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"BRING THE BOYS HOME": DEMOBILIZATION
OF THE UNITED STATES ARMED FORCES
AFTER WORLD WAR II

By

Bert Marvin Sharp

ABSTRACT OF A DISSERTATION

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

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Department of Arts and Letters

1976

ABSTRACT

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Bring the boys home was a phrase used at the conclusion of World War II. It meant to many of those who used it at that time that American troops should be brought home with all due speed, with no excuses, and no nonsense. In time the phrase became a pejorative one and referred to a senseless headlong drive to return all American servicemen to their homes with no regard to national security or international commitments. Then and now the phrase recalls a highly charged emotional period of American history--letters to Congressmen by the thousands, some with baby pictures in them, generals cornered by angry wives, letters to editors with reference to army brass, chair-borne generals, and land lubbing admirals.

It was in part to prevent just such a vitriolic reaction that the Army developed a point system, which they hoped would be a fair means of discharging troops. Before World War II, the United States Army and the Navy had used the unit system of discharge; that is to say,

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entire units were disbanded at one time. The point system would individualize discharges, giving credit for time served, combat decorations, battle stars, and parenthood. The other armed services developed similar programs. Meant to insure fairness, the point system of the services seemed to expand the area of complaint. Complicating the program was the desire of Congress to have surplus personnel released regardless of points. They also sought the release of men for industry. There were also instances of men being discharged who were not eligible--movie stars, football players, and sons of prominent political personalities.

As the armed services sought to please Congress by discharging larger and larger numbers of men, some of the facilities designed for discharge became crowded. And there were hearings on the operation of the separation centers; some of them were visited by the Special Committee to Investigate the National Defense Program. There were also investigations of trans-oceanic operations by both the House and the Senate, as answers were sought to the seemingly slow return of men from the Pacific, particularly the Philippines.

It was in the Philippines that the most serious challenge to military authority took place, with men numbering in the thousands, demanding to be returned home, and where a plethora of headquarters personnel cranked out letters on mimeograph machines which were sent to the

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President and Congress. There is a discussion of the causes of these demonstrations, the reaction of the public to them, and an analysis of what they accomplished.

In what appeared to be the genuine will of the people to have their loved ones return, the President though privately worried, about the effects of our rapid demobilization, said little. This may have been the case with many of the Congressmen, but a fairly substantial number of Congressmen from the Midwest, most of them prewar critics castigated the Administration sharply for not wanting to bring the boys home.

The thesis concludes that the emotional reaction of the American people was an understandable one, and one that we could have done very little to prevent. It also concludes that the peril to our national security was not as great as was feared at the time and offers the observation that the only conceivable threat to our security was the Soviet Union which was so involved with problems of its own, many of which grew out of her own rapid demobilization that she was not the threat to United States security that some thought she was.

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INTRODUCTION

On September 2, 1945, World War II came to an end with the signing of a surrender document between the United Nations and Japan. At the conclusion of World War II, there were over twelve million men and women in the armed services of the United States. They had participated in active combat or other military activities on every continent and on most of the world's oceans. Uniformed personnel were scattered over scores, if not hundreds, of islands from Greenland and Iceland to the Bahamas and all across the Pacific. In all recorded history, no country had ever waged war over such an extensive area of land and water on such an intensive scale, nor waged it so well.

These men and women would now have to be brought home, many of them over thousands of miles of water. It would be a massive undertaking, for which there had been no parallel in modern human history. In the space of a single year the armed services would bring home most of the forces they had taken over three and a half years to deploy. As a further complication, those troops would have to be brought home by a priority of discharge method that had been devised by the services. In previous wars, discharges for the most part, had been given on a unit basis; that is, entire units

were disbanded at one time.

This time the services relied upon an elaborate system of individual discharge based upon an accumulation of points for length of time in service, amount of time overseas, campaign battle stars, combat decorations, and dependency. Constructed in such a manner as to give credit for a number of considerations, all of which it was hoped would ultimately result in a fair, democratic system of discharging men. It also had the result of increasing the area of complaint. Although the majority of servicemen apparently considered the point system fair, others were dissatisfied. More serious was the friction created by shipping delays, by relations between officers and enlisted men, by housing and living conditions, and by favoritism in assignments. In short, the whole area of human concern that might be experienced by unhappy men. That discontent soon resulted in thousands of letters to public officials, Congressmen, Senators, officials of the armed services, and even the President of the United States. Servicemen who had shivered in zero weather in Belgium but obeyed orders, who had fought the Japanese and the mosquitoes but obeyed orders, were now taking part in activities that were close to mutinous. There were demonstrations and marches with placards and bull horns in Europe and the Pacific as well as telegrams written at interminable length and signed by hundreds of men. In the words of the unknown humorist who first said it, everyone wanted to come home the day

[illegible]

before yesterday. That this may not have been a responsible or even a sensible position did not seem to worry the men who were doing the complaining.

Of this feverish desire to drop everything and come home immediately and of the results of such a policy, Harry S. Truman later wrote:

Americans hate war, but once they are provoked to defend themselves against those who threaten their security, they mobilize with unparalleled swiftness and energy, while the battle is on, there is no sacrifice of men or treasure too great for them to make.

Once hostilities are over, Americans are as spontaneous and headlong in their eagerness to return to civilian life. No people have been known to disengage themselves so quickly from the ways of war.

This impatience is the expression of a deeply rooted national ideal to want to live at peace. But the tragic experience following World War I taught us that this admirable trait could lead to catastrophe. We need to temper and adjust the rate of demobilization of our forces if we would be able to meet our new obligations in the world.¹

But demobilization was not to be tempered or adjusted. Congress answered letters and wrote resolutions at a hectic rate. There were numbers of Congressmen touring the world, listening to complaints. The Secretary of War visited many of the principal military centers in Europe and Asia and listened to delegations of servicemen. George Marshall, while Chief of Staff, addressed members of

¹Harry S. Truman, Memoirs, I, Year of Decisions (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1955), p. 506.

Congress on demobilization, and when General Dwight Eisenhower became Chief of Staff, he also addressed them. Admiral Chester Nimitz assured Congress that the Navy was doing everything that it could to bring servicemen home as rapidly as possible. Congress held a number of hearings on demobilization to investigate the separation centers, the point system, transportation, and demobilization in general. Congressmen replied to letters and phone calls and tried to exercise patience and restraint when visited by delegations such as the Servicemen's Fathers Release Association, the Parents Selectee Legion, the Wives in Waiting Club, the Gold Star Mothers, the Blue Star Mothers, and the Bring Home Daddy Clubs. Medical Associations wanted doctors released; the UMW wanted miners released; LaGuardia wanted policemen released; and college coaches wanted football stars released. This pressure that was brought against the government was particularly impressive in view of the fact that it was not organized for the most part, and that it genuinely represented the voice of the people, and Congressmen knew this.

Critics--important critics--Truman, Byrnes, Forrestal, Nimitz, Marshall, and Eisenhower all spoke of the dangers of a too rapid demobilization, but it all was to no avail. The American public wanted the servicemen returned home and angrily charged that the armed forces were trying to build empires, and Congressmen themselves were soon speaking of "brass hats" and "chairborne

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generals," giving vent perhaps to what might have been a somewhat carefully repressed hostility that had lain submerged during the war. Then, too, the rather emotionally strained times brought old issues back to life vividly and a number of them were now eager to reassert the primacy of the civil over the military power, and one way of doing this was to rapidly demobilize the armed forces. This rapid demobilization, too, would mean that sizable reductions could be made in the budgets, and this was a thought that brought pleasure to many Congressmen whose minds had reeled at the figures in the wartime budgets.

While the armed forces of World War II were being demobilized, a serious omission was becoming apparent. This was the failure to provide adequately for postwar forces. Seemingly, the nation was loath to accept the burden of postwar responsibilities; it wanted the glory but not the grief. It did not want the draft but an extension of it had to be accepted. It did not want Universal Military Training, nor high budgets. One way was the old way, stay at home, mind its own business, maintain a limited army and navy, stay clear of agreements. The other way meant agreements, a substantial army and navy, and higher budgets than were normal in peacetime. Congress could not agree, for example, on what it wanted in way of a postwar army, but clearly the old army no longer existed. All of the services, for that matter, were being cut down to the proportions that were expected to be sufficient for peacetime; but no one had a

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clear idea of whether these would be sufficient to meet new obligations. In important places, brows began to wrinkle and men spoke wistfully of the size of the U.S. armed forces during wartime and the recent period of demobilization was spoken of ruefully as the period of the "disintegration of the armed forces.

This study seeks answers to a number of questions. The major part of it will be concerned with the question of why the United States, given its postwar responsibilities, demobilized its armed forces as rapidly as it did. Quite evidently, the answer to this is public opinion, an emotional outpouring on the part of the American people so vast as to be irresistible, and it hit Congress squarely, that branch of the government which was the most vulnerable. The characteristics of that public opinion and the manner in which it was asserted requires discussion in depth. Requiring just as much discussion is the reaction of Congressmen and Senators to that opinion, their reaction as legislators representing constituencies and as lawmakers proposing laws, engaging in debate, and conducting hearings, and any number of other relevant activities; and certainly an important part of that body's activities, which will also be dealt with, will be its relationship with the President and the various departments of the executive branch.

This study will travel over some ground that is not new. There are published works that deal with early postwar planning that have discussed New Deal agencies such as the

Natural Resources Planning Board and the wartime agency the OWMR admirably. No attempt will be made to discuss these agencies in detail, but an attempt will be made to discuss them with respect to their relationship with Congress and the effects of their contribution to the demobilization of the armed forces. It will also attempt to come to some conclusions regarding the effect of the demobilization of the U.S. armed forces on the subsequent course of the postwar world. Published studies that treat some aspect of the demobilization of the armed forces have frequently not given this the attention that it deserves. Unpublished studies, studies of units, for example, of which there are many are prone to suffer from an understandable lack of objectivity and to substitute rhetoric for logical argument and premise for fact. This study will attempt to do more.

Chapter 1

PREPARING FOR WAR'S END: THE NATIONAL RESOURCES PLANNING BOARD AND CONGRESS

In the hectic stages of demobilization, critics insisted that the government had not prepared for it. Although the confusion that sometimes arose in the program made this easy to believe, it was not entirely true. Planning for demobilization had begun quite early in both the executive branch and Congress. As early as November 1940, Roosevelt had quietly asked the National Resources Planning Board to begin "post defense" planning.¹ This was at a time when the United States was not at war and would not be at war for over a year. To Roosevelt, it did not seem strange for the nation to begin "post defense" planning, for by this time, Germany had conquered Poland, the low countries, and France, and was subjecting the English to a deadly air campaign. The possibility of the United States remaining out of the war was becoming more and more remote, and the first peacetime conscripts in the history of the United States were marching to the cadence

¹Davis R. B. Ross, Preparing for Ulysses (New York: Columbia University Press, 1969), p. 54.

counts of red-faced sergeants.

Once the United States entered the war, there was little doubt in the minds of most people that the Allies would be victorious, after which they would then set about reconstructing the world. Curiously enough, a substantial number of people accepted this as the legitimate mission of the United States. Yet it would be a mistake to ascribe all of these motives to pure idealism. Much of the concern about a "war-torn" Europe was undoubtedly genuine, the result of the most sincere humanitarian motives, but at the same time much of it arose from the fear of what an economically depressed Europe would mean to the economy of the United States. This interest in the period that would follow the war was not confined to the executive branch. In Congress, Jerry Voorhis of California was concerned enough to try to create a national commission to study problems after the war. In it, he envisioned representatives from business, labor, agriculture, education, and Congress--five from the House, five from the Senate. The resolution introduced in January 1941 placed heavy emphasis on the importance of postwar planning for a sound economy. Hearings were held on it in the summer of 1941 by the Labor Committee and a number of witnesses testified in favor of the resolution. The resolution was not reported from the committee, however, until May, 1942 and was not adopted by the House. According to Voorhis' own legislative post-mortem, his resolution in the opinion of the House

"leadership" was too early.²

Across the hall in the Senate, October, 1941, Claude Pepper, Senator from Florida, introduced a resolution calling for a study group which was killed by the party leadership. Majority Leader Alben Barkley asked Pepper not to push for the adoption of his resolution because the time was inopportune. There were a number of other Senators, he explained, who wanted to introduce postwar legislation and it would be to everyone's advantage for the sponsors to confer together and coordinate their efforts. Satisfied, or at least resigned, Pepper did not press the matter.³

At a time when most Americans were too preoccupied with the course of a war which was far from being won (and which the United States had not yet joined), Voorhis and Pepper were in the minority. Yet the number of people who thought as they did was growing. When they first introduced their resolutions in 1941, the emotional involvement of the American people was growing each day. Wartime pictures from the European front showing the faces of starving children and reports of England burning during the blitz were beginning to have their effect. And while the sentiment favoring American involvement was rising, there was a parallel development: a growing sentiment for permanent

²Jerry Voorhis, Confessions of a Congressman (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1948), pp. 250-5.

³United States, Senate, Congressional Record, 77th Congress, 2nd session, April 27, 1942, pp. 3717-8.

peace, insured by some kind of peace-keeping organization. In a Gallup Survey of persons listed in Who's Who in America, 60 percent believed that the United States should enter into a postwar league.⁴ Wendell Willkie, proud spokesman of the American way and of the superior virtue of undefiled electrical power, said that the American Way would not be protected until the British Way and the Chinese Way were also protected. Several months later in an interview in Rushville, Indiana, he predicted that there would be a peace league after the war.⁵ The following day, the former ambassador to Belgium, John Cudahy, in a radio speech over WTMJ proposed that Roosevelt ask the Congress to endorse a program for a new world order composed of an Association of nations.⁶

Newspaper editorials and speeches were filled with idealistic cliches: "family of nations," "a peaceful future free of strife." A letter writer to the New York Times saw nothing impractical about the four freedoms. To him, they were ". . . no vision of a distant millenialism . . . it is a definite basis for a kind of world attainable in our own time."⁷ Finally, one may only speculate as to the numbers

⁴New York Times, Aug. 2, 1941, p. 2.

⁵New York Times, February 26, 1941, p. 8; August 10, 1941, p. 2.

⁶New York Times, August 11, 1941, p. 6.

⁷New York Times, IV, April 6, 1941, p. 8.

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of P.T.A. members who had to listen to some principal's comments about the importance of education in the "world of tomorrow."

All of this, of course, is by way of showing that the sentiment in favor of internationalism was growing, not riotously, but consistently. All isolationist sentiment was not dead. Hamilton Fish was still in the House of Representatives, as were John Vorys and George Bender, and Burton K. Wheeler and Hiram Johnson were in the Senate. Gallused farmers in blue denim shirts and small town bankers in white ones still read the Chicago Tribune, and certainly not all Republicans were willing to accept either Wendell Wilkie or his philosophy of internationalism--far from it, to at least one, he was not far from a war mongerer. On November 6, 1941, Congressman Dewey Short, Republican from Missouri, characterized Willkie as "Wee Windy War Willkie, a Bellowing, Blatant, Bellicose, Belligerent, Bombastic Blow-Hard"--effective alliteration perhaps but poor timing for the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor a month later.⁸

At war as of December 7, 1941, America was already looking forward to its end, indeed, some of its statesmen were confidently planning for it. A little more than a month later, January 14, 1942, President Roosevelt sent to Congress the National Resources Planning Board's report

⁸Volta Torrey, You and Your Congress (New York: William Morrow and Co., 1944), p. 177.

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for 1940-1941. In an accompanying letter, he spoke of the Board as the "planning arm" of the executive office, "charged with the preparation of long range plans," and with developing plans for "winning the peace."⁹

Six months after the President's letter to Congress, the director of the NRPB, Fred Delano, wrote the President that it was necessary "to develop planning for a comprehensive well articulated plan for demobilization."¹⁰ A few days later, the President replied that it was not the proper time to consider demobilization, and that the publicity given to demobilization might divert the attention of people from winning the war. Despite the fact that the letter was to "Dear Uncle Fred," in places it was not far from caustic: "there will not be any postwar problems if we lose this war."¹¹

Yet Delano was not the least daunted, for under the aegis of the NRPB a conference began on postwar problems, July 17, 1942. In its first two months, the conference met five times, usually with at least fifteen members present

⁹U.S., Cong. Rec., 77th Cong., 2nd sess., Jan. 14, 1942, p. 314.

¹⁰Fred Delano, Director, NRPB, to Franklin Roosevelt, President of the United States, July 1, 1942; Official File 1092 D White House Papers of Franklin D. Roosevelt, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York. Cited hereafter by file number and identification, then Roosevelt Papers, FDRL.

¹¹Roosevelt to Delano, July 6, 1942; OF1092D, Roosevelt Papers, FDRL.

from the Departments of Agriculture, Labor, Navy, and War, from the Veterans' Administration, the Selective Service, the War Manpower Commission, the Federal Security Agency, and the sponsoring National Resources Planning Board. Officially known as the Conference on Postwar Readjustment of Civilian and Military Personnel, its members preferred an abbreviation of the title: Postwar Manpower Conference (PMC). Meeting throughout the summer of 1942 and into early spring of 1943 the PMC Report, Demobilization and Readjustment was rounded into shape for the President by two of its representatives. In June, the President submitted the completed report to Congress.¹²

Its analysis of demobilization was the most comprehensive of anything that had yet been done and furnished not only a philosophy of demobilization, which was followed in many areas, but a clear set of proposals to help achieve an effective and democratic demobilization. Noting that demobilization included more than the mere separation of men from the armed services, the Conference report stated that it should also include a review of a man's records to ascertain his education, whatever special skills he might have acquired while in the service, dissemination of information concerning employment opportunities, the opportunity for vocational guidance, and, last of all, "relocation of the man in his total peacetime situation

¹²Ross, Preparing for Ulysses, pp. 54-9.

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including his placement in useful, productive work."¹³

To assure this placement of the individual in "useful, productive work," the Conference believed that the rate of demobilization should be adjusted to the speed with which industry was able to absorb workers.¹⁴ To provide a period of adjustment at the end of a serviceman's career, it proposed a three month's furlough with regular base pay, the amount not to exceed \$100 a month. During this time, he could secure information on "readjustment and rehabilitation." Thereafter, the United States Employment Service would extend its facilities and the federal government would offer unemployment benefits for a period not to exceed twenty-six weeks. For those interested in agriculture, assistance would be given in locating employment or in buying a farm. For the time that the individual spent in service, he was to be allowed credit on his old age and survivor's insurance. Finally, the most generous provision of all, provided for living allowances and tuition for those who wished to resume their education.¹⁵

All of these proposals, submitted by the President to Congress in June, were the subject of his fireside chat

¹³ National Resources Planning Board, Demobilization and Readjustment (Washington, D.C., 1943), p. 52.

¹⁴ NRPB, Demobilization and Readjustment, pp. 26-7.

¹⁵ NRPB, Demobilization and Readjustment, p. 4.

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of July 28, 1943.¹⁶ In October, he presented an outline to Congress for veterans' educational benefits, using as resource material a report that was submitted to him by a committee of the armed forces.¹⁷ Almost a month later, November 23, 1943, the President submitted the remainder of his program for veterans' legislation. Reminding Congress of certain benefits that already existed, notably in the area of insurance and hospitalization, he asked specifically that mustering out pay be added to these; that there be a uniform system of federal unemployment benefits; and that veterans receive credit under the social security system for time spent in the service.¹⁸

The legislation requested by the President was soon lumped into one omnibus bill known as the GI Bill of Rights which he signed into law on June 22, 1944, remarking that it carried out "substantially" what he had asked in three different addresses in 1943.¹⁹ Veterans' benefits had come

¹⁶ Samuel J. Rosenman, comp., "Fireside Chat on the Progress of the War and the Plans for Peace," The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt, XII: The Tide Turns, July 28, 1943 (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1950), pp. 333-5.

¹⁷ Rosenman, "Message to the Congress on the Education of War Veterans," The Public Papers . . . Roosevelt, XII, pp. 449-55.

¹⁸ Rosenman, "A Message to the Congress on Providing for the Return of Service Personnel to Civilian Life," The Public Papers . . . Roosevelt, XII, November 23, 1943.

¹⁹ Rosenman, "Victory and the Threshold of Peace, The President Signs the G.I. Bill of Rights," The Public Papers . . . Roosevelt, XII, pp. 180-185.

a long way since the PMC report, of June 1943 was sent to Congress. In almost all areas, the provisions of the GI Bill equaled or excelled the suggestions that had been made by the PMC. For example, the PMC asked that the veteran be given assistance in buying a farm, but the GI Bill provided federally guaranteed loans for the buying of a farm, of a home, or one's own business. The PMC had asked for unemployment insurance for twenty-six weeks; the GI Bill provided for fifty-two weeks. Where the PMC called for one year of education with the veteran to be given a living allowance, the GI Bill provided up to four years with a living allowance for both the veteran and his dependents.²⁰

On the whole, the GI Bill was one of the most remarkable laws ever passed in the history of the United States. There is no other instance in our history of so much having been done for so many people on so vast a scale. The World War I veteran may have been rightly aggrieved at his treatment; but the veteran of World War II, with the exception of those who were seriously wounded and crippled and for whom no compensation was adequate, was generously rewarded for his service. Apart from the humanitarian aspects of the legislation, there was a practical side as well. It made possible a smooth transition from a war to a peacetime economy by putting many veterans into schools and

²⁰Rosenman, The Public Papers . . . Roosevelt, pp. 180-5.

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thereby removing them from the job market. And for those who did have trouble finding employment, it furnished through unemployment payments, a means of sustenance to the individual, and some stimulus to the economy as well.

The GI Bill became law approximately ten and a half months before the war ended in Europe and well over a year before it ended in the Pacific. During the spring of 1944 when Congress was shaping the legislation, the United States had not yet invaded continental Europe, nor had the reconquest of the Philippines taken place; yet it was confidently planning for the end of the war. As Roosevelt had stated the previous October, the "time to prepare for peace is at the height of the war."²¹ With the GI Bill, the government had made a great step forward with its planning, and an early one; it was certainly a step that was in stride with public opinion, if not ahead of it.

The whole of the program of veterans' benefits, of which the GI Bill was a part, was not obtained without some cost. As previously stated, much of the legislation grew out of suggestions made originally by the Postwar Manpower Conference, a group of men who met under the aegis of the National Resources Training Board. This Board, the agency chosen by the President to do his postwar planning, died at the fiscal hands of Congress, June 26, 1943, and the more

²¹Rosenman, "Message to the Congress the Education of War Veterans," The Public Papers . . . Roosevelt, XII, Oct. 27, 1943, p. 453.

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conservative members of Congress were convinced that they had killed a hydra-headed monster.²² This was well before the end of the war was even in sight, and fortunately for the President, and for that matter, for the American people, the NRPB was not then at work on any major project. Its most important report, Demobilization and Readjustment, had already been submitted to the President. But the President was now confronted with the possibility of not having any agency to help him at a time when he needed help the most.

There certainly had not been too much help from Congress, for the initiative for demobilization planning as late as the fall of 1943 lay with the executive branch. No one knew this better, nor resented it more than many of the members of Congress; yet they did little about instituting plans of their own. Much of this resentment took the form of carping criticism of the NRPB.

The National Resources Planning Board was created for the purpose of coordinating public works planning, natural resources development, and research projects between federal, state, and local agencies. The Board came into existence in 1939 as a result of the reorganization plan of the President's office. By the terms of this plan, the NRPB assumed the responsibilities and duties of the Federal Employment Stabilization Board which was abolished.

²²Edward Hobbs, Behind the President (Washington, D.C.: Public Affairs Press, 1954), p. 82.

Strangely, there was never any statutory basis for the NRPB; that is to say, Congress had made no provision for such an organization. It had only consented to the reorganization plan of the President. Congressional critics of the Board claimed that the NRPB had no statutory basis aside from the performance of duties that had previously been the responsibility of the Federal Employment Stabilization Board. There is a certain amount of irony in that statement, though, for at the time of the Board's creation, Roosevelt had requested statutory authority for the Board.²³

Almost from the beginning, the NRPB came under attack as an agency that was meant to enlarge the powers of the President's office and usurp the functions of the states and municipalities, not to mention Congress. The Board was in almost constant financial trouble, for many of the members of Congress were not convinced of the usefulness of this particular executive creation. In a 1940 debate on the appropriations requested for the Board, Senator Byrd of Virginia said, "I think that in its accomplishments it shows less for the actual money expended than any other agency of the government."²⁴ There were other complaints that the NRPB was duplicating the work of other agencies. Formidably opposed by such Senators as Taft of Ohio, who thought along the lines of Byrd, the appropriation for the Board passed

²³Hobbs, Behind the President, pp. 77-8.

²⁴U.S., Cong. Rec., 76th Cong., 3rd sess., p. 1053.

the Senate by only three votes.²⁵

The House was not any friendlier toward the NRPB. Everett Dirksen, for example, suggested that the Board plan its way out of existence.²⁶ The NRPB's troubles continued. In 1941 and again in 1942, the President found it necessary to make pleas in behalf of its continuation.²⁷ In 1943, with the NRPB once again experiencing trouble securing the necessary money to continue functioning. Roosevelt wrote to Clarence Cannon that the NRPB had done good work on the projects on which it had worked.²⁸ About a month later, Roosevelt wrote to Carter Glass, stating that the NRPB would not duplicate any of the work of Congress. Roosevelt went on to say that he did not question Congress when that body felt that it needed a specific sum of money to carry out a specific function; therefore, why should Congress question him.²⁹

Roosevelt's efforts, however, accomplished nothing, for 1943 was a difficult year for the NRPB--indeed, a decisive year as far as its existence was concerned.

²⁵U.S., Cong. Rec., 76th Cong., 3rd sess., February 6, 1940, p. 1059.

²⁶U.S., Cong. Rec., 76th Cong., 3rd sess., April 12, 1940, p. 4450.

²⁷Hobbs, Behind the President, p. 82.

²⁸Roosevelt to Cannon, February 16, 1943, OF1092D, Roosevelt Papers, FDRL.

²⁹Roosevelt to Glass, March 15, 1943, OF1092, Roosevelt Papers, FDRL.

Advocates of economy were convinced that the Board was not economical; advocates of states rights were just as convinced that it intruded upon the rights of states. There were other critics who accused the Board of being everything from subversive to satanic. According to one of the Congressional critics, for example, a woman who had researched one of the NRPB's reports, was a "devotee of Karl Marx," "an important cog in the New Deal machine that grinds out socialistic schemes to destroy private property in America."³⁰

Congressman Frederick Smith of Ohio said that the NRPB was a "grave menace" and ought to be destroyed. Smith also had other objections to the agency. In one of the publications of the NRPB, a statement was made about the need for family planning and marriage counseling. In what was a remarkably tasteful and inoffensive statement about this need, Smith saw an attempt to influence sex morals. Of the wicked agency, he said: "It proposes not forthrightly and openly, of course, but insidiously and slyly to invade the domain of sex life among our young people. Mark well this salacity."³¹

Yet it was the counting room, not the bedroom that was responsible for the NRPB's demise. In the late spring of 1943, Roosevelt discussed the matter with Harold Smith,

³⁰U.S., Cong. Rec., 78th Cong., 1st sess., Feb. 8, 1943, p. 4380.

³¹U.S., Cong. Rec., 78th Cong., 1st sess., Feb. 8, 1943, p. 717, p. 720.

Director of the Budget:

I made it clear to the President that I had talked to no one on the Hill about the situation so that I knew the reactions only at second hand. He asked me what I thought should be done to save the Board, and I frankly told him very little. He suggested that if I would try to get the appropriation through for \$200,000 I could say to those on the Hill--I assume the Appropriation Conference Committee Leaders--that he would then get the Board, the Budget, and the Majority and Minority Leaders of Congress together for a discussion of planning.³²

Despite Smith's warning that it was futile to attempt to save the Board, Roosevelt was determined to do something. On July 19, 1943, he sent Samuel Rosenman a memorandum in which he stressed the necessity of having an organization such as the NRPB to assist in postwar planning and asked that he incorporate those suggestions into a speech that he was preparing for the President.³³ Something must have changed the President's mind, though, for he did not mention the NRPB by name in his fireside chat of July 28, 1943.³⁴ The subject was not discussed at his press conference two days later, either.³⁵ On August 31, the President wrote Fred Delano, the Board's Chairman, thanking him for his efforts, adding that he was sending a letter of

³²Harold D. Smith Papers, Diary of Harold Smith, Conference with President Roosevelt, June 3, 1943, FDRL.

³³Rosenman, The Public Papers . . . Roosevelt, XII, p. 336.

³⁴Rosenman, "Fireside Chat on the Progress of the War," The Public Papers . . . Roosevelt, XII, pp. 326-336.

³⁵Rosenman, The Public Papers . . . Roosevelt, XII, The Nine Hundred and Twelfth Press Conference, July 30, 1943.

thanks to each of the members of the NRPB.³⁶ It died quietly; the shades were drawn; the door softly closed. If postwar planning were to continue, new means must be found.

³⁶Roosevelt to Delano, August 31, 1943, OF1092, Roosevelt Papers, FDRL.

Chapter 2

CONGRESSIONAL PLANNING

With the death of the National Resources Planning Board, President Roosevelt sought the services of another agency for demobilization. Particularly mindful of the importance of good Congressional relations, especially since it was the absence of such relations that had contributed materially to the demise of the NRPB, the President in 1943 chose as its successor the Office of War Mobilization. It had a good reputation with Congress, much of it due to the Director, James Byrnes.¹ Having served in both the House and Senate, Byrnes knew his way around Capitol Hill. Solicitous of the feelings of Congressmen and Senators, he was always mindful too not to intrude into areas that they considered the special province of the legislative branch.

There was another compelling reason for choosing the OWM to head a unit concerned with demobilization. Obviously the war effort and demobilization were tied together quite

¹Rosenman, "Statement on the Establishment of a Unit on Reconversion in the Office of War Mobilization," The Public Papers . . . Roosevelt, XII, pp. 432-433.

closely, and there could be no demobilization until the war was well on the way to being won. Yet that did not mean that planning should not go forward; and if there were such planning, there would be a certain consistency in allowing the agency that was in charge of mobilization to assume the task of demobilization. Then, too, by putting the unit in the Office of War Mobilization, things could be kept in perspective, for the OWM was not likely to jeopardize the war's progress by overly enthusiastic and premature planning for demobilization. In an October 15 statement, Roosevelt explained: "While we must prepare for necessary postwar adjustments, this preparation must not interfere with the long and hard war programs which are still ahead of us."²

Within a short time after the President had asked him to set up a demobilization unit within the OWM, Byrnes asked Bernard Baruch, Wall Street financier and director of the War Production Board during World War I, to assume control of the unit on demobilization. Although retired from public life, Baruch maintained close social and political contacts in Washington. He had enemies there, to be sure, but he also had many more friends, among whom was James Byrnes. Yet Byrnes' esteem did not rest on friendship but on his respect for Baruch's ability.³

²Rosenman, "Statement on the Establishment of a Unit in the Office of War Mobilization . . . ,"
The Public Papers . . . Roosevelt, XII, pp. 432-3.

³James Byrnes, All in One Lifetime (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1958), pp. 172-3.

In November, Baruch and one of his Wall Street colleagues, John Hancock, began a study of demobilization.⁴ Although the war was far from over, victory seemed a reasonable certainty, and there was already considerable sentiment for demobilization planning. As a matter of fact, some tentative steps had already been taken. In September 1943, Nelson's Bureau of Planning and Statistics in the War Production Board had undertaken a broad review of reconversion problems. In early November of the same year, the Truman Committee had issued a report urging greater attention to problems of contract termination, surplus property disposal, and reconversion. Three days later, the George Committee reported that piecemeal reconversion was taking place without proper coordination and warned of the necessity for developing a uniform policy and for well directed goals.⁵

Baruch and Hancock worked on their study during the winter of 1943-44 and presented in February what became known as the Baruch-Hancock Report. It stressed that demobilization was of such importance that it should be under a "Work Director,"⁶ but it did not see the necessity

⁴Byrnes, All in One Lifetime, p. 208.

⁵Herman Miles Somers, Presidential Agency, OWMR, The Office of War Mobilization and Reconversion (Cambridge, Mass.).

⁶U.S., Congress, Senate, Report on War and Postwar Adjustment Policy, submitted by Bernard Baruch and John M. Hancock to James F. Byrnes, Director of Office of War

for an Office of Demobilization. This function, the report maintained, could best be fulfilled by the OWM, which:

"dealing with the many problems of transition . . . can see both the mobilization and the demobilization as one whole."⁷ The Report also spoke of the necessity for unifying the work of the Executive branch with Congress and the armed forces on the "human side of demobilization." It did not mention that there was nothing that remotely approached an integrated program within the armed forces. As for Congress, the study suggested that the Senate and the House create committees or a joint committee that would work on a program of legislation to achieve the objectives that everyone shared: a smooth transition from serviceman to civilian.⁸

The Report was received favorably, earning plaudits from some newspapers and magazines that had been critical of almost all previous Administration efforts. Some Congressmen were critical, though, because it was released to the public before Congress saw it.⁹

What the report had to say about the "human side of

Mobilization, Senate Document 154, 78th Cong., 2nd sess. (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1944), p. 6.

⁷U.S., Senate, Report on War and Postwar Adjustment Policy, p. 69.

⁸U.S., Senate, Report on War and Postwar Adjustment Policy, p. 6, p. 5.

⁹Margaret Coit, Mr. Baruch (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1957), p. 539.

demobilization" was particularly significant, for it was this aspect of demobilization that was being shoved aside in the eagerness particularly by Congress, to settle such things as surplus property, unfulfilled contracts, and industrial reconversion. There were postwar committees, specifically labeled as such in the House and Senate, but these were economic policy and planning committees, and were concerned, as one would rightfully assume, with economic matters.¹⁰ There was no committee in the House or Senate that had the human side of demobilization as its primary consideration, although a number of the standing committees, particularly Military Affairs, dealt with matters that touched upon this. The Report noted this: "The important point at which civilian plans must be coordinated with the military in the demobilization of men and women in the service is a crucial one, and it is now the final responsibility of no one agency."

True, the adjustment that had to be made from a war economy to one of peacetime was of such importance as to require months of inquiry, research, and discussion before decisions could be reached and laws could be drafted. Of course, someone had to labor hard over the cold, hard facts

¹⁰The House committee was popularly known as the Colmer Committee after its chairman, William M. Colmer, and the Senate Committee, the George Committee after Senator Walter George. Officially, it was the House Special Committee on Postwar Economic Policy and Planning and the Senate Special Committee on Postwar Economic Policy and Planning.

of surplus property disposal. But who was laboring hard over the reconversion of the serviceman? Many were, but they were not organized into a single committee that had this as its sole responsibility. Congress often talked about the average GI and a few "tears" were shed, some sincere, some not, about the sacrifices that the "boys" were making, and that it was the responsibility of Congress to take this matter of demobilization in hand and to prepare a better world for the remaining veteran. But Congress seemed uncertain as to the best means of doing this. If a committee, preferably a joint committee, had been established, it could have rendered invaluable service in establishing policies and securing laws that would have made the transitional period from serviceman to civilian as painless as possible. As an example of what could have been done, Congress could have established a uniform system of priority for release from the armed forces, insofar as it was possible. It could have worked to coordinate transportation policies and it could have insisted upon the correlation of demobilization plans among the services, and, then, in turn, between the armed forces, Congress, and the executive branch.

In 1944, Congress did establish a committee for which there was a definite, perhaps a vital need, and it dealt with an area that had previously been ignored. This was the committee on postwar military policy. It was established in the House of Representatives and was a select

committee; that is, it could recommend legislation to the appropriate committees, nothing more. Formed in March of 1944, it consisted of twenty-three members, seven from the Naval Affairs Committee, seven from the House Committee on the Armed Forces, and nine from the Congress at large.¹¹ It combined the expertise of the two service committees with the impartiality of the members at large.

Over the course of a year and a half, it considered such subjects as unification of the armed forces, disposal of surplus property, continuation of scientific military research, and the enactment of universal military training.¹² But the order of priority with which these subjects were considered defied logic. Seemingly, a subject such as a single department of the armed forces could without any harm, and possibly even with some advantage, have been considered last of all, yet it was the first subject upon which hearings were held.¹³ Hearings on universal military training were held last, seemingly the subject that should have been considered first, as the Army

¹¹U.S., Cong. Rec., 78th Cong., 2nd sess., LXL, March 28, 1944, p. 3199.

¹²U.S., Congress, House, Select Committee on Postwar Military Policy, Report no. 1356, Final Report, submitted by Mr. Woodrum of Virginia to the Committee of the Whole House, 79th Cong., 1st sess., December 10, 1945.

¹³U.S., Congress, House, Select Committee on Postwar Military Policy, House Report no. 1645, A Proposal to Establish a Single Department of the Armed Forces, 78th Cong., 2nd sess., May 10, 1944, pp. 1-4.

particularly was counting on their numbers as constituting part of the total armed strength of the postwar forces; to constitute, so to speak, a reserve force, a highly trained militia. So urgent did the Committee consider the UMT that it asked immediate consideration by the appropriate legislative committee and the passage of appropriate legislation.¹⁴ When the committee finished its hearings on UMT, it closed its books.

These three committees, the House and Senate Special Committees on Economic Postwar Policy and Planning and the House Select Committee on Postwar Military Policy were the Congressional committees (created solely by Congress and consisting of its members) that carried out the planning for demobilization, in common, of course with the contributions of some of the standing committees. It could not be said that their accomplishments were spectacular, but it must be remembered that they had recommendatory powers only, and there was no requirement that these recommendations be followed. The House committee on military policy, for example, recommended that the House immediately consider legislation for universal military training, yet the House Committee on Military Affairs insisted on holding hearings

¹⁴U.S., Congress, House, Select Committee on Postwar Military Policy, House Report no. 857, Universal Military Training, 79th Cong., 1st sess., July 5, 1945, pp. 1-4.

of its own.¹⁵ In the Senate, the committee on economic policy advised that an Office of Demobilization be created, yet this recommendation was not followed; instead the Senate took the advice contained in the Baruch-Hancock report that the functions of mobilization and demobilization should be combined into one office. Even so, the Senate took its time in adopting some of the suggestions that Baruch and Hancock had made.

This delay disappointed Baruch who, in a letter which he released in March 1944, commented that although Congress complained about being by-passed on reconversion, it had taken no action since the report had been released. This comment of Baruch's should have been well taken by the Congress. For months in a querulous mood, they had particularly grumbled about the intrusion into their domain. This had almost become an obsession with some of the members who mentioned it on the floor of the House and Senate, as well as at hearings and committee meetings. In one of the reports published by the Senate's Special Committee on Postwar Economic Policy and Planning, the statement was made that though it was proper to delegate authority in time of war it was not proper to do this in time of peace. In peacetime, Congress "should retain in its hands the settlement of the broad basic problems of the demobilization

¹⁵U.S., House . . . Select Committee . . . Military Policy, House Report no. 1356, Final Report, 79th Cong., 1st sess., July 5, 1945, pp. 1-2.

program out of which the structure of the peace economy will arise."¹⁶

Congressional accomplishment did not always keep pace with Congressional rhetoric, though, and during the spring and early summer nothing was done about implementing some of the suggestions in the Baruch-Hancock Report, specifically the creation of a Work Director for reconversion problems. Spurred though by Allied victories in France, there was a flurry of activity in the middle of the summer of 1944. On August 1, Barkley told the members of the Senate that the Senate Military Affairs Committee would soon be reporting out a bill on reconversion, and he reminded all of the members that all thoughts of a recess "would not be at all justified" until after something had been done in the way of creating appropriate legislation for reconversion.¹⁷

The Senate did even better than Barkley had hoped; actually, two bills were reported. Ambitious measures, they provided not only for a Work Director under OWM auspices, but for unemployment compensation for employees who had worked on federal projects, as well as transportation

¹⁶U.S., Congress, Senate, Special Committee on Postwar Economic Policy and Planning, Senate Report no. 539, part 2, Report of the Special Committee on Postwar Economic Policy and Planning, 78th Cong., 2nd sess., February 9, 1944, p. 4.

¹⁷U.S., Congressional Record, 78th Cong., 2nd sess., August 1, 1944, p. 6706.

charges for displaced war workers. Both of the last two provisions were excised from the bill, S2051, when it came before the House, but the Office of Director was accepted, although the "Office in the opinion of critics was one in which there was no great power."¹⁸ Roosevelt seemed to think that the bill as finally adopted was reasonably satisfactory; that it accomplished what was needed: statutory provision for a director for reconversion. The Office of War Mobilization (OWM) became the Office of War Mobilization and Reconversion (OWMR).¹⁹

Hardly had the office been created when the enthusiasm for demobilization dropped off rather sharply as a result of the slowing down of the offensive against the German Army on the western front in October and November. It diminished even more sharply when the German counter-attack broke out in Belgium in December 1944. Not until spring, when Allied fortunes improved and the end of the war drew near would it emerge. During the fairly brief time that it was in existence, the OWMR was subject to a great deal of criticism. Particularly critical was the Mead Committee (President Truman's old committee) which said that

¹⁸U.S., Cong. Rec., 78th Cong., 2nd sess., Aug. 10, 1944, pp. 6833-53; Aug. 31, 1944, p. 7440; Aug. 29, 1944, p. 7353; Aug. 31, 1944, pp. 7432-3; Sept. 19, 1944, pp. 7897-7903.

¹⁹Press and Radio Conference 971, Executive Office of the President, Oct. 3, 1944, Press Conferences, Vol. 24, Roosevelt Papers, FDRL.

the agency did not have but should have had direct control over the other war agencies. The Committee also thought that the OWMR should have had the power to "issue orders and not confine itself to umpiring disputes."²⁰ In other words, the Mead Committee obviously wanted an organization with finality of decision, an organization at a higher level than any military or civilian office, and superior to any of them, a departmental version embodying the powers of the Commander in Chief. Dismissing for a moment, the temptation to discuss what Congressional reaction might have been to such an agency, one can say that there were several factors that militated against the OWMR. It was not a strong agency to begin with; legislation saw to that. Furthermore, it was a temporary one, and, as the Mead Committee mentioned, the staff was small.

Making provision for the expansion of the OWM into the OWMR and for a director of the agency was the last really significant act of Congress of what came to be called "the human side of demobilization." The war with Germany ended seven months later; the war against Japan in ten. It was regrettable that much of Congress was unhappy with its own creation.

An attempt has been made to show that planning for the period after the war was instituted almost with the

²⁰United States, Congress, Senate, Special Committee to Investigate the National Defense Program, Senate Report 110, pt. 4, 79th Cong., 1st sess.

beginning of the war itself. It was, to be sure, modest planning and much of it was in very general terms. At the beginning, it would seem that President Roosevelt (although he blew hot and cold on demobilization according to the vicissitudes of war) showed one of the characteristics of a successful administrator, that is, he started a program early. It would also seem, however, that he is less entitled to praise, insofar as the death of the National Resources Planning Board was concerned. It is true, of course, that Roosevelt praised the Board and that he made pleas to Congress in behalf of adequate financing for it. But in the Board's last days it was quite apparent that he would not carry the battle into the trenches if it meant risking serious Congressional disapproval; nor did he seem willing to fight very hard for complete control of the Office of War Mobilization and Reconversion, quite passively letting Congress define the responsibilities and duties of the office and the power of the director.

As to the "human side of demobilization," the phrase that first appeared in the Baruch-Hancock Report and that was picked up and given currency by Roosevelt, it probably found its highest expression in the GI Bill. Generous far beyond anything that Roosevelt or the National Resources Board had asked for or expected, it had the enthusiastic endorsement of the Congress.

In Congress over the course of several years, there was considerable jealousy toward the executive branch,

manifesting itself, for example, in the financial death blow that was dealt the National Resources Planning Board when the Congress refused to approve any appropriation for the agency. Yet after killing it, it took Congress almost a year and a half to make statutory provision for another agency, waiting much too long before even beginning work on one. This, of course, was particularly regrettable, for there were resolutions in the House and Senate that had been introduced much earlier and had made provision for postwar planning.

