaining military discipline as in dispensing justice. Forty objectors were court-martialed before the reforms of 1918, and nearly five hundred thereafter. Virtually every one was found guilty and dispatched to military prisons. Regarded as "hard cases," they were often subjected to extraordinarily punishing treatment in those already barbarous institutions.

Clearly, the liberal measures of early 1918 marked the outer limits of the administration's goodwill toward conscientious objectors. Thereafter the War Department's attitude hardened. A month after Wilson's liberal proclamation of March, Secretary Baker directed that any objector whose sincerity was questioned, or who engaged in propaganda, or who was sullen and defiant" should be "promptly brought to trial by court martial." A few months later, Assistant Secretary Frederick Keppel advised Baker that "good departmental and public policy" dictated lenient discipline and honorable discharges for officers who had severely beaten objectors at Camp Funston, Kansas. Baker and Keppel, wrote prominent pacifist Norman Thomas, "had tried to be liberal; they bad been criticized for it; now if objectors could not meet them half-way so much worse for the objectors."

So much worse, too, as time went on, for the less than conscientious objector——the draft evader motivated by no principle more elevated than the wish to save his hide. No one will ever know precisely how many men willfully dodged the draft. The Provost Marshal General estimated that roughly 337,000 men escaped his net during the war, some 12 percent of the men inducted. About half of those men were eventually brought to book, and the government contented itself with simply publishing the names of the remainder. At first the administration proceeded rather hesitantly against "slackers." By mid-1918 the Justice Department had prosecuted only 10,000 persons for failure to register. But in March of that year the Department inaugurated a new tactic, aimed not at the individual offender but designed to round up thousands of delinquents in one swoop. Justice Department agents launched the first "slacker raid" in Pittsburgh, aided by local police and by the self-styled patriots of the American Protective League. More raids followed in Chicago, Boston, and other cities, most notoriously in New York and northern New Jersey from September 3 through 6. In these last raids, armed soldiers and sailors joined a canvass that detained more than 50,000 apparently draft-age men who were often apprehended at bayonet-point in ball parks, restaurants, or on street corners and made to show their Selective Service documents. In New Jersey alone, this dragonnade turned up more than 13,000 delinquents. Thus rudely was the fiction abandoned that the government merely selected from a people who had "volunteered in mass."

Sharply criticized from many quarters, the slacker raids were but the latest cinching of the knot in a relentless tightening of the draft net. In December 1917, General Crowder had already fined the mesh by introducing a classification system, designed to sort the registrant pool more scientifically into five classes of varying suitability for service. In May 1918, he issued his "work-or-fight" order, compelling the local boards to review the current occupations of all registrants and push the idle or the less essentially employed (waiters, for example) into Class I. The following month a new registration enrolled men who had turned 21 years of age since the first sign-up a year earlier. A supplemental registration in August caught the new 21-year-olds of the preceding two months. Also in August, Congress extended the eligible age limits to 18 and 45, a step that called for a massive new registration on September 12 of the estimated 13 million men under 21 and over 30 now suddenly liable to the draft.

This new enrollment worried the War Department even more than the original registration of June 1917. Enthusiasm was no longer fresh and keen as it had been in the first weeks of American belligerency. Casualty reports from France, now published regularly in the newspapers, had perhaps cooled the itch to don a uniform. Men's willingness to come forward, so tensely relied upon in the spring of 1917, was less certain than ever. But Crowder, for one, was little daunted by those difficulties. He had a characteristic solution. “This,” he said, “was where the problem of publicity began——how to reach, in a startling, inspiring and universal appeal, every individual in those 13 million.” For a solid week before the appointed day, 30,000 Four-Minute Men orated, newspapers urged and advertised, and military bands played incessantly, all to induce the newly eligible men to enter their names in the registration books on September 12. “We were attempting to do voluntarily in a day,” said Crowder, “what the Prussian autocracy had been spending nearly 50 years to perfect.” Popular historian Mark Sullivan called this spectacle “a propaganda and publicity campaign of a magnitude never seen before or since in this country.” Its extravagant dimensions testified to the continuing fascination with the voluntarist ethos and the techniques of persuasion. But the very superabundance of the hoopla preceding the September registration suggested also that the limits of the voluntarist approach to military mobilization were being reached. The slacker raids around New York, carried out in the same week, suggested that conclusion still more strongly. The quickening pace of the draft calls in the summer of 1918 and the extended registration in September revealed the growing desperateness of the military’s manpower needs. Had the crisis continued to deepen, and the government been forced to sift the population ever more finely for men to send to France, it was altogether likely that ballyhoo would have increasingly given way to bayonets. But here, as in so many other areas, the country was spared the resort to more extreme measures by the war’s end in November.

Many Americans had at first believed that the nation would be spared altogether the ordeal of sending millions of its sons to join the Allied armies in the field. “They don’t need more warriors,” said the New York *Morning Telegraph* in April 1917; “they want money and food, and munitions of war.” Professional military men, reported the *New York Times* in the same month, thought it would be impossible in any case to send a significant body of American troops to Europe because of the lack of shipping. The French themselves were initially reassuring on this score. Major James Logan, Jr., had cabled from Paris on March 30, 1917, that the French General Staff had “no particular interest in having American troops in France.” Moreover, there appeared to be legal impediments to sending a major force overseas, as the Constitution seemed to preclude deployment of the states’ militias outside the United States. Hiram Johnson thought in the early weeks of the war that the President intended “to fight with our dollars to the last Frenchman and Englishman. He expects the war to be ended by the time he can prepare to have an army ready.” Even among those who envisioned the creation of an American Expeditionary Force, many saw it actually taking shape only in the far distant future. Julius Kahn, the manager of the Selective Service bill, declared that “it would be folly to think of sending our boys to the front until they have had a year of training.” And General Tasker Bliss, speaking for the General Staff, recommended that the Army be prepared at home for two full years before descending in numbers upon France.

