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"BETTER THAN THEY WERE BEFORE"  
ATHLETICS AND AMERICAN MILITARY PREPAREDNESS  
DURING THE GREAT WAR

presented by  
DOUGLAS LINCOLN CLUBINE

has been accepted towards fulfillment  
of the requirements for

MA degree in HISTORY

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Major professor

Date March 22, 1994



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**“BETTER THAN THEY WERE BEFORE”  
ATHLETICS AND AMERICAN MILITARY PREPAREDNESS  
DURING THE GREAT WAR**

**By**

**Major Douglas Lincoln Clubine  
United States Marine Corps**

**A THESIS**

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

**MASTER OF ARTS**

**Department of History**

**1994**



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## **ABSTRACT**

### **“BETTER THAN THEY WERE BEFORE” ATHLETICS AND AMERICAN MILITARY PREPAREDNESS DURING THE GREAT WAR**

**By**

**Major Douglas Lincoln Clubine  
United States Marine Corps**

The establishment of the Commission on Training Camp Activities in April 1917, marked a radical shift in the way athletics were viewed by the military. For the first time in US military history, athletic programs were developed and directed at the highest level of command. The Commission was directed by the Secretaries of War and the Navy to prepare four million men physically for combat in Europe. Steeped in Progressive reform ideology, the Commission took its mission beyond that of physical fitness. Using athletics as a tool, it attempted to make men better mentally, spiritually and physically than they were before.

This thesis relies primarily on Commission papers, contemporary journals and magazine articles to tell how the Commission, through subordinate agencies like the YMCA, implemented what was arguably the most comprehensive athletic program ever to have been undertaken to that date. It places the formation of the Commission in the context of the social activism that characterized the turn of the century. Focusing on the Commission's use of athletics for purposes other than pure recreation, the thesis raises questions about the role of athletics and the American experience.

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am indebted to the United States Marine Corps and to Lieutenant General R.B. Johnston, USMC, for granting me time away from the Marine Corps to pursue graduate studies. This thesis would not exist were it not for my friend and mentor, Peter Levine, who offered me this topic and his advice. He has opened my eyes to a world of possibilities and I have been the beneficiary of his counsel. Thanks are due to Don Mrozek, Mark Dyreson and Steve Pope who sent me encouragement and portions of their own research. Mitch Yockelson at the National Archives could not have been more helpful. I am grateful to Peter Vinten-Johansen and John Coogan who took time to read and critique my work. Finally, thanks yet again to Pat, Hillary and Nate who tolerated and sustained me while I launched into another project.

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## INTRODUCTION

Americans living in the late twentieth century take their leisure time for granted. When they think specifically in terms of leisure and recreation, their thoughts are likely to be of planning an event or perhaps reminiscing about a leisure activity that was particularly enjoyable. For those serving in the military, thoughts about leisure are no different from those of any other citizen. Servicemen and women have free time and generally that time is theirs to do with as they will. Each branch of the military has, as part of its organizational structure, divisions or departments devoted solely to providing for the morale, welfare and recreation (MWR) of its servicemen. MWR divisions work closely with numerous civilian service organizations such as the United Services Organization, the Young Men's Christian Association and the Red Cross. They organize leisure and recreational activities for service members to relieve boredom and stress. Organized activities serve the additional purpose of providing uplifting experiences as alternatives to what the military services and mainstream Americans believe to be less desirable activities (i.e., the bars, striptease shows and prostitutes that tend to be prevalent near military bases). This is especially true at American military bases overseas. The military advocates participation in athletic events because they foster teamwork, discipline, camaraderie and unit esprit de corps. Athletics are among the most popular recreational activities with servicemen because they are also fun.

One hundred years ago, however, MWR agencies that are common today did not exist in the military. Responsibility for the morale and welfare of the troops belonged to the commanding officer of the unit to which they were assigned. Individual officers did what they felt was best for their men. It was not unusual to find some unit sports teams or even teams representing military posts, but there was no large scale athletic organization.

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Servicemen were often left to their own devices during their off-duty time. The mobilization of the National Guard to protect the Mexican-American border, in 1916, vividly demonstrated the inadequacy, or more correctly, the lack of recreational opportunities for servicemen.<sup>1</sup>

America's entry into World War I, in 1917, changed the military's perception of leisure and athletics. For the first time a national level organization of service agencies was established for the purpose of providing recreational opportunities for servicemen. The War Department Commission on Training Camp Activities and a similar commission in the Navy Department—collectively known as the Fosdick Commission after Raymond Fosdick, chairman of the joint commission—took responsibility for much of the physical training of servicemen as well as attending to their leisure time and recreational needs. By providing military units with equipment and experts to supervise recreation and athletic training, the Fosdick Commission gave commanders the latitude to focus primarily on the military aspects of training. Yet the Fosdick Commission did more than simply orchestrate recreational opportunities in the training camps. Under its direction, activities normally regarded as recreational in nature, specifically athletics (including organized sports), were converted for use as tools to train men for combat and, perhaps more importantly from the Commission's perspective, to face the vicissitudes of life. Using the latest in physical education theory and drawing from every available resource (including the ranks of professional athletes, coaches and educators), military and civilian leaders developed a comprehensive, relatively standardized training program for recruits. The program was designed so that it could be used for maintenance of physical fitness and moral in the American Expeditionary Force (AEF) camps in Europe as well.

Initiation of an athletic program of this proportion is particularly significant when placed in the context of the social change that occurred at the turn of the century. The Fosdick Commission's wholesale utilization of athletics as a training vehicle and recreational pastime evolved from a ground swell of leisure reform that had been growing

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since the latter part of the previous century. Reformers organized associations, such as the Playground and Recreation Association of America, through which they sought to create some form of order in the chaotic lives of the nation's peoples. As the country moved toward becoming a consumer society, sports and recreational pursuits increasingly became part of American self-indulgence. Less important for any social value they might impart, participation in sports was becoming a commodity, something that was purchased or used with no specific purpose other than for the immediate gratification that could be derived from it.

The Fosdick Commission held a different view of athletics. It believed that athletics could serve a purpose other than simple recreation. The Commission's program acknowledged the recreative value of athletics, but its governing philosophy was grounded in social change. Athletics would be used as a means of controlling behavior. Specifically, athletics served as a weapon against what Fosdick called the "twin vices," alcohol and prostitution, that were perpetually associated with concentrations of military forces. The national government gave the Fosdick Commission tremendous power and support for its program to assist the military develop and maintain fighting efficiency. Establishing the Fosdick Commission was the logical culmination of progressive reform efforts that characterized the early twentieth century.

The Fosdick Commission and its work in the training camps during World War I has not yet received the critical historical analysis it deserves. Attempting to answer the questions generated by even a cursory look at the Commission is easily beyond the scope of a master's thesis and requires much more research than has been done to date. What follows in this thesis is simply a beginning, an effort to set the stage for a research project of larger dimension. In that regard, I have presented the evidence primarily as I have found it—overwhelmingly supportive of the Commission and its athletic program for military preparedness.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### THE NEW CENTURY

#### I

The creation of the Fosdick Commission, an agency whose purpose was to control a segment of society through athletics, evolved from the turmoil of change that characterized the United States at the turn of the century. The advent of the twentieth century provoked a mixture of attitudes in America. This was a period of increasing tension in economics and politics. The country had become a world power with responsibilities for distant territories and was now a continental nation. For some Americans (primarily the overcrowded, overworked urban masses, to a lesser extent the urban middle-class, and reformers, both social and political), the new century posed innumerable unknowns. Rapid changes taking place in society resulting from the enormous influx of immigrant masses and the increase in industrial urbanization were causes for great concern. The decline of familial and community associations, the loss of a sense of identity, and the loss of influence that institutions like the Church had traditionally provided in meeting needs for renewal and regeneration, left these Americans with doubts and misgivings about the future.<sup>1</sup> Intellectuals expressed the view that the end of the century was a time of despair—*Götterdämmerung* (the twilight of the gods) and the malaise of the death of one world and the powerlessness of another to be born. Robert Higgs, writing of Yale and the heroic ideal, describes this view as a reflection of a pervasive sense of hopelessness.<sup>2</sup>

Historian Frederick Jackson Turner's announcement in 1893, that the closing of the American frontier had also closed a safety valve that, for over two hundred years, had provided a release for those who were dissatisfied in the more populous areas of the

country contributed in part to the feelings of doubt and frustration. Warren Susman, in *Culture as History*, speaks of those who urged that a new myth be found to replace that of the Old West. Others, he says, condemned the “taming” of the West and sought to preserve some of its characteristics: individualism, courage, recklessness, aloofness from social ties and obligations. They hoped to find “qualities and traits of character that might continue to withstand the onrush of standardization and conformity.”<sup>3</sup>

Concerned about moral and social decay, those who advocated preserving the character of the frontier entered the new century seeking and welcoming change. They actively sought means by which they could control rather than being controlled. There was a widespread attitude among the nation’s upper-class (specifically among Ivy League alumni) that the revival of the warrior ideal was preferable to the stagnant vapidness of the businessman’s life. These men were confident in their abilities to influence their own destinies and to be leaders in the world and national communities. Steeped in their own brand of social Darwinism that emphasized adaptability and the belief that they were the product of a “natural selection,” men like Theodore Roosevelt, Henry Cabot Lodge, Owen Wister, Clarence King and Frederic Remington eagerly embraced opportunities to excel, whether it be in arts and letters, the sciences, or politics. “Leadership” was one of the new watchwords often used by this group of men. Susman points out their belief that man was responsible for his fellow man, a responsibility discharged through the leadership and direction of the “best men.”<sup>4</sup>

This philosophy of leadership reflected a tradition of reform prevalent at the turn of the century. Susman calls this the tradition of the artisan: the technocrat, who applied new concepts of organization and communications and used science and engineering to circumscribe his relationship to society. Definitions of civilization that stressed scientific education, administration, and efficiency, like that of Brooks Adams (civilization is centralization), became commonplace. Technocrats used words like “science,” “efficiency,” and “power.” Susman describes this “Progressive movement” as possessing

a “sense of revolt against politics itself in the interest of a managerial-oriented society, a government of trained and efficient experts who could make the system work to the profit of the whole nation and its citizens, a kind of neomercantilist view of the state and society directed by an elite of experts.”<sup>5</sup>

Some of these experts focused on a physical culture that had been growing during the latter decades of the previous century. Experts like Luther Gulick, Dudley Sargent and Bernarr Macfadden advocated sport and physical activity as a vehicle for mitigating the problems faced by Americans as the nation became a world power. Sports offered an alternative to the closed continental frontier. Athletics opened a different frontier to those who sought new adventures in the outdoors, whether on playing fields or in the wilderness. Athletics offered opportunities for Americans to test themselves physically in ways that were no longer possible without actually going to war. While athletics did not pose the hardships that subsistence farming or Indian fighting did, they did provide an antidote to the urban experience of many Americans.<sup>6</sup> Further, as Donald Mrozek suggests in *Sport and American Mentality 1880-1910*, health care, of which athletics was a significant part, provided a reason for optimism. The regenerative nature of athletics reinforced and was in turn supported by an emerging belief that “life on earth could be a good thing, that disease and suffering were abnormal, and that a secularized heaven could be attempted in this world.”<sup>7</sup> It is not surprising then, that popular interest in outdoor recreational activities, and sports in particular, blossomed throughout the country.

Regardless of whether their views of the new century were optimistic or not, Americans looked for ways to utilize available free time and free space for their own purposes. In the first decade of the century, Americans living in the country attended church socials, Fourth of July parades, held picnics and played baseball. In the cities the working class socialized on their lunch breaks or if space permitted played catch or a pick-up game of baseball. On their days off they sought the fun and exhilaration that could be found at amusement parks or they picnicked in the newly established city parks where they

drank beer and socialized. Those Americans with the means to do so sought respite from the cities by going to the mountains or the country. They formed clubs where they played polo, tennis and golf. Their sons away at college rowed or played football. Baseball had established itself as the national sport, football was striving for national prominence, and boxing, though still illegal in most states, was popular with working class men and was gaining in popularity with the middle and upper classes. For the majority, leisure was to be enjoyed in whatever form the individual chose to occupy himself. This meant that the individual was not to be constrained by rules, regulations and structure imposed by some outside group or authority. Leisure was time that had no value other than that given to it by the individual to use as he saw fit.<sup>8</sup>

Not everyone agreed fully with this concept of leisure. Reform-minded individuals thought that leisure time should be used solely for physically recreative activities. Many spoke out on the issue in magazines like *Scribner's*, *Century*, *Nation*, *The Independent*, and *Outlook*, of which Roosevelt himself was a contributing editor.<sup>9</sup> Athletics and activities that promoted physical wellness were required to combat the “softness” that seemed to accompany the new modernity. According to the “experts,” the condition of neurasthenia, of which the paralysis of the will was a symptom, had become in effect, the “national disease” of the middle-class. This “disease” had as its source the “overcivilization” of American middle-class society due to urban comfort and fast pace. The experience of sport became a reasonable tool for revitalizing the spirit and physical well-being as well as developing “the character and values required for continual personal and national growth.”<sup>10</sup>

Roosevelt and many of his Harvard Club friends were among the most prominent and often the most vocal about the need for physical activity. For these men, life was the “strenuous life”, filled with action and athleticism.<sup>11</sup> Unlike earlier advocates of the outdoors, like John Muir or Henry David Thoreau who derived replenishment from the quietude of nature, men like Roosevelt continuously sought action in which they could test

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themselves against an opposing force. Competitive sports provided the training ground for the aggressive instinct that would be needed for success and leadership in later life. The unconscious need for, and commitment to victory drove the conscious desire to develop the aggressive instinct.