On the whole, the performance of Congress in the area of planning for human demobilization was considerably below the efficiency level of the executive branch with which it was constantly feuding. In finding reasons for this, it would be all too easy to say that it was a failure of initiative and energy, yet it would be difficult to find very many people who work harder than Congressmen. The countless phone calls, the reception of constituents, the correspondence, the mending of political fences, the time-consuming committee meetings, and scores of other tasks require a vast amount of time and work. Most probably, it was a very simple and understandable matter of priorities, and the war had already expanded their responsibilities into wider and wider areas until they were scarcely manageable. Executive agencies, after all, can expand to meet increased responsibilities, at least to the extent to which their budgets allow them, but the number of

Congressmen remains constant. On this note perhaps it would be wise to end this discussion of Congressional and executive responsibility for planning, at least for the present, and turn to the other branches of government, which also had their share of troubles in planning for demobilization.

Chapter 3

HOW JOHNNY CAME MARCHING HOME: DISCHARGE PAST AND PRESENT AND THE EVOLUTION OF THE POINT SYSTEM

It is a well established practice for men to look back into their past for answers, and this is as true of institutions as it is of men. In 1942, when the U.S. Army first began to think seriously of demobilization, it initiated studies of practices that had been used by the United States armies at the conclusion of wars fought in the past. Seemingly, there was much that could be learned, for there were enough to furnish a considerable body of experience. Beginning with the American Revolution, the United States had fought in six different wars before World War II, three of which had been fought and won on foreign soil. In these wars, troops had been mobilized and demobilized, although the mobilization and the demobilization were rather simple compared to what they would become at a later date.

In the Revolutionary War, men entered and left the Army with comparative ease; some left at the expiration of their enlistments (as short as three months) and others after long campaigns. It was a constant concern to General

George Washington, particularly when enlistments were due to expire on the eve of a campaign. Early in the war, he found it necessary to offer a ten dollar bounty to Continental troops whose enlistments were coming to an end. Only with the bounty did he persuade them to remain for the battles of Trenton and Princeton.¹ At the end of the war, troops were disbanded quite informally, and Dixon Wecter has told us that they strolled home in groups of four and five.²

In the War of 1812, enlistments ranged from one month to twelve and there was a constant stream of men coming and going. At its conclusion, men who had enlisted for the duration of the war were discharged, and those who remained were transferred to active regiments. At the same time, entire regiments were disbanded. Demobilization after the War of 1812 then was a combination of unit and individual separation from the service and was accomplished in a somewhat disorganized fashion. Rather than demobilized, it seems that the Army was simply dissolved.³

At the conclusion of the Mexican-American War, demobilization followed the precedents of the War of 1812. During the course of the war, there were never more than

¹Emory Upton, Military Policy of the United States (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1917), p. 25.

²Dixon Wecter, When Johnny Comes Marching Home (Cambridge: Houghton-Mifflin, 1944), p. 37.

³Sparrow, History of Personnel Demobilization in the United States Army, p. 4.

105,000 men mustered into the service, and, of these, large numbers had already left the Army before the conclusion of the war. Those who remained at the end were either regulars, who constituted only a fragment of the Army, or those who had enlisted for the duration of the war. The latter were discharged at the war's conclusion.⁴

The next war, the Civil War, was at that time the nation's greatest in terms of men involved, killed, and wounded. When it ended, there were over 1,000,000 men in the Union Army. Within nine months' time, that figure had been reduced to something over 115,000, and by November 15, 1866, that figure in turn had been reduced to a little over 11,000 men.⁵ Demobilization of the Union Army was conceived intelligently and executed efficiently. Demobilization was by unit; each of the units was assigned to one of nine rendezvous areas, established throughout the South and border states. At these areas, inventories were made of clothing, records brought up to date, particularly in the area of illness and absence, soldiers were paid and discharged.⁶ The most involved of all of the nation's demobilizations in terms of numbers, it was also the most efficient; and some of the methods of procedure,

⁴Sparrow, Hist. of Personnel Demobilization . . ., pp. 4-5.

⁵Wecter, When Johnny Comes Marching Home, pp. 151-152.

⁶Sparrow, p. 6.

particularly those involving administrative chores, presaged methods that were to be used by the army at a later time.

The Spanish American War was a small war in terms of the number of men used, the vast majority of whom were volunteers. Beginning in August 1898, the government began demobilization, which was far from efficient. At first, muster out was performed at federal camps; ten days later it was abruptly switched to state camps. While there, the men were given furloughs, and while they were on furlough, their records were processed. Very little seems to have been accomplished by the decision to move from federal to state camps. As a matter of fact, it was estimated that it took four and a half days longer to demobilize a soldier in them. Also, nothing seems to have been gained by the decision to furlough the men; far from it, absenteeism became a serious problem. The men also did not consider the furlough to have been a sufficient reward for the time that they spent in service; most of them would have preferred additional pay.⁷

At the end of World War I, the size of the United States Army was gargantuan compared to the numbers of men who had been enrolled in the peacetime regular army. At war's end, there were over 4,000,000 men in the Army, two million of whom were in the A.E.F. in Europe. This army was demobilized by units, some of which were as large as a

⁷Sparrow, p. 10.

division. The paper work was performed at a number of temporary camps scattered throughout the United States. Demobilization was rapid, and everything considered, efficient. As many as 650,000 men were discharged in the month of December 1918. By the anniversary of the war's ending, the discharge rate had fallen to 30,000 a month, and over 3,250,000 men had been discharged.⁸

There was no priority of discharge procedure established, though; and in some cases, men who had served in the Army for only a few months were discharged before experienced veterans with extensive service. Divisions that were in training in the United States were demobilized as divisions, the presence of all of the records in the camp making the separation from the Army a comparatively easy task. So hurried was the demobilization that trains carrying draftees that were en route to Army camps were stopped, sent back to their points of departure, and the men mustered out of the service.⁹

Demobilization by the Navy was also quite hurried, though seemingly not as hurried as that of the Army. With the end of the war, it authorized the release of 20 percent of the Naval Reserve Force, 20 percent of the men who had

⁸Oliver Lyman Spaulding, The United States Army in War and Peace (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1937), p. 454.

⁹James R. Mock and Evangeline Thurber, Report on Demobilization (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1944), p. 134.

enlisted for the duration of the war (even though the war had not officially ended), 10 percent of the men who had enlisted between April 6, 1917 and January 1918, and 5 percent of hospital corpsmen, with nothing said about dates of enlistment for corpsmen. The Navy also released sea-going personnel on a percentage basis. For the months of May and June of 1919, for example, the Navy authorized the release of 6 percent of the men on ships with a view to having total personnel reduced to 250,000 by July 1, 1919. On October 7, 1918, the Navy began discharging all enlisted men who had made a written request for discharge.¹⁰ In summary then, the Navy appeared to have proceeded on a somewhat more orderly basis than the Army in its program of demobilization and obviously did have some system of priority of discharge established which was followed, at least insofar as it was practical to do so, for the Navy appears to have been somewhat flexible in this regard.

Demobilization in our past wars then appears to have had some things in common. It was usually not planned until the war's end was imminent. Until World War I military units were quite often simply disbanded with no thought given to such things as a priority of discharge formula. In 1918, the Army tried a modified form, bringing units home in the order that they had been sent overseas. In these units, however, were many men who had been sent across the seas as

¹⁰ Annual Report of the Navy Department: Report of the Secretary of the Navy (Washington, U.S. Govt. Printing Office, 1920), p. 76.

replacements and had been members of the units for very short times, while men with longer service remained in Europe. The Navy tried to take into consideration the date that men had enlisted in establishing the order in which they were to be discharged.

Six times in our nation's history before 1945, men had left the armed services to return to civilian life at the end of a war. For all of the shortcomings that were evident, the transition from soldier to civilian was usually a smooth one. There were rumblings of discontent among some of the Army officers after the Revolutionary War, for example, but the mutiny that might have resulted from what is known as the Newburgh Conspiracy never materialized largely because of the influence of Washington. Otherwise, incidents have been rare. As for the financial condition of ex soldiers after wars, they never really appeared to suffer until after World War I when the unemployment that hit the nation as a whole seemed to hit the ex soldier particularly hard.

In conclusion, then, it can be said that if Army and Navy planners had wished to do so, they could have benefited from the experience of previous wars. This experience was not so likely to furnish answers, though, as it was to acquaint the planners with the type of problems with which they would be faced. Some problems were the same, except that they had increased enormously in magnitude. There were, for example, many men to be brought home, just as there had

been in World War I, but this time there were many more of them, and they were much more widely separated.

For some reason, though, the prospect of returning men home seemed to worry very few of the responsible people in the government, at least publicly. The greatest concern of all, and many men worried long and hard and quite publicly about this as well, was what would be done with the men once they returned home. Unemployment rates among veterans were quite high after World War I, and World War II planners were haunted with the prospect of a vast number of unemployed veterans roaming the streets and standing in soup lines to use some of the more popular images of the day. To prevent a recurrence, serious planning was begun quite early in the war.

Much of this planning was discussed in a previous chapter, wherein particular emphasis was placed on the work of the Postwar Manpower Conference, a conference whose personnel consisted of a rather diverse group of men--educators, government officials, and members of the business world. It was responsible for some of the earliest and most earnest planning on demobilization, and out of it came a highly influential report, Demobilization and Readjustment. In it was mentioned for the first time such things as mustering out pay, extensive unemployment insurance for veterans, and free, though limited educational provisions for qualified veterans; in short, the complex welfare and educational provisions that were later (with substantial

modifications) incorporated into the omnibus legislative measure that became known as the GI Bill of Rights.

Economic considerations seemed to dominate the thinking of the people at the conference, and no one consideration seemed more important than that of employment. There were suggestions that even the release of men from the service be controlled in order not to throw too many of them into the labor market at one time: "the problem of military demobilization is that of arranging the volume, rate, and directions of this flow from the armed services take place in such a way that there will be no unreasonable interval between the time when a man leaves active military service and the time when he is located in some civilian employment."¹¹

Quite obviously someone soon began enlisting legislative support for this program; for within a very short time, Congressman Augustine B. Kelley of Illinois sent a letter to Franklin D. Roosevelt in which the Congressman sent a copy of his bill, H.R.2879, the purpose of which was stated as follows: "To provide that no member of the armed forces shall be separated from the service under honorable conditions or released from active duty following the present war until he has secured employment in civilian

¹¹U.S. National Resources Planning Board, Demobilization and Readjustment, Report of the Conference on Postwar Readjustment of Civilian and Military Personnel, 1943, pp. 26-27.

life." Kelley's letter was answered by the Secretary to the President, General Edwin M. Watson. This letter refused to take a firm position, volunteering only that the problem was a "complex" one, that much study needed to be done on the matter, and that meanwhile it was probably best to withhold expressions of sentiment concerning demobilization.¹²

Despite Watson's lukewarm response, the idea did not die, and another Congressman introduced a resolution that was similar to that which had been introduced by Kelley. The resolution of Congressman Brooks, House Joint Resolution 204, stated that its purpose was "To provide an orderly demobilization for members of the armed services of the United States, to aid in obtaining suitable employment for such persons" The resolution would have provided for a three months' furlough. At the end of that furlough if the individual had not secured employment, he would be allowed to remain in the service. The three month period would be a transitional period in which the individual could be reintegrated into the community: "such a three month furlough would facilitate the social and occupational readjustment . . . of members of the armed forces who are about to be discharged . . . , and would enable their former

¹²Letter Edwin M. Watson to Augustine M. Kelley, House of Representatives, August 23, 1943, O.F.5404, Roosevelt Papers, FDRL.

prospective employers to make suitable adjustment arrangements.¹³

The Army did not like the resolution of Congressman Brooks. Secretary of War Henry Stimson said that he did not want to see the legislation passed; and in his message to the Bureau of the Budget, said that the passage into law of an act that provided for mustering out payments had removed the need for such a resolution. He added that it would be impossible to make an accurate estimate of the total cost of the resolution, but that to furlough 1,000,000 men for three months would cost approximately \$395,000,000.¹⁴

There were a number of high ranking officers in the United States Army who thought as Stimson did although in all fairness it must be stated that the resolutions of Congressmen Kelley and Brooks went well beyond what the Postwar Manpower Conference had originally proposed, for the PMC was thinking in terms of the speed of demobilization and the level of employment available rather than specific individuals and specific jobs. Yet there were many Army officers who objected even to that. One of these Brigadier Generals F. H. Osborn stated in rather frank language that it was not the part of the Army to function as a

¹³U.S., Congress, House, House Joint Resolution 204, Bureau of the Budget, Record Group 51, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

¹⁴Letter, Henry Stimson, Secretary of War to Harold Smith, Director of the Budget, Record Group 51, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

'preventative W.P.A.' and that the only factors that should enter into military demobilization were military necessity and availability of transportation.¹⁵

It might be mentioned in support of General Osborn's position, incidentally, that there was ample historical precedent to support him. At the end of World War I, the British Army began discharging personnel on the basis of the ability of industry to absorb them. Before a discharge was granted, the potential veteran had to prove that there was a job awaiting him--the proof took the form of a letter or affidavit from an employer. The enterprising and the unethical were soon producing spurious letters which added even more to the growing indignation of those who had to remain in the Army. Things finally reached a point where mutinies broke out. Order was finally restored, though, as a result of the trouble-shooting of Winston Churchill who instituted a priority of discharge formula based on the individual's length of service.¹⁶

This system of discharging men on the basis of the availability of employment was also proposed for the United States at the end of World War I, its principal proponent, Newton C. Baker, Secretary of War. The Secretary's argument was that a smooth resumption of the civilian economy was

¹⁵Sparrow, p. 65.

¹⁶Winston Churchill, The Aftermath (New York: Charles Scribners Sons, 1929), pp. 40-54.

more important than a rapid reduction of the armed forces.

The Chief of Staff of the United States Army Peyton C. March was not convinced of this, though, and he maintained that it would be extremely difficult to discharge men by vocation, for Army records were not too thorough concerning occupational classifications.¹⁷ In a letter written in answer to a number of queries by Congressmen, March also said that it would hurt the efficiency of the Army, and that it would be poor economy to keep such a large number of men in uniform. Besides, March thought that the unit method of demobilization would furnish a sufficiently large cross section of workers to the labor market.¹⁸

It is one of the ironies of history that within a few years after the end of World War I, the large number of unemployed veterans concerned a number of people, but the United States would probably have encountered the same problems as the English in World War I if it had attempted to use the armed forces as reservoirs of employment. It was very probably the memory of this unemployment following World War I, though, that revived the safety valve concept of demobilization during World War II. Though the idea had some adherents, formidable opposition to it soon developed. In the early summer of 1944, the Undersecretary of War

¹⁷Mock and Thurber, Report on Demobilization, pp. 129-130.

¹⁸U.S., Congressional Record, Appendix, LVIII, 66th Cong., 1st sess., May 28, 1919, p. 8835.

arrayed himself alongside some of his general officers by roundly endorsing a section of a bill on reconversion which expressly forbade the retention of men in the armed services for the purpose of preventing unemployment.¹⁹ And the matter was definitely settled with the passage of the George Bill into public law, a measure that specifically stated that prospective employment was not to be considered a condition for discharge.²⁰

Now it had been settled; nothing other than military conditions were to be factors in an individual's discharge from the service. But the method of discharge, whether by individual or by unit, had not been definitely decided; nor had a means been agreed upon to determine a priority of discharge formula. But to the credit of the Army, it had already begun work on such a project, and by the spring of 1944 had distributed questionnaires to soldiers scattered around the world. According to the Army, the questionnaire sampled "all kinds of soldiers in all kinds of outfits with all kinds of backgrounds, combat men, rear echelon troops, Negroes, Whites, fathers, non fathers, married men, single

¹⁹Robert P. Patterson, Undersecretary of War to Samuel Rosenman, October 1, 1944 (copy of letter, June 14th to Senator Murray, attached), The Papers of Robert P. Patterson, General Correspondence (classified), Letters of Robert Patterson, IV, Box 26, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

²⁰United States, Congress, Senate, Public Law 458, sect. 201, 78th Cong., 2nd sess., United States Statutes at Large, 1944, LVIII, Public Laws, United States Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., p. 785.

men, young men, old men, and so forth." In these questionnaires, answers were sought as to which of the following should be considered the most important in determining eligibility for discharge: (a) combat participation (b) army service overseas (c) total army service (d) dependent children (e) marriage (f) possession of critical skills needed for reconversion (g) age. After the questionnaires were computed, the first four items were considered the most important by the servicemen: combat participation, overseas service, total Army service, dependent children.²¹

This survey, conducted by the Army's Information and Education section, was then broadened to include 25,000 soldiers to whom questionnaires were sent--questionnaires which listed four items to which the soldiers were asked to rank in importance. Overseas service consistently received the highest number of votes, ranging from 45 percent of the votes cast in Alaska to 56 percent of those in the South Pacific. Ranked next in importance was dependency, receiving 47 percent of the votes cast in the European Theater of Operations and 38 percent of the vote in the South Pacific. In addition to the four specific categories, there was a section where the serviceman could express a written opinion. The most frequent response concerned combat. Army

²¹United States, Congress, House, Administration of the Army Point System for Discharge, Hearings before the Committee on Military Affairs, 79th Cong., 1st sess., June 19, 1945 (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1946), pp. 8-9.

personnel who had seen combat action thought that separate recognition should be given for it, recognition, that is, in addition to the overseas credit.²²

After the Information and Education Division had computed and analyzed the answers from the soldiers' questionnaires, they developed a system which took into account combat, awards for wounds (purple heart), number of months overseas, number of children, length of time spent in the Army.²³ During the late summer of 1944, the Army spent considerable time in trying to work out a system that would be as fair as possible. The future Secretary of War stressed the importance of a just and equitable system in a memorandum which he wrote to General Tompkins:

I believe that in our planning for demobilization we should make further revisions on the priorities for discharge.

The system must be one that will give full effect to the views of the troops themselves Otherwise the Army will have a problem in morale It is fundamental that the priorities in discharge of soldiers should be the priorities that soldier opinion would approve.

From talks with commanders overseas and with a number of soldiers, I feel quite certain that soldier opinion would give preference in the following order:

- 1) men wounded in action
- 2) men with combat service overseas according to length of combat service

²²Samuel A. Stouffer et al., The American Soldier: Combat and Its Aftermath, II (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1965), pp. 522-24.

²³U.S., House, Administration of the . . . Point System . . ., p. 9.

- 3) men with non combat service overseas according to length of such overseas service
- 4) men with service in the United States according to length of service
- 5) men with dependent children but no great value to be attached to this factor.²⁴

On September 7, 1944, the Army in a press release announced that it would discharge men on a basis of points, which would be awarded for time spent in service, time overseas, combat decorations, and dependency; in short, on the basis of those things which the men themselves considered to have been the most important.²⁵ It will also be noticed that the list conformed to a marked degree with that which Patterson had submitted. Patterson did seem to be in error, though, concerning the attitude of the serviceman toward dependent children. Later, when points were assigned for each of these categories, parenthood outweighed all other factors, but that was still in the future, for the Army was not yet ready to assign specific point totals for specific categories.

But that time was not too far in the future, for on May 8th, 1945, Germany surrendered; and within a few days, May 10th, Major General William Tompkins, Director of the Army's Special Planning Division, released the completed

²⁴Robert P. Patterson, Undersecretary of War to General Tompkins, August 29, 1944, The Papers of Robert P. Patterson, Letters of Robert P. Patterson, General Correspondence, IV, Box 26, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

²⁵New York Times, Sept. 7, 1944, p. 1, p. 14.

version of the Army's priority of discharge formula, the point system, specifying the categories for which points were to be given as well as the number of points to be assigned to each of them. Of the four categories, the text of the statement released to the newspapers, said this:

Service credit--one point for each month of Army service since Sept. 16, 1940

Overseas credit--one point for each month served overseas since Sept. 16, 1940

Combat credit--five points for the first and each additional award of the following for service performed since Sept. 16, 1940: Distinguished Service Cross, Legion of Merit, Silver Star, Distinguished Flying Cross, Soldiers Medal, Bronze Star Medal, Air Medal, Purple Heart, and Bronze Service Stars (battle participation stars).

Credit . . . given for the following decorations by the Navy Department: Navy Cross, Distinguished Service Medal, Legion of Merit, Silver Star Medal, Distinguished Flying Cross, Navy and Marine Corps Medal, Bronze Star Medal, Air Medal, and Purple Heart Medal.

Credit . . . for awards and decorations of a foreign country which may be accepted and won under the War Department regulations

Parenthood credit--twelve points for each child under 18 years up to a limit of three children.²⁶

The Navy had no demobilization plan to offer with the defeat of Germany as that service did not plan on demobilizing its forces until after the defeat of Japan. That is not to say, though, that the Navy had done no planning, for actually that service had a tentative plan ready as early as December 1943. In that plan, it was assumed that military necessity would take precedence over all other matters. That much having been established, a number of possible factors for a priority of release formula

²⁶New York Times, May 11, 1945, p. 1, p. 11.

were considered including employment opportunities, dependency, length of service, resumption of education, and age. Of these factors, age was soon "summarily dismissed," for it was assumed that by the time that the war ended, there would be relatively few people over 38 years of age in its service. As for education, it was deemed wise to wait and to see what Congress would do with some of the bills it was considering at that time. As for length of service, it was considered a fair base for determining priority of release, but the Navy wondered if such a factor might not conceivably interfere with its desire to hold onto men with extensive service. Discharge by dependency was ruled out as being too likely to seriously disrupt its personnel program, although the reasons why this should be true were not made clear. And if employment opportunities were one of the considerations for discharge, a number of young inexperienced sailors would be at a distinct disadvantage and might conceivably spend an inordinate amount of time in the services waiting for employment. Then, too, there were a sufficiently large number of Navy officers who thought that this was not the proper role for the Navy to play.²⁷ Whether it was or not in time became an academic question, for Public Law 458 stated that men could not be kept in the service to prevent unemployment. By the time the George Bill became law,

²⁷U.S., Navy Department, Narrative of the Bureau of Naval Personnel, 1 September 1945 to 1 October 1946, Vol. II, The History of the Demobilization Activity, unpublished manuscript (Washington, D.C.: 1947), p. 51.

though, the Navy had already moved away from such a position and had begun thinking that a number of factors would have to be included in a priority of discharge formula.

In November of 1944, the Navy reached a decision as to just what factors should be included in a discharge formula. Within some areas, the formula was similar to that of the Army. Both branches gave credit for time spent in the service, time overseas, and combat service. They differed, though, in that the Navy placed a premium on age and that it gave discharge points for a wife and children, whereas the Army plan only considered the children. Entitled Demobilization Plan, Number 2, Revision 1, it, too, was destined for eventual revision.²⁸

This need for revision arose from some of the plan's administrative shortcomings. There was no way, for example, of determining in Washington how much overseas service an individual had accumulated or what his status was concerning dependency. This information was contained in the records that were with the ship, and to secure it, it was suggested that an Alnav (All Navy Bulletin) be sent asking that all ship commanders forward this information to Washington. The Alnav, however, was never sent as it was soon agreed that it

²⁸U.S., Navy Dept., Narrative of the Bureau of Naval Personnel, . . . , Vol. II, The Hist. of the Demobilization Activity, unpublished manuscript, p. 51.

would not be worth the expenditure of labor required.²⁹ For the moment, at least, the plan was shelved. As of May 1945, the month and year that Germany surrendered, the Navy did not have a plan for demobilization; yet there was no panic. The Navy had no intention of demobilizing until after the defeat of Japan, and such a defeat still seemed months and months away.

During May and June of 1945, the Navy continued its search for an acceptable priority of discharge formula. Four informal boards were given the assignment of studying the factors for discharge and making recommendations for a workable formula. The factors submitted by a board composed of enlisted officers seems to have been the most popular. Yet strangely enough, the factors that were supposed to have rendered the demobilization plan of the previous November unacceptable, sea service and dependency, were included in this plan as well. In the November plan, they were rejected because it would not have been possible, so the argument went, to compute sea service and dependency status from records in Washington, and all of the records, therefore, of all of the ships at sea would have to be canvassed. But this plan not only reaffirmed the value of both, but actually increased the number of points that were assigned to them. Nevertheless, it all went for naught, as

²⁹Narrative of the Bureau of Naval Personnel, Vol. II, unpublished manuscript, p. 57.

the plan was not adopted, and a revised version that would have given a blanket credit of 12 points for service outside the United States, if such service exceeded one year's time, and 15 points for any form of dependency soon became popular among some of the Navy planners, strangely enough; but good sense prevailed, and most of this plan was scrapped, although the blanket credit for dependency which it provided eventually became part of the formula by which men were discharged.³⁰

In late June of 1945, though, it appeared that the Navy had finally developed its priority of release formula. The plan was shown to a number of people in high places including the Chief of Naval Personnel and the Chief of Naval Operations as well as the respective Chairmen of the Senate and House Naval Affairs Committee. The plan was then sent to fleet commanders. The objections of fleet commanders, echoing the thoughts of many of their men, was that no provision had been made for sea service. The plan was reworked and credit given for sea service, and there it seemed as if matters would stand, and that the plan was ready for release to the public. But once again, the Navy had a change of heart and decided not to give credit for sea service, and the plan when released gave credit for age,

³⁰ Narrative . . . Naval Personnel, II, unpublished manuscript, The History of the Demobilization Activity, pp. 66-69.

credit for time on active duty, and dependency.³¹

A howl of outrage greeted the plan; more than 85 percent of the people who wrote the Navy Department complained about points not being given for service at sea.³² Congressman Emanuel Celler of New York could not understand how the Navy "could consider clerks at desks and pinafore officers in the same category as those who risk their necks" and summed up his feelings by saying that the men who went to sea got a "raw deal."³³ There was a host of letters to newspapers that bitterly criticized the plan. A writer to the Chicago Sun harped on what became a popular theme: the superiority of the Army's plan to that of the Navy.³⁴

The pressure worked, for within a month's time the Navy was forced to amend its plan in such a fashion as to give credit for overseas service. The plan that was finally adopted by the Navy provided for the following priority of discharge formula.

1/2 point for each year of age

1/2 point for each month of active duty since
September 1, 1939

³¹Narrative . . . Naval Personnel, II, Hist. of the Demobilization . . ., p. 89.

³²Narrative . . . Naval Personnel, II, History of the Demobilization . . . unpubl. manuscript, p. 90.

³³New York Times, August 17, 1945, p. 7.

³⁴Chicago Sun, August 27, 1945, p. 10.

1/4 point for each full month of active duty outside the United States since September 1, 1939

10 points for dependency³⁵

This plan was in effect from September 15, 1945 to July 1, 1946. In July the Navy ceased discharging people by points and began discharging them by a quota system; that is, 30 percent from this ship; 20 percent from that station, and by September 1, 1946, the Navy considered its demobilization program to be at an end.³⁶

The sister services of the Navy, the Coast Guard and Marines were given permission to use the Navy's system of discharge or develop their own formulas. Except for minor variations, the Coast Guard accepted that of the Navy. The U.S. Marine Corps, which had apparently done little work of its own on a priority system, decided to accept the Army's point system.³⁷ Nothing was changed; the same criteria was accepted; each of the factors were assigned the same weight; there was literally not a comma's difference in the plans. There is no way of knowing whether this decision of the Marines was an expression of discontent with the Navy's plan or not, although it seems to have been. The Navy's plan, to

³⁵U.S., Navy Department, U.S. Naval Personnel Bureau, Nav. Pers. 15637A, The Navy's Demobilization Program, Nov. 15, 1945, Wash., D.C.

³⁶Narrative . . . Naval Personnel, II, Hist. of the Demobilization, pp. 103-104.

³⁷U.S., Navy Department, Bureau of Naval Personnel Information Bulletin, All Hands, Washington, D.C., No. 342, p. 72.

be sure, had been in a high state of flux for such a very long time, and then, too, it seemed to favor the older man with dependents. The Marines, on the other hand, considered among their very best fighting men the large number of seventeen and eighteen year olds in the Corps. The Army plan, too, made provision for campaigns and combat decorations. The Navy never gave credit for campaigns, but it would discharge individuals who had been awarded decorations for valor. Everything considered, though, the Marines obviously considered the Army plan as being better adapted to their needs.

In summary, the priority of discharge formulae evolved over a period of months from the time when the Postwar Manpower Conference (PMC) in 1942 and 1943 first spoke of discharging men as employment became available. Despite the fact that such a plan had support, some of which was in Congress, a sufficiently large number of Congressmen were opposed to this and specifically prohibited it by passing a law that forbade such a practice. Eventually, the armed services developed priority of discharge formulae which while fair, were also complex compared to previous methods of discharge. The presence of so many factors to determine eligibility for discharge also served to broaden the areas in which men could feel aggrieved. Single men thought too many points had been given to fathers of children; fathers thought that parenthood had not been sufficiently recognized. And while there was complaint

about the weight given to the various factors in the point systems, there were people who wanted to scrap them entirely. Others would defend them, but at the same time they wanted to see the discharge of anyone who was not doing something constructive, as well as the discharge of people who would be useful in industry. Needless to say, the services opposed the discharge of people outside the point systems, for practices that ignored them tended to diminish their effectiveness, as well as destroy confidence in them. The armed forces which had not had an easy path to travel in wartime found that the journey had improved in peacetime, but there were places where the road was still rocky.

Chapter 4

TWO WARS ARE TOO MANY: REDEPLOYMENT TO THE PACIFIC

In May of 1945, the war against Germany ended. The score was "two down and one to go." Though Japan was not defeated, the thinking of most Americans was that it was only a matter of time. "Winning the peace" for which there had already been extensive planning had become even more important. Some of these plans could now be put into effect, while the war went forward with undiminished ferocity against Japan.

A number of steps at "winning the peace" had already been taken. Even before the war against Germany had ended, the United States Army had begun rounding up Nazi war criminals, imprisoning them for future trial, and the process of denazifying Germany had also begun. Nazi officials were systematically removed from positions of responsibility whenever and wherever possible. Within a short time after the war ended, an educational program was begun that had as its ultimate objective the democratization of Germany. In other areas, too, peace was pursued. Most important of all, without question, was the founding of the United Nations in San Francisco in April of 1945. Seemingly

then in the early summer of 1945, there was reason to be hopeful--the end of the war was not as far away as it had seemed a few months before. And the peace that would follow at the end of it seemed to offer great promise.

Yet despite all of this, there were some disquieting factors present. Most disquieting of all was the obvious reluctance of the American serviceman to remain in the armed services a single day longer than was necessary. Supporting them in their desire to return home were wives, parents, sweethearts, relatives, friends, and thousands and thousands of well wishers. Not everyone could be brought home immediately, though, Germany could not be occupied unless there were troops to do it, nor could it be disarmed, denazified, and pacified. Also, there were billions of dollars of material that had to be inventoried, maintained, and stored as well as protected by men carrying rifles. And, most important of all, the war against Japan had not yet been won; and to win this war, it would be necessary to transfer vast numbers of troops from Europe to the Pacific. In short, the winning of a war that was entering its final phases, and the responsibility of protecting whatever peace might be secured, clearly imposed serious obligations on the American people and their sons and daughters in the armed services.

For the average serviceman, though, obligations were meant to be met by someone else. One of the most serious mistakes made by many postwar planners was in thinking that

if Americans knew what was expected of them they would then meet their responsibilities willingly. That was far from true, particularly after the war had ended, and the reason appeared to lie somewhere in the difference between wartime and peacetime motivation. Wartime motivation was based upon a number of factors, which may have been present in peacetime, but were much more subtle in the forms they took. It would be impossible to weigh them accurately but they included such things as patriotism as well as honor, courage, and sense of duty to one's comrades. Men who could easily understand the importance of capturing a railroad junction in Germany during the war, particularly when ammunition being fired at them was passing through that junction, found it more difficult to accept guarding freight cars of coal in Europe during peacetime. The coal might have been used to keep someone from freezing to death, but it was someone who was completely unknown and living in a city which one would never see. Those who did see the necessity for guarding the coal took the position that someone else should do it. To the man overseas and a combat veteran, the man who should guard the coal was someone who had not experienced combat or very little of it. And to the man who was overseas but had seen little combat, the job should be done by the man who never went overseas at all. But to this man who was still in the United States, the responsibility in his opinion was not his, for he had done his part, the job should be done by the war worker or the 4F who was never in the service at

all. At this time, it might also be mentioned that there were vastly exaggerated ideas of the number of men who were physically fit, but because of having been declared essential to the war effort had never served in the armed forces. One of them, once wrote:

' . . . there are several million physically fit men between the ages of 23 and 40 in the United States that are holding down good jobs. They say they are essential, and I guess they are, but all of us would be glad to change places with them and be glad to work for our room and board just to go home. . . . We have put in our time, now it is their turn. We can make the munitions, planes, as well as they can.'¹

The period from May to September 1945 was a difficult one in the services insofar as plans for demobilization were concerned. There were a number of complaints from the servicemen, particularly from those in the Army, that the point system was not being administered honestly or fairly. There were complaints, too, of the Army's policy of essentiality. As this policy worked, a man could be kept in the service, even though he was eligible for discharge if his services were essential and there was no one to replace him. This worked a hardship at times when commanding officers were too rigid in applying the label of essential. Considering an x-ray technician as essential might be justified, but there were cases where drivers and clerks

¹Quoted in John C. Sparrow, History of Personnel Demobilization in the United States Army (Washington, D.C., Department of the Army, 1952), p. 128.

were considered essential.² This discontent with the Army during the period that we might call the period of partial demobilization was not confined to angry denunciations of the point system, or of the policy of essentiality. There were a number of people who were unhappy with the Army's proposed program of redeployment of men to the Pacific.

With the defeat of Germany in May of 1945, the Army's job was only half completed; there was still the matter of defeating Japan. By the reckoning of a number of authorities, the end of the war still appeared to be many months away. According to the Chief of Staff of the United States Army, the final invasion of Japan was not to take place until the early spring of 1946.³ The estimated date for the defeat of Japan was November 1946,⁴ but the Japanese were capable of fighting with fierce tenacity. Roosevelt once told Churchill that he would not be surprised if the war continued until the spring of 1947. According to Stettinius, no one appeared to be surprised; indeed, it seemed to be the consensus of the military and political

²Sparrow, History of Personnel Demobilization in the United States Army, pp. 126-132.

³The War Reports of General of the Army George C. Marshall, General of the Army H. H. Arnold, Fleet Admiral Ernest J. King (Philadelphia and New York: J. P. Lippincott and Company, 1947), p. 240.

⁴Harry S. Truman, Memoirs, I, Year of Decisions (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1955), p. 382.

advisors who were present.⁵

Conscious of the fanaticism with which the Japanese were capable of fighting, and mindful of the cost incurred in subjugating Okinawa (39,000 casualties and over 1,000 aircraft lost),⁶ the services were determined to strengthen their position in the Pacific with the addition of units from the now inactive European theater. They planned to use those groups that had not seen extensive combat which would be composed, therefore, of men who did not have high point scores. This, of course, was no spur of the moment decision. Common sense dictated such a move, extensive planning had provided for it, and even the servicemen themselves expected it. The armed services knew that there would be considerable unhappiness among the men in the unfortunate units that were chosen to be transferred to the Pacific. They had hoped, however, that the servicemen themselves would accept their duty without serious complaint, with no more than the customary bitching, as they had done for the most part during the course of the war.

As a matter of fact, some effort was expended to create the impression that this was precisely how the GI would react. From time to time, magazines and newspapers

⁵Edward R. Stettinius, Jr., Roosevelt and the Russians (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1949), p. 72.

⁶The War Reports of the General of the Army George C. Marshall, General of the Army H. H. Arnold, Fleet Admiral Ernest J. King, p. 240.

would interview servicemen who were being redeployed to the Pacific, and Americans could read in newspapers such as the New York Times of how the average GI who was being redeployed did not want to go to the Pacific, but he considered it his duty to go and just wanted to get the war over with.⁷ These were nice thoughts and in the finest tradition of American manhood, but they seemed to have been the thoughts that the American public would have liked for the serviceman to have had rather than what his thoughts actually were.

A much more realistic appraisal of what the GI's actually thought could be found in a survey conducted by the Information and Education Division of the Army. It found that a decided majority of the returnees (71 percent) did not want to go overseas again and of those who answered that they were willing to go overseas (19 percent in one survey, 11 percent in another), the I & E suggested that some of these might be evasive. Fifty percent of those who said that they were willing to do more also indicated that they expected to be discharged before the war ended. A reasonable assumption then is that they were willing to do more as long as they thought that they would not be around to do it. As a matter of fact, this is stated to have been the case in clear and unmistakeable language: "it seems likely that most of the returnees who said they were willing to go when

⁷Drew Middleton, "What the GI Is Thinking About," New York Times (Magazine), New York Times, May 13, 1945, p. 9.

needed, believing as they did that they would not be needed, were really little, if any, more willing to go overseas again than the returnees who flatly said no."⁸

The I & E section of the Army tried to explain these attitudes of the veterans: ". . . it was psychologically very difficult for the returnee not to feel this way, for he had in a sense, come to the end of the Army cycle."⁹ The "cycle" as explained by the I & E was service in Europe. Some of those who thought that they should not serve additional time overseas, also thought that their release should come sometime soon. In an unusually prescient observation, the Director of the OWMR had predicted this two months before Germany surrendered. James Byrnes in a letter to the Undersecretary of War commented on the lack of information emanating from that office on the discharge program contemplated by the Army. There would be, he said, a hue and cry to get out of the service, that in a poll that had been taken the previous September, 37 percent thought that they would be discharged within one to five months after the defeat of Germany; 67 percent thought that they would be discharged six months after Germany's defeat.¹⁰

⁸Samuel A. Stouffer et al., The American Soldier: Combat and Its Aftermath, II (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1965), p. 471, 469.

⁹Stouffer et al., The American Soldier: Combat and Its Aftermath, II, p. 472.

¹⁰James F. Byrnes, Director OWMR to Robert P. Patterson, Undersecretary of War, Memorandum, March 11, 1945, The Papers of James F. Byrnes, Drawer 1, Folder 48, Cooper Library, Clemson University, Anderson, South Carolina.

Of those who felt, incidentally, that they should be out of the Army, there were very few who were more vociferous than some of the veterans who were being redeployed with divisions that were scheduled to go to Japan. Convinced that they had done their part, they began applying pressure on government officials and Congressmen. This was particularly true among troops of the 95th Division. Resentful even before the end of the war at being one of the divisions chosen to fight in the final phases of the war against Japan, the men of the division showed unconcealed hostility after August 14, 1945, the day of Japan's actual if not formal surrender. Clearly, they did not want to serve as occupation troops. Members of that division while on pass in New Orleans visited newspaper offices and sought the support of the papers. Troops from the division's 279th regiment sent a telegram to the United Press denying a War Department statement to the effect that they had seen only limited combat and emphasized that their tour of duty in Europe included 104 days in the front lines. A letter writer to the Times Picayune defended the division's record by saying that it had served for more than nine month's overseas, and that its casualties suffered in combat would fill the pages of a telephone directory. Four soldiers took a petition protesting the division's redeployment signed by 200 men to the Hattiesburg American.¹¹

¹¹Washington Post, August 20, 1945, p. 5; August 21, 1945, p. 2; New Orleans Times Picayune, August 21, 1945, p. 8; Memphis Commercial Appeal, August 19, 1945, 1, p. 2.

Despite the vigor with which this protest of the 95th Division was made, the division's commander, Major General Harry Twaddle stated that the protest was "orderly and not mutinous."¹² Six years later, the general seemed much more frank about some of his thinking:

'After the Division's arrival in the United States, there was a continuous and growing opposition to being ordered to the Pacific. A very disturbing situation arose approaching open sedition and mutiny. The principal disturbing elements were centered among high point men who had been transferred into the Division prior to departure from Germany. These men openly and vigorously expressed the view that they had come home for discharge--that they had done their share of fighting in the war, and it was the turn of those who had not had overseas service to do their bit.'¹³

Army officers were quite obviously loath to describe these activities as mutinous at the time of their happening for fear they would have reflected seriously on their own ability to control the troops under their command, and, besides, to have done so, might have fanned protest into mutiny. And at the same time, it might have served to increase publicity which the authorities were trying to avoid. Therefore, a rather curious situation prevailed in the Army wherein incidents that were serious were dismissed as minor, and public relations rhetoric consistently described disruptive activity in low key language--leaving the impression that the Army had things well under control.

¹²Washington Post, August 20, 1945, p. 5.

¹³Quoted in Sparrow, History of Personnel Demobilization in the United States Army, p. 138.

A good example of this was the Army public relations announcement that 500 men of the Eighteenth Airborne Corps had sent individual petitions to Congress asking not to be sent to the Far East. The PR office said that no action would be taken against the soldiers since these were the actions of individuals rather than of a group.¹⁴

That the Army had grown lenient was unlikely. To have treated the situation in any other manner, though, would have simply increased the amount of publicity that the incident had already evoked, and, in addition, would have turned the men into martyrs. This much, however, was certain: Army authority was being questioned to a very serious extent. There was no comparable incident during the course of World War II that was even remotely similar to this. These were not isolated incidents either. They were happening in different units in different places and were happening with enough frequency to make Congress nervous. Sometimes Congressmen tried to transfer some of the pressure being placed on them to the shoulders of the President, Congressman Charles B. Hooven from Iowa, for example, sent a telegram to the President stating that he was being "swamped" with communications regarding the men who were being sent overseas and that he thought changes should be made in redeployment plans and that men who had

¹⁴Washington Post, August 22, 1945, p. 4.

done their share in combat should not be sent overseas.¹⁵

And apparently just about everyone thought that he had done his share in combat. The members of the 11th Major Port Battalion protested their proposed redeployment to Japan in telegrams to President Truman, the Adjutant General, the House Military Affairs Committee, and the Office of Defense Transportation. The Washington Post featured a story of 3000 high point GI's from the Washington area winning a fight to keep from being redeployed to Japan. A plaintive note from a wife to a New Orleans paper said that there was an immediate job awaiting her husband if he were not sent to Japan. Private X and 479 others from the 557th Field Artillery Battalion (239 consecutive days of combat) told the people of the Boston area that they were being "shanghaied" to Japan. And the enlisted men of the 141st General Hospital told the readers of the Detroit Free Press that it was an injustice to ship them to Japan. The Minneapolis Star Journal concluded ruefully that the GI was a good fighter but a poor peacetime soldier and said that the paper had been "flooded with their letters."¹⁶

¹⁵Charles B. Hoeven, House of Representatives to Harry S. Truman, President of the United States, telegram (telegram, referred to Secretary of War by Hassett, Secretary to the President), August 27, 1945, Official File 190V, White House Papers of Harry S. Truman, Harry S. Truman Library. Cited hereafter as OF (file number); then, Truman Papers, HSTL.

¹⁶Memphis Commercial Appeal, August 21, 1945, p. 1; Washington Post, August 23, 1945, p. 1; New Orleans Times Picayune, August 24, 1945, p. 8; Boston Daily Globe, August 30, 1945, p. 14; Detroit Free Press, September 2, 1945, part 2, p. 5; Minneapolis Star Journal, September 5, p. 10.

On the West Coast, there was an attempt to inhibit the free spirit of men on pass from the 86th Division by stamping on their passes that they were not authorized to send telegrams. Apparently not everyone believed it, for a number of men from the camp where the men were stationed, Camp Stoneman, gave money to a columnist and asked him to send telegrams for them--telegrams to Congressmen.¹⁷ Perhaps this was simply a liberal reinterpretation of what the pass said. At any rate, there was at least one organization that protested against the restriction of the civil rights of veterans. The United Parents of Veterans called for the court martial of two generals who tried to institute disciplinary action against servicemen who wrote to Congress.¹⁸

It was a disturbed Congress that received the letters and telegrams, and now and then some members were stimulated into an unusual statement or action. Congressman Paul H. Maloney of Louisiana said that he thought that there was enough concern about the Army's plans for redeployment to merit an investigation, but the Congressman's reaction was not typical; most Congressmen were prepared to ride out the storm, which they did.¹⁹

¹⁷Chicago Sun, August 22, 1945, p. 12.

¹⁸Form Letter, United Parents of Veterans to President Harry S. Truman, Sept. 6, 1945, OF190T, Truman Papers, HSTL.

¹⁹Washington Post, August 21, 1945.

As for many of the GI's who had complained, the members of the 95th Division remained home; those of the 86th set sail for the Philippines--sad and sullen, undoubtedly, and unconvinced of the need to ship them anywhere. That the 95th Division was granted a reprieve only served to worsen their aggrieved feelings. It was little more than a month and a half before that the New York Times had written:

the Army will do its best to make the welcome to the men of the 86th, one they will long remember.

