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**The Demise of the Citizen-Soldier and its Implications for The Role of  
The American Army**

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## I. Executive Summary

The Army is one of the oldest institutions in the United States, older even than the country itself. Unlike some other nations, the United States does not have a rigid and distinct historical character to its force composition. It has not favored a dominant blue water navy over conventional ground forces, like the British. It has not conscripted generation after generation of young men and women into regular army service, like the Russians.<sup>1</sup> It does not employ universal service, like the Israelis. The United States Army has a more complicated story, one that is interwoven with the founding of the nation itself.

Through a review of primary source material, historical events, demographic compositions, and the first hand accounts of contemporary officers and policy makers, this thesis examines the deeply rooted foundational value in the Army of the *citizen-solider*, how this concept has evolved from colonial days, and its implications for the modern United States Army. Through a historical study of the ways in which the Army fills its ranks, this thesis reviews the evolution of conscription and volunteerism in major wars in US history. It then goes on to explore two framework perspectives on the citizen-soldier concept in greater detail. The seminal ideas of Brevet Major General Emory Upton calling for a professional military corps supplemented by a civilian reserve influenced the shape of the Army in the decades following the Civil War. And the proposals of General George C. Marshall to institute University Military Training following World War II raise interesting questions about the role and necessity of the citizen-solider in the Army that remain every bit as relevant, today.

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<sup>1</sup> Felgenhauer, Pavel. "Russian Military Reform: Ten Years of Failure." Russian Military Reform: Ten Years of Failure. Sevodnya Newspaper, Moscow, 26 Apr. 1997. Web. 12 Mar. 2013.

Throughout its history, the Army's composition has fluctuated according to the needs of, support from, and engagement with the general public. At issue is the question of whether the conscripted citizen-soldier Army that cannot be easily deployed without considerable public support may, in fact, help avoid American intervention in unnecessary and costly wars. Is today's professional army more readily used and deployed in unpopular, "immoral" wars than a conscripted citizen-soldier force, and if so, is this a primary factor in making wars of that nature a possibility? This thesis concludes that the advent of the professional standing army after the Vietnam War and the demise of citizen-soldiers within the Army's ranks has significantly lowered the political risk of going to war for American elected officials, and served to divorce the American public from the Army that serves and protects it.

## **II. The Foundational Values and Mission of the U.S. Army**

The Army was founded on June 14, 1775, before the United States even became its own sovereign nation. The original mission of the United States Army was limited and straightforward: to win the independence of the newly formed United States and to protect that freedom once it was gained.<sup>2</sup> It was first and foremost a land-defense force. Though the years immediately following the Revolution and War of 1812 are viewed as relatively docile in retrospect, the so-called "Era of Free Security," they certainly didn't seem so secure at the time. President James Monroe in 1817 assumed leadership of a "barely four-decades old republic that had already fought two wars with Britain, a naval quasi-war with France, and border skirmishes with Spain."<sup>3</sup> The young country also faced

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<sup>2</sup> Linn, Brian McAllister. *The Echo of Battle: The Army's Way of War*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007. Page 13.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 10.

threats from what might today be deemed “non-state” actors harassing their borders and lived under the specter of a third Anglo-American War.<sup>4</sup> All of the military’s efforts went towards anticipating and mitigating existential threats to the homeland. The prevailing defensive strategy at the time paired a strong, militia-based home guard with a powerful blue water navy that could engage and harass potential invaders far from friendly coasts as the primary means of national defense. It was in this context that the United States Army matured and developed.

The United States Army was founded on the ideal of the *citizen-soldier*, soldiers with a stake in the democracy they vowed to defend. Defined by Merriam Webster as an “army of ordinary citizens rather than professional soldiers,” the citizen-soldier is an iconic symbol of participatory democracy.<sup>5</sup> It is based on the notion of citizens as defenders of the nation’s values, motivated by a selfless commitment to an ideal that far exceeds the interest of any individual member of society.<sup>6</sup> The generic citizen-soldier is a young man who comes from the wider civil society, not a “lifer.”<sup>1</sup> These are individuals that remain firmly rooted in civilian life, and mark military service as an unwelcome, forced deviation from it. This understanding of military service instills a citizen-soldier army with a character and attitude that is radically different than that of a professional army, one that the Founders wanted a healthy dose of in American armed forces.

The concept of the citizen-soldier was inextricably linked to another foundational value-- the Founding Father’s inherent *bias against a large standing peacetime Army*.

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<sup>4</sup> Linn, 11.

<sup>5</sup> "Citizen-Soldier." Merriam-Webster. Accessed February 21, 2014.  
<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/soldier>.

<sup>6</sup> Hansen, Victor Davis, *Courage and Culture: Landmark Battles in the Rise of Western Power* New York, Doubleday, 2001 Pages 3-8.

The Founders were extremely wary of the coercive potential of a large standing army interspersed amongst the people. They had just lived with one under British rule, and they had no intention of returning to such a system. The young country was skeptical of all forms of centralized power, in fact, and their original governing document reflects that skepticism. The Articles of Confederation only very loosely bound the thirteen states and created a very weak central government. While the Articles empowered Congress to provide for the American military with their power to “raise and support armies,” they were not permitted to fund it for more than two years at a time.<sup>7</sup> The military expenditures of the early Republic reflect their limited aims. The regular US Army existed primarily to defend the frontier and to guard the northern border from British aggression through Canada. Large-scale national defense was viewed as the responsibility of the American *people*, not the sole purview of the central government. The federally controlled regular army was to occupy an invader long enough for a popular army to be mustered, not to take on an attacker by itself. Such a defensive strategy allowed the Founders to put a cap on the size of the Army and thusly to ameliorate any of the perceived ill effects that came with a large standing army.

The third foundational value of the U.S. Army is the notion of *civilian rule*. The United States was a nation founded “of the people, by the people, for the people.” The Founding Fathers’ self-evident truths of “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness” established a government that was designed to protect citizens’ rights. The military that protected their borders was not to be lorded over them, nor were the interests of the people to be subordinated to those of the military. Article II Section 2 Clause 1 of the

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<sup>7</sup> *The Articles of Confederation*, Clause 12.

United States Constitution explicitly establishes the President of the United States, a civilian elected official, as the “Commander in Chief” of the nation’s armed forces.<sup>8</sup> But the President does not wield unilateral control over the military. Ever wary of the power of one man, and seeking to log jam significant government functions to the greatest extent possible, the Founders gave the power to declare war, i.e. the power to decide when to actually *use* the military, to the people’s branch, Congress.<sup>9</sup> Such a governmental structure was meant to make the army an easily managed arm of the people, *representative* of their interests, never superior to them. This understanding was drilled into the military as well. The commissioning oath for officers entering the Army includes swearing allegiance not to the nation but to the Constitution of the United States, reinforcing “we the people’ as the ultimate authority in the military chain of command.<sup>10</sup>

Until the mid-late twentieth century, these foundational values were reflected in the historical pattern of mobilizing a military force during wartime: calling up the militia, recruiting volunteers (or resorting to conscription), and demobilizing after the war. As a result of this pattern, the Army’s composition, structure, and readiness have ebbed and flowed over time to meet an ever-changing threat. Its mission has evolved over that time as well. Whereas its role in colonial days was simply to protect the nation’s borders, its modern mission is as an expeditionary force “prepared to defeat aggression anywhere in

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<sup>8</sup> *Constitution of the United States*, A. II, S. 2, C. 11.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.* A I, S. 8, C.

<sup>10</sup> United States of America. United States Army. *The Officer's Oath of Office*. By United States Army. 1959. Accessed January 12, 2014. <http://www.army.mil/values/officers.html>.

the world.”<sup>11</sup>

That transition to a professional army with a more global mission happened very slowly. During the Revolutionary War, militias won America’s independence from England using poorly trained men for whom discipline was such an issue that they often left the battlefield at will. In the War of 1812, leadership was a problem, and during the Civil War, the citizen-soldiers that comprised the Union Army literally had to learn ‘on the job.’ The underwhelming performance of soldiers in the Spanish-American War attributable to a lack of training and poor pre-war readiness led to reforms at the turn of the century that coincided with the military’s growing role in global conflicts. The Army grew more professionalized throughout the twentieth century, with the major mobilizations of World War I and World War II bringing millions of conscripts into service and the creation of the first peacetime draft, in 1940. Thirty years later, the debacle that was the Vietnam War eroded morale and discipline to the point that the draft died forever, and the public had become so divorced from its military that the Army required a complete restructuring and rebuilding. That fundamental reimagining of the United States military as a result of the Vietnam War produced the modern, highly professionalized, All-Volunteer Force (AVF) that the country operates today.

### **III. A Historiography of Army Conflicts, Conscription, and Composition**

For most of its history, the United States has followed a consistent pattern of maintaining a barebones peacetime army that it frantically filled out in time of war, via conscription or mass volunteerism. The armies that fought almost every American war in

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<sup>11</sup> United States of America. Department of Defense. Office of the Secretary of Defense. *Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense*. President Obama. Washington D.C.: Department of Defense, 2012.

history, from the Revolution to Vietnam, were broad cross sections of society, mustered into the force either voluntarily or through conscription. Though the details vary from conflict to conflict and era to era, the study of the history of American force composition from the country's first war to its last reveals a clear and interesting trend.

***The Colonial Era and The American Revolution.*** The draft in America, like the Army it feeds, is older than the United States itself. From the earliest days of the colonies, militias were formed to provide for the common defense and to fill royal troop levies, based on a service model transplanted from England.<sup>12</sup> While the details varied from one colony to the next, the same core system existed among all the colonies. One universal tenet was that service in the militia was compulsory. A given town or colony would mandate that every able-bodied man between certain ages (usually sixteen to sixty) present themselves and a self-furnished weapon for training on specified dates. Typically, training only happened four times a year, but in times of heightened security concerns it could be as frequent as once a month or even once a week.<sup>13</sup>

The primary role of early American militias was to protect the hearth and home from local threats. When colonial governments called up their militias, they rarely did it *en masse*. Instead, they gave each militia district a quota to be filled according to specified enrollment numbers.<sup>14</sup> The militias would then ask for volunteers from amongst their ranks. As the merits of these conflicts were not immediately evident to the men being asked to fight them however, volunteers were not always abundant and could

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<sup>12</sup> Chambers, John Whiteclay. *To Raise an Army: The Draft Comes to Modern America*. New York: Free Press, 1987. Pages 14 – 17.

<sup>13</sup> Hummel, Rogers Jeffrey. "The American Militia and the Origin of Conscription: A Reassessment." *Journal of Libertarian Studies* 15, no. 4 (Fall 2001): 29-77. Page 32.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.* 33.

usually only provide a small fraction of the requisite manpower. This fact resulted in America's first conscriptions.

A man drafted from his local militia and pressed into colonial service could, under normal circumstances, only be kept in service for three months and he was not to be made to serve beyond the borders of his home colony. Despite these theoretical constraints however, innumerable colonial men were conscripted and made to participate in long distance Indian raiding and imperial warfare against Spanish and French interests on the continent throughout the Colonial era.<sup>15</sup> It is from this model that the first American Continental Congress derived its understanding of how to field an army for war.

The typical image of American troops during the Revolution was of a hardscrabble volunteer "Minuteman," so named because the trooper could drop his plough and grab his musket and be ready to fight the British or any other threat to his home at just a minute's notice. Though this understanding is somewhat idealized, the Patriots of Lexington and Concord that fired the fabled "shot heard 'round the world" were genuine Minutemen. But the majority of their brothers in arms, men without whom the fledgling country would not have produced sufficient troops to stand up to the British, were fighting on less romantic and glamorous terms.

At the beginning of the War, the Continental Army was an all-volunteer outfit. Men were offered cash bonuses and a promise of free western land after the war. But as the war bogged down and prospects of a quick and decisive victory evaporated, so too did volunteer enlistments, and the Continental Army became perilously undermanned. To

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<sup>15</sup> Hummel, 33.

remedy this, the new army resorted to a “federal” draft along the same lines as the militias.<sup>16</sup> The system was decentralized but far reaching. Some states conscripted any able-bodied male they could find, while others simply pulled from the lowest strata of their society.<sup>17</sup> Either way, conscription was an important part of the story of the Revolutionary War and fundamental to the formation of the American Revolutionary fighting force. Once independence was won, the challenge became keeping it, a challenge aggravated by structural issues with the nascent government of the United States.

During the course of the war, American leadership had realized that their governing document and sole unifying bond, the Articles of Confederation, made the central government virtually impotent and effectively unable to defend itself. The Articles enabled the creation of militias, but they were run at the state level.<sup>18</sup> The federal government was neither allowed to have a standing army nor to levy taxes to raise one, even in the event of war. Troops had to be mustered and then “volunteered” by the states to the federal government.<sup>19</sup> George Washington himself called for a system under which a small peacetime standing army that could be bolstered with a large, well-trained, and well-disciplined militia and built according to the principle of universal male conscription. Congress rejected this proposal.<sup>20</sup> It was enough of a stretch for the states to cede the meager authority to tax or raise an army in time of war; a universally trained and equipped populace was beyond even the beloved and respected Washington to institute.

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<sup>16</sup> Chambers, 47.

<sup>17</sup> Hummel, Rogers Jeffrey. "The American Militia and the Origin of Conscription: A Reassessment." *Journal of Libertarian Studies* 15, no. 4 (Fall 2001): 29-77. Page 38.

<sup>18</sup> *The Articles of Confederation*, Art. VII.

<sup>19</sup> *Articles*, Art. VIII.

<sup>20</sup> Hatch, Louis Clinton. *The Administration of the American Revolutionary Army*. New York,; Longmans, Green and, 1904. Page 10.

Going in the opposite direction, Congress all but disbanded the Continental Army when the Revolutionary War ended. They retained only a token force of less than one regiment to hold strategic points such as West Point, and to guard the frontier.<sup>21</sup> Fundamentally, defense was not viewed as a federal responsibility under the Articles of Confederation until an existential threat to the collective emerged. An individual state's border protection, for example, was thought to be the sole prerogative of that individual state.

Upon the abandonment of the Articles of Confederation and the adoption of the Constitution in 1789, the standing army concept received a small shot in the arm, at least on paper. Under President Washington, the newly dubbed "United States Army" was authorized a standing force of 4,000 officers and men, though Congress was very deliberate in appropriating the funds required to recruit, train, and equip that force.<sup>22</sup> With the central government's ability to fully muster a federal force thus hampered, it became necessary to expedite the means by which they could mobilize the militia. Thusly, at the behest of local military leaders, Congress began to codify the states' right to conscript. The Calling Forth Act of 1792 and the Uniform Militia Act of 1794 formally articulated and reinforced the states' and nation's right to conscription, and mandated that every male between the ages of eighteen and forty-five serve in their local militia.<sup>23</sup> Those aged eighteen to twenty constituted the so-called "advanced corps," and were made to drill sometimes up to thirty days out of the year, functioning much like the

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<sup>21</sup> The United States Army. "The Continental Army." United States Army History. March 2011. Accessed December 14, 2013.

<sup>22</sup> Hummel, 42.

<sup>23</sup> Constitution.org. "The Militia Act of 1792." The Militia Act of 1792. Accessed April 17, 2014.

modern National Guard or U.S. Army Reserve.<sup>24</sup> In this manner, the existing system of constant, involuntary conscription at the state level remained and was expanded upon after the Revolution, through the tumult of the late eighteenth century, and into the first round of “Indian Wars” that defined American history in the early nineteenth century.

A significant difference between conscriptions of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and those of the twentieth is the possibility for substitutions or paid commutations of service. In some sense, these pre-Civil War drafts were not really “drafts” at all. While it is true that a great many men were forced to sacrifice their time and energy to drill with local militia units, few were ever forced to face an enemy’s weapon. When a state needed to levy troops for a campaign, it went to each of its town militias and first asked for volunteers. As previously noted, typically only a few would come forward and conscription would become necessary. Drafts of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries were local, the contemporary equivalent of “draft boards” precisely targeted recruits as only those familiar with an area and its people truly can. Often, the people drafted were not actually those the local board expected to serve. The frequent practice was to serve notice to men known to be in a position to offer significant incentives to other men to fight in their stead. By design, these people that had been “drafted” would simply hire someone to volunteer in their place.<sup>25</sup> This model of conscription became a tool for effectively privatizing the cost of producing volunteer armies.