The “strenuous life” advocates believed that experience in sport would produce the moral character within the athlete necessary for success in later social enterprises. Young men should actually experience the practical governance of behavior through the introduction of physical order and discipline. In a speech delivered to the Harvard alumni in June 1896, Henry Cabot Lodge spoke of the “spirit of victory” as a concrete phenomenon. As he put it: “It is but another phrase for what the social philosopher dealing with nations calls social efficiency. It is the spirit which subordinates the individual to the group, and which enables that group, whether it be a college or a nation, to achieve great results and attain high ideals.” High ideals were meaningless unless translated into action and deeds. Wholesome athletics, particularly football, provided lessons in “self-control, self-surrender, alertness of mind and body, courage, and the ability to think and act quickly for one’s self.” The dominant attitude, as espoused by Roosevelt, was that sport should never be pursued for its own sake, but for the higher purpose of developing moral and physical virtue. Given this attitude, it makes sense that Roosevelt looked to the playing fields of the Ivy League to enlist his regiment of “Rough Riders” or that as President he required candidates for high military office to pass a rigorous physical fitness test.<sup>12</sup>

Roosevelt’s belief in the “strenuous life” and his propensity for assertive, committed action was a pivotal part of the relationship between the civilian government and the military. He was representative of a small, elite group of men who saw politics and service to government and society as natural outlets for their energies and talents. Their positions in government brought them into contact with the military by law, as controllers of military policy under the Constitution, and also, as in the case of Roosevelt,

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through physical fitness and military preparedness. Leadership, they believed, was a right that carried with it a great burden of responsibility. Working with like-minded military officers, they looked for ways to improve the military and to bolster the country's ability to defend its interests.

## II

One means of improving the military was through athletics. The military services at the turn of the century experienced many attempts to reform their ideas about physical training and athletics. Although physical training and athletics were not new to the military, unit commanders had implemented their own programs, or not, as they saw fit. The Military Academy at West Point was the first academic institution in the country (in 1891) to attempt the physical development of its students by requiring physical training. Some advocates of physical training wanted the Military Academy to go as far as training its cadets to be physical training instructors upon graduation. This, in fact, was done by Presidential order in 1905.<sup>13</sup> Advocates of physical training often wrote articles in military journals.

The physical fitness of officers was a favorite topic of these authors. They gave little attention to that of enlisted men. Lieutenant Colonel Charles Richard, in 1909, supported the mandatory annual endurance test for field officers. He suggested that the tendency of these officers was to train for the test and then grow soft in the intervening year before the next test. Richard recommended a required number of hours devoted to physical training. A portion of this training was to include participation in sports.<sup>14</sup> Captain William H. Monroe of the Coast Artillery Corps, writing in 1910, asserted that, as men would follow their officers in the rigors of military campaigns, it was not too much to expect that officers would keep themselves physically ready at any time to take the field with their troops.<sup>15</sup> Based on the system of the commander having the latitude to create his own training plan, this would ensure that there was the requisite training expertise



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available to establish unit fitness programs. The use of sports was seen as a beneficial addition to gymnastics and setting-up exercises at both the Military Academy and the Naval Academy at Annapolis, Maryland. Football was the dominant sport and a great rivalry between the two academies existed prior to the turn of the century. Many military men (and civilians alike) believed that football was the peacetime equivalent to war.<sup>16</sup>

The use of athletics in military training was not limited to its physical training applications. In 1910, Colonel John A. LeJeune, USMC (who became the 13th Commandant of the Marine Corps in 1920) assumed command of the Marine Barracks at the Navy Yard, Brooklyn, New York. The barracks was rife with disciplinary problems, due in part to its location in a section of the city where “disreputable liquor saloons and dives” were plentiful. LeJeune changed the work and liberty schedule, improved the mess, and established a program of entertainment. He encouraged athletics, particularly baseball, and required every man to learn to swim. In two years the desertion rate had fallen from nine percent to five percent. By toughening the training schedule, making the training imaginative and including athletics, he reduced the desertion rate to less than three percent in the following year.<sup>17</sup>

Other commanders experienced similar successes in their units. Palmer Pierce, who later was the military member on the Fosdick Commission, writing in *Collier's* in 1911, said that throughout the Army, the athletic experience was “a powerful influence toward clean living, good discipline, and contentment.” He further observed that athletics was used for entertainment and as a tool for developing the ideals of “clean, manly sport” which would improve the moral tone and ultimately serve for the betterment of the enlisted men. Baseball was a favorite of the troops both for participants and for spectators. Boxing also generated a large interest primarily as a spectator sport. Palmer made specific note of the fact that some inter-racial matches were held, reportedly without race or color being a question. This was seen as a tribute to the good effect of athletics in teaching self-restraint and sportsmanship.<sup>18</sup>

Of the officers who pressed for reform in the areas of physical fitness and preparedness, General Leonard Wood was the most prominent. He knew well the value of athletics. Wood was in every way the embodiment of the “strenuous life.” A Harvard graduate and medical doctor, he fully realized his affinity for the “strenuous life” while a contract surgeon to the US Army on the western frontier. Assisting in the capture of Geronimo, he was noticed by his commanding officer who helped him obtain a commission in the regular Army. As a result of the force of his personality, his exceptional performance of duty, and his Harvard alumni connections, he rose through the commissioned ranks to that of Major General. Wood held a number of important posts as a general officer: Governor of Santiago Province, Cuba; Military Governor of Cuba; Governor of Moro Province, the Philippines; and Commander of the Philippine Division, before becoming Chief of Staff of the Army in 1910, and ultimately Governor-General of the Philippines from 1921-1927. He, with Teddy Roosevelt, formed the “Rough Riders” and, as the ranking regular Army officer, was the regiment’s commanding officer (although there was no question that Roosevelt was *de facto* commander). A regular competitor with Roosevelt, he loved to take strenuous hikes, box, play football and participate in any another sport or physical activity that offered challenge and required toughness. Together with Roosevelt, Lodge, the presidents of Harvard, Princeton and Yale and a number of prominent businessmen and politicians he established two summer camps in 1913 to provide military training for college students.<sup>19</sup>

### III

Calls for reform and increased preparedness in the military had been ongoing for well over a decade when the training camps were established. The war in Europe and the small size of the regular Army caused fear that there would be a shortage of men qualified to be leaders when mobilization became necessary. The official government policy of pacification before the outbreak of hostilities in Europe, and American neutrality once the

war began, made active military preparedness an impossibility. In an effort to combat the inevitable inefficiencies that mobilization would generate and still adhere to official policy, Wood, in his capacity as Chief of Staff of the Army, conceived the idea of establishing a private military training program for college men. Wood received the tacit approval of the War Department and a training program was structured to coincide with scheduled Army training maneuvers. In this way Wood could cut the costs of his private training program by using Army assets while not “officially” using Army funds.

The training at the first two camps, one at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania with 159 students from sixty-one colleges and universities, the other at Monterey, California with sixty-three students from twenty-nine schools, was designed to establish a military reserve pool from which commissioned officers could be drawn in the event of an emergency. Wood anticipated that students attending the camps would return to their colleges and spread the word about the need for preparedness. In effect, the students would serve as “ambassadors,” linking those charged with the responsibility of defending the nation, like Wood, to the young men who would be called upon to do the actual fighting when the country went to war. Each student paid for his own transportation to the camp, for uniforms, and board. The training, which lasted five weeks, was arduous and conducted in austere surroundings. The daily schedule included calisthenics, military drill and theory. Afternoons were devoted to sports and voluntary exercises. Many students became so eager to learn the lessons they spent their afternoons drilling each other until they were ordered to play ball. Evenings were given to small group discussions and recreation. Often there was a dance arranged on the weekend. In the later stages the training intensified with students conducting maneuvers against regular Army troops. And finally there was the seven day hike during which students daily hiked fifteen miles with thirty-pound packs while conducting concurrent tactical problems.<sup>20</sup>

The fact that 222 students would pay for the privilege of enduring this type of training during their summer break instead of enjoying a summer vacation or getting a job

was significant. First, the student camps represented a particular stratum of society. The attendees were college men, the sons of the upper and middle classes who could afford to take the summer off. Second, reports of the students' behavior and feelings about the training camp experience suggested that young Americans were committed to the ideal of national preparedness. And third, their voluntary participation in the rough, outdoor program was a reinforcement of the belief in the "strenuous life" philosophy held by at least two generations of Americans. Capitalizing on the success of the first two training camps, additional programs were established the following year at Monterey; Ludington, Michigan; Ashville, North Carolina and Burlington, Vermont with three times the number of students participating.<sup>21</sup>

Taking advantage of the achievements experienced in the college camps, the camp organizers looked to expand its program to include young and middle-aged men who had already established themselves in the business world. During the summer of 1915 the first businessman's camp was established at Plattsburg, New York, on the shores of Lake Champlain. This camp differed from the student camps only in that the participants were older. The prospect of American involvement in a war was becoming more likely. The National Guard had been mobilized to defend the Mexican border, the *Lusitania* had been sunk, and with war escalating in Europe, military preparedness and universal training advocates were adamant about taking action despite President Wilson's promise to keep the country out of war.

General Wood, now Commander of the Eastern Department, spoke out on preparedness using language that was characteristic of those who adhered to the "strenuous life" philosophy. He spoke in terms of athletics. The position of the United States was similar to that of Harvard's football team going into a game against a first-rate team with only one good player weighing 110 pounds and one poorly trained substitute weighing 120 pounds. His analogy referred to the regular Army and the militia. The other team was highly trained with at least five players for each position and the game was going

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to be played at any time. Wood was horrified that the country refused to prepare. Plattsburg, organized with the help of Roosevelt, Lodge and others, had as its goal the establishment of a small military reserve corps that would at least have a modicum of military skills.<sup>22</sup>

The Plattsburg participants were a fairly elite group, most coming from well-to-do New England families. At least twenty percent of the fourteen hundred new “privates” had established national or international reputations in civic service, politics, or in arts and letters.<sup>23</sup> Over thirty-five percent were known nationally for their business acumen. Many were members of the Harvard Club. According to the editor of *Scientific American*, who visited the camp, the regimental rosters included such notables as the mayor, the police commissioner, a former police commissioner and the collector of the port of New York City; two members of the largest banking firm in that city; a former ambassador and a former Secretary of State. Walter Millis, writing in the *New York Times*, pointed out facetiously that roll call “sounded like ‘Who’s Who’ and the ‘Social Register’” with a “whole host of social butterflies of Newport and Bar Harbor.”<sup>24</sup> The average age of the businessmen recruits was thirty-five. There were representatives from around the country and there were even some father-son teams.<sup>25</sup> Just as the student camps had represented that section of the population who could afford to send their sons to college, this camp represented those who had not only the money, but the independence and the leisure time to spend away from their businesses.

The training plan was similar to that of the student camps. Athletics played a key role here as it had with the students. The instructors tried to teach the men in four weeks what they would normally teach regular Army enlisted men in four and a half months. The renowned war correspondent, Richard Harding Davis, who had already witnessed the war in Europe and was now a participant at Plattsburg, said that it was a “get-wise-quick” course. “It was like trying in three weeks to train eleven men who never handled a football to defeat Yale.”<sup>26</sup> The hard, intense training in the company of like-minded men

generated a camaraderie similar to that found on well-trained sporting teams and imbued in them a spirit of élan that set in motion a plan for additional camps.

According to the Plattsburg organizers, when the United States entered the European war in April 1917, the country was better prepared due in large measure to the success of the first Plattsburg camp. The country now had a corps of successful businessmen who had already received a degree of military training and were capable of assuming leadership billets as officers in a reorganized national army. The popular support that the first participants were able to garner for preparedness paid off in the halls of Congress and the White House. Public leaders, influenced by the Plattsburgers, joined with twenty-one state governors in September 1915, as part of the National Security League, to press for greater preparedness. The threat of preparedness becoming a partisan issue in the 1916 election gave the Wilson administration the impetus to move on the issue. Congress passed the National Defense Act in May 1916. This act called for a phased increase in the number of regular Army troops and tasked the National Guard with responsibility for providing the country's reserve force. It also established the Reserve Officers Training Corps in universities and colleges, a corps that was closely allied with college athletics during the ensuing war. Dissatisfied that the provisions of the National Defense Act relied too heavily on poorly trained, state controlled militias, and the lack of a mandate for universal training, supporters of military preparedness, specifically the Military Training Camps Association, organized more camps throughout the country based on the Plattsburg model. Over 16,000 civilian volunteers received training that summer, despite a loss of training officers who were called for duty with the National Guard on the Mexican border. Estimates the following May indicated that as many as 30,000 had been trained in the preceding year alone.<sup>27</sup> Ironically, while the leaders of the military preparedness movement were promoting physical fitness and incorporating athletics into the training of their largest group of businessmen volunteers, an even larger



group of American volunteers found themselves in the most austere regions of the country with little or nothing to do.

#### IV

The mobilization of the National Guard to the United States-Mexican border in June 1916 called attention to the recreational and off-duty activities of soldiers and sailors, and their relationship to military preparedness and efficiency. Over 100,000 civilian soldiers were uprooted from their homes and moved to remote and often desolate cantonments. Despite the arrival of the National Guard units, it was business as usual in the Army's border camps. The Army had been there for years and the National Guard had been rotating small units in and out of the area since 1906. The only significant change was the sudden influx of such huge numbers of troops. The military made few attempts to meet the recreational needs of the men in the camps. Word of the unsavory conditions in the camps and surrounding towns began to filter back to the War Department through letters of outrage written by the parents and wives of guardsmen and from state governors who were shocked and appalled that their sons, husbands and constituents were being subjected to what was being construed as the military's tacit approval of lasciviousness.