Harbor whistles will shrill and bands will play as the vessels slowly steam up New York Bay, an army "welcome home" ship with a wac band aboard will draw alongside each transport and serenade the men.²⁰

Their sailing for the Philippines was a less joyous occasion.

²⁰New York Times, June 17, 1945, Section 1, p. 1.

Chapter 5

GETTING THEM OUT OF THE ARMY AND GETTING THEM INTO THE ECONOMY

The summer of 1945, which was characterized with enough disputes over redeployment to unsettle the nerves of some military leaders, was also one in which civilian authority was determined to assert itself. There had been previous clashes, and that summer they clashed again, the specific occasion being the shortage of men to work in the coal mines. The only place that a sufficient number of miners could be found to work in them was in the Army, or so it was claimed by a number of people, the most important of whom was the Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes who argued this point consistently. He also sought the support of the newspapers and repeated these charges in an appearance before the Senate Committee to Investigate the National Defense Program.¹

There had been a running argument over the release of the coal miners for over two months before Ickes appeared

¹United States, Senate, Special Committee Investigating the National Defense Program, Hearings Pursuant to Senate Resolution 55, 79th Cong., 1st sess., July 31, 1945, part 31, p. 14983.

before the Senate Committee. The position of the War Department was that the special release of coal miners would only encourage other industrial groups to apply for the release of personnel in their industries. Also, the discharge of groups such as these would destroy the morale of those who would be subsequently discharged through the point system. And if an unusually large group of men were discharged as favors to special groups, it would mean the ultimate destruction of the point system. Nevertheless, there was considerable pressure placed on the War Department to release or furlough coal miners; for example, the Director of the OWMR requested the furlough of 5000 in May of 1945, but Patterson refused the request.²

The request, though, came up again in a cabinet meeting in early July. Ickes pushed the matter, repeating his assertion that the only place a sufficient number of miners could be found was in the Army. Once again, Patterson stated that he could not discharge or furlough them and repeated his fears of what it would do to the smooth functioning of the method of discharging personnel. At this meeting, Truman apparently supported Patterson, for he made a strong statement in praise of the point system.³

²Robert P. Patterson, Undersecretary of War to Fred M. Vinson, Director, OWMR, May 23, 1945, General Correspondence, Robert P. Patterson (classified), Library of Congress.

³Notes on Cabinet Meeting, Robert P. Patterson, July 5, 1945, Stimson Papers, Sterling Library, Yale University.

But the Secretary of the Interior was a persistent man and the result of his activities was a heightened interest by the public in the coal mines and a greater degree of pressure against Acting Secretary of War Patterson. Despite all of this, Patterson refused to be swayed from his position. On July 13, he renewed his refusal to furlough miners in a letter to Ickes; on July 21, he wrote to Sam Rayburn in the House and Kenneth McKellar in the Senate, objecting to proposed legislation to furlough 10,000 coal miners and discharge 20,000 others.⁴ And there matters stood until the argument finally found its way into the committee room for the Senate Committee to Investigate the National Defense Program, now under the leadership of a new chairman, Senator James Mead of New York.

In July 1945, as a result of its investigations, the Mead Committee supported the position of Harold Ickes and others that "the release to industry of a relatively few men could make possible the employment of great numbers in the future." The Committee was also of the opinion that the Army was wasting manpower: "setting up huge reserves of troops which it cannot hope to employ in the Pacific War, except in the event of an almost disastrous military

⁴Letters, Robert P. Patterson, Acting Secretary of War to Sam Rayburn, House of Representatives, July 21, 1945; to Kenneth McKellar, United States Senate, July 21, 1945, General Correspondence, Robert P. Patterson (classified), Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

set-back."⁵ Clearly, public opinion was beginning to run against the Army, and even the Washington Post, a paper that was usually sympathetic to military problems, urged it "to pay attention" to the Mead Committee claim that there were 10,000 miners who were eligible for discharge.⁶

Fortunately for the public and the Army, the coal crisis passed--a number of factors contributed to this. First, the Army agreed to expedite the discharges of coal miners who were eligible for discharge. Of more importance, though, was the fact that within a couple of weeks of the time that the Mead Committee had made its report, the war ended. The Army then further liberalized its qualifications for discharge. All indications were now that there would be more than a sufficient number of men to work in the mines.

The matter of the coal mines had not been settled when it became apparent that there was a lack of labor in another area as well, the railroads. The problem became particularly acute in early July when transportation authorities found it necessary to move the thousands of redeployed veterans from Europe to the United States. Several things became quickly apparent. Either the railroads were not sufficient to handle the vast number of servicemen or there were some monumental mistakes in

⁵United States, Congress, Senate, Special Committee Investigating the National Defense Program, Senate Report 110, part 4, 79th Cong., 1st sess., 1945, p. 16.

⁶Washington Post, July 31, 1945, p. 8.

scheduling, as members of the armed forces found it necessary to wait an inordinate amount of time before they were loaded on board a train. Adding to an already unpleasant situation, too, was the general crowding on the trains: extremely long lines to the dining cars, and in the mornings and evenings, lines to the restrooms. Equipment was poor: lights did not always work; coach seats were sometimes torn. And particularly irksome to servicemen was the discomfort of traveling great distances without Pullman cars. The hot July weather did not help matters, either.

During this hot month of July a series of incidents happened that dramatized some of the problems of redeployment -- incidents that were publicized by the newspapers. In Memphis, for example, an irate railroad worker Carl Cannon spotted a group of German prisoners of war traveling in Pullman coaches. This was a newsworthy item, for there were literally thousands of GI's home by now who had ridden miles and miles in French box cars (the notorious 40 and 8) and who could not understand why enemy prisoners of war in this country did not travel in the same fashion. Unknown to Cannon perhaps was that these were hospital cases and psychoneurotics. At any rate, he chose to call the local newspaper, and one of the supervisors of the railroad sought to stop him, which spoke better of the supervisor's courage than it did of his wisdom, for Cannon was a 300 pound former athlete and one time boxing coach of Mississippi State. Cannon said it was necessary for him to "slap down" the supervisor

before he could make the call.⁷

Within about a week's time from the incident that happened concerning the German prisoners of war, a rather voluble Colonel in the Transportation Corps spoke out on some of his ideas concerning the transportation of GI's. It was far from adequate, according to him, and he was particularly condemnatory of the railway equipment which he classified as strictly "toonerville." The Colonel's statement which was picked up and spread by the newspapers aroused national attention, and many people thought that they recognized the Colonel's name, which may have been the case, for Lieutenant Colonel Peter de Paolo was a former auto racing champion, good enough at one time to win the Indianapolis 500. The Army definitely did not appreciate the Colonel's remark and quickly sped him down the road to a rapid retirement. The official explanation was that the Colonel had more than the sufficient number of points to be discharged. No explanation was given as to the actual number of points that he possessed; however many, they were more than enough.⁸

Much less spectacular than any of these incidents, but cumulatively more important perhaps were the letters to Congressmen, phone calls and letters to newspapers, and the private gripes of GI's that railway transportation was

⁷Memphis Commercial Appeal, July 8, 1945, p. 4.

⁸Stars and Stripes (Paris edition), July 15, 1945, p. 3.

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inferior. Some blamed the railroads for the situation; some, the Army, and some, the Office of Defense Transportation. The Mead Committee opened hearings to determine just what the situation was with the railways, with the hope of making some meaningful and constructive suggestions.

The Committee found, as had been maintained by the ODT, that there was a shortage of labor on the railways and tried to secure from the Army a pledge to furlough or discharge men to work on them. The Army was reluctant to do this; they needed railway workers themselves during this period of redeployment. They had already furloughed some during the month of June, and, most of all, they did not want to interfere with the point system. The Committee stressed that there were many former railway workers who were not working on the Army's railroads and asked that these be released. To stress the wisdom and practicality of furloughing these men, the Committee repeated the observation of the Director of the ODT that one good railway worker at work on the railroads was worth a hundred railway workers in the Army. But the Army was still reluctant to release them. This particularly angered the Chairman of the Committee who stated that there were a number of areas of which he was aware (Iran for one) where railway labor battalions were being phased out. Nor could the Chairman understand, as he later told the newspapers, why American soldiers were used on the French railroads at a time when

there was wide-spread unemployment throughout France.⁹

The other area in which the Committee probed hard was the matter of scheduling of troops. Initially, it seemed as if the onus of responsibility lay with the Director of the ODT, as the shortage of cars appeared to be his fault. The Director maintained that a major reason for the shortage was the incorrect information that he had been furnished by the Army. Though he was told, for example, that the Army would redeploy 150,000 troops during the month of June, they actually redeployed more than 200,000; and for the month of July, the figures that were released showed an error of over 100,000 troops. Furthermore, the Director found out "accidentally" that the figures of August were more than 100,000 greater than the figures that had been furnished to the ODT. Clearly, this was an impossible state of affairs.¹⁰

That state of affairs arose because the Army did not coordinate its planning with the Office of Defense Transportation. True enough, it did give monthly figures on the number of men who would be shipped, but not weekly or daily

⁹U.S., Congress, Senate, Special Committee Investigating the National Defense Program, Hearings Pursuant to S. Res. 55, 79th Cong., 1st sess., July 24, 1945, p. 14881, p. 14894; p. 14912; Stars and Stripes, July 30, 1945, p. 8.

¹⁰U.S., Congress, Senate, Special Committee Investigating the National Defense Program, Hearings Pursuant to S. Res. 55, Part XXXI, 79th Cong., 1st sess., July 24, 1945, pp. 14948-9.

figures. It consistently and deliberately exceeded the figures supplied in monthly quotas by the overloading of ships and did not tell the ODT that ships would be overloaded. Army explanation for this was that scheduling was made with the Association of American Railroads. All of this was very well, but the AAR did not provide the railway cars; that is, they did not establish the priorities; did not provide for the physical inventory. That was the responsibility of the ODT, either by transferring them from other lines, where the demand was not great, or of manufacturing them.¹¹

There was to be sure, a shortage of all railway cars, but the shortage of Pullman cars was particularly acute. Undoubtedly, the wear and tear involved in transporting hundreds of thousands of troops was probably the most significant reason for this, but apparently there had not been a sufficient number of them manufactured during the war. Burton K. Wheeler said on the floor of the Senate that many of those that had been manufactured during the war had been sent to South America. Senator Scott Lucas of Illinois reminded the Senate that the Committee to Investigate the National Defense Program had in the past opposed the manufacture of additional Pullman cars as a luxury that was not in the spirit of the war. At any rate,

¹¹U.S., Senate, Spec. Comm. Investigating the Natl. Defense . . . , Hearings Pursuant to S. Res. 55, Part XXXI, 79th Cong., 1st sess., July 24, 1945, pp. 14930-9.

the ODT did its part, and called for the transfer of 895 Pullmans that had been used for civilian service and ordered the manufacture of an additional 1000 cars.¹²

Meanwhile, back at the War Department, pressure was mounting. For a period of several weeks, the Army had been taking a beating in the newspapers. Thoughtful articles such as that which appeared in the New Orleans Times Picayune tried to be fair and understand the Army's position but at the same time stressed the importance of having the nation's railways operate as efficiently as possible, which the Army could help with the release of railway workers.¹³ The last day of July the Army finally relented and announced that it would release 2,063 men engaged in work in railway shop battalions, and 1,362 men involved in active railway service in Europe would be released to work on the railroads in the United States.¹⁴ A few days later with the hope of scurrying up more workers, Patterson wrote the Deputy Commanding General of the Army Air Force and reminded him that the previous June the War Department had asked for the furlough of 4000 railway workers of which the Air Force was expected to furnish 1,755, but as of the date of the writing

¹²U.S., Congress, Senate, 79th Cong., 1st sess., July 21, 1945, Cong. Rec., XCI, p. 7900; Stars and Stripes (Paris), July 15, 1945, p. 3.

¹³New Orleans Times Picayune, July 25, p. 9.

¹⁴New Orleans Times Picayune, August 1, 1945, p. 1.

of the letter (Aug. 2) had only furnished 814.¹⁵ In view of that, Patterson asked the Air Force to speed up its efforts. Within two weeks of the time that the Army began the acceleration of its efforts to discharge some men and furlough others, the war ended. There were no further demands on the Armed Forces to release men to work on the nation's railways.

The debates that were conducted over the nation's coal mines and railroads, and where to get men to work them, were indeed acrimonious at times. Unfortunately the Army alienated a number of the members of the Mead Committee and much of the general public, as well as drawing the ire of prominent Senators as well. Edwin Johnson of Colorado accused it of hoarding manpower; Robert Taft said that Army policy was blind, stupid, and stubborn. Kenneth Wherry of Nebraska said that the Army was deliberately keeping men in the military in order to influence Congressional policy toward the Armed Forces. There was also criticism in the House. Andrew May, Chairman of the House Committee on the Armed Forces, said that the Army did not understand the needs of the public.¹⁶ In short, the Armed Forces, particularly the Army could look forward to a long, hot

¹⁵Robert P. Patterson, Undersecretary of War to Ira C. Eaker, Deputy Commanding General, United States Army Air Force, August 2, 1945, Patterson Papers General Correspondence (classified), Vol. 5, Library of Congress.

¹⁶Washington Post, August 4, 1945, pp. 1-2.

summer, one in which patience would be strained and tempers short.

The summer of 1945 then was marked with a number of incidents and two minor crises, if there can be such things as minor crises. At least, they did not become major, but they very well might have if the war had not ended when it did. The ending of the war, for example, reduced the amount of coal that was needed, and it also substantially reduced the amount of traffic on the railroads in freight if not in passenger cars. A shortage of cars remained for a number of months, but the shortage never reached the critical proportions predicted at one time. In addition, the war's end meant a greatly increased number of men were now available to work in the mines and on the railroads.

Not crises perhaps but serious incidents that same summer were the series of protests made by the men who were being redeployed to Japan. Plainly, they did not want to go, and it did not matter too much that others had done more, for they only answered that there were many who had done less, and some had done nothing at all. No one knew how to answer these men, or if, indeed, there was an answer. The tritest thing that could be said, "the fortunes of war" was probably the truest. Someone had to go, and even when the war ended, someone still had to go. But the incidents opened the eyes of a number of people, and probably some of them for the first time saw the serviceman as a human being, for better or worse, no larger than the dimensions of any

other human being, who rather than acting nobly as human beings sometimes do, acted selfishly as human beings usually do. It was the good fortune of the United States, though, that he did not react even more selfishly. If he went unwillingly, at least he went, and thereby prevented what might have become another crisis.

These crises, near crises, incidents that took place during the summer reflected what seemed to have been a number of changes in the attitudes and thought patterns of the nation's Congressmen and Senators as well as those of the people. The end of a war drawing near seemed to evoke deep civil yearnings of the people, and to stimulate the desire to return to normal, everyday things. It awoke at the same time the darker side of their natures; they became less trusting; more inclined to doubt. Particularly did they now suspect the purity of motive of the military. Reasons advanced for a position, or offered in way of an explanation, accepted without qualm in former times, were more likely to be questioned now. It was, after all, the temper of the times. Congressmen realized this, and to an extent they were even responsible for it, but they welcomed the opportunity it gave them to reassert the civil power over the military; to curb the ambitious officer; to demand economy in expenditures; to question the need of personnel; to set limits on the numbers of officers and men.

Civil control over the military in the minds of many Congressmen had not disappeared, but it had been dangerously

eroded, and they now wanted an opportunity to do something about it. That opportunity would soon be presented. The summer of 1945 was a troubled one for many. Men with sufficient points to be discharged were sitting in camp awaiting the final discharge procedure; some were waiting to be transferred to other camps; some to be redeployed to Japan. At the time of Japan's formal surrender, there were millions of idle men sitting around camps. This angered the men in the camps; it angered wives and parents; and, most assuredly, it angered Congress. It was an intolerable state of affairs, and Congress took it upon itself to determine why in the old Army phrase there were men who were "busy doing nothing."

Chapter 6

TOO MANY MEN, ALL BUSY DOING NOTHING

Early on a Sunday morning, September 2, 1945, the representatives of the United Nations met on the deck of the battleship, Missouri to accept the surrender of the Japanese Empire. In quiet, grave proceedings that began and ended within a period of 25 minutes, the war that they had conducted against Japan for over 3 1/2 years came to an end.¹

There was surprisingly little in the way of celebrations to greet the news of the surrender ceremony, so different from the reaction of August 14, the day that Japan stopped fighting and announced that she would surrender. On that day the newspapers spoke of frenzied activities, jubilation, even bedlam at times. On this quiet Sunday, celebrations would have been anti-climactic, for actual fighting had ceased two weeks before; and advanced units had already landed in Japan to begin the occupation, even before the formal surrender of Japan took place.²

¹New York Times, September 3, 1945, p. 1.

²Chicago Sun, August 25, 1945, p. 1.

Americans could not bring themselves to celebrate the end of a war that in their own minds had already ended.

In New York City, Mayor LaGuardia cancelled a proposed celebration in Central Park with the explanation that the people had already had their "big time." The city seemed quiet. The New York Times stated that this Sunday was hardly any different from any other Labor Day weekend with traffic at the Holland Tunnel actually below the level of that of most Sundays. In Washington, D.C., hundreds of offices were closed and the State Department Building so busy during the war was all but empty, "tenanted by a yawning skeleton force." There is little reason to believe that the experience of New York and Washington was much different from that of other cities, with the possible exception of Detroit where the Tigers were making a determined drive for the American League championship, helped to a very great extent by a couple of recently discharged veterans: the pitcher Tommy Bridges and the long-ball-hitting outfielder Hank Greenberg.³

Not surprisingly, a rash of speeches greeted the end of the war. Truman spoke on September 1 and announced that September 2 was to be considered V-J day (Victory against Japan). On the following evening, he spoke over the Armed Forces Radio Network to assure the American servicemen that

³New York Times, September 2, 1945, I, p. 1; September 3, 1945, p. 1; September 2, 1945, I, p. 1; New York Times, September 2, 1945, V, p. 7.

they would be brought home as rapidly as possible, and that they would return to a "good life."⁴

The servicemen were being brought home, of course. This had begun with Germany's surrender and continued throughout the summer of 1945. One could read everyday of troop ships that had landed as well as the names of the units on board. The Minneapolis Star Journal, for example, in the "GI Gangplank" carried the names of all Minneapolis boys who had returned, the name of the ship on which they had returned, and where the ship had docked. Papers as small as the Washington Democrat (Washington, Indiana) and as large as the Washington Post had sections specifically devoted to servicemen. In addition, the major newspapers and the wire services tried to enliven the news of a unit's homecoming with colorful anecdotes and accounts. The men on the Queen Mary, for example, were greeted by a golden-haired nurse waving a pair of black lace panties.⁵ Sometimes WAC bands drew alongside the troopships and serenaded the men into the harbor with "America the Beautiful" and "Sidewalks of New York," the lyrical waltz-like sounds of which must have sounded good even to boys from the Dakotas. The following account was written of the landing of the Queen Elizabeth: "With name bands playing hot jive on the pier

⁴New York Times, September 2, 1945, p. 1; September 3, 1945, p. 1.

⁵New York Times, June 21, 1945, p. 5.

and deep-throated horns bellowing signals to the Lilliputian tugs, the giant Queen Elizabeth docked at West Fifteenth Street early yesterday afternoon amidst the noisiest welcome since V-E Day. She brought 14,860 passengers. . . ."⁶

Most of the men did not come home on the Queens, of course, but on merchant ships of every size and description with accommodations that were adequate at best, but, nevertheless, they came home. Sometimes they came home only to be given a new assignment in the United States, or to be redeployed to the Pacific, or to be discharged. By late summer of 1945, Army camps were crowded with men, most of them not engaged in any particularly constructive activity, and many of them not doing anything at all. Then the war against Japan ended. Now there were not only idle men in the Army, but in the other branches of the service as well. Throughout the summer, wives and parents of servicemen and newspaper editors fretted over this large number of idle men, all of which did not help the serviceman but made him even more discontented and probably only added to the maddening frustration which he was experiencing.

It added to the frustration of Congress as well. Senator Edwin Johnson of Colorado spoke for many of the other members of the Senate and the House as well when he expressed his discontent with the practices and policies of the armed forces. Speaking of some of the charts used by

⁶New York Times, September 1, 1945, p. 6.

[illegible]

the Army to explain the operation of the separation centers, Johnson said this:

The chart that I should like to see and the chart that has caused Congress so much trouble, and is causing the soldiers themselves so much concern at the present time is a chart of the pipeline before they get to the separation center--the boys that are mowing lawns with bayonets, the boys that are picking up cigarette butts around the barracks 30 days at a stretch, the boys who are sitting there folding their hands for months upon months, the boys that are taking basic training once more after they have had 3 or 4 years of combat experience.⁷

Johnson's accusation of men engaged in unnecessary and useless tasks was no idle charge. There were a number of complaints made to Congressmen in the summer of 1945 of the men not having anything to do or of having to perform senseless tasks. Many of these complaints came from nearby Fort Belvoir, Virginia. On one occasion, a sergeant from the fort called Edwin Johnson from the Chamber of the Senate to discuss with him the employment of the men at Belvoir. In a list which the sergeant presented to Johnson it was stated that the men were being used to cut grass and pick up cigarette butts and mop floors, clean the rifles of officer candidates, and pick up leaves in one place and put them in another.⁸ The sergeant's complaint was made more than a

⁷U.S., Congress, Senate, Committee on Military Affairs, 79th Cong., 1st sess., Hearings on S1355: A Bill to Provide for the Speedy Return of Veterans to Civilian Life, for the Immediate Military Needs of the United States and for Other Purposes, September 13, 1945, p. 49.

⁸U.S., Congress, Senate, 79th Cong., 1st sess., August 1, 1945, Congressional Record, XCI, p. 8293.

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month before the hearings by the Senate Committee on Military Affairs. A month and a half later, shortly before the Senate began its hearings on demobilization, a private George L. Mark from Fort Belvoir told a newspaper man that he and nine other men had been forced to cut grass with bayonets. A short time after that happened, the private was transferred to Camp Shelby, Mississippi, a move which he interpreted, possibly correctly, as being a "railroad."

Obviously not easily intimidated, however, the private repeated those charges in an appearance before the Senate Committee on Military Affairs, at which time he was given the assurance of Elbert Thomas, Committee Chairman, that if any further recriminations were taken against him, the Army would have to answer to the Senate.⁹ These assurances were somewhat belated though in view of the fact that the soldier was being sent to a camp that had a reputation of being something less than a paradise.

Most experiences of discontent were not so dramatically stated, though, as that of the private from Fort Belvoir. Most servicemen and parents of servicemen were content to write their Congressmen rather than appear before them in person and increasing numbers of them were writing. An overworked farmer from Montana told Senator Burton K. Wheeler that his boy was lying around doing nothing, and Wheeler said that he had received a number of

⁹Chicago Daily Tribune, September 21, 1945, I, p. 6.

such complaints. Congressman Daniel Reed of New York said that he had received a letter from a man who was a production engineer before the war, and that the engineer felt qualified to say that the Army wasted manpower, and that he had seen the Army put six men on a job that would not keep one man busy. A young Army man from Lincoln, Nebraska wrote of being kept busy by working in the officer's mess, sweeping the officer's barracks, and cleaning their latrines. One Congressman said that a serviceman mentioned in a letter that the men were told to keep busy when inspection teams came by, even if it meant that they were to keep doing the same thing over and over.¹⁰

Though most of these complaints were from the Army, the Navy, too, had large numbers of idle men. Charles Plumley, a Congressman from Vermont, referred to an excess of specialists in the Navy whose specialty was no longer required and stated that these men should be discharged if they had nothing to do, and should not be kept in service simply to adhere to a "theoretical formula."¹¹

Although these letters were helpful in alerting Congress to some of the problems faced by the men in the

¹⁰U.S., Congress, Senate, 79th Cong., 1st sess., September 25, 1945, Cong. Rec., p. 8975; U.S., Congress, House, 79th Cong., 1st sess., Oct. 1, 1945, Cong. Rec., p. 9209; Oct. 30, 1945, Cong. Rec., Appendix, p. A4588; U.S., Congress, Senate, 79th Cong., 1st sess., October 9, 1945, p. 9477.

¹¹U.S., Congress, House, 79th Cong., 1st sess., September 13, 1945, Cong. Rec., Appendix, p. A3872.

service, they were not always necessary, for many Congressmen knew about these problems first hand as a result of inspection trips that they had made. Congressman John Taber of New York spoke of his visit to Army camps in the United States which he made presumably sometime in September. In one camp, he found that over 4000 men had been kept busy for over four months doing nothing; in another, that men were given repeated furloughs.¹²

Idle men were not confined to the United States. Earl Wilson, Congressman from Indiana, reported that in the inspection trips that he made through Europe and Asia 90 percent of the men were idle. Wilson said with obvious exaggeration that it was a well-known practice that the Army used twelve men to do the job of one, and that he personally knew of a utility that the Army operated which was eleven times more expensive than the utility of a city near his hometown. Wilson deplored the expense of all of this to the taxpayer and said that the Army should not be allowed to use even six men to do the job of one.¹³

Possibly the most interesting comment concerning idleness was made by Frank Chelf, Congressman from Kentucky. He, too, spoke of men being used to pick up cigarette butts. In a discussion that he had with a sergeant, the sergeant

¹²U.S., Congress, House, 79th Cong., 1st sess., October 17, 1945, Cong. Rec., Appendix, p. A4356.

¹³U.S., Congress, House, 79th Cong., 1st sess., September 18, 1945, Cong. Rec., Appendix, pp. A3930-1.

told him that if he (Chelf) remained for any length of time that they could play golf every day. By no means did Chelf think that idleness was any worse overseas than it was in the United States or worse in one branch of the service than another. He spoke of Army post offices in the United States deliberately letting mail pile up so that the clerks would have something to do when inspection teams came by. He also thought that the Navy shamefully wasted manpower and equipment and spoke of transports flying from coast to coast carrying sandbags.¹⁴

The Kentucky Congressman thought that if the armed forces could not bring home all of the men immediately, and he was not convinced that they were in any hurry to do so, then the men should be given furloughs. He summed up his observations on demobilization with a short poem. Two stanzas of which are as follows:

The war is over, Congress
That I shall repeat
Grab the reins from the brass
Climb in the driver's seat

Ship the millions home, judge
Ship the millions home
Order the chairborne divisions
To ship the millions home.¹⁵

In his speech, although he discussed a number of areas of inefficiency in the Army, Frank Chelf mentioned one

¹⁴U.S., Congress, House, 79th Cong., 1st sess., September 19, 1945, Cong. Rec., pp. 8793-8797.

¹⁵U.S., Congress, House, 79th Cong., 1st sess., September 19, 1945, Cong. Rec., p. 8797.

in particular that had already aroused considerable comment and would be the cause of still greater comment in the future: that was the subject of doctors. Specifically, he said that while he was in England, he visited one hospital in which there were no patients, but a full complement of doctors and nurses.¹⁶ This type of comment had become rather common by the early fall of 1945, but never so common that it would not arouse an intense reaction from the public every time that it was made. The shortage of doctors, the public was convinced, was genuine.

That concern of the shortage of physicians was soon reflected in the newspapers, which gave the subject extensive coverage. Quite possibly the most effective of all was by the syndicated columnist Drew Pearson. Writing from Washington, he tailored his column to activity in that city, fulfilling the name of the "Washington Merry-Go-Round" quite well. The matter of demobilization was made to order for the columnist, and he took it up in the manner of an unreconstructed muckraker, which was his style, of course, in everything else. Quite early, he began attacking the armed forces for their manpower policy and their use of physicians as a part of that policy. In his column of September 6, he wrote that although the number of personnel had actually declined on some Army bases, the Army had

¹⁶U.S., Congress, House, 79th Cong., 1st sess., September 19, 1945, Cong. Rec., pp. 8794-5.

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increased the number of physicians that were on duty. About a week later, he wanted to know why in view of the fact that the war had ended, it was necessary to have doctors learn the nomenclature of the M1 rifle, the machine gun, the carbine, and the hand grenade.¹⁷ The type of charges made by him had been made many times in the past, but their incidence grew rapidly with the end of the war.

Undoubtedly, there was great pressure exerted by the extremely well organized medical profession to secure the release of physicians from the service, but there was an equal perhaps greater amount of pressure from individual doctors and specific communities which had few if any doctors available to them. Rural communities in particular seemed in bad shape. Poucher Coleman in an article in the Louisville Courier Journal said that in Dawson Springs, Kentucky the doctors were not sufficient in number to give adequate medical care to the public. And in Gallatin County in the same state, there was not a single physician to serve an area with a population of 4,330.¹⁸ This situation was not at all unusual by the end of the war. At one of the hearings conducted by the House Committee on Military Affairs, Congressman Leslie Arends of Illinois spoke of one doctor

¹⁷Louisville Courier Journal, Sept. 6, 1945, sect. 2, p. 8; Sept. 14, 1945, sect. 2, p. 12.

¹⁸Louisville Courier Journal, August 12, 1945, sect. 3, p. 4.

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having to serve eight towns.¹⁹

There was no way that the armed services could have guaranteed that small communities would receive adequate medical care, even if they had discharged all of the physicians. And even if they had, it still would not have changed the fact that the services themselves did not use their physicians effectively. In the late summer of 1945, a special subcommittee of the Senate Committee on Military Affairs looked into the matter of physicians in the armed forces. Among their conclusions were that there was an inexcusable duplication of services; that on some of the islands in the Pacific the various branches of the Army would each have medical units, i.e., Army Service Forces, the Army Air Force, etc., and medical units for the Navy as well, all within a stone's throw of each other. Moreover, the services had too many physicians, the Army having more than 17,000 too many. In addition, 50 percent of the physicians in the service did not see combat service or deal with casualties but did purely administrative work.²⁰

The findings of the sub-committee were devastating, but did not surprise many of the members of Congress. For a considerable length of time, they had received letters from

¹⁹U.S., House of Representatives, Committee on Military Affairs, 79th Cong., 1st sess., Hearings, Demobilization of the U.S. Army . . ., August 28, 1945, p. 38.

²⁰St. Louis Post Dispatch, September 14, 1945, p. 10A.

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medical men in the service who insisted that they did not have anything to do, or what they did did not require the services of a physician. Congressman Clarence J. Brown of Ohio had a letter placed in the Record of September 11, a letter which he stated was typical of hundreds that he received. The writer began by saying 'Medically speaking, I haven't earned a dollar of my salary since I've been in the Army.' He then said that he had given instruction in close order drill, compass reading, map reading, first aid and sanitation; that he had inspected latrines, kitchens, and fly traps; that he had been 'shot at, shelled, and strafed' and that he had forgotten all of the medicine that he ever knew. How could there be such a shameful waste of manpower and the Army get by with such practices. The doctor explained. Speaking of inspectors, he said this:

They fly in from Washington and have a few drinks with the commanding officer of a general hospital who has been previously warned of the inspectors' arrival. Then the inspector if he is really daring, straps on a pistol and makes a flying trip into what he considers no man's land--a field hospital which is probably forty miles behind the lines. Then he goes back to the states with a theater ribbon and a Legion of Merit and reports that all is well; everyone is working at top speed and all doctors are essential.²¹

In the Senate there was an attempt on the part of one of the Senators, Clyde Reed of Kansas, to find out just how many doctors were essential. In time, he was able to

²¹U.S., Congress, House, Cong. Rec., Appendix, 79th Cong., 1st sess., Oct. 2, 1945, p. A4135.

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equal Congressman Brown's statement of having received hundreds of letters; as a matter of fact, he said that he had received thousands of them. Much more dramatic, though, was an earlier statement that there were more doctors in the Army on September 1, 1945, at a time when there was no fighting, than there were on January 1, 1945 at the very height of the war.²²

Somehow or the other, the pressures of the public, the news media, and Congress must have worked, for the Armed forces did expedite the release of physicians. In late September, the Army newspaper the Stars and Stripes spoke of their being shipped home by plane.²³ By the middle of the following month, according to the Army, their rate of release surpassed that of all other personnel. In support of this statement, it was stated that since V-E Day, 7,213 doctors had been released, 16 percent of the total force, and during the same time, the army had reduced its total strength by only 15 percent.²⁴ This news, however, did not completely quiet the Congress, and in the Senate, a resolution was introduced that requested the Secretary of War to appoint a board of inquiry, which, among other things,

²²U.S., Congress, Senate, Cong. Rec., 79th Cong., 1st sess., Nov. 6, 1945, p. 10420; Oct. 11, 1945, p. 9567.

²³Stars and Stripes (Paris edition), Sept. 19, 1945, p. 1.

²⁴U.S., Senate, Committee on Military Affairs, Hearings on S1355, Demobilization of the Armed Forces . . ., Oct. 17 and 18, 1945, Washington, D.C., p. 189.

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"would locate responsibility for the blundering and incompetence plainly exhibited since heavy fighting ceased on all fronts."²⁵ A short time later, the Navy in a public hearing stated that doctors were being released faster than other personnel, and in way of illustrations said that 40 percent of them would be released by the first of the year.²⁶ By January 1, 1946, the crisis seemed to have passed, and the pressure by that time to demobilize doctors was no greater than the pressure to demobilize any other group of men.

The clamor to release doctors added much to general demobilization pressures. The hearings had discussed the problem on several occasions. There was mail that Congressmen had to answer; there were telephone calls; there were personal requests made in person; there were articles in newspapers. Possibly the most important result of all of this, however, was the somewhat intensified reflection it precipitated, for the problem of doctors was tied up with all of the other problems of demobilization: the point system, the use of personnel, the size of the armed forces, both present and projected. It was, in fact, only one facet of the much larger issue of what was to be done with the

²⁵U.S., Congress, Cong. Rec., 79th Cong., 1st sess., Nov. 6, 1945, p. 10417.

²⁶U.S., Senate, Committee on Naval Affairs, Hearings on S188, Demobilization and Transportation of Military Personnel, Nov. 13-15, 1945, Washington, D.C., p. 57.

armed forces in terms of their size and employment; yet it loomed large in the public's eye for a time far overshadowing the concern over any other professional or occupational group.

That there were too many doctors in the service and that they were not effectively employed seems to have been a clear and incontrovertible fact. It seemed equally clear that there was a shortage of them to serve the civilian population, and that their release from the service would have helped alleviate this shortage. Yet the medical profession itself was partly responsible for the shortage that existed. It is true, of course, that the armed forces established quotas for physicians. These quotas were subscribed to by each state's Procurement and Assignment Division, it being the responsibility of these divisions to decide how many doctors could be released from a community; in short, they themselves established quotas of their own. In many areas, those quotas were not only filled but sometimes oversubscribed. Unfortunately, perhaps even tragically at times, the very communities that met their quotas were communities that already had a shortage of doctors. Senator Clyde Hoey of North Carolina spoke of a community oversubscribing its quota by 160 percent; yet this very same community was in a state where the ratio of doctors to patients was below the national average.²⁷

²⁷U.S., Senate, Cong. Rec., 79th Cong., 1st sess., Sept. 14, 1945, p. 8602.

It seems clear that the shortage of doctors to some extent was a magnification of a problem that had existed before the war, a problem which the medical profession had never settled. And it also seems clear that the problem was as much of a matter of poor distribution, as it was a shortage of numbers. By and large, the Congressmen who complained about this shortage were the representatives where agriculture was the chief source of income in their state; yet no one thought to blame the medical profession or medical societies for the poor distribution of physicians. It was the armed forces and the Army in particular that was blamed. Those who pointed the accusing finger sometimes implied and sometimes insisted that this was all part of an overall design on the part of the services to retain personnel. Feelings that were already strained were further exacerbated as a result of this furor over doctors; doubt became overt suspicion as Congressmen, the public, and the servicemen themselves offered interesting suggestions as to why the armed forces seemed slow in demobilizing the troops.

The men were not being discharged in the opinion of one Congressman because the New Deal had been influenced by radical labor leaders who did not want competition from the returning veteran. Frederick Smith, Congressman from Ohio, said that the Administration was afraid of massive unemployment and recalled the statement of Lewis Hershey that it was cheaper to keep them in the Army than it was to create an

agency to take care of them.²⁸ The Indianapolis News in an editorial wondered whether the Administration was thinking of a national WPA.²⁹ Congressman George Gillie of Indiana questioned whether some kind of national regimentation was planned for the young people in the armed services on the order of the Civilian Conservation Corps.³⁰ Senator Edward Robertson thought that the government was motivated by simple expediency: they wanted the displaced war workers to secure jobs before bringing home the veterans.³¹ And so it went. The most popular reason of all, though, was that the armed forces wanted to remain large because the number of officers and the availability of promotion were dependent on the size of the armed services.

The idea of the armed forces deliberately wanting to retain its members was not news in many areas. On board ships and in hundreds of barracks this had been a popular subject of conversation. It was also discussed in liberal journals such as the New Republic, and Drew Pearson in his column questioned the sincerity of the Army particularly

²⁸ U.S., Congress, House, Cong. Rec., XCI, 79th Cong., 1st sess., Sept. 18, 1945, p. 8722; Cong. Rec., XCI, 79th Cong., 1st sess., Sept. 19, 1945, p. 8797.

²⁹ Indianapolis News, sect. 1, Sept. 3, 1945, p. 10.

³⁰ U.S., Congress, House, Cong. Rec., XCI, 79th Cong., 1st sess., p. 8720.

³¹ Chicago Daily Tribune, Sept. 11, 1945, p. 1.

to demobilize all of its men.³² But for every time the subject appeared in the papers it must have appeared in the letters written by the servicemen a thousand times. Substantially the charges were the same, although the list of particulars might have varied somewhat. The letters usually said that the men did not have anything to do; yet they were being kept in the Army. As to why they were being kept in service, the men said it had nothing to do with world responsibilities; really, the answer was quite simple: the brass wanted to hang onto their jobs, which if one were to believe the letter writers, were better than anything they ever had in civilian life. "It will tickle me and all the rest of us GI's when they all get back to their filling stations," a soldier wrote to Congressman Frank Chelf in a letter that was not at all atypical.³³

Many of these letters were read on the floors of Congress, and Congressmen such as A. L. Miller of Nebraska and Daniel Reed of New York seemed to take delight in reading those that showed the Army's waste of manpower or exposed its inefficiency. Reed particularly enjoyed taking gibes at the "New Deal mess" being made of demobilization. There were others who had no particular quarrel with the

³² Arthur Eaton, "Getting Out of the Army," The New Republic, Vol. 113, no. 110, Sept. 3, 1945, p. 284; Louisville Courier Journal, Sept. 9, 1945, sect. 3, p. 3; Louisville Courier Journal, Sept. 15, 1945, p. 14.

³³ United States, Congress, House, Cong. Rec., XCI, 79th Cong., 1st sess., Sept. 19, 1945, p. 8795.

armed forces, but who were beginning to feel the pressure put on them by constituents. Sometimes tempers became strained. The Chairman of the Senate Committee on Naval Affairs David Walsh snapped at a young officer who asked about pay raises for naval officers: "Do not mention that. Do not talk about increasing the pay of officers at this time."³⁴

Congressional vexation with the armed forces over large numbers of men being idle did not begin with V-J Day, of course. Early in the summer, the Army and the Mead Committee had clashed over the number of men in the Army, and individual Congressmen had requested the discharge of certain groups of men. By and large, the Army stood its ground, though, and refused to discharge them. Then the atomic bomb was dropped. It now appeared as if a large group of men could be discharged immediately. The Secretary of War Henry Stimson said that this was not possible.

This statement of the Secretary angered Army critics. Senator Edwin Johnson in a letter to Stimson said that the statement that the Army would need 7,000,000 men was most disheartening. It would mean, the Senator said, "a transportation crisis . . . a serious manpower shortage. . . . It means that reconversion is stymied. . . . that we are to have mass demobilization at the very moment when

³⁴United States, Congress, Senate, Cong. Rec., XCI, 79th Cong., 1st sess., Sept. 26, 1945, p. 9025.

unemployment in the United States is at its peak."³⁵

Johnson's letter brought forth an equally angry response from Stimson. Quite obviously with Johnson, and others in mind as well, Stimson said that charges that the Army was deliberately retaining men "contributed no little to the understandable discontent of men who have been anxious for many months to return home." Stimson said that he wanted to state "categorically" that the Army was not retaining "millions of men" that it could not use.³⁶

The situation grew worse during the summer. The sudden capitulation of Japan removed the last of the reasons for maintaining a large Army, and complaints from suspicious, discontented members of Congress over the next few months increased considerably. This suspicion, sometimes even hostility, can be seen in the remarks of the Congressional Record, but an even better picture of their attitudes can be gathered from reading the hearings of the armed forces committees. Edwin Johnson of Colorado, Chapman Revercomb of West Virginia, Joseph C. Mahoney of Wyoming, David Walsh of Massachusetts, and Wayne Morse could be insistent and demanding questioners at times. In the House, Charles Clason of Massachusetts, W. Sterling Cole of New York, Charles Elston of Ohio, Forrest Harness of Indiana, Franck Havenner of California, Chet Holifield of California, and

³⁵Chicago Sun, August 5, 1945, p. 6.

³⁶Chicago Sun, August 10, 1945, p. 3.

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James Mott of Oregon all could be sharp critics of Army practices. Harness particularly would even show hostility on occasion: "I have been wanting to ask you some questions for the last two hours around here."³⁷

At the same hearings in which Harness displayed such hostility, Congressman Charles Clason of Massachusetts had a pointed question concerning the size of the Army, and although he was not as hostile as Harness, he was every bit as direct. Specifically, he wanted to know if the number of officers was dependent on the size of the Army. Major General Stephen Henry, the Deputy Chief of Staff, insisted that the number of officers did not depend on having a definite number of men to command and in way of explanation stated that he did not command any men. Henry's answer was not altogether convincing, and although Clason did not press him hard on the subject, he did ask that Henry furnish the committee with a table of organization of the General Staff and stated at the time that he wanted this to be a part of the record.³⁸

Clason had touched on a subject that was in the minds of many people; and shortly after the hearings, Franck Havenner introduced a resolution (H.R.4086) that would have

³⁷United States, Congress, House, Committee on Military Affairs, 79th Cong., 1st sess., Hearings, Demobilization . . . U.S. Army . . ., August 28, 1945, p. 46.

³⁸United States, Congress, House, Committee on Military Affairs, 79th Cong., 1st sess., Hearings, Demobilization . . . U.S. Army . . ., August 28, 1945, pp. 40-41.

required all General Officers to revert back to their prewar rank.³⁹ A week or so later, he presented a list of questions to the Chairman of the House Committee on Military Affairs. Those questions concerned the status of these officers. Specifically, Havenner wanted to know such things as how many General Officers were on duty as of June 1, 1945, and then how many as of September 25, 1945, he also wanted to know how many were in the various staff divisions: the Pentagon, the Army Air Forces, and the Army Service Forces. Stated somewhat simply, Congressman Havenner wanted some answers.⁴⁰

Undoubtedly, Congressmen such as Havenner, Clason, and Harness were effective in the pressure they brought against the armed services in the House, but the most effective gadfly of them all was in the Senate. There Edwin Johnson had been conducting a running battle with the Army all during the late spring and early summer of 1945. Irascible to an extreme, his temper did not seem to improve over the course of time. In August of 1945, he told a newspaper reporter that the Army was stupid. Six months later, the War Council devoted part of its meeting to a discussion of whether the War Department should prepare an answer to a letter in which he accused them of "congenital

³⁹United States, Congress, House, Cong. Rec., XLI, 79th Cong., 1st sess., Sept. 17, 1945, p. 8659.

⁴⁰United States, Congress, House, Cong. Rec., Appendix, Sept. 25, 1945, p. A4045.

stupidity."⁴¹

The concern of Senator Johnson over the seemingly large numbers of men in the service was shared by many of his colleagues in Congress, although they worried more quietly and less publicly than the Senator. Over in the House, for example, another Johnson, Lyndon Baines of Texas, a good friend of the War Department by the Secretary of War's own admission, as early as August 1945 wrote to the Secretary of War that the time had come for a "searching reexamination of Army needs."⁴²

There must have been a sufficient number of people who agreed with the Congressman, for in late August of 1945, approximately two weeks after Japan ceased fighting and announced that she would surrender, the House opened hearings on demobilization, a significant aspect of which was concerned with the number of men that would be needed by the armed forces. So very much depended on the answer to this particular question, regardless of where one stood on the matter of demobilization, for plainly plans could not be made for the use of men without knowing the number of men that would be needed.