But in the month following those observations, General Pershing was on the Atlantic, headed for France. A full American division began to debark at French ports in June 1917. “Three months ago,” wrote an unsettled Hiram Johnson on June 25, “if any man in our State had advocated the conscription of our youth to have them fight in Europe in this war, be would have been hooted from the platform. Today, our men are landed in France and our transports are upon the water. As I look back, the changes seem to me almost incredible."

Still more incredible changes were to come. The force that so strained Johnson's credulity was tiny in June 1917. And though the War College and General Pershing both recommended that a million men he brought to France by the following summer, the War Department calculated that available shipping would only permit transportation of some 650,000 troops by June 1918. Training facilities, too, could not so quickly be made to accommodate such numbers. Thus the first draft call was set at only 687,000. By the end of 1917 only 175,000 troops had reached France, and Selective Service inductions had been virtually halted. Then, in 1918, inductions and troop shipments suddenly shot up. In April, May, and June of 1918, more men were drafted than in all Of 1917, and throughout the summer nearly ten thousand men a day crammed themselves aboard the troop transports at Hoboken, Newport News, Boston, and Philadelphia. By Armistice Day, almost four million men were to be in uniform, half of them in France.

The reason for this sudden expansion and acceleration of the War Department's plans was not far to seek. Beginning in the autumn of 1917, the Allies suffered a series of disastrous military reverses. In October, the Germans and Austrians unleashed a spectacularly successful assault. against the Italians on the Isonzo front, capturing 275,000 prisoners and driving the defenders in wild disarray back behind the River Piave. This new demonstration of the enemy's capacity to carry out an attack contrasted starkly with the failure of the British drive in Flanders, which ground to a pathetic halt at Passchendaele in November, after an advance of barely two miles bought with 300,000 casualties. In November, too, came the Bolshevik Revolution, and moves toward an armistice in the east. Soon German troops were being shifted from the Russian to the western front, preparatory to a massive offensive launched on March 21, 1918. As those blows successively hammered upon their armies, Allied statesmen and generals, in frantically intensifying rhythms, stepped up calls for American troops. The war had turned into a deadly race, testing whether the Americans could throw enough troops across the Atlantic in time to stem the German tide rapidly flowing from the east.

The desperation of the Allied demands threatened to eclipse the United States' intention to create a separate American army. British and French representatives had requested as early as April 1917 that American troops be simply amalgamated into Allied units, dispensing with a separate command and a separate supply operation. The Allies had even suggested that they be allowed to recruit American citizens directly for their own armies, as they explained to the War Department, "from the surplus you will have over your own needs." President Wilson and Secretary Baker had turned aside those suggestions at the time, but with the mounting urgency of the crisis in the spring of 1918 the Allies insisted ever more shrilly that the best use that could be made of fresh American manpower was to punch it quickly into the battered line under French or British command. The British were now driven even to contemplating conscription in seething Ireland, though American troops were greatly preferred. "It is vital that American troops of all arms be poured into France as soon as possible," British Prime Minister David Lloyd George told his ambassador in Washington. "Please press this fact on the President with all your power....The difference of even a week in the date of arrival may be absolutely vital."

In the highest circles of the Wilson administration considerable confusion and irresolution surrounded the issue of amalgamation. Baker remained committed to a separate American force, but Wilson seemed to waver, so that the Secretary, concludes his biographer, often "was not sure what the President was doing or desired to have done." Tasker Bliss, American military representative on the Supreme War Council, infected by the gloom of the Allied military men, inclined toward accepting some form of amalgamation. But standing resolutely against all such proposals was the Commander in Chief of the American Expeditionary Force, General John J. Pershing.

Had American troops been fed into French and British units, Pershing, of course, would have become the proverbial general without an army. But his reasons for resisting amalgamation went far beyond the simple desire to secure his own command, and he rebuffed the incessant Allied demands with an unremitting stolidity that infuriated his adversaries. Supreme Allied Commander Marshal Ferdinand Foch warned in May 1918 that Pershing's continued resistance might spell the doom of the western front. "You are willing," asked Foch, "to risk our being driven back to the Loire?" "Yes," Pershing replied simply, "I am willing to take the risk."

The remark was typical of the man and his policies. In looks and manner, as in his strategic preferences, Pershing was the model American soldier: no-nonsense, obedient, quietly forceful, and a little dull. Fifty-six years old in 1917, be was still robust and barrel-chested, and his peninsular jaw and perpendicular bearing made him a paragon of military appearance. Born in Missouri, be had attended West Point in the 1880s, when the Academy was still suffused with the afterglow of the Civil War, occasionally visited by aging heroes like Ulysses S. Grant and William Sherman. In the closing years of the nineteenth century, Pershing had skirmished with a few Indians, earned a law degree at the University of Nebraska, and picked up the nickname "Black Jack" while serving with a black cavalry regiment in Cuba during the Spanish-American War. Posted in the Phillipines in 1902, he had energetically subdued the Moros, and won promotion to Brigadier in 1906. Command of the Punitive Expedition against Pancho Villa in Mexico in 1916 made Pershing the only American officer since the Spanish-American War who had led a large body of troops in the field. That experience, in addition to his cool tact and diplomatic acquiescence in administration policy——qualities markedly in contrast with the flamboyant insubordination of his principal rival, General Leonard Wood——recommended Pershing to Wilson and Baker in 1917, and in May they selected him to lead the AEF.