Secretary of War Newton D. Baker asked Raymond B. Fosdick, of the Rockefeller Foundation, to go to the Mexican border to conduct a survey of the conditions in communities where troops were stationed. Fosdick was an "expert." He had graduated from Princeton (B.A. and M.A) and had received his law degree from New York Law School only eight years earlier. While studying law he worked with boys' clubs to defray the costs of his residency at New York's Henry Street Settlement. From 1910 to 1911 he served as assistant corporation counsel for the City of New York in the contracts division. In 1912, he served, at Woodrow Wilson's request, as comptroller and auditor of the finance committee of the Democratic Party Convention. John D. Rockefeller asked him to conduct a study of police organizations in Europe for the newly created Bureau of Social

Hygiene. Following an extensive tour of European cities, he began a study of American police problems, again at Rockefeller's request. His study took him to every city in the United States with a population over one hundred thousand. He was conducting that study when Baker called him to survey the problems on the Mexican border.<sup>28</sup>

The survey was to consider specifically the leisure-time activities available to the troops. The results of this survey showed that thousands of troops in places like Laredo and Brownsville, Texas; Columbus, New Mexico; and Douglas, Arizona, had no access to recreational activities other than a few saloons and "a very well-run red-light district." With the exception of the magnitude of the scale, this was status quo for duty with the Army on the border. Unscrupulous speculators, with an eye toward profiting from the lack of off-duty entertainment, had quickly established rows of bars and bordellos outside of camp gates.<sup>29</sup> The entrepreneurial aspects of the situation were alarming and reprehensible to mainstream American society. In the towns adjacent to the camps, Fosdick found filled houses of prostitution and soldiers in uniform roaming the streets in the company of what appeared to be "obvious" whores. The outgrowth of this unsavory situation was a dramatic rise in the number of cases of venereal disease which, in part, prompted the flood of letters to Washington.<sup>30</sup> Yet it appears that while some camps were bereft of all but the basest of off-duty opportunities, others enjoyed the benefit of plentiful and well-organized recreational activities.<sup>31</sup>

Fosdick's survey of border conditions probably included permanent facilities like the large Army maneuver camp (twenty thousand men) in San Antonio, Texas, in addition to the New National Guard cantonments.<sup>32</sup> As early as 1911, the San Antonio camp had determined that "play and pastimes are as essential to a well-regulated development and wholesome existence of the soldier as is the mess or the hair band of the hat." Pitching horseshoes topped the list of recreational pursuits. This was primarily because it required little equipment or preparation, it could be started and stopped almost instantly, and because it really demanded little thought. The horseshoe pits were numerous and

regularly scheduled match games were held that captured the interest of company and regimental size units. Baseball was a close second with at least one hundred teams formed. The organized league consisted of about twenty teams and played a regular schedule. Pick-up games were a daily occurrence. Movie theaters in town did a huge business with films about war being the largest draws.

However, the city of San Antonio, itself, offered other enticements for soldiers. Saloons were available and there was a well-established red-light district. Though gambling was illegal it ranked third in popularity as a recreational pursuit. Card games and craps were common, normally played behind closed tent flaps and out of sight of the officers. The soldiers also ran illegal roulette and domino games. It was not unusual, and was frequently commented on, that a single individual might end up owning the entire company's payroll the day after payday.

The San Antonio camp made efforts to provide alternatives to vice. The commanding officer invited service organizations to work in the camp with the following purpose: "to develop the better side of the soldier's nature, to stimulate the nobler impulse and to strengthen a religious spirit."<sup>33</sup> The YMCA had three large tents where free movies were shown and where reading and writing materials were available. The Enlisted Men's Club was organized by the chaplains and provided nightly entertainment. These included musical programs performed by the local young women and instructive and amusing lectures, addresses and discussions.

While it appears that some commanders understood the value of organized athletics as an antidote for apathy and even for vice, it is equally apparent that other commanders had failed to grasp that there was an alternative to the moral and social problems within their commands. Citing the example of the YMCA and the efforts of other service organizations, Fosdick's survey showed that recreational opportunities could, and should be provided for servicemen on the Mexican border. The imminence of American entry into the European war interrupted any plans for correcting the border

situation. Baker realized that when the nation was mobilized for war, the problems of 100,000 men in border camps would pale in comparison to those of millions suddenly appearing in training camps. Nevertheless, the Fosdick survey indicated that it was possible, if properly organized, to provide wholesome recreational outlets for large numbers of men.

Thus the stage was set for what became the largest athletic program ever to have been undertaken in the military to that time. The program was the product of the successes of social reform movements and the evolution of physical culture ideology that had occurred since the 1870s. As the United States found itself being pulled into the European conflict, civilian and military leaders counted improvement of the physical fitness and ultimately the moral fitness of the men who would do the fighting among their most pressing requirements. Drawing from their new understanding of recreation theory and the experiences of social reformers, they saw in athletics the solution for solving both requirements.

## CHAPTER TWO

### THE FOSDICK COMMISSION

#### I

When the United States declared war in April 1917, there was an immediate requirement to raise an army sufficient in strength, numerically and physically, to be successful in battle. The plan called for the conscription of up to two million men with an additional two million to be called if necessary. By the close of 1917, the nation's military force had grown from 100,000 to 1.5 million. Within eighteen months of the declaration of war, over two million men were serving in Europe, another two million men were in training camps in the United States, and twenty-four million men had been registered and classified by the Selective Service. These numbers added up to a quarter of the population of the United States. It was an army nearly six times larger than that which had been raised during the Spanish-American War and three times larger than the force Napoleon had used to invade Russia. For the next nineteen months, men poured into the Army's seventeen regular Army stations to which had been hastily added sixteen "permanent" cantonments for draftees and sixteen other camps for National Guard divisions.<sup>1</sup>

The first draft, conducted on 30 July 1917, was for 687,000 men. Of that number, the national average rate for failure of the physical examination was roughly a third.<sup>2</sup> Only a minority of the men who went to the military training camps were physically fit enough (i.e., possessing the "strength, endurance, agility, muscular control, and disciplined initiative") to begin intensive training immediately. According to the doctors who conducted the draft physicals, this group was made up primarily of men who had extensive athletic experience under competent instruction.<sup>3</sup> Subsequent drafts proved to be as bad or worse. The result was a reduction of the standards for entry into the service. One

medical doctor, writing in *Everybody's Magazine*, said the draft had “demonstrated another thing, which, next to social and economic causes, is the most crucial factor in producing American deficiency. This is that we, as a nation, are under-exercised, or one-sidedly exercised.” He went on to advocate a physical regeneration of America through the cultivation of “the *Turn-Verein* spirit in our schools, colleges, and gymnasiums, on playgrounds and athletic fields.”<sup>4</sup> The call for an aggressive physical program for the youth of America, while warranted perhaps as a long term solution to improving the physical health of the country, did nothing to alleviate the immediate dilemma caused by the sudden mobilization of millions of men to fight. The poor physical quality of the draftees posed a major problem for the military services. There was no formal plan for physical training, or recreation for that matter, on this large a scale. The military was forced to rely on what little previous experience it had and to take whatever resources it could find to help.

Unfortunately, the most recent experience the military had was that of the National Guard on the Mexican border. Failure to provide for the training and recreational needs of the Guard, as reported in Fosdick's survey, was evidence that a major effort would be required to rapidly establish an efficient fighting force. President Wilson expressed his concern by stating that “the spirit with which our soldiers leave America and their efficiency on the battle fronts of Europe will be vitally affected by the character of the environment surrounding our military training camps.”<sup>5</sup> The President believed that calling young men to service in defense of the country should be made an asset to them, “not only in strengthened and more virile bodies as a result of physical training, not only in minds deepened and enriched by participation in a great, heroic enterprise, but in the enhanced spiritual values which come from a full life lived well and wholesomely.” He believed that painstaking and conscientious thought should be given to the protection and stimulation of the country's “mental, moral and physical manhood.” It followed that there was a requirement for some agency to represent the government and “the government's

solicitude that the moral and spiritual resources of the nation should be mobilized behind the troops.”<sup>6</sup>

Secretary of War Baker echoed Wilson’s sentiment in his stipulation that any program developed, while focusing on physical training, should also have as its *raison d’être* the moral protection of the servicemen. Spelled out, this meant a strong campaign against alcohol and prostitution, both of which were considered to be deleterious to military efficiency. At the same time that Baker was contemplating what type of program was required, numerous private and civic service organizations, moved by patriotic fervor, volunteered to assist the war effort by aiding the servicemen. Baker determined that he needed a central organization that could develop and implement a program to compete with the “twin evils” of alcohol and prostitution and to suppress them. Additionally, this organization would coordinate the overlapping and often competing activities of the various service groups offering aid.

On 18 April 1917, Baker, with Wilson’s approval, created the War Department Commission on Training Camp Activities. “I want an organization that will link together the Y.M.C.A., the Recreation Association, and every other agency that can contribute to the social well-being of troops in the field, an organization that will itself supply any gaps in the program,” Baker told Raymond Fosdick, the man he had chosen to head the new organization.<sup>7</sup>

Fosdick was the natural choice because of his familiarity with the problems of large training camps. He understood the predicament faced by troops who lacked decent recreational facilities. Fosdick also understood Baker’s concern that the men who would soon be entering the camps were conscripts, not volunteers. Baker’s precept for the new commission expressed his concern. “We cannot afford to draft them into a demoralizing environment. It must be assured that their surroundings in the camps are not allowed to be less stimulating and worthy than the environment in their home communities.”<sup>8</sup> Three months later the Secretary of the Navy, Josephus Daniels, formed a similar commission

and asked Fosdick to head it as well. The two commissions, jointly known as the Fosdick Commission, shared a board of commissioners, but had independent organizational structures.

The nucleus of the Fosdick Commission was composed of a number of men who were well known in philanthropic and “progressive” circles. Among those joining Fosdick, whose work for the Rockefeller Foundation and whose study of the Mexican border situation had catapulted him to the position of leadership, were Lee F. Hanmer, who had been inspector of athletics for the New York public schools and traveling field secretary for the Playground Association of America before joining the Russell Sage Foundation; Joseph Lee, a son of the Boston aristocracy, founder of the Massachusetts Civic League, former head of the American Civic Association, and titular head of the Playground and Recreation Association of America (PRAA); Dr. Joseph E. Raycroft, Professor of Hygiene and Head of the Physical Education Department at Princeton University; Dr. John R. Mott, the former General Secretary of the International Committee of the YMCA and General Secretary of the YMCA’s newly formed National War Work Council; Malcolm McBride, a Yale graduate and President of the Board of Trustees at the University School of Cleveland; and Major Palmer E. Pierce, the Army’s representative from the Training and Instruction Branch of the General Staff.<sup>9</sup> This group of men brought to the Fosdick Commission a wealth of experience and expertise in the administration of people and money. They believed that many of society’s welfare requirements could best be met administratively through organizations established for that purpose. Several commissioners were deeply involved in progressive reform movements that catered specifically to society’s need for recreation. Most were cut from the same social fabric and shared many of the same ideas of leadership and fitness (moral and physical) as did Roosevelt, Wood, and the Plattsburgh participants, although they may well have differed in political ideology.



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## II

Two groups represented on the Fosdick Commission, the PRAA and the YMCA, were particularly well-suited to assist the Fosdick Commission with the expertise and, almost as important, the funding to establish recreational programs. The PRAA and YMCA were already working in communities and with the military. During World War I, these two organizations accomplished a majority of the Fosdick Commission's work in support of training and recreation.

The PRAA, a private organization, had worked actively with those federal offices that dealt directly with recreation: the Forest Service, the National Park Service, the Office of Education in the Department of the Interior and the Children's Bureau in the Department of Labor. The leaders of the PRAA, Joseph Lee and Howard Braucher, the Association's executive secretary, believed that to be effective, governmental programs of recreation had to supply organized play and trained professional leaders. "Efficiency" was a watchword of the Association. It was the theme of the PRAA's 1911 congress and was frequently coupled with topics such as expertise and professionalism. The PRAA made its expertise on establishing community recreation programs available to municipalities, although it stressed that local initiative should not be stifled. However, it did emphasize that programs of recreation should not be operated haphazardly, that expertise should be utilized and adapted to proven local methods. Further, programs should be characterized by professionalism.<sup>10</sup> The PRAA's role as the "expert" on community recreation placed it in a unique position to offer assistance to the Fosdick Commission.

In late March 1917, the directors of the PRAA, with a look toward the impending declaration of war, approved of the decision by the Secretary of War to form a federal commission on recreation. The commission was to provide for the "wise use of leisure time" by military recruits in training. The directors volunteered the PRAA's services, fully expecting that when the war came (as it did only a few days later) the entire PRAA staff

would become the federal commission responsible for ensuring the availability of wholesome recreation for the troops.

The appointment of the Fosdick Commission caused the PRAA to re-consider the type of contribution it could make to the war effort. The YMCA was in a better position to manage recreation programs within the training camps than was the PRAA. The Fosdick Commission, however, did not intend to limit its concern to activities in camps alone. Baker maintained that although most young men would prefer decent recreational activities to saloons and brothels, when given the opportunity, they would go to town. It seemed almost natural then, that the PRAA, with its existing community relationship, would assume responsibility for work in the communities adjacent to training camps. The mission would be to help the communities provide wholesome alternatives to vice. In effect, the PRAA wanted to “create a massive settlement house around each camp” with the voluntary efforts of the communities. To ensure that this was done efficiently, the PRAA convinced the Fosdick Commission to give it sole authority for coordinating community programs outside the camps. The PRAA staffed a new organization, called the War Camp Community Service (WCCS), under whose aegis all local community committees were asked by the Fosdick Commission to unite.<sup>11</sup>

Of all the welfare agencies offering war time assistance, the YMCA was the best suited to provide recreational programs within the camps. If the PRAA was the “expert” on community recreation, the YMCA had the expertise in service to the military. The appointment of John Mott to the Fosdick Commission was calculated to bring the full benefit of the YMCA’s experience and resources to bear in the establishment of training camp programs. Competition between service organizations to contribute to the war effort was fierce. John Mott’s appointment to the Commission placed the YMCA in the premier position among those organizations. However, his appointment was not made so much in an effort to end petty squabbles as it was out of the need for Mott’s, and thus the YMCA’s, expertise. As General Secretary of the International Committee of the YMCA

he had been personally responsible for the welfare work of the YMCA in the European war since 1914.