A look at enlistment numbers from the Revolutionary War confirms this phenomenon. Though precise numbers are hard to pin down, it is estimated that only

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<sup>24</sup> Hummel, 45.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid. 38.

2.5% to 10% of the total force during the Revolutionary War had actually been drafted. Contrast those numbers with the estimated percentage of the total force of hired substitutes. As an example case, it is estimated that the Northampton, Pennsylvania militia was 54% hired substitute and that the New Jersey Line of the Continental Army was anywhere from 20% to 40% hired substitute.<sup>26</sup> In some measure, state and federal governments were having their cake and eating it too. They were able to use the threat of conscription to motivate people with means to recruit and deliver a volunteer force that was more socially expendable, and thusly easier to field for prolonged periods of time.

**The War of 1812.** The War of 1812 shows many parallels to the Revolutionary War. It featured the same belligerents, on similar battlefields, with fundamentally unchanged tools and tactics. It also featured a U.S. Army put together in largely the same way.

When the great anti-Federalist Thomas Jefferson became President in 1801, he slashed the military's budget and authorized personnel strength. In somewhat of a contrast to his advocacy of a "blue water" navy while he was Minister to France, Jefferson envisioned defending the American coast with swarms of privately owned gunboats manned by citizen-sailors, pouring out of the nation's harbors and overwhelming the capacity of invading fleets to sink them.<sup>27</sup> His approach to land defenses was similar. The consummate opponent of the standing army, Jefferson shrank the army to a token force while furthering reliance on the militia.<sup>28</sup> He sought to structure

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<sup>26</sup> Hummel, 39.

<sup>27</sup> Buchanan, Andrew. "The "Expansible Army", Indian "Removal", and Military Professionalism." Lecture, HST 183A, The University of Vermont, Burlington, September 26, 2012.

<sup>28</sup> Hummel, 54.

an Army that could withstand a foreign invasion long enough for his universally armed and trained male population to organize an effective resistance. Through Jefferson's advocacy and despite a reticent Congress, the institutional reliance on the militia that had been bred into the young United States in its experience during the Revolution was cemented in the early years of the nineteenth century. This system would shortly be put to the test however, as within a decade of Jefferson leaving office, British troops would again be at America's door.

The War of 1812 was not a popular cause among the general populace. Indeed, this war divided public sentiment as much as any war in American history, including Vietnam.<sup>29</sup> Many American citizens were angry over the impressment of their countrymen into Royal Navy service, but most were unwilling to go to war over it. In consequence, the young United States was forced to rely heavily on conscription to furnish the necessary troop strength. But a *national* conscription bill never passed through Congress.<sup>30</sup> Instead, Jefferson's beloved militias were called forth, en toto, to serve in the active force.

Some suspect that the American declaration of war against the British in 1812 was offensive and expansionist in nature, an opportunistic attempt at a Canadian land grab. England's army was tied up on the continent fighting Napoleon, and her navy was stretched thin enforcing a blockade of most of the western European coast. President Madison and his supporters in Congress believed the United States could take advantage of Britain's diverted attention to seize territories denied to them in the 1783 Treaty of

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<sup>29</sup> Coffman, Edward M. *The Old Army: A Portrait of the American Army in Peacetime, 1784-1898*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1986. Page 40.

<sup>30</sup> Hummel, 55.

Paris, and simultaneously eliminate the possibility of a British-backed Native American confederation of tribes in the Midwest impinging upon future American expansion.<sup>31</sup> However, with a regular army of fewer than 12,000 men, the Americans could not summon sufficient numbers of professional soldiers to dispossess the British of their Canadian holdings, or to wage a sustained campaign against Native Americans in the West.<sup>32</sup> Quasi-conscripted citizen-soldiers of the state militias were asked to do the job instead. They failed, quite fantastically. But American politicians would learn a valuable lesson from that failure. While state militias would go on to serve valiantly and effectively over the course of the war when fighting on their home soil, citizen-soldiers proved to be utterly ineffective as instruments of imperial power. This lesson would be taken to heart when American politicians next considered waging wars of dispossession, in the middle and end of the nineteenth century.

*The Civil War.* The middle of the nineteenth century brought the greatest crisis in American military and political history, the Civil War. Thoughts of westward expansion were put on hold as the Union waged a bitter war to hold itself together.

The early years of the Union draft during the Civil War offer another striking parallel to the Revolution. Of Lincoln's initial call for 75,000 troops, all were conventional volunteers. But once the war got underway in earnest, and it became clear to the public that victory would come with a high human cost, volunteer enlistments slowed to a trickle and a draft was used to fill the ranks.

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<sup>31</sup> *The Old Army*, Page 41.

<sup>32</sup> Quimby, Robert S. (1997). *The U.S. Army in the War of 1812: An Operational and Command Study*. East Lansing: Michigan State University Press. pp. 2–12.

As the war progressed, conscription slowly became a more centralized process, until ultimately the Enrollment Act of 1863 was passed and there was unilateral federal control over conscription for the first time in American history.<sup>33</sup> Though changes to the old system were enacted under this conscription format to make it more like a modern draft, many of the fundamental processes remained the same. While the “commutation” was abolished by the draft of 1864, paid substitutes still comprised the majority of “drafted” soldiers.<sup>34</sup> To avoid service, substitute soldiers could be hired for three hundred dollars. Naturally, this practice was widely perceived to be profoundly undemocratic and unfair, and people put their dissatisfaction on display. In July of 1863, 1,000 people died in draft riots in New York City, as people protested the injustice of the system. Clearly, there were fundamental flaws in the federal government’s drafting mechanisms that needed redress. Though the Civil War was in many ways the first “modern war” in American history (or at least it was the one that finally prompted them to modernize), the means by which they assembled their army were more eighteenth century than nineteenth.

The years immediately following the Civil War through to the start of the Spanish American War display striking similarities to the way in which the modern army mans itself, and offer a distant mirror to our contemporary situation. By the time the Civil War ended in April 1865, there were over 1 million men under arms in the Union Army. By late November of the same year, more than 800,000 of those men had been discharged

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<sup>33</sup> Perri, Timothy J. "The Evolution of Military Conscription in the United States." *The Independent Review* 17, no. 3 (Winter 2013): 429-39. Accessed December 2013. Page 430.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.* 429.

and sent home.<sup>35</sup> Demobilization and reorganization continued at that rapid pace for the next two years, with the Army shrinking to just over 54,000 officers and men by September of 1867, all of them professionals. This was the largest that the Army would be for the next three decades.<sup>36</sup>

During those roughly three decades from 1867 - 1898, the Army's officer corps was comprised almost exclusively of West Point graduates. The officers that constitute "The Long Grey Line" have always been seen as the true military professionals within the ranks. Those that came out of lesser academies (VMI, the Citadel, Norwich) or the ROTC (founded 1866) were not considered true "military men," but simply men that were in the military. Their shorter durations of service reflected this. The enlisted side, too, saw an increase in professionalization. The enlisted American soldiers doing the fighting in the post-Civil War era were (relative to conscripted troops) highly trained men on longer-term enlistments. They were predominantly cavalrymen, requiring greater investment in both money and training than any other sort of trooper. They were the epitome of the enlisted military professional, serving in an army comprised entirely of long-term volunteers. The army had come to be manned and led entirely by "lifers."

***The Indian Wars.*** In the twenty-five years between the end of the Civil War in 1865 and Frederick Jackson Turner's famous 1890 declaration that "the frontier was closed," the U.S. Army fought in at least *forty-five* distinct "wars" against individual Native American tribes or coalitions.<sup>37 38</sup> The smaller scale and lower intensity (relative

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<sup>35</sup> Holberton, William B. *Homeward Bound: The Demobilization of the Union and Confederate Armies, 1865-1866*. Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole, 2001. Print.

<sup>36</sup> Coffman, Edward M. *The Regulars: The American Army, 1898-1941*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2004. Page 5.

<sup>37</sup> PBS. "Frederick Jackson Turner." PBS - The West. 2001. Accessed April 11, 2014.

to the Civil War) of these conflicts translated to a lower manpower necessity, enabling policy makers to rely on an all-volunteer force rather than dragooning local militias into federal service or subjecting the general populace to a draft. Those distant and oft-forgotten frontier wars would be almost the sole occupation of the newly professionalized American Army for the next quarter-century.

Throughout this era in US history, Congress repeatedly sought to reduce the funding and size of the Army. Though some officers and men may have enjoyed the rugged life of a smaller army in a state of permanent semi-war, none of them enjoyed being under-funded and undermanned while they were at it. During this time, the Army lost much of its public prestige and fell away from the public eye:

“[the Army] was unseen, unpopular, or unknown. Northerners were disinterested in it, southerners disliked it, and westerners no longer needed it. In 1877, as a result of political manipulations centering around the end of Reconstruction, the officers and men of the United States Army went a full year without pay.”<sup>39</sup>

All of this occurred while the Army was still very much engaged in the West (the officers and men fighting in the Great Sioux War actually went unpaid through some of it). The fact that westerners in particular could ignore their fellow citizens that were suffering on their behalf is a brutal indictment of the professional army model. This public negligence, brought about by the professionalization and subsequent marginalization of the military, created the battered and exhausted United States Army that closed out the nineteenth century, and a public that remained conveniently ignorant of it, content to reap the rewards of the blood, sweat, and suffering of their countrymen while offering none of their own.

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<sup>38</sup> Colonial Williamsburg Historical Foundation. "The Indian Wars." *The Colonial Williamsburg Official History & Citizenship Site*. Colonial Williamsburg, Spring 2010. Web. 12 Apr. 2013.

<sup>39</sup> Ambrose, Stephen E. *Upton and the Army*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1964. Page 112.

*The Spanish-American War.* The Army's social isolation ended in 1898 with the onset of the Spanish-American War. As the United States was fairly late arriving on the international scene, it had missed the "golden era" of western imperialism. But after watching most of Western Europe gobble up the globe, at the end of the nineteenth century, America decided that she wanted some colonies of her own. The only problem was that most of the "pie" had already been carved up (and eaten, in many cases). The United States would not be able to add any colonies to its burgeoning empire without taking them from someone else. The US identified the Spanish holding of Cuba as a convenient and potentially soft target, and so they sought to drum up a context under which they might invade and seize the small island, fifty miles off the Florida coast.

When the *U.S.S. Maine* exploded and sank in Havana Harbor in February of 1898, the sought after pretext was provided. "Yellow journalists" like William Randolph Hearst and Joseph Pulitzer began drumming up a veritable public frenzy for a war with Spain, the presumed culprit (though internal Navy investigations have shown that the sinking was likely the cause of a shipboard magazine exploding). But in 1898 the US Army was woefully unprepared for a war with a legitimate first world power, as Spain was perceived to be at the time. The Army numbered only 28,000 officers and men on the day the *Maine* sank. To mitigate this, Congress immediately declared all males between 18 and 45 subject to military duty.<sup>40</sup> Within a few months the Army would swell to more than 220,000. Every additional man was a volunteer.<sup>41</sup> They fought a quick but poorly

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<sup>40</sup> *The Regulars*, 3.

<sup>41</sup> Graham A. Cosmas, *An Army for Empire: The United States Army and the Spanish-American War* (1971). Page 103 – 110.

managed war of only eight months before American objectives were met and the massive volunteer army was ushered out of service.

During the almost two decades from the turn of the century to the beginning of American involvement in WWI, the mission of the US military changed. While it is often thought of as a fairly peaceful time for the United States, it was, in fact, an era of previously unprecedented foreign interventionism.<sup>42</sup> The Spanish-American War served as somewhat of a coming out party for United States power. The US became an undisputed regional hegemon, sending marines and soldiers to no fewer than ten countries in the western hemisphere, including Panama to seize the canal zone and Puerto Rico, which remains an American territory to this day.<sup>43</sup> But in addition to these neighborhood police actions (or conquests), the US began to play the role of global power projector. Having taken the Philippine Islands in the Spanish American War, the US fought a Filipino insurgency, and even landed troops in China as part of an international coalition suppressing the Boxer Rebellion, going so far as to leave a garrison in China to continue protecting American interests there indefinitely.<sup>44</sup>

These more muscular policies were carried out by volunteer troops. The men who had fought the Spanish-American war had not signed up to build an empire. When peace was signed and their enlistments ran out, they went home. A new force of professional soldiers was recruited from the general populace to fill the void they left, a force that would fight a long, low intensity war to secure the spoils of American conquest. The

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<sup>42</sup> Grossman, Zoltan. Evergreen State College. "History of U.S. Military Interventions since 1890." History of U.S. Military Interventions since 1890. 2011. Accessed February 16, 2014.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

fighting experienced in the Philippines and other far off places by these soldiers and Marines was some of the most brutal counter-insurgency warfare in American history, though the fact that it was endured by only a very small professional force, far from the public eye, made it easier to compartmentalize for the American public. While a massive public debate from these overseas forays did take place (particularly over the Philippines), no meaningful action was taken. This fit with a then emerging pattern that has continued intermittently to the present.

*The World Wars.* The next great surge in interest in military matters came in the buildup to American involvement in World War I. The American public, ever ready to heed George Washington's warning and avoid getting wrapped up in the troubles of Europe, was initially very reticent to get involved. However, there had arisen a new cohort of American politicians, a fresh brand of Republicans who had been emboldened by the successes of the previous decades' conquests, that advocated American military expansion and involvement in the war on behalf of the English.

These were men such as former President Roosevelt, former Secretary of War Elihu Root, and future Secretary of War Henry Stimson. They found an ally across the aisle in President Woodrow Wilson, an intellectual idealist from the Democratic Party. Wilson desired to stay out of the war, but more than that, he desired for the U.S. to broker the inevitable peace that would follow the war. If that meant getting involved as a combatant and shedding American blood, he would ask (or tell) American kids to do just that.

Unfortunately, neither the Army nor the Navy were manned or equipped for a war with first-rate world powers, and Wilson's 1917 call for volunteers went largely

unheeded. Only 73,000 men had voluntarily joined the Army by the time war was declared with Germany, whereas Wilson had asked for 1 million.<sup>45</sup> History had made clear that the National Guard (federal militias) could not be relied upon for sustained overseas campaigning, so the President resorted to a federal draft. History had also made clear that previous models of conscription would not produce a sufficient overseas fighting force, however. So under the direction of the profoundly influential John McAuley Palmer, the United States passed the Selective Service Act of 1916 (implemented in 1917) and codified the first modern-style draft in its history. This law compelled all males between the ages of twenty-one and thirty to register for the draft (amended in 1918 to include all males between eighteen and thirty-five).<sup>46</sup>

For the first time in American history, the draft was an entirely federal affair. Also a first in American history, the practice of hiring a substitute was expressly forbidden throughout. Any man called upon to serve was legally compelled to do just that (from this era emerged what is by now an old favorite marching cadence of American soldiers that begins: “Got a letter in the mail/ Go to war or go to jail”). The institution of the draft also drove up voluntary enlistment significantly, though there remained significant opposition to the first rounds of drafts. During the first drawing, 50,000 men applied for exemptions and over a quarter of a million men failed to register.<sup>47</sup> Despite that initial reservation,

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<sup>45</sup> *The Regulars*, 204.

<sup>46</sup> US National Archives. "Records of the Selective Service System (World War I)." National Archives and Records Administration. Accessed April 11, 2014.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*

two million men would eventually volunteer to fight in WWI, and another 2.8 million men would be drafted.<sup>48</sup>

This was the first time in American history that the country fielded a predominantly conscript Army. It was also the first time that citizen-soldiers would prove themselves effective in an offensive war. Citizen-soldiers had performed well in combat before, but never on such a scale and never so far from home. This improvement may be attributable to the Selective Service Act's federal bent that enabled the US Army to ensure the quality of soldier that they were sending into action as never before. Regardless, it was a significant break from previous policy and a momentous turning point in the history of United States Army force composition.

After the war, the draft was halted, and, as it always had, the Army reverted back to a relatively small professional force. But this army assumed the new burden of being the enforcement mechanism of a bona fide world power. The Army had men in active combat in South America, Europe, and Asia intermittently throughout the 1920's.<sup>49</sup> The decade following WWI may have been the "roaring 20's" for the average American, but for a small cadre of professional American soldiers, it was a time of high-tempo overseas deployments.