For virtually the entire tenure of his command, Pershing was so preoccupied with Allied pleas for amalgamation, that his chief of staff later wrote: "a reader fifty years hence might well conclude that this struggle between Allies was more important than much of the fighting that went on in quiet sectors on the Western Front." Pershing took his uncompromising stand for several reasons. As he constantly told the Allied supplicants, amalgamation would be terribly unpopular with the American people. Nor, he privately felt, would it be popular with the troops themselves. They were thought to share the national prejudice against the British, and few of them could understand the French tongue. Moreover, the mutinies in the French army in April 1917 were developments that the American commander in chief could hardly have found inviting. Then, too, Pershing, like all American strategists, was a "westerner," opposed to efforts to reopen the eastern front and to peripheral engagements such as the Allies had mounted in Palestine and, disastrously, in Gallipoli in Turkey. "It was my belief," he later wrote, "that our task clearly lay on the Western Front and that we would have all we could do to beat the enemy there.” The Allies, he said scornfully, were inclined “to send expeditions here and there in pursuit of political aims.” Pershing had no intention of letting American troops be used to free up French or English units for deployment elsewhere, and he certainly did not propose to put his troops under foreign command only to find them dispatched “here and there” away from the Western front. Political considerations also entered Pershing’s calculations. “When the war ends,” he wrote Baker, “our position will be stronger if our army acting as such shall have played a distinct and definite part.”

Most of all, Pershing opposed amalgamation because it would hamper the execution of his singular strategy: a massive, head-on confrontation with the main German force, an open and aggressive assault of such overwhelming strength that the enemy would be annihilated. These precepts, be said, were “the fundamentals so thoroughly taught at West Point for a century.” In clinging to that brutally simple doctrine, Pershing showed himself to be the most American of strategists. There is, as Russell Weigley writes, an American way of war: “Indian campaigns early encouraged the notion that the object of war is nothing less than the enemy’s destruction as a military power. The Civil War tended to fix the American image of war from the 1860s ...and it also suggested that the complete overthrow of the enemy, the destruction of his military power, is the object of war....In the history of American strategy, the direction taken by the American conception of war made most American strategists, through most of the time span of American history, strategists of annihilation.” Pershing’s education at post-Civil War West Point, where the votive fires still flickered in commemoration of Grant’s slog to Richmond and Sherman’s march to the sea, as well as nearly all the young officer’s subsequent combat experience, only deepened his attachment to that primal doctrine. Accordingly, Pershing was utterly contemptuous of the defensive strategy of attrition into which both sides had sickeningly settled along the western front. Amalgamation, in his view, would dribble American blood indefinitely into the deadlocked trenches. What was needed was a knockout blow, delivered by fresh American troops held back from the front until such time as they could crushingly breach it by sheer concentration and mass. It was logical, Pershing said with disdain, that the French were so enamored of defensive tactics, because “they had been on the defensive, at least in thought, during the previous half century.”

In fact it was not some inherited Gallic pusillanimity but the cruel realities of modern military technology that had forced all sides, not just the French, into the stalemated trench warfare of 1914-17. Long-range artillery and especially the deadly concentrated fire of the machine gun had given tremendous advantage to the defensive position, locking the opposing armies in an iron checkmate. Those facts Pershing overlooked. In his view, “the basic principles of warfare had not changed,” and he repeatedly urged that the French and British instructors who had been seconded to the stateside training camps be posted back home. He wanted to minimize training for trench fighting, and instead emphasize a program “which laid great stress on open warfare methods and offensive action.” Victory, Pershing believed, “could not be won by the costly process of attrition, but it must be won by driving the enemy out into the open and engaging him in a war of movement.” Above all, that strategy meant that his troops must have thorough training in the use of the rifle. Nothing, be claimed, could replace “the combination of an efficient soldier and his rifle.” Training methods for American troops, he said again and again, “must remain and become *distinctly our own*. All instruction must contemplate the assumption of a vigorous offensive.” Pershing wanted nothing of the trench fighting that had enervated both sides on the western front:

> From a tactical point of view, the method of combat in trench warfare presents a marked contrast to that employed in open warfare, and the attempt by assaulting infantry to use trench warfare methods in an open warfare combat will be successful only at great loss. Trench warfare is marked by uniform formations, the regulation of space and time by higher commands down to the smallest details...fixed distances and intervals between units and individuals...little initiative....Open warfare is marked by...irregularity of formations, comparatively little regulation of space and time by higher commanders, the greatest possible use of the infantry’s own fire power to enable it to get forward, variable distances and intervals between units and individuals...brief orders and the greatest possible use of individual initiative by all troops engaged in the action....The infantry commander must oppose machine guns by fire from rifles, his automatics and his rifle grenades and must close with their crews under cover of this fire and of ground beyond their flanks....The success of every unit from the platoon to the division must be exploited to the fullest extent. Where strong resistance is encountered, reinforcements must not be thrown in to make a frontal attack at this point, but must be pushed through gaps created by successful units, to attack these strong points in the flank or rear.

So Pershing remained, for reasons of sentiment and politics, strategy and tactics, unbudgeably attached to the policy of a distinct American force, uniquely trained and separately fielded. He gambled that the British and French would hold off the Germans until be could play his own strong hand. But the American commander did not hold all the cards. Of necessity, he had to dicker with the Allies over amalgamation, in a series of confrontations that included elements of double-dealing and bluff. Ships were trumps. The Allies, especially the British, had them; the Americans did not——at least not in sufficient numbers to transport the 100-division army that Pershing eventually wanted.