The YMCA was no stranger to the exigencies of war. In its infancy, the YMCA had ministered to the needs of American soldiers during the Civil War, regardless of the color of their uniforms. The work at that time was limited primarily to the establishment of social center tents, providing stationery and writing utensils and the distribution of Bibles, New Testaments, Scripture pamphlets and hymn books. In the later years of the nineteenth century the YMCA had solidified a "four-fold work" plan that encompassed educational, social and physical work that was supplemented with religious meetings and Bible classes. The Spanish-American war was really the YMCA's first experience with a major war effort. By this time the Association had a fully developed infrastructure and was, in fact, a well organized institution. The state committees governed activities in the state training camps while the International Committee took responsibility for national training camps. For the first time the YMCA provided services for naval forces. The outgrowth of the YMCA's experiences in this war was its commitment to permanent service to the Armed Forces.

The YMCA formalized its commitment in 1898, when it formed the Army and the Navy Department under its International Committee. A special act of Congress in 1902 authorized the YMCA to construct permanent buildings on government property. The Army and Navy Department installed its program at Army posts and Navy stations throughout the country, adapting them to the particular needs of the servicemen at individual locations. The YMCA had also begun work throughout the world in support of servicemen. The Canadian YMCA supported Canadian troops in South Africa during the Boer War. The experience of the Canadians contributed materially to the war expertise of the American YMCA whose International Committee had financed a portion of their expenses. Similarly, the British YMCA, represented by the Soldier's Christian Association, also established an experience base during the war that would serve the

YMCA in its entirety when war broke out in Europe. Additionally, the American YMCA had successfully broken through religious and cultural barriers to provide "Comforting Bureaus" for Japanese troops during the Russo-Japanese War.

The commencement of hostilities in Europe in 1914 was the clarion call to service for YMCA organizations worldwide. The World Alliance of Young Men's Christian Associations was the coordinating body, but the American and Canadian Associations took active roles. John Mott's visit to Europe in 1914 to assess the potential for American YMCA participation led to welfare service for both sides in the war. Representing a country that was neutral, Mott was able to travel unimpeded and allowed to see the conditions of soldiers regardless of their nationality. By the time the United States entered the war in 1917, the American YMCA was already supporting the needs of millions of servicemen and prisoners-of-war. When the AEF arrived in France, its commander-in-chief, General John J. Pershing, turned over responsibility for all recreation, to include athletics, entertainment and operation of the post exchange system, to the YMCA.<sup>12</sup>

On the American home front, the YMCA had been working since 1911 with the troops on the Mexican border. In 1916, the small YMCA units were unable to respond, initially, to the arrival of such large numbers of troops. The problems that existed on the border were a result of the massive influx of troops and the extended periods of inactivity. The concerns of the War Department regarding the soldiers and vice were shared by the YMCA. In the nine months prior to the United States declaration of war in April 1917, the YMCA spent nearly \$350,000 in the border camps providing recreational programs as alternatives to the saloons and bordellos. It can well be said that without the experiences of the Mexican border crisis the soldiers of Uncle Sam's conscript army would not have had the benefit of YMCA services upon their arrival at the new training camps in 1917 and 1918.

Although the PRAA and the YMCA were both immediately in a position to implement programs on behalf of the Fosdick Commission, other groups had quickly offered their services to support soldiers and sailors. The YWCA, the Knights of Columbus, the Jewish Welfare Board, the Salvation Army, and the American Library Association were also authorized by the Fosdick Commission to provide recreational, educational and religious activities for all servicemen. The YWCA was already involved in the war effort primarily providing nursing services overseas. Seeking to aid soldiers in stateside camps, the YWCA took responsibility for providing "hostess houses" at the training camps. These houses performed the very basic and necessary function of assisting the wives, girlfriends and mothers who often appeared unannounced at the gates of the camps looking for their men. Additionally, the presence of respectable ladies lent a bit of dignity and normalcy to the all male environment.

The Knights of Columbus and the Jewish Welfare Board became involved as a direct result of religion, bolstered by a large dose of patriotism. The dominance of the YMCA's Protestant Christian zealotry concerned the Roman Catholic and Jewish communities. Grateful for the service of the YMCA, but resentful of the religious influence that accompanied it, the Knights of Columbus and the Jewish Welfare Board petitioned the Fosdick Commission for authority to work within the camps and to accompany the AEF. Arguing on the basis of demographics and using Secretary Baker's own dictum of providing an environment as close as possible to that of the home community, they won access to the camps. Both agencies provided a similar range of services to those offered by the YMCA, but on a much smaller scale. The Knights of Columbus, which received financial support from a greater constituency than the Jewish Welfare Board, became very active in the athletic programs, primarily those involving boxing. The American Library Association established reading rooms in the camps, often in facilities belonging to the YMCA, and planned to send book boxes with AEF units. The Library Association's activities were calculated to help accomplish Baker's plan to

make the American boys better than they were before by making reading materials available and, if necessary, teaching them to read. Numerous other groups volunteered their help. A number of them were sporting organizations like the Amateur Athletic Union and the New York Athletic Club, whose interests in sports dovetailed neatly with the Fosdick Commission's focus on athletics.

### III

Military officers were generally receptive to civilian offers of assistance. A number of them recognized the value of athletic sports and physical exercise as a part of military training for the development and maintenance of military efficiency and morale. The War Department found it impossible, under existing conditions, to provide for the development of any comprehensive system of physical training or for the instruction of the necessary specialists and instructors to do this work in the training camps.<sup>13</sup> What the Army already had in operation at some posts, such as Fort Leavenworth and Fort Riley, Kansas and in Hawaii and the Philippines, were plans to stimulate interest and conduct recreative athletics for the soldiers. These plans were implemented by athletic councils under the direction of an athletic officer. They were localized plans for specific units which could not be transformed quickly enough to meet the Army's needs in dealing with the volume of new recruits. The Army also had a well developed calisthenics program at the Military Academy at West Point. Here cadets were trained sufficiently to serve as unit athletic officers upon commissioning.<sup>14</sup> The Fosdick Commission recommended that initially no time be lost in training specially qualified men to become physical and bayonet training instructors who were already on active duty in the Army. Working through General Palmer Pierce, the Fosdick Commission arranged to have qualified instructors re-assigned as needed, and to take on the responsibility for handling physical conditioning activities.<sup>15</sup>

To direct the conduct of the physical training and athletic work, the Fosdick Commission organized two physical training divisions, one each for the Army and the

Navy. The Army's physical training division was headed by Dr. Joseph Raycroft, one of Fosdick's commissioners. The Navy's division was headed by physical fitness advocate and "father" of the modern game of football, Walter Camp. Camp was well-known among physical culture advocates. An 1880 graduate of Yale, Camp attended medical school before joining the New Haven Clock Company. He became general manager of the company in 1902 and was appointed president the following year. He held both positions through the World War I years until assuming the chairmanship of the board of directors in 1923, two years before his death. Under his leadership the company made many innovations that changed the industry and caused it to become one of the largest clock manufacturers in the country. He was equally innovative in the area of sports and physical training. He had played baseball, rowed with the crew and, with H. W. Slocum, was Yale's representative in the first intercollegiate tennis match. First as a player and then as coach of Yale's football team, a position he held for thirty years, Camp suggested new rules and methods of play that were accepted by the intercollegiate football committee. Camp was responsible in 1906 for the ten yards in four downs rule that became the standard for the game. Football players across the country vied for the honor of being named on Walter Camp's annual All-American Team. In addition to heading the Navy's athletic division during World War I, Camp organized the "Senior Service Corps," in which thousands of men over military age became physically fit for war service. Additionally, he devised a series of setting up exercises (essentially a set of limbering calisthenics and stretching exercises) to "achieve war-time physique for elderly and adipose Cabinet members...." He led them through the drills on the front lawn of Congressman William Kent's house. Camp was a prolific author. He used his medical training to write dependable books and articles on calisthenics as an aid to health and on sports. Camp's selection to head the Navy's athletic division virtually assured its chances for success.<sup>16</sup>



The goal of the two athletic divisions was to provide not only guidance on how to conduct physical training, but the means for accomplishing it as well. Further, the divisions were to do the same for recreational activities. Their job, through athletics, was to make the men fit to fight and once overseas to keep them fit. The Fosdick Commission believed that athletics contributed significantly to military efficiency. Athletics developed an aggressive fighting spirit and this spirit, as well as the physical benefits derived from athletics, made soldiers efficient. The development of better bodies led to better minds. Soldiers who were able to think clearly under pressure were better soldiers. Organized athletics developed teamwork. Soldiers who thought and acted like a team were better soldiers.<sup>17</sup> Secretary of the Navy Josephus Daniels, making a statement for *Outlook* on the subject of the Fosdick Commission's purpose, likened man's efficiency to that of a machine's. "Mechanical perfection is demanded in the machinery that drives the vessel, turns the turret, and fires the guns. More important is the man. More than a machine, his body is yet the most marvelous of machinery. Systematic exercise, athletics, is to perfect it and make him master of the whole." He followed this by stating that the athletic program was vital and that its importance could not be too strongly stressed.<sup>18</sup>

Daniel's statement appears to be a dichotomy. On the one hand, he was endorsing the individual man. In 1917, "personality" was a new word, a new concept. Reformers were flooding the market with self-help books and advice to distinguish one from the crowd of mass society. Daniel's statement is consistent with the prevailing reform philosophy of mastering oneself and controlling one's own destiny. On the other hand, he compared man to a machine and as part of a system of interdependent machines. At a time when society was stressing individuality to break out of the control of the mass, the War and Navy Departments were attempting to codify even more rigid controls. The resolution lies in the Fosdick Commission's athletic program. The program was aimed at the masses, to achieve mass efficiency. But first it was necessary to reach the individual.

Athletics were not to be used as a mere time filler. Participation in athletics would change men: physically, mentally, and morally.<sup>19</sup>

The Fosdick Commission continued to refine its plan. Attempting to standardize as many aspects of the plan as possible, it determined that physical training, bayonet and close combat instructors should receive some sort of formal training. One of the first actions taken by the Fosdick Commission was to send a survey team to Toronto to gather information on physical and bayonet training in the Canadian Army. The Canadians had developed a program based on that used by the British at their Central School at Aldershot, England. The program focused on training a cadre of instructors, specialists in the areas of physical and bayonet training, who would then be posted to the various training camps to direct local training programs. The British and Canadians had noticed a marked development and improvement in the physiques and mental and physical alertness of their recruits as a result of the physical training regimen. The training was also credited with instilling in the recruits the discipline and “smartness” which they said characterized the British soldier. The Fosdick Commission asked the Army for the services of Major Herman J. Koehler, West Point’s renowned physical training instructor, and sent him to the Canadian school in preparation for his organizing a similar school in the United States.<sup>20</sup>

Quickly realizing that establishing a school on a grand scale would not be possible in a short time, the Fosdick Commission decided to conduct a number of small training courses at the officer training camps. Koehler traveled to the various camps providing physical training instruction to selected candidates, who, upon assignment to enlisted training camps, would assume duties as instructors. The mini-courses ranged from two to four weeks in duration and several hundred men were quickly trained. However, the mini-courses failed to solve the instructor shortage. First, there simply were not enough instructors to handle the work load. Second, the instructors were often diverted from instructing and given different duties by their new commanding officers once they reached

the camps. The Fosdick Commission needed a large pool of already qualified men to immediately assume the work in the training camps. On 21 June, the Secretary of War approved the Fosdick Commission's recommendation that camp commanders be authorized to invite the services of trained coaches to promote athletic sports in the camps as part of the physical training program. However, the Fosdick Commission retained the approval authority for those selections.<sup>21</sup>

As it developed, much of the Fosdick Commission's expertise on organized athletics soon came from the nation's universities. In keeping with the prevailing philosophy of utilizing experts in order to obtain maximum efficiency, when the Commission realized that it could not efficiently produce its own experts, it looked elsewhere. The Fosdick Commission recruited from the ranks of the best collegiate coaches, trainers, athletes and physical educators to carry out the massive task of operating its athletic programs. The roster of athletic experts soon contained the names of men like Floyd Rowe, former star four-miler at the University of Michigan and now that University's athletic director; Lawson Robertson, trainer of the Irish-American Athletic Club and the previous Olympic team; Chester L. Brewer, Director of Athletics at Michigan State Agricultural College and formerly Director of Athletics at the University of Missouri; Harvey Cohn, Director of Athletics at Colby College, Associate Director of Athletics at Indiana University and three-time Olympian; and a host of others too numerous to mention, but who represented athletic departments from high schools and colleges throughout the country. These men were assigned as physical directors at the various National Army and National Guard training camps.

The training camp athletic programs differed from those in the universities in many ways, not the least of which was their magnitude. Just as the sizes of the programs differed so did the populations toward which they were directed. Whereas college programs catered to a certain few, those with extraordinary ability, military athletics were

for everybody. Fosdick made the comparison stating that “university athletics develops champions; army and navy athletics develops the mass.”<sup>22</sup>

The YMCA gathered its own group of experts when it recruited athletic directors for its programs in the United States and the European camps. “Big Bill” Edwards, former standout football player at Princeton headed the YMCA’s College Committee on Recruiting. Alonzo A. Stagg, coach at the University of Chicago and Frank L. Kleeberger, physical director of the University of California were on the YMCA’s Committee for National Recruiting of Athletic Directors.<sup>23</sup> The recruiters wanted men who had a certain set of qualities and values that are recognizable in today’s military rubric as leadership traits. To the members of the YMCA’s recruiting committees, the logical place to look for these men was on the athletic fields. Edwards provided a corollary to the axiom attributed to the Duke of Wellington, that the battle of Waterloo had been won on the playing fields of Eton and Harrow, when he stated that “any athlete who has stood the strain of an athletic contest, whether it be football, baseball, track, or any other competition, is good enough for service abroad. A man that has stood the contest in big championship games and knows what it means to be on his mark and start and finish a race is the kind of man that Uncle Sam needs over there.” Edwards went on to make a very strong connection between athletics and moral character. “It would be foolish of me to even suggest to any real American what his [the athletic director’s] example should be to the men with whom he works. A man who would exert an immoral influence over the men with whom he is working should be treated as a spy—a traitor to his country—and immediately shot. I doubt if any old ‘Varsity’ man would ever be found guilty of such an act.”<sup>24</sup> Stagg, who stated that athletic men as a class are intensely loyal, intended to capitalize on that particular trait by conducting a recruiting blitz on former college athletes who were just beyond military age.<sup>25</sup>

Over the next year and a half the YMCA succeeded in attracting many of the best coaches, trainers and former star athletes the country had to offer. Colleges expressed

great concern over their athletic programs and the 1918 football season promised to be particularly bleak due to the shortages of qualified coaching staffs. Edwards and his associates landed the talents of men like Dave Fultz, lawyer, football referee, former member of the New York Americans and a notable football and baseball star at Brown. Though too old for active military service, they offered their athletic expertise and leadership example. The names of the leading athletes, coaches, athletic directors and trainers who flocked to the rolls of the YMCA and the Fosdick Commission were regularly reported in the nation's newspapers. "I look on this," said Kleeberger, "as a most remarkable opportunity for men to connect up athletic ability and enthusiasm for forwarding righteousness and love of country."<sup>26</sup> Sports figures were revered by Americans and their service to the war effort was an example that said, "You should do your part, too." They helped Americans become involved.