The "roaring 20's" soon gave way to the very depressing 1930's, however, and America was forced to pull back from world affairs and turn her gaze inward. Her age old

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<sup>48</sup> US National Archives. "Records of the Selective Service System (World War I)." National Archives and Records Administration. Accessed April 11, 2014.

<sup>49</sup> Grossman, Zoltan. Evergreen State College. "History of U.S. Military Interventions since 1890." History of U.S. Military Interventions since 1890. 2011. Accessed February 16, 2014.

isolationist streak reemerged. After 1932, Americans would not be asked to serve overseas again until almost a decade later, in World War II.

World War II broke out in Europe in September of 1939. When France fell the following spring, the general feeling in the United States was that war was inevitable. In order to prepare, on September 16, 1940, the United States enacted the first peacetime draft in its history: the Selective Training and Service Act of 1940. This law required all men between the ages of twenty-one and thirty six (again amended to eighteen to sixty five when the war broke out) to register for the draft.<sup>50</sup> The peacetime draft was fairly limited and the service requirement attached to it only one year. Once the US entered the war in December of 1941, however, the draft ramped up dramatically and service commitments were extended to “the duration of the war, plus six months.”<sup>51</sup> Voluntary enlistments also surged in the immediate aftermath of Pearl Harbor, but as they had in WWI, the Civil War, and every major American war before that, volunteer enlistments petered out as the war dragged on, and they ultimately proved unable to sustain the manpower needs of a war of such incredible scale.

By the end of the war, more than fifty million men had been registered for the draft and over eleven million were actually inducted into the service.<sup>52</sup> This resulted in a force composition of roughly 6.3 million volunteers (approximately 39%), and about 11.5 million soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines entered the service via the draft, translating to approximately 61% of the total force.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> US National Archives. "Records of the Selective Service System, 1940-." National Archives and Records Administration. Accessed February 21, 2014.

<sup>51</sup> The National WWII Museum. "Take a Closer Look at The Draft." The National WWII Museum. Accessed March 21, 2014.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> WWII Museum, *Take a Closer Look at the Draft*.

Once the steep learning curve of early defeats was weathered, America's drafted military acquitted itself remarkably well. Fueled by a belief in the righteousness of their cause, instilled with training generally superior to that of their enemies (particularly as the war progressed), and driven by the substantial industrial might of the United States, American citizens that had almost all been private citizens thirty-six to forty-eight months earlier, helped liberate the great capitals of Europe *and* defeat Japan. Combat effectiveness was clearly not a problem for a citizen-soldier army.

*The Cold War.* As early as the end of the War in 1945, a full year before Churchill's famous "Iron Curtain" speech, there were respected American and Allied officials calling for a re-armament of Germany and a combined arms march onto Moscow.<sup>54</sup> Though this view is often written off as zealous war mongering, the sentiment cannot be so easily pigeonholed. American leaders over the course of WWII knew full well that communist Russia was going to be the next great thorn in their side. They recognized that both countries would emerge from the war as super powers, and that they would be jostling for global primacy for years to come. Accordingly, the American presence in Europe was overwhelming at the close of WWII. Unwilling to make the same mistake that they had after WWI, the United States ensured that it kept enough troops overseas after the war to send a clear message about who would be the "decider" in Western Europe. The US had missed an opportunity in 1919 to become the master of Europe and the center of a new world order. It had no intention of doing so again.

But even though there was a massive, experienced, and well-equipped United States Army sitting in Central Europe at the end of WWII, a hot war against Russia in

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<sup>54</sup> Fordham University. "Winston S. Churchill: "Iron Curtain Speech", March 5, 1946." Fordham University: Internet History Sourcebooks. 1997. Accessed April 5, 2014.

1945 was simply not going to happen. There were a number of reasons for this. The *fundamental, most important reason*, however, was that neither the Army nor the American public (of which, as a citizen-soldier army, the army of 1945 was extremely representative), was willing to continue the fight. American mothers and fathers had sent their sons to end fascism and to protect immediately threatened national interests, nothing more than that. The battered Army that had just fought its way through North Africa, Italy, and Western Europe, and the Navy and Marine Corps that had island-hopped through the South Pacific, were simply *not willing* to keep fighting, nor were their families back home willing to sit idly by while they did so. The men saw their job as done, and they were ready to go home. Regardless of what the geopolitical realities were, or what influence the military-industrial complex (a term that did not then exist) might have wielded, the most important factor limiting further American action after WWII was the composition of the force. If the government wanted to fight communists as it had Indians a century earlier, it would need a different Army.

So after WWII, the Army began to transition once again. This began with a failed attempt by General of the Army George C. Marshall at a revolutionary overhaul of the American citizen-soldier service model with his call for Universal Military Training (Section III). But despite its unwillingness to adopt Marshall's reforms, the country did seek to address its shifting service priorities in the wake of WWII. The Cold War presented different challenges from the recently ended two-front total war, and consequently, the military's needs were different. The draft was scaled back dramatically and the Selective Service Action (as it exists today) was instituted in 1948.

*The Korean War.* Even though the draft was not as far reaching as it had been, it never completely went away; it surged to meet the elevated troop needs of the Korean War. The Korean War draft exempted World War II veterans and called for eighteen to thirty-five year old men to serve out two-year obligations. The prospect of being drafted helped encourage and sustain a steady stream of “shotgun volunteer” enlistments, as a drafted man had much less leeway in determining his branch and component than one who had voluntarily entered the military.<sup>55</sup>

Officers and politicians of the day knew the effect that the draft had on the military-eligible population. General Lewis Hershey, the Director of the Selective Service System, often testified before Congress in defense of the draft, making the case that “for every man drafted, three or four more were scared into volunteering.”<sup>56</sup> This flow of voluntary recruits was vital to the United States’ ability to continue to project power throughout the world. While most of America’s post-Korea, pre-Vietnam foreign engagements came in the form of clandestine operations, soldiers and sailors were still frequently dispatched to foreign hot spots in the Middle East, South America, and Asia.<sup>57</sup>

*The Vietnam War.* The hot spot that saw increasing US attention in the 1950’s, particularly from 1954 onward, was French Indochina, or Vietnam. The American involvement in Vietnam began under President Eisenhower with the enunciation of the “Domino Theory” and his commitment to defending democracies against Soviet incursion, expanded under Kennedy, and dramatically escalated under Johnson. The draft

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<sup>55</sup> Korean War Educator. "Korean War Educator: Home Front - Selective Service/College Deferment." Korean War Educator. Accessed February 12, 2014.

<sup>56</sup> Congressional Record, CR-1958-0823, Congressional Session: 85- 2, August 23, 1958

<sup>57</sup> Prados, John. *Vietnam: The History of an Unwinnable War, 1945-1975*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2009. Page 39.

was expanded under all three presidents successively in order to meet yet another burgeoning manpower need. Out of a registered pool of approximately 27 million American males, roughly 2.25 million were inducted into the military, but the draft's most profound effect was cajoling men to voluntarily enlist or to volunteer for the draft (like my own father). All told, 8.7 million Americans entered the Army "by choice" and constituted the majority of the 3.4 million men that ultimately found themselves in Vietnam between 1964 and 1975.<sup>58</sup>

The Vietnam War stirred greater public passion and vitriol on the part of the American people than any war before or since. While not every American was against the war, the preponderance certainly was. The most vocal opponent was the baby boomer generation that was coming of age right in the midst of the conflict, and that bore the brunt of its fighting. In response to Vietnam there were large-scale, popular anti-draft demonstrations for the first time since the Civil War. The system of liberal deferments which had grown up during the period of low draft calls following the Korean War had come to be seen as a means by which the most privileged members of society could avoid service, a distant mirror to the paid substitution system of the Civil War era that precipitated the last round of draft riots in America. In an effort to ameliorate this, in 1970, Nixon ordered the random selection lottery. It did not erase the sense of unfairness, but merely changed the focus from victimization of the underprivileged to victimization of the unlucky; protests only grew. The pressure mounted by the baby boomers and by the broad social coalition that they formed in opposition to the Vietnam War was such

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<sup>58</sup> Prados, 127 – 132.

that, for the first time in American history, a war was ended not by the capitulation of the enemy, but by the weight domestic opposition.

Out of this ‘defeat’ emerged from the military a modern American spin on the “stabbed in the back” narrative of the defeated Weimar Germany. The professional remnants of the post-Vietnam Army felt similarly betrayed by an unsupportive and detached public. Losing the war without losing a significant battle led to an “if only we didn’t have to fight this war with two hands tied behind our back and a blindfold on” institutional explanation for the Army’s defeat.<sup>59</sup> The military grew to resent the public and rejected their perceived “softness.” Likewise, the American public sought to distance itself from the military. The average citizen that had opposed the war and that could not fathom why anyone would fight was content to let the “baby-killing warmongers” that would have liked nothing more than to nuke Hanoi quarantine themselves in an isolated, alternative warrior society.

The Vietnam draft pushed the idea of a conscript army completely out of public favor. In consequence, and with the mutual approval of both the public and the military, the draft was officially ended in 1973 with the introduction of the professional, “All-Volunteer Force” (AVF). While eighteen to twenty-six year old males are still required to register for Selective Service, there are no legal ramifications for failing to do so and no one has been involuntarily inducted into the service in all that time anyway. Today, the draft is dead. The concept of national service or the like is occasionally floated, but elected officials at the national level seem to have reached the consensus that conscription of any kind is either unhealthy for the nation, political suicide, or both.

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<sup>59</sup> Prados, 514 – 517.

**Figure I. Chart of Mobilization by Major War**

War	American Revolution	War of 1812	Mexican American War	Civil War <sup>60</sup>	Indian Wars <sup>61</sup>	Spanish American War
<b>US Population</b>	3,929,214	7,239,881	23,191,876	31,443,321	49,371,340	76,212,168
<b>Pre-war Military Size</b>	0 <sup>62</sup> (0%) <sup>63</sup>	12,000 (0.12%)	12,500 (0.05%)	16,000 (0.05%)	15,000 <b>(0.03%)</b>	26,000 (0.03%)
<b>War Time Military Size</b>	200,000 (5.1%)	286,730 (3.9%)	78,718 (0.34%)	2,213,363 (7.04%)	27,000 <b>(0.05%)</b>	306,760 (4.2%)
<b>US KIA</b>	4,435	2,260	13,283	364,511	1,000	2,446
War	World War I	World War II	Korean War	Vietnam War	Desert Storm	Global War on Terror
<b>US Population</b>	106,021,568	132,165,129	151,325,798	203,211,926	248,709,873	308,745,531
<b>Pre-war Military Strength</b>	100,000 (.09%)	189,000 (0.14%)	1,459,462 (0.96%)	2,653,926 (1.03%)	1,985,555 <b>(.80%)</b>	1,384,338 <b>(.44%)</b>
<b>War Time Military Strength</b>	4,734,991 (4.5%)	16,112,566 (12.2%)	5,720,000 (3.78%)	8,744,000 (4.03%)	2,322,000 <b>(.93%)</b>	1,369,532 <b>(.44%)</b>
<b>US KIA</b>	116,516	405,399	36,574	58,220	383	6,800 <sup>64</sup>

In summary, **Figure I.** shows that every major war since the American Revolution has been fought by citizen-soldiers who were called up either as volunteers or through conscription, only to be demobilized following the war. The notable exception is the 35 years of Indian Wars fought by small group of professional soldiers detached from and largely out of sight of the public eye.

**Data Sources:**

Population Data: *U.S. Census Bureau*  
 URL: <http://www.census.gov/easystats/#>  
 Military Size Data: *Department of Defense*  
 URL: <http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0004598.html>  
 Military Casualty Data: *Defense Casualty Analysis System*  
 URL: <https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/dcas/pages/casualties.xhtml>

<sup>60</sup> Only Union Army numbers are given, Confederate data is excluded.

<sup>61</sup> Data reflects 1867 – 1898.

<sup>62</sup> No federal military existed because no federal government existed.

<sup>63</sup> Percentages are of total population.

<sup>64</sup> As of 15 April 2014.

#### **IV. Two Models for Citizen-Soldier Service**

The preceding historiography shows the defining role of the citizen-soldier in American military conflicts since the colonial era. The American debate on the role the citizen-soldier is well captured by studies of the works Brevet Major General Emory Upton and General George C. Marshall, both of whom sought to shape and sculpt the Army in their time. Upton's seminal work on professionalism influenced the organization of the Army in the decades after the Civil War, and Marshall's proposal for Universal Military Training following World War II raised interesting questions about the role and importance of the citizen-soldier in today's Army that remain relevant today.

##### ***The Post-Civil War Transition: Emory Upton and the Attempt to Reform***

Emory Upton was perhaps the most important and prolific American military intellectual in a century that produced such notables as Silvanus Thayer and Alfred T. Mahan. While he never made the rank that many of his more famous friends and colleagues would, he nonetheless revolutionized American military thinking in the nineteenth century. Seemingly a walking contradiction, Upton's battlefield experience during the Civil War established the feasibility of well trained and disciplined citizen-soldiers, while his subsequent, tireless scholarship on the topic of Army composition seemed to set out to invalidate those experiences. In the years following the Civil War, the Army's Commanding General, William T. Sherman, sent Upton on a world tour to observe and report on the armies of almost every major country in the world. His account of the expedition and his ensuing publications took a hard look at the past military policies of the United States, and became the foundation for major American military reform in the latter half of the nineteenth century.

Emory Upton was born on August 27, 1839 on a family farm in the Northwest corner of New York State. He grew up in an extremely religious home in an extremely religious part of the country. Upton's father inculcated the young Emory with the belief that hard work and discipline were virtues and that idle time or leisurely pursuits were an affront to God. His father told him "in a world with so much darkness there was no time for foolishness."<sup>65</sup> When he was fourteen years old, Upton read a biography of Napoleon and decided that he wanted to be a soldier. At fifteen, he requested an appointment to West Point from his Congressman, but was told to get more education first. Upton spent two years at Oberlin College in Ohio, working tirelessly to prepare himself for West Point's entrance exams, and in early 1856, he was finally appointed to West Point's class of 1861.

Upton's time and experiences at West Point would prove to be extremely formative. They would ingrain in him a bias against the citizen-soldier that he would carry with him (to varying degrees) for the entirety of his Army career. During his second year, Upton took a class on tactics taught by 1839 graduate Henry Wager Halleck. Halleck's textbook repeatedly used historical examples to excoriate the militia and National Guard as effectively useless in modern combat.<sup>66</sup> Upton was taught that the only demographic truly capable of handling the nation's defense was the professional, career soldier led by the professional, career officer.

An already stern and judgmental man immersed in a world of professional soldiers with extremely limited civilian interaction, Upton came to disdain civilian meddling in military affairs. His distaste was furthered by the rampant practice of filling

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<sup>65</sup> Ambrose, 7.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid. 11.

vacancies in the Army with nepotistic civilian appointments. With such a small standing army, the small cadre of officers that West Point and a few other institutions such as VMI and the Citadel produced was considered adequate, with any gaps in the Army's needs filled by the direct appointment of the Secretary of War or other powerful civilian leaders. The direct appointment of often under qualified (other than having the right uncle or cousin) civilians into the military irked Upton enough, but his ire was roused further by the fact that these civilians received their commissions *before* the West Pointers did each year, meaning the civilians in each commissioning cohort technically outranked the professional soldiers. These experiences instilled in Upton certain ideas about civil-military relations, but his experience during the Civil War would morph those ideas into an unshakeable conviction.

Upton was commissioned on May 6, 1861.<sup>67</sup> By the time of his commission, the rebels had already fired on Fort Sumter and the Civil War had begun. States were scrambling to assemble regiments and were desperate for officers to lead them. Many of Upton's West Point classmates accepted regimental commands of the volunteer forces of their home states, serving in the rank of volunteer Colonel while retaining their regular army rank of Second Lieutenant. Jumping into the Army as a brevetted Colonel would seem like an attractive route for a man singularly possessed with making rank and becoming the "most famous soldier in the country," but Upton did not consider entering a volunteer unit for a second.<sup>68</sup> He knew that had he chosen to serve in a New York volunteer regiment, he would have led untrained civilians under an untrained general. His

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<sup>67</sup> Ambrose, 13.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid. 6.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid. 15.

years at the academy had sufficiently prejudiced him against citizen-soldiers that he actively avoided service alongside or underneath them, despite the prospect of easy and immediate rank and reward.