⁴¹"Minutes of War Council Meeting," April 18, 1946, The Papers of Robert Patterson, General Correspondence, Box 23, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

⁴²Robert Patterson, Memorandum, Deputy Chief of Staff, August 10, 1945, The Papers of Robert Patterson, General Correspondence (classified), Box 26, Vol. V, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

At these hearings, the Deputy Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army said that the Army had 8,050,000 men and that it was its intention to reduce to 2,500,000 by July 1, 1946.⁴³ Three days later, the Navy announced that its membership totaled over 3,300,000 and that it intended to reduce down to 550,000 by September 1, 1946--officers to account for roughly 10 percent of this total.⁴⁴ On the same day, the Marine Corps stated at the hearings that its male enlisted strength was 421,370 men, and although the Corps did not give figures for its officer strength, a fair assumption would be 10 percent.⁴⁵ Their intention, they said, was to reduce these figures to 100,000 enlisted men, with, once again, an officer strength of 10 percent of this total. The Coast Guard anticipated reducing its forces from a wartime strength of 170,480 men to 34,500.⁴⁶

By prewar standards, these were large numbers of men. There were in the Army, for example, as of the summer of 1939 only 174,000 men; the Navy at the same time had

⁴³United States, Congress, House, Comm. on Military Affairs, 79th Cong., 1st sess., Hearings, Demobilization . . . U.S. Army . . ., August 28, 1945, p. 21.

⁴⁴United States, Congress, House, Comm. on Military Affairs, 79th Cong., 1st sess., Hearings, Demobilization . . ., August 31, 1945, pp. 60-62.

⁴⁵United States, House, Comm. on Military Affairs, 79th Cong., 1st sess., Hearings, Demobilization . . ., August 31, 1945, pp. 89-91.

⁴⁶The War Reports of General of the Army, George C. Marshall, General H. H. Arnold, Admiral Ernest J. King, J. B. Lippincott (Philadelphia and New York: 1947), p. 712.

126,418; the Marine Corps, 19,701; and there were 10,079 in the Coast Guard.⁴⁷

In view of this, it is hardly surprising that Congressman Forrest Harness thought that some of the figures were staggering, for if the armed forces had achieved them, it would have meant an Army almost fifteen times larger than was in existence in the summer of 1939; a Navy that had more than quadrupled in size; a Marine Corps that would have been five times larger; and even the Coast Guard would have tripled in size.⁴⁸

These figures, however, were subject to change, for with the Army particularly there would be a diminution of responsibilities as time passed and the occupied countries were pacified. All of this was not understood too clearly, however, by the average citizen. Equally unclear, too, even after the hearings, was what future manpower policy would be in the government and the armed forces. The government had hoped, and certainly this was true of Congress as well, that manpower needs could be filled by voluntary recruitment. Yet the hearings revealed considerable doubt by the Army that this was possible, and there was also a definite lack of enthusiasm shown by some of the members of the committee

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 16, p. 494.

⁴⁸United States, Congress, House, Committee on Military Affairs, 79th Cong., 1st sess., Hearings, Demobilization . . . U.S. Army . . ., August 31, 1945, Washington, D.C.

on a continuation of selective service.

The hearings did reveal this much; a concern on the part of Congressmen to have the services demobilized as rapidly as possible, and at the same time, a desire on the part of the armed forces (at least they said as much) to see that the men were returned home just as soon as conditions would permit. Facts and figures were given as to how quickly the men would be demobilized and how many of them. Other than that, there were still questions that remained unsettled. It was not long before the members of Congress displayed considerable anxiety concerning the future size of the armed forces, with the Army, once again, receiving most of the criticism.

In a letter to the War Department, which was released by his office, Senator Pat McCarran of Nevada asked for answers concerning the Army and its manpower policy. There was, he explained, a widespread lack of understanding and state of confusion among the general public. Underscoring almost every question with the use of the words "specific" or "specifically," McCarran wanted to know how many men would be needed for occupation armies, how many would be willing to volunteer, and if men were being rotated on overseas assignment. The Senator referred to a bombardment of letters and telegrams from parents of servicemen and asked if they were being kept informed of military policies.⁴⁹

⁴⁹New York Times, September 3, 1945, p. 25.

There did seem to be considerable confusion about military policy, particularly concerning the number of men who would be released. On August 14, 1945, President Truman stated that within a year or eighteen months the Army would release 5,000,000 to 5,500,000 men. At the House hearings in late August Major General Stephen Henry, on the other hand, spoke of releasing 6,500,000 within a period of a year. It was at that time that he made the statement that the Army would need 900,000 men to occupy the entire Pacific area, which included Japan, Korea, the Philippines, and assorted islands throughout the Pacific.⁵⁰ On the other hand, Al Miller, Congressman from Nebraska, said that George Marshall had made the statement that when the world was settled, 500,000 men would be sufficient to meet the occupation needs of the United States.⁵¹ Referring to this confusion, Miller said that he had a bill on his desk to limit the size of the Army to 1,000,000 men.⁵²

Suddenly and dramatically, the confusion grew worse, for on September 18 General Douglas MacArthur stated that 200,000 men would be adequate to occupy Japan.⁵³ The

⁵⁰New York Times, August 15, 1945, p. 1.

⁵¹United States, Congress, House, Committee on Military Affairs, Hearings on the Demobilization . . . U.S. Army . . ., 79th Cong., 1st sess., August 28, 1945, p. 22.

⁵²United States, Congress, House, Cong. Rec., XLI, September 17, 1945, pp. 8618-8619.

⁵³Stars and Stripes (Paris edition), September 19, 1945, p. 4.

statement caught everyone by surprise, including the Army, the office of the President, and the State Department. Each of these had operated on the assumption that 500,000 men would be needed to occupy Japan, for this was the figure that MacArthur himself had previously submitted. Truman, who remained calm in public but privately boiled, intimated to the Director of the Budget Harold Smith that MacArthur's move was political.⁵⁴ In the State Department, Dean Acheson said that the purpose of the Army was to "implement" policy not "determine" it.⁵⁵ This in turn angered the MacArthur supporters in the Senate who were soon engaged in a tedious debate, the gist of which was that the general had kicked the props out from under the social revolution that was being planned by the State Department. Acrimonious at times, the debate probably reached its nastiest level when it was suggested that the proposed confirmation of Acheson as Undersecretary of State be put in "cold storage" while the Senate examined his qualifications for the position.⁵⁶

In the Navy Department, things seemed quiet, but perhaps this was because it did not begin its demobilization program until after the defeat of Japan. As an example of how quiet things were, James Forrestal wrote to one of his

⁵⁴The Diary of Harold Smith, Conference with President Truman, Sept. 18, 1945, Roosevelt Papers, FDRL.

⁵⁵New York Times, Sept. 20, 1945, p. 1.

⁵⁶United States, Congress, House, Cong. Rec., XLI, 79th Cong., 1st sess., September 20, 1945, p. 8833.

officers on September 16, 1945 that he wanted to make a tour of the demobilization centers when they had enough activity to make a tour worthwhile.⁵⁷ Within a period of just four days, though, the pressure for demobilization had increased to such an extent that the Secretary of the Navy was canvassing the Department for someone who could go on the air, as well as for someone who could get the facts of demobilization to the newspapers.⁵⁸ On September 25, 1945, he wrote to the Chairman of the Naval Committee in the Senate explaining the Navy's demobilization program in depth. Stating that one man out of every three would be home by mid February, one out of every three by the middle of June, five out of six by August 15, and by September 1, 1946, Forrestal stated that it was the hope of the Navy to have completed its demobilization program, at which time it would have 500,000 men and 58,000 officers.⁵⁹

This was 8000 more officers than the Navy had said that it needed approximately one month earlier, but the variation was a slight one, and did not remotely approach the discrepancies in the Army's figures, which was fortunate, for it was these great variations in the figures released by

⁵⁷The Papers of James V. Forrestal, Memorandum, Sept. 20, 1945, Correspondence, Box 123, The Firestone Library, Princeton University, Princeton, New Jersey.

⁵⁸United States, Congress, House, Cong. Rec., XLI, 79th Cong., 1st sess., Sept. 28, 1945, p. 9113.

⁵⁹United States, Congress, House, Cong. Rec., XLI, 79th Cong., 1st sess., Sept. 28, 1945, p. 9113.

the Army that confused and angered many people.

Convinced that there was sufficient justification for this anger, a number of verbally energetic Congressmen reiterated the popular GI charge that the armed forces were deliberately retaining men. "The suspicion that many men are being kept in military service so that there can be justification for unnecessary personnel in the higher ranks runs through hundreds of letters coming to my office," said Congressman George H. Bender of Ohio. He was not alone in his views. There was a small but noisy minority who made similar comments--Congressman Berkely Bunker from Nevada, Clare Hoffman and Paul Shafer from Michigan, and Fred Smith from Ohio, as well as others.⁶⁰

The armed forces, of course, insisted vehemently that they were not deliberately retaining men. On September 6, the War Department issued a news release that it intended to separate 600,000 of its 800,000 officers by July 1, 1946.⁶¹ Later, the Public Relations branch of the War Department stated that of its General officers, 70 had left active duty; 100 were in the process of being reduced in grade, and of the 136 General officers who had been recalled from retirement into active duty, only a few

⁶⁰United States, Congress, House, Cong. Rec., 1st sess., Sept. 11, 1945, p. 8492.

⁶¹Louisville Courier Journal, Sept. 6, 1945, p. 1.

remained.⁶² On September 19, the position of the War Department was reaffirmed by a statement from the President that there would be no padding of the armed services and that no one would be retained even a single day longer than was necessary.⁶³

The statement of the President was reassuring. It did not answer, however, the equally pressing question of when the men would no longer be needed. More simply stated, perhaps, the size of the armed forces depended on what the United States government wanted to do with those forces. First of all, the defeated countries would have to be occupied. This required troops. No discussion of the size of the armed forces or the number of officers or budgets or anything else could get away from that fundamental fact. It was also a fact that the American people were a notoriously impatient people, and that there were a significant number of them who, when faced with the prospect of an extensive occupation in scope and time, were not willing, or at best reluctant to see the United States assume such a responsibility, but if the responsibility had to be assumed, they would have preferred having it done with

⁶²War Department Release, "Reduction of General Officers," War Department Bureau of Public Relations, The Papers of Robert P. Patterson, General Correspondence Box 26, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

⁶³Stars and Stripes (Paris edition), September 20, 1945, p. 1.

volunteers.

Congressman Philip Philbin of Massachusetts thought that the regular army and volunteers could take care of occupation responsibilities. John Byrnes, Congressman from Wisconsin, wanted Germany and Japan kept down, but also thought that the job could be done with volunteers. John C. Kunkel, Congressman from Pennsylvania, would have preferred that Japan be occupied by China, the Philippine Islands, New Zealand, Australia, Great Britain, France, and Holland, and A. L. Miller, one of Nebraska's Congressmen, would have occupied Japan with the Philippines and the Chinese. Several resolutions were introduced asking that the former enemy countries be occupied by volunteers of one variety or another.⁶⁴ Walter C. Floeser, a member of Congress from Missouri, in an extension of his remarks in the Congressional Record introduced a resolution from the Twelfth Ward Republican Precinct Organization asking that the occupation be conducted by volunteers and that drafted soldiers" be returned home for the well-being of the country."⁶⁵ The National Board of Directors of Irish War Veterans stated that volunteers should be given the assignment of occupying these countries, and that if enough

⁶⁴United States, Congress, House, Cong. Rec., XLI, 79th Cong., 1st sess., Sept. 12, 1945, p. 8539; Sept. 11, 1945, p. 8514; Sept. 12, 1945, p. 8539; Sept. 17, 1945, p. 8619.

⁶⁵United States, Congress, House, Cong. Rec., Appendix, XLI, 79th Cong., 1st sess., p. A2597.

volunteers could not be found then Germany should be occupied by the Poles, the Dutch, the Norwegians, and the French.⁶⁶

There was also considerable sentiment for a volunteer army expressed in the hearings as well as some highly interesting suggestions, such as that of Chet Holifield who wondered whether anything was being done about using German volunteers as laborers in the Pacific. Quite obviously, the subject had been discussed in high circles, for a questionnaire had been submitted to German prisoners of war about the possibility of their doing such work and 60 percent said that they would be willing to serve.⁶⁷ This was not the only time that the use of a former enemy was contemplated, for George Marshall, Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army, in October of 1945 at a War Council meeting discussed the possibility of using German civilians to do the police duties of the occupation. Marshall's reasoning was that occupation was primarily police work, and he questioned how well trained the Army was to do it. It would be one alternative, as far as Marshall was concerned, to the pressure that would undoubtedly come for reducing the size of the occupation forces.⁶⁸

⁶⁶United States, Congress, Senate, Petitions and Memorials, Senate Committee on Military Affairs, 79th Cong., 1st sess., 1945, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

⁶⁷United States, Congress, House, Committee on Military Affairs, Hearings on the Demobilization . . . U.S. Army . . ., 79th Cong., 1st sess., August 28, 1945, p. 13.

⁶⁸War Council Meeting, Oct. 3, 1945, The Papers of Robert P. Patterson, General Correspondence, Box 23, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

The interest in finding alternatives to the use of American troops as occupation forces diminished as war veterans came home, but it did not die completely. Such alternatives as were proposed from time to time were not particularly original, but now and then someone would suggest a means of securing occupation forces that was different. Congressman John Lesinski, for example, in a letter to Harry Truman suggested that the United States maintain a foreign legion. Truman's answer was brief and in the best tradition of his economy of style: "I read your letter of the seventeenth with a lot of interest, and I am glad to have your views on a foreign legion for the United States. Personally, I am not very much impressed with the idea."⁶⁹

The idea of a foreign legion was a radical extreme, as alien to American thought as about any idea one could possibly propose; nor could anyone say that it was an accurate reflection of a substantial segment of the American public or Congress. But at a time when innovative policies were sought, it was about the most original of them all. Most assuredly, most Congressmen would not have wanted a legion, and it would also seem correct to say that despite the protestations of a number of them that the majority of members of Congress were willing to accept occupation

⁶⁹Letter, Harry S. Truman to Honorable John Lesinski, House of Representatives, May 21, Washington, D.C., "Occupation Forces," 190Y Harry S. Truman Library, Independence, Missouri.

responsibilities, although quite reluctantly and then for a limited amount of time.

It would be, though, an even greater misrepresentation of fact to suggest that there was much enthusiasm for the occupation of any of the defeated countries. A cursory examination of the Congressional Record during 1945 and 1946 will reveal that the golden voices of internationalism, the Fulbrights, the Balls, the Hatches were quiet. It was a time to ponder not to talk; it was an indecisive time-- Selective Service, UMT, the budget for the armed forces had not been agreed upon, even the size of the armed forces was not a hard and fast fact. It was a time when issues should have been discussed dispassionately, weighed carefully, and decisions made deliberately. It was becoming increasingly difficult, though, for Congress to do anything deliberately in the face of mounting pressure to bring the servicemen home. Congressmen think in terms of constituencies, and it is a rare breed of legislator who can or will put the national interest above "what the people back home want." And it seemed clear to Congressmen as they read mail and answered phones that regardless of occupation policies or postwar responsibilities, or anything else for that matter, that those who had loved ones in the service wanted them returned home.

Chapter 7

THE POINT SYSTEM: OPERATION AND COMPLAINTS

That there would be complaints at the thought of large numbers of idle men in Army camps was undoubtedly anticipated by some of the officers in the armed services. In general, the older ones must have realized it, but no one realized that there would be so very many of them. But then very few people anticipated that the war against Japan would end as quickly as it did, with the inevitable result of huge numbers of surplus personnel, many of them in the United States--a phone call away, as events developed, from the nearest newspaper or Congressman's office. And as if the orderly discharge of these men did not present sufficient problems, the whole matter was complicated by still another consideration: the point system. How could the armed services discharge huge numbers of men (many of whom were low point men) and, still preserve the "integrity" of the system, a somewhat radical system of discharge, the outstanding characteristic of which, according to its proponents, was its fairness. To all of this, many members of Congress answered "yes but." Willing to accept the system, they also proposed alternative methods of discharge

as well.

Hearings on the point system (the Army's) began even before the war against Germany ended; they were held by the House Committee on Military Affairs in June 1945. At that time, they revealed that the Committee was already quite familiar with the system and that its main interest was how rapidly men could be discharged under it. Almost all of the hearings began with a statement of how many men the services expected to discharge, and, after demobilization was underway, of how many had been discharged. In June of 1945, for example, General Stephen Henry said that the implementation of the demobilization plan began on May 12, and that by the end of that day, 1,981 soldiers had been released. By the end of May, it was 30,000, according to Henry, and the plan called for the discharge of 70,000 in June, and by the end of December, the Army contemplated releasing a million, and by June of 1946, two million.¹

Figures such as these were given at every hearing. Obviously the armed services believed that figures in themselves were impressive, and indeed they were, and were sufficient proof that progress was being made, but at every hearing, too, means were advanced for furthering the numbers of men being discharged, and of increasing the speed at

¹U.S., Congress, House, Committee on Military Affairs, 79th Cong., 1st sess., Hearings on the Operation of the Army Personnel Readjustment Plan, Washington, D.C., June 19, 1945, pp. 2-3.

which they were being released, and it logically follows that one of the means of advancing numbers and speed was by increasing the number of men eligible. Congressman R. Ewing Thomason of Texas at the hearings conducted by the House Committee on Military Affairs in June wanted to know why the Army could not discharge older men and suggested that the age for discharge should be dropped to 38.² Paul Kilday, another Texas Congressman, also wanted the age for discharge dropped, and stated as his reason that it was much more difficult for older men to get jobs.³

The same numbers game was played in successive hearings. In August, General Henry stated that between V-E Day and August 24, 326,000 men had been separated from the service under the Army's discharge formula, and that it was contemplated that 156,800 men a week would be leaving the Army in January. The Navy had little to say at the August hearings, not having begun its demobilization until after the defeat of Japan, but said that it envisioned discharging 121,000 men in September and in January would reach a peak of over a quarter of a million men a month and would continue at that pace until they reached the figure of 500,000 enlisted men, the projected figure of the postwar

²U.S., Congress, House, Committee on Military Affairs, 79th Cong., 1st sess., Hearings, Operation Army . . . Readjustment Plan, June 19, 1945, p. 10.

³Ibid., p. 12.

Navy.⁴

That the Committees were impressed seems likely, but they still had many questions. If volunteers were needed to replace veterans, why did the Army need three-year enlistments? Why was it not possible to have two-year enlistments? And Congressman Kilday wanted to know why combat veterans could not be given a one-year enlistment, since there would be no need of a training period for them. Why, too, had the Army not lowered its points, "recomputed" them after the defeat of Japan as the Army had promised to do as early as June of 1945? Why was there not a point system for officers? Why could not all of the sons be returned home to families where one of the sons had been killed in action?⁵ Clare Booth Luce mentioned that she had received a number of letters wanting to know why extra points were not given to men who had been prisoners of war.⁶ And so the questions went. Upon examination, a rough pattern becomes clear: they were directed toward the possibility of

⁴U.S., Congress, House, Committee on Military Affairs, 79th Cong., 1st sess., Hearings on the Demobilization of the U.S. Army, Washington, D.C., August 28-31, pp. 16-17, pp. 59-60.

⁵U.S., Congress, House, Committee on Military Affairs, 79th Cong., 1st sess., Hearings . . . Demobilization . . . U.S. Army, Washington, D.C., August 28, 1945, pp. 28, 33, 37, 41, 45.

⁶U.S., Congress, House, Committee on Military Affairs, 79th Cong., 1st sess., Hearings . . . Demobilization . . . U.S. Army, Washington, D.C., August 28, 1945, p. 45.

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increasing the number of men eligible for discharge.

It was probably of little solace to them, but the members of the armed services committees could take some comfort in knowing that the members of the general body of Congress were also being subjected to heavy pressure by their constituents. William Lemke of North Dakota said that "it was getting warm, in fact, it was getting hot for members of Congress." Lemke was right, for within a month of the time that he spoke, a considerable number of the House spoke of demobilization pressures and complained of the demobilization program of the armed forces: John M. Robsion of Kentucky, the New Deal Congressman from Ohio, Frederick Smith, Daniel Reed of New York, John H. Folger of North Carolina, Robert J. Corbett of Pennsylvania, James G. Fulton, another Congressman from Pennsylvania, J. Harry McGregor of Ohio, Joseph P. O'Hara from the cold north country of Minnesota, Homer Angell of Oregon, H. Carl Andersen, another Congressman from Minnesota, Howard Buffett of Nebraska, Raymond Springer of Indiana, Paul Shafer from the cereal capital, Battle Creek, Michigan, and John C. Kunkel of Pennsylvania.⁷

Keeping things lively in the Senate on different

⁷United States, Congress, House, Congressional Record, XII, 79th Cong., 1st sess., Sept. 18, 1945, p. 8723; Sept. 19, 1945, p. 8797; Sept. 24, p. 8942; Sept. 27, 1945, p. 9100, p. 9106, p. 9107; Oct. 9, 1945, p. 9506; Oct. 15, 1945, p. 9665, p. 9669; Oct. 19, 1945, p. 9823; Nov. 14, 1945, p. 10676.

occasions were C. Wayland Brooks of Illinois, David Walsh of Massachusetts, Robert Taft of Ohio, Clyde Reed of Kansas, Bourke Hickenlooper of Iowa, Homer Ferguson of Michigan, Edward Robertson of Wyoming, a veteran of the Boer War and still a fighter, and Kenneth Wherry of Nebraska.⁸ And there were those such as Tom Connolly who also did not mind telling the newspapers what they thought. Connolly probably spoke for many of the members of the Senate when he advised them to "keep after the Army and Navy until they show some disposition to relax their present rigid demobilization regulations."⁹

If, as Lemke said, things were hot for the members of Congress, the temperature was also on the way up in the Office of the Secretary of War. It had been rising since early summer. That summer there were a number of Congressmen who were unhappy because the War Department would not release men to work in the coal mines. At the time, Acting Secretary of War Patterson refused to release them because he thought that it would be a bad precedent and would destroy the integrity of the point system. Despite considerable pressure, Patterson stuck to his guns and consistently defended the system to its critics. Many of

⁸United States, Congress, Senate, Cong. Rec., XII, 79th Cong., 1st sess., Sept. 19, 1945, p. 8727; Oct. 9, 1945, p. 9475; pp. 9474-75, p. 9476, pp. 9477-78, p. 9479; Nov. 9, 1945, pp. 10595-97; Nov. 14, 1945, p. 10638.

⁹Louisville Courier Journal, Sept. 15, 1945, p. 1.

the Congressmen who were critical, men such as Miller of Nebraska, Daniel Reed of New York, and Philip Philbin of Massachusetts, as well as a number of others considered the point system a poor means of selecting men for discharge and wanted it replaced with some other method.

Although small in number, they were a considerable embarrassment to the War Department as they read letters on the floor of the House that questioned the essential fairness of the Army's formula for discharge and called attention to its inadequacies. A serviceman, said Daniel Reed, had missed three Christmases from home. He read another letter which complained about points being given for the bronze star. It seemed, the letter writer complained, that they were given to cooks. A. L. Miller read a letter from a farmer in Broken Bow, Nebraska, who wanted the men who drew up the point system "drawn and quartered" for he had two boys who had been in the whole mess for three years and four months. Philip Philbin of Massachusetts spoke of basic inequities and confusions in the system.¹⁰

There may have been inequities in the system, apart from whatever confusions there may have been, but it would have been difficult, if not impossible, to have created one in which they would not have existed. Both services, the Army and Navy, were each convinced that they had created a

¹⁰United States, Congress, House, Cong. Rec., XLI, 79th Cong., 1st sess., Oct. 1, 1945, p. 9208, p. 9209; Sept. 25, 1945, p. 8997; Sept. 12, 1945, p. 8539.

method for assigning priority for discharge which the men considered to be fair, although the Navy did admit that it was necessary to institute a major change in its own plan and give credit for overseas experience--a change it might be added parenthetically that came as a result of public demand.

Inequities, though, were not the principal complaint of the members of Congress. Obviously, they understood that absolute fairness to everybody would have been impossible to achieve in any system, but they did become disturbed when their constituents complained that the system was not being followed. And certainly it did not take long for the complaints to begin. By July, servicemen were taking complaints to Congress and to the newspapers in considerable numbers. The Hoosier Senator Homer Capehart in a United Press article quoted servicemen as saying that there was considerable dissatisfaction; that men were unable to get out of the service even though they had the necessary number of points. In the same article, Capehart called attention to the practice of commanding officers being equally reluctant to discharge men on the basis of non-essentiality --a legitimate reason for discharge, and a method that was meant to augment the point system.¹¹

The question of who was essential, of "essentiality," was, of course, frequently abused. Though a violation of

¹¹Indianapolis News, July 24, 1945, p. 5.

regulations, there were a number of instances where local commanders tried to create their own categories. The War and Navy Departments tried to handle the matter by keeping lists of categories, reducing them as demobilization progressed. In way of illustration, the Army at one time had eighteen categories where enlisted men were considered essential. By August 28, there were only three: orthopedic mechanic (manufactured braces, artificial limbs), transmitter attendant (set up radio transmitting facilities), and electroencephalographic specialist (measured brain waves).¹²

The Navy, which had begun demobilization several months later than the Army, reduced its list of essential personnel a little more slowly than the Army, but by November, 1945, had reduced the number of categories of essential personnel to certain types of hospital technicians and personnel specialists such as key punch operators.¹³ Both services tried to keep the classification of "essential" or of "military necessity" from being violated. The Army, for example, found it necessary to maintain boards of inspectors who visited camps throughout the country, doing nothing other than checking out supposed essential

¹²United States Congress, House, Committee on Military Affairs, 79th Cong., 1st sess., Hearings . . . Demobilization . . . Army of the U.S. . . ., Aug. 28, 1945, p. 52.

¹³All Hands: Bureau of Naval Information Bulletin, Nov. 1945, No. 344 U.S. Govt. Printing Office, Washington, D.C., p. 64.

personnel.¹⁴ Still violations occurred, some of them perhaps by design, others from the commanding officers not reading or perhaps misreading the fine print of directives.

In most cases, though, the instances of men being retained in the service though eligible for discharge were not the result of design or mistake, but simply the result of transportation not having caught up with them. There were a number of complaints addressed to Congress in the fall of 1945 of men not being able to obtain discharges though they possessed sufficient points. In November of 1945, Lawrence Smith, Congressman from Wisconsin, extended his remarks in the Congressional Record to include a letter from a serviceman who claimed that he had 89 points (60 would have made him eligible) but that he still had not been discharged, even though he was doing nothing at all. The same writer said that there were over a thousand men on the island of Luzon who also were not doing anything. Melvin Price of Illinois introduced two letters into the Record, both of them from soldiers who claimed that they had not been discharged, though they possessed the requisite number of points.¹⁵ Karl Mundt, rotund Congressman from South Dakota, spoke of mail coming from all over the world from

¹⁴United States, Congress, House, Committee on Military Affairs, 79th Cong., Hearings on the Operation of the Army Personnel Readjustment Plan, p. 14.

¹⁵U.S., Congress, House, Cong. Rec., Appendix, XLI, 79th Cong., 1st sess., p. A4741; Nov. 7, 1945, pp. A4744-A4745.

high point men, and the day after he made his remarks a Congressman from Pennsylvania, Chester Gross, said that he had received a letter in which the writer claimed that he had seen an official document which stated that there were in the Okinawa area over 3,000 men who had a sufficient number of points to be discharged.

Still the complaints came pouring into the offices of Congressmen. Charles Clason, Massachusetts' Congressman, said that he had received letters in which it was stated that there were over 20,000 men on the island of Guam who were eligible for discharge. Apparently, Guam had been a hot spot for a considerable length of time, even for the Navy. About a month and a half earlier Congressman James Morrison in an extension of his remarks for the Congressional Record introduced a letter that he had received from a group of sailors on that island who claimed that there were over 125 men in a communications group who had been eligible for discharge for over a month and a half.¹⁶

There certainly seemed to be a backlog of men in the Pacific area. As the complaints of "high-point men" not being discharged continued to mount (they had been rising for several months), the House passed a resolution for the purpose of investigating the matter of transportation, the lack of which seemed to be impeding the discharge of

¹⁶U.S., Congress, House, Cong. Rec., XLI, Appendix, 79th Cong., 1st sess., Nov. 29, 1945; Dec. 3, 1945, p. A5310; Oct. 22, 1945, p. A4437.

qualified personnel. House resolution 422 was the occasion for hearings held by the subcommittee of the House Committee on Naval Affairs. George Bates, Republican Congressman from Massachusetts and a member of the Committee, stated during the course of the hearings why the investigation was taking place. It was an eloquent statement of the frustrations of Congressmen.

Let me ask you this question, Admiral. Members of Congress are perhaps the recipients of more protests about this discharge system than any other group of men in the country. We are the representatives of the folks back home, and we hear their kicks and their complaints, and their feelings, and we know, and I know, and every member of this committee knows that we have a large number of boys in the European and Pacific areas who aren't getting home. We know that . . .¹⁷

The House hearings were almost anti-climactic, for they came at a time when the incidence of complaints had begun to fall off. In that respect, the hearings held by the Senate Committee on Naval Affairs were better timed. But neither one was as productive as might have been wished. They did serve the purpose, though, of allowing the Congressmen to let off steam concerning some of the aspects of the demobilization program. To the Navy, the hearings must have been much less satisfactory, particularly so because so many of the areas of complaint, such as the point

¹⁷U.S., Congress, House, Subcommittee of the Committee on Naval Affairs, 79th Cong., 1st sess., Hearings . . . House Resolution 422 Requesting Information from the Secretary of the Navy about Transportation to Return Troops from Overseas Points, Dec. 13, 1945, p. 2475.

system of the Army, were areas over which the Navy had no control. One thing was certain: the hearings did not stop complaints about transportation. The subject would certainly be mentioned again; nor did they stop the complaints about the discharge formula used by the armed services.

Almost from the time that the point system was created, there were people who insisted that they did not want to abolish it, but that they did want to institute some changes in it, or seek in some cases exceptions to it-- exceptions, for example, such as the discharge of special groups, perhaps of men over a certain age, or the discharge of members of a profession, or of those who had dependents. These exceptions, unimportant singly, if they became numerous enough, could well have resulted in the erosion of the system. Both Patterson and Forrestal found it necessary on many occasions to take positions against people who requested these exceptions. Only a week after Japan announced its intention to surrender, Patterson found it necessary to remind the President of the United States that the discharge of men "because of a desire to enter into professional training would do violence to the Army's merit system of discharge."¹⁸ Harry Vaughn, the President's Aide,

¹⁸Robert Patterson, Undersec. of War to Harry S. Truman, the President of the United States, R.G. 107, "Demobilization" 370.01, Box 473, Records of the Undersec. of War, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

answered that Truman agreed that the point system "should be preserved at all costs," but that the President thought that anyone who would become eligible for discharge in October or November should be discharged in September in order to avoid missing a semester of school.¹⁹

That a concession such as that would only have stimulated others to ask for similar privileges did not seem to occur to Truman, but such practices were well-known to Patterson. Only a few days after he wrote to the President stating his objections to discharging men in order to allow them to enroll in school, the Undersecretary of War wrote to Senator Byrd of Virginia and stated why he did not wish to make special arrangements for the early discharge of miners and farmers.²⁰

But the requests came, nevertheless. Gordon L. McDonough, a Congressman from the Los Angeles district of California, wanted the discharge of all policemen. Quite worried about what seemed to him like a fairly large number of unemployed in the Los Angeles area, and fearful of future consequences, McDonough mentioned that there had already

¹⁹ Harry Vaughn, Military Aide to the President of the United States, to Robert Patterson, Undersec. of War, August 21, 1945, R.G. 107 "Demobilization" 370.01, Box 473, Records of the Undersec. of War, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

²⁰ Robert Patterson, Undersec. of War, to Harry F. Byrd, United States Senate, August 23, 1945, the Papers of Robert Patterson, General Correspondence, Box 26, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

been a number of crime waves in the Los Angeles area. Jed Johnson, an Oklahoma Congressman, wanted the release of teachers. Robert Taft on one instance wanted the release of anyone who was not usefully employed by the Army, and on another, wanted the discharge of the entire 37th Division, an Ohio division, needless to say. Brooks Hays, Congressman from Arkansas, wanted medical students released.²¹

Earlier in the summer, Patterson had estimated that if all of the men for whom someone had sought a discharge (and the requests were much more numerous than indicated here and the groups equally numerous) had actually been discharged, then their total number would have exceeded 1,000,000.²² If that particular number was accurate in the summer of 1945, then the total number in the army in the fall of 1945 for whom special discharges had been requested must have been at least 2,000,000.

The Army was not the only branch of the service that was besieged with special requests. In a letter to the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Naval Affairs, James Forrestal told of some of the problems faced by the Navy. The Secretary of the Navy said that there were requests to

²¹U.S., Congress, House, Cong. Rec., XLI, 79th Cong., 1st sess., Sept. 24, 1945, p. 8922; Senate, Congressional Record, XLI, 79th Cong., Oct. 9, 1945, p. 9476; Nov. 9, 1945, p. 10594; Cong. Rec., XLI, Appendix, 79th Cong., 1st sess., Sept. 24, 1945, pp. A4060-A4061.

²²U.S., Congress, Senate, Cong. Rec., XLI, 79th Cong., 1st sess., July 21, 1945, p. 7919.

release married men and at the same time to release men so that they could get married. There were requests to release combat veterans because of the hardships they had suffered, and to release men who had not seen combat if the Navy had no further use for them. Furthermore, he continued, the Navy had been asked to release young men in order that they might prepare for their careers, and to release older men so that they could resume theirs. In short, for every reason advanced to justify special consideration for a specific group, there were just as many reasons advanced by some other group to justify the same favored treatment for themselves. To have tried to fulfill all of these requests would have been quite impossible and would have meant that demobilization would have broken down, in the words of the Secretary, in "a chaos of cross purposes."²³

The requests for the release of special groups of personnel were a matter of constant concern to the Congressmen who had to make those requests, usually at the prompting of a constituent, as well as to the armed forces who had to refuse them. An equally serious concern was the matter of granting discharges to individuals who were not eligible, either as a personal favor to someone or as the result of political pressure. This was a particularly galling practice to the Congressmen who had refused to make such requests on

²³U.S., Congress, Senate, Cong. Rec., XLI, 79th Cong., 1st sess., Sept. 28, 1945, pp. 9113-9114.

behalf of their own constituents or perhaps who had made such a demand and had been refused. At any rate, the War and Navy Departments sent out thousands of letters which commented upon the importance of preserving the integrity of the point system, all of which must have sounded rather shallow when one could read in the morning's paper from time to time of the discharge of an individual who was patently ineligible for discharge.

The matter of the preferential discharge was frequently attacked in Congress. During the time that demobilization was in its most hectic stages, that is, the fall and early winter of 1945 and 1946, there were a number of people who were discharged who were not eligible. Now and then, due to the resourcefulness of some reporter, the facts of these cases would become known. There were three that attracted an unusual amount of attention. One of these involved the son of Tom Stewart, United States Senator from Tennessee, a member, incidentally of the Senate Committee on Military Affairs. In this case, young Stewart was being returned to the United States to be discharged when the facts of the case became known. The Tennessee Senator, who claimed originally that he knew nothing about all of this, then intervened (the case had become an embarrassment to him) and requested that his son not be returned to the United States and that he not be discharged.²⁴

²⁴U.S., Congress, House, Cong. Rec., Appendix, XLI, ext. remarks, Hon. B. Carroll Reece, 79th Cong., 1st sess., Dec. 4, 1945, p. A5256.

The second case involved Lewis MacNider, the son of a Marine general. MacNider's son was discharged, although he was twelve points short of the required number of fifty, as a result of the direct intervention of the Commandant of the United States Marine Corps. When the facts became known on this, there was a strong reaction on the part of the public, and, in turn, in Congress. Criticizing the handling of the Stewart and MacNider cases, Raymond Springer, Congressman from Indiana, asked: "Is there any wonder that the morale of our veterans with high points is low and that they are disgusted over this very unfair treatment?" Perennial Army critic Paul Shafer said that a "mockery" was being made of the point system through the "discharge of sons of generals, movie actors, football players, and other low point favorites." Paul Kilday, normally a strong supporter of the armed forces and a very infrequent contributor to the Congressional Record, stated that despite the fine combat record of General Hanfield MacNider he was decidedly at fault in requesting preferential treatment for his son.²⁵ Neither of these two cases, though, aroused as much response as did the discharge of a football player by the name of Charles Trippi.

Trippi, a young Italian-American, was originally

²⁵U.S., House, Cong. Rec., Appendix, XLI, extension of remarks, Hon. Raymond Springer, 79th Cong., 1st sess., Nov. 30, 1945, p. A5207; Nov. 27, 1945, p. A5184; Nov. 27, 1945, p. A5173.

from Pennsylvania. Football scouts, though, convinced him of the virtues of a Southern education, and he enrolled at the University of Georgia, where he quickly established himself as a "star." But the glory did not last for long, for he soon entered the Army. There his experience was something less than harrowing, though, for he spent most of it playing football. While tank divisions broke through enemy lines, Trippi broke through right guard; while infantrymen adjusted packs, Trippi adjusted shoulder pads; while men sweated in the Pacific, Trippi sweated at such hardship ports as Tampa, Florida. In the middle of October, the newspapers announced that Trippi (a low point man) was being discharged on a "surplus and hardship basis."²⁶ The Army did not need him; therefore, he was surplus--good logic; that he could earn more as an "amateur" athlete and thereby support his wife, child, and mother seemed like poor logic. But like Horatio's philosophy, there are things in this world that the amateur codes never dreamed of, and among these is the very professional status of athletes in amateur standing.

Regardless of all of this, the discharge of Charles Trippi might have gone unnoticed if it had not been for the initiative of a reporter for a Tampa paper who uncovered some interesting facts about the "Fighting Rebel" from

²⁶Stars and Stripes (Paris edition), Oct. 14, 1945, p. 1.

Pittston, Pennsylvania. Among these were that both Georgia Senators Richard Russell and Walter George had been involved in the activity to get Trippi discharged.²⁷ Other than Georgia football fans, there were not very many people who were happy about the situation; certainly there were none in Congress.

Over the period of the next month or so, there was a good deal of grumbling among Congressmen of the favoritism being shown. George Bender, Congressman from Ohio, said that he had received "hundreds of letters denouncing the failure of the War Department to recognize its own point system of discharge." And there were also complaints from a number of other Congressmen.²⁸

The strongest statement on the Trippi case, though, did not appear in the Congressional Record at all; as a matter of fact, the particular Congressman involved, Charles LaFollette of Indiana, usually went to great length to keep his personal feelings out of the Record. LaFollette in a letter reminded the Army (Patterson) that he was not one of those who were consistently needling the Army; that he did not ask for special favors; that he did not deliberately embarrass the Army as many did. Stating that the Trippi

²⁷Stars and Stripes (Paris edition), Oct. 15, 1945, p. 1.

²⁸U.S., Cong. Rec., Appendix, XLI, ext. remarks of George Benders, 79th Cong., 1st sess., Oct. 17, 1945, p. A4359.

decision was the poorest ever made by the Army, he also maintained that the lack of an investigation was a serious matter. In LaFollette's opinion, Trippi should not have been discharged at all, and if he actually was surplus to the needs of the Air Force, then he should have been sent overseas to take the place of someone who could have been sent home. Indeed, LaFollette saw no reason why Trippi could not have been transferred to the Infantry.²⁹

Patterson's answer was that Trippi had too many points to be shipped overseas; that he was surplus to the needs of the Air Force; and that he had been discharged on the same basis as had many others. In time, of course, the Trippi matter was forgotten, but it was one more incident that served to worsen relations between the military and the public, at a time when relations were already quite strained.³⁰

That incidents such as those that involved Trippi and other "personalities" could have been avoided cannot be denied. Particularly regretful, too, was the fact that attention was focused on the worm and not the apple. Disgruntled servicemen quickly complained; Congressmen echoed their complaints loudly enough to be heard back home.

²⁹Charles M. LaFollette, House of Representatives, to Robert P. Patterson, Secretary of War, November 1, 1945, R.G. 319, Records of the Adjutant General, Demobilization 370.01, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

³⁰Interview, Charles LaFollette, Sept. 3, 1970, Evansville, Indiana.

Basic to the system, of course, was its fairness. The Under-secretary of War--later the Secretary--worked hard to preserve it, and also worked hard to see that in the Army that it was impartially administered. The papers of Robert Patterson are replete with examples of instances where he took courageous positions to make the system workable. Unfortunately, the Trippi case was an exception, for there his courage broke when he was faced with the prospect of alienating the two powerful Georgia Senators, Walter George and Richard Russell, the latter of whom was a member of the Senate Committee on Military Affairs. Perhaps he is entitled to some divine forgiveness for this human error, for these were men who could have exerted an inordinate influence on the future of the War Department and perhaps on Robert Patterson himself who nourished a strong desire for an appointment to the Supreme Court.

In conclusion, the priority of discharge formula, the point system created by the armed forces, was a complicated method of discharge that had as its greatest virtue its fairness, or at least its fairness to most servicemen. But the priorities created led to thousands of complaints, as did the administration of the system itself. Shortly after the end of the war, it was the greatest source of complaint, as the Congress soon observed. But in the attempt to "keep up" with it, that is, discharge all of the men who had the requisite number of points, the armed forces created another problem, for the separation centers in which

men congregated to be discharged were now overcrowded. Many of these men did not suffer in silence. And Congressmen who saw some diminution of complaints about the point system were soon aware of an increased number of "gripes" about the separation centers.

You can't please some of the people any of the time. But Congress was willing to try. And try it did.

Chapter 8

BRINGING THEM HOME: FULL SCALE DEMOBILIZATION AND FULL SCALE PROBLEMS

In late August of 1945, the armed services began full scale demobilization. Facts and figures on the number of men released were widely publicized, and every few days or so one could read in the newspaper of the number of men who would be discharged as well as the number that had already been returned to civilian life. Figures for the Army were particularly impressive, for that branch of the service had the advantage of beginning its demobilization earlier than the others. At the end of August it stated that it had already discharged over 500,000 men since V-E Day.¹ Three days later the Navy, which did not have any particularly impressive figures to offer (they had discharged only 2,300 since V-E Day), spoke of the plans for the Navy of the future, a Navy of 500,000 men and 50,000

¹U.S., Congress, House, Committee on Military Affairs, 79th Cong., 1st sess., Hearings on the Demobilization of the Army of the United States and for Voluntary Recruiting for the United States Army (Washington, D. C.: U.S. Govt. Printing Office, August 28 and 31, 1945), p. 16.

officers.² Somewhat later than three weeks, an article in the New York Times stated that the Army had discharged 800,000 men and the Navy 72,000; and although Army discharges were averaging 17,000 a day, the Navy average was only 4000.³

This apparent slowness in demobilization on the part of the Navy had concerned many people for some time. The Washington Post spoke for some of them early in the month of September when it commented critically on the Navy's lack of speed, while pointedly praising the Army.⁴ The President of the United States was also concerned, for in a conversation with Harold Smith, Director of the Budget, on September 13 he seemed quite concerned about the proposed Navy budget, "knitting his brows and shaking his head" at the figures. The following day at a cabinet meeting he effectively ducked making any commitment on the proposed budget although the Secretary of the Navy pressed him on the matter. About three weeks later, Truman stated that he intended to have the Director of the OWMR look into the Navy's demobilization program, for he seemed to agree with Smith that the program

²U.S., Congress, House, Committee on Military Affairs, 79th Cong., 1st sess., Hearings . . . Demobilization . . . Army . . ., August 28 and 31, 1945, pp. 60-62, p. 68.

³New York Times, September 23, 1945, p. 10E.