By late August 1917, civilian athletic directors had been appointed for each of the camps. The athletic directors worked for the camp commanders, although they still answered to the Fosdick Commission. Their job was to relieve military officers of the responsibility for planning and organizing the athletic programs in each camp. There had been some initial misgivings by the Army about giving responsibility for the physical education of recruits over to civilians. However, after the Fosdick Commission reiterated that its plan called for the establishment of a military organization answerable to the General Staff, the plan received the full support of the military and the work began. The athletic organization in each camp was governed by an Army division athletic council which was supplemented by councils at the regimental level and individual company organizations. Camp commanders were pleased and in some cases recommended that their athletic directors be given regular commissions in the National Army.<sup>27</sup>

Not everything went smoothly or according to plan. One problem that arose almost immediately was rivalry between the various service organizations in the camps. The YMCA in particular seemed to be put out by the arrival of the Fosdick Commission

appointed athletic directors. The YMCA already had a jump on training camp work as a result of its previous servicemen's activities. It already had existing programs established in some of the training camps. That there was resentment on the part of YMCA athletic and physical directors toward the new Fosdick Commission directors was understandable. But when some YMCA directors actually opposed the efforts of the new directors, immediate corrective action was taken to quell the problem. Fosdick, himself, met in August 1917, with Dr. George Fisher, the head of the YMCA's Athletic Department, to resolve any questions of authority within the camps. The Fosdick Commission had been granted sole authority to manage activities by the War and Navy Departments, there it remained. Fosdick and Fisher released a joint statement to that effect.<sup>28</sup> Throughout the war, however, there were instances of friction between the different agencies. It is reasonable to assume that in many cases friction may have been the result of the personalities involved, rather than the system itself. There were certainly greater problems that required immediate attention and resolution.

Perhaps the greatest problem was that of obtaining athletic equipment. There was not enough readily available to implement a program of any size. The YMCA had some equipment, but certainly not enough to go around. The YMCA and the Knights of Columbus bought a considerable amount of equipment during the war which they loaned to the troops. The troops bought some equipment for themselves through company funds. The Fosdick Commission formed an Athletic Equipment sub-committee within the Athletic Division to take on the task of determining what equipment was required and finding equipment quickly. Since time was critical, the Fosdick Commission decided to accept donations of equipment and money from "patriotically inclined athletic organizations" until such time as Congress authorized funds for purchases. Sport associations around the country sponsored tournaments and used the proceeds to purchase sport specific equipment for the troops. For example, the United States National Lawn Tennis Association, after raising funds initially for the Ambulance Corps, donated tennis

equipment to the training camps and the AEF. In early 1918, in response to a request for 80 nets, 160 dozen tennis balls and 300 racquets for the men in France, the Association took action to meet the request.<sup>29</sup>

The Fosdick Commission organized the United War Work Campaign as its fund raising instrument. A Sports Committee, within the War Work Campaign, worked through the various branches of sports to raise a sum of \$170,500,000. This was the amount needed to carry out the work of the principal service organizations working under the Commission. Since much of the work of service organizations included athletics as a major component, it was logical that sports associations, amateur and professional, be solicited for contributions. The Sports Committee's purpose was twofold. First, it sought to obtain direct revenue. Second, it was a publicity seeking vehicle. Through athletic competitions and exhibitions it intended to draw attention to the identity of the War Work Campaign and the combined work of the service associations. The Sports Committee deemed it fitting that sports was being used as a vehicle to fund the service associations, since much of their work was devoted to offering athletic opportunities to the troops. Almost any type of athletic contest was considered suitable for fund raising including golf, track and field, football, soccer, boxing, billiards and pool, trap shooting and motorcycle and bicycle racing. The Sports Committee recommended in its working manual that activities be adapted to local circumstances and that other features might be included as fund raising events. Penciled in at the bottom of one copy of the manual was the suggestion that dog shows, flower shows, fetes and other exhibitions might also be suitable. Grounds and arenas for contests and exhibitions were to be secured through donations. All overhead expenses were to be eliminated including payment for the participants regardless of their professional or amateur status. Proceeds from the events would be sent directly to the War Work Campaign's treasurer. Based on the popularity of collegiate football, the Sports Committee anticipated that the game would command large audiences. It worked to arrange contests between training camp teams and those of

nearby colleges and universities.<sup>30</sup> Arguably the most successful of these fund raising football games, the contest in Chicago between the Camp Custer and Camp Grant squads, brought in gate receipts of \$40,000. The money was used to purchase athletic equipment for the soldiers in France.<sup>31</sup>

A number of organizations were instrumental in donating athletic equipment to the soldiers. Among them were the Clark Griffith (manager of the Washington Americans) Bat and Ball Fund; the National Lawn Tennis Association; the United States Golf Association; organizations of the Amateur Athletic Union; State Councils of Defense; the American Red Cross; the WCCS in individual towns; Post Exchange funds; and the General Athletic Equipment Fund, a fund raised by newspapermen and turned over to the Fosdick Commission.<sup>32</sup> Athletics for the troops had caught the attention and spirit of the American people. If the boys wanted athletics, then athletics they would have.

The Athletic Equipment sub-committee decided that the best way to handle the huge amounts of athletic equipment was to design a standard box that would become the property of each company-sized unit (seventy-five to one hundred men). The box would accompany the unit wherever it went. As the war continued, the equipment boxes were often supplemented with additional baseballs, playground bats, quoits and posts, and whistles (see Appendix C).

The government placed a \$50,000 purchase contract for athletic equipment to fill the unit boxes in September 1917. This purchase was followed in February 1918, by a \$250,000 contract, and a third contract in October 1918, for \$490,000. One effect of the procurement and buying organization of the sub-committee was the formulation, in February, of a set of specifications for athletic equipment. Military specifications for standardization and quality control, used by the government when soliciting purchasing bids, were not a new concept. However, this was the first time they had been formulated for athletic equipment.<sup>33</sup>



Within six months of the declaration of war, the Fosdick Commission had appointed athletic directors and physical and bayonet training instructors for all the camps. It had begun a procurement plan for athletic equipment (see Appendix D). In November, camp commanders were authorized by Baker to begin constructing athletic fields and facilities, including baseball diamonds, basketball courts, playing fields and swimming pools (see Appendix E). The Fosdick Commission's plan was in place and, largely through the efforts of its subordinate service agencies, athletic and recreative programs were being conducted in the camps.

## CHAPTER THREE

### “FIT FOR FIGHTING....”: ATHLETICS IN THE TRAINING CAMPS<sup>1</sup>

#### I

The Fosdick Commission's work within the training camps and their surrounding communities was based on the theory that the development and maintenance of physical and moral fitness would result in a more efficient fighting man, and ultimately, a better citizen. Acting to repress the twin vices of alcohol and prostitution, Congress had passed legislation that prohibited the sale of alcohol to servicemen and the establishment of saloons or brothels within prescribed limits of military posts. The Fosdick Commission implemented the preventive portion of the Government's plan. Prevention was possible through athletics and the availability of wholesome leisure activities. A massive athletic program for the masses, enacted as part of the military training program to develop physical fitness, military skills and discipline, was the first part of the prescription. The second was to make organized recreational athletics and structured activities available during off-duty hours.

Athletic or physical training directors were billeted to each camp and cantonment, both in the states and, as the war drew to a close, in Europe. For the first time the Government allotted sufficient recreational funds to units which eliminated the need for officers to dip into their own pockets to buy athletic equipment. Athletics and organized recreation were the order of the day. Fosdick and Edward F. Allen wrote in *Century Magazine* about one camp whose commander had an imaginative way of getting his troops involved in athletics. The brigadier general issued the order that every soldier be given the opportunity to participate in at least one sport, and that a daily recreation period be provided to vary the regularly prescribed physical drill. The general also established a

competition consisting of five specific events—tug of war, basketball, soccer, playground ball and volleyball. Those men who participated in the competition were excused from daily physical drill so long as they were engaged in games as part of the competition. Every man had the chance to participate. The experience in this camp was not an isolated case. In camps across the country, soldiers and sailors participated in sports on a level that had never been seen before.<sup>2</sup> *Outing* magazine featured a story on Camp Cody, a cantonment of thirty-five thousand men at Deming New, Mexico, in which it reported that ninety-eight percent of the camp's soldiers had taken part in athletics the previous week.<sup>3</sup> At a different western camp there were sixteen baseball diamonds where it was not unusual to see all the diamonds in use at once. Another camp had twenty-six football fields with a seating capacity of eighteen thousand. In a week's time at one naval station, three thousand sailors played baseball. Soldiers played soccer in mass games of as many as four hundred players with eight to ten balls in play at once. Cross-country meets might see two thousand runners competing. When the Fosdick Commission set out to make athletics available to the masses it did not exaggerate its purpose.<sup>4</sup>

## II

Nor did the commission exaggerate the importance of using the application of specific sports to teach military skills to the masses. Of all the sports, boxing had the most transferability of skills. Soldiers and sailors engaged in a variety of physical contact sports, but only boxing required a man to stand toe-to-toe with another man, to hit, and to be hit in return. It was for this very reason that the Fosdick Commission instituted a formal boxing program in the training camps. "Boxing," said the Fosdick Commission, "teaches the manly art of self-control as well as that of self-defense. It also makes better bayonet fighters."<sup>5</sup> The experience of the Canadians, who had already participated in the trench warfare in France, gave credence to the relationship between boxing and bayonet fighting. William P. Armstrong, a boxing instructor in Canada, who later worked for the

Fosdick Commission in the United States camps, first made the correlation. Most of the positions in boxing had a counterpart in bayonet fighting. Quickness and aggressiveness were natural byproducts of boxing training which, it was calculated, would save American lives in combat. This notion also had been borne out by the Canadians who reported that “the agility and quickness of eye gained in boxing is a valuable part of the soldier’s equipment”<sup>6</sup>

Instructors taught the relationship of boxing’s moves to those of bayonet fighting in the classroom and on the training field. Three movies were produced to assist the instructors. The movies showed the world’s champion fighters posing in fighting stances which illustrated the starting positions and the landing of blows. The corresponding bayoneting technique was then shown. One of the movies, featuring middleweight Mike Gibbons, made the point succinctly with a subtitle that said: “Bayoneting is boxing with a gun in your hands.” For example, the movement of the right hand in boxing’s right hand uppercut to the body is nearly identical to the arc described by the movement of the right hand on a rifle while executing a vertical butt stroke to the groin. Likewise, the movements of the left hand in boxing’s left hand swing for the head correspond with a horizontal bayonet slash to the neck. A left lead in boxing is similar to a long point thrust in bayonet fighting.<sup>7</sup> The footwork was also similar. One particular move, “the Fitzsimmons shift” was popular and very effective. This move, named for its originator, Bob Fitzsimmons, who held titles in several weight divisions during the early years of the century, involved moving the right foot forward quickly while simultaneously executing a straight shot with the right fist, immediately followed by a straight left. The move became famous when Fitzsimmons put Jim Corbett down for the count in March 1897 and won the heavyweight title. Its application to bayonet fighting could achieve the same result. The rapid transfer of energy from the legs to the bayonet simultaneously thrusting forward placed the momentum of the soldier’s entire weight behind the thrust. The result was a tremendously forceful and shocking attack.

The Fosdick Commission wanted recruits to replicate this type of aggressive attack and to practice it until it became second nature. New rules for boxing in the training camps were designed specifically to provoke an aggressive style of fighting. The training of officers in particular embodied this attitude. Herbert Reed, in a series of articles published in *The Independent* on officer training being conducted at Plattsburg, New York, commented on the fighting ability of the student-officers. Reed stated that "We have yet to become as ugly as we ought to be....Clean, upstanding American men who are seeking their commissions here are temporarily reluctant to admit that they have got to learn 'dirty fighting.'" Even among the large number of college athletes, specifically football players, who were used to hard, physical give-and-take play, there was a slow discovery that there was no such thing as fair play in close combat. In order to be effective leaders, they would, at least temporarily, have to dig down inside of themselves, to the roots of their very beings, to change those beings into something tremendously repugnant to them. The Fosdick Commission believed that the demoralizing effect of an aggressive bayonet attack on an opponent could be devastating, and for this reason the camp physical directors paid much attention to developing fighting skills and using realistic practice dummies.<sup>8</sup> They replaced long distance lunging with the bayonet, that had been taught for decades, with violent and quick closing on the enemy, followed by a long thrust and a short thrust. An alternative was "a jab to the throat or vitals with both hands right under the bayonet hilt, a crash of the butt on the head or face, or as a last resort a terrific downward blow with the knife edge of the weapon." Reed suggested that nobody with an imagination could go through the exercise without feeling a "queer sensation in the neighborhood of his midriff." One student-officer even passed out as a result of the vivid picture his imagination called to mind.<sup>9</sup>

In an era when great credence was given to the voice of the expert, it seems natural that the Fosdick Commission would also solicit its own fighting experts. It had already enlisted the aid of the educators, the recreationalists and the university athletic

directors and now it found the very best boxing instructors that could be had—professional prizefighters. Looking at the credentials of the fighters that were chosen, it is interesting to note that many of them were known for scientific boxing, “artistry,” tenacity, and their canny ring sense. A large percentage also had a knockout punch. The Fosdick Commission sought these characteristics with the intent that they would be inculcated in the troops sufficiently to deliver a knockout punch on the Huns, and to bring American boys home alive.