The early years of the Civil War were very eventful for Upton. He served with distinction as an artillery officer and aide-de-camp at the Battle of Bull Run, in the Peninsular Campaign, and at Antietam. He earned high praise from his superiors in the regular army, but that distinction earned him only orders to West Point to serve as a tactics instructor. Upton did not want to leave the war. He loved being a field commander, and he was as good at it as he expected he would be. So, upon hearing that the commander of the 121<sup>st</sup> New York Infantry Regiment had declared himself unfit for service and resigned his commission, Upton pursued the post. In October of 1862, Upton became a “Colonel of Volunteers” and somewhat apprehensively took command of a volunteer regiment.<sup>70</sup>

Upon arrival at his new outfit, Upton put each of his subordinate officers through a battery of tests akin to those that he went through at West Point. These resulted in a number of politically appointed officers resigning in disgust, which was precisely Upton’s intention. He replaced those men with qualified officers of his choosing. He next set about disciplining the enlisted side of his volunteer unit to the regular army’s standard. He had them drilling incessantly to the point that the 121<sup>st</sup> New York Infantry Regiment was dubbed “Upton’s Regulars,” a somewhat ironic moniker that they would keep for the duration of the war. The disciplined paid dividends, however, as the 121<sup>st</sup> acquitted itself extremely well in combat in numerous engagements, most notably at Fredericksburg and

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<sup>70</sup> Ambrose, 20.

Gettysburg. The experience of leading a regiment of citizen-soldiers highlighted to Upton the potential for martial competence in civilians, if provided proper *professional* leadership and instilled with sufficient discipline.

While he had a positive citizen-soldier experience with the 121<sup>st</sup> New York, Upton was horrified and enraged by most of his wartime experiences with them. Over the course of the war, Upton served in the artillery, infantry, and cavalry, rising to the rank of brevet Major General. In these subsequent postings Upton had negative experiences with citizen-soldiers that served to validate his pre-war prejudices. On many occasions during his service, he witnessed citizen-soldiers doing things that went against everything that had been so deeply ingrained in him as a professional officer. He once came across a group of volunteer soldiers sitting off to the side of a battle refusing to fight because the terms of their enlistment contracts had been violated.<sup>71</sup> He was himself repeatedly passed over for promotion throughout the war for political reasons, despite his clearly superior military merit.<sup>72</sup> Hand in hand with that issue was Upton's recognition of the fact that Union troops, volunteer and professional alike, were very poorly led. He wrote in the aftermath of the disaster at Cold Harbor, "Some of our corps commanders are not fit to be corporals."<sup>73</sup> There are innumerable accounts of young First Lieutenant Upton indignantly fixing the haphazard or unsound troop placements of an inept politically appointed Colonel.<sup>74</sup> These experiences galvanized the now war-seasoned Emory Upton, and with the great crusade of his professional career over before his twenty-sixth birthday, Upton set out to make his mark on the peacetime Army.

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<sup>71</sup> Ambrose, 52.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid. 27.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid. 37.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid. 17.

In the years following the Civil War until his death in 1881, Upton sought to become a military theorist of international renown, in the vein of Carl von Clausewitz and Antoine-Henri Jomini. He traveled extensively through Europe and Asia before returning to the United States and attempting to apply the lessons he learned to the US. While many of his initial reforms focused on tactics (Upton was a renowned tactical innovator during the war), all of his later attempts at reform were on the strategic and policy level. This reform movement had a profound effect on military thinking in the US both within the institution of the Army and by political leadership, and served as the guiding hand of American military policy through the turn of the century and beyond.

In the latter part of 1875 and well into 1876, Upton traveled extensively through Europe and Asia as an official observer for the United States Army.<sup>75</sup> He travelled with two fellow officers: Brevet Brigadier General George A. Forsyth and Major Joseph P Sanger.<sup>76</sup> Among the three of them, they were to learn as much as they could about the drills, tactics, and implementations of other countries' infantry, cavalry, and artillery for application in the United States.<sup>77</sup> Their first stop was Japan, a country from which they expected to learn very little. As most western men would have at the time, Upton and his colleagues carried a degree of prejudice with them to Japan. They were skeptical that an "oriental" culture could teach them anything about the military arts.<sup>78</sup> Upon arrival, they were very pleasantly surprised to find that they were wrong. All three men commented on the unexpected proficiency with which the Japanese infantry, cavalry, and artillery

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<sup>75</sup> Ambrose, 85.

<sup>76</sup> Correspondent. "The Japanese Army." *The New York Times* (New York), August 27, 1877.

<sup>77</sup> The New York Times. *The New York Times* (Yokohama, Japan), September 30, 1875.

<sup>78</sup> Correspondent. "The Japanese Army." *The New York Times* (New York), August 27, 1877.

executed battle drills that would leave “little to apprehend even in direct competition with the crack regiments of the line of the United States.”<sup>79</sup> From Japan Upton and his colleagues travelled to China, where they would have one of the more formative experiences of their trip.

Upton was shocked by the state of Chinese military affairs as he found them. The first thing he noticed in China was the cultural indifference that the Chinese people had to military service. He opens his section on discipline in the Chinese Army by stating, “China is the only country [he visited] in which the profession of arms is not honored.”<sup>80</sup> He goes on to quote a Chinese proverb to that effect: “as you would not use a good iron to make a nail, so you would not use a good man to make a soldier.”<sup>81</sup> This indifference to the military and to military service manifested itself deleteriously in many ways, according to Upton. Their weapons and tactics were severely outdated, prompting him to comment that the “Chinese army is as backward in its tactics as in its armament.”<sup>82</sup> In the text of *Armies*, Upton mocks their primitive, flintlock musket-toting infantry and saber-brandishing cavalry. He attributes all of China’s tactical and technical challenges to their public attitude towards military service. He believes that because they institutionally funnel only the dregs of their society into service, the military and therefore the culture as a whole suffers at all levels. He identifies bureaucratic civilian control of the army in

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<sup>79</sup> The Japanese Army, *The New York Times*.

<sup>80</sup> Upton, Emory. *The Armies of Europe & Asia, Embracing Official Reports on the Armies of Japan, China, India, Persia, Italy, Russia, Austria, Germany, France, and England: Accompanied by Letters Descriptive of a Journey from Japan to the Caucasus*. Portsmouth, England: Griffin &, 1878. Page 21.

<sup>81</sup> *Armies of Europe and Asia*, 21.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.* 20.

China as the fundamental problem.<sup>83</sup> It is his experience in China that precipitates a shift in Upton's tour and review of the armies of Europe and Asia from the mere study of their weapons and tactics to a deeper policy analysis.

From China, Upton and his cohorts traveled to India to watch British military drill in action. Upton is very praiseworthy of the organizational and logistical proficiency of the British officer corps in India, but is left generally uninspired by their tactical doctrine. While Upton does not glean much from a tactical standpoint while in India, his observations of colonial armies and the colonizer-native relationship, particularly as it pertains to military service, prove to be important experiences. He concludes that a reliance on native populations is politically complicated and militarily inefficient. He notes the "frequent mutinies that have broken out among the native troops" that have "their source in the deep religious animosities and prejudices of the races."<sup>84</sup> Again, while tactics are painstakingly described and unit organizations thoroughly listed, the key lessons he gleans are at the policy level. He is thinking at this point in his journey more about the way in which armies are fielded than how they're used once they get there.

From India, Upton briefly visits Persia, modern day Iran. The first sentence of his section on Persia sums up his findings exactly: "The decline in military organization from India to Persia is scarcely less marked than from Japan to China."<sup>85</sup> His disdain translates into effort as well as sentiment, and he devotes only eight pages of his roughly four hundred-page treatise on the armies of Europe and Asia to their study.

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<sup>83</sup> *Armies of Europe and Asia*, 22.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.* 78.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.* 88.

After Persia, Upton finally arrives in Europe. It is clear in his chapter bridging the sections on Europe and Asia that Europe was all along meant to be the focal point of his trip. The reasons for his European focus are fascinating and revealing. He says of the armies of Asia that: “the chief object of all these armies is the maintenance of order and peace within their borders.”<sup>86</sup> The armies of Europe, by contrast, are designed to a fundamentally different end. They are to “contend for new territory and increased power...With the object for which they are maintained clearly in view, it is to the armies of Europe that we ought to look for the best military models.”<sup>87</sup> With those words, Upton is tacitly acknowledging that the United States Army’s mission has grown beyond the mere defense of the homeland, and now exists primarily to seize land and maximize power. This is important context for unpacking the military reforms that Upton will propose upon his return to the United States.

Upton visits and studies a number of European countries on his grand tour, among them Italy, England, Russia, and France. His analyses and conclusions of the preceding four countries are largely the same. He appreciates the novelty of their tactics, he is extremely captivated by the way in which all of Europe has cultural, professional officership so ingrained in their societies, and he applauds the interconnectedness of the military and the government. His real groundbreaking work is done on Germany and Austria. It is from these countries’ systems that Upton gleaned most of his ideas for how

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<sup>86</sup> *Armies of Europe and Asia*, 96.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.* 97.

the US should operate. Indeed, some have even argued that he took too much from them.<sup>ii88</sup>

The first thing that stands out about Upton's analyses of Germany and Austria is the sheer length. Combined, they total more than seventy pages. That is about one fifth of the entire book, for only two countries analyzed. Upton is absolutely enamored of the Germans and Austrians. He is extremely praiseworthy of their general staff system, one that was unique at the time. He marvels openly at its efficiency and the way in which it frequently rotated quality officers from the staff, to the line, and back.<sup>89</sup> He is also impressed by the robust system that existed for officers to rate their subordinates and recommend them for promotion or reassignment.<sup>90</sup> He devotes several pages to detailing the Austrian and German versions of what the modern US Army would call an "Officer Evaluation Report." The high turnover rates and frequent ratings by superiors helped to prevent the careerism and the entrenching of incompetent officers that Upton so resented during the American Civil War and throughout the rest of his career. Some of his own frustration at the slow rate of promotion comes through in his analysis: "the effect of the staff arrangement, and promotion by selection, is to enable intelligent and efficient officers to obtain while young the highest grades in the army, in which, at any moment, they may be called upon to influence the destiny of the nation."<sup>91</sup> Implicit in this summation and immediately apparent to any informed contemporary, was that the United

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<sup>88</sup> Weigley, Russell Frank. *The American Way of War; A History of United States Military Strategy and Policy*. New York: Macmillan, 1973. Page 168.

<sup>89</sup> *Armies of Europe and Asia*, 207.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.* 218.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.* 190.

States *lacked* such a system, a point he subsequently probes in painstaking detail in his Conclusion.

Upton pays particular attention in his Austrian and German sections to the way in which both countries trained and readied their general populations for war. In his sections detailing the organizational models of both armies, he takes pains to outline both their peace and war footing models. While these are not the only two countries to be classified with such a dichotomy, they are certainly by far the most detailed. Unique in the analyses of Austria and Germany is a description of *how* they actually muster their armies during peace and war. Upton details in his study the general reserve of the German Army, their “Ersatz Reserve,” which is further broken down into two classes of service of varying duration, a furlough list of men that were granted early separation from the Ersatz Reserve, a general troop depot that funneled men into the Ersatz Reserve, and finally, a “Landsturm.” The Landsturm effectively served as a stable for universal training until young men could be absorbed into the regular army or any reserve component explained above.<sup>9293</sup> Men that were *past* their term of service transitioned into the “Landwehr.” The Landwehr was effectively a home guard, reserved for men that had done their time with the colors and returned home.<sup>94</sup> Universally trained male populations like those that the Germans and Austrians boasted bred a remarkable civil-military understanding into the foundations of their societies.

Upton unabashedly marvels at and jealously covets the German system. For a military man, a society so tightly interwoven with martial virtue would certainly seem

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<sup>92</sup> *Armies of Europe and Asia*, 199.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.* 203.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.* 201.

“the dream.” It is precisely this enthusiasm for the German model that garnered Upton some very harsh criticism, both from his contemporaries and posterity.<sup>95</sup> As contemporary historian Brian Linn puts it: “Upton wanted to replicate another nation’s [Germany’s] military structure, but without transposing the underlying philosophy of war that had created these forces and guided them to victory.”<sup>96</sup> In other words, the contention was that Upton failed to understand that the unique combination of conditions that existed in Germany to create their military apparatus were not the same in the United States, and that thusly, the attempted “cookie-cutter” transposition of a foreign military system would inevitably fail. While these criticisms are not without merit, they do nothing to change the very real impact that Upton’s work had in his time, and afterward.

In 1878, Emory Upton compiled and published his complete observations from abroad in the form of *The Armies of Europe and Asia*, an exhaustive study of the tactics and organization of ten countries and their military establishments. As explored previously, Upton spends most of his ink in *Armies* describing the tactics and force structures of a given country before summing up his findings and making recommendations in his “Conclusion.” But as mentioned, Upton had already made great contributions to tactical reform within the Army (in fact, he won his general’s star during the Civil War for validating a new way in which heavily fortified earthworks might be taken at the Battle of Spotsylvania Courthouse).<sup>97</sup> He published manuals on infantry and artillery drills that were already taking hold at all levels of the post-Civil War United

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<sup>95</sup> Weigley, 168 - 170.

<sup>96</sup> Linn, 50.

<sup>97</sup> Ambrose, 50.

States Army.<sup>98</sup> So with his study of the armies of Europe and Asia, the ambitious Upton sought to do something more than simply reform at the tactical level. He instead sought to apply the lessons he learned overseas to a comprehensive reform of American military *policy*. Resultantly, the ideas Upton advocates in the Conclusion of *The Armies of Europe and Asia* were nothing short of revolutionary. They represented an effort to completely overhaul the Army's force structure and the means by which it filled its ranks.

To build his case, Upton begins by highlighting many of the shortcomings that plagued the Army's system for personnel induction in previous conflicts.<sup>99</sup> His Civil War experiences made painfully clear to him the unnecessarily high price in blood and treasure that the American citizenry is forced to pay when the Army has neither a readily available levy of trained citizen-soldiers prepared to fill out the ranks of the regular army, nor a pool of competent and educated officers to lead them. His comparison of the U.S. Army during the War of 1812 to other countries fighting similar wars of aggression made clear to him the shortcomings of poorly trained citizen-soldier armies in offensive campaigning, explicitly articulating for the first time one of the fundamental lessons to American policymakers that emerged from that conflict.

The most radical proposition made in *Armies*, however, was Upton's call for universal military service through the formation of a group he (somewhat misleadingly) dubbed "The National Volunteers." Upton's first enumerated point in his list of lessons from his journey was the sincerely democratic sentiment that: "...every citizen, in consideration of the protection extended to his life and property, is held to owe military

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<sup>98</sup> Michie, Peter Smith. *The Life and Letters of Emory Upton, Colonel of the Fourth Regiment of Artillery and Brevet Major-General, U.S. Army*. New York: D. Appleton, 1885. Upton to Peter S. Michie, 22 February 1879. Page 467.

<sup>99</sup> *Armies of Europe and Asia*, 321 – 323.

service to his government.”<sup>100</sup> From this fundamental premise he expounded a system of short-term conscription founded on the principle of universal service. In the Conclusion of *Armies*, Upton laid out a peacetime draft that would be “national in character and local in outlook,” meaning one that was federally controlled and that marshaled conscripts directly into the regular army, but that was administered at the local level.<sup>101</sup>

Upton also provides a thorough outline of an entirely re-imagined regular army force composition that could more readily absorb a massive influx of volunteer or conscript soldiers upon the country’s pivot onto a “war footing.”<sup>102</sup> In this way, Upton argues, much of the “wasted life” that inevitably ensues when utterly green troops are thrown into the maelstrom of combat alongside one another could be curbed.<sup>103</sup> Upton concludes *the Armies of Europe and Asia* with that sentiment: “The organization of national volunteers would give us in time of peace the regular army, a reserve, and the militia, and would enable us in time of war to prosecute our campaigns with vigor and economy, and with that regard for human life which becomes a free people.”<sup>104</sup> Under the proposed “Uptonian” system, every American male would have a baseline competence in infantry drills and tactics, regardless of whether or not he made a career of the Army. When called into service, inexperienced conscript or volunteer companies would serve in the same battalions alongside companies of the regular, professional Army, thus dramatically reducing the human cost of war to the United States.