Immediately after American entry into the war, Prime Minister Lloyd George had prophetically told an American audience in London that victory was “to be found in one word, ships, in a second word, ships, and a third word, ships.” Pershing, who somehow had to float a vast army across 3000 miles of sea, knew the truth of that statement. Without ships he would have no army at all. To get them, he alternately wheedled and browbeat the British, bartering troops for bottoms. “In all these discussions,” be later succinctly said, “the British were bargaining for men to fill their ranks and we were trying to get shipping to carry over our armies.”

In the winter of 1917-18, discussion centered upon two competing proposals. Pershing wanted the British to transport six complete divisions to Europe in the first half of 1918. At first protesting that they had not the shipping to do so, the English surprised the Americans in January by announcing that they would find sufficient ships——on condition that the vessels carry 150 battalions of infantry and machine-gunners only, to be integrated into the British Army. Pershing and his staff, their suspicions of British forthrightness no doubt aroused, nevertheless agreed in January to a compromise: the British would provide ships for the six divisions, whose infantry units would take their forward training in the British sector. Those units would be available to be thrown into the line in an emergency, though subject to recall by the American commander. In addition, Pershing agreed to place four black infantry regiments under French control, where they remained, unique among American outfits, until the Armistice.

Matters uneasily rested until the German offensive of March 21, which revived Allied clamoring for American men, even raw and untrained if need be, to patch the shredded and shrinking forces at the front. At a dramatic meeting of the Supreme War Council at Versailles on March 27, Pershing flatly rejected such proposals, angrily stalking from the conference room in a rare but effective display of temper. At a subsequent meeting at Abbeville in May, Pershing stonily called Foch’s bluff about retreating behind the Loire. Finally, in July, an independent American Army was formed and the amalgamation controversy at last subsided.

The American position in that protracted wrangling had been shot through with traditional fears of Old World deviousness. Amalgamation was principally discussed in the Supreme War Council, to which Wilson, emphasizing his distance from Allied war aims, refused (until the final weeks of the war) to assign a permanent *political* representative. It was left to the American *military* representative on the Council, Tasker Bliss, to present his government’s views on amalgamation, even though this issue, as many others the Council took up, had far-reaching political implications. For his part, Bliss had harbored since early in the war the suspicion that the “deliberate desire” of the Allied powers was to “have a million [American] men there and yet no American army and American commander. United States military planners also suspected the British of deliberately understating the tonnage actually available for trans-Atlantic troop transport, in order to keep ships plying the supply routes to their peripheral operations in the Middle East and Russia, which were unpopular with the Americans. The suddenly revised British shipping estimates of January, thrust at Pershing as a bargaining counter in the 150-battalion controversy, increased his suspicions of British candor. President Wilson cautioned at the time that “whatever they may promise now, the British will, when it comes to the pinch, in fact cut us out from some of the tonnage they will promise us.” Nor were commercial calculations absent from these exchanges on ships, for each side feared ceding advantage to the other in the anticipated postwar rivalry for supremacy in the shipping business.

In all this, the American leaders proved themselves faithful sons to their Revolutionary forebears, deeply mistrustful of the machinations of Old World politicians, and determined, even in the face of military necessity, to avoid entanglement in the coils of European corruption. Pershing further evidenced his embrace of the mythic American image of Europe when be described Allied strategy as timid and tired, the product of an effete military establishment that “lacked the aggressiveness to break through the enemy’s lines.” The American concept of open warfare, by contrast, “was based upon individual and group initiative, resourcefulness and tactical judgment.” The idiom was military, but the accent was a familiar one in which Americans for more than a century had congratulated themselves for inhabiting a New World, whose vigor happily contrasted with the declining vitality of the Old.

Yet if Pershing suspected the Europeans, and tended to deprecate both their strategic ideas and their culture, he nevertheless recognized the genuine desperateness of their plight. He never really questioned the need for enormous infusions of American manpower on the western front; the argument had been about their disposition on arrival. Thus in late 1917 he requested thirty divisions to be landed in France by the end of the following summer, a proposal so ambitious that Wilson wondered if such a program were even possible. Six months later, prodded by Foch, Pershing *tripled* his estimates and called for a hundred divisions by the summer of 1919. Secretary Baker moved at once to secure extension of the draft age limits, and the British at last made firm assurances about providing shipping.

And so the Americans came. They trickled slowly at first into Liverpool and Brest and Saint-Nazaire, then flooded the ports with swelling waves in the summer of 1918: 245,000 men in May, 278,000 in June, 306,000 in July. By the end of August, Pershing at last stood ready to play his long-anticipated role on the western front. Yet, by November the war would be over. Pershing's barely bloodied troops would soon be stacking their scarcely used arms.

Generals, it is commonly said, habitually fight the previous war, a maxim to which Pershing, with his attachment to Civil War tactics and strategy, was no exception. But the common soldier, too, went to France with his head full of ideas and images from the past. Like so many American public places dominated by monuments to battles fought long ago, the American mind in 1917 was filled with memories of a kind of warfare that would never again be waged. Somehow, medieval notions of battle as an arena for individual heroism, for the display of "chivalry," and "honor," survived virtually intact into the early twentieth century. Those vestigial ideas were found throughout Western culture, as the popular English poems of Rudyard Kipling and Rupert Brooke, to cite but two non-American examples, picturesquely testified. But a romantic view of war had a peculiar hold on the American mind, which still throbbed with memories of the Civil War, memories glowing with the light of righteous glory and echoing with John Brown's hallelujahs.