The Fosdick Commission’s instructor roster lists thirty-five professional fighters and reads like a *Who’s Who* of the world and American rings. Among the best of the group were heavyweight Frank Moran; light heavyweights Tom Gibbons, Jack Root, and world champion Battling Levinsky; middleweights Tommy Ryan and Mike Gibbons; welterweight Packey McFarland; lightweights Willie Ritchie, Joe Mandot, Richie Mitchell, Charlie White, and current world champion, Benny Leonard; world champion featherweight, Johnny Kilbane; and bantamweight Johnny Coulon . These men were the epitome of expertise. Their celebrated status as athletes was recognized immediately and their mere presence on the training platform was sufficient to capture the attention of the thousands of men they were to train. In addition to the fighters named above, boxers were pulled from the officer and enlisted ranks to augment the Fosdick Commission’s instructors. There was a small number of men within the ranks who had some prior boxing experience as amateurs, in athletic associations or colleges, and there were even some professionals who had enlisted like light heavyweight and middleweight champion Harry Greb and reigning bantamweight champion Pete Herman.

Two of the Fosdick Commission’s boxing instructors are worthy of special mention because their stories show the diversity of careers represented among the instructors and illustrate the consummate skill that became resident in the training camps. “Phantom Mike” Gibbons, formerly a welterweight, was never officially declared a champion though he was generally acknowledged as the pre-eminent middleweight

contender from 1908 to 1916. He was well-known as a very technically proficient fighter and highly respected. He fought 132 bouts during a distinguished career that ended in 1922. The impact Mike Gibbon had on the sport is best described by former U.S. Marine Gene Tunney, who won the AEF boxing championship in 1919. The noncommissioned officer in charge of the AEF boxers had been a sports writer from Joplin, Missouri. An exceptionally knowledgeable man on matters pugilistic, he had seen Gibbons beat Jack "The Giant Killer" Dillon and related to the aspiring Tunney how completely Gibbons had outboxed Dillon. A past master of defensive boxing and a classicist at sparring, Gibbons had used form, brains and "mentality" in the ring with feinting and quick stepping to reduce the ten round match to a "thing of mathematics." Tunney's study of Mike Gibbons's style and his later friendship with both Gibbons and his younger brother Tom significantly influenced Tunney's own style. Their influence helped him to defeat the heavyweight champion, Jack Dempsey, in 1926 and again in 1927.<sup>10</sup>

The second instructor, Benny Leonard, was certainly one of the greatest of the lightweights and his name is included in the pantheon of all-time great boxers. In a career extending from 1911 to 1925 he fought 209 matches with 88 wins, 68 by knockout and 115 no decisions. He was knocked out himself only four times. Leonard reigned as lightweight champion for eight years from May 1917, until he retired undefeated in 1925. Leonard was the consummate boxer, capable of packing as powerful a punch as any slugger in his weight division and of out boxing the most scientific ring tacticians. During his fight with Ever Hammer in 1916, Leonard displayed his mastery of ring science after being cut over the eye. He continually tied Hammer up using a variety of tricks to prevent further injury to his eye until he knocked Hammer out in the twelfth round. He was also as quick with his mouth as he was with his hands and feet. In two fights, with Charlie White and Richie Mitchell, after being knocked down in early rounds, he challenged them to come in and mix it up. His banter gave him time to recover and threw his opponents sufficiently off guard for Leonard to defeat them within a few rounds. Later, he used the

same tactic in a fight against Lew Tendler in 1922. Taking a powerful left to the stomach that paralyzed his legs, Leonard told Tendler to “keep them up.” Tendler stopped to argue about the alleged “low” punch which gave Leonard just enough time get his legs back. Leonard embodied the aggressive spirit and pluck that the Fosdick Commission wanted to imbue in the Army’s new soldiers.<sup>11</sup>

The Fosdick Commission built a staff of close combat experts and martial artists around the boxers. Six men are listed in the Fosdick Commission’s “History of Athletic Division” as follows: Kogiro Haneishi, professional jujitsu instructor from Japan; J.J. O’Brien, hand-to-hand fighting expert from Cleveland, Ohio; Sergeant Hugh Ross, hand-to-hand fighting expert from Kentucky; William C. Sandow, hand-to-hand fighting expert from Rochester, New York; Captain Allen Smith, who had studied jujitsu in Japan; and Al Williams, hand-to-hand fighting instructor at the Olympic Club, San Francisco, California.<sup>12</sup> It is unclear what exactly the expertise of these men was, but based on their association with the professional boxers, it is reasonable to assume that they were to provide instruction in grappling techniques, something boxers could not provide, yet essential for trench fighting.

These instructors had their work cut out for them. Their task was to develop in the new draftees the skills and attitudes necessary to kill another man either with their bare hands, or with a rifle and fixed bayonet. The sport of boxing was a logical choice for use as a training vehicle. The object of boxing was to make “heads up and eyes open” two-fisted fighting men, not expert boxers. Dr. Joseph Raycroft, head of the Army’s Athletic Division, said the instructors’ job was to get the men to fight aggressively and effectively. “A straight left,” he contended, “well delivered and backed up by aggressive American determination, is a Boche [German] eliminant in nine out of ten cases.”<sup>13</sup> To that end, boxing instructors directed their instruction to the masses rather than to a few individuals.



Perhaps the greatest contribution of boxing to military training could be found in the development of the willingness and the ability to fight at close range.<sup>14</sup> Edward Allen, writing in 1917 on the Fosdick Commission's work, asked an Army officer at a boxing demonstration one evening how many men he supposed had ever hit a man since they were boys. The officer replied, "Not ten per cent," which Allen thought was probably correct.<sup>15</sup> The boxing training that men received in the camps taught them a lesson in the reality of physical conflict. Given the enormity of the task, it appeared unlikely that even with the expertise of professional boxers and hand-to-hand fighting experts, more than a modicum of fighting skills could be taught. The solution to the problem turned out to be relatively simple and totally consistent with the philosophy of the Fosdick Commission. The key was efficient organization.

Nearly every large camp had at least one boxing instructor, usually a professional prizefighter or a highly ranked amateur. Due to the large number of men requiring training, the first order of business was to train assistant instructors. Anyone with any previous boxing or wrestling experience was a likely candidate to be an assistant. Once a cadre of assistants was trained, the task of teaching all the recruits began. This was accomplished by having the instructor stand on a platform where he could be seen by several hundred men at once. The instructor demonstrated a move and the group then executed the same move. Assistant instructors were stationed within the group where they could make on the spot corrections. The assistants were also able to work with smaller groups throughout each camp. The training process to produce new assistants never stopped. As soon as a man was trained he was put to work and a new man began training. The goal was to achieve a sufficient number of assistants to provide one-on-one instruction for all recruits.<sup>16</sup>

The boxing instructors used training methods that were designed specifically for group learning. The same training methods, which provided progressive mastery of skills through mass participation, are used today by the U.S. Marine Corps to teach close

combat fighting to recruits. The first method was demonstration of a skill by the instructor which was then imitated by the recruits. Instructors initially taught the fundamentals of boxing, the individual techniques and movements. A natural progression of combinations of punches, jabs and footwork followed. Once the trainees had learned the combinations, instructors increased the tempo and introduced the recruits to shadow boxing. Shadow boxing developed physical endurance, poise and speed, attributes that were vital to success in hand-to-hand combat. Instructors demonstrated combinations from platforms while assistant instructors worked among the recruits making corrections. The Fosdick Commission held a number of conferences with its athletic directors and close combat instructors to standardize the instruction. They reduced the number of exercises and movements to a few that were proven effective and easily mastered.<sup>17</sup> The instructors calculated that through repetitive practice, the combinations of fighting movements would become second nature to the troops. In hand-to-hand combat, where a moment's hesitation could mean the difference between life or death, reaching the enemy first or responding more quickly with a fatal blow could mean salvation. Instructors placed shadow boxing in this context to illustrate the seriousness of the business.<sup>18</sup> When recruits mastered the basic offensive techniques, instructors paired individuals to teach blocks and counters. Here too, the tempo increased in relation to improvement in proficiency.

The Fosdick Commission athletic staff always looked for ways to improve the quality, and thus the efficiency, of the training. The large number of men requiring training taxed the instructors and the system. In one camp alone, thirty thousand men took daily boxing lessons. In another camp, the boxing instructor dealt with nearly twenty-five thousand men in one week, either individually or in groups, giving lectures or demonstrating from the platform.<sup>19</sup> Athletic directors and instructors were required to be creative. Floyd Rowe, the athletic director at Camp Custer devised a progressive method for teaching boxing. Lessons on the different phases of boxing were given to groups of

soldiers made up of three to six squads. This gave the men a comprehensive lesson in the same amount of time ordinarily used for a single lesson. Three squads learned fundamentals, six squads learned advanced techniques, three squads practiced the instructions, one squad practiced on punching bags, and one squad boxed in pairs. The boxing instructor was located with the second group where the most important instruction took place. The other groups were led by officers and men who had advanced training and skills. A training session, roughly forty-five minutes in duration, was broken down into seven and a half minutes each of fundamentals and practice, fifteen minutes of advanced techniques, two and a half minutes each on the punching bag and boxing, and a half minute rest between periods. This type of session provided variety and stimulated interest in the training.<sup>20</sup>

The Navy's Athletic Division, also part of the Fosdick Commission, was equally committed to developing fighters. Walter Camp, the Commissioner of Athletics for the Naval Stations, ordered that standardized boxing and wrestling instruction be provided for the entire Navy. The standardized instructions resulted from a study conducted over several months in different camps by Herman P. Olcott, athletic director at the Great Lakes Station, Illinois. Olcott was the director of athletics at the University of Kansas and former football coach at Yale and the Naval Academy. The study sought to develop a standardized method that would interest the greatest number of men in the sport and exercise of boxing and wrestling. The study revealed that instruction was necessary in the proper way to ball the fists and position the feet; on balance; and in rudimentary techniques such as the left jab, left hook and right cross. The Navy recruited former professional fighters to teach boxing just like their counterparts in the Army camps. Fighters like Mike Glover, Eddie Murphy, Eddie Shevlin, William Rolfe, William Freeman and Granville Lee taught classes to groups of sailors ranging in size from one hundred to two hundred men.<sup>21</sup>

Wrestling instruction was also taught in groups with the help of knowledgeable instructors. Ben Reuben, the champion middleweight professional and Jack Gruppell, the Amateur Athletic Union welterweight champion worked closely with Olcott in developing standardized techniques. These techniques included holds and breaks such as the waist hold, head and strangle locks, the flying mare, the jujitsu leg break, breaking the arm in a clinch and defense against kicks and knives.<sup>22</sup>

To ensure that the troops fully understood the ramifications of their boxing training, the Fosdick Commission established new rules for organized matches. The new rules were designed to give greater credit to the boxer who was aggressive. In this regard they more closely resembled the Marquis of Queensbury rules which stressed fast, clever fighting. According to Raycroft, "success in bayonet fighting depends upon aggressive determination and attack even more than upon skill....A fierce attacking forward action bayonet charge means a 98 per cent. quota of fighting men returned to safety." It was necessary, therefore, to put a premium on offensive fighting and to discourage backstepping, covering up and purely defensive work. An attack had to consist of a combination of six blows.<sup>23</sup> Raycroft directed that boxing matches were to be supervised so that a stinging blow or defeat could be used as a stimulus for self-betterment, the ultimate goal being the development of a first class fighting man.<sup>24</sup> Benny Leonard, lightweight champion of the world and boxing instructor at Camp Upton, was well suited for reinforcing Raycroft's boxing philosophy. Though no stranger to defensive tactics, he was an aggressive fighter by nature. Leonard was quite pleased with the way the men took to the sport. Wild flailing of punches turned into squared-off bouts in which the competitors kept their heads and guards up, just like the pros. The pro, himself, received a taxing work out. Constant demonstrations kept him in the physical trim necessary to defend his championship against Johnny Dundee, his long time rival, immediately following the war.<sup>25</sup>

Fighting was serious business. However, the basics of boxing, and to a lesser extent those of wrestling, served two additional purposes within the training camps and the war effort in general. Boxing provided an athletic, recreational outlet for the troops both in a participatory role and as spectators. The natural outgrowth of training bouts was the organization of boxing matches held within and between units. The Fosdick Commission capitalized on boxing's popularity as a sport to provide a recreative outlet for the men and the individual and unit bragging rights, earned in organized matches, reinforced the lessons taught in boxing classes.