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<sup>100</sup> *Armies of Europe and Asia*, 317.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.* 324.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.* 337 – 353.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.* 347.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.* 370.

The most compelling case Upton makes for National Volunteers has little to do with tactics or military expediency, however, and more to do with the health of American civic life and democracy as a whole. Upton, despite being derided by many historians as “a profoundly undemocratic, militaristic zealot” and “pessimistic” in his outlook, was an idealistic man of conviction who harbored a deep, unshakeable faith in American institutions.<sup>105</sup> He believed that the Army was the oldest and greatest institution in America, and that accordingly, it should be representative of its people. Upton was painfully aware that the US Army of the past and present, an Army that could count fractions of a percent of the country’s population in its ranks except for in a few instances of major war, was not representative of the nation at large. The lesson was not lost on him, and so with his National Volunteers, Upton sought to change that. The first point that Upton gives in outlining the foundational values of the National Volunteers reads:

“1. The declaration, that every able-bodied male citizen, between certain ages, owes his country military service – a principle thoroughly republican in its nature, as it classifies in the same category, and exposes to the same hardships, the rich and the poor, the professional and non-professional, the skilled and the unskilled, and educated and uneducated.”<sup>106</sup>

Upton believed that the Army could be the ultimate democratic experience in the United States. As he specifies in the preceding quote, nowhere else in public or private life are the rich and the poor, the ruling elites and the disenfranchised working classes, the established American and the immigrant, thrown together in such a pure meritocracy and in such dramatic circumstances, as the military, particularly a military at war. Upton felt that this would be extremely healthy for the country, and perhaps more importantly, extremely healthy for his beloved Army.

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<sup>105</sup> Fitzpatrick, David J. "Emory Upton and the Army of a Democracy." *The Journal of Military History* 77 (April 2013): 463-90. Page 462.

<sup>106</sup> *Armies of Europe and Asia*, 323.

Upton understood that an organization such as the National Volunteers, an outfit which stood to be mobilized whenever the country went to war, would engage a wider cross section of American society and thereby keep the American public better attuned to the activities of its military forces. Ultimately, he hoped that coercing the populace into military service would lead the people to “regard the army as the only true field for the exercise of courage and patriotism,” and that the army and the people it defended would become inextricably linked.<sup>107</sup> Upton explicitly articulates this point: “The adoption of such a system [the National Volunteers] would at once tend to nationalize and popularize our Army.”<sup>108</sup> A popular army would serve to demystify the military to the public, and foster a more informed and educated citizenry that was *personally invested* in the actions and welfare of its army.

Upton was extensively read and admired by most of his colleagues, including successive Commanding Generals of the Army (the precursor to the Chief of Staff position) Ulysses S. Grant, William T. Sherman, and Philip Sheridan.<sup>109</sup> Despite that, he never got much traction in implementing his proposed organizational reforms. There remained a genuine and spirited debate among the officer corps, played out in the journals, in the press, and over simple “mess hall” discussion, about the proper role of the Army in society. While Upton advocated grand reform in the shape of a massive force reorganization and reinjection of martial virtue into society, many of his peers were staunchly opposed to Upton’s grand proposals.

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<sup>107</sup> *Armies of Europe and Asia*, 367.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.* 368.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.* 110.

There were those in the officer corps that actually liked the hard-bitten nature of frontier duty. They appreciated the challenge. As Brian Linn puts it: “The army’s constabulary duties on the frontier required officers to make both war and peace and to function as police as well as soldiers.” They also took pride in the ruggedness of it all, Hugh L. Scott recalled one “pacification” mission in which he “swam icy rivers, braved a blizzard, marched almost 500 miles, and successfully arrested a few individuals who had fled their reservation.”<sup>110</sup> Frontier service was hard and rigorous, and some men took pride in doing a job that none of their countrymen wanted. A New York Times opinion piece from an unnamed frontier officer praises the Army and the uniquely American nature of the service it performs on the frontier: “The greater portion of our military service is of a kind which no other army in the world could be got [sic] to perform. This outpost duty, in which our troops pass their lives, is one which European armies...perform only for fixed periods.”<sup>111</sup> He goes on to praise his fellow officers, “the officers are buoyed under this terrible task by the influence of resources and education, by the voice of honor, and the hope of distinction.”<sup>112</sup> He also comments on the size of the United States Army, offering a dramatically different view than that which Upton advances. He claims that the American people are “so essentially a non-military people, that our standing army is in some measure forced upon us by...the immensity of our frontier and the ever increasing complexity of our relations with other powers.”<sup>113</sup> The most savage attack and potential counterpoint to Upton comes at the end of his article, however: “there can be no doubt that the attempt to keep Comanches, Apaches, and

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<sup>110</sup> Linn, 74.

<sup>111</sup> "Our Military Service." *The New York Times*, October 2, 1857.

<sup>112</sup> Military Service, *The New York Times*.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*

Seminoles in check with the same sort of force which we use to fight British regulars and quell insurrections of our citizens, is very absurd.”<sup>114</sup> While men like Upton called for a large, rigid army with an assertive presence in the lives of everyday Americans, other voices within the ranks were content to remain a grizzly, underappreciated frontier constabulary on the fringes of society, performing an unglamorous but necessary service to the nation.

Further impeding Upton’s efforts to reform was the fact that the American people (and the officer corps, for that matter) had just recently closed the book on the bloodiest conflict in American history, and martial zeal among the general public was understandably flagging. So while Upton had success convincing fellow officers of the merits of his *tactical* thinking, the bigger-picture reorganization of the US Army that he envisioned in *The Armies of Europe and Asia* and that he had begun to lay out in earnest in the early drafts of what would be his seminal work, *The Military Policy of the United States*, was not to be.

In the social and political climate of the years following the Civil War, even with a personal friend in the White House in U.S. Grant, Upton’s calls for major reform went unheeded. While the War Department itself was not much interested in major strategic or organizational overhaul, the biggest stumbling block was the people’s body itself: Congress. The Democrat controlled South grudgingly accepted that it had to be a part of the Union, but it certainly had no interest in expanding Union influence in the lives of Southern sons and grandsons anymore than absolutely necessary. Upton noted in *Armies* that none of his “plans can be successfully executed, nor can any other plan be devised

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<sup>114</sup> Military Service, *The New York Times*.

for prosecuting our wars with economy of life and treasure, without special legislation looking to the increased efficiency, and radical reorganization of the army.”<sup>115</sup> From a divided Congress representing war weary constituents, no such legislation would be forthcoming.

Contributing to the lack of enthusiasm for Upton’s proposals, or perhaps the cause of it, the federal government and its army had no large pressing concerns to attend to in the aftermath of the Civil War. By the mid nineteenth century, the United States had demonstrated beyond doubt to any would-be invader that the country was capable of defending itself. The specter of foreign invasion no longer loomed as large as it had in previous decades. Therefore, neither the American people nor their elected officials saw any need to invest a great deal of taxpayer dollars and citizen sweat into the Army. As far as they were concerned, no threat that demanded such a readiness posture existed. Here we can identify a fundamental divide between the motivations of Upton and the general American public. While Emory Upton was concerned with preparing for the next “big one,” and catering US policy to the direst potential personnel needs, the general population only wanted to address the most pressing problem of the day. That problem was indubitably the ongoing war being fought on America’s western frontier. But that conflict against the Indians did not require a great effort on the part of the American people, as far as they were concerned. Enough men were choosing to join the Army to do the job with which it was tasked. The public saw no reason that they should be compelled to do anything where they did not see a pronounced need for their service.

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<sup>115</sup> *Armies of Europe and Asia*, 324.

Upton was discouraged by his failure to give impetus to a dramatic overhaul of American military policy after *Armies*, but he did not quit on the idea. Upon finishing his manuscript for *Armies*, Upton immediately began work on what he felt would be his legacy work, his pièce de résistance, his immortal contribution to the United States military intellectual tradition: *The Military Policy of the United States*. In this book, Upton sought to trace American military policy from the Revolution through the Civil War “and to show at what expense and treasure and blood a nation must prosecute wars” and in the process expose the “folly and criminality” of previous American policy.<sup>116</sup>

In *Military Policy*, Upton built upon old arguments made in *Armies* while providing greater historical and theoretical evidence for them. Historian Stephen Ambrose distills Upton’s suggestions as follows: “The military forces of the United States should consist of the regular army, the National Volunteers which would be trained and officered by the regulars on an expansive system, and the militia, to enforce the laws and suppress insurrections.”<sup>117</sup> The case he makes for his reforms is rooted extensively in campaign-by-campaign case studies from every major American war.<sup>118</sup> He looks at each example of American inefficiency or failure on the battlefield and explains how his system might have mitigated it. Upton’s work is on the whole a thorough, comprehensive, and painstakingly researched contribution to the American military intellectual tradition. The largely positive feedback that drafts of Upton’s work received from his fellow officers (including William T. Sherman) and the correspondence of contemporary officers allow us to speculate that Upton’s compiled wisdom represented the general

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<sup>116</sup> Michie, Upton to Wilson, 15 April 1878.

<sup>117</sup> Ambrose, 124.

<sup>118</sup> Upton, Emory. *The Military Policy of the United States*. Edited by Joseph Prentiss Sanger and William D. Beach. Washington: United States Department of War, 1904.

thoughts and opinions of the mainstream of the Army officer in the late nineteenth century.<sup>119</sup>

Emory Upton was a tortured soul. In 1870, his beloved wife died. He would mourn her for the rest of his life. In 1878, when he published *Armies*, the critical praise his work garnered and the early (but fleeting) support that his ideas had on Capitol Hill had him extremely hopeful of getting legislation through Congress that would turn his lifelong dreams of international military fame and acclaim into reality. His hopes were dashed. In 1881, while assigned as Colonel of the 4<sup>th</sup> Artillery at what is now the Presidio in Monterey, California, a depressed and migraine-addled Emory Upton sat down at his desk to write a letter of resignation to the Secretary of War, put his .45 caliber service revolver to his temple, and shot himself through the head.<sup>120</sup> His death utterly rocked the Army officer community. Though he believed himself a failure after his failed national reform efforts, Upton's colleagues and superiors in the Army thought more highly of him.<sup>121</sup> Many of the most influential men in the country attended his funeral, and Upton's pallbearers included the massively famous generals Edward D. Townsend, James H. Wilson, and William T. Sherman.

At the time of his death, Upton had not yet finished *The Military Policy of the United States*. While a few of his friends and colleagues had seen drafts of chapters, nobody had yet seen the entire manuscript. In his will, Upton had appointed his best friend and West Point classmate Henry DuPont to finish the book in his stead.<sup>122</sup> But

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<sup>119</sup> Correspondent. "The Military Alumni Meeting: The Examination of the Graduates." *The New York Times* (West Point, NY), June 13, 1873.

<sup>120</sup> Ambrose, 148.

<sup>121</sup> Michie, 471.

<sup>122</sup> Ambrose, 152.

DuPont was extremely busy running his family's chemical business (yes, that DuPont) and was thus unable to devote the necessary time to completing the manuscript, while at the same time refusing to publish it before it was "absolutely perfect."<sup>123</sup> Years passed, and the Army officer community became more and more frustrated with DuPont. But DuPont only kept getting busier (he was ultimately elected to the United States Senate).<sup>124</sup> Accordingly, the *Military Policy of the United States* remained unread, its lessons unlearned, and the institution that it could have helped continued to stagnate. The Army near the end of the nineteenth century remained a force structured to fight Indians that no longer existed that would be no match against an organized and competent first-rate power.

Then, in 1898, the country went to war. Luckily, the enemy was neither organized nor competent. The Americans handily won the Spanish-American War, but at a remarkable, unnecessary cost. During that war, there was no general staff coordinating overall strategy. There was no institutional apparatus for inter-service coordination. There was no sophistication to the logistics supporting overseas operations in two hemispheres. Soldiers ate rancid meat or starved. More than two thousand died from disease.<sup>125iii</sup> The American public was outraged, and the Secretary of War (Russell A. Alger) was

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<sup>123</sup> Ambrose, 153.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid. 155.

<sup>125</sup> United States Department of Defense. "Military Casualty Historical Data: Spanish-American War." Defense Casualty Analysis System. April 15, 2014. Accessed April 15, 2014.

unceremoniously fired.<sup>126</sup> This sacking created an opening for the ascendancy of the greatest friend that Emory Upton never had: Secretary of War Elihu Root.

The so-called “Root Reforms” still represent the most thorough and dramatic changes to the Army and its composition in the nation’s two hundred and thirty eight year history. A largely overlooked feature of those reforms is that they were almost entirely a product of Emory Upton’s intellectual and scholarly efforts.

Root took office knowing that he needed to enact dramatic changes to the organization and structure of the War Department, and he fielded suggestions from, among other places, his own officer corps. They collectively pointed him in the direction of Emory Upton’s work (further evidence of Upton’s popularity and widespread acceptance in that demographic). Root quickly read *The Armies of Europe and Asia*, as well as a biography of Upton written by a friend and West Point professor Peter Michie. Then Root heard about the manuscript of *Military Policy* that was collecting dust in Henry Du Pont’s office. He demanded that DuPont hand it over. DuPont complied, perhaps more out of guilt than anything else. Root then set a pair of promising young officers to the task of editing and revising Upton’s work in preparation for widespread publication. Finally, in 1904, the War Department published *The Military Policy of the United States*.

With the text of *Military Policy* as a backbone, Root enacted major military reforms. He streamlined the command and control of the Army, at long last creating an American General Staff with a single Chief of Staff of the Army who served as the senior

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<sup>126</sup> U.S. Army. "Darkness and Light: The Interwar Years, 1865–1898." *The U.S. Army Center of Military History*. Force Structure and Unit History Branch, 25 Apr. 2005. Web. 19 Mar. 2013.

ranking member of the military and reported directly to the Secretary of War's office.<sup>127</sup>

Root also enlarged the standing army, put tighter constraints on the state run National Guards so as to allow for their smoother transition into active service, and created a system of interchangeability between staff and line assignments for the officer corps to ensure that decision makers did not lose sight of the realities of war for the man at the front.<sup>128</sup>

Suddenly, Emory Upton's name and work was at the tip of everyone's tongue in Washington. *Military Policy* went through four printings before 1914, all sponsored by the War Department. Congress frequently published and distributed select chapters. The Army War College held essay contests on Upton's works. Most importantly, "Upton's spirit presided over the 1916 hearings on national defense," as every speaker either made direct mention of him or discussed his works.<sup>129</sup> The press at the time went so far as to call him a "military genius."<sup>130</sup> In a sense, Emory Upton had been vindicated. He had always been respected, but he was finally being listened to at every level of the government and military hierarchy.

But while the Root Reforms made the United States Army a much more efficient and effective combat force, it did not make it substantially more democratic or representative of the American public. An important area that the Root Reforms neglected to address, perhaps the key area, was the means by which the Army was put together. Root completely sidelined Upton's concept of the National Volunteers, and with

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<sup>127</sup> 10 U.S. Code § 3033, Creation of the Army Chief of Staff Position.

<sup>128</sup> Ambrose, 156.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid. 157.

<sup>130</sup> Barry, Richard. "Emory Upton, Military Genius." *The New York Times* (New York), June 16, 1918.

it any notion of universal military obligation in the United States. The peacetime Army would always be larger after Root's tenure as Secretary of War, but it was still only a small percentage of the population writ large, and except when directly engaged in significant overseas conflict, the public was largely detached from it. The Army would stumble through the cycle of massive, rapid expansion for conflict and equally rapid demobilization two more times before another American military official would make an earnest call for compulsory national service and the forced democratization of the armed forces. This time, however, it would come from the very top of the uniformed hierarchy in the person of one of the most respected men in American history: George Catlett Marshall.