⁴Washington Post, September 4, 1945, p. 12.

was too slow.⁵ Of some interest as well is the fact that an unidentified spokesman of the OWMR had already stated in a news release that too many men in the Navy were sitting around doing nothing and that the OWMR had tried to get it to release more men.⁶ Surprisingly enough, though, the Navy still seemed to enjoy some temporary immunity from Congress.

Throughout the fall of 1945, the War and Navy Departments continued to inform the public dutifully through news releases of the number of servicemen being returned home, and the newspapers with just as great a sense of duty reported the exact figures. Now and then the papers would personalize an article on demobilization by telling of the release of a prominent personality. On September 1, the Times devoted several paragraphs to the movie actor, James Stewart, who, as an air force officer, participated in twenty combat missions over Germany.⁷ Life magazine, incidentally, followed Stewart home and featured a story on him with pictures of the former air force officer talking to neighbors on the street in his hometown of Indiana, Pennsylvania, fishing from a rowboat and reading in bed.⁸

⁵The Diary of Harold Smith, Conference with President Truman, September 13; Cabinet Meeting, September 14; Conference with President Truman, October 5, Roosevelt Papers, FDRL.

⁶Louisville Courier Journal, September 24, 1945, p. 1.

⁷New York Times, September 1, 1945, p. 6.

⁸"Life Comes Home with Jimmy Stewart," Life, Vol. XIX, No. 13, New York, pp. 126-131.

The Minneapolis Tribune gave front page coverage to the discharge of radio and movie comedian Red Skelton who was discharged after a relatively brief eighteen months of service, some of which was spent in North Africa.⁹

Late in September, the President in a letter to Congress had some figures of his own to release. The Army said the President would have a maximum size of 1,950,000, and the Army budget would be reduced by 28,692,722,000, approximately half of the original budget.¹⁰ Obviously prepared for the news in the President's letter, the War Department announced two days later that it would reduce the Army to 1,630,000 by July 1, 1946, a figure that was 320,000 less than the President had requested.¹¹ The following day, the Marine Corps released the first figures since it had begun demobilization, and according to them, 6,286 men had been released from the Marines since V-J Day; a modest figure but in time the Marines would equal the other services in speed of demobilization.¹²

By October 6, the Army was prepared to say that it had returned over half of the total of combat divisions that were in Europe at the end of the war, 32 of 62, and of the

⁹Minneapolis Tribune, September 30, 1945, p. 1.

¹⁰Louisville Courier Journal, September 26, 1945, sect. 1, p. 3.

¹¹Louisville Courier Journal, September 28, 1945, sect. 1, p. 13.

¹²New York Times, September 29, 1945, p. 11.

3,000,000 men who were there on V-E Day, 1,500,000 had been returned to the United States.¹³ October appeared to have been a good month for the Army. Helped by calm oceans, they brought men home in massive numbers. The New York Times of October 30 said that the War Department had announced that since V-E Day, 2,225,000 men had been discharged from the Army, 1,047,000 from October 1 to October 26.¹⁴ The Army had surpassed by an impressive margin, incidentally, its projected goal of a month earlier of an average of 24,000 men a day, for they had discharged during the month of October more than 40,000 men a day.

With such large numbers of men coming home, bottlenecks soon appeared. Primarily, there were two: the separation centers and transportation. Logically enough, the centers proved to be the first stumbling block to an orderly demobilization as the surprisingly quick end of the war left a large surplus of men in the United States, many of whom were originally meant to be redeployed to the Pacific. At the same time, men were being returned every day from Europe and the Pacific to be discharged, the result of which was a temporary glut of the separation facilities and an unhappy situation as far as the men were concerned.

The separation centers were established as processing centers for men who would be discharged from

¹³New York Times, October 6, 1945, p. 3.

¹⁴New York Times, October 30, 1945, p. 11.

the service. It was here that they had their records checked, were given medical examinations, submitted pension claims, were counseled as to economic opportunities and veterans benefits, paid in full, and then discharged. These centers were established throughout the United States with as much regional diversity as possible.

At the time of the defeat of Germany, the Army separation centers were established to handle 15,000 men a week. By the middle of August, these facilities had been expanded to handle 40,000, and the Army expected that a peak capacity would be reached in January of 156,800 men per week.¹⁵ Within two months of the time that the Army made this statement, it was separating from the service almost twice that number. Two conclusions follow quite logically. First of all, public opinion was forcing the Army to move faster than it had originally planned; and as a result of this accelerated discharge program, the separation facilities were severely taxed.

Congress soon heard of the crowded facilities at the separation centers. At Sioux Falls, South Dakota, irate air force men complained bitterly to the newspapers and to their Congressional representatives.¹⁶ The problem was not confined to the Army either, for at the Great Lakes Naval

¹⁵U.S., Congress, House, Committee on Military Affairs, 79th Cong., 1st sess., Hearings, Demobilization . . . Army . . ., August 28 and 31, 1945, pp. 16-17.

¹⁶New York Times, September 1, 1945, p. 4.

Training Center, men complained to the newspapers of having to wait around for 10 to 20 days before the discharge process even began.¹⁷ Having nothing to do at camp, they were dismissed every day, but only after they appeared for the eight o'clock roll call, the early hour of which probably did not improve their disposition. In Camp Atterbury, Indiana, there was a backlog of men, but the situation had improved by the time that Congressman Harness of Indiana visited it.¹⁸ At Fort Dix, New Jersey, men sometimes had to wait for three days before they could even begin the discharge process, a situation that existed according to Dix authorities because of the lack of help.¹⁹ These reports soon spurred Congress into activity, and the newspapers were full of the comings and goings of Congressmen and reports of inspection trips proposed as well as completed. Twelve members of a subcommittee would visit twenty-five separation centers said the Minneapolis Morning Tribune of September 20, 1945, in a press release, and so they did.²⁰

The personal reports of some of these members of

¹⁷Chicago Daily Tribune, September 21, 1945, sect. 1, p. 7.

¹⁸Indianapolis News, September 24, 1945, pt. 1, p. 1.

¹⁹New York Times, September 30, 1945, p. 7.

²⁰Minneapolis Morning Tribune, September 20, 1945, p. 6.

Congress were extremely interesting as well as informative, and among their findings were some of the following. There were, as many had contended, large backlogs of men. At Fort Devens, Massachusetts, for example, there was a backlog of over 5,000 men, but there was a reason for it. Originally, Devens was supposed to handle 350 separations daily. In September, the program was stepped up to handle 535 daily, but this did not last for long, for Devens processed 788 men on September 20. At Devens, they had devised an ingenious method of handling their surplus of potential discharges, though: they simply furloughed the men until such time as they could be processed.²¹ The AAF separation base at Patterson Field, Ohio was set up to handle 100 separations daily, but nine days later, it separated 194 men from the service.²² Fort Dix was listed as having a capacity of 3000 on August 31; September 20, they separated 3,390 men and it was thought that the number would eventually reach 4000.²³ At Dix, many men were slowed down in the discharge process because of discrepancies in their records or because of missing information. At Fort Devens they also ran into

²¹U.S., Congress, House, Cong. Rec., Appendix, 79th Cong., 1st sess., XCI, pt. 13, September 24, 1945, pp. A4015-16.

²²U.S., Congress, House, Cong. Rec., Appendix, 79th Cong., 1st sess., XCI, pt. 13, October 2, 1945, p. A4141.

²³U.S., Congress, House, Cong. Rec., Appendix, 79th Cong., 1st sess., XCI, pt. 13, September 24, 1945, pp. A4015-16.

problems with records, but the Devens procedure was to have the soldier supply whatever information was missing and correct whatever information was wrong and then sign an affidavit that the information that he supplied was true. One of the suggestions made by one of the subcommittee members was that the Devens procedure be used instead of the method at Dix.

There were other findings on the part of the subcommittee. That facilities were inadequate it found to be true and specified that work conditions seemed to be extremely crowded, with workers almost falling over each other. In addition, there was a lack of trained personnel, and the subcommittee stated that low-point soldiers should be trained to do separation work.²⁴

The question of the separation centers and their operation was discussed at great length in the hearings held by the House. Conscious of criticism on the part of the public and of Congress, the Army strove hard to acquaint the Committee with the difficulty of the task that faced it and of what had been accomplished. In terms of numbers at the time of the hearing, the Army pointed out that the rate of discharge at the separation centers had increased from 6000 men a day to 25,000. This did not include men being discharged at camps and stations, for in addition to the

²⁴U.S., Congress, House, Cong. Rec., Appendix, ext. remarks of Hon. Leroy A. Johnson of California, 79th Cong., 1st sess., XCI, pt. 13, September 24, 1945, pp. A4015-16.

men being discharged at the huge separation centers, men were also discharged every day at some 600 separation points. Usually it was on some basis other than points --medical reasons, age, hardship, or surplus to the needs of the service.²⁵

The separation centers were often short of trained personnel as their own men became eligible for separation. To secure the necessary personnel, the Army opened training schools for them, and at one school, for example, they turned out over 1000 finance clerks a month. Evidently, there was a serious shortage of them, for the Army stated that it had flown over 1,200 of them back from Europe.²⁶

The shortage of trained personnel at the separation centers was certainly not alleviated either by the decision of the United States government to cut back on its civil service personnel--a general order for a cut-back of 25 percent. This meant a general reduction of 50,000 workers who had been assigned to the War Department; and in addition to these, General Benjamin Caffey of the office of the Chief of Staff said that there was another 50,000 cut contemplated for December or January, the exact date of which he was not certain. At the hearings held in October, Congressman Chet

²⁵U.S., Congress, House, Committee on Military Affairs, 79th Cong., 1st sess., Hearings . . . Demobilization of Material and Personnel, pp. 79-80.

²⁶U.S., Congress, House, Committee on Military Affairs, 79th Cong., 1st sess., Hearings . . . Demobilization, p. 78.

Holifield of California stated that he would try to get the government to exempt the demobilization centers from this decision.²⁷

The chairman of the Senate Special Committee to Investigate the National Defense was of the opinion that the armed services had themselves to blame for a shortage of personnel. The chairman, James Mead, presided over hearings that were held at both Army and Navy separation centers (Fort Meade, Bainbridge, Maryland, Fort Dix, New Jersey, Lido Beach, Long Island, and Camp Shanks, New York). In a speech delivered on the floor of the Senate, he said that demobilization was a "welter of confusion" and that among the specific findings of the committee were that there had not been adequate planning.

Meade may have been too harsh, though, for by the time that he spoke to the Senate on October 26, the problems of the separation centers seemed to have pretty well straightened themselves out. In one of the camps that had been swamped at one time, Camp Atterbury, they had actually run out of troops to discharge.²⁸ Another problem, however, arose: transportation, or it was certainly a problem to the

²⁷U.S., Congress, House, Committee on Military Affairs, 79th Cong., 1st sess., Hearings . . . Demobilization . . . , p. 83.

²⁸U.S., Congress, Senate, Committee on Military Affairs, 79th Cong., 1st sess., Hearings . . . Sl355, A Bill to Provide for the Speedy Return of Veterans to Civilian Life, p. 210.

men who were depending on ships to bring them home.

Almost from the beginning of the time that the services began full scale demobilization, there was a serious concern on the part of the officers of the armed services about transportation. On September 17, the Undersecretary of the Navy, Artemus Gates, said that shipping was the most important factor in the entire demobilization program.²⁹ Some two weeks later, General Robert Berry said in answer to a question that the Army discharge program was closely tied to shipping and seemed to indicate in his answer that this was the reason why more men from the Pacific theaters were not being discharged.³⁰ In the middle of October, officials of the OWMR were stating in their correspondence that the program of demobilization would be governed by the available shipping.³¹

In a sense it was regrettable that transportation had become a factor, for all indications were that the demobilization programs of all of the services had begun to pick up speed. The Secretary of the Navy, for example,

²⁹U.S., Senate, Committee on Military Affairs, 79th Cong., 1st sess., Hearings . . . S1355, A Bill to Provide for the Speedy Return of Veterans to Civilian Life . . ., p. 88.

³⁰U.S., House, Committee on Military Affairs, 79th Cong., 1st sess., Hearings . . . Demobilization of Material and Personnel, p. 50.

³¹J. Donald Kinglsey, Office of War Mobilization and Reconversion, to Honorable A. A. Bryan, Mayor, Paola, Kansas, October 25, 1945, R.G. 250, D42, Box 107, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

announced that as of October 27, 381,077 men had been discharged from the Navy.³² The figures of a few days later were more explicit and, at the same time, considerably more impressive: 505,006 naval personnel had been discharged. Of these, 441,000 were male enlisted men, 47,900 male officers, and 16,500 Waves. At the time of the release of these figures, the Navy also announced that it hoped to discharge 1,200,000 men by January 1.³³ In the middle of November, there was an article in the New York Times that said that the total of men separated from all of the services was almost 3,500,000.³⁴ This was more than one-fourth of the men who were in the armed services at the time of the defeat of Japan.

Yet if one-fourth of the members of the armed services were home and happy with their new life, three-fourths were not and were decidedly unhappy about it; and it must have seemed to Congress at times as if all of them were writing their Congressmen and, indeed, many of them were. So many of them wrote as a matter of fact that one could almost piece together a composite picture of the average letter writer. He was in his late teens or early twenties; more than likely, he was in the Army, although the Navy certainly had critics of its own; he was "stuck on some

³²New York Times, November 3, 1945, p. 10.

³³New York Times, November 7, 1945, p. 8.

³⁴New York Times, November 14, 1945, p. 15.

God-forsaken island"; he was not doing anything; he had sufficient points to be discharged, yet he was not being discharged.

In one form or the other, Congressmen became acquainted with thousands of such correspondents, and although each letter was different, many of them made common observations: (1) ships were leaving the islands in the Pacific completely empty (2) ships were leaving the islands with empty passenger space (3) ships were carrying Japanese prisoners (4) large numbers of ships were simply lying idle in a port (5) Victory and Liberty ships were not being converted to carry servicemen home (6) Where were all of the ships with which the Army and Navy had transported men overseas, and with which the war was won.

All Congressmen received letters asking just such questions, but most of them did not complain. By and large, many of these, indeed, most of them were familiar names by now, but that of William Knowland, Senator from California, was a new name. The new senator from California was appointed to fill the large shoes of Hiram Johnson who died in the summer of 1945. The son of an Oakland publisher, and a former Army officer himself, Knowland quickly came to the defense of the servicemen as he interested himself with problems of demobilization, the most pressing of which was transportation, or so it seemed to Knowland from reading his mail. As early as September 29, for example, he wrote to the Secretary of War, Robert Patterson, and asked him some

very specific questions. Knowland wanted to know 1) the number of men home from the European and Pacific theaters, with separate breakdowns of figures; 2) the number of men being sent home by weeks; 3) the number of ships being used for redeployment and whether there was an increase or decrease in the number of such ships being used; 4) the number of Navy warships being used to bring men home from both theaters; 5) the number of men brought home by plane and the number of planes being used for that purpose; 6) the provision made with the British government for continued use of the Queens; 7) the number of men in the two theaters with points ranging from 70 to 100; 8) the number of doctors still in both theaters and the United States, and the number released since V-E Day.³⁵

The Secretary of War responded to each of the questions and gave the specific facts that were requested. During May 12 through May 31, 50,000 men were shipped home from Europe and the Mediterranean theaters; June, 290,000; July, 341,000; August, 309,000, September, preliminary estimate of 383,000. The total of men who had been shipped home from Europe and the Mediterranean theaters was a total of 1,473,000. From the Pacific theaters from May 12 through May 31, 6,000 were returned: 32,000 in June; 46,000 in July; August 45,000; September, preliminary estimate, 79,000. A

³⁵U.S., Senate, Cong. Rec., XLI, 79th Cong., 1st sess., U.S. Govt. Printing Office, November 1, 1945, pp. 10267-8.

total of 208,000 men were shipped home from the Pacific.³⁶

At first glance, the figures seem out of balance, which, indeed, they were, as seven times as many men were shipped home from Europe as had been shipped home from the Pacific. The Secretary offered no explanation for this, except to say that the amount of time used in transporting troops from the Pacific was twice as great as the time used to transport them from Europe. Undoubtedly the need for the redeployment of troops to fight in the war against Japan accounted for the large shipments of troops from Europe in the summer of 1945, yet one is perplexed about the limited number of men, 79,000 who were shipped home from the Pacific in September (the war having ended), compared to the European and Mediterranean theater totals of 383,000. It seems a fair inference to say that the transport of troops from Europe was given priority over the transport of those from the Pacific, but it is possible that this may have been the result of circumstance rather than deliberate intention.

Knowland, at any rate, was not completely satisfied with the progress of demobilization as pictured in the Secretary's letter, for he thought that men could be brought home even faster than they were being brought home by the armed services. What seemed to distress him was the lack of coordination between the armed services and agencies which

³⁶U.S., Senate, Cong. Rec., XLI, 79th Cong., 1st sess. (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Govt. Printing Office, November 1, 1945), p. 10267.

served them such as the WSA. To correct what he believed to be a serious flaw in planning, he proposed that a coordinator of transportation be named.³⁷

The findings of the California senator may have made an impression upon the Army and perhaps upon some members of the Senate, but it is doubtful whether his findings were as impressive as those of the prestigious Mead Committee (Special Committee to Investigate the National Defense Program). This committee, made famous by its original chairman, Harry Truman, had spent much of the month of October and part of September investigating several aspects of demobilization--the point system, the separation centers, and transportation. In its report to the Senate, the Chairman of the Committee stated that sufficient planning had not been devoted to transportation, and he thought that this was particularly true of the Air Transport Command, many of whose personnel had been discharged through the point system.³⁸

The speech of Senator Mead setting forth the findings of his committee was not greeted with the thunderous applause of a crowded Senate. A few members of that body offered supporting remarks--Knowland and Ferguson, for

³⁷U.S., Senate, Cong. Rec., XLI, 79th Cong., 1st sess., November 1, 1945, p. 1026.

³⁸U.S., Senate, Cong. Rec., XLI, 79th Cong., 1st sess. (Washington, D.C.: United States Govt. Printing Office, October 20, 1945), p. 10076.

example, as well as the obviously sympathetic Chairman of the Committee of Naval Affairs, David Walsh.³⁹ But this did not mean that the senators were not concerned, as there were apparently enough of them to gather support for a resolution to investigate the problem--if, indeed it was a problem. Senate resolution 188, submitted by Senator Robertson of Wyoming, authorized the Senate Committee on Naval Affairs ". . . to make a full and complete study and investigation of the general overall plan or plans for demobilization and transportation of military personnel to the United States from overseas . . ."⁴⁰ Without objection, the resolution was referred to the Senate Committee on Naval Affairs. On November 13, 1945 that committee began hearings on transportation, and held hearings through the 15th of November.

These hearings did not yield any great surprises, and were not productive of any magic solutions either. Admiral Denfeld of the Bureau of Naval Personnel answered most of the questions for the Navy, questions which did not seem to follow any organized pattern and were prompted by the whim of whatever Senator had the floor at the time. This much the hearings did do, though: they clarified the position of the Navy on Liberty and Victory ships the great use of which was being widely advocated. There was

³⁹U.S., Senate, Cong. Rec., XLI, 79th Cong., 1st sess., October 26, 1945, pp. 10076-83.

⁴⁰U.S., Senate, Cong. Rec., 79th Cong., 1st sess., November 9, 1945, pp. 10598-9.

considerable criticism of the armed services because more of these ships had not been converted. To properly convert them, according to Capt. Granville Conway, Deputy Administrator of the War Shipping Administration, would take three to four months, and before they were ready, the crisis would be over. Captain Conway submitted a written statement of answers to questions which were most frequently asked, and to which the WSA could furnish answers. These answers merit some attention as they were a good exposition of the WSA position, as well as a fairly good picture of the troop ship situation in general. The answers give the impression that the Army was not overly concerned about transportation. Take note, for example, that they had not requested any additional conversion of ships (conversion of cargo carriers to passenger) since the previous April.⁴¹

The WSA statement follows:

1. WSA operated 396 troop carriers in the Atlantic, 155 in the Pacific.
2. Operating matters on WSA vessels under authority of WSA.
3. Total troop lift from Atlantic 350,000; Pacific, 235,000 (previous month).
4. Army scheduled the vessels it used.

⁴¹The precise situation concerning the conversion of Victory and Liberty ships (normally cargo carriers) is unclear. Army testimony at subsequent hearings was in conflict with that offered by the WSA. It is possible that the Army on its own may have converted some ships, and perhaps that would answer some of the discrepancies in testimony.

5. Number of troop vessels determined by the Army; troop ships converted at request of Army; last request for conversion of a ship, April 11.
6. No troop vessels inactive.
7. No passenger vessels capable of bringing back troops that were not bringing back troops.
8. All cargo vessels operated by government account, not by private companies for private gain.
9. Troop lift in November estimated at 1,042,000.
10. In less than a month, there would be a surplus of troop ships in the Atlantic and then they would be diverted to the Pacific.
11. Many Victory vessels no longer carried any cargo in order to increase the turn-around time of the vessels.
12. Two hundred-fifty Victory and Liberty ships would sail to Europe to return troops in November.⁴²

The written statement of the WSA that was presented at the hearings was simply a collation of much of what it had been saying for several months and of what it said at the hearings. One senses a certain confidence in the statement, which seemed to be characteristic, incidentally, of Naval and War Shipping personnel who testified before the Committee. This sense of confidence seemed to communicate itself to the Senators who seemed well pleased with Naval testimony, although it did not prevent them from implementing one phase of the resolution's directive: the creation of a committee to investigate transportation. It was to be a committee

⁴²U.S., Senate, Hearings . . . Sen. Res. 188, Demobilization and Transportation of Military Personnel, p. 74.

that represented both the Senate and the House and one in which there would be both civil and military members.⁴³ The resolution was proposed and seemingly accepted without rancor by both sides.

The Senate was not the only legislative body to conduct hearings on transportation; the House, too, conducted hearings of its own. As in the Senate, the members received a considerable volume of mail that complained about transportation, particularly in the Pacific. There were complaints about ships lying idle, ships leaving port empty, ships carrying cargo when they could have carried passengers. Also, as was the case in the Senate, it was a small number of Congressmen who made their complaints public, but there must have been a great deal of private complaint. The situation was aggravated, too, by the publicity emanating from service newspapers and national magazines. "Where is the vast armada that will bring us home?" the Daily Pacifican asked.⁴⁴ Life magazine in an article entitled "Ship Graveyard" spoke of unused ships and featured a picture of 28 Liberty ships lying at anchor in the James River, with the obvious inference that

⁴³U.S., Senate, Hearings . . . Sen. Res. 188, Demobilization and Transportation of Military Personnel, p. 74.

⁴⁴U.S., House, Cong. Rec., Appendix, XLI, ext. of remarks of Hon. Edward O. McCowen, October 30, 1945, p. A4589.

all ships were not being used.⁴⁵

It was to answer just such questions as why all ships were not being used that the House began its hearings in December. The opening sentence of House Resolution 422 "Requesting Information from the Secretary of the Navy about Transportation to Return Troops from Overseas Points" spoke of "widespread protests" being received by members of Congress and then spelled out the reasons for the committee hearing: rumors of troop ships being converted to commercial cargo runs, of ships lying idle, of the premature retirement of ships, of the use of American ships by foreign powers. The latter part of the resolution in five specific paragraphs called for an inventory of just about everything that would float, in the words of a Congressman, "every dory in Chesapeake Bay."⁴⁶

The Navy was represented at these hearings by Rear Admiral Felix Johnson, Director, Planning and Control, Bureau of Personnel and Rear Admiral W. M. Callaghan, Asst. Chief of Naval Operations for Transportation. The gist of their testimony was that all available satisfactory transportation was being used, including 87 Victory ships and 216

⁴⁵"Ship Graveyards," Life, XIX, no. 22, November 26, 1945, p. 75.

⁴⁶U.S., House, Subcommittee of the Committee on Naval Affairs, Hearings . . . House Resolution 422 Requesting Information from the Secretary of the Navy about Transportation to Return Troops from Overseas Points, pp. 2463-4.

Liberty type ships. As for the additional conversion of Victory and Liberty type ships, there were a number of compelling reasons for not converting them, the most important of which was that there was no longer any need for them, for there was now more than sufficient shipping. In addition, the cost and time required for conversion were excessive: \$430,000 and 72 days for example, to convert one Victory ship. Moreover, there would not be sufficient crews to operate them, even if they were converted.⁴⁷

In way of illustration of their argument that there was now more than sufficient shipping available, the Navy pointed out that there would be 799,200 Naval and Marine personnel eligible for transportation from some overseas point in the Pacific in the months of December, January, and February, and there would be 862,000 spaces, an excess of almost a hundred thousand. At the same time, it was stated that there would be more than enough space to bring home all eligible Army personnel during the same three months. Specifically, the Army would need 228,414 spaces for December and there would be 325,000 spaces available; in January it would require 220,000 and there would be 406,000 spaces; in February the requirement would be 183,000, and

⁴⁷U.S., House, Subcomm. of the Committee on Naval Affairs, Hearings . . . H. Res. 422 Requesting Information from the Secretary of the Navy about Transportation . . . , pp. 2493-4.

there would be space for 301,000 men.⁴⁸

The situation looked equally promising in the Atlantic. Admiral Callaghan said that by the end of December there would be no transportation problem there, and that the Navy alone (apart from WSA activity) intended to remove 13 of the 15 Navy combatant ships from the Atlantic, and that 31 ships with a capacity of 76,000 spaces would be transferred to the Pacific.⁴⁹

The availability of shipping as appraised by the Navy was confirmed by the Army, for Major General R. H. Wiley, Asst. Chief of Transportation, War Department said that even if the Navy decommissioned a number of its ships and transferred others to the Pacific that there would still be sufficient transportation to bring the men home from Europe. There would also be no problem in the Pacific, and the General estimated that every man in the Pacific who was eligible for transportation back to the United States would probably receive it within 5 to 7 days from the time that he became eligible and that the gap between eligibility and transportation would never exceed a month.⁵⁰

⁴⁸U.S., House, Subcomm. of the Committee on Naval Affairs, Hearings . . . H. Res. 422 Requestions Information from the Secretary of the Navy about Transportation . . ., pp. 2473-4.

⁴⁹U.S., House, Subcomm. on Naval Affairs, Hearings, H. Res. 422 . . ., p. 2473.

⁵⁰U.S., House, Subcomm. on Naval Affairs, Hearings, H. Res. 422 . . ., p. 2501.

Quite satisfied with the testimony of Army and Navy transportation authorities, the Congressional members of the Committee did not press for the comprehensive inventory of all ships being used in transportation, as well as a statement of their use which the resolution had requested. The feeling among a sufficient number of members of the subcommittee was that such a resolution was no longer necessary.⁵¹ The transportation crisis, insofar as transoceanic travel was concerned, had come to an end by the middle of December, but it was just beginning to reach its peak in the United States. Rapid transport of men from overseas had glutted stateside ports, and rail facilities simply were not sufficient to handle all of the returning troops. It was sad news to a nation that oversentimentalized Christmas, but the regrettable fact was that many of the returned servicemen would not spend their holidays at home.

It was unfortunate that more men would not be home for Christmas, but the activities of the armed forces during the latter part of October, November, and December in transporting men from the European theater at least had been heroic, particularly when it is remembered that this was accomplished in the face of many frustrations: shortages of crews on ships, walkouts, strikes, protests, and hundreds of vexations, major and minor. In the early part of

⁵¹U.S., House, Subcomm. on Naval Affairs, Hearings, H. Res. 422 . . . , p. 2494, p. 2502.

October, for example, there was a strike among the New York longshoremen, the International Longshoremen's Association, an affiliate of the A.F.L. Their principal grievance was that they had been asked to load more weight than their contract specified, but as the strike spread, grievances seemed to multiply as well, and among these was a lack of confidence in the Union President.⁵²

While the strike was in progress, both sides yelled foul. Secretary of War Robert Patterson and Vice Admiral Emory S. Land, administrator of the War Shipping Administration tried to intercede and appealed to the President of the Longshoremen's Union. In their appeal, they stressed the seriousness of the strike and stated that in the harbor of New York there were 16 Liberty and Victory ships that were tied up. The President of the Union, though, was powerless; it was a wildcat strike that did not have Union sanction. The longshoremen contended that they had never refused to unload troop ships, only cargo ships, but unfortunately some ships carried both cargo and passengers. At any rate, the Army began using its own personnel to unload ships; two platoons of soldiers unloaded the Queen Elizabeth. The strike was not a major setback in the transportation of troops, but there is no question but what it did slow down, temporarily at least, the Army's transportation program. In

⁵²New York Times, October 2, 1945, p. 12; October 13, 1945, p. 2.

one instance it was stated that a contingent of some 12 to 13 thousand troops in Europe would have to wait a week to ten days longer than had originally been anticipated before they could be shipped home.⁵³ Fortunately the strike did not last long and was settled through the intercession of New York mayor Fiorello LaGuardia.

Close on the heels of the strike of the longshoremen was the strike of 12,000 machinists in the San Francisco area. This strike, according to Lieutenant Commander W. C. Peet, had delayed work on twelve troop ships. And then proof that troubles come in battalions was the announcement of the National Maritime Union on November 4 that if the government did not provide more ships for the return of troops by December 1 that it would stage a nationwide walkout. This walkout would be confined to commercial vessels, not troop ships. The Union told the WSA that it was confident that "seamen will refuse to help promote the private gains of a few while hundreds of thousands of our heroic fighting men remain stranded in Europe and the Pacific."⁵⁴

The announcement of the N.M.U. was popular with servicemen. A group of enlisted men and officers in LeHavre in a letter congratulated the union. Many excuses, the

⁵³New York Times, October 13, 1945, p. 2; October 4, 1945, p. 13; October 10, 1945, p. 1.

⁵⁴Stars and Stripes (Paris edition), November 5, 1945, p. 1.

letter said, had been given such as "lack of ships, weather, British trade unions reconversion, and even officers' pets" but perhaps the N.M.U. would bring to light the real reason for the delay in shipping; at least the men hoped so: "We greet with considerable satisfaction and appreciation your promise to expose the real snafu by providing crews for only troop ships."⁵⁵

In less than two weeks, after the N.M.U. statement, a protest was staged by 150 delegates of the Greater New York Council of the Congress of Industrial Organizations. Carrying placards and distributing handbills, the delegates reminded passers-by that veterans were still overseas, and that all of them should be brought home except those needed for occupational duties.⁵⁶ The day after this protest, Congressman Weichel of Ohio suggested that public hearings should be held by the members of the Committee on Merchant Marine, the State Department, the Maritime Commission, the War Shipping Administration, and the Army and Navy to find out what was the real situation with our shipping. Shortly after this, Congressman John Byrnes of Wisconsin wanted an investigation of not only shipping facilities, but air

⁵⁵Stars and Stripes (Paris edition), November 5, 1945, p. 1.

⁵⁶U.S., Cong. Rec., XCI, 79th Cong., 1st sess. (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Govt. Printing Office, November 16, 1945), p. 10780.

facilities as well.⁵⁷

Both sides of the dispute tried to capture public support for its position. With what may have been an attempt at psychological warfare, an appeal was issued through the New York Port of Embarkation for 3000 men who were needed to man 34 army transports. The National Maritime Union disputed the need for these seamen, and on a national radio program its President Joseph Curran asked why Admiral Land and General Hershey in view of this alleged shortage had agreed that seamen after November 15 could leave the Merchant Marine if they had 32 months of service and not be subject to the draft and the Union President accused the War Shipping Administration of more than just inconsistency. He took issue particularly with its statement that American ships were not being turned over to private companies. There were he said 14 Victory or C type ships that had indeed been turned over to commercial operators, specifically: the Water Witch, Billings Victory, Baylor Victory, Archer Victory, Pompero, Sioux Falls Victory, Ames Victory, Ocala, Pass Christian, Beaver Victory, Maiden Victory, Lynchburg, Parkersburg Victory, and Atlantic Victory. All of these ships, moreover, had made initial commercial voyages. The Billings had left Seattle November 7; the Baylor, San Francisco, the 8th; Archer, Seattle, 8th;

⁵⁷U.S., Cong. Rec., 79th Cong., 1st sess., XCI, Appendix, ext. remarks of Senator Wayne Morse, December 3, 1945, p. A5255.

Pompero, Seattle, 10th; Sioux Falls, Seattle, 14th; Ames, San Francisco, 15th. From eastern ports the Ocala left Philadelphia on November 6; the Pass Christian, Baltimore, 7th; the Maiden, New York, 7th; Lynchburg, Philadelphia, 7th; the Beaver sailed from Baltimore and the Parkersburg left Philadelphia on the 8th; the Atlantic City, New York, the 9th.⁵⁸

Curran stated that it was the efforts of the National Maritime Union that had goaded the War Shipping Administration into making more ships available for troops. As a specific illustration of this he stated that the Monterey, Lurline, Matsonia, President Johnson, and the Brazil had been reassigned as troop carriers.⁵⁹

In addition, the total number of ships, according to the NMU's President had increased appreciably: 450 to 551, but this was only a fraction, according to him, of the number of ships that were available, for at war's end, the United States had 4,500 ocean going vessels, many of which, Curran argued, could be converted into troop carriers, despite the protestations of the armed services and the War Shipping Administration. In way of adding strength to his assertion, he stated that shipyards had converted cargo

⁵⁸U.S., Cong. Rec., 79th Cong., 1st sess., XCI, Appendix, ext. of remarks of Sen. Wayne Morse, December 3, 1945, p. A5255.

⁵⁹U.S., Senate, Cong. Rec., 79th Cong., 1st sess., XCI, Appendix, ext. of remarks of Hon. Wayne Morse, p. A5255.

ships to troop ships in a day's time and that a group of GI's in the Pacific had converted the Otto Mears into a comfortable vessel in two days.⁶⁰

It was there that the issue was joined. The Navy particularly did not think that rapidly converted cargo ships were comfortable. In the holds the men would have no heat or ventilation or proper sanitation facilities, but much more important, the ships would not be safe, as there would not be adequate life-saving facilities.⁶¹ Adding some support to what it was saying (rapidly converted cargo ships could be unsafe) was an experience undergone by one of these "jiffy" transports. In a storm, a few hundred miles outside of San Francisco on a voyage from the Pacific, the spot welded stoves on the deck of a transport were swept overboard as were the rest of the mess facilities, the sanitation facilities that had been built on deck, and soldiers' personal belongings.⁶² Fortunately, no lives were lost, but it did prove that makeshift arrangements were no match for an angry sea.

The N.M.U. remained unconvinced. A nationwide

⁶⁰U.S., Senate, Cong. Rec., 79th Cong., 1st sess., XCI, Appendix, p. A5255.

⁶¹U.S., Congress, Senate, Committee on Naval Affairs, Hearings . . . Sen. Res. 188, Demobilization and Transportation of Military Personnel, November 13-15, 1945, p. 57; 72.

⁶²"On Bringing 'Em Home," Newsweek, December 3, 1945, XXVI, no. 56, p. 26.

strike of all maritime workers, a 24-hour work stoppage was planned for December 3; and it was expected that it would involve a total of over 83,000 workers.⁶³ The strike fizzled; not everyone walked out. Members were told to write or phone the President but few of them actually did.⁶⁴ The President of the United States, nevertheless, got the message of the N.M.U. At a cabinet meeting that took place on December 3, he instructed the Secretary of War that he wanted a statement released on the progress of demobilization, and the statement was to include a message to the effect that the United States was making use of all available shipping.⁶⁵

Other crises appeared to bedevil the armed forces in their transportation program. On a trip from Europe, a transport suddenly discovered that it had no food for the troops. From the man who sent the message, through a battery of clerks, and, finally, to the decision makers panic moved like current through a live wire. Plans were made for the transport General Patrick to transfer food to the ship, but the General Patrick could not find the ship that was in distress. Meanwhile, the ship's course was

⁶³ New York Times, December 3, 1945, p. 11.

⁶⁴ New York Times, December 4, 1945, p. 1.

⁶⁵ "War Council Meeting Minutes," 3rd December 1945, The Papers of Robert P. Patterson, Box 23, General Correspondence, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

changed and it headed for Halifax. Finally, everyone breathed easily when the ship cabled in that the food had been found; somehow it was misplaced.⁶⁶

Other ships experienced other troubles, although predictable ones. December was a stormy month in the Atlantic, and some of the transports suffered heavily. The Henry Ward Beecher lost a propeller on the way from Marseilles to Norfolk, and the ship with a considerable number of troops on board (three companies, at least, were identified by unit) had to be towed into Bermuda. The McCrory's starboard boilers blew out and her port tubes leaked badly, but she struggled valiantly and made it in to Bermuda.⁶⁷ Another ship, the Navarchos Koundouriotis, lost a propeller and also had to be towed into Bermuda. The cruiser Augusta was severely buffeted in a storm and cabled that it would be necessary for her to put in at Portsmouth or Southhampton for repairs. The Wasp, an aircraft carrier, put into Plymouth to have its superstructure and bulkheads repaired.⁶⁸ What seemed to have been the worst storm of all hit the Portland, a cruiser. Parts of the superstructure were crumpled with 100-foot waves; two soldiers were killed, more than 60 soldiers and sailors were injured.⁶⁹ Despite

⁶⁶New York Times, November 18, 1945, p. 34.

⁶⁷New York Times, December 7, 1945, p. 10.

⁶⁸New York Times, December 19, 1945, p. 1.

⁶⁹New York Times, December 29, 1945, p. 8.

the storms and the discomfort, the servicemen were glad to be home. In a phrase that became popular, they would have come home lashed to the mast if that had been the only means available to them.

Home from the war, it was now the responsibility of the railroads to get them to the separation centers and from the separation centers to their homes. The railroad crisis, if such it can be called, soon replaced the shipping crisis, as the most urgent of transportation problems.

Transportation authorities had predicted for some time that the railroads would soon be overcrowded, and the railroads themselves had complained that they were consistently hauling more troops than had been arranged for in preliminary estimates.⁷⁰ Military authorities, on the other hand, sometimes complained that the railroads did not make adequate preparations, and that they hauled too many civilians. Early in December Admiral Royal E. Ingersoll made both of these complaints. Particularly distressed about civilian travel, he stated that they sometimes traveled luxuriously, while military personnel were assigned to day coaches. Ingersoll was also concerned that the railroads were not delivering more rolling stock and said that "chaos" was in prospect if things did not change.⁷¹

⁷⁰U.S., House, Subcomm. on Naval Affairs, Hearings, H. Res. 422 . . ., p. 2497.

⁷¹New York Times, December 2, 1945, p. 2.

The railroads, of course, denied the allegations of civilian favoritism, and, indeed, a census conducted by the Office of Defense Transportation seemed to contradict the statement that was made by Ingersoll. According to the ODT, military personnel occupied 89.1 percent of all beds and berths, 90.4 percent of all seats. The ODT was critical, though, of railroad maintenance and said that of 1,200 new troop sleeper cars that were scheduled to be completed only 350 had actually been completed. This being so, the ODT warned that holiday traffic would be particularly heavy, and that servicemen would be given priority on all rail travel.⁷²

Despite the fact that they were given priority, many servicemen were not able to travel home during the holidays. And at ports on the West Coast, many of them were stranded and spent their holidays on board troop ships. Local communities tried to make things pleasant for them, delivered gifts, decorated ships, and furnished entertainment. Some servicemen were determined to spend Christmas at home, though, such as the four sailors who hired a taxicab at a cost of \$55 each to drive them from the West Coast to Atlanta. Others traveled less comfortably. A group of sailors (who did not make it home for Christmas) refused to reboard their troop train. They had ridden all the way from the West Coast in a dilapidated car. There was no water in the coaches, and there had not been any for over 25 hours.

⁷²New York Times, December 16, 1945, p. 20.

Some of the coaches did not have lights; and the windows in some of the others were broken.⁷³

Without question, the railroads were using just about anything that would roll; apparently though some were more discriminating than others. The Pennsylvania, for example, refused to haul one sleeper that had made the trip from the West Coast because it considered the car too old --too old to be safe probably. Troops who had been riding in it were forced to wait for more than twenty hours before another car arrived.⁷⁴ But it was a time of discomfort for many. Trains from the West Coast were frequently 20 to 40 hours late. Frantic wives paced the floors of railroad stations, sometimes with a child in their arms, until they reached the point of exhaustion. Complicating the matter of transport from the West Coast was the small number of rail lines; there were only eight of them, and some of these were single track.⁷⁵ Another frustrating factor for men who were anxious to come home.

But come home they did, though not always in style and quite frequently not even in comfort, but by the early part of the new year, what was known as the railroad snafu

⁷³New York Times, December 23, 1945, p. 2; December 29, 1945, p. 28.

⁷⁴"Colossal Rail Snafu Holds Up GI's in Christmas Rush Toward Home," Newsweek, XXVI, no. 26, December 24, 1945, p. 27.

⁷⁵Ibid.

had apparently straightened out. Apart from the figures in newspapers that told the public of the number of men who had been returned one could see it in other ways. There was, for example, a marked increase in the number of young men on the streets, in trolley cars and buses, in restaurants and bars. On college campuses one could see groups of former servicemen strolling across campus or sitting in the student unions, sometimes dressed in mottled fashion: civilian trousers and Army khaki shirts, gabardine trousers, and Army paratroop boots, a Navy pea jacket worn over any number of combinations of other types of clothing. Pawn shops soon became glutted with Japanese swords, German helmets, and Nazi flags. Army surplus stores abounded and featured raincoats, shovels, the Army entrenching tool, cots, and blankets, and the olive drab five gallon gasoline can, a popular item on dairies and farms. In the few sections of the country where it was warm enough, one could see young couples quietly walking; the woman was frequently pregnant. A housing shortage soon developed, one that would grow much worse as the birth rate rose, but already plaintive advertisements were appearing in papers of "desperate" or "frantic" couples who needed housing. Colleges housed students in quonset huts, converted Army barracks, and in trailers.

There were other signs that the men were returning home. The men who made signs their business, the great advertising companies, cashed in on the sentiment over

demobilization. The Texas company had an advertisement showing the children of a Texaco dealer playing with his discarded Army clothing.⁷⁶ An advertisement in the Saturday Evening Post told its readers that when old Army clothing would no longer fit, Camel cigarettes would fit any size pocket.⁷⁷ Maxwell House Coffee had an advertisement showing a benevolent, middle-aged mother pouring coffee for her returned son; the advertisement told the reader that Maxwell House Coffee was the coffee for "home again" dinners.⁷⁸ Oxford paper showed a GI at home reading in bed and reminded the reader that Oxford paper produced paper for books.⁷⁹ American Standard Plumbing showed a GI lolling in a bathtub --discarded Army clothing strewn over the floor.⁸⁰ Listerine reminded its female readers that if they wanted to be "so sweet to come home to" that they had better freshen their breath with Listerine.⁸¹ And there was an advertisement for those who did not care how their breath smelled: Carstairs Distilling, too, was waiting for the GI to come home.⁸²

⁷⁶Look, IX, November 27, 1945, p. 14.

⁷⁷Saturday Evening Post, CCXVIII, October 27, 1945, p. 97.

⁷⁸Saturday Evening Post, CCXVIII, November 10, 1945, p. 45.

⁷⁹Fortune, XXXI, October, 1945, p. 25.

⁸⁰Saturday Evening Post, CCXVIII, p. 128.

⁸¹Saturday Evening Post, CCXVIII, November 17, 1945.

⁸²Boston Daily Globe, August 30, 1945, p. 7.

And they would be coming home, of course; as the new year began, many young Americans were already home, and the worst part of demobilization seemed to have passed. The separation centers that posed such problems in September and early October were running smoothly by the beginning of November. The shipping situation, according to transportation authorities, was in good shape, and during 1946, there would be actually a surplus of shipping. And the railroads with the frenetic Christmas rush behind them appeared capable of doing a better job of transporting troops in 1946. Many people wondered what all of the shouting had been about a few months earlier. Everyone seemed confident on the surface, although not all of them were. The press did not seem worried; Congress seemed quieted by the hearings of the few previous months. And then in the Pacific, the whole situation blew sky high.

Chapter 9

TROUBLE IN THE RANKS: GI PROTESTS AND DEMONSTRATIONS

In the Hawaiian Islands and in Guam, in dozens of small islands in the Pacific, and particularly in the Philippine Islands, the first weekend of the new year was filled with protest. Men met in tents and barracks, in the day rooms and mess halls. Mimeograph machines thumped out copies of form letters; mimeographed statements of protest were posted on bulletin boards and handed out to GI's wherever they could be found. As individuals and as groups, soldiers sent cables to the President and to their Congressmen--cables that protested the slowing down of demobilization. It all started when several days before the Daily Pacifican, the Army newspaper in Manila, carried a War Department announcement that the rate of demobilization would be reduced from 800,000 men a month to 300,000.