Like other sports, boxing offered an emotional release from the monotony of the daily routine and distracted the troops who may have been homesick or overwhelmed by the strange, new experiences of the training camp environment. The Fosdick Commission viewed the role of boxing in the training camps the same as it did in the AEF where a counter to the debilitating effects of shell shock was needed. Boxing became a major sport for the men in the training camps, running second only to baseball. Impromptu matches were fought at the small unit level. Some of these may actually have been arranged to settle disputes before they got out of hand and caused a problem within the unit. More often, the best boxers in the unit were pitted against each other in order to determine a unit champion. Company champions fought for brigade championships and eventually for the division title. The latter matches were well organized, highly publicized affairs that drew thousands of spectators. At Camp Cody, for instance, Wednesday afternoons were set aside for boxing matches held in the camp's big stadium. The camp boasted about the prowess of its fighters led by Packey McFarland and some of the best fighters the Southwest had to offer.<sup>26</sup> In a three night series of elimination tournaments held at another large camp, forty bouts were fought.<sup>27</sup> In some cases, matches were held between training camps. Walter Camp thought that the boxers and wrestlers at Boston Station were the best in the Navy for the 1918 season, and scheduled them for a match against the Camp Devens teams, to be conducted in the large recreation hall at Camp

Devens.<sup>28</sup> Under the leadership of heavyweight Frank Moran, the Division Boxing Instructor, the 27th Division, at Camp Wadsworth, had boxing instructors assigned to each company. Bouts were held twice a week and every other week bouts were scheduled with other camps.<sup>29</sup>

Boxing also served as a large draw for recruiting and for public awareness of the war effort. Matches were often scheduled as part of Liberty Loan bond drives. Something about two boxers, fighting man-to-man attracted crowds who, perhaps in their patriotic ardor, were able to experience the brutality of the war vicariously through the men in the ring. Demonstrations and exhibitions also showed the public the efficiency of the training being conducted in the camps. One particular exhibition staged by Navy recruiters to bolster enlistments and to promote the sale of bonds was held aboard the USS Recruit, the "land battleship" moored in Union Square. Seven, four round matches were fought with Mike Leonard, known as boxing's "Beau Brummel" and the boxing instructor at Pelham Bay naval training station, as the referee. The main event pitted three well known fighters against each other: Harry Greb, Joe Bonds and Jim Coffey. Greb used his speed to win the bout and then fought an exhibition bout against Al McCoy, the former middleweight champion. It is noteworthy that less than two months later a small noticed appeared in the *New York Times* announcing Greb's engagement as a boxing instructor for the Navy on USS Recruit.<sup>30</sup>

Benny Leonard was asked on several occasions to give boxing demonstrations or to participate in exhibitions as a means of raising money. One such request was to fight an exhibition in Philadelphia in support of a Mrs. Stotesbury's Liberty Loan program. Leonard agreed, but insisted that it be clearly understood that the exhibition was in no way to be considered a title defense.<sup>31</sup> The champion had much to lose by participating, as did the other fighters. Even in the training camps it is likely that the champions ran the risk of being hurt by an untrained fighter who lacked control, or by the braggart who only wished

to claim that he had punched the champ. Yet the boxers volunteered to serve and their contribution to the training, recreational and patriotic effort was beyond measure.

A description of one of Leonard's demonstrations appeared in the *New York Times* in June 1918. Disputing the opinion that Leonard was having an easy time of it as boxing instructor at Camp Upton, the reporter made a convincing case. The New York Athletic Club, an active supporter of the Fosdick Commission's program, sponsored a sports program to which had been added a military training exhibition. For nearly thirty minutes, Leonard led a group of "colored" troops through their movements. Positioned in the center of the divided group he barked out commands, "Left jab, skip; right jab, skip; body blow, advance," all the while dancing in and out in illustration of the correct movements. Despite his conditioning, the champ was breathing heavily by the time the exhibition ended. Leonard told the reporter afterwards that the men had made the lesson realistic. He could hear murmured threats against the Huns and when he did, he had to move quickly to avoid the blows being thrown at the imaginary enemy.<sup>32</sup>

However, not all Americans were as enamored with boxing as were the servicemen. Boxing, or prizefighting actually, was illegal in most states. Americans concerned about the morals of the country's youth, while acknowledging the transferability of boxing's techniques, albeit grudgingly, worried that their sons would become brutal. Moralists pointed out that only an infinitesimal number of men were ever actually involved in hand-to-hand combat. Against this criticism, the Fosdick Commission asked how much of a coward a man was if he refused to defend his fellow man against an unjust and murderous assault. Or, how much more a coward if he failed to rush to the defense of "bleeding and mutilated forms of outraged men and women." The Fosdick Commission answered these questions by saying that the bravery that men showed in combat was the bravery their parents had taught them. Bravery was but another trait like "tenderness, unselfishness, loyalty, laughter, courage, and endurance..." American boys would kill with a bayonet when required to, not out of bloodlust, but

“because of the righteousness of the cause.”<sup>33</sup> By training American men to be skilled, efficient fighters, the Commission expected to end the war more quickly. The Commission mitigated the perceptions of brutality and ennobled boxing by appealing to a higher moral purpose. In this way, the Fosdick Commission also carried out Baker’s precept that America’s young men would be better than they were before.

### III

The Fosdick Commission claimed that the physical skills required to play other sports were also transferable to soldiering. While there may be a small bit of truth to the claims, more compelling reasons for playing sports were to develop physical fitness and to foster teamwork and discipline—attributes that contributed to good citizenship. Sports also offered soldiers and sailors opportunities to have fun which the Fosdick Commission recognized as essential for mental and physical regeneration.

Athletic activities were as varied as the interests and experiences of the individual men in the camps. The Fosdick Commission had received its mandate from the Secretaries of War and the Navy to make life in the military, with the exception of combat itself, as close to that of home as possible. The mandate was a reflection of the growing popularity of recreation oriented reform initiatives being implemented throughout the country and the flourishing national interest in sports. Through its subordinate service agencies, the Fosdick Commission endeavored to provide as many athletic opportunities as it could, believing that any participation in recreative sports could only benefit the individual and create a more efficient fighting force. Wholesome recreation was a good alternative to vice and sports, with its many benefits, was wholesome recreation.

Among the many sports played in the camps, baseball was king. The headline of the March 11, 1918, sports section of the *New York Times* proclaimed: “More than 4,000



Nines to play for Laurels of America's B.B. League." Sub-headlines announced: "2,000,000 MEN JOIN UNCLE SAM'S LEAGUE, Vast Baseball Organization Is Planned for Army and Navy Camps of the Nation, TEAM FOR EACH COMPANY." The article described the widespread enthusiasm for the sport as a "Utopia in athletic endeavor" which the pioneers of physical education had only dreamed of, but never believed would ever happen. What was happening was that a branch of sport had reached that point of amateur perfection at which two million men were playing the sport for sport's sake. In places where the climate is mild, baseball was played through the winter, but with the arrival of spring, the soldiers and sailors began playing without waiting for an "official" season to begin. The Fosdick Commission was reported to be organizing new leagues that, where possible, allowed for travel between camps to play games. The Navy's plan, formulated by Walter Camp, called for inter-service and inter-station games. The emphasis on baseball was part of the Fosdick Commission's plan to keep the troops morally fit by providing wholesome recreation and to prepare them for service "over there." Baseball, more than many other games, developed "the coordination of mind and muscle and judgment of distance." The application was found in throwing grenades where accuracy in distance is essential. Men who had experience playing baseball were judged to be better grenade throwers. The *New York Times* article stated that when the recreative aspects of playing baseball are combined with the military training value of the sport, it is no wonder that the Fosdick Commission wanted every soldier and sailor to play baseball.<sup>34</sup>

Professional baseball teams made their contributions to the war effort as well. Caught between the Secretary of War's "work or fight" dictum and the clamor of the public, including the soldiers, to play out the 1918 season, baseball's pros donated time and equipment to the services. The New York Yankees took a road trip to Macon, Georgia to play the Camp Wheeler champions. Although the Wheeler team was badly beaten by the pros, everyone had a great time. The game also netted \$200 for the Camp Wheeler Baseball League. The players, some of whom had participated in an earlier

“Yankees” businessman’s training camp before the war, spent a few days mingling with the troops. Several days later, the Yankees played the 124th Infantry team from Camp Wheeler before a crowd of twelve thousand soldiers. The game was a rout. Every Yankee scored in the first inning and two scored twice before the side was retired. The game, which was described as a burlesque rather than a ball game, was called in the seventh inning with the score at 12 to 4, but not before the Yankee’s Ping Bodie led the horseplay by insisting on running the bases in reverse order.<sup>35</sup>

The Boston Red Sox and the Brooklyn Dodgers traveled to Camp Pike, near Little Rock, Arkansas, to inaugurate the camp’s new ball park with an exhibition game. The game was rained out, but the several thousand soldiers in the stands were not entirely disappointed. The players entertained the troops during their practice session before the rain started. Boston’s Babe Ruth was loudly cheered for hitting five balls over the right field fence. The troops kept calling for more until the Red Sox manager came out to protest the high cost of baseballs being used for that type of entertainment. Other professional teams played exhibition games to raise money for the troops. The Washington Americans, led by their manager, Clark Griffith, established an equipment fund from the proceeds of some of their games and through donations. In March 1918, they shipped nearly 1300 sets of baseball equipment to military camps in France.<sup>36</sup>

Professionalism in sports contributed to training camp athletic programs in other ways as well. For instance, emergence of a professional football league sparked a national interest in what had only a few years earlier been almost exclusively a college sport. Football became one of the most popular sports in the training camps. Additionally, it dovetailed neatly with the Fosdick Commission’s principles of physical training. Because of the very nature of the game, playing football was touted as being a great learning experience for the recruits. Paralleling the lessons of boxing, the game caused the players to close with each other in violent confrontations, to hit and to be hit. Football required discipline and teamwork. It promoted an aggressive fighting spirit. Raymond Fosdick and

Edward F. Allen, writing for *The Century Magazine*, spoke of the effect on the morale of the participants and the enthusiasm of the spectators that one of the camps could produce with its twenty-six football fields and seating capacity for eighteen thousand.<sup>37</sup> Football was big business. Of all the sports, it may very well have had the largest drawing power for revenue and recruitment. The game played at Chicago, between Camp Custer and Camp Grant that reportedly netted \$40,000 was perhaps the highest gate received. By some accounts, the Chicago game raised only \$23,000. Nevertheless, this was a considerable sum and it was only one of many, many games staged throughout the country.

The Custer-Grant game was particularly memorable for reasons other than the money it raised. It was great football. The Custer soldiers, coached by Fielding Yost, football coach at the University of Michigan, went to Chicago with a team that was probably one of the finest in the country. The twenty-four-man squad was all officers, two captains and the rest lieutenants. The backfield was led by Georgetown All-American quarterback, Harry Costello. The other backs were Cramer and Langhoff from Wisconsin and Michigan State's first All-American, Jerry DePrado. They met the team from Camp Grant, a powerhouse in its own right, before a crowd of 15,000 on a typically cold Chicago December day. Coached by Amos A. Stagg, Grant's twenty-four-man roster included Cornell's All-American back Fritz Shiverick, Illinois fullback Gene Schobinger, and All-American end Nelson Norgren from Chicago. Grant scored a touchdown in the first quarter and led the game 7-0 at the half. Although the second quarter was scoreless, the punting exhibition given by Shiverick and Costello, both had punts better than fifty yards, was reported to be the finest kicking seen in many years. Early in the third quarter Grant attacked again, and after being held for three downs by Custer's goal line defense, managed to score again. Custer came back from a 14 point deficit in the fourth quarter with a punt return to the Grant fifteen yard line. Langhoff's touchdown put Custer on the scoreboard, but the extra point attempt failed. Grant wasted no time moving the ball

down the field. Schobinger ran a sweep around the right end toward Custer's "Chief" Gardiner (a former star from Carlisle). Gardiner who had been playing a very aggressive game against Schobinger came up to meet him. Gardiner had been accused by the Illinois soldiers of slugging as part of his defensive tactics and at one point had literally ripped off Schobinger's helmet. This play was no exception. Schobinger attempted to shift the ball from one arm to the other which gave Gardiner the chance he was looking for. Snatching the ball away from Schobinger he flashed fifty-five yards down the field for Custer's second score. The point after attempt was good and Custer trailed by only one point. Recovering its own on-side kick Custer was closing on Grant's goal when Norgren dumped Custer back Blake Miller, from Michigan State, for his second major loss of the day. Custer's loss of yardage also coincided with its loss of the game. That evening a gala banquet was held at the LaSalle Hotel where both teams were feted by Chicago's social elite, many of whom had also braved the cold weather to watch the game. This game was special because of the quality of football played by both teams. Yet in the greater context of the war effort, it was just one of many.<sup>38</sup>

On the West Coast, the Marines were the masters of football. The team from Marine Barracks, Mare Island, California, dominated the game on the collegiate and the military gridirons. Writing about the Marines in *Sunset, the Pacific Monthly*, Robin Baily compared the use of athletics by the Marine Corps to that of universities who used athletics to draw men to their campuses. "Who would have heard of Harvard or Yale," Baily mused, tongue in cheek, "if they had not put teams on the football field and crews on the river? Certainly not a man on the street." The Marines knew a good thing when they saw it and took on the stratagem as their own. They organized a team that could humble any rival. Beating the likes of the Universities of Oregon (28-0); California (28-0 and 27-0); Southern California (34-0); and St. Mary's, Oakland, California (27-0), the Mare Island Marines, led by Captain John W. Beckett, All-American tackle at Oregon in 1916, racked up two hundred points to their opponents ten. According to Baily, students

“flocked to the colors of their conquerors.” The other service teams were forced to concede the athletic and recruiting prowess of the Marines. In an earlier *Sunset* article on the 144th California Field Artillery, known as the Grizzlies, Baily had touted the athletic abilities of this regiment and extolled the virtues of having star collegiate athletes on the team. He then pointed out that the Marines were better. The Marine’s greatest victory in 1918 was its win in the Rose Bowl over their West Coast rivals, the National Army’s 91st Infantry Division team from Camp Lewis. The division champion team, selected from among the division’s fifty-two thousand men, had the country’s military football championship wrenched from its grasp by the Marines, who then used the 19-7 victory to enhance their own recruiting drive.<sup>39</sup>

Football, baseball and boxing were very popular sports among the servicemen and they were probably the most visible to the civilian communities surrounding the training camps. But they were just a part of the athletic and recreational programs. Although each of these sports allowed for a large number of men to be involved, either as a player or spectator, with the exception of the training aspects of boxing, they did not offer the player participation opportunities that other sports did. Rugby and pushball were also popular, but they too were somewhat limited by the number of players allowable. Of all the athletic games played in the training camps, cageball and soccer offered the greatest opportunities for participation by the masses.<sup>40</sup> Cageball and soccer provided plenty of rough-and-tumble excitement, which was in keeping with the Fosdick Commission’s philosophy of strenuous training. It was not unusual to have soccer games in which four hundred men competed with eight to ten balls in play at once. It is likely that the same was true for the number of participants in cageball games. Soccer also possessed transferability of skill to a military application. Because the game required a player to be able to kick the ball with either foot, it developed balance and a short gait useful for crossing the “churned and furrowed surface of no-man’s land.”<sup>41</sup>

Cross-country running and the track and field events drew fairly large numbers of participants. Meets were held within camps, between camps and colleges and sometimes they were held in conjunction with large athletic club meets. Cross-country running of distances from three to seven miles was certain to develop men physically as were the events of track and field. All National Collegiate Athletic Association events were represented in the meets and many college stars vied for unit honors. Notices of the enlistment or commissioning of prominent track and field athletes appeared regularly in newspapers and magazines.