### ***George C. Marshall and Universal Military Training***

George Catlett Marshall was born into a comfortable middle class family in Uniontown, Pennsylvania on December 31, 1880.<sup>131</sup> A descendant of an old, prestigious Virginia planter family, he chose to attend the Virginia Military Institute upon completing high school. Four years later in 1901, Marshall graduated from VMI and commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the Infantry Branch of the United States Army.<sup>132</sup> Marshall saw action as a Platoon Leader and Company Commander in the Philippines and several other of the guerilla campaigns that characterized the decade and a half bridging the turn of the century to WWI, as well as rotations as both a student and an instructor at the School of Infantry and Cavalry (today the Command and General

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<sup>131</sup> George C. Marshall Foundation. "About George C. Marshall." George C. Marshall. Foundation, 2009. Accessed February 21, 2014.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid.

Staff College) at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.<sup>133</sup> When the Great War came, Marshall was deployed to France. First, he served as the chief planner for the 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division. His success there earned him a quick transfer to the American Expeditionary Force (AEF) Headquarters, where he worked very closely with General John “Black Jack” Pershing, the commander of all AEF troops in Europe and Marshall’s mentor.<sup>134</sup> It was while serving on Pershing’s staff that Marshall met John McAuley Palmer, a man that would prove to be extremely influential on Marshall later in his career. It was also while serving as a staff officer in Europe during WWI that Marshall distinguished himself as a prominent officer in the US Army of the future, and singled himself out for future general stars.

Between the wars, Marshall served in a number of capacities in Washington D.C. and elsewhere. He commanded the 15<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment in China for three years, as well as the Vancouver Barracks in Washington State.<sup>135</sup> Most of his assignments in the inter-war years, however, were fundamentally related to policymaking, what the modern Army might classify as being a part of “Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC).” Marshall taught at the Army War College, oversaw the Infantry School’s publications (thusly he was instrumental in distilling the infantry’s lessons from WWI), and in July of 1938, as a Brigadier General, Marshall was appointed Deputy Chief of Staff of the Army. It was in this era of his career that Marshall began to distinguish himself as a prescient and insightful military mind. In his capacity as Deputy Chief of Staff, Marshall attended a

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<sup>133</sup> George C. Marshall Foundation. "About George C. Marshall." George C. Marshall. Foundation, 2009. Accessed February 21, 2014.

<sup>134</sup> Marshall, George C. *Memoirs of My Services in the World War, 1917-1918*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1976. Page 143.

<sup>135</sup> Cray, Ed. *General of the Army: George C. Marshall, Soldier and Statesman*. New York: Norton, 1990. Pages 183 – 185, 228.

White House meeting in which President Roosevelt proposed a plan for a massive air force buildup, at the expense of the Army. Every attendee of the meeting tacitly agreed, except Marshall, who, when asked by the President himself, boldly and honestly replied, “Mr. President, I am sorry, but I don’t agree with you at all.”<sup>136</sup> Most of Marshall’s peers believed he ended his career with his audacity. Instead, on 23 April 1939, Marshall was summoned into President Roosevelt’s second floor White House study. There he was informed that he would be appointed the next Chief of Staff of the Army, a position he would occupy for the entirety of the Second World War.<sup>137</sup>

The first great challenge that Marshall faced during the war was turning the underfunded and archaic army of 174,000 men that he inherited in 1939 into a viable fighting force that could stand up to seasoned German, Italian, and Japanese troops.<sup>138</sup> The rush to get men into theatre forced Marshall to approve an extremely abbreviated training regimen for all troops (except those in Airborne units) that gave the average American private on his way overseas only a primitive understanding of the weapons, equipment, and basic soldier skills that he would be implementing in the face of the enemy.<sup>139</sup> That dearth of quality men and material was put on painful display throughout the early American involvement in the European theater, with defeat after defeat characterizing the hapless American efforts against the seasoned and savvy troops of Erwin Rommel’s much vaunted *Afrika Korps*. Even as late as mid-1944, some American

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<sup>136</sup> Cray, 249.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid. 262.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid. 269.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid. 272 – 279.

soldiers destined for line service were being only nominally trained in the use of weapons and tactics actually in practice in theater.<sup>140</sup>

The experience of having to frantically rush to the field an army capable of standing up to a first-rate power stuck with Marshall for the rest of his life, and convinced him finally and unshakably of the merits of the ideas of his old friend and colleague John McAuley Palmer. Born in 1870, Palmer was a decade older than Marshall. Like Marshall, he was a career infantry officer. Palmer and the primacy he puts on citizen-soldiery are considered in many ways to be the antithesis of Emory Upton, though that is not an entirely fair claim. It is true, however, that while Upton was a proponent of maintaining a significant standing force of military professionals as the primary prosecutors of American wars, Palmer advocated and wrote extensively on precisely the opposite.

In 1911, Palmer accepted a post on the Army General Staff, where he was instrumental in instituting a number of tactical reforms and reorganizations.<sup>141</sup> Palmer read and rejected the wartime expansion system articulated by Upton in *Military Policy*.<sup>142</sup> In 1912, he published *The Report of the Organization of the Land Forces of the United States*, as part of a report issued by the General Staff. In this document, Palmer reviews previous applications of militias, and reaches similar conclusions about their ineffectiveness.<sup>143</sup> But rather than write them off as previous thinkers had (especially Upton), he instead proceeded to offer a defense of them and their potential value. He

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<sup>140</sup> Cray, 284.

<sup>141</sup> Palmer, John M. "John McAuley Palmer Papers." *Collection Summary*, March 2013. Accessed April 12, 2014.

<sup>142</sup>House, Jonathan M. "John McAuley Palmer and the Reserve Components." *Parameters, Journal of the US Army War College* XII, no. 3 (2013): 12-18. Accessed April 10, 2014.

<sup>143</sup>Ibid.

proposed possible solutions that would, in contrast to Upton's expansive model of professional officers leading citizen-soldier troops, preserve an unfettered citizen-soldier character in a large, quickly mobilized army. In 1916, these ideas were more meticulously laid out in his book, *An Army of the People*.<sup>144</sup>

After WWI, Palmer, then a full Colonel, again served on the Army General Staff, where he effectively became the primary formulator of American military policy.<sup>145</sup> Palmer was the greatest driving force behind the formulation and passage of the National Defense Act of 1920, which formally established the prevailing "Army of the United States" as a three-part organization consisting of the Regular Army, the National Guard, and the Organized Reserve.<sup>146</sup> This system was intended to inextricably bind the citizen-soldier model to American military policy, forcing upon the general American public a stake in all future conflicts. It was by this profoundly democratic military theorist (as well as by his own war experiences) that Marshall was most influentially socialized and professionally developed with regard to personnel policy.

While Marshall was unquestionably an adherent to Palmer's policy proposals, he accepted them for different reasons than Palmer initially posited. Ever the pragmatic general, Marshall pushed for Universal Military Training (UMT) primarily as a means of meeting the incredible demands that would immediately be placed upon the country's military in the event of a land war with the Soviets, while still enabling the American taxpayer to enjoy some margin of a "peace dividend" following the massive moral and monetary expenditure that was the Second World War. Amidst the backdrop of the

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<sup>144</sup> Palmer, John McAuley. *An Army of the People; The Constitution of an Effective Force of Trained Citizens*. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1916.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>146</sup> *Palmer Papers*.

rapidly escalating Cold War, Marshall appeared before Congress in 1947 and stated: “We [the US] must find some method of maintaining a sufficient military posture, one sufficiently strong without the terrific expense of a large standing military establishment.”<sup>147</sup> Marshall recognized that the United States was facing a military readiness challenge that was unique in American history. The years of 1941 – 1945 had seen the ascendancy of the United States to unquestioned super power status. As the War was coming to a close in 1945, President Roosevelt introduced the concept of the United States as a global leader (and implicit in his view, a global police force). He called for the US to take a larger and more assertive international role, strengthen ties with allies to avoid future conflicts, and for the US to step out on the world stage as “a larger organization for world peace.”<sup>148</sup> The US position at the end of WWII as encapsulated by President Roosevelt bookended the process begun by FDR’s uncle’s Great White Fleet thirty-eight years earlier. Only now, the successful pursuit of American policy necessitated a great deal more than sixteen battleships and various escorting accoutrements. Genuine and assertive global leadership necessitated ready access to an incredible body of prepared manpower.

As the Chief of Staff of the Army in the wake of WWII, General George C. Marshall was concerned with preparing precisely that trained and ready force for a land war on the European continent against the Soviets. As early as October of 1945, while still serving as the nation’s senior uniformed official, Marshall began publicly advocating

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<sup>147</sup> Statement by George C. Marshall in Senate Committee on Armed Services, Universal Military Training: Hearings Before the Committee on Armed Services United States Senate, 80th Cong., 2nd sess., Mar. 17, 18, 23–25, 29–31, and Apr. 1–3, 1948, in Sager, John. "Universal Military Training and the Struggle to Define American Identity During the Cold War." *Federal History*, 2013, 57-74. Page 57.

<sup>148</sup> Sager, 63.

not just a continuation of the WWII draft, but the institution of Universal Military Training for eighteen to twenty year old males.<sup>149</sup> A very public national debate sprung from Marshall's efforts, and he continued to champion his cause while serving as Secretary of State and later Secretary of Defense to President Harry S. Truman. Testifying before Congress in 1948, Marshall said "The concept of universal service and military training reaches back more than 150 years. The father of His [sic] country recognized the need for a citizens' army based on reserves of trained manpower."<sup>150</sup> Marshall asked Congress to approve a plan for universal training, claiming, "in every national emergency...our military efforts have been hampered, our very national existence has been imperiled, by the lack of trained reserves."<sup>151</sup> The main thrust of Marshall's call for UMT was that it was militarily expedient and necessary to the defense of American interests in Europe and around the world.<sup>152</sup> Marshall sought to save any of his successors, and more importantly, his countrymen, from having to cope as he had with a grossly unprepared and underequipped military that would be forced into the field before it was ready.

So, with President Truman's blessing and Palmer's advice, General and later Secretary Marshall introduced UMT before Congress. He testified on numerous occasions on its behalf. The system that he outlined, as previously alluded to, stipulated that upon turning eighteen, all males would report for one year of military training. Upon the completion of their training, they would be organized in a general reserve for six

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<sup>149</sup>Shallet, Sidney. "SERVICES AND CONGRESS SPLIT ON TRAINING PLAN; Draft in Any Form Stirs Conflict as Army and Navy Dispute Merger." *The New York Times* (New York), October 28, 1945. New York Times Archive.

<sup>150</sup> George C. Marshall to HASC, in Sager, 66.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid. 67.

<sup>152</sup> Shallet, New York Times.

years following. It would be from this pool of ready, trained men that mass armies would be conscripted, when needed.<sup>153</sup> In contrast to Upton's expansive model that necessitated a large enough professional officer corps to lead an Army bolstered to its war footing, Marshall's model would have formed a system under which a "comparatively small professional force [was] reinforced by a well trained and effectively organized citizen reserve."<sup>154</sup> Marshall's citizen-soldiers would have been led by their own officers, thus preserving its civilian character, while the fact that they were already "well trained" and "effectively organized" would preserve an acceptable caliber of combat effectiveness (if not quite equal to that of the professionals). President Truman threw his weight behind the proposed system as well. In numerous addresses to Congress, Truman outlined the benefits of UMT for the country, citing among other things that the reduced standing army would save the country money in the long run, that compulsory service would instill in young Americans a proper understanding of citizenship and responsibility, and that such a system would manifest a uniquely American fighting force characterized by equality and inclusivity.<sup>155</sup> The UMT system, if executed properly, would inexorably tie American armed forces to the ideal of the citizen-soldier upon which the nation was founded. But despite the strong argument put forward by these very high profile and venerated public servants, a panoply of private and public interests lined up in opposition to Marshall's proposal.

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<sup>153</sup> Cray, 1,115.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid. 1,116.

<sup>155</sup> Sager, 69.

The most vehement opposition to Marshall's UMT came from educators and from Congress.<sup>156</sup> The education community feared that a one or two year interruption in young Americans' education for military service would homogenize the worldviews of an entire generation. They worried that it would limit democratic instruction and hamper intellectual progression. They also feared cooptation by the federal government. If public service was to be nationalized and made compulsory, why not education as well?<sup>157</sup> State institutions like public education above all others feared the potential for overreach by the federal government. The most assertive and thorough rejection of UMT, however, as it had roughly eighty years earlier in Emory Upton's day, again came from the people's branch: Congress.

While there were some sympathetic members of the House and Senate that supported UMT, the majority of Congress had a litany of grievances against the policy that were very publicly aired from the end of WWII through the early years of the following decade.<sup>158</sup> On its face, much of Congress rejected UMT because they believed it to be too costly and that it would be ineffective, despite the assurances of the administration and the army that UMT would actually save money in the long run. There was also the growing consensus among policymakers in the late forties that large-scale conventional armies were a thing of the past. A New York Times Op-Ed from 1947 reflects this idea: "only a wasteful government would spend money to train an army for

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<sup>156</sup> The Associated Press, "UMT Is Attacked by Einstein Group: Opposed as Spread of Military Influence, Fackenthal Joins Educators Backing Program." *The New York Times* (New York), January 19, 1948.

<sup>157</sup> New York Times, *UMT Attacked*.

<sup>158</sup> Associated Press. "Senate Uncertain Over Draft, UMT." *The New York Times* (New York), March 21, 1948.

something we would never need [a large scale ground war].”<sup>159</sup> The Soviet experience on the Eastern Front of WWII was still fresh in America’s collective mind. The Soviet ability, but more importantly, their *willingness*, to throw millions upon millions of men into a meat grinder as a legitimate military strategy demolished the Germans and demonstrated to the West that the Red Army would not be beaten conventionally except at an unfathomable price, a price that both the Russians and the Americans knew the West would not pay. But the Americans found a way around their unwillingness to bleed on such a scale. While the Soviets made a great statement to the world by steamrolling their way into Berlin in May of 1945 and raising the “Sickle and Hammer” over a burned out *Reichstag*, the Americans answered with an equally forceful statement of their own. On 6 August 1945, the Americans debuted for the world (and in Russia’s backyard) the most destructive weapon in human history. It was American ingenuity’s counterpoint to pure Russian brawn, and arguably, the first day of the Cold War.

By 1947, the nuclear age had dawned in earnest, and it was in this context that the debate over UMT played out. While the US in 1947 had a monopoly on “the bomb,” legislators and policymakers knew that it was only a matter of time before the Soviets had one too (they got it in 1949). That eventuality, as far as contemporary detractors from the UMT model were concerned, would have rendered obsolete both the offensive and defensive application of large formations.<sup>160</sup> An American army massed around any key objective would face nuclear annihilation, if it could even beat the Red Army

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<sup>159</sup> Associated Press. "The Atom in Peace and War." *The New York Times* (New York), July 25, 1947.

<sup>160</sup> Linn, 190 – 192.

conventionally in the first place (which many did not believe they could).<sup>161</sup> Detractors of UMT in Congress perceived themselves to be forward thinking. They felt that large armies were relics of a pre-nuclear era, and they felt that the adoption of UMT would be an example of the United States government and military preparing to fight the next war with the tactics that won the last one.

The real heart of the public debate went beyond questions of sheer military expediency, however. At the core were issues of citizen responsibility and the limits of democratic governance, a revisiting of the core American principles upon which the nation was founded. There prevailed in most of the arguments against UMT a great fear of an American militarism that would spring from having a militarized male population. It was argued that universal conscription, even if for a brief time in a young man's life, was a dangerous departure from the American tradition, one that smacked of Prussian or German practices.<sup>162</sup> Having a ready and available reservoir of trained troops might make for a more bellicose and belligerent American public, the logic being that one would more readily resort to the sword if it were always sharp and kept within arm's reach. This militarism, it was argued, would subordinate American men and women to the needs and whims of the military, thus encroaching on the civilian liberties that the military exists to uphold and defend in the first place.<sup>163</sup> In the words of famous contemporary historian Charles Beard, UMT would "violate every liberty to which our nation has been dedicated since the founding of the Republic."<sup>164</sup> Critics responded to advocates claims that UMT

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<sup>161</sup> Linn, 191.

<sup>162</sup> Shallet, New York Times.