Following closely this discouraging news was the statement of General Lawton Collins that men with two years service might not be discharged by March 20, as had been previously stated, and that the discharge dates of some might be postponed two to three months. Finally,

there was one last event that was blown completely out of proportion. At a press conference in Guam, Secretary of War Robert Patterson made the statement that men in the service were still accumulating points. That statement was in error as points had been frozen since September 2, 1945. Upon being corrected, Patterson realized that he was indeed in error, and apologized. The statement, however, was picked up by a reporter, and the Secretary of War was soon being flailed as an incompetent who did not know what the score was, and who literally did not know how the score was computed. Patterson, a dedicated executive, was far from incompetent, but GI's who were in a head-rolling mood wanted him removed from office, and their mimeographed letters demanded it.

Protest was particularly serious in the Philippines, where a group was turned back at the Manuel Quezon Bridge at the point of a bayonet. Later that day 2,500 men in columns of four paraded down the dusty streets of Manila, cheering and shouting, and marched menacingly on the University of the Philippines, the headquarters of Lt. Gen. Styer, Commander of Army Forces in the Western Pacific. There they were turned away. That evening, though, the General addressed them by radio in an attempt to allay their suspicions of Army intentions, but his speech was hooted and jeered

derisively.¹

That night downtown Manila was crowded with thousands of GI's who jammed the city's main plaza and rocked the area with noise. At this rally, a group of the men went on record as being opposed to any type of police activity or interference of any kind in Philippine internal affairs. They also protested the proposed combat training of the 86th Division, castigated Patterson, and asked for a Congressional investigation into demobilization.² In other areas the protests took extreme forms, such as at Guam where 3,500 men embarked upon a hunger strike.³ There were countless mass meetings where speeches were made, money collected for telegrams, resolutions drawn up, petitions circulated and signed.

The discontent spread rapidly. The military police broke up an attempt to hold a meeting in Yokohama.⁴ Two mass meetings held in Calcutta were attended by over five thousand clamorous GI's. Angry charges were made

¹Clipping, New York Times, January 7, 1946, The Papers of Robert P. Patterson, Box 23, General Correspondence, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., Stars and Stripes (Paris edition), p. 1; Diary, Robt. Patterson Papers . . . Box 23, Genl. Corresp., Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

²Clipping, New York Times, January 7, 1946, Papers . . . Robt. Patterson, Box 23, Genl. Corresp.; Stars and Stripes (Paris edition), January 8, 1945, p. 1.

³Stars and Stripes, January 10, 1945, p. 1.

⁴Stars and Stripes, January 8, 1945, p. 1.

that the War Department used valuable space to ship nonessential materials home--space that could have been used by servicemen.⁵

The GI's in Yokohama did not give up easily. Their first attempt at a protest was broken up by M.P.'s. Their second one was successful enough to be called a near mutiny and had some very ugly aspects to it. According to a mimeographed throwaway entitled "Discharge," the GI's at the meeting were supposed to have been severely abused by Colonel Charles P. Mahoney who was reported to have told the men that they should have been dressed in lace panties, and that he would take all of them to Yokohama prison. Mahoney denied that he has abused the men, but he did admit that he had reprimanded them severely. At any rate, "Discharge" announced that another meeting would be held the next day, and Army authorities made no attempt to prevent it.⁶

There were apparently some differences in attitudes on the part of the authorities toward these meetings. In Honolulu, the Mid Pacific Naval Commander issued orders that there was to be no further agitation for demobilization, and he specifically directed that his commanders make that known to some of the "leaders" of previous

⁵Clipping, New York Times, January 14, 1945, Papers of Robert Patterson, Box 23, Genl. Corresp.

⁶Stars and Stripes (Paris edition), January 10, 1946, p. 1, 8.

meetings.⁷ The Marine Commander in the Honolulu area took an equally hard line. There were to be no meetings on demobilization "today or any other day."⁸ Apparently other Marine commands and Naval commands as well took the same position. It was pretty much an Army show, and the officers, at least, of the other branches were obviously quite happy that it was.

When the mania for demobilization hit the China area, Albert C. Wedemeyer considered the issue so important that he let a Vice Admiral cool his heels in his office while he discussed the subject with a group of GI's. A protest meeting had been held the day before (a meeting of which Wedemeyer did not approve) and out of that grew the decision on the part of the GI's to meet with Secretary of War Patterson. Wedemeyer acceded to the GI request, but plainly let it be known that he thought that the men should have consulted him first.⁹

The widespread discontent in the South Pacific, China, Burma, and India, and Japan was, in the words of the Supreme Commander of the United Nations forces in the Pacific, Douglas MacArthur, the result of the War Department's announcement concerning the slowing down of

⁷Wire Service Bulletin, The Papers of Robt. Patterson, Genl. Corresp., Box 23.

⁸Stars and Stripes (Paris edition), January 12, 1973, p. 1.

⁹New York Times, January 13, 1946, p. 20.

demobilization and the work of Communists and discontents in the service newspapers. MacArthur told Secretary of War Patterson that he would have chosen newspapermen from combat divisions, and with his usual self-assurance said that there would have been no problems.¹⁰ These words, spoken in private to Patterson, were the almost exact opposite of what the Commander had said in public.

MacArthur's public version was that the protests were the work of homesick men "who are not inherently challenging authority." These latter words were addressed to General Eisenhower, the United States Chief of Staff, who incorporated them into a memorandum which he sent to President Truman and which was released to the papers.¹¹

The version of Robert Patterson who met with the men in the Philippines was that these were "serious, sober men with no disposition to be insubordinate." The Secretary visited the Manila area and talked with a grievance committee that had been selected by the men themselves in an open election. In what must have been as grueling an encounter as any press conference the Secretary ever faced, the men pressed him with questions: Was the State Department attempting to influence military policy or political policy in the Philippines? Was the

¹⁰ Diary, Robt. Patterson, Tokyo, January 10, 1946, The Papers of Robt. Patterson, Box 23, Genl. Corresp.

¹¹ Washington Post, January 10, 1946, p. 3.

86th Division meant to police the Philippines? How many men would be needed in the Philippines, and what were the intentions of the War Department in this regard? Why were men being given combat training? The Secretary said that he had a long "talk" with the men, but he was more of a witness than a conversationalist. The meeting, however, may have done some good, for the Philippines grew quiet; and one of the members of the committee who met with him said that it was the most complete description of War Department policy that he had heard since he had been in the Army.¹² Patterson had gone the last mile to maintain communications with the men.

The protests were not confined to the Pacific and CBI area, but took place in Europe (France and Germany) as well and undoubtedly they were influenced by the demonstrations in the Pacific. Their causes were both general and specific, universal and local. The first of them grew out of purely localized causes. At Camp Boston, a redeployment tent area in northern France, a group of GI's found their sailing dates postponed four different times; and before a fifth was given, they marched in ranks, two thousand strong, on the headquarters of the camp and presented a letter of protest to the commander who received it and agreed to forward it to the theater commander, Lt.

¹²Wire Service Bulletin, Analysis Branch, War Department, January 17, 1946, The Papers of Robt. Patterson, Box 23, Genl. Corresp.

Gen. Joseph McNarney. The demonstration was an orderly one; the men were controlled by their non coms; the camp commander spoke to them; and no incidents grew out of the demonstration.¹³

The GI's at Camp Boston had more than ample cause for complaint. Their first sailing date was December 13, which was postponed, and then they were given successive dates of December 20, December 27, and January 2.¹⁴ Even this, though, might have been endurable under more pleasant surroundings. Camp Boston was only one of a number of tent cities that were built in northern France to handle most of the redeployment chores, records, and such other things as were necessary to speed the men on their way home. From one of these "cities," they then were sent to LeHavre where they were herded together for a few days before being put aboard ships.

In late Fall of 1945, there was a fuel shortage in the camps, and even the members of the garrisons suffered from the cold. Though the weather of France was not severe, it was too cold to face without fuel. At Camp Pittsburgh, for example, GI's scrounged and even stole anything that would burn. "Hit it with an ax. If it doesn't bleed, burn it." They stole clothes line poles

¹³Stars and Stripes (Paris edition), January 7, 1946, p. 1.

¹⁴Stars and Stripes (Paris edition), January 7, 1946, p. 1.

from the "other" company; they stole furniture from officers; and even the sign that said Camp Pittsburgh went up in smoke. Such fuel didn't help too much in a drafty tent, though; and if one were a sufficient distance from a stove, only mountains of blankets would keep him warm. Transient troops, such as those who protested at Camp Boston probably had two blankets each, the standard GI issue. There was, of course, no running water in the tents. Showers and toilets were in large buildings, usually within 50 yards or so, but an awfully cold walk if one had to get up in the middle of the night. Despite all of this, most troops managed to endure it with a minimum of complaint as the stay was usually from five to seven days. But the men at Boston at the time of the protest had spent close to a month in two different camps and were due to be transferred to a third. For them, it was a lonely Christmas and New Years as transient troops usually were restricted to the camps, though their boredom might have been leavened somewhat by visits from prostitutes that no one worked very hard to exclude.¹⁵

Other demonstrations seemed somewhat more closely related to general causes and were influenced by the demonstrations in the South Pacific as well. "We are joining our buddies in Manila," said a GI at a

¹⁵These camps were garrisoned by the 75th Division. I was a member of that division and worked in two of the redeployment camps for some eight months or so.

demonstration that took place in Paris, and although one is hard pressed to understand why anyone engaged in housekeeping and clerical chores in Paris would be dissatisfied, particularly when he could sell a fifty cent carton of cigarettes for twenty dollars in good times and for ten dollars in bad, and bars of five cent laundry soap for a dollar, they protested, nevertheless. It all bears out everything that is said about relativity, as a combination of the profit motive and la dolce vita was not enough to keep a group of a thousand GI's from marching down the Champs Elysee, where they assembled before the American Embassy. It was also not enough to keep them from demanding at a meeting at the Trocadero that relations between officers and men be put on a more egalitarian basis. The Enlisted Men's Magna Charta wanted the abolition of officers' quarters, the opening of officers' clubs to enlisted men, and the abolition of the officers' mess. Though not part of their Magna Charta, they also wanted Secretary of War Patterson fired.¹⁶

Of the demonstrations in other cities, the most serious took place in Frankfurt. At the headquarters of General McNarney, it was necessary to call out a contingent of armed paratroopers to break up a demonstration of five thousand men. Undaunted, though, the men held a second

¹⁶St. Louis Post-Dispatch, January 9, 1946, p. 2A; New York Times, January 14, 1946, p. 9.

meeting, in which 1000 men were present and asked McNarney to speak to them, and said that they would continue to demonstrate until such time as he did.¹⁷ At their third demonstration, McNarney spoke to the men stressing postwar responsibilities, the care of surplus property, and personnel policy. The General also said that whether the men came home would be the decision of the government, not of the Army, and that if the men wanted replacements sent over faster that the pressure would have to come from the people back home on the draft boards. And, finally, he said that it was time to end the demonstrations and that he did not want to see any more of them.¹⁸

Protests also took place in London and Vienna, although not on the scale of those in Frankfurt and Paris, but servicemen collected money and sent telegrams to Congressmen by the hundreds. There were even a few protests in the United States, but somehow or the other they never aroused the interest as did those overseas, but they were never on the scale of them either. An interesting situation developed at an Air Force Replacement Training Center in Utah where a photographer from a Salt Lake newspaper took pictures of a demonstration, and was detained by the military police who tried to confiscate

¹⁷PM, January 10, 1946, p. 8; January 11, 1946, p. 10.

¹⁸New York Times, January 13, 1946, p. 13.

the photographs.¹⁹

Some two weeks or so after the demonstrations had begun, they subsided, although vestiges of them could be seen in the letters and telegrams that were still coming into offices of the Congressmen and the President as well. What caused them: a combination of things apparently. The immediate cause of the outbreak in the South Pacific seems clear enough: the change in War Department policy that said that demobilization would be delayed; and except in instances such as took place in Camp Boston, this was a cause in other areas as well. But this does not go quite far enough in way of explanation. There must have been other causes; indeed there were. In assessing them, perhaps it would be wise to look at the situation that existed where the protests first started, the Philippines.

The Philippines was not a verdant paradise but more of a slough of despond to the men who were stationed there. They complained about the climate, the food, recreational facilities, and their officers; but most of all, they complained about not coming home. In these complaints, they were abetted by the editorial policy of the Daily Pacifican which published hundreds of their letters, and had a few choice words of its own to say, most of them in scathing terms. Of all service newspapers, it seemed to be the one most often quoted by Congressmen.

¹⁹PM, January 11, 1946, p. 10.

Much of the news published by the paper concerned shipping. Since Manila was a harbor, and one of the busiest ports in the Pacific, it was a common sight to see ships docked from all over the world. And it was an infuriating sight to see any of them leave empty, although there may have been compelling causes as to just to why they did leave the port empty. In addition, the Philippine area was one that abounded with headquarters and service personnel, a natural development since it was meant to be a staging area for the great invasion of Japan. Most of the men who were stationed there were low point men who had not had the opportunity to accumulate points for such things as combat decorations. This area of discontent grew even more discontented with the arrival of the 86th Division, a redeployed division from Europe, and one that had protested bitterly before it was shipped to the Pacific.

As early as October 1945, there were reports that the men in the Philippines were in a highly disgruntled state. Robert Trumbull in an article in the New York Times said that they constituted "one of the most discontented bodies of troops under the American flag." In support of his statement, he mentioned that oral comments were plentiful, as one can well imagine, and that throughout the area the men had erected signs that said "Get us home." He also mentioned that the Daily Pacifican published three columns of letters daily in its gripe section, and that most of these were concerned with demobilization. That

some of the gripes were justified Trumbull was in full agreement. There were 77,000 men, for example, who were supposed to be shipped from the area, but only 37,000 actually were shipped, and of these, many had not qualified under the point system, but were men who were over age.²⁰

Some six weeks later, and three weeks or so before the protests began, Trumbull followed up with another article that illustrated the seriousness of the situation. He stated that mimeographed petitions tersely titled "No Boats, No Votes" were sent to all Congressmen, and that the We Want to Get Home Now Union was also distributing petitions that were sent to Congress. Of some interest too, he said, was a mimeographed pledge that the Daily Pacifican had received, which pledged the signer not to vote for anyone who would not within twenty-five days take affirmative action to help remedy demobilization problems. There were apparently plenty of problems, as the Daily Pacifican estimated that as many as 17,000 men had signed one petition or another. The writer for the Times also thought that the increased volume of mail to the "Mail Bag," the GI gripe column, was significant, for it was averaging over 200 letters a day, most of which according to the Mail Bag editor, were concerned with some phase of demobilization.²¹

²⁰New York Times, December 11, 1945, p. 4.

²¹New York Times, December 11, 1945, p. 4.

What was known to Robert Trumbull was also known to the Congressmen. More than a month before the demonstrations, Forrest Harness, Representative from Indiana, in a letter to Eisenhower stated that "every possible means should be taken immediately to relieve the deplorable situation in the southern Philippines." And there were, of course, the usual waspish critics who called for action; some of their names have appeared earlier in the narrative in different places, but for the sake of the record, here they are: Edward O. McCowen of Ohio, Clare Hoffman of Michigan, Robert Rich of Pennsylvania, John C. Kunkel of Pennsylvania, Clyde Doyle of California, Lawrence Smith of Wisconsin, and Charles Clason of Massachusetts.²² Of some interest is the fact that each of these men included clippings from the Daily Pacifican along with the letters from the servicemen. Not every Congressman who disapproved of the Army's actions made his feelings public. People such as the fair-minded Margaret Chase Smith in the House and a frank Army supporter Scott Lucas did not like the situation in the Pacific, but they wrote to Patterson rather than joining in the attack against the

²²U.S., House, Cong. Rec., Appendix, 79th Cong., 1st sess., XLI, ext. remarks of Hon. Edward O. McCowen, October 30, 1945; pp. A4588; ext. remarks of Hon. Clare E. Hoffman, November 7, 1945, p. A4841; ext. remarks of Hon. Robert Rich, p. A4883; ext. remarks of Hon. John C. Kunkel, November 15, 1945, p. A4916; ext. remarks of Hon. Clyde Doyle, November 21, 1945, p. A5050; ext. remarks of Hon. Lawrence Smith, November 30, 1945, p. A4741; ext. remarks of Hon. Charles Clason, December 3, 1945, p. A5310.

Army.²³

But the protests developed, though not always out of purpose or design. In large measure they arose because the Army became caught up in cross currents of its own promises and could not deliver on all of them. It wanted to discharge men on points; it wanted to discharge those who were over age; it wanted to bring home divisions that had seen extensive combat; it wanted to discharge nonessential men; and it said at one time that it would begin discharging all men with two years of service after March 20. With the exception of the point system, all of the promises that the Army made were in large measure the result of public pressure. But what the public wanted was not always to the public good.

It would have been difficult to have said what the public good was. The GI's who took part in the protests claimed that they were acting in the best interests of the nation: nonintervention in the domestic affairs of other nations, a democratic armed forces, the right to petition for redress. The group of GI's in Manila were concerned about policing the Philippines; those in Paris wanted the abolition and democratization of the armed forces. A

²³Letter, Secretary of War Robert Patterson to Honorable Scott Lucas, United States Senate, December 28, 1945; Letter, Margaret Chase Smith to Secretary of War Robert Patterson, December 12, 1945; "Demobilization," 370.01, R.G. 407, Records of the Adjutant General, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

group of GI's in Oahu petitioned the Senate to appear before them.²⁴ Another group from Bremen, in a petition addressed to the Senate said this of its actions:

whereas there are some people who may attempt to discredit these resolutions . . . We resolve that all men take notice that we are proud members of a citizen's army that fought a peoples' war and that we intend to strive to win and maintain a peoples' peace.²⁵

Though the resolution had a fine ring to it, the intellectual distillation perhaps of one who at some time of his life had done the assigned reading of documents in his government class, it suffered somewhat when we remember that those who voted on the resolution wanted someone else to maintain the peace. In the somewhat more evanescent vernacular of our own time: that was where it was at.

There were many resolutions, pledges, petitions, and letters that were less eloquent than the resolution from the GI's in Bremen, but they were just as definite. Addressed to the President and Congress, they were numerous in number and sometimes even angry in tone. A group of GI's in Okinawa wired the President that they

²⁴Telegram, Oahu Servicemen's Committee for Speedier Demobilization to Senator Harvey Kilgore, "Demobilization," The President's Official File, OF190R, Truman Library, Independence, Missouri.

²⁵Telegram, Cpl. Allen, Chairman, Committee Bremen, to the President of the Senate of the United States, January 12, 1946, R.G. 46, Senate Records, Petitions, and Memorials, Senate Committee on Military Affairs, 79th Cong., National Archives, Washington, D.C.

would like to be given a presidential pardon.²⁶ A form letter addressed to the President, rubber stamped "no boats, no votes" and "Don't betray us. Get us home now," stated: "We are . . . tired of being cheated . . . and robbed of the fruits of our sacrifice by a government that treats us not as free citizens, but like subjects of the countries we just defeated." And yet another form letter: "We feel that the War Department has broken faith with the GI's . . . Are you all so woefully uninformed? Are you all so painfully unaware of the actual situation here." The last letter did a masterful job of marshalling facts:²⁷

We were told:

- 1) There will be no empty berths returning U.S. (War Dept.).
- 2) We need only 200,000 men for occupation (MacArthur).
- 3) No men will be held after they become eligible (War Dept.).
- 4) Men not needed for occupation or surplus property disposal will be home by Mar. 1 (Sec'ty Patterson).
- 5) By March 1946, all men with two years service will be eligible (War Dept.).
- 6) When shipping is available, men will go home (Sec'ty Patterson).
- 7) 68,000 more berths assigned to AFWESPAC.

²⁶Thomas C. Houlihan to Harry Truman, President of the United States, January 12, 1946, "Demobilization," 370.01, Records, Adj. Gen. Office, R.G. 407, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

²⁷T. Rutherford to Harry S. Truman, Pres. of the U. S., "Demobilization," the President's Official File, OF190R, Truman Library, Independence, Mo.

Facts:

- 1) Navy takes 103 ships off Pacific run (Daily Pacifican, Jan. 4).
- 2) Ships leave Manila partly empty (Daily Pacifican).
- 3) "I didn't know men overseas had stopped accumulating points" (Sec'ty Patterson).
- 4) Sec'ty Patterson in Guam said he didn't know two-year men were to become eligible in March 1946.
- 5) Discharges cut in half; a man may be kept in the Pacific three months after becoming eligible (Lt. Gen. Collins).²⁸

There were form letters that protested the waste of manpower and money, particularly in the Pacific: "Waste of men and money must cease or our desire for peace and home will be mired down in corruption." A rather professional effort, all of the s's in the letter were dollar signs.²⁹

Many groups and individuals sent telegrams. There were telegrams and telegrams; they came in by the hundreds. Some stated their case simply and with respect: "Sir, please do something about redeployment."³⁰ Others were more demanding and more involved: "your obligation to us is to pass immediate legislation guaranteeing an occupation

²⁸Sgt. Terry E. Rempel (form letter) to Pres. H. S. Truman, Jan. 19, 1946, "Redeployment," the President's Official File, OF190R, Truman Library, Independence, Mo.

²⁹Form letter (no signature) to Pres. H. S. Truman, Jan. 14, 1946, "Redeployment," the President's Official File, OF190R, Truman Library, Independence, Mo.

³⁰Telegram, Infantryman Jones to Pres. H. S. Truman, Jan. 10, 1946, "Redeployment," the President's Official File, OF190R, Truman Library, Independence, Mo.

force composed of those who have sacrificed and endured least. . . ."31

It was a troubled public and a troubled Congress, that reacted to the protests in the Philippines. The Times said they were "indefensible" and that they were "damaging us in the eyes of other countries."32 The St. Louis Post Dispatch in an editorial called for an "adult recognition of world affairs," but at the same time found fault with the draft boards for only providing 37,000 out of a 50,000 quota; a few days later, though, Marquis Childs in a column featured in the same paper said that the seriousness of the responsibilities of the GI had never been fully explained to him. And this was the position that a number of newspapers took.33 The public relations effort of the Army in regard to occupation had failed said the Louisville Courier Journal: and the New Orleans Times Picayune took almost the same position the next day.34 Walter Lippman, featured in the Washington Post, stated that the problem was that we had never really planned for an occupation Army, and that political planning

31Telegram, 125 Engineer Combat Battalion to Pres. H. S. Truman, Jan. 12, 1946, "Redeployment," the President's Official File, OF190R, Truman Library, Independence, Mo.

32New York Times, January 8, 1946, p. 22L.

33St. Louis Post Dispatch, January 7, 1946, p. 2B; St. Louis Post Dispatch, January 10, 1946, p. 3C.

34Louisville Courier Journal, Jan. 8, 1946, p. 6; New Orleans Times Picayune, Jan. 9, 1946, p. 8.

and military planning had never been coordinated and in his phrase, "took place in separate water-tight compartments."³⁵ The Minneapolis Morning Tribune was concerned with what the protests would do to the military planning that was then in progress and called attention to the postponement of hearings on the draft by the House Committee on Military Affairs, and a week later a correspondent of the Minneapolis paper spoke of the confusion of military policy and said that the demonstrations might at least teach the Army brass the dangers that existed in thinking out loud, particularly in such things as the statement made by George Marshall that it would be possible to discharge all men with two years service by March 20, 1946.³⁶

Some of the nation's magazines had their versions of the protests. The New Republic and the Nation took as expected a somewhat similar view, with almost identical titles, distinguished only by the article the. One title was Why GI's Demonstrate; the other was Why the GI's Demonstrate. There was some difference in the articles themselves, though, for the article of the New Republic was a good deal more shallow than that of the Nation. The New Republic thought that such things as shipping snafus

³⁵Washington Post, Jan. 8, 1946, p. 9.

³⁶Minneapolis Morning Tribune, Jan. 13, 1946, p. 13; Minneapolis Morning Tribune, Jan. 20, 1946, p. 10.

had been a factor in GI discontent but thought that the major reason was the Officer caste system, anathema to a citizen's army.³⁷ The Nation stressed the importance of maintaining an occupation force and blamed the government for not recruiting such a force. Trouble arose, the Nation thought, from having men trained for combat doing police work, and would only be settled when proper replacements trained in new techniques were sent abroad. The magazine agreed with the New Republic that inequality between officers and men was also a factor.³⁸ Time lumped the whole problem under the heading of morale and thought that the Army had done a poor job of explaining to the GI's the importance of postwar policy, specifically, the necessity for maintaining occupation forces, and the magazine thought, too, that the Army officers themselves had done an equally poor job of taking care of the men under them and were more interested in their own selfish pleasure.³⁹ The U.S. News thought that some of the trouble lay with a reluctant Congress and said that the draft would either have to be extended or GI's would have to wait overseas longer, for voluntary recruiting was not

³⁷"Why the GI's Demonstrate," New Republic, CXIV, no. 3, Jan. 21, 1946, New York, p. 73.

³⁸"Why GI's Demonstrate," Nation, CLII, no. 3, Jan. 19, 1946, New York, pp. 60-61.

³⁹"My Son, John," Time, Jan. 21, 1946, Chicago, pp. 20-21.

supplying the proper number of replacements.

The reaction of newspaper editorial writers was shared to a large extent by the radio commentators of the day, in some instances they repeated the same ideas in different language. The liberal commentator Martin Agronsky of ABC thought that the fault lay with the Army for not convincing our troops of the necessity for occupational chores. Morgan Beatty of NBC was of the same opinion.⁴⁰ John W. Vandercook, also of NBC, echoed Agronsky's and Beatty's thoughts and said that the problem might very well have arisen from the Army's penchant for issuing orders but of "never deigning to give any reasons for them." Cecil Brown of MBS (Mutual Broadcasting System) said that everyone could be brought home if we wanted to shirk our responsibilities. Cedric Foster of NBC spoke of the anomalous position of the U.S. public: on one hand they wanted to work with the United Nations, but on the other hand, they wanted to divest the United States of the very means by which such a policy could be implemented. In a cogent sentence, Foster stated his opinion: "Impartial analysis can only bring the statement that the country must make up its mind; it can't be fish and fowl at one

⁴⁰"Radio Digest," War. Dept. Bureau of Public Relations, the Papers of Robert P. Patterson, Box 23, Genl. Corresp.

Since all of the information on radio broadcasts is from the same source, I will not add any more documentation until I reach the end of the section dealing with radio commentators.

and the same time." Harry Marble of CBS seemed to think that the Army was just as confused as the public about military policy. The most critical statement of the GI protests was made by Leif Eid of NBC who called them a "mild form of rebellion," and warned the radio public that we needed an armed forces to implement policy. Eid was critical of a Congress that he thought spent too much time yelling "bring Daddy back." Major George Fielding Eliot, military analyst for CBS, also thought that the problem lay with Congress and said that a Congressman thought in terms of his 10,000 dollar a year job and votes and that the Congressional reaction to demobilization and the "brass hats" were "election day kickbacks."

There were columnists, though, who thought that it would take Congressional action to straighten the matter out. Possibly the most vehement of these was Fulton Lewis Jr. who suggested that the armed forces wanted to hold on to every establishment that they could. He predicted that there would be a Congressional inquiry into the whole problem of demobilization and two days later, he quoted Senator Wayne Morse as stating that the military had to be eliminated from any traces of influence in the administration of civilian affairs. Richard Harkness of NBC said that obviously what the protesters wanted was a complete Congressional investigation of demobilization and there

were indications that they would get it.⁴¹

If it was the hope of the GI's who took part in the demonstrations to have the topic of demobilization brought into public and Congressional scrutiny, they succeeded admirably. On January 15, 1946, General Dwight Eisenhower, Chief of Staff of the United States Army, addressed the members of Congress assembled in the auditorium of the Library of Congress. The Army, said Eisenhower, had no "hidden ball plays." Men were kept in service to police occupied territories, to rid them of the vestiges of fascism, programs such as denazification; to guard and maintain surplus property; to maintain lines of supply and communication; to service Army installations; to maintain a PX and postal service system, as well as countless other tasks. Demobilization, according to the Chief of Staff, had been far more successful in execution than anyone had ever hoped. During the fall months, he stated the Army had exceeded its original estimates by more than 1,500,000 men. The time had come, though, the General stated, when there was a danger that if demobilization schedules were maintained that the United States would "run out of Army." To a degree, the trouble was a lack of replacements, and this shortage of replacements developed because the Army had not recruited a sufficient

⁴¹"Radio Digest," Jan. 7, 10, 1946, War Dept. Bureau of Public Relations, the Papers of Robt. P. Patterson, Box 23; Genl. Corresp.

number of men, even though all previous recruiting records had been broken and because of the failure of Selective Service to provide the 50,000 men a month that the Army had requested and assumed that they would receive. Instead the Army had received 41,000 in September, 37,000 in October, 35,000 in November, and 21,000 in December.

Eisenhower said that he realized that there would be a clamor to bring men home at the end of the war, but that he had not anticipated the near hysteria that had developed. Regardless of the homesickness of the men, he thought that they would have to accept their responsibilities as he knew American soldiers would. As to the protests, he had wired his theater commanders that they would serve no further purpose. The General said nothing about what was euphemistically referred to in some places as "the changing international situation." In the entire speech, Russia was not mentioned once.⁴²

The day after the General's speech, a subcommittee of the Senate Committee on Military Affairs began hearings. There were several things that interested the subcommittee and on which they pushed Acting Secretary of War Kenneth Royall on one day and Chief of Staff Eisenhower on the next. Foremost of these perhaps was the problem of

⁴²Statement of General Eisenhower on Demobilization, ext. of remarks of Hon. Michael A. Feighan of Ohio, Jan. 17, 1946, House of Representatives, U.S. Cong. Rec., Appendix, Vol. XCII, p. 496.

replacements. Speaking to Eisenhower, Edwin Johnson, the chairman of the subcommittee, told him that it was the Army's fault that they did not get sufficient replacements and not that of the Congress, for the Army not only conducted the recruiting campaign but was responsible for the number of men called by Selective Service, for General Hershey was under the command of Eisenhower. With a faint touch of testiness, the mild-mannered Eisenhower disagreed and stated that he was not aware that he had any control over General Hershey or Selective Service.

Johnson was tenacious about this, and on the following day he called up General Lewis Hershey to testify. Hershey said that he took his orders from the President, not anyone else. Hershey admitted that Selective Service had fallen woefully short of the number of men that had been requested by the Army, but he stated that there were a number of reasons for this. The Army, for example, had raised its standards in medical examinations. It was no longer accepting illiterates, either, which meant that 6,000 men who would have entered the service were now exempted from induction. High school students who had not been drafted unless they were in the last half of the school year were now totally exempt from service. Some medical students and graduate students were exempted from induction. But possibly the most important reason Selective Service was having difficulty drafting men was that Selective Service on the order of the

President was not drafting men between the ages of 18-26, and local draft boards were extremely reluctant to draft fathers, which meant that Selective Service was pushed even harder to get men from the young age groups. This in turn was made more difficult by the Army's new authority to enlist seventeen year olds; in other words, potential draftees were joining some branch of the service before they were inducted and were lost to Selective Service. As for suggestions as to what should be done, Hershey thought that many psychiatric rejects should be drafted and that men who had served less than six months should be reinducted into the service. Hershey also told Congress that one of the most constructive things that it could do was to take some kind of stand on Selective Service before the Selective Service Act expired on May 15. Local Draft Boards, according to the Selective Service Director, would be reluctant to draft anyone if they thought the draft would end within a few months. The subcommittee did not react with much enthusiasm to this proposal.⁴³ Obviously the subcommittee built a fire under someone, though, for the War Department in February reminded Selective Service that quotas were not only not being filled, but that they had fallen 75,000 men behind. Headquarters of the office

⁴³U.S., Senate, Comm. on Military Affairs, 79th Cong., 2nd sess., Hearings on S1355, pt. 3, A Bill to Provide for the Speedy Return of Veterans to Civilian Life, pp. 363-364, 403-409, 421-423.

in Washington told the local Draft Boards to comb through past rejects.⁴⁴

The subcommittee was equally concerned with the matter of surplus property and surprisingly enough, they favored dumping it into the sea rather than having it brought home, if having it brought home meant that servicemen had to guard and maintain it. This was also the opinion of some of the members of the House Committee on Military Affairs. Congressman Dewey Short of Missouri, speaking in reference to India, had this to say:

The overall picture seems quite clear to us, the difference between the cost of maintaining troops and the income to be expected from sale of this property does not seem to warrant keeping so many men in India for a period of even six months. . . .⁴⁵

The hearings were important to the Army and the members of Congress insofar as they clarified some points. The members of Congress wanted to know why there was a replacement lag and Eisenhower told them why. Hershey managed to apprise the subcommittee of the Senate of some of the difficulties involved in the drafting of men. No basic changes in the demobilization plan came out of the hearings, though, but neither the committee of the House nor the Senate requested any.

⁴⁴New York Times, Feb. 16, 1946, p. 17.

⁴⁵U.S., House, Comm. on Military Affairs, 79th Cong., 2nd sess., Hearings Before the Committee on Military Affairs, 79th Cong., 2nd sess., On Demobilization of the Army, Jan. 22, 1946, p. 9.

In less than two and a half weeks, the largest demonstrations against authority in the history of the United States Army had brought one theater commander and one area commander to address a group of assembled GI's; precipitated a meeting between the Secretary of War and a GI committee; was the occasion for an informal address by the Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army to the members of Congress; had forced hearings in both Houses of Congress. Did the results equal all of this attention; in large measure they did not. What they did do, though, was to elicit a statement from the Chief of Staff as to what priorities would govern demobilization in the coming months. On January 15, 1946, Eisenhower issued a directive on demobilization. One suspects that personnel worked late in offices to get it ready before he appeared before the members of Congress that same day.

The directive stated that beginning April 30, 1946, all enlisted men, except volunteers, with 45 points as of September 2, 1945 or 30 months service were to be returned home or on board ship returning home, and by the same date the same stipulations were to apply to officers, except regular Army, with 67 points or 45 months service. By June 30, 1946, all enlisted men, except volunteers, with 40 points or two years service and male officers with 65 points and 42 months of service were to have been

returned home or on board ship returning home.⁴⁶

Undoubtedly, the directive was a disappointment to the men who had been given hope by George Marshall's statement of the previous September that a possibility existed that in late winter the point system could be scrapped and all men with two years service could be released. But at least they now knew definitely what the conditions for discharge were and when they could be expected to be released. That seemed to quiet things down considerably, but the mail did not stop completely from coming into the offices of Congressmen; but after January, most of them seemed content to let demobilization run its course. Since May of 1945, many of them had worked diligently with the armed services to expedite the return of servicemen, both under heavy pressure from the public. The nature of this pressure and the reaction of the Congress and the services to it is a subject all by itself and will require an examination in some detail.

⁴⁶Statement of General Eisenhower on Demobilization, ext. remarks of Hon. Michael A. Feighan of Ohio, Jan. 17, 1946, House, Cong. Rec., Appendix, Vol. XCII, p. A97.

Chapter 10

CONGRESS AND DEMOBILIZATION: CORRESPONDENCE, HEARINGS, AND LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITY

The protests and demonstrations during the early winter of 1946 that had shaken the confidence of Congress and the public in the armed forces had almost ended by early spring. Now and then the newspapers would carry a story of some group of discontented men, such as the 400 marines in Hawaii who sent a petition of protest to Truman, but it was a small paragraph near the end of the paper.¹ Quite obviously, the demonstrations had lost their effectiveness and the public had lost interest. The furor over demobilization was pretty much at an end.

Congress seemed satisfied. Members of a subcommittee of the House who had just returned from an eighteen thousand mile trip through the Pacific area reported that the Army and Navy were doing a fine job of returning troops to the United States.² And throughout the winter, impressive figures were released to support such statements. On the

¹New York Times, Feb. 17, 1946, p. 25.

²New York Times, Feb. 4, 1946, p. 5.

26th of February, for example, President Truman said that the Army had discharged 6,300,000 men, an impressive number --75 percent of its strength at the time that Germany had surrendered.³

News from the Navy and the United States Marine Corps was equally sanguine. Some three weeks after Truman's announcement concerning the Army, the Secretary of the Navy stated that the Navy had demobilized 2,132,741 men and women and that 303,123 Marines had returned to civilian life.⁴ Though the figures were not as impressive as those of the Army, the Navy and marines had demobilized approximately 60 percent of their armed forces. Though both services were running behind the Army, they caught up by the late summer of 1946, for the Army by the end of August was running almost two months behind and did not meet its original demobilization schedule of June 30, 1946. It stated that this was because of the large number of men who were still in the hospitals, but that an additional 175,000 men would be cleared through the demobilization pipelines by September 1.⁵

The Navy on September 1 made the rather unusual statement that it had met its demobilization deadline, although it still had over 60,000 enlisted men and 22,000

³New York Times, Feb. 27, 1946, p. 5.

⁴New York Times, April 17, 1946, p. 25.

⁵New York Times, August 20, 1946, p. 17.

officers more than the projected postwar strength of 500,000 enlisted men and 58,000 officers. The Marine Corps stated that it would finish its demobilization no later than October 1, 1946, at which time it would reduce its forces to the authorized postwar strength of 108,000 men and officers. The Coast Guard had the best record of the services, for it had cut its strength from 170,830 to a total of 19,000, 11,000 less than the projected postwar total of 30,000.⁶

Though none of the services except the Coast Guard was able to maintain its original demobilization schedule, all of them were within a few weeks or, at the most, a few months of doing so. No one seemed particularly concerned about these slight delays, and this was the case with Congress as well. There was little Congressional concern with demobilization after the spring of 1946; there were no hearings after March; comments in Congress were insignificant. Apparently content that the services were handling the problem well, Congress was willing to let them handle it. The most rabid critics grew quiet.

Undoubtedly the armed services enjoyed this new period of quiet, for during the previous six months they had received more criticism than they had received in the previous six years. It is no great source of wonder that much of this came from Congress, but it is of interest to

⁶Ibid.

note that most of it came from relatively few people, and that these were "predictable" critics, Congressmen who had been critical of Administration issues in the past. But perhaps specific comment should follow a more general discussion of Congressional activity.

Congressional activity has been discussed, but usually in terms of Congressional response as specific events and incidents arose, sometimes of particular Congressmen and, to a large extent, in a chronological fashion. That having been done, the focus now can be placed on members of Congress as a whole rather than seeing them as a part of the picture. Apart from activity on the floor, Congress was involved in the answering of voluminous mail, in hearings, and in the handling of the large number of bills concerning demobilization. We shall deal with the correspondence first.

It has been said that when demobilization was at its peak Congress received as many as 80,000 letters a week.⁷ Congressmen answered specific requests from constituents; they gave advice on how to secure discharges in hardship cases; they looked into unusual situations. But to answer even this mail required an inordinate amount of time. Fortunately the armed services set up correspondence sections, and members of the House and the Senate began

⁷Samuel Huntington, The Common Defense (Columbia University Press: New York, 1961), pp. 38-39.

referring much of their mail to them. The armed services knew about the problem that faced Congress, for they, too, were trying to stand up under the pressure of mail written by thousands of correspondents--possibly the greatest letter-writing campaign in the history of the United States, at least until that time.

From every section of the United States the letters poured in. One Congressman, upon being asked how many men were in the Army, and upon being told that there were eight million, humorously replied that there had to be more than that for he had already received more than eight million letters.⁸ Senator Elbert Thomas said that every day Congressmen received in the aggregate thousands of letters.⁹

It must have seemed at times as if everyone wrote. Everyone did not, of course, but those who did furnished a good cross-section of American life. Housewives wrote; farmers wrote; the servicemen themselves wrote. There were letters bearing rural addresses written on gray tablets (the kind on which children practice ABC's) and letters written on expensive stationery that had the writer's name embossed at the top. With constant, unremitting repetition, the

⁸U.S., Congress, Senate, Hearings before the Committee on Military Affairs, Demobilization of the Armed Forces, S1355, A Bill to Provide for the Speedy Return of Veterans to Civilian Life for the Immediate Military Needs of the United States and for Other Purposes, 79th Cong., 1st sess., 1945, p. 6.

⁹Ibid.

letters made the same demand: send him home.

The services closed ranks and fought the battle with electric typewriters and sophisticated printing equipment. Most of the complaints were somewhat standard --complaints about points, transportation, fathers not being returned to their families, and requests for preferential or special discharge. The volume of mail was such, of course, that it was impossible to prepare individual replies to all of the letters, and "form" replies became necessary. The following, for example, was a typical form paragraph that must have been included in thousands of letters:

The present policies for the discharge of military personnel were formulated only after mature consideration. While the War Department is fully aware of the desire of many men in the above category to return to civilian life, it also recognizes its obligation to those who have seen long and arduous service. The discharge of all fathers would result in the retention of an equal number of single men who have earned the right to discharge under the point system.¹⁰

This particular form paragraph, one of several blended into a form letter that Senator Donnell used, dealt with a rather important topic: the subject of fathers. Not surprisingly, the form letters that were sent out in answer to questions concerning fathers did not satisfy everyone, as may be judged by this response to a letter from the Adjutant General's office.

¹⁰Records of the Adjutant General, Demobilization 370.01, Record Group 319, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

Just why the Secretary of War did not himself reply to my letter of September 21st, but asked you to do so, and why it took 17 days even to receive a reply from you probably never will be known. The rank and file of soldiers are young unmarried men. They haven't the vaguest conception, most of them, of the responsibilities and feelings of parenthood. To permit them to fix the policy on this important issue seems as stupid as it would be to permit children to govern their parents.¹¹

The writer of this letter, a member of the New York State Legislature, had put his finger on a very important point, and judging from the volume of mail that the services and Congress received on this issue, there were obviously thousands who agreed with him.

One can only conjecture, incidentally, at the uproar that would have ensued if the Army had not given any points for parenthood as it had originally planned on doing; indeed, such a plan would not have been entirely unjust, for prior recognition of parenthood had already been provided for by draft boards throughout the country in the form of deferments. Many fathers were not drafted until late in the war and not then until after all of the eligible men had been called. Yet this meant very little to the women who fought the battle of diapers and running noses. Selective service metaphysics was for others to worry about; the war was over and fathers should come home.

The women, of course, only echoed the thoughts of

¹¹Lowell H. Brown to Edward Witsell, Acting Adjutant General, Oct. 15, 1945. Records of the Adjutant General, Demobilization, 370.01, Record Group 319, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

their husbands. In thousands of letters they must have asked the question "When are you coming home?" And although it must have been discouraging to hear that her husband was not coming home tomorrow, it must have been absolutely enraging to hear that he wasn't doing anything, or that the base commander was not following the demobilization program. The result of all this was that Congress and the War Department were soon bombarded with letters, the tone of which was invariably critical and sometimes even insulting.

We have written back and forth several times, Mr. Anderson, and you always say you are sorry. I feel that you haven't answered my questions, and then follows a new line of double talk that is supposedly answering my questions and in reality is saying nothing whatsoever. Shall we try it again--this time without the double talk?

I've asked you twice before and I'll ask you again, why is Congress allowing the brass hats to keep a married man who fought in combat for fourteen months overseas . . . ?¹²

Intemperate many of these women were--yes--but it does seem that much of this can be understood. There were the normal strains of running a family complicated by the abnormal pressures of wartime--a husband away from home, possibly new living arrangements with an in-law or otherwise, an allotment that was considerably below the husband's previous earnings, perhaps forcing the wife to work. There were many emotional letters that mentioned either one or all

¹²Margaret Grim to Jack Anderson, House of Representatives, The Files of the Adjutant General, Demobilization, 370.01, Record Group 319, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

of the above, as well as letters from women who wanted families but had postponed having them. Although wives had no monopoly on vituperative correspondence, they were in this area certainly the equal of anyone, many years before the equal rights amendment. Their feelings, of course, stemmed from what was undoubtedly a mistake in the Army's point system, not giving points for a dependent spouse. In this respect, the Army's policy differed from that of the Navy, for the Navy gave points for any dependent--a wife, a child, or a mother; in short, anyone whose livelihood was dependent upon someone in the United States Navy.