It is easy to forget how vivid the Civil War seemed to Americans in the World War I era. Many men yet living had fought under Grant or Lee. More men still, especially those of an age to occupy influential positions in American life——including Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson——had been impressionable boys when Beauregard's batteries fired on Sumter. They were raised by hearthsides where fathers and uncles passed on the lore of Bull Run and Vicksburg, Chickamauga and the Wilderness, Cold Harbor and the Sunken Road, Antietam and the Bloody Angle. On registration day, June 5, 1917, Wilson addressed a convention of Confederate veterans, and spoke evocatively of "the old spirit of chivalric gallantry." That rhetoric and the attitude toward war it bespoke were comfortably familiar to two generations of Americans; but even while Wilson talked, both the language and the sentiment were as near to death as the graying men he faced.

Many of those aging veterans, and even more of their Union counterparts, remained powerful arbiters of popular values. Among the images they urged the young to regard reverently was that of war as an adventurous and romantic undertaking, a liberating release from the stultifying conventions of civilized society. No one had more eloquently articulated that sentiment than Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., a young Civil War officer in the 20th Massachusetts, veteran of Fredericksburg and Antietam, and for thirty years after 1902 a magisterial figure on the United States Supreme Court. Only in war, he told Harvard's graduating class in 1895, could men pursue "the divine folly of honor." From war "the ideals of the past for men have been drawn....I doubt if we are ready to give up our inheritance." War might be terrible when you were in it, he said, but with time "you see that its message was divine." In the generation succeeding Holmes's, the charismatic Theodore Roosevelt whole-heartedly embraced those precepts and preached them to his countrymen with unflagging gusto. What American had not heard the account of the old Rough Rider waving his bat and charging up San Juan Hill, gleefully projecting an image of battle as a kind of pleasingly dangerous gentlemen's sport?

This irrepressibly positive and romantic view of war belonged particularly to an older elite, people like Holmes and Roosevelt: old-stock, Northeastern, often Anglophilic or Francophilic. In his study of prewar American culture, Henry May has called them "the beleaguered defenders of nineteenth-century tradition...the professional custodians of culture." From this quarter came some of the strongest pressure both for a permanent system of military training and for American intervention in the war. Almost unanimously, says May, "the leading men of letters, the college presidents, the old-line publishers, the editors of standard magazines, and their friends knew where they stood from the start" in 1914. "Instead of seeing the war as the doom of their culture, they believed it would bring about its revival: the war was a severe but necessary lesson in moral idealism." Thus did Princeton President John Grier Hibben speak of the chastening and purifying effect of armed conflict. Thus did novelist Robert Herrick write of war's "resurrection of nobility." Thus did one of Edith Wharton's characters tearfully meditate on the ancient phrase from Horace: "dulce et decorum est pro patria mori." Thus did countless posters depict Dame Columbia or some other drapeaued goddess benevolently shepherding doughboys into battle. And thus, too, did widely distributed movies like *Pershing's Crusaders* and best-selling books like *The Glory of the Trenches* and *My Home in the Field of Honor* continue to trade in the kind of medieval imagery that popular authors like Walter Scott had for generations seeded in the American mind. Everywhere, the venerable custodians of traditional culture spoke as if with a single voice: war was glorious, adventurous; it was manhood's destiny, a strenuous and virile antidote to the effete routine of modern life. And, as May has noted, it was the "young acquaintances of these elder idealists who were early in the field. The older colleges and the more exclusive prep schools contributed far more than their share to the volunteer units." Young men from the most prominent families and the most prestigious universities fought with the French or the English, joined the Lafayette Escadrille air unit, or the Norton-Harjes Ambulance Service. It was, in short, the nation's most carefully cultivated youths, the privileged recipients of the finest education, steeped in the values of the genteel tradition, who most believed the archaic doctrines about war's noble and heroic possibilities.

Of all the young men who so believed, none did more passionately than Alan Seeger. A 1910 Harvard graduate given to writing florid and portentous verses, Seeger had gone to Paris in 1912, "in the spirit," says a sympathetic biographer, "of a romanticist of the eighteen-forties." Swelling with Byronic yearning for glory ("it is for glory alone that I am engaged," he wrote) and for a poetic death at an early age, in 1914 he joined the French Foreign Legion.1 For the next two years, huddled in billets in Champagne, he wrote of the war, in verse, in his diary, in letters to his family, and in articles sent to the New York *Sun* and the *New Republic*. He was, he said candidly, "of a sentimental and romantic nature." His writing alternated between lyrical tributes to the charms of the French countryside and awe-filled descriptions of the grandeur of war. "Will never forget the beauty of this winter landscape," he noted in his diary, "the delicate skies, the little villages under their smoking roofs. Am feeling perfectly happy and contented." He was no less happy to bear “the magnificent orchestra of war” in an artillery cannonade, and he wrote his mother: “You have no idea bow beautiful it is to see the troops undulating along the road in front of one in *colonnes par quatre* as far as the eye can see with the captains and lieutenants on horseback at the head of their companies.” “What is Virgil’s line,” be mused, “about the pleasure it will be sometime to recall having once done these things...? I pity the poor civilians who shall never have seen or known the things that we have seen and known....[T]he sense of being the instrument of Destiny is to me a source of greater satisfaction.” This, he said, was “the supreme experience.”

Men of Holmes’s and Roosevelt’s generations could recognize those sentiments as kindred to their own, and they also found familiar the language in which Seeger expressed them. When he spoke of undulating lines of troops led by men on horseback, he conjured visions of battle as a panoramic pageant with skirling pipes and streaming gonfalons, “the battalions in maneouvre, the officers, superbly indifferent to danger, galloping about on their chargers.” At times his diction was even more frankly archaic, as when he wrote in “A Message to America”:

Not by rough tongues and ready fists
Can you hope to jilt in the modern lists.