<sup>163</sup> Associated Press, *UMT Attacked*.

<sup>164</sup> The Editors of Encyclopædia Britannica. "Charles A. Beard (American Historian)." Encyclopædia Britannica Online. Accessed April 3, 2014.

would instill a reliance on the democratically principled citizen-soldier by arguing that the opposite would in fact be the case. They felt that UMT would actually destabilize American values. Detractors postulated that UMT was antithetical to citizen-soldier values because conscripts would be plucked and absorbed into a compulsory, national organization and not fighting out of a concern for the local and the immediate. This is a somewhat ironic inversion of Marshall's assertions about the democratizing effect of shared mandatory service, but it made for a compelling argument nonetheless. Ultimately, UMT detractors saw the proposal as a profound threat to the long held American ideal that those who sacrifice freedom for security deserve neither.<sup>165</sup> They did not see the merits of impinging individual liberty in any way in order to prepare for uncertain future conflicts.

Marshall attempted to address all of these issues with his congressional testimonies and public appeals from 1945 – 1948. He rejected the notion that large-scale armies were a thing of the past. He believed that nuclear weapons were a weapon of last resort and that a very high threshold for their use existed. He believed that the best way to meet the readiness challenges of the latter half of the twentieth century, and to ensure that the United States would never again be caught flat-footed as they had in the early years of WWII, was to train a massive pool of potential conscripts that would be ready for line service in only the time it took to mobilize them.<sup>166</sup> He further couched this argument in fears of a potential Soviet attack on the United States mainland, facilitated by new weapons such as jet fighters and supersonic bombers, and the prevalence of quick strike

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<sup>165</sup>Franklin, Benjamin. "The Papers of Benjamin Franklin." Packard Humanities Institute: The Papers of Benjamin Franklin. November 11, 1755. Accessed April 9, 2014.

<sup>166</sup> Shallet, New York Times.

forces such as mechanized and airborne troops. Marshall articulated that in the event of a ground war on American soil against potentially overwhelming Soviet ranks, a deep, trained reserve would be vital to mounting a coherent defense.<sup>167</sup> Making that case more compelling, Marshall argued that the existence of a large, trained citizen force in the US and the world's awareness of its existence would actually serve to raise the perceived cost of a US invasion, and thusly deter foreign (Soviet) aggression.<sup>168</sup>

Marshall acknowledged the criticisms of congressional leaders and private citizens that UMT would place a burden on the American people, but he felt that it was entirely justified and worth the cost.<sup>169</sup> Not only for the boon it would provide to national security and military readiness, but also because, again channeling his friend and mentor John McAuley Palmer, he saw an inextricable link between civic obligation and the long standing citizen-soldier and militia history of the United States (there was also the added benefit to Marshall that UMT would ensure that young Americans grew up to be 'good boys' and not communists). To accusations that compelling Americans to serve during peacetime was undemocratic and un-American, Marshall stated that UMT was "only un-American if universal education and paying taxes are."<sup>170</sup> With that sentiment, Marshall was making the point that compulsion exists at all levels of American society, compulsion that inconveniences the individual in pursuit of the greater good. No one debated the democratic merits of free public education or tax-supported infrastructure.

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<sup>167</sup> Belair Jr., Felix. "Marshall Identifies Russians As Threat to World Stability; MARSHALL NAMES SOVIET AS THREAT." *The New York Times* (New York), January 13, 1948, sec. 1.

<sup>168</sup> Belair, New York Times.

<sup>169</sup> Associated Press. "Marshall Urges Senate Push UMT." *The New York Times* (New York), January 3, 1948.

<sup>170</sup> Marshall to Senate Committee on Armed Services, in Sager, 64.

Marshall considered his proposal to be along the same lines, and posited that the very universality of his plan ensured that it was democratic.

In the end, Universal Military Training died with a whimper, not with a bang. The debate that raged around UMT from 1945 – 1952 ultimately ended in failure. UMT petered out due to public apathy, more than anything else, driven by opponents' arguments that mandated military service threatened the democratic notions of individual liberty and that it would not be worth the political or economic cost. President Eisenhower's accession to the presidency in 1952 was a further setback to UMT legislation. Eisenhower's implementation of the "New Look" (a reliance on nuclear weapons and strategic air power) in conjunction with his policy of "massive retaliation" for any foreign incursion convinced the interested parties in the American public that UMT was a relic of a bygone era, and therefore not worth the cost.<sup>171</sup> But even though UMT failed, the issues it raised, and the idea of engaging citizen-soldiers in the Army as an alternative to an expensive, standing, professional army, divorced from the public, remained extremely relevant through the end of the twentieth century, and continues to be so today.

### **V. The Modern Professional Army: A Perilous Course?**

When John F. Kennedy succeeded Eisenhower as President in 1960, he deviated from and indeed rolled back much of the previous administration's military policy. The New Look emphasis on air power and nuclear weapons and its adherence to a policy of "massive retaliation" as a means of nuclear deterrence was supplanted by Kennedy's policy of "flexible response." As a super power engaged in a global war on communism,

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<sup>171</sup>Associated Press. "The Nation." *The New York Times* (New York), December 19, 1954.

Kennedy wanted the US to be able to flex its substantial military and paramilitary muscle. This meant that the United States Army was once again catapulted into relevance. One principle from the Eisenhower administration that Kennedy did hold fast to, however, was his notion of the “Domino Theory.” The theory held that if one country fell to communism, others in its region would likely follow suit. So when North Vietnam began to turn red at a time when the incumbent US President believed in the merits of military interventionism and construed North Vietnam’s political shift as a threat, the stage was set for conflict. What ensued was one of the great debacles in American history: the Vietnam War.

What emerged from the death of the draft after Vietnam was the modern “All-Volunteer Force.” In 1970, a bi-partisan presidential committee headed by Thomas J. Gates was tasked with creating a plan to maintain military strength without conscription. Their study produced the “Gates Commission Report.” The Report concluded that a 2.5 million-man force could be maintained through voluntary service, provided that certain incentives were offered.<sup>172</sup> An increase in pay was proposed, as well as comprehensive improvements in the conditions of military service. To fill a volunteer levy, the recruiting effort was re-envisioned and better resourced.<sup>173</sup> The Gates Commission concluded, in essence, that a small stripe of the American populace would be willing to bear the nation’s military burden, they just needed to be properly incentivized. As a result of their recommendations conscription was ended in 1973, and the extant AVF was born.

At first this seemed to be a match made in heaven. The post-Vietnam Army didn’t

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<sup>172</sup> United States of America. The Office of the President of the United States. *The Report of the President's Commission on an All-Volunteer Armed Force*. By Thomas S. Gates, Et. Al. Washington D.C., 1970. Page 102.

<sup>173</sup> Ibid. 110.

want unwilling conscripts injected into its ranks any more than those conscripts wanted to be there. The Army was quite content to be left to its own devices. In the midst of the incredible culture wars of the 1970's, the Army became a professional organization dedicated to martial virtue, its members self-selected from society because they wanted to be "better" than the rest. The AVF cultivated (and continues to cultivate) elitism among its members. "We don't promise you a rose garden" became the sales pitch that appealed to a small slice of the general American public. But the Army's problems were many, in the early seventies. While the AVF concept gave the Army the insulation from society that it so badly wanted, it still lacked a clear identity and mission. Their failure in Vietnam precipitated doubts about the Army's war fighting abilities, both in the general public and within the ranks.

Many officers regarded some aspects of the All Volunteer Force concept very warily, however, particularly in the context of their collective Vietnam hangover.<sup>174</sup> It cannot be overstated the extent to which Vietnam degraded the institution of the United States Army. The men themselves were exhausted, morale was abysmal, and the "good order and discipline" which every military takes as its foundation was a joke. By the early 1970's, many American line units were positively impotent.<sup>175</sup> Vietnam was truly a disaster, one for which the military predominantly blamed politicians. The Army felt as though it had been thrown into an unfair fight with inept troops while having their strategic options limited.<sup>176</sup> They felt as though the politicians had set them up for failure and then blamed them for it. It was a modern American take on the *dolchstoßlegende*<sup>iv</sup>

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<sup>174</sup> Linn, 197 – 200.

<sup>175</sup> Binder, L. James. "The Agony of the U.S. Army." *The New York Times* (New York), November 30, 1971.

<sup>176</sup> Linn, 193.

myth.<sup>177</sup> The question for Army policy makers in the wake of Vietnam, then, became how to avoid fighting a war like it ever again. They recognized that with the psychological and geographic distance that the military and the American public were quite happily putting between themselves through the implementation of a professional, all volunteer force, that they might actually be laying the foundation for future overuse.

The Army Chief of Staff during this pivotal era of transition was General Creighton Abrams. While the military as a whole welcomed the idea of separating and distancing themselves from the society they were sworn to defend, they did not want to become so far removed as to enable politicians (another demographic the military regarded warily) to use the military without thorough forethought. The officer corps of the seventies and eighties still wanted to find a way to tie their fate to that of the American people. The regular army felt as though it had been left out in the cold in Vietnam. Though there was a draft on, neither the Army Reserve nor the various National Guards (where the sons of the rich and well connected were hiding) were ever called up and sent over seas. The political cost of doing so would have been too high, so they were never used, and a wildly unpopular, unwinnable war was allowed to drone on. General Abrams sought to ensure that such a thing would never be allowed to happen again. Pursuant to that, Abrams restructured the task and organization of the three components of the United States Army such that no one component (specifically the Regular Army component) could go to war without the other two. The National Guard and US Army Reserve become fundamental to the Regular Army's ability to function in combat. In this way, Abrams designed an Army with incredible inertia. If it was to go to war, the entire

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<sup>177</sup> Binder, *Agony*, in *The New York Times*.

organization, *all three components*, would have to go to be mobilized, effecting the American public much more deeply than if just the perennially insulated Regulars were sent overseas. As a uniformed military member, Abrams very deliberately hamstrung elected decision makers and limited the choices available to them by raising the political cost of war to a nigh untenable degree.

In an effort to further buttress themselves from Vietnam-like wars, the Army shuffled its doctrine in addition to its fundamental force structure. The Army developed new doctrine for a new kind of war, called “AirLand Battle.” It was to be a seamless integration of aerial and ground pounding capabilities within the Army and across services, utilizing “fast-moving, well dispersed tactics.”<sup>178</sup> AirLand Battle was the doctrine applied in Grenada, Panama, and in the liberation of Kuwait, to smashing success.<sup>179</sup> In turn, these victories restored the Army’s confidence in itself. The professional army for the first time in American history acquired the swagger and cocksure competence for which it is known today.

Developing simultaneous to AirLand Battle and also in direct response to the Army’s experience in Vietnam, concepts like the “Powell Doctrine” came to the fore of American military intellectual thought. General Powell articulated that when force was to be used, it should be applied in a merciless and overwhelming fashion, as quickly as possible, so as to smother the enemy’s ability to resist. No more limited wars. A Clausewitzian inspired return to the World War II practiced “war of annihilation” mentality again came to prevail in the Army. The intent behind this policy was to keep

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<sup>178</sup> Associated Press. "25 US Warships in the Caribbean." *The New York Times* (Washington), November 9, 1984.

<sup>179</sup> Browne, Malcolm W. "Invention That Shaped the Gulf War: The Laser-Guided Bomb." *The New York Times* (New York), February 26, 1991.

the army out of the painful, protracted conflicts that defined the majority of the three decades following WWII. The Army was trying to do structurally and doctrinally what its civilian leadership had failed to do legislatively. From the early eighties through to the turn of the century, they were remarkably successful.

September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001, and the ensuing “Global War on Terror” shattered that sense of success. The American mission in Afghanistan at first seemed to validate the American defense sector’s newfound understanding of the potency of American weaponry and military professionalism. The rhetoric of American commanders during the Afghan war smacked of that of Army Air Corps generals professing the unparalleled potency of strategic bombing during World War II. A small contingent of highly trained special operations forces and a very liberal application of precision-guided 2000lb JDAM’s (bombs) had throttled the Taliban and put Al Qaeda on the run in a matter of weeks. It seemed that the United States had conquered the historically unconquerable Afghanistan, adding to a litany of recent successes and once again validating the efficacy of the small, highly trained, “high-speed, low drag” professional army.

The early days of Iraq appeared to have done the same thing. The monumental military success that was the destruction of Saddam Hussein’s Ba’athist state and the military upholding it (the fourth largest in the world at the time) was the final jewel in the crown that the Army needed to validate its claim of being the best fighting force in the world. AirLand battle, in the form of “Shock and Awe,” had finally been tested in an unfettered war of annihilation against a worthy adversary, and it had proven itself to be beyond reproach. The Army never got to fight the Soviets in the Fulda Gap, and they were forced to stop short of total victory in round one against Iraq, but in 2003, the

American military was finally told: “sic ‘em.” They did so with remarkable savagery and mesmerizing efficiency...and in a matter of weeks. Unfortunately, the difference between conquest and occupation would soon be driven home to painful degree by America’s War for the Greater Middle East.<sup>180</sup>

In the buildup to the 2003 invasion, then Chief of Staff of the Army, General Erik Shinseki, testified before the House Armed Services Committee that "something in the order of several hundred thousand soldiers" would be required to effectively stabilize Iraq after the Hussein regime was toppled.<sup>181</sup> This figure was hundreds of thousands of men greater than the number that Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld and his Deputy, Paul Wolfowitz, were claiming to need. General Shinseki was approaching the problem of how to topple and then stabilize Iraq from the standpoint of military expediency. Rumsfeld and Wolfowitz approached it from the standpoint of *political* expediency. They knew that they would be unable to field an army of several hundred thousand combat troops without a massive influx of human capital into the military (i.e. a draft). But Iraq could not be invaded with a draft army. So an ugly public debate over troop requirements ensued, that ended with Rumsfeld prevailing and General Shinseki’s rather ignominious retirement three months after the invasion.<sup>182</sup> Of course, history has shown General Shinseki to be a rather prescient chap. Iraq was an unmitigated disaster. American travails in that country also took the strategic focus off of the ongoing Afghan War long

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<sup>180</sup> Bacevich, Andrew J. "Nine Theses." Lecture, Rosen Lecture Series, The University of Vermont, Burlington, March 9, 2014.

<sup>181</sup> Scmitt, Eric. "THREATS AND RESPONSES: MILITARY SPENDING; Pentagon Contradicts General On Iraq Occupation Force's Size." *The New York Times* (Washington), February 28, 2003.