There was a group of women who have not been discussed as letter writers: the mothers. As a correspondent, "Mom" was not above castigating the brass, as indeed, no one seemed to be, but she never reached the heights of invective of the irate housewives. She also seemed to be a great deal more patient and, other than an infrequent maternal lapse, such as voicing concern over the boys who were living in unheated quarters, she manifested considerable fortitude. Her letters could on occasion be poignant, though, as may be witnessed by the following, the likes of which must have driven deep shafts into those with Lincolnian hearts.

He went into the army at eighteen years of age. He did the job of a grown man well. Now he is past twenty-one, a young man now, and I would like to see him. I lost my little ten year old boy Sept. 28, 1945, and I am very sad and lonely. I know that I'll feel much better as soon as my son T/4

Louis Polite comes home again. He's in the Hq,
Battery, 35th F.A. Group, APO 403, N.Y., N.Y.¹³

There were many letters written by the GI's themselves; indeed they were prolific correspondents. Some general characteristics of their letters may be quickly mentioned. First of all, they were frequently suspicious of Army sincerity about bringing the men home. Many servicemen thought quite frankly that the services were interested in retaining as much in the way of power and prestige as they could possibly retain. Secondly, statements by the servicemen, particularly GI's, questioned the reliability of Army statements, calling attention to discrepancies and contradictions when they happened. Last of all, attention was frequently called to a specific situation: someone with ninety points not being sent home for discharge when he was eligible; or a transport leaving a port without taking men on the ship who were eligible for separation from the service. These letters that made references to specific situations were letters incidentally that Congressmen acted on quickly. AGO files abound with no-nonsense communications from Congressmen who wanted an immediate investigation and a prompt reply.

Before commenting on the suspicion evident in some of the servicemen's correspondence, it should be mentioned

¹³Lucy Barrett to U.S. Senate (no further address, no date), Senate Records, Petitions, and Memorials, Senate Committee on Military Affairs, 79th Cong., Record Group 46, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

that their letters differed importantly from those written by parents and wives in that they were frequently joint efforts including the signatures of dozens of men. Apparently there were advantages to participation such as this, not the least of which was the comfort of knowing that the services could not proceed against one individual without proceeding against the group. There were incidents of serious pressure being applied against servicemen. As a matter of fact, Congressmen when forwarding letters frequently resorted to the device of quoting extensively from the letter, then simply giving the name of the unit, omitting the names of the servicemen involved. That there was some wisdom in this practice may be gathered from reading this paragraph from a letter of the Secretary of the Navy:

In connection with the case of Lt. (j.g.) H.A. Pressman, USNR, I have the honor to advise you that I propose to ask the Chief of the Bureau of Naval Personnel not to take any disciplinary action for his violation of the Navy regulations in writing directly to a member of the national legislature in a manner derogatory to the naval services rather than forwarding such letters through channels.¹⁴

The first generalization made about the servicemen's correspondence was that it displayed a great deal of suspicion. The following portion of a letter was taken

¹⁴James V. Forrestal, Secretary of the Navy, to James E. Murray, U.S. Senate, the Forrestal Papers, Firestone Library, Princeton University, Princeton, New Jersey.

from one that was forwarded by a member of Congress to the Army with a request as to the best means of answering it.

The Army states that we are needed. We may be needed to maintain the size of the Army, to provide a reason for continued high rank, but there is certainly no need for anything we do. Because we have troops out here, we must feed, clothe, and house them; we must maintain records and shipping and a thousand other maintenance duties. And because we have the maintenance duties to perform, we must have troops. It is an endless circle.¹⁵

There was this letter, too, forwarded by Margaret Chase Smith:

When in God's name will Congress wise up to the many sided double cross that the War Department is handing the men over here who have no way to protest. . . . What kind of a God damned country are we supposed to be fighting for!¹⁶

And this letter was from a service woman--supposedly a servicewoman, at any rate. It was a mimeographed effort sent undoubtedly to every Congressman. It was not as profane as the letter quoted previously, but it surrendered nothing in the way of emphasis. Signed Mamie McGee it might have been someone's invention. There were also names included under "we the undersigned," but these were omitted when the Congressman forwarded a copy of the letter. Judging from the caution of the Congressman, at least he

¹⁵Joseph Zorn to Ralph H. Gamble, House of Representatives, The Files of the Adjutant General, Demobilization, 370.01, Record Group 319, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

¹⁶Margaret Chase Smith, House of Representatives, to Robert P. Patterson, Secretary of War, Dec. 12, 1945, the Files of the Adjutant General, Demobilization 370.01, Record Group 319, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

thought that the names were genuine. Genuine or not, it was written by someone with a fair degree of literary skill.

We the undersigned respectfully but vehemently protest against this palpable breach of all the promises made by the War Department. We state that we have sacrificed much willingly and have received in return only this: THEY SHALL NOT GO HOME.¹⁷

Letters could be quoted, too, voicing the suspicion of the man in the services concerning the desire of the services to retain men and high ranking officers, but they would add little to the argument. The most conclusive proof that can be offered as to the frequency of this particular charge is that the Army prepared a form paragraph in way of an answer:

You may be assured that we will not keep men in the Army in order to maintain rank for high officers or because we want a large army. In this connection, the Army is proceeding with haste to retire, reduce, or relieve from active duty, its temporary general officers.¹⁸

What are some of the conclusions that can be drawn from the letter writing campaign conducted by the public? First of all, it was the most effective pressure of all. Special groups did write: labor unions, do-good organizations of various types, and the veterans' organizations themselves. However, the volume of all of these was insignificant

¹⁷Edward A. Kelly, House of Representatives, to Robert P. Patterson, Secretary of War, June 30, 1946, the Files of the Adjutant General, Demobilization 370.01, Record Group 319, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

¹⁸The Files of the Adjutant General, Demobilization 370.01, Record Group 319, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

compared to that from the servicemen and the public. Almost all of the letters indicated either a complete ignorance of postwar responsibilities or a complete indifference to them. To some extent, this was the fault of the executive branch of the government. To the argument that Germany had to be denazified, and that surplus property had to be cared for, wives of servicemen, if they mentioned the matter at all, wondered why civilians couldn't do it. As for trouble with Russia, the public seemed completely unaware of it; nor did Congress show much awareness of it.

This is particularly interesting in view of the fact that there was acute awareness of such trouble by the President and his Cabinet. But Congress chose not to discuss it, at least not on the floor of the House or Senate. Wisely or not, members of Congress chose not to involve themselves with this issue and concentrated instead on expediting the return of servicemen. It would seem that the unusually heavy volume of mail which they received helped them to arrive at such a decision. Apparently, children who had been taught in civics classes twenty years before to write their Congressmen had learned their lessons well.

The letter-writing campaign conducted by the public and the servicemen had an unquestionable effect on Congress other than the immediately apparent one of enormously increasing the amount of mail that they had to answer. A number of hearings were conducted through the summer and fall of 1945 and into the winter of 1946. Theoretically,

hearings are held for the purpose of enacting legislation, but most of these were colloquies for the gathering of information, a means of determining the efficiency with which demobilization was proceeding and to make further suggestions as to the means and areas in which such efficiency might be improved. They made no basic changes in the demobilization program.

They did do this much, though: they impressed upon the armed services the pressure which was being placed upon Congress for an ever speedier demobilization. The House Committee on Military Affairs held hearings in June of 1945, some six weeks after the surrender of Germany, and at the end of August, September, and October, and again in January, 1946. The House Committee on Naval Affairs held hearings on the construction of the postwar Navy in September of 1945, much of which pertained to the return and discharge of servicemen, and in February of 1946 on the effects of budget cuts on the Navy's program of demobilization. A subcommittee of the Naval Affairs Committee held hearings on the transportation of men abroad in November of 1945. The Senate Committee on Military Affairs held hearings in September, October, and January, and the Senate Committee on Naval Affairs held hearings in November and December of 1945, dealing respectively with transportation and the discharge of doctors from the naval service. Aside from the hearings held by the armed forces' committees, there were also hearings held by the Senate, Special Committee to

Investigate the National Defense Program, on the operation of the separation centers.¹⁹

That the hearings were an important means for the communication of Congressional views and that the armed forces were responsive to the wish of Congress can be seen in a number of instances. In the hearings held on the point system in June of 1945, for example, there was some

¹⁹U.S., Congress, House, Committee on Military Affairs, Administration of the Point System, Hearings before the Committee on Military Affairs, 79th Cong., 1st sess., June 19, 1945 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1945); U.S., Congress, House, Committee on Military Affairs, Demobilization of the Army of the United States, Hearings before the Committee on Military Affairs, 79th Cong., 1st sess., Aug. 28 and 31, 1945; U.S., House, Committee on Military Affairs, Hearings before Committee on Military Affairs, 79th Cong., 1st sess., Sept. 18 and 19 and Oct. 4 and 8, 1945; U.S., Congress, House, Committee on Military Affairs, Demobilization of the Army of the United States, Hearings before the House Committee on Military Affairs, 79th Cong., 2nd sess., Jan. 22, 1946 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office); U.S., Congress, House, Hearings before the House Committee on Naval Affairs, 79th Cong., 1st sess., Sept. 19, 1945, Composition of the Postwar Navy; U.S., Congress, House, Committee on Naval Affairs, Hearings before a House Subcommittee on Naval Affairs on H. Res. 422: Requesting Information from the Secretary of the Navy about Transportation . . .; U.S., Congress, House, Committee on Naval Affairs, Sundry Legislation Affecting the Navy Establishment: Item No. 201 Effect on Navy of Demobilization and Proposed Budget Cut, March 19, 1946 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office); U.S., Congress, Senate, Committee on Military Affairs, Hearings . . . Demobilization of the United States Armed Forces, parts 1, 2, and 3, on S1355, 79th Cong., 1st and 2nd sessions, Sept. 12-19, Oct. 17-18, 1945, and Jan. 16-18, 1946 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1945 and 1946); U.S., Congress, Senate, Committee on Naval Affairs, Hearings before the Committee on Naval Affairs, 79th Cong., 1st sess., on Sen. Res. 188, Demobilization and Transportation of Military Personnel; U.S., Congress, Senate, Committee on Military Affairs, Hearing on Senate Res. 188 and Senate Res. 200, 79th Cong., 1st sess., December 13, 1945 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1945).

dissatisfaction on the part of the House Committee on Military Affairs that older men were being kept in the armed services. Pressed upon this matter, Major General Stephen Henry said "We want to separate men because of long and hard service not because of age alone."²⁰ Yet at the hearings that were held in August with the same General testifying before the same committee, he stated that all men of 38 years of age or older were being released upon request, and that within a brief time the age level for automatic discharge would be dropped even lower.²¹ The release of men thought to be essential to the nation's welfare, particularly doctors, was also expedited by the hearings. In August the position of General Henry was that the release of doctors might not be as fast as that of some other personnel, but by early October, the general's position had changed remarkably, and he offered the following account of a discussion with a high ranking medical officer: "General Kirk was in my office at 5 o'clock yesterday afternoon. I told him I don't care what the technique is or about anything else; just get that

²⁰U.S., Congress, Committee on Military Affairs, Administration of the Point System, Hearings before the House Committee on Military Affairs, 79th Cong., 1st sess., (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, June 19, 1945), p. 11.

²¹U.S., Congress, House, Committee on Military Affairs, Demobilization of the United States Army, Hearings before the House Committee on Military Affairs, 79th Cong., 1st sess. (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, August 28, 1945), p. 19.

doctor and the nurse back home."²²

Another instance in which Congressional pressure was effective was in expediting the release of surplus officers who did not qualify under the point system. On September 22, 1945, the War Department issued a circular which made them eligible, Circular No. 290.²³ The decision to release it may not have been immediately determined by recent hearings that hit hard on men not having anything to do, for most of the hearings had concerned enlisted men, but the timing suggests that the Army had become sensitive in this area. The circular also specified that men were to be released if it were not economical to keep them in the service, or if they were hardship cases, or essential to the nation's national health, safety, or interest.

The Navy was also pressed on the possibility of such releases; and although they did not have a policy concerning national health, safety, or interest, Admiral Denfeld, Chief of Naval Personnel, made it clear that any such request would be liberally construed. And as for hardship cases (for which the Navy did make provision), the Admiral

²²U.S., Congress, Senate, Committee on Military Affairs, Hearings before Committee on Military Affairs on Sl355, A Bill to Provide for the Speedy Return of Veterans . . . (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1945), p. 55.

²³U.S., Senate, Committee on Military Affairs, Hearings before the Committee on Military Affairs on Sl355, A Bill to Provide for the Speedy Return of Veterans . . . (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1945), p. 55.

indicated to Senator McClellan at hearings of the Senate Committee on Naval Affairs that these cases too would be sympathetically received by the Secretary of the Navy --possibly a hint as to whom the Senator should address his request.²⁴

There were in addition to these specific areas more general ones in which the Congress whittled away at the size of the Army. Somewhere in all of the hearings there was discussion concerning the number of troops needed to accomplish particular objectives, the need for men in the United States, the use to which men were being put. Statements by witnesses at the committee hearings frequently began with the number of men in the particular service being discussed, the numbers demobilized, the numbers that would be demobilized, the numbers of men with two years service, with three years, or with four. Questions were answered as to the number of fathers, pre-Pearl Harbor fathers, and so it went.

Invariably the hearings were critical, though usually not hostile, and sometimes they were dominated by just a few men. This was particularly true in the Senate

²⁴U.S., Congress, Senate, Committee on Military Affairs, Hearings . . . on SL355, A Bill to Provide for the Return of Veterans . . ., 79th Cong., 1st sess., Sept. 13, 1945, pp. 77-82; U.S., Congress, Senate, Committee on Naval Affairs, Demobilization and Transportation of the Armed Forces, Hearings before the Committee on Naval Affairs on Sen. Res. 188 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, Nov. 15, 1945), p. 67.

where Edwin Johnson of Colorado and Chapman Revercomb of West Virginia of the Committee on Military Affairs probably used as much time as the remainder of the Committee put together. Revercomb was relatively new to the Senate, but Johnson was an old hand whose seniority dated back to the middle 1930's, and like many of the critics of postwar military policy, he had been a prewar critic of policy as well. He voted against compulsory selective service in 1940 and against the extension of it in 1941, in addition to voting against the amendment of the Neutrality Act in 1941 and against lendlease.²⁵ The ranking majority member of the Committee, next to Chairman Elbert Thomas, Johnson sometimes chaired meetings during the extensive absence of Thomas in the fall of 1945 and was chairman of the subcommittee that investigated demobilization in January of 1946. Candid to the point of rudeness sometimes, he was equally frank with the newspapers as he questioned Army policies at every turn. There is little doubt that he was the dominant personality of the committee; and although he apparently never succeeded in swaying the other members to share the intensity of his concern, his direct and sometimes sarcastic barbs, many of which were picked up by the newspapers, undoubtedly

²⁵U.S., Congress, Senate, Congressional Record, 76th Cong., 3rd sess., LXXXVI, Aug. 28, 1940, p. 11142; U.S., Congressional Record, LXXXVII, 77th Cong., 1st sess., August 7, 1941, p. 6881; U.S., Congressional Record, LXXXVII, 77th Cong., 1st sess., p. 2097; U.S., Congressional Record, 77th Cong., 1st sess., p. 8680.

stimulated the Army particularly to work for speedier release of its personnel.

The chairman of the sister committee in the Senate, the Committee on Naval Affairs, was David Walsh of Massachusetts. Like Johnson, he was a critic of demobilization policies, and like him, too, he had been opposed to many of the Administration's prewar military policies and had voted against selective service in 1940, also the extension of it in 1941, as well as the lend-lease act and the amendment of the neutrality act in the same year.²⁶ Unlike Johnson in forcefulness of personality, Walsh seemingly never dominated his committee. Committee hearings were few, brief, and low key in tone. Although Walsh could be a persistent questioner, he was always courteous. And, most assuredly, he never subscribed to the theory that members of committees should refrain from criticizing the armed forces in public, although his comments did lack the acerbity and color of those of Edwin Johnson.

The most active of the committees was the House Committee on Military Affairs. Its chairman was Andrew May, and it seemed to be the best balanced in terms of member participation. Paul Kilday of Texas, Robert Sikes of Florida, John Sparkman of Alabama, and R. Ewing Thomason of Texas all seemed sympathetic to the problems of the Army, although they, too, pressed it for speedier demobilization.

²⁶ Ibid.

The committee had its share of outspoken critics--Forrest Harness of Indiana, usually fair; Dewey Short of Missouri, always fair; and Paul Shafer of Michigan, usually fair in the committee, but prone to ascribe motives when speaking on the floor of the House. Harness was not always quiet in the House either and was usually critical when he was not; Short would even defend the Army if he thought that the defense was justified. All of these critics (Harness, Short, and Shafer) were Republicans who had opposed prewar policies: selective service in 1940, the extension of it in 1941, lend-lease, and the amendment of the Neutrality Act.²⁷

Easily the strongest chairman was Carl Vinson of the House Committee on Naval Affairs, although Vinson's strength manifested itself in the control that he exercised over the committee's activities rather than in domination of the committee's time. A committee that was rather well-balanced, it appeared committed to rapid demobilization; but it was never on the point of panic and no one representative dominated its time.

There are a number of additional observations that can be made about the committees of the House and Senate. Apart from the fact that none of them in the hearings made any major changes in the basic demobilization plan, it is

²⁷U.S., Congressional Record, House, LXXXVII, 76th Cong., 3rd sess., Sept. 7, 1940, pp. 11754-11755; U.S., Cong. Rec., House, LXXXVII, 77th Cong., 1st sess., August 12, 1941, pp. 7074-7075; 77th Cong., 1st sess., Oct. 17, 1941, p. 8042.

more important to note that none questioned the principle of speedy separation of men from the armed services; far from it, all of them wanted to see the wartime personnel returned home as rapidly as possible, and other than comments directed toward keeping enough men to perform the tasks allotted to the services, there was no overweening concern with the postwar role of the United States.

On the whole, the armed services (particularly the Army) did a poor job of justifying the retention of men that they said was necessary for postwar security. There were, to be sure, elaborate statistics quoted on numbers of men in various theaters, with breakdowns of what the men were doing, and of how many men would be needed to perform tasks, but all of these figures were simply the estimates of theater commanders, the result, one suspects, of the haphazard mathematics in turn of thousands of unit commanders. Lacking in the evidence presented by most of the services was any thorough study of the nature of the assignment of personnel; and equally lacking was any convincing evidence that these assignments could not be performed with fewer men. The armed forces' committees did question witnesses on this, but the question was never pursued with the vigor with which it should have been pursued, with the possible exception of the number of physicians in the service.

Possibly the most effective of the services in justifying the retention of men and of material was the United States Navy. Within a few weeks after V-E Day, the

Navy had figures on what it wanted in numbers of ships and men.²⁸ Pushed ably by Chairman Vinson, the appropriate legislation passed both houses, securing the necessary appropriations for this Navy.

The last generalization to be made about the hearings is that they are the best available evidence of the generally defensive posture assumed by the armed services in the immediate postwar period. There was a pervasive, tacit, almost palpable understanding that ran through all of them and that was that the armed forces would be demobilized rapidly and the witnesses and the testimony were heard to assure the committees that this was being done. And despite random suggestions that a rapid demobilization might be an inefficient one and perhaps even a dangerous one, this was somehow lost sight of in the rush to bring men home. Clearly, the services got the message; and with prepared statements, answers to questions, mimeographed handouts, charts, and statistics, they sought to convince Congress that everything was being done to bring home and discharge all eligible men. Whether they would have acted this expeditiously in the absence of pressure is open to question. Quite possibly, if they had not been pushed, they might have sought to restrict the number of eligible men.

²⁸U.S., Congress, House Committee on Naval Affairs, Hearings . . . Committee on Naval Affairs on House Concurrent Resolution 80: Composition of the Postwar Navy, 79th Cong., 1st sess., (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1945).

But once men were declared eligible, there was little to be gained by not returning them, and, of course, much to be lost, not the least of which was the good will of Congress, the body which would not only determine the size of the armed forces but their appropriations as well. In summary, then, the outstanding accomplishment of the hearings was the communication of the consensus of Congress that the size of the armed services should be reduced and all eligible men returned to their homes.

This pressure so evident at the hearings was far greater than any that was applied on the floor of the House or Senate and more effective. Understandably so, for there was, of course, the immediate advantage of confronting someone across the table in an eyeball to eyeball atmosphere, to use a later, popular phrase: an atmosphere that not only heightened responsibility but brought it into a sharp and public focus; and for the individual being questioned, it must have seemed an intensely personal focus as well. And in these hearings, too, where reasonableness in both manner and method usually prevailed, one senses a collective desire to arrive at a solution to the common problem. Questions, generally, were meaningful, and there was an absence of rhetoric, of criticism for the sake of criticism, or a grinding of axes, all in all best expressed perhaps as a lack of partisanship.

There was no such lack of activity on the floor of the House and Senate, though, where a far different

atmosphere prevailed. And since the partisanship exhibited there has drawn the attention of scholars who have labeled it as being the work of a group that was not very large, but who have had no reason to make a detailed listing of who these men were and what motivated them. Perhaps it would add something to an understanding of demobilization to know who these critics were; that is, those who were opposed to the method, manner, or speed of demobilization or to a combination of these or all of these. Possibly the most singular characteristic of most of them was that they were not only critical of demobilization, but that they had been highly critical of preparedness measures before the war.

Most of them were Republicans--in the House 55 of the 88--and the majority of these were from the Midwest. (See the table at the end of the chapter.) Democrats, on the other hand, came from a fairly broad section of the United States: California, Washington, Mississippi, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Kentucky, Arizona, and Illinois. Although the Democrats who had been in the 76th and 77th Congresses supported the Administration's preparedness program, with a few notable exceptions (John M. Coffee of Washington, Louis Ludlow of Indiana, and Jerry Voorhis of California), the Republicans did not. In the 79th Congress, there were 48 members--Republicans and Democrats--who had served in the 76th Congress and had voted on the Selective Service Act of 1940. Of these 48, 36 voted against it--75 percent. Now of these 36, 32 were members of the Republican

party--approximately 89 percent. Of these 32 Republicans, 26 were from the following states--roughly what one might call the Midwest, the states of the old Northwest Territory --Michigan, Wisconsin, Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois, and, in addition, Minnesota, Iowa, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, and Kansas. Every single member from these states voted against the Selective Service Act of 1940.²⁹

In the 79th Congress, there were 46 critics, Democrats and Republicans, who had served in the 77th Congress and had voted on the extension of the Selective Service Act in 1941. Thirty-six voted against the Act--78 percent. Of these 36, 32 were Republicans, the same number as before, and the same percentage--89 percent. Of the 32, 25 were from the Midwest (as previously defined). One did not vote; one, William Pittenger of Minnesota, voted in favor of the Act; the remaining 23 voted against it--92 percent.

In the United States Senate, the majority of the critics in the 79th Congress were Republicans--14 out of 22, approximately 64 percent. There was this difference in the Senate, though: some of the most powerful voices of demobilization were members of the Democratic Party--Burton K. Wheeler of Montana, Edwin Johnson of Colorado, David Walsh of Massachusetts, and Pat McCarran of Nevada. Of

²⁹U.S., Cong. Rec., LXXXVII, 76th Cong., 3rd sess., Sept. 7, 1940, pp. 11754-55.

interest is the fact that all four of these had opposed Administration measures in the past. There were altogether eleven members of the 79th Congress (proponents of a more rapid demobilization) who had served in the 76th Congress and had voted on the Selective Service Act of 1940. Seven of them had opposed the Act: the four Democrats previously mentioned (Wheeler, Johnson, Walsh, and McCarran) and three midwestern Republicans (Capper of Kansas, Shipstead of Minnesota, and Taft of Ohio). In the 77th Congress, the same type of situation prevailed, involving most of the same people, except that there were two additional Republicans votes--Langer of North Dakota and Willis of Indiana, neither of whom served in the 76th Congress. Otherwise the statistics were almost identical and there would seem little need for repeating them, particularly since there is a table available at the end of the chapter.³⁰

In summary, most of the criticism from the 79th Congress in the House and Senate came from Republicans. In the House, there existed a bloc of Midwestern Republicans such as did not exist in the Senate. In both the House and Senate, many of those who were critical about how the boys were being brought home never wanted to see the boys leave home in the first place. Now, how much of this was well reasoned conviction and how much of it simply the

³⁰U.S., Cong. Rec., House, 77th Congress, 1st sess., August 12, 1941, pp. 7074-75.

institutionalized rhetoric of a particular party at a particular time and place is anyone's guess. It would seem reasonable to assume, though, that much of it was campaign rhetoric, particularly since the Republican Party was looking for issues for 1946 and had sought to make demobilization one as early as September 1944. There was no one to demobilize then, as the war had not ended, but the Republican candidate for President, Thomas Dewey, was asserting that there would be no rush when the war did end as the Administration would keep men in the service until they had jobs to which they could return.

This assertion of Dewey's was ridiculous and untrue, according to John McCormack, House Majority Leader, and "conveyed to the American people and the officers and men of the United States Army a completely false impression." The Army had no intention of keeping anyone in the service who was not needed, McCormack insisted; and, furthermore, Dewey knew this, or he should have known it, as the War Department had already issued a comprehensive statement that men who were not needed would be speedily discharged. Dewey's statement was politically motivated, McCormack claimed, and was based upon information drawn from a comment by the Director of Selective Service, Lewis Hershey, that it might be cheaper to keep men in the Army than to provide an agency to care for them. No such agency was contemplated, argued the House Majority Leader, and Lewis Hershey had no authority over demobilization, as this would be the

responsibility of the armed services. McCormack introduced into the Congressional Record the correspondence of Robert Patterson to the House Committee on Military Affairs in which he "strongly favored" the enactment of legislation that would prevent the retention of men in the Armed Services "for the purpose of preventing employment or awaiting opportunities for employment."³¹

The means of employing millions of men returned from the service was potentially a lively political issue as it was the conviction of a sizable number of Congressmen that the Administration had not solved and could not solve the problem of full employment without a war or quasi-war economy. This thinking was not confined to the Republican members of Congress, but they, more so than the Democrats, particularly those from the Midwest, had sought to strike the Administration in its soft political underbelly. However, their attempts were sporadic and ineffective, amounting to no more than harassment, as they themselves were vulnerable to the charge of hindering the war effort or of damaging the morale. So a political dilemma presented itself to the Republicans: how and where to attack the Democrats without losing more in the opposition party's subsequent counterattack. Obviously, the floor of Congress was not an ideal place, and as events developed, the

³¹U.S., Cong. Rec., House, 78th Congress, 2nd sess., Sept. 12, 1945, pp. 7702-09.

Presidential election was not much better. Complicating matters, too, was the Administration's successful conduct of the war and the previous passage of the GI bill, a measure that provided for subsidized education, loans, and unemployment insurance, possible anti-depression measures in themselves. There was nothing for the Republicans to do but bide their time until the end of the war and hope for issues to develop or to develop issues, which they did --demobilization.

With the end of the war, the Republican party, freed of the onus of handicapping the war effort with its criticism, could attack the Administration for hindering the development of the civilian economy and of retarding the return to normal peacetime pursuits, all of which, of course, were tied up with the return of the nation's servicemen. So the reading of the servicemen's mail on both floors of Congress was frequently accompanied with remarks voicing suspicion that the armed services (often the Army) were to be used as giant WPA's or C.C.C.'s; to effect a social revolution in Japan; to uphold colonialism or imperialism or both; to carry out international boondoggling now that the nation had become disgusted with domestic boondoggling. Roosevelt was dead, but the New Deal was not, and what was really wrong with demobilization was what was wrong with the New Deal. And with their war of words, they (and some Democrats as well) complemented it with a legislative attack by introducing a large number of bills to change the

demobilization program.

In the Senate, the first bill introduced which requested the discharge of personnel was that of Senator Ellender of Louisiana. S637 called for the discharge of certain personnel "to aid in making possible the education and training of physicians and dentists to meet essential needs." This bill was introduced two months before the war against Germany ended. Seven weeks later, Edwin Johnson of Colorado requested in Senate Concurrent Resolution 16 the discharge of service personnel on a "first in, first out basis." In September of 1945, Senator Henrik Shipstead of Minnesota asked that all men under 20 years of age who desired to resume their education be discharged. In November Senator Chapman Revercomb of West Virginia (S.J. Res. 116) wanted inductions stopped and the release of "certain members" of the armed forces. Later, Senator Hugh Butler of Nebraska also wanted the release of "certain members."³²

The activities of the Senate were minor, though, compared to the activities of the House. In July, 1945, Congressman James H. Morrison of Louisiana introduced H.R. 3838 which would have provided for the discharge of anyone who had lost two or more brothers or sisters in the war.

³²U.S., Senate, Cong. Rec., 79th Cong., 1st sess., XLI, Feb. 21, 1945, p. 1410; May 3, 1945, p. 4101; Sept. 26, 1945, p. 9005; Nov. 8, 1945, p. 10487; Nov. 26, 1945, p. 10954.

In September there was a flood of bills. H.R. 4010 introduced by Daniel Reed of New York provided for the discharge of all members of the armed forces who had served at least 18 months. Paul Shafer of Michigan requested the discharge of anyone who had served at least two years (H.R. 4013). John Jennings of Tennessee (H.R. 4088) specified 18 months. Overton Brooks of Louisiana asked that men be discharged after two years of service (H.R. 4604). Herbert McGlinchey of Pennsylvania wanted men discharged who had served three years in the service or eighteen months overseas.³³

And while some Congressmen thought that time should be the basis for discharge of personnel, others thought that marriage and family responsibility should take precedence. H.R. 4062 introduced by George Schwabe of Oklahoma would have discharged married men; as would the bills of Joseph Talbot of Connecticut and George Sadowski of Michigan (H.R. 4668 and H.R. 5425). Other bills provided for the discharge of married men if they were fathers. In September this was requested by Herbert McGlinchey of Pennsylvania (H.R. 4146), and Edwin Arthur Hall of New York (H.R. 4434) repeated the request within a month's time.³⁴

³³U.S., House, Cong. Rec., XLI, 79th Cong., 1st sess., July 18, 1945, p. 7743; Sept. 12, 1945, p. 8575; Sept. 17, 1945, p. 8659; Nov. 6, 1945, p. 10469.

³⁴U.S., House, Cong. Rec., XLI, 79th Cong., 1st sess., Sept. 14, 1945, p. 8616, Nov. 13, 1945, p. 10628; Cong. Rec., XLII, 79th Cong., 2nd sess., Feb. 8, 1946; House, Cong. Rec., XLI, 79th Cong., 1st sess., Sept. 20, 1945, p. 8879, Oct. 18, 1945, p. 9821.

Many members of Congress were concerned about the interruption of the education of the young. The bill of Henry Larcade of Louisiana would have discharged anyone who "desired to continue his education or training," and that of George Schwabe of Oklahoma was identical with that of Larcade (H.R. 4376), introduced something like a month later.³⁵

There were also bills that provided for the discharge of "certain physicians, dentists, and veterinarians" (H.R. 4425) introduced by Philip Traynor of Delaware. A bill to provide for the immediate discharge of anyone who was awarded the Purple Heart (H.R. 4275) was introduced by Thomas Lane of Massachusetts. The bill of Frank Chelf of Kentucky, would have discharged anyone who had amassed a total of 35 points (H.R. 4729). Members of the Normandy invasion would have been awarded five extra points to accelerate their discharge from the service by House Concurrent Resolution 110: Daniel Flood of Pennsylvania.³⁶

There were also a number of bills with omnibus proposals. The provisions of H.R. 4585 introduced by Representative Noble Johnson of Indiana provided for the discharge of anyone who had served eighteen months or who

³⁵U.S., House, Cong. Rec., XLI, 79th Cong., 1st sess., Sept. 19, 1945, p. 8799, Oct. 15, 1945, p. 9673.

³⁶U.S., House, Cong. Rec., XLI, 79th Cong., 1st sess., Oct. 18, 1945, p. 9821; Oct. 4, 1945, p. 9372; Nov. 19, 1945, p. 10826; Dec. 11, 1945, p. 11855.

had a wife or family, or who was under eighteen, but not over 25, and who had had his education interrupted. Similar were the educational provisions of H.R. 4471 that stated that anyone who entered the service before he was 25 was presumed to have had his education interrupted. The provisions of H.R. 4467 contained many of the other bills but would have also discharged anyone who had dependents and would also have stopped selective service: a familiar stipulation in many of them.³⁷

These three bills just mentioned (H.R. 4585, H.R. 4471, and H.R. 4467) were all opposed by the Army. Of H.R. 4471 the Legislative and Liaison division stated that it would destroy the morale of the men who did not want to pursue their education. As for H.R. 4581, the division thought that it was fraught with loopholes and weak, elastic terminology. There were similar objections to H.R. 4467.³⁸

The Navy also made reports upon proposed legislation. In response to a question from the House Committee on Military Affairs to H.R. 4515 and H.R. 4518, the Navy stated that the bills were similar in their requests: provisions for discharge to pursue one's profession, to further education, to care for a wife or dependent. The Navy took

³⁷Robert P. Patterson, Secretary of War, to Andrew J. May, Chairman of the House Committee on Military Affairs, Feb. 22, 1946; Kenneth C. Royall, Acting Secretary of War, to Andrew J. May (no date)--House Records, Accompanying Papers, R.G. 233, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

³⁸Ibid.

note that H.R. 4515 would release an individual upon request after 18 months' service, whereas H.R. 4518 specified 12 months. There was this difference, too: H.R. 4515 provided for the discharge of anyone over 35 years of age, as well as the end of inductions.³⁹

There were a number of bills that did not relate specifically to the discharge of personnel, but would have accelerated their discharge. There were also a number of resolutions requesting the withdrawal of troops from China: (H. Res. 408) by Hugh DeLacy; (H. Res. 409) by John Coffee; and (H. Res. 411) by Helen Gahagan Douglas.

There were other resolutions making identical requests. That of Ned Healy, Congressman from California (H. Res. 412) wanted the withdrawal of U.S. troops in order "to permit and encourage free democratic determination of their form of government." The resolution of Ellis E. Patterson repeated the request in almost identical language (H. Res. 413). Congressman Adam C. Powell also requested the withdrawal of troops from China, with his resolution (H. Res. 425). Congressman Franck Havenner's resolution was more comprehensive than that of any of the others in that it called for the return of Army troops from overseas points

³⁹O. S. Colclough, U.S. Navy Judge Advocate General, to Honorable Andrew May, Chairman, House Committee on Military Affairs, Jan. 31, 1946, House Records, Committee on Military Affairs, Accompanying Papers, 79th Cong., R.G. 233, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

(H. Res. 421) and also those of the Navy (H. Res. 422).⁴⁰ Referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, with the exception of H. Res. 421 and H. Res. 422, they were never reported from the committee.

Though the bills and resolutions discussed thus far seem extensive, there were any number of others; some of them were almost a restatement of previous bills; some of them sought to restrict the jurisdiction of commanding officers to declare troops essential; and others sought to discharge men who had reached a specified age. So crowded for time did the Navy become that they developed the practice of objecting to bills collectively. The Navy, for example, said that it was opposed to H.R. 4498; that it would interfere with the Navy's program of demobilization, and that for much the same reason the Navy also objected to the following: H.R. 4662, H.R. 4791, H.R. 4604, H.R. 4668, H.R. 4677, H.R. 4729, H.R. 4849, H.R. 4894, and H.R. 5019, as well as House Joint Resolution 281 and House Joint Resolution 282.⁴¹

There were, in summary, 44 bills that provided for the demobilization of certain groups and categories of men

⁴⁰U.S., Congress, House, Cong. Rec., XLI, 79th Cong., 1st sess., Nov. 26, 1945, p. 1107; Nov. 28, 1945, p. 11156; p. 11078.

⁴¹O.S. Colclough, U.S. Navy Judge Advocate General, to Honorable Andrew May, Chairman of the House Committee on Military Affairs, Feb. 12, 1946; House Records, Committee on Military Affairs, Accompanying Papers, 79th Cong., R.G. 233, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

from the armed services and seven that would have ended selective service; and this does not include House Joint Resolutions, one of which also pertained to selective service, nor does it include the eight House Resolutions, most of which were concerned with China, and one House Concurrent Resolution. In addition, there were seven Senate bills, three Senate Joint Resolutions, and one Senate Concurrent Resolution.

This was prodigious and yet futile legislative activity. There were hearings that were held on the few that were legislative in nature, but those that called for basic changes in the demobilization program were never reported from the committee to which they were assigned. This was fortunate, for the adoption of almost any of these would have meant chaos to the discharge program. There were, however, no laws passed by Congress that changed any of the plans for demobilization. The program was designed and implemented by the armed forces--the point system, the transportation system, and the separation centers. All changes that were made in the program were made by the services themselves, or, more accurately, by the War and Navy Departments.

In summary, then, Congress in the period 1945-46 was under tremendous pressure to bring servicemen home, the overwhelming preponderance of which came from close relatives (wives, mothers, and fathers) and the servicemen themselves. A group of unregenerate Republicans and a

smaller group of Democrats sought to make radical changes in the program. Yet sanity prevailed. Demobilization was expedited but continued under the control of the armed services. Congress has been criticized for the part that it played in the disbandment of the nation's forces at the end of the war, the usual interpretation being that the national interest was ignored in the survival game of politics, leaving the United States powerless to influence its policies in Europe and unable to help its friend, China, in the Far East. The President as well has been criticized for not doing more than he did. Both Congress and the President have answered these charges by saying that there was nothing that they could have done, that it was the will of the people. And whether it was indeed the will of the people or the majority of the people has also been questioned, all of which can probably be most suitably answered in a chapter that deals with demobilization and United States foreign policy.

House of Representatives

Critics, Proponents of a More Rapid Demobilization

(Asterisk indicates that he was not a member of Congress)

Vote on S.J. Res. 95,
Extension of Selective
Service 1941

Vote on S4164
Selective Service 1940

State

Party

Name

1. Andersen	Republican	Minnesota	no	no	no
2. Anderson	Republican	California	yes	yes	yes
3. Andresen	Republican	Minnesota	no	no	no
4. Angell	Republican	Oregon	no	no	no
5. Barden	Democrat	North Carolina	yes	yes	yes
6. Bender	Republican	Ohio	no	no	no
7. Boren	Democrat	Oklahoma	yes	yes	yes
8. Brehm	Republican	Ohio	*	*	*
9. Brown	Republican	Ohio	no	no	no
10. Brumbaugh	Republican	Pennsylvania	*	*	*
11. Buffet	Republican	Nebraska	*	*	*
12. Bunker	Democrat	Nevada	*	*	*
13. Byrnes	Republican	Wisconsin	*	*	*
14. Chelf	Democrat	Kentucky	*	*	*
15. Church	Republican	Illinois	no	no	no
16. Coffee	Democrat	Washington	no	no	no
17. Corbett	Republican	Pennsylvania	no	no	no
18. Cox	Democrat	Georgia	yes	yes	yes
19. Curtis	Republican	Nebraska	no	no	no
20. D'Ewart	Republican	Montana	*	*	*
21. Doyle	Democrat	California	*	*	*
22. Earthman	Democrat	Tennessee	*	*	*

House of Representatives (Continued)

Name	Party	State	Vote on S4164		Vote on S.J. Res. 95,	
			Selective Service	1940	Extension of Selective Service	1941
23. Eberharter	Democrat	Pennsylvania	yes	*	yes	*
24. Ellis	Republican	West Virginia	no	*	no	*
25. Engel	Republican	Michigan	no	*	no	*
26. Folger	Democrat	North Carolina	yes	*	yes	*
27. Gillie	Republican	Indiana	no	*	no	*
28. Gordon	Democrat	Illinois	*	*	*	*
29. Green	Democrat	Pennsylvania	*	*	*	*
30. Gross	Republican	Pennsylvania	no	*	*	*
31. Hall	Republican	New York	yes	*	no	*
32. Hand	Republican	New Jersey	*	*	*	*
33. Harless	Democrat	Arizona	yes	*	*	*
34. Havenner	Democrat	California	yes	*	*	*
35. Hoffman	Republican	Michigan	no	*	no	*
36. Holifield	Democrat	California	*	*	*	*
37. Hook	Democrat	Pennsylvania	*	*	*	*
38. Jenkins	Republican	Ohio	no	*	no	*
39. Jennings	Republican	Tennessee	no	*	no	*
40. Johnson	Republican	Indiana	no	*	no	*
41. Jonkman	Republican	Michigan	no	*	no	*
42. Kearney	Republican	New York	*	*	*	*
43. Knutson	Republican	Minnesota	no	*	no	*
44. Kunkel	Republican	Pennsylvania	no	*	no	*
45. Lane	Democrat	Massachusetts	*	*	*	*
46. Larcade	Democrat	Louisiana	*	*	*	*
47. Lecompte	Republican	Iowa	no	*	no	*
48. Lemke	Republican	North Dakota	no	*	no	*
49. Ludlow	Democrat	Indiana	no	*	no	*
50. Lyle	Democrat	Texas	*	*	*	*

House of Representatives (Continued)

Name	Party	State	Vote on S4164		Vote on S.J. Res. 95,	
			Selective Service 1940		Extension of Selective Service 1941	
51. Mansfield	Democrat	Montana	*			yes
52. Marcantonio	American Labor Party	New York	no			no
53. Martin	Republican	Massachusetts	yes			no
54. McCowen	Republican	Ohio	*			*
55. McGlinchey	Democrat	Pennsylvania	*			*
56. McGregor	Republican	Ohio	no			no
57. McKenzie	Democrat	Louisiana	*			*
58. Merrow	Republican	New Hampshire	*			*
59. Michener	Republican	Michigan	no			no
60. Miller	Republican	Nebraska	*			*
61. Morrison	Democrat	Louisiana	*			*
62. Mundt	Republican	South Dakota	no			no
63. Murray	Republican	Wisconsin	no			no
64. O'Hara	Republican	Minnesota	*			did not vote
65. O'Konski	Republican	Wisconsin	*			*
66. Patterson	Democrat	California	*			*
67. Philbin	Democrat	Massachusetts	*			*
68. Pittenger	Republican	Minnesota	no			yes
69. Ploeser	Republican	Missouri	*			no
70. Price	Democrat	Illinois	*			*
71. Ramey	Republican	Ohio	*			*
72. Randolph	Democrat	West Virginia	yes			yes
73. Rankin	Democrat	Mississippi	yes			yes
74. Reed	Republican	New York	no			no
75. Rich	Republican	Pennsylvania	no			no
76. Rizley	Republican	Oklahoma	*			no
77. Robsion	Republican	Kentucky	no			no

House of Representatives (Continued)

Name	Party	State	Vote on S4164 Selective Service 1940	Vote on S.J. Res. 95, Extension of Selective Service 1941
78. Rowan	Democrat	Illinois	*	*
79. Schwabe	Republican	Oklahoma	*	*
80. Shafer	Republican	Michigan	no	no
81. Smith, F.	Republican	Ohio	no	no
82. Springer	Republican	Indiana	no	no
83. Voorhis	Democrat	California	yes	no
84. Vorys	Republican	Ohio	no	no
85. Vursell	Republican	Illinois	*	*
86. Weichell	Republican	Ohio	*	*
87. White	Democrat	Idaho	no	no
88. Wilson	Republican	Indiana	*	no

Senate

Critics, Proponents of a More Rapid Demobilization

(Asterisk indicates that he was not a member of Congress)

Name	Party	State	Vote on S4164 Selective Service 1940	Vote on S.J. Res. 95, Extension of Selective Service 1941
1. Aiken	Republican	Vermont	*	did not vote
2. Andrews	Democrat	Florida	yes	yes
3. Butler	Republican	Nebraska	*	did not vote
4. Capper	Republican	Kansas	no	no
5. Connolly	Democrat	Texas	yes	yes
6. Ferguson	Republican	Michigan	*	*
7. Hoey	Democrat	North Carolina	*	*
8. Johnson	Democrat	Colorado	no	no
9. Knowland	Republican	California	*	*
10. Langer	Republican	North Dakota	*	no
11. McCarran	Democrat	Nevada	no	no
12. Mead	Democrat	New York	yes	yes
13. Morse	Republican	Oregon	*	*
14. Reed	Republican	Kansas	did not vote	did not vote
15. Revercomb	Republican	West Virginia	*	*
16. Shipstead	Republican	Minnesota	no	no
17. Taft	Republican	Ohio	no	no
18. Walsh	Democrat	Massachusetts	no	no
19. Wheeler	Democrat	Montana	no	no
20. Wherry	Republican	Nebraska	*	*
21. White	Republican	Maine	yes	yes
22. Willis	Republican	Indiana	*	did not vote

Chapter 11

A RETROSPECTIVE LOOK AT DEMOBILIZATION: FOREIGN POLICY AND SOME OTHER AFTERTHOUGHTS

On October 1, 1945, Harry Truman sat at his desk. Enter at this time, Harold Smith, Director of the Budget. Smith was something of a gossip with a fine penchant for a funny line, a good ear for popular quips: the State Department fiddles while Byrnes roams, he said on one occasion. But Harry Truman was in no mood for humor that day. He had heard only recently of Molotov's tactics and attitude at the London Conference, the tactics of which, according to Byrnes, helped account for the fact that the Conference accomplished nothing, and an attitude of which suggested that even less might be accomplished in the future. Byrnes report obviously disturbed the President, for he wanted to know how many men would be in the Army as of June 1946.