When Seeger was killed in 1916, the custodians of culture instantly transformed him into America’s first genuine war hero. His uplifting descriptions of war, cast in the literary conventions of the medieval romance, admirably fitted their own views. Indeed, so admirably did Seeger suit the tastes of the traditional keepers of culture that in 1915 they were already calling him America’s Rupert Brooke (the English poet who died earlier in the war). They completed the comparison by prematurely announcing Seeger’s heroic demise in October 1915. When be died in fact on July 23, 1916, some were so eager to invest his memory with all the symbolic freight it would bear that be was often erroneously said to have met his fate——that would have been the phrase——on the Fourth of July.

Seeger’s poems were published soon after his death, to extravagant praise from established critics, and his *Letters and Diary* was released to the public the following summer. Theodore Roosevelt, the hero of “A Message to America” (“I would go through fire and shot and shell...if ROOSEVELT led”), eulogized him in appropriately archaic accents as “gallant, gifted young Seeger.” A Wellesley student surpassed even the medieval metaphors of the dead poet himself: “Had he lived in centuries past,” she wrote, “he would have lived a knight, true to his ‘idols——Love and Arms and Song’ In the twentieth century be still lived as true as was possible to those idols. So he will live in our hearts——Alan Seeger, Knight.”

Seeger’s was the authentic voice of late nineteenth-century American high culture, and it spoke powerfully of war’s ennobling glory. Other writers couched a similar message in a more popular idiom. Robert W. Service, for example, in *Rhymes of a Red Cross Man*, sang of the

...dream that War will never be ended;
That men will perish like men, and valour be splendid;
....
That though my eye may be dim and my beard be hoary,

I'll die as a soldier dies on the Field of Glory.

When Hiram Johnson read Service's poems to his family in the evenings, "all of us at times have been rather choked up." When he read them to his fellow Senators, he said, "you could have heard a pin drop."

Seeger's *Poems* and Service's *Rhymes* were both best sellers in 1917, as was Arthur Guy Empey's *"Over the Top,"* a runaway success that sold 350,000 copies in its first year of release and was later made into a movie. Empey became a featured speaker at countless Liberty bond rallies. Those developments no doubt pleased his publisher, George Haven Putnam of G. P. Putnam's Sons, a founder of the pro-preparedness National Security League. *"Over the Top"* was a go-get-'em confection in the Richard Harding Davis vein, a snappy autobiographical account of the New Jersey boy's adventures with the British Army in France. Disappointed that his own country had been "too proud to fight" after the sinking of the *Lusitania*, Empey went to England to become a "Tommy." Though his account of his exploits among the English was replete with condescending national comparisons——British trains had "matchbox" cars; Americans had "energy and push," the English mere "tenacity"——Empey clearly intended to convey affection for the British soldier and sympathy for the Allied cause. "Tommy Atkins," he said, "has proved himself to be the best of mates, a pal....a man with a just cause who is willing to sacrifice everything but honor in the advancement of the same. It is my fondest hope," he added, "that Uncle Sam and John Bull, arms locked, as mates, good and true...will wend their way through the years to come, happy and contented in each other's company.

Empey provided the American public with a kind of primer on life at the front. In a bright, wisecracking style, liberally sprinkled with colorful British Army slang, Empey recounted his initiation into British Army ways, his arrival at the front, his first encounters with "Fritz" (the Germans), his wounding in a trench raid, and his trip back to "blighty" (home). The narrative was not without its accounts of horrors and of gut-grinding fears. In a grudging and stiffly jocular way, Empey even admitted to tears at the death of a mate: "like a great big boob, cried like a baby. I was losing my first friend of the trenches." But the tone of *"Over the Top"* was overwhelmingly positive. Even the scenes of terror and fright could not really terrify or frighten, so briskly were they related, and so swiftly did they sink beneath the glinting surface of Empey's quick-paced story. With unrelenting good humor, Empey portrayed the war as a kind of thrillful sporting adventure, where all the players, on his side at least, were good fellows who knew how to "die game." In the climactic battle scene, Empey was wounded, but his outfit "took the trench and the wood beyond, all right." The story faithfully followed the formula of the popular adventure tale: men expired with athletic grace, the hero proved his manhood by receiving a wound in virtual hand-to-hand combat, as convention required, and in the end his fellows triumphantly seized their objective.

The message was insistently upbeat, and lest his American readers miss its significance, Empey candidly said in his closing pages that he dreamt of the day "when the boys in the trenches would see the emblem of the 'land of the free and the home of the brave' beside them, doing its bit in this great war of civilization." For the boys in the trenches, he said, "the spirit of sacrifice is wonderful." Moreover, "for all the suffering caused this war is a blessing to England——it has made new men of her sons; has welded all classes into one glorious whole."

War, he concluded, was "not a pink tea but in a worthwhile cause like ours, mud, rats, cooties, shells, wounds, or death itself, are far outweighed by the deep sense of satisfaction felt by the man who does his bit." The language was less elevated than Seeger's, but the meaning no less affirmative of war's virtues.

From accounts like these, many departing doughboys formed expectations of what awaited them in France. An affirmative and inspiring attitude toward war, preached by guardians of tradition like Holmes and Roosevelt, nurtured by popular writers like Seeger and Empey, filled men's imaginations in 1917. That attitude was sufficiently strong to counter three years of news and propaganda about the atrocities of modern warfare; it was strong enough, even, to temper men's natural fear of death. Historian William L. Langer, for example, went to war as a young man in 1917, and later recalled with wonder "the eagerness of the men to get to France and above all to reach the front."