<sup>182</sup> Shanker, Thom. "Retiring Army Chief of Staff Warns Against Arrogance." *The New York Times* (Fort Myer, Va.), June 12, 2003.

enough to allow the situation to deteriorate there, as well. As a result, the United States Army became embroiled in not one but *two* protracted, poorly defined conflicts of ambiguous strategic value. In this way, two of the least popular wars in the nation's history, Iraq and Afghanistan, have also become our longest.<sup>183</sup>

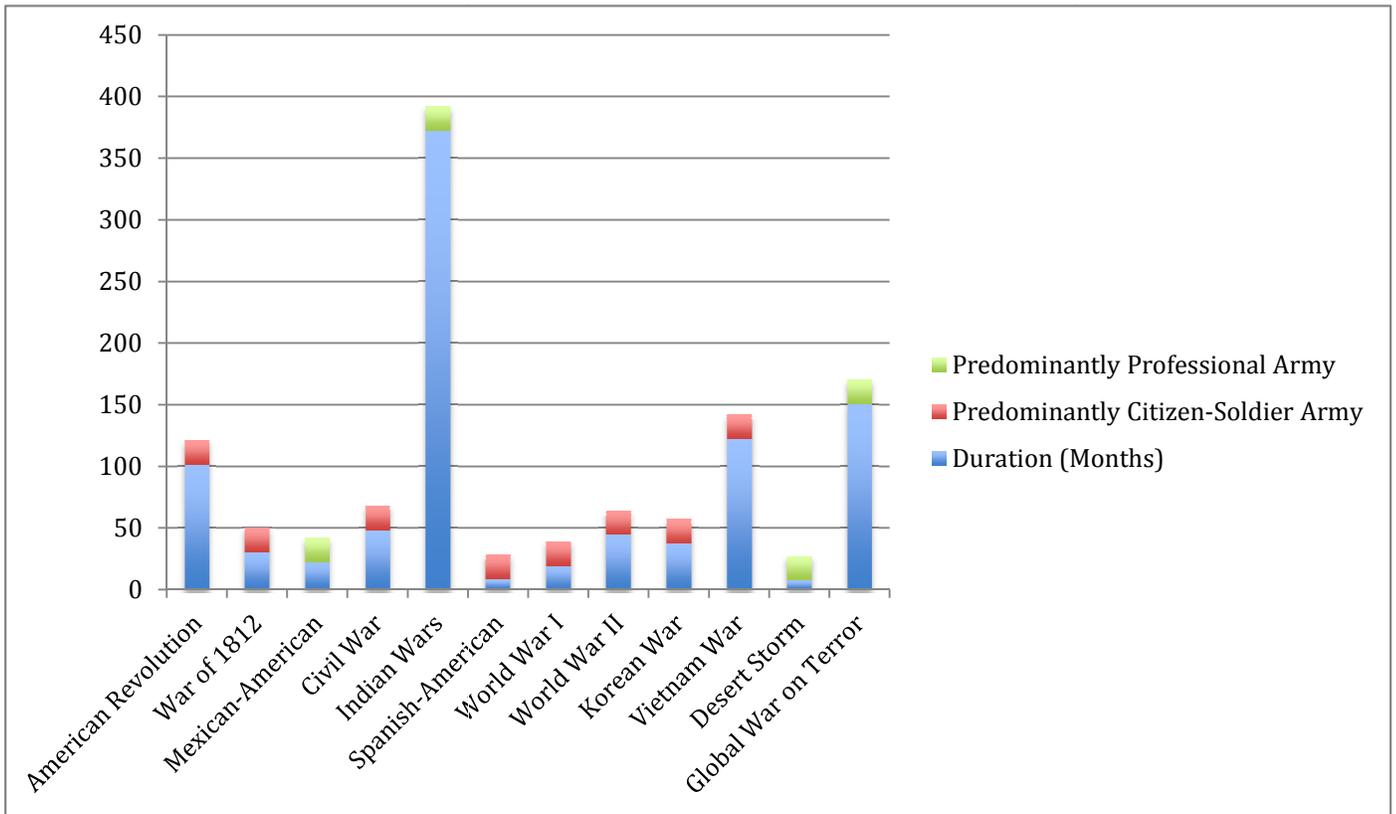
A little more than forty years after the establishment of a professional army in the United States, the American system eerily resembles that which the nation's Founders so feared and abhorred. The U.S. Department of Defense is today the *largest employer in the world*, and includes over 700,000 active and reserve personnel in the United States Army alone.<sup>184</sup> Adding to that sum, today's professional military is supplemented on the battlefield by privately contracted military professionals, "soldiers of fortune" in the truest sense of the term. With the draft off the table today, the government has been forced to turn to companies such as Blackwater (now Xe) to sufficiently fill out the ranks to wage wars that would have previously required broader mobilization. This professionalized and sometimes-privatized force is busier than at any time in American history, though only 1% of the population shares the burden. Under the extant professional system, the American public has been guiltlessly divorced from its military as at no other time in American history.

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<sup>183</sup> Bacevich, Andrew J. *Breach of Trust: How Americans Failed Their Soldiers and Their Country*. New York: Metropolitan Books, Henry Holt and Company, 2013. Page 110.

<sup>184</sup> United States Department of Defense. "About the United States Department of Defense." The Department of Defense (DOD). 2014. Accessed March 22, 2014. <http://www.defense.gov/about/>.

**Figure 2: Major American Conflict by Duration and Type of Army Fielded**



In summary, **Figure II.** shows that professional armies have a propensity to fight protracted wars without a clearly defined political objective. In consequence, the longest conflicts in American history have generally been fought by predominantly professional armies.

Data Source: Penn State University,  
 URL: <http://www.personal.psu.edu/dsb10/datasets.htm>

## VI. CONCLUSIONS

The long held ideal of soldiering in the United States revolves around private citizens taking up arms in times of crisis to meet temporary threats, and returning to their regular lives when the need for their service has abated. Any healthy democracy must ensure that the burden of its defense is borne communally, rather than by any particular sect or section of society. To do otherwise would be to compromise the fundamental democratic tenet of equal rights and responsibilities before the law. The United States is

today violating that fundamental tenet.

The current American Army, manned and led predominantly by career oriented professionals, represents a significant departure from the way in which the country met its manpower needs for the first two hundred years of its history. In a perverse inversion of the grievances of the “Occupy Wall Street” movement, since 1973, 99% of the American public has exploited the 1% of their countrymen who chose to assume the burden of the nation’s defense.<sup>185</sup> The events of the “Global War on Terror” have starkly and brutally driven that point home. For soldiers and officers in the United States Army from 9/11 to the present, life has been a ceaseless merry-go-round of twelve to fifteen month deployments and returning home only to start scaling up for the next one. As one Master Sergeant put it, “2006 – 2009 are just gone. I was either in Iraq or Afghanistan or in a yellow-phase,<sup>v</sup> jumping out of airplanes every day, getting ready to go back in six months. That’s three years of my life that I’ll never get back.”<sup>186</sup> That sergeant’s experience is typical. Having two deployments under one’s belt is the standard in today’s United States Army, even among junior officers and NCOs. As it was during Vietnam, the institution of the United States Army is today exhausted. Unlike during Vietnam, however, the general American public has not been asked, or forced, to share in that exhaustion. The American people have been allowed by their government to carry on their lives as normal. Indeed, the transition to a professional army has encouraged the general public to indulge in easy, no-cost jingoism. Everyone “supports the troops,” but nobody wants themselves or their kids anywhere near what it is they ask those troops to

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<sup>185</sup> *Breach of Trust*, 178.

<sup>186</sup> Conversation with MSG Stephen Carney, 173<sup>rd</sup> Airborne Brigade Combat Team (ABCT), 12 April 2014.

do. Instead of three citizen-soldiers, plucked from society, going on the three deployments to which the previous quote refers, the burden of those many months of combat fell to but one professional soldier. Extrapolate that to the entire Army and the roughly two million Americans that have been deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan since 2001, and a troubling picture begins to emerge.<sup>187</sup> The American concern for its troops might be likened to a thin layer of ice on a lake. It is a mile wide, but an inch deep...and it bears little weight.

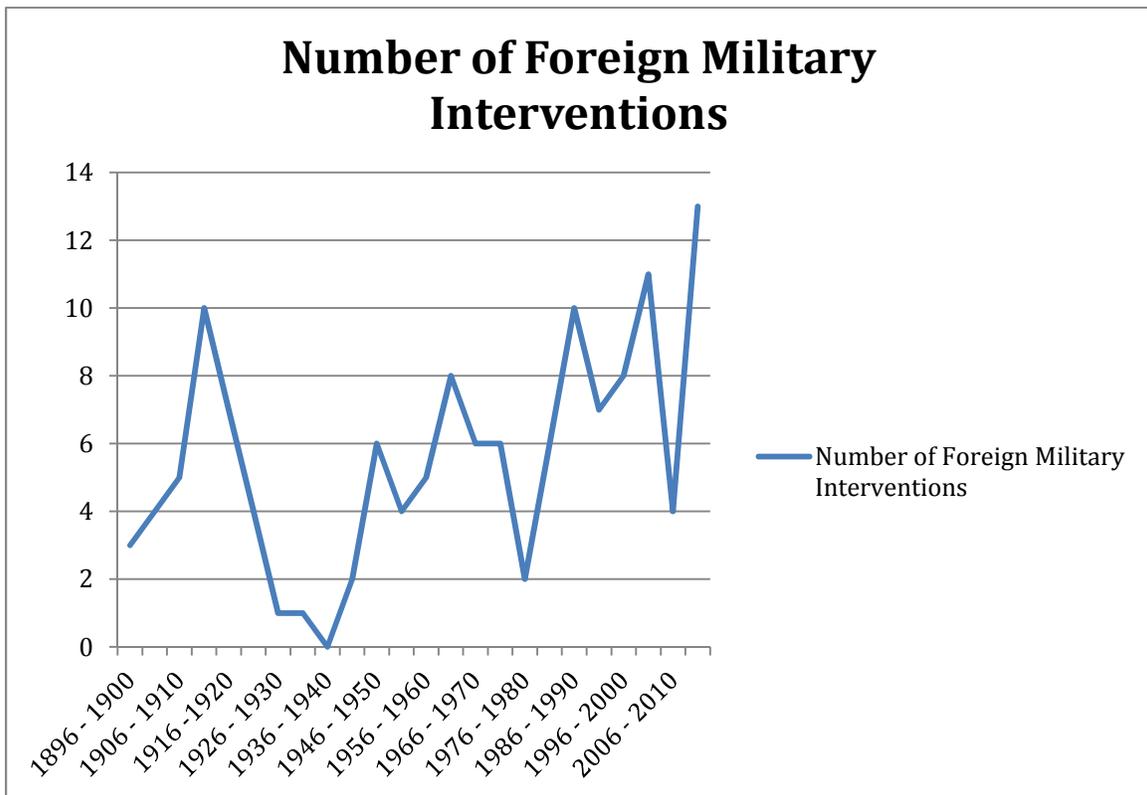
The professional force has lent itself not only to neglect, but also to rampant overuse. Andrew Bacevich draws attention to the lower threshold for war that exists when the broad American public doesn't have "skin in the game."<sup>188</sup> His argument is in essence that listening to politicians weigh military intervention is much easier for a citizenry to ignore when the ramifications of those interventions are abstract and remote. If a citizen can shelter himself and his family from the consequences of the actions of the nation as a whole, war becomes more tolerable. That lower threshold for military action and decreased citizen interest in military affairs brought on by personal insulation from it has fostered the conditions for a fundamental drift in the military's mission. The Army was founded to win independence from England and secure the nation's borders. It evolved into an expansive force for the dispossession of the Native Americans. Then, as the American global footprint expanded, the Army became an implement of modest international power projection. In all of those instances (with the notable exception being the Indian Wars), sustained operations were made impossible by the privately interested

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<sup>187</sup> Baiocchi, Dave. "Measuring Army Deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan." *Rand Corporation*, 2011.

<sup>188</sup> *Breach of Trust*, 115.

and fundamentally non-martial character of the larger body of American forces brought to bear. But with the advent of the professional force, the military and the Army in particular have become the “go to” implement of American foreign policy. Indeed, in a 2012 memo for the Department of Defense, “Defend the Homeland” was only the *seventh* bullet/priority in the subsection “Primary Missions of the U.S. Armed Forces,” right behind “Maintain a Safe, Secure, and Effective Nuclear Deterrent.”<sup>189</sup> Figure III illustrates the frantic pace of military intervention brought about by the military’s mission creep, and the American public’s indifference to it.



In summary, **Figure III.** illustrates the generally upward trend in foreign military interventions since the transition to the professional army in 1973. The high water marks on the graph correspond to eras of increased US colonial activity, while dips generally correlate to eras of economic hardship.

Data Source: *Evergreen State College*, Professor Zoltan Grossman  
 URL: <http://academic.evergreen.edu/g/grossmaz/interventions.html>.

<sup>189</sup> Joint Force 2012, 3.

After more than a decade of war, the United States Army and the military generally is entering a time of transition. The modestly bolstered Active Duty force required to prosecute two simultaneous wars is being curtailed, slightly. Civilian leaders and military brass alike are devoting a great deal of time and energy to thinking about the future military needs of the United States. Now might be an opportune time to consider the track record and ramifications of the professional Army over the last forty years, particularly the debacle that was the last decade, and think about a potential change of course. Instead, however, the American reliance on the professional military is being redoubled.

President Obama's 2012 strategic guidance memo to the Department of Defense, entitled "Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Defense," would be a truly horrifying read for any signatory of the Declaration of Independence or The US Constitution. The document is a bald-faced, cocksure assertion of American global primacy. It articulates the American need to defend its interests and those of its allies in the western Pacific and South East Asia.<sup>190</sup> It discusses ongoing and expanded counter-terror operations in the Middle East and Africa.<sup>191</sup> It claims that the United States will be ready and willing to "confront and defeat aggression anywhere in the world."<sup>192</sup> In the President's own words, "the United States will remain the greatest force for freedom and security that the world has ever known."<sup>193</sup> How is the American military of the future going to accomplish those many daunting tasks, one may ask? The answer appears to be-- with an even smaller, better trained, and more insular force of military professionals than

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<sup>190</sup> Joint Force 2012, 2.

<sup>191</sup> Ibid. 3.

<sup>192</sup> Ibid. 5.

<sup>193</sup> Ibid. 1.

it fields today.

The Defense Department's vision of the future is labeled "Joint Force 2020." The planned future military will be "smaller and leaner, but will be agile, flexible, ready and technologically advanced." It will be led by the "highest quality, battle tested professionals." It will have a global presence emphasizing Asia-Pacific and the Middle East, while still ensuring the ability to retain American defense commitments to Europe and strengthening alliances and partnerships across all regions. To proponents of the citizen-soldier ideal, this document is the formula for a nightmare of military professionalization in which the soldiers that fight for American democracy continue to move uncomfortably closer to soldiers of fortune, and represents the perpetuation of, and expanded reliance on, a fundamentally flawed military policy.

Many tout the strength and unparalleled combat effectiveness of the modern American military. It is certainly true that no citizen-army the United States has ever assembled is as proficient or deadly as the professional force it sustains today. The United States Army of today and tomorrow will "win the battle." But any war is much more than a mere collection of battles, and while the *professional* United States military has never lost a major engagement, it has never really *won* a war.

An alternative system to the current force composition must be found. While they are far from perfect, the ideas of Emory Upton and George Marshall have merit and should be re-evaluated. Train up a larger force of citizen-soldiers and keep it in reserve, to be drawn upon during crises to fill out a relatively small, permanent professional cadre of officers and men and women. Because the citizen-soldier is pulled from civilian life, he or she will remain rooted in the wider, contemporary culture and democratic values.

Fundamentally, people just don't like war. As America's historic reliance on conscription highlights, people are understandably reticent to put their lives on the line for what are often personally abstract reasons. But if war is to be considered a necessary evil, which sometimes it is, a society must find a fair and democratic way by which to distribute the burden of military service amongst its people. That fundamental concept is critical to keeping the military a part of American life, and ensuring that when the country goes to war, it does so very deliberately, and with its citizenry bearing the nation's standard in the vanguard of the formation, not being dragged along unwillingly, behind.

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## Explanatory Notes

<sup>i</sup> “Lifer” is military jargon for a career soldier. These are individuals that are entirely immersed in military culture and consider themselves to be distinct from the rest of society (Page 5).

<sup>ii</sup> Most prominently Russell Weigley and Stephen Ambrose, and most recently David Fitzpatrick, have accused Upton of taking too much from the German and Austrian models. They contend that he directly lifted their manpower models and tried to force them upon a United States that had evolved different civil and political institutions from Germany. Institutions that were fundamentally incompatible with a “Prussian” system. For further reading, see Russell Weigley, *the American Way of War* and David J. Fitzpatrick, "Emory Upton and the Army of a Democracy," *The Journal of Military History* 77 (April 2013): 463-90 (Page 41).

<sup>iii</sup> Exactly 2,061 men died of disease during the Spanish-American War (Page 53).

<sup>iv</sup> The stab-in-the-back myth (German: Dolchstoßlegende) was the widely held notion in the German Army after WWI that they had not lost the war, but in fact had been betrayed by a weak willed, unpatriotic civilian population on the home front (Page 71).

<sup>v</sup> The Army classifies its units’ deployment readiness in three phases. “Red phase,” otherwise known as “Reset,” is the organizational rest and refit time in the months (or weeks) after returning from an operation or a deployment. “Yellow Phase,” the most strenuous phase in the training cycle, is when the actual deployment preparation takes place. A line unit in Yellow Phase spends the majority of its time in the field training at a high tempo for an impending deployment. “Green Phase” is reached when the unit has validated all of the tasks related to its mission set and is considered available for overseas deployment. The cycle restarts for the *unit* upon return from deployment. What would often happen to guys coming off deployments at the height of the war, however, was they would come back home with their unit and then be rotated out to a different unit that was in yellow phase with an imminent deployment. (Page 78).

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