Smith told the President that there would be 2,000,000. Truman said that there were some people in the world who were only impressed with the number of divisions that a country possessed. Smith reminded Truman that he had an atomic bomb up his sleeve. The President answered

that he knew that but he doubted that he could even use it.¹ In that conversation was the essential ambivalence that Harry Truman felt: how to use military strength as an instrument of policy when that strength consisted of a super weapon that he could not or would not brandish and of an army that was being disbanded rapidly. It was a dilemma that he was not able to resolve over the course of the next six or seven months either.

Recalling the frustration that he felt during that time, particularly concerning the disbandment of the armed forces, Truman said a few years after he left the Presidency, that it was not a demobilization of the army but a "disintegration" of it. And in the early 1960's, he told Merle Miller that ". . . nobody gave a damn anymore . . . the Mommies wanted to get their little boys home."²

Truman's concern with the rapid disbandment of the United States Armed Forces can also be seen in some of his correspondence with members of Congress. Answering a letter from Congressman John Folger of North Carolina (November 1945), the former President said that if we did not have the necessary manpower to support our demands then we were "heading for a third world war." Four months

¹Diary of Harold Smith, Oct. 5, 1945, Roosevelt Papers, FDRL.

²Harry S. Truman, Memoirs, I, Year of Decisions (New York: Doubleday and Sons, Inc., 1955), p. 509; Merle Miller, Plain Speaking (New York: Berkely Publishing Corporation, 1974).

later, Truman told Congressman Jerry Voorhis of California, who had requested information concerning the presence of American troops in India, that he wished that everyone could come home immediately. Then stating that this was not possible, the President added: "there are certain people in the world whose only understanding of a treaty is the ability of the other party to support it with force."³

These thoughts communicated to his Director of the Budget and to two of the members of Congress privately were somewhat different from what the President was saying publicly--or more accurately perhaps from what he was not saying. Though Truman years later liked to create the impression that he registered strong and forthright opposition to demobilization there is no proof that he did. Indeed, a review of the President's press conferences from September 1945 to April 1946 reveal that the President supported the program of demobilization. It was not until April 17, 1946 that he spoke of the "disintegration" of the armed forces. And this was at a time when two-thirds of all of the forces and three-fourths of the Army had already been demobilized. And his use of the word "disintegration" was in itself interesting. It was not

³Harry S. Truman to John Folger, House of Representatives, November 16, 1945, OF19OR, Harry S. Truman Library, Independence, Missouri; Harry S. Truman to Jerry Voorhis, House of Representatives, March 2, 1946, OF19OR, Truman Library, Independence, Missouri.

one of a long train of blistering adjectives condemning a rapid disbandment of the armed forces, but a somewhat humorous aside, uttered by him during a routine discussion of demobilization, although his use of the word was undoubtedly meant to be sardonic.

The nearest thing to criticism of the demobilization program by the President until the April 17th speech incidentally was a statement in his State of the Union message that it was the need for troops overseas that would govern the return of men. This was certainly mild criticism, if it was criticism at all. In summary, then, the memory of Truman that he took a bold position on demobilization was simply not so. His position was a careful one, calculated not to upset the public, and it was just as political probably as the position of any other elected office holder. The President simply had a larger constituency.

There were men, however, some of these were the President's men (cabinet officers, high ranking military officials) who thought that the public should be given the hard facts about our demobilization program whether it upset them or not. The Chief of Staff of the United States Army on October 29, 1945 spoke of the need to carry out our international responsibilities and of the pell-mell rush to discharge men as contributing to the "disintegration" of the armed forces. It would in time, as noted earlier, become a very popular word. A few days later,

the Undersecretary of War spoke to this same point. On November 9, 1945, the Assistant Secretary of the Navy said that "we were embracing weakness . . . that we were likely to become a punctured balloon." A week later Admiral King said that the Navy "could not fight a major battle as the result of a too rapid demobilization." In December of 1945, Anthony Leviero, writing in the New York Times, said that there had been a rash of statements concerning the rapid disbandment of our armed forces and that Marshall, King, and Spaatz had all deplored the "loss of efficiency" in military units and all had used the word "disintegration" to describe it.⁴ Nevertheless demobilization went forward.

There were, however, plans underway to slow it down. On November 1, 1945, Patterson wrote to the Secretary of State that the War Department was in the midst of a "drastic demobilization"; and that if the rate continued, every man overseas could be discharged by September 1, 1946. If there were an adjustment in this rate (a slowing down), then there would have to be a planning period of four months, referred to as a "planning lag," in short, decisions as to numbers of troops overseas in May of 1946 would have to be decided in January. To help War implement State's policy, Patterson attached a

⁴New York Times, October 30, 1945, p. 1; November 4, 1945, p. 25; November 10, 1945; p. 7, November 17, 1945, p. 11; December 2, 1945, p. 10E.

carefully phrased questionnaire to his letter.⁵

Secretary of War Patterson did not receive an answer to his letter and questionnaire of November 1, 1945 until almost a month later, and there was nothing in the answer of any specific nature. Strewn throughout in his answers to questions were phrases such as "depends on developments," "as long as required," "cannot predict with any certainty." Two questions loomed large. Stating that the amount of troops in Germany would be sufficient for occupation responsibilities but inadequate "should a firm stand against a militant power prove desirable," Patterson asked somewhat euphemistically if this were in "consonance" with the present thinking in the State Department. Byrnes' answer was that he doubted whether twice the projected strength of mid-summer 1946 would be a sufficient force. More important, said the Secretary, was adequate force "to give evidence of a determination to back up the policies of our government. . . ."⁶ He mentioned, however, no particular number of men that would furnish such evidence. The second important question concerned "the minimum interests from which the United States will not retreat

⁵United States, Department of State, Foreign Relations, I, 1946, 811.20/11-145, Memorandum by the Secretary of War (Patterson) to the Secretary of State, November 1, 1945, pp. 1111-1112.

⁶U.S., Dept. of State, For. Relations, I, 1946, 811.20/11-45, The Secretary of State (Byrnes) to the Secretary of War (Patterson), November 29, 1945, pp. 1128-1135.

in the event of a clash of interests in the Far East." Byrnes said that it was not possible to make a statement of "minimum interests" and thought that this particular matter and others could best be handled by "consistent and close cooperation between the Departments concerned."⁷

Apparently convinced that he would get no support from the State Department, Patterson stated his convictions in a letter to the President. In this letter, November 30, 1945, the day after he had received Byrnes' rather noncommittal reply, he stated that the shortage of troops in Europe was becoming critical and that the rate of return of men from Europe in the first quarter of 1946 should be sharply curtailed. This would mean a retention of men eligible for separation (230,000) for a period from one to six months.

Whether the position of Patterson resulted from a sincere conviction that occupation responsibilities could not be carried out if troops were further reduced or whether he desired to have them on hand in the eventuality of an attack by a militant power is anyone's guess. There is little question, however, of what the Joint Chiefs thought or the members of the State War Navy Coordinating Committee; their thought was directed toward United States security in the event of another war. In a memorandum prepared by the Joint Chiefs in September 1945, and

⁷Ibid.

republished in March 1946, the statement was made that the greatest danger to the United States consisted in the breakdown in relations between Britain, the United States, and Russia.⁸ In such an eventuality, the United States must be prepared to stand alone. The degree to which we should be prepared may be gauged by the following statement:

When it becomes evident that forces of aggression are being arrayed against us by a potential enemy, we cannot afford through any misguided and perilous idea of avoiding an aggressive attitude to permit the first blow to be struck against us. Our government under such conditions, should press the issue to a prompt political decision while making all preparations to strike the first blow if necessary.⁹ / Italics mine /

The study was general and did not specify an enemy against whom we would make the first strike, if necessary, but given a prostrate Germany and Japan, and the unlikelihood of a manic Britain out to avenge Cornwallis, it seems likely that the Joint Chiefs had the Soviet Union in mind. In late March 1946, they specifically stated that this was indeed the case: ". . . the consolidation and the development of the power of Russia is the greatest

⁸United States, Department of State, For. Relations, 1946, I, SWN CC282, Memorandum Prepared by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, March 27, 1946, p. 1161.

⁹U.S., Dept. of State, For. Relations, 1946, I, SWN CC282, Memo. Prepared by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, March 27, 1946, p. 1163.

threat to the United States in the foreseeable future."¹⁰ In a paper read to the State War Navy Committee several days later, the Acting Department of State member (Matthews) in his memorandum argued for the reconstitution of our military strength in the "immediate future." Diplomatic and non-military action would have to be used against Russia, Matthews maintained, until such time as an extension of Russian power put her in a vulnerable position: ". . . until such extension involves the seizure of regions in which the powers of the Soviet armies can be countered defensively by the Naval, amphibious, and air power of the United States."¹¹ In using United States armed forces, the memorandum stressed the necessity of securing the support of the United Nations. An interesting omission in these realistic studies was an absence of reference to the atomic bomb, but this was at a time, of course, when we still sought some control of atomic weapons. And since the study was written in 1946, early 1946, we may not have possessed them in such numbers as to be considered a sufficient deterrent.

That there was concern then on the part of the War

¹⁰U.S., Dept. of State, For. Relations, 1946, I, SWN, 4096, March 29, 1946, the Joint Chiefs of Staff to the Secretary of State, March 29, 1946, p. 1165.

¹¹U.S., Dept. of State, For. Relations, 1946, I, Memorandum, by the Acting Dept. of State Member (Matthews) to the State War Navy Coordinating Committee, April 1, 1946, p. 1169, p. 1171.

and State Departments particularly that Russia could conceivably dominate most of Europe with her military is an incontrovertible fact. There was also fear that she might dominate the Far East, and there were a number of serious studies on this, but the thinking was that it would be through subversion and through influence exerted on the Chinese Communists rather than through any naked display of military power. Her military power, in the Far East, to be sure, was not what it was in Europe, but our own military power in China particularly was not great either.

It was in Europe, though, that the Russians were particularly feared, and perhaps with some reason. Firmly situated in the countries contiguous to her and possessed of an Army greater in numbers than our own, but not as great as some had imagined, she seemed formidable indeed. This essentially formidable picture was enhanced by our recent memories of how she had clawed the living guts out of an army that was once thought to have been invincible, and in doing so, demonstrated that she could be as ruthless as her enemy. Now in possession of Eastern Europe, the question in the minds of many people was whether she would work to subvert other European countries, even worse than this, would she make war against them. Some thirty years after the event our fears at that time seemed to have been so terribly exaggerated. The Russian juggernaut did not, after all, roll all the way to the

sea. And, though, there seems to be no definitive way to answer whether it ever intended doing so, there are some common sense observations apparent to us then and now, and some facts that became apparent some fifteen years or so after the end of the war that are quite material to this question.

The first observation, apparent then, and now was that Russia had been so seriously crippled by the war, twenty million dead and countless villages and thousands of homes destroyed, not to speak of the unnamed and unnumbered horrors of the war. About Leningrad we know, but there is much that we don't know; indeed there is probably much that even the Russian people will never know.

The next observation concerns an area of fact and--an important one. In 1960 in a message to the Supreme Soviet, Nikita Khrushchev stated that at the end of the war Soviet strength was 11,365,000 men but by 1948 it had been reduced to 2,874,000.¹² Since his speech was an argument for modernizing the army, taking the "fat" out of it, it does not seem that he would deliberately understate the figures and that he should be believed. The Soviet army then at the end of the war was considerably

¹²Discussion of this can be found in Marshall D. Shulman, Stalin's Foreign Policy Reappraised (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1963), p. 27 and Adam Ulam, Expansion and Coexistence (New York: Praeger, 1968), pp. 403-4.

smaller than many people thought, and though it was a fourth larger than the United States army was at that time, it was undoubtedly smaller than the combined United Nations army, and was also smaller than the combined figures of the American armed forces. Quite important, too, was the degree of reduction of the forces in the Red Army. Originally, the Russians stated that they would reduce their forces by about two-thirds; this reduction was considerably more than that.

There are estimates available today, incidentally, that the Russians demobilized eleven million men from the army in the year following the war.¹³ These figures make one gasp and are from a source that seems to have over-estimated the size of the Soviet Army. Yet the timetable of the Russian government was to demobilize 6,000,000 men by January 1, 1946.¹⁴ If these figures are reliable, or anywhere near reliable, then this was an absolutely prodigious demobilization, and must have occasioned some of the same chaotic situations in transportation that occurred in the United States--if they were not infinitely worse, as the Russian railways were heavily damaged by war and by excessive use.

And the Russian demobilization must have been

¹³Area Handbook for the Soviet Union (Washington, D.C.: USGPO, 1971), pp. 578-9.

¹⁴New York Times, Sept. 27, 1945, p. 23.

similar to the American in one other way, and that is that they, too, must have had hundreds of units that had been stripped of its experienced personnel, leaving them ineffective or certainly reduced in efficiency. Russia also did not demobilize by unit but by age and occupation. The first group was from 55 to 42 and also all teachers, all high school students, and farm related occupations, such as tractor mechanics and tractor drivers.¹⁵

In short, then, upon reflection it seems accurate to say that the rapid demobilization of the United States which saw millions of men released from the service and which resulted in inexperienced, understaffed, and inefficient units was matched by a Russian demobilization which also released millions of men from the service with resultant inefficient units. The Soviet experience, in brief, was similar to our own.

Yet many people apparently did not believe any of this and maintained that the Russians never demobilized. In a speech made in 1961, Clare Booth Luce said: "Russia did not disband her armies. The Russian divisions which were affronting Germany at wars' end were maintained still facing west."¹⁶

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Clare Booth Luce, "American Morality and Nuclear Diplomacy" (speech delivered at Wilson College, Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, Oct. 27, 1961), Vital Speeches, XXVIII, no. 9, Feb. 15, 1962.

Mrs. Luce's statement was the classic Cold War statement of the classic Cold Warrior. Just as interesting was what she said earlier in her speech that our demobilization had destroyed the "credibility" of our intention of remaining in Europe. One wonders at this point, what price credibility? At the time of her speech, the United States had already been in Europe for sixteen years. Mrs. Luce had a point, but not a good one. The credibility factor was important, but it should have been measured by our determination to stay, not by any specific numbers of men. Our commitment in Europe was a substantial one, of such size that any major Russian move against it would have been at the risk of war or a serious police action, that is a limited protection of our own area.

And in following along in this particular vein of thought (numbers of U.S. troops in Europe) there would have been little advantage in slowing down our demobilization except, and this is an important exception, that there might have been some collateral benefit to our bargaining position. Such a move would have had minimal effect insofar as changing the balance of power was concerned. Russia, if she had felt challenged by it would probably have just slowed down her own demobilization. A doubling of our troops might very well have resulted in a doubling of her own. We would in short have begun playing a game with troops that we are now playing with missiles.

To conclude this chapter, our foreign policy thought

to have been adversely affected by our rapid demobilization, and our national security weakened, appears not to have been; or certainly not to the extent that was thought at that time. On the whole, our policy seems to have been cautious; and even national security studies, with the exception of the one recommending first strike, if necessary, seemed to reflect this. No adventurous courses were recommended. And probably to a much greater extent than usual our policy seemed to reflect the will of the people.

CONCLUSION

Having discussed demobilization, its actual progress, and the public's reaction to it in other chapters, this seems the place for some afterthoughts concerning influences on it, consequences of it, as well as some comments that did not seem appropriate earlier but do seem to fit in with the winding down of a study. First of all, some facts and figures: in a little better than ten months, the Army reduced its manpower from a high of 8,300,000 men to 1,500,000; the Navy in a little better than a year's time from 3,300,000 to 500,000; the U.S. Marines from 475,000 to 108,000; the Coast Guard from 170,000 to 34,500. In a little better than a year's time, the total number of men discharged from the armed services was over 10,000,000.

That this was a fantastic accomplishment of logistics and organizational skill seems readily apparent. Looking at it in retrospect, how well things went. Things went equally well with the blending of these men into civilian life. A complex of veterans' benefits made the transition easy: education at the expense of the government, a transitional allowance, mustering out pay, unemployment benefits, job guaranties for servicemen who

left jobs to enter the service--all of these were instrumental in effecting a smooth return to civilian life. The fear of former servicemen selling apples on street corners, the nightmare of some Congressmen, never materialized, and, in large measure, it was the Congressmen themselves who had prevented this. In short, if demobilization is thought of in terms of the discharge of personnel and the skillful re-entry of that personnel into civilian life, then it was an overwhelming success.

That this success was accomplished at some cost has been the principal complaint of the critics. One of these complaints was the point system. Admittedly a democratic method of discharging men, it allowed the older, more experienced personnel to be discharged first, lessening in efficiency those units with young unseasoned personnel. This was particularly dangerous in view of the speed of modern war. The Air Force particularly complained about this. But if much of Congress was dissatisfied with the point system, and much of Congress was, and with other aspects of the discharge procedure as well, the fault to a large extent was its own. In Congress, before the end of the war, demobilization was thought of primarily in terms of a readjustment to a peacetime economy, with thousands of hours spent in a number of committees on such things as unemployment insurance and contract cancellations. Although sage men said from time to time that the government could expect a tremendous outpouring of

sentiment with the conclusion of the war, they obviously did not make a sufficient impression, for the Congress, and the armed forces as well, greatly underestimated the response of the public. Congress might have been better equipped to have met that response, and might have precluded much of it, if it had taken a more active part in the design of the mechanics to be used in demobilization, and, of course, the method to be used in determining eligibility for discharge. The proper place to have done this would have been in the subcommittees of the armed forces's committees, and their role should have been one of liaison, for they would not have had the time or the facilities to design the actual discharge program. But the program, once having been designed, could have been given the Congressional stamp of approval, that is, adopted into law. This might have preempted much of the criticism, and it certainly would have reduced the deluge of legislation after the war to change discharge procedures.

The United States demobilized rapidly after World War II for a number of reasons. Although in the final analysis, political considerations were the determining factors, within these factors there were both idealistic and practical motives. In the minds of a number of Congressmen, the military had become a little too lordly, possessed of too many privileges for too long a time, and they wanted to reduce it to more human proportions. To

some Congressmen, a large military establishment always carried with it the possibility that civilian primacy might somehow be lost in the process, an argument as old as the United States. But for those less idealistically concerned, there was the hard fact of the dollar to consider. The United States was eager to return to prewar taxes. Both the President and the Congress wanted smaller budgets. We could not do other than bring the boys home if we wanted to return to prewar taxes and prewar expenditures.

The boys came home in the final analysis, though, because the people wanted them home. It was an attitude that had grown out of one of the most understandable conditions of the human heart: the desire to have a loved one return. This condition is most assuredly not unique to the American, but in most societies, there is not the glut of communication that exists in this country. From billboards, magazine illustrations, popular songs, and particularly the movies the message was conveyed that the sunburned kid from next door would one day return home. This message, sometimes implied, but more often shouted, continually played upon the earnest anticipation of the war's end. A skillful war message must convey two things: a statement that the war is worth fighting for and that someday it will end.

Demobilization was sold to us as the war was sold to us. The sale was less strident, less intense, but the

American people believed as an article of faith that their sons and daughters would be returned home. And the politicians and after dinner speakers did nothing to dispel this belief. Their message, of course, was more abstract and usually delivered in conjunction with platitudes about tomorrow's better world, but it was persistent and pervasive and added to the reservoir of sentiment for bringing the boys home. And if proof is needed that this reservoir burst with the end of the war, then ask the Congressmen who once received as many as 80,000 letters a week.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL ESSAY

BIBLIOGRAPHIC ESSAY

This study of demobilization is based primarily on documents, personal papers, and newspapers. Possibly the first debt that should be acknowledged is to the Congressional Record, an invaluable source for someone interested in what the public and Congress was thinking and how intensely they were thinking about it. Specific citations appear throughout the text. The Hearings conducted by the House Committee on Military Affairs, Committee on Naval Affairs, and those of the Senate Committee on Military Affairs and Committee on Naval Affairs, and those of the Senate Special Committee Investigating the National Defense Program are all excellent sources for information on demobilization. Here one can gain not only an appreciation of the issues, but the intensity of reaction to those issues. They are helpful, too, in that statistics and progress charts are part of the published hearings. Where conclusions are more important than the substance of the subject, the Reports of the committees are a fine source of information. Particularly helpful to me were the Reports of the Senate Special Committee on Postwar Economic Policy and Planning and the House committee of the same name.

ARCHIVAL SOURCES

The National Archives contains the most varied and helpful information on demobilization. Of greatest value to me were the Records of the Adjutant General's Office. Much of the section on correspondence in the dissertation was derived from letters that are a part of the records. The Records of the Senate Petitions and Memorials furnished some of the material in the chapter concerning the demonstrations in the Philippines and Europe during the winter of 1946. The records of the Army's Legislative and Liaison division are also at the Archives and contain the division's specific written response to all proposed legislation affecting the Army. The Records of the Office of the Judge Advocate General are also at the National Archives and contain correspondence from Congressmen to that office.

There is a considerable amount of information on demobilization in the archives of the United States Air Force, Air Institute, Maxwell Field, Alabama. The Air Force is still convinced that the rapid demobilization after World War II was a tragic mistake and there are studies with specific facts and figures concerning the degree to which the Air Force was reduced in power and efficiency. Much of this material is not classified; however, gaining access to Air Force materials, classified through secret, involves the least red tape of all of the services. The Air Force has projected its thinking on demobilization and exploratory studies exist of what might

be necessary in a future demobilization.

The Franklin Delano Roosevelt Library at Hyde Park, New York, contains some interesting correspondence of the Director of the Office of War Mobilization and Reconversion Byrnes, and a considerable amount of correspondence that is pertinent to the National Resources Planning Board. Much of this correspondence is relative to the legislative fortunes of the Agency. The Diary of Harold Smith, Director of the Budget under Roosevelt, and for a brief time under Truman, is also at the library. Smith was a good diarist with a penchant for gossip that is reminiscent of Ickes. There are several entries in the diary concerning the armed services and the budget in September and October of 1945, and some rather revealing comments from Truman on his distrust of the Russians.

At the Truman Library in Independence, the President's Official Files contain a considerable amount of correspondence on demobilization--some of it from Congressmen, but most of it is from the servicemen themselves. Much of the servicemen's correspondence, though, is in the form of mimeographed letters, many of which were joint efforts. There are a few letters from Truman to the chairmen of the armed forces' committees--UMT, the possibility of continuing the draft.

The papers of the two Secretaries of War and one Secretary of the Navy were also consulted. The papers of Henry Stimson at the Sterling Library, Yale University, are

not very extensive concerning demobilization. There are a few items from Stimson's good friend Grenville Clark, written in early 1944, warning of the dangers of over optimism concerning an early end to the war, and a few letters from Stimson's Undersecretary Patterson concerning the same subject. In the summer of 1945, Patterson also wrote the Secretary of his misgivings concerning the possible demobilization of occupational groups.

The papers of Robert Patterson, Undersecretary of War under Stimson, and, upon Stimson's resignation September, 1945, the Secretary of War, are an excellent source. Patterson conducted a voluminous correspondence, and much of it was saved. At the time of my visit to the Library, summer of 1969, some of this correspondence was classified, and it was necessary to secure clearance to read it. There are letters from Patterson to Congressmen concerning demobilization to cabinet officials, and the President. There are also digests of radio broadcasts that were recorded by the Army's Office of Public Relations. Patterson was a diarist, and there are diary-like notes scattered at random throughout the various boxes of correspondence.

James Forrestal's papers at the Firestone Library, Princeton University, contain his personal correspondence, inter-office memoranda, and monitored telephone calls. Not too helpful insofar as day-to-day coverage of demobilization was concerned, they do show, though, the Secretary's obsessive concern with the Soviet Union. Forrestal kept

studies of the USSR and frequently made memoranda that certain studies were to be read by officials of the Navy Department. As might be surmised, George Kennan was one of his favorites.

Of other officials of the Roosevelt and Truman Presidencies, possibly the most important, not yet named, was James Byrnes, Director of the OWMR under Roosevelt and Truman, and Secretary of State under Truman. At the time of my visit to the Cooper Library, Clemson University, several years ago, the papers of Byrnes had not been catalogued beyond 1931 and the little information gleaned from my visit there was not significant. One would assume that everything has been catalogued by now.

The papers of Byrnes' good friend and fellow South Carolinian, Bernard Baruch, are at the Firestone Library, Princeton University. Before the end of the war, and possibly until a year before its end, Baruch had been rather active with demobilization issues. He was, of course, co-author of the Baruch-Hancock Report. There is very little information concerning this report in the papers. There is, surprisingly, copies of all of the Special Planning Reports issued by the Army's Special Policy and Planning Division containing strategic assumptions and, one would assume, sensitive information, justifiably labeled Secret (proposed date for the invasion of Japan, for example). There are also a few studies included in the Baruch papers concerning future plans for Army personnel,

culled from information obtained by the Army's Information and Education Division.

Not mentioned thus far are the papers of the President's Chief of Staff. These are at the Library of Congress. The Diary of William Leahy concerns information, though somewhat limited, of political ambitions of some of the younger naval officers, that is, those who wanted to use politics to further the naval reserve program. Leahy kept a close watch on visitors and usually included a short summary of subjects under discussion, visits of Ambassadors and Congressmen. Included too are short statements of some of the subjects discussed at cabinet meetings. Typical diary information and quite candid.

The papers of Congressmen are quite scattered. I read the papers of Senator Elbert Thomas, Chairman, Senate Committee on Military Affairs, at the Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York. All of the papers concern his correspondence with constituents, and the majority of his correspondence dealt with requests concerning servicemen, which was also the case with the correspondence of Robert Taft, Library of Congress, and Tom Connolly, also at the Library of Congress. I read the papers of David Walsh, Chairman of the Senate Committee on Naval Affairs at Holy Cross University; Walsh's papers include a few drafts of speeches and some newspaper clippings concerning some of his activities as a member of Congress.

The papers of two conservative bulwarks are to be

found in Indiana. Those of Charles Halleck are at the Lilly Library, Indiana University, and those of Homer Capehart at the State Library, Indianapolis, Indiana.

Most of the correspondence of these two Congressmen was with the wives and parents of servicemen, concerning the release of someone from the service. In the Halleck papers, though, there is some correspondence with Arthur Summerfield concerning demobilization as a political issue. Another Indiana Congressman, Raymond Springer, member of the House of Representatives, has his papers on deposit with the State Library, Indianapolis, Indiana. But other than a few letters to constituents on demobilization, the remainder of his correspondence is concerned with his work with veterans, particularly pension and welfare measures.

NEWSPAPERS, MAGAZINES, AND PERIODICALS

In discussing newspapers, I would like to devote a considerable amount of time with those of the services themselves, particularly the Army. The most prestigious service newspaper, with enormous circulation, was the Stars and Stripes. The European edition, for example, maintained its own reporters as well as its own news service (ANS) and correspondents in Washington. Its coverage of demobilization was excellent; its shortcoming, perhaps, being a decidedly pro enlisted man's viewpoint and a somewhat restricted view of an enlisted man's responsibilities in peacetime. This paper broke stories of corruption in the Army, and sometimes of brutality, before civilian newspapers

picked them up. It can be read in the Library of Congress, where I read it; it can also be secured on interlibrary loan from a number of places, the University of Wisconsin, for example, and it can be purchased on microfilm.

The Stars and Stripes also possessed one of the greatest war correspondents of all time, a cartoonist, Bill Mauldin. The essence of a Mauldin cartoon was that it could say with a picture what could not be said with thousands of words. Mauldin's early brilliant career (famous before he was 21) was the result of a mystical confluence of time and talent--and experience. A former infantry soldier, a rifleman in the 45th Division, Mauldin's cartoons hit one in the pit of the stomach with an immediate and emotional appeal, like the kick of a mule, like raw uncut whiskey in the gut. Others wrote about the infantry, Mauldin was the infantry. In addition to this, he had a talent for humor, intellectual and sardonic, and perfect for the times, that amounted to genius. Officers patronizing enlisted men with transient and insincere efforts at equality, he once deflated in a cartoon. Two high ranking officers were perched at the precipice of a cliff, looking down into a beautiful French valley. One officer said to the other, "Beautiful view, is there one for the enlisted man?"

This talent for pricking balloons seemed typical of the Stars and Stripes, which possessed an elan, a bird-dog instinct for a good story, and a devil-take-the-hindmost attitude that was sadly lacking in the older, more

conservative state-side newspaper establishments of the time. Judging from the comments of Congressmen, the same spirit could be seen in the Daily Pacifican, and the Marines' First Division News Letter.

Congregated in these newspapers (and I speak primarily of the Army) were men who were recruited by the Information and Education division. Though some in the I and E, and some of its recruits, were later vilified as Communists, there has been no proof that they were, but their prose was such as to lead one to believe that their political and economic thinking had been well shaped in college classes in the late thirties and early forties: anti imperialistic, anti colonial, suspicious of big business and the power of monopolies, righteous about the evils of cartels and their power to create war, opposed to fascist dictatorships, suspicious of the power of newspapers, and the curbing of a free press, fond of quoting PM, the Christian Science Monitor, and the New Republic. All of this spilled over into the newspapers, and what they could not print, one suspects that they put into mimeographed letters for Congressmen and the President. Many of these letters were simply too well written to have been the product of the average clerk or supply sergeant.

They sought out the dark corners, apparently copied, stole, or at least gained access to documents, and were closed down from time to time, but their successful howling about Cromwellian tactics quickly brought them back into

business. They brought out into the open that the right hand of our government did not always know what the left hand was doing, or that the people, at least, did not know what either hand was doing. They claimed that we were shipping some supplies to Indonesia, surplus or otherwise, it was using valuable shipping; that the French troops were being shipped from Marseilles on Liberty boats; that it was a logical inference to assume that the 86th Division was being trained to put down a potential uprising from the Huks; all of which later proved to be true. And, most important of all, of course, they drummed away at the theme that servicemen should return home. Paradoxically, it was the service newspapers, created among other reasons to sustain the morale of men fighting a war, that may have been the most influential factor of them all in bringing these men home once the war had ended.

The following newspapers were helpful, most of which were secured through interlibrary loan to Indiana State University, and will be identified as such. The Boston Daily Globe (interlibrary), Chicago Tribune, University of Illinois and Indiana University, Chicago Sun, Indiana University, Christian Science Monitor, Indiana University, Dallas Morning News, (interlibrary), Detroit Free Press, University of Illinois, Indianapolis News, Indiana State University, Kansas City Star, (interlibrary), Knoxville Journal, (interlibrary), Los Angeles Times, (interlibrary), Louisville Courier Journal, Indiana

University, Memphis Commercial Appeal, Indiana University, Minneapolis Morning Tribune, University of Illinois, New York Times, Indiana State University, New Orleans Picayune, Indiana University, PM, Indiana University, Pittsburgh Courier, (interlibrary), Seattle Post Intelligencer, (interlibrary), St. Louis Post Dispatch, (interlibrary), Santa Fe New Mexican, (interlibrary), Washington Post, Indiana University.

Of these newspapers, possibly the most useful was the New York Times. Its index is seductive in its availability, and in terms of reportorial resources, it has the finest in the country. The Washington Post was good but not as thorough as the Times. For sheer reader interest one of the best was the Chicago Sun, as there were few important facts that it did not report and with a liveliness of style that made it a joy to read. A valuable part of that paper, too, was the column "Inside Washington" by Bascom Timmons. The coverage of the Louisville Courier Journal was also good, and the regionalism reflected in the paper did not detract from it, as many times it carried interesting information reported by Kentucky Congressmen. The same thing could be said about the St. Louis Post Dispatch, somewhat regional at times but first class coverage. Both papers had reporters assigned to Washington.

Small town newspapers were a disappointment, yielding little information, and much of this was from wire service reports and syndicated columnists. There is some

advantage, though, in reading them if they are papers covering a Congressman's home town. It was for this reason that I read the Washington Democrat, Washington, Indiana, Senator Capehart's hometown.

Most of the articles in the periodicals were brief. The service magazines contained more information on discharge procedures and the problems involved in them than any other sources. The publication of the Bureau of Naval Personnel All Hands was quite informative, offering information on locations of separation centers, explanations of discharge procedures and naval policies relating to them. The Army publication Yank was less useful in its coverage of demobilization, far below the level of the Army newspaper, Stars and Stripes, for example. Leatherneck, the U.S. Marine magazine, seemed to have trouble in forgetting the war but did contain information on discharge procedures and always announced point changes as well as facts and figures on the number discharged. A curious lack in all of the magazines was life on a troop ship.

Other magazines, such as American, Colliers, Fortune, Ladies Home Journal, and the Saturday Evening Post, contain a number of articles dealing with the adjustment of the veteran and the necessity for finding future jobs. A typical product was that which appeared in the Saturday Evening Post of August 7, 1943, "We Can Train Soldiers for Postwar Jobs," written by Carl Gray. For week to week coverage of demobilization, Newsweek was the best,

surpassing Time in securing interesting and original material. U.S. News delved deeply into specific issues, particularly the question of United States military strength. Of the pictorial magazines, Life and Look, the better by far was Life with pictorial essays on transportation, United States intervention in China, and popular material concerning the return to civilian life of prominent personalities.

Two magazines that discussed issues likely to arise with the returning veteran, and with the serviceman before he became a veteran, were the Nation and the New Republic, although with a somewhat definite editorial slant: "authoritarian officers," "essentially undemocratic structure of the Army," and a host of similar phrases. Not to be missed by anyone is the article of John Fischer, "The Army Takes Over" in the May 1945 issue of Harpers. Fischer was convinced that the Army had become the lords and masters of Washington, and a little too lordly and a little too masterly. The essence of Fischer's article was that the Army was taking a much larger share of essential raw materials than was necessary, as well as food stuffs. Written before the war against Germany ended, the article is illustrative of an anti-Army sentiment that had already begun to grow.

BOOKS

REFERENCE

The only general bibliography of Demobilization is that of Grace Hadley Fuller, Demobilization: A Selected List of References, United States Government Printing Office, (Washington, D.C., 1945). Unfortunately it deals with the period before the end of the war. It is an exhaustive compilation of all sources. Just about anything of enough significance to be put into writing, including minutes of meetings, is there. The New York Times Index, of course, and no elaboration seems necessary. The Public Papers of the Presidents, United States Government Printing Office, containing as the series does, press conferences, releases from the Office of the President, messages to Congress, and budget messages, is indispensable in maintaining a running account of public positions and is a valuable statistical guide as well. The Foreign Relations Series of the United States, United States Government Printing Office, covers the period of demobilization and goes a few years beyond. There are studies in it of position papers from the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the State Department that are not available in any other public source. Emphasis is uneven, though; postwar strategic considerations of our position in China, for example, are discussed much more fully than they are with Europe. The Annual Report of the War Department: Report of the Secretary of War, Part I, Vol. I, United States Government Printing

Office, (Washington, 1920), and the Annual Report of the Navy Department: Report of the Secretary of War discuss the scope of demobilization of World War I with specifics as to the mechanics of demobilization and detailed accountings of numbers of men and units. Provided, too, are fairly good narratives of the problems encountered. In addition, they furnish the last word on where and when and what kind and how many. In this category, too, are the War Reports of General of the Army, George C. Marshall, General of the Army H. H. Arnold, and Fleet Admiral Ernest J. King, J. B. Lippincott (Philadelphia and New York, 1947). Demobilization was not yet completed at the time the reports were made, but they are an invaluable source in tracing the growth of the services in the period before the war to its conclusion, with specific facts and figures on men and units.

GENERAL

The best book on demobilization prior to World War II is that of Dixon Wecter, When Johnny Comes Marching Home. A survey, it concentrates on the problems faced by the returning veteran and the government's response to them from Yorktown through World War I: bonuses, land bounties, land resettlement programs. In writing his book, Wecter profited, as can any scholar, from reading the following: Francis Greene, The Revolutionary War and the Military Policy of the United States, Scribners, (New York, 1919), Emory Upton, Military Policy of the United States, United States Government Printing Office, (Washington, D.C.,

1917), especially good on the War of 1812 and the Mexican American War, but does not go beyond the Civil War, also William Ganoe, History of the United States Army, D. Appleton Century, (New York, 1941), and Oliver Lyman Spaulding, The United States Army in War and Peace, G. P. Putnam and Sons, (New York, 1937), which do, and on through World War I. John Sparrow also discusses World War I very briefly in his book History of Personnel Demobilization in the United States Army, Department of the Army, (Washington, 1952). The best account of demobilization in World War I is that of James Mock and Evangeline Thurber, A Report on Demobilization, University of Oklahoma, University Press, (Norman, 1944). This is a thoroughly well-researched book, with the concentration on the demobilization planning on a local, state, and federal level that took place before the war's end, and at its conclusion. Library of Congress people (Mock and Thurber), their work undoubtedly added much to the stature of their staff.

The most thorough treatment of the demobilization of the United States Army after World War II is contained in the book written by John C. Sparrow, History of Personnel Demobilization: in the United States Army. Written from documents, it was extensively researched, and, though a Department of the Army pamphlet, the coverage is fairly objective, although conclusions may be argued with by some. Demobilization of the Air Force at the conclusion of World War II is discussed in Chapter VI "Redeployment and

Demobilization" The Army Air Forces in World War II, University of Chicago Press, (Chicago, 1958). The actual transportation of men from overseas is discussed in the mammoth series The U.S. Army in World War II, Part VI The Technical Services, The Transportation Corps, Responsibilities Organization, and Operation. Chapter III "Redeployment and Repatriation" is quite informative and, one might add, objective, with no hesitancy about admitting when the transportation corps was wrong.

The Navy has an administrative history series of which demobilization is a part (unpublished manuscripts) Narrative of the Bureau of Naval Personnel, 1 September 1945 to 1 October 1946, I, Department of the Navy, (Washington, 1947) Administrative History of Offices and Activities, II, Department of the Navy, (Washington, 1947). Further information can be found in the book of Vincent Davis, Postwar Defense Policy of the United States Navy, University of North Carolina Press, (Chapel Hill, 1966). This book contains information on how politics played a part in the Navy's demobilization, different arms of the Navy being reluctant to commit themselves to a program before they knew what their strength in the postwar navy would be. Samuel Eliot Morison, History of United States Naval Operations in World War II, XV, Little Brown and Co. (Boston, 1961) devotes some time to the discussion of Magic Carpet, the program where Naval war vessels, particularly carriers, were used to transport troops home.

MEMOIRS AND DIARIES

The memoirs of James Byrnes, Frankly Speaking, Harpers, (New York, 1947) was an interesting account of our (U.S.) experiences vis a vis the Russians and pertinent to this period, as was William Leahy's I Was There, Whittlesey House, (New York, 1950). Both contain information on Roosevelt's attempt to restrict the role of U.S. occupation forces in Europe. Walter Millis (ed.), The Forrestal Diaries, Viking Press, (New York, 1951) contains the observations of the man who was most concerned about our difficulties with Russia, and also includes many specific references to the problems posed by rapid demobilization. Henry Stimson and McGeorge Bundy On Active Service in Peace and War, Harpers, (New York, 1948) discusses Yalta and, as was the case with the works of Leahy and Byrnes, discusses Roosevelt's attempt to restrict the role played by American forces and their length of stay. Potsdam is discussed extensively in Truman's memoirs, Harry S. Truman, Year of Decisions, I, The New American Library, (New York, 1955). Demobilization is also discussed in Truman's book, as well as his ideas on the results of it.

Other books that should be mentioned are works of Congress, such as that of Bradley Westerfield, Foreign Policy and Party Politics, Yale University Press, (New Haven, 1955), Jerry Voorhis, Confessions of a Congressman, Doubleday (Garden City, 1948). The latter is an interesting

account of Voorhis' socially oriented philosophy and of how he became interested in postwar reconstruction. Volta Torrey, You and Your Congress, William and Morrow, is a series of fairly lengthy essays concerning Congressmen who were, in the author's opinion, arch reactionaries. Congressional positions are detailed, pinpointed with appropriate quotations.

And finally, these comments concerning works on the Presidency and the actions of that office in the planning for demobilization. The best work is that of Davis R. B. Ross, Preparing for Ulysses, Columbia University Press, (New York, 1969). Researched from a number of archives, the book is a scholarly account of the return of the veteran and of how the legislative work of the government made his return a social and economic success. Edward H. Hobbs, Behind the President, Public Affairs Press, (Washington, D.C., 1954), is an account of the National Resources Planning Board and the reaction of that agency to Congress; though brief, it is well done. A much more thorough history of an agency is that of Herman Miles Somers, Presidential Agency, OWMR: The Office of War Mobilization and Reconversion, Harvard University Press, (Cambridge, 1950).

GLOSSARY

Intelligence and Education (I and E)

Intelligence and Education (I and E) as would be assumed this branch of the army was active in orientation activities. It also conducted the polls for the army, on the point system for example. In addition, it selected the personnel for army newspapers.

Legislative and Liaison (L and L)

Legislative and Liaison (L and L) this division of the army was responsible for the thorough study of legislation, and of course with all phases of liaison with all agencies of the government. It advised on legislation and wrote specific assessments of any legislation affecting the army, which in turn were forwarded to appropriate committees.

Magic Carpet

Magic Carpet usually referred to as the Magic Carpet Operation. Naval ships, particularly aircraft carriers that were used to return men from overseas made up the Magic Carpet.

National Maritime Union
(NMU)

National Maritime Union (NMU) the powerful union of the merchant seamen.

National Resources
Planning Board (NRPB)

National Resources Planning Board (NRPB) grew out of the Works Progress Administration. In the 1930's it conducted studies of natural resources--water, for example. Chosen to do "post defense" planning, it continued this function after the outbreak of World War II. Much of the planning for demobilization originated with this Board.

Office of Defense
Transportation (ODT)

Office of Defense Transportation (ODT) principal function was to allocate and supervise transportation priorities. Was responsible for rail transportation --movement of troops; also made locomotives and cars available for rail transportation, whether by manufacture or otherwise.

Office of War Mobilization
(OWM)

Office of War Mobilization (OWM) executive agency formed in 1943 with James Byrnes as the Director. Coordinated the work of the various war agencies, established priorities, referred disagreements between

agencies.

Office of War Mobilization
and Reconversion (OWMR)

Office of War Mobilization and Reconversion (OWMR) same agency, renamed in 1944; had all of the responsibilities and functions as before but was now responsible for reconversion. Established sponsorship or control of a number of agencies that had to do with such things as surplus property, employment and retraining.

Postwar Manpower
Conference (PMC)

Postwar Manpower Conference (PMC) operated under the sponsorship of the National Resources Planning Board with members of the National Resources Board and representatives from the Departments of Agriculture, Labor, Navy, and War, also from the Veterans' Administration, and Selective Service. From its suggestions, the point system developed. Also the GI Bill was an enlargement but a vast one of suggestions contained in the Committee's report submitted to the Congress by the President in June of 1943.

War Shipping Administration
(WSA)

War Shipping Administration (WSA) formed in 1942 and managed ocean-going transportation, particularly troops and cargo. Did not assume control of privately owned shipping but managed it to a certain extent. Supervised building of the 10 knot Victory ship and the 15 knot Liberty.