> One would think that, after almost four years of war, after the most detailed and realistic accounts of murderous fighting on the Somme and around Verdun, to say nothing of the day-to-day agony of trench warfare, it would have been all but impossible to get anyone to serve without duress. But it was not so. We and many thousands of others volunteered....I can hardly remember a single instance of serious discussion of American policy or of larger war issues. We men, most of us young, were simply fascinated by the prospect of adventure and heroism. Most of us, I think, had the feeling that life, if we survived, would run in the familiar, routine channel. Here was our one great chance for excitement and risk. We could not afford to pass it up.

John Dos Passos recollected similar sentiments from 1917: "We had spent our boyhood in the afterglow of the peaceful nineteenth century....What was war like? We wanted to see with our own eyes. We flocked into the volunteer services. I respected the conscientious objectors, and occasionally felt I should take that course myself, but hell, I wanted to see the show."

Brimming with eagerness and enthusiasm, hundreds of thousands of young men embarked in 1917 and 1918 upon what Theodore Roosevelt alluringly called the "Great Adventure." Secretary Baker consciously strove to model the stateside training camps on "the analogy of the American college," and countless contemporary observers noted the keen sense of schoolboyish anticipation and excitement that infected the fresh recruits. "As in similar encampments," said one trainee, "Fort Sheridan was alive with enthusiastic recruits, with an atmosphere somewhat like that of a college campus on the eve of a big game."

Even more than college boys, the young men in the Army were to be protected from wickedness and vice. Temperance crusaders, long devoted to changing the nation's drinking habits, were at war's outbreak riding a wave of recent successes. By 1917 nineteen states had adopted prohibition, and the increasingly powerful Anti-Saloon League was pressing for a prohibition amendment to the federal Constitution. Passionate "drys" shuddered at the opportunities for debauchery that army life might put in the path of the nation's manhood. Their political muscle helped convince the War Department to ban the sale of liquor in the vicinity of the training camps, and to forbid (on paper at least) any man in uniform from buying a drink.

These measures imparted further momentum to the temperance cause, and contributed to the ratification of the Eighteenth Amendment in 1919.

The Army also undertook a campaign against sexual vice that had substantial influence on postwar life. The American Social Hygiene Association had urged as early as 1914 that the public be educated about venereal disease, though the Association cautioned that the effort should go forward "conservatively and gradually...without impairing modesty and becoming reticence in either young or old." Despite widespread concern about the debilitating effects of the "social disease," little had happened by 1917 to advance the Association's cause. Then the Army, determined to get the maximum number of "effectives" from the mass of inductees, and not troubled by questions of modesty, launched a great anti-VD campaign. It assigned the task to the Commission on Training Camp Activities (CTCA), a consortium of civilian service organizations, like the YMCA, Knights of Columbus, and Jewish Welfare Board, that worked under official Army auspices. Wanting results, the Army and the Commission cared little for reticence, and they minced no words about sexual matters. Speaking frankly of "balls" and "whores," one CTCA pamphlet carefully explained that wet dreams were normal and that masturbation, common folk wisdom notwithstanding, would not lead to insanity. The clear implication was that natural emission, or even masturbation, was greatly preferable to potentially infectious liaisons. In the same vein, the Commission placarded the camps with posters proclaiming: "A German Bullet is Cleaner than a Whore." Pamphlets urged sexual purity in the name of patriotism: "How could you look the flag in the face," asked one, "if you were dirty with gonorrhea?" "A Soldier who gets a dose," warned a poster, "is a Traitor!"

The campaign continued with the doughboys in France. The Commander in Chief gave special attention to the venereal report every morning, and venereal infection was made a matter for discipline. "Keeping our men clean," said Pershing, was a matter of the highest importance, "not only from the standpoint of effectives, but from that of morals." But, as elsewhere, Pershing's efforts in the battle for sexual purity were hampered by what the general daintily termed "the difference between the French attitude and our own." In February 1918, Premier Clemenceau magnanimously offered to help establish licensed houses of prostitution, customary in the French army, for what he obviously regarded as the long-suffering American troops. Pershing passed the letter containing the offer to Raymond Fosdick, head of the CTCA. Fosdick, in turn, showed Clemenceau's letter to Secretary Baker, who reportedly exclaimed: "For God's sake, Raymond, don't show this to the President or he'll stop the war." The Americans declined this bit of gracious Gallic generosity, and continued to mete out stem punishment to soldiers suffering from VD. The Army congratulated itself that the campaign drastically lowered the venereal infection rate among the doughboys. The educational drive had further import as well. For many young men, the Commission's pamphlets, films, and lectures no doubt constituted the first thorough sex education they had received. Surely very few had ever been exposed to such frank and open scientific discussion of matters about which the society had been notoriously mute. In its own blunt way, the Army contributed to the demythologizing of erotic life by bringing sexual matters into the arena of public discourse, which was to become a characteristic feature of twentieth-century American culture.

The Army cooperated less eagerly with another social experiment in 1917-18: intelligence testing and classification by mental ability of men who passed through the training camps.

Testing people's intelligence was a novel procedure in the prewar era. First developed by French psychologist Alfred Binet in the early years of the century, the method was adopted and improved by Stanford University's Lewis Terman in 1916, and became known in the United States as the Stanford-Binet test. When America entered the war, the American Psychological Association pressured the War Department to use the tests to screen mental incompetents from the Army and to classify all inductees on the basis of their intelligence. Not incidentally, this plan would provide the professional psychologists with data-sets of previously undreamed-of size, the raw material for countless further studies.

The Army at first responded tepidly to these "mental meddlers," as one general called them. But by early 1918 trained psychological examiners were posted to all the camps. There they administered thousands of "alpha" tests to the literate inductees, and "beta" tests to the illiterate. The results were used to designate the recruits "superior," "average," or "inferior," so that personnel officers might then select potential officer trainees and distribute the remainder of the men proportionately, with reference to their tested intelligence, throughout the various units.

The testers were struck by the extent of illiteracy their examinations revealed——as many as 25 percent of the draftees could be so classified. Examiners were also unsettled by the meager educational backgrounds of the recruits. Most enlisted men had left school between the fifth and seventh grades. The median number of years of education ranged from 6.9 for native whites and 4.7 for immigrants to 2.6 for Southern blacks. In one large sample of native white draftees, fewer than 18 percent had attended high school, and most of those men had not graduated. The typical enlisted soldier, concludes one student, was "an ill-educated unsophisticated young man...the opposite of the Harvard boys who volunteered for ambulance duty before America entered the war."

The psychologists were less surprised by their correlation of test performances with racial and national backgrounds. Invariably, men from "native" or "old" immigrant stock scored heavily in the "superior" range, while draftees from "new" immigrant backgrounds fell disproportionately into the "inferior" category. More than half the Russian, Italian, and Polish draftees, for example, showed up as "inferior." Nearly 80 percent of the blacks who took the alpha test were labeled "inferior," and their illiteracy rates were significantly higher than those for whites.

The psychologists, striving for scientific objectivity, denied that their examinations were biased toward certain educational or cultural backgrounds, or toward a particular kind of scholastic skill, Yet it may be doubted whether the native intelligence of recent immigrants or poor rural blacks was fairly tested by questions about the authorship of "The Raven," the talents of the painter Rosa Bonheur, or the city in which the Overland car was manufactured——all standard queries on the alpha test. These examinations were the crudest devices of an infant psychological "science" that even in its maturity has not escaped criticism on grounds of cultural bias. The Army, to its credit, never lost its suspicion of the psychologists, and ended the testing program at the first opportunity, January 1919. But what the Army rejected, the nation's educational system eagerly adopted in the postwar era, as intelligence testing became a familiar procedure in the schools. And to many oldstock, white Americans, the widely publicized results of the wartime tests conveniently reinforced their already disparaging appraisal of the new immigrant groups and blacks.

Forewarned about disease, tested and labeled, introduced to the manual of arms, trained to drill, drill, drill, fitted out with a new-fangled safety razor (the war would change the shaving techniques of a generation), and saddled with packs, the doughboys marched out of the camps and up the ramps of the ships of the "Atlantic Ferry." Most left from Hoboken, and nearly half sailed in British vessels. A lucky few cruised in some style on the *Leviathan*, the former Hamburg-American luxury liner *Vaterland*, impounded in New York harbor since 1914, and in 1917 seized and made to carry troops to battle against the men who built her. Others traveled on various Cunard ships and American ocean liners, but a great many were shipped in converted freighters, hastily refitted, stark, and dirty. "Assigned quarters on lower deck," said a private put on board the British ship *Kashmir*; "the blackest, foulest, most congested hole that I ever set foot into." On arrival in France, the men were shoehorned into the notorious "40-and-8's"——diminutive French railway freightcars supposedly able to carry 40 men or 8 horses——and rumbled slowly away from the ports along the choked rail system to their forward training areas in the interior of France. Once off the train, the men began to walk, and for many it must have seemed that they walked forever. *Stars and Stripes* found no more fertile subjects for humor than the length of hikes and the weight of packs. Billetted in widely scattered areas that required lengthy walks to training facilities, and prodded by officers under orders not to let the troops become restless while Pershing's idle army grew to sufficient size, the men moved constantly——often, it seemed, just to be moving. As the diary of one reads:

> Sat. June .22, 1918: Left Colembert in A.M. and hiked with full packs about 7 kilos to Bellebrune.
> Wed. June 26, 1918: Hiked with full packs back to Colembert.
> Thur. June 27, 1918: Hiked back to Bellebrune.
> Sat. June 29, 1918: Hiked with light packs about 14 kilos to gas school.
> Wed. July 3: Hiked about 20 kilos to Bouinngues.
> Thur. July 4: Hiked 10 kilos to riflle range.
> Fri. July 5: Hiked 18 kilos to Buysschure.
> Sat. July 6: Hiked 15 kilos to Oudezeele.

The doughboys spent most of their time in this way until the spring of 1918. Then, in March, German General Ludendorff began the first of a series of offensives, thrusting his armies down the scarred valleys of the Somme, the Oise, the Aisne, and the Marne, in a last desperate drive to burst the western front and end the war. Pershing allowed a few American units to be thrown in under Allied command to brace the buckling French and British lines, and the green American troops fought recklessly but well at Cantigny in late May, and at Château-Thierry and Belleau Wood in June. Perhaps 70,000 Americans had tasted battle by mid-July. The last German drive was checked on July 18, and the initiative passed from Ludendorff to Foch, who immediately took the offensive with vigorous counter-attacks. Foch also at last ordered the establishment of an American First Army, and assigned it to move into the front to the French right, in the sector stretching from near Verdun to the Vosges Mountains. It was now becoming Pershing's kind of war. His gamble for time was about to pay off. The Allies had held back the Germans long enough to permit the assemblage of a great American force in France. It now entered the line, fresh and huge, just as Foch prepared to administer the war’s decisive blow against the badly battered foe.