A few of the sports represented in the service, such as polo, tennis and golf, were those favored by the high-caste, social elites. Polo was by its nature a rich man's sport which, at a minimum, required the financial wherewithal to own and care for a horse. Polo players were a small fraternity in the United States and it is notable that the majority of them saw service during the war. The American Polo Association recorded that of its 1,440 members, 985 were known to be in the Army or Navy in September 1918. Of that number, the majority were officers including 142 in the ranks of lieutenant colonel through major general. The number of Jockey Club and National Steeplechase and Hunt Association members in the service was so great that the government granted a special dispensation to enable the members to participate in the United Hunts Meet in May 1918.<sup>42</sup> While many active duty Army officers were former cavalrymen, the war in France signaled the demise of horse troops in modern warfare. Not to be deterred, the polo players and their turf oriented companions, the horse racers and huntsmen, were drawn to aviation to fulfill their needs for excitement, derring-do and greater glory. Polo fours could be found in some camps, but they appear to have been privately organized teams. Camp Sheridan, commanded by Major General Charles G. Treat, was one such camp. Treat, with his friend Major General Leonard Wood, had been instrumental in introducing polo to the Army. They had even managed to persuade Congress to pass a bill authorizing the payment of funds for the upkeep of a small number of polo ponies and equipment for

officers who lacked the means to do so themselves. When Wood remarked that he wished, from a military point of view, that there were a million polo players in the country, he was echoing the sentiments of the Commander-in-Chief of the English forces in France, General Sir Douglas Haig. Haig stated in a report on training operations that those interested in the welfare of the army should encourage officers to participate in sports that have real value in training for war, by which he meant polo and the hunt. Although these sports must have been seen by some as anachronistic, sports of skill and endurance were considered by American leaders, as well as those of the English, to be “important aids toward efficiency.”<sup>43</sup>

Golf was more widely received than polo, and tennis was played on a regular basis. Both sports were encouraged for their recreative value. If many of the Ivy League tennis players rushed off to join the service, it worked to the advantage of the camp physical directors who were looking for ways to promote the sport and desperately needed coaches. The United States National Lawn Tennis Association made up for the loss of its players by holding benefit tournaments to raise money for tennis equipment. The Association donated the equipment to the military. In communities surrounding the training camps, country clubs, participating in the work of the WCCS, frequently invited the enlisted men to play tennis and golf. Tennis was played everyday at Camp Cody on the camp's courts and also on the concrete courts of a Deming, New Mexico resident who donated playing time to the camp via the WCCS. Twilight tournaments for tennis and baseball featuring the camp's best players were popular. The full moon lighted the plains on which the camp was situated so well, night games were possible without artificial lighting.<sup>44</sup>

As might be expected, the western camps had more than just a familiarity with equestrian events. Western camps staged elaborate rodeos. Camp Lewis claimed that there was not a horse ranch or cow outfit in the West that was not represented in the camp. Camp Lewis was home to the Army's Remount Depot so rodeo events were a





natural part of life for the soldiers. When they did stage a rodeo, the entries in the bronco-busting and bull dogging events included many of the cowboy stars of the rodeo circuit. Camp Cody frequently held Wild West Days on Sundays. This was done partly so that the city boys in camp, who thought that everyone in the West rode a horse and carried a lariat, would not be disappointed. It was also done to provide the men who possessed equestrian skills an opportunity to maintain them and to participate in activities they enjoyed. The entire camp was invited to join in, either as a participant or a spectator, and everyone was encouraged to have a good time.<sup>45</sup> In this way, the Fosdick Commission met its mandate to make the camps more homelike and to offer opportunities for wholesome recreation.

Whereas the practical application of the rodeo to military training in the Army had been self-evident for years, the Navy had failed to grasp the importance of one sport that should have had equally obvious relevance. Early in 1918, Walter Camp announced that results of a survey conducted at the training stations indicated that nearly fifty percent of the recruits could not swim. Swimming was not a pre-requisite skill for becoming a sailor and really made no contribution to the ability of sailors to accomplish their missions. Commonsense would dictate, however, that anyone associated with the water as closely as sailors were, should possess some aquatic skills. Swimming was a skill that could save a sailor's life. Nevertheless, the number of non-swimmers was not totally unexpected. Recruits for the Navy came from all over the country, not just from the port and fishing centers on the coasts as they had in the days of the sailing Navy. Many men came from communities that had no swimming facilities. Camp strongly advocated swimming as an exercise that developed the whole body uniformly so he decided to change things. He ordered that every sailor in the training stations be given swimming instruction. He also began working on a plan to teach non-swimming sailors on ships and stations. The instruction consisted of dry land lessons followed by progressive drills in the water, the same as it is done today.<sup>46</sup>

Swimming was not simply a compulsory activity for sailors, it was a great recreational pastime that was shared by sailors and soldiers alike. Camp athletic directors staged swimming meets between units and with nearby colleges just as they did in other sports. Some camps were fortunate enough to have swimming pools. In others the soldiers used field expedient methods to go swimming. The Camp Cody soldiers used local irrigation tanks for swimming until the WCCS acquired the use of a privately owned natatorium for them.<sup>47</sup>

Soldiers and sailors assigned to northern camps participated in winter sports as part of their recreational programs. An effort may have been made to incorporate winter sports, such skiing, into the training syllabus, but trench warfare in Europe did not call for soldiers with winter sport specific skills. It is unlikely, therefore, that winter sports served any purpose other than to promote physical fitness and wholesome entertainment. Tobogganing and sledding were popular where there were hills. Ice rinks were flooded for those interested in skating. Camp Grant led the other camps in its adoption of winter sports. Lewis Omer, the camp's physical director and former director of athletics at Northwestern University, touted the efficacy of winter sports in "neutralizing" the bad effects of the super-heated air of the barracks and its enervating influence. Omer required that soldiers participate in one hour of outdoor exercise a day. Six toboggan slides saw daily use with over 50 toboggans available to the soldiers. Recruits had access to 80 dozen hockey sticks for use on the camp's 6 artificial skating rinks. Over 200 pairs of skis and 150 pairs of snowshoes were also available. Omer did not feel at all constrained by the winter weather. In addition to typical winter sports, he required the brigades to run. The 183d Brigade held weekly cross-country runs during which the men ran as far as 2.5 miles in zero degree weather with no apparent ill effects.<sup>48</sup>

Indoor facilities were available at many camps which expanded the availability of sporting activities, particularly during inclement weather. Basketball was still a relatively new sport, but it was very popular. The *New York Times* reported in March 1918, that

basketball had easily taken its place as the most prominent of the minor sports. The rules of the game continued to evolve although an official set was published in 1917 by the Joint Rules Committee (representing the NCAA, the YMCA and the AAU) and the American Sports Publishing Company. One of the camps in the western United States was reported to have four hundred teams playing in fourteen leagues. Twenty thousand men played basketball at least one hour a day. Many games were probably played on outdoor courts as well as indoors.<sup>49</sup> Some camps had bowling lanes that were available for use by the troops, some had handball courts, and in others, soldiers organized fencing squads. Virtually every sport was represented in the camps.

In addition to recognized sports, the camp physical directors produced a host of athletic games that were played by the troops en masse. Athletic games were useful for developing physical fitness as they involved running, jumping, or some other form of exertion. Games like cageball actually fell into this genre, but there were many other games that, perhaps, had never been played by the men, or that had not been played since grade school. Recruits typically viewed the idea of grown men playing juvenile games with suspicion. When they realized how much fun could be had, they soon came around. Many of the games were designed to make the men laugh. The Fosdick Commission believed that the ability of men to laugh at the harmless misfortune and antics of others or, even more importantly, at themselves during games, was valuable for dispelling melancholy and homesickness. Athletic games were diversions that drew men out of themselves, that made them forget that they were in a new, strange, regimented and abnormal society. Laughter compelling games helped build self-esteem and promoted good feelings. The good humor generated by the games contributed to self-discipline, self-control and mental alertness which in turn contributed to good citizenship. Athletic games promoted the development of agility and initiative. All these attributes were part of the foundation upon which military efficiency was built. Developing a high level of military efficiency within the soldiers prior to their deployment to France promised to

make them more efficient fighters and would ultimately save their lives. The ability to rise above a given situation rather than withdrawing inside one's self was the antidote for shell shock and the psychological trauma of trench warfare. Athletic directors taught this lesson through laughter compelling games.<sup>50</sup>

There were dozens of these games. The YMCA published the rules for many of them in its *Army and Navy Athletic Handbook*, but more than a few were made up by the physical directors themselves. Games designed to bring men out of themselves were not limited solely to the training camps. They were also played in the staging camps of the AEF. Athletic directors used them as part of the rejuvenating process for troops coming out of the front lines and as diversions for those who were about to be committed to the lines. Some of the games described in the handbook, such as Swat Tag, Circle Jump and Dizzy Izzy, are still played today.

Swat Tag was a popular laughter compelling game. Twenty to thirty men formed a circle, their hands behind them, with one man designated as "it." He ran around the outside of the circle with a "swatter," a cotton-stuffed canvas bag about eighteen inches long and two inches in diameter. He placed the swatter in the hands of one of the men in the circle. This man turned to the man standing on his right and began beating him with the swatter while he chased him around the circle and back to their original positions. The man on the right obviously tried to avoid being hit by outrunning his antagonist or by dodging his blows. The chaser then became "it." This game developed physical alertness and was great fun.<sup>51</sup>

Recruits also enjoyed Circle Jump. One man in the center of a circle of men swung a rope under their feet. The men had to jump as the rope approached and passed beneath them. To make the game more difficult, the men held hands and the rope was swung at higher levels. The game could cause hysterical laughter among the men when someone's feet became entangled in the rope and he crashed to the ground.<sup>52</sup>

Dizzy Izzy is as popular today as it was seventy-five years ago. Dizzy Izzy is a relay race in which each member of a team runs to a designated point, picks up a bat and, placing one end of the bat on the ground and his forehead on the other end, circles around the bat a prescribed number of times. He then runs, or attempts to run, back to his team and the next man begins. Dizzy Izzy is guaranteed to make men laugh.<sup>53</sup>

Prisoners' Base was another favorite of the recruits. Two teams of up to fifty men faced each other approximately fifty feet apart. A five foot square, marked out behind each team served as the prison. The object was to capture as many of the opposing team as was possible in the time allowed, and put them in prison. One or more members of either team ran toward the other team which responded by sending some of its own members out to tag them before they returned to their baseline. Once a man was tagged he was imprisoned by his captor until one of his team members was able to tag him in prison without first being tagged by an opponent. This again was a game that required physical fitness and agility. As important, it was fun.<sup>54</sup>

Athletic games also provided therapy for the wounded. The Fosdick Commission recommended the program implemented by the Convalescent Center at Camp Dix to other camps who had a need for similar training programs. The Camp Dix Center assigned men to platoons within a company based on their physical status. The worst cases were in the fourth platoon, the first platoon contained men that were well enough to be discharged. As training and recovery took place, men advanced through the platoons. First platoon conducted normal training. The others conducted a modified program that excluded close-order drill, but did include setting up exercises and games. In the mornings, men that were able, followed thirty minutes of setting up exercises with fifteen minutes of games and a two to three mile hike. In the afternoon they participated in an hour and a half of recreative exercise which included games, boxing and stunts (e.g., one-armed wrestling or Indian wrestling). The convalescents were partial to boxing. Tournaments were held where it was not unusual to see one-armed men fighting with nearly the same

ability as men with two arms. It was a great morale builder for both the participants and the spectators. The officer-in-charge of calisthenics games at Camp Dix reported that the simple game of Circle Ball Passing, with three or four balls being passed around the circle, had a good effect on men who were shell shocked.<sup>55</sup>

#### IV

The goal of the Fosdick Commission to make men fit for fighting the war required that the needs of servicemen overseas be addressed in addition to those of men in the training camps. The Fosdick Commission launched a major athletic and recreational effort for the American troops in France that was run almost exclusively by the YMCA. This effort differed from that in the training camps in that its emphasis was on recreation rather than training. The stated aim of the AEF program was to keep soldiers fit just as it was in the States. Here too, the prevailing attitude was that fitness would be maintained as a by-product of healthy, athletic competition. Athletics provided a means for the men to release pent-up anxiety and frustration. It kept them from becoming "stale." and rejuvenated them. Even more importantly, the athletic and recreation program in the AEF attempted to thwart the problems caused by alcohol and prostitution which had plagued the European military services since 1914 and now threatened the AEF. The various service organizations under the aegis of the Fosdick Commission contracted with local hotels, inns and spas for their use by servicemen. The YMCA tents and those of the other organizations were present as they were in the States to show movies and to offer a quiet place to read or write. By the spring of 1918, the YMCA operated over six hundred centers for American soldiers in France. The YMCA provided services for nearly ninety-five percent of the places where American troops were stationed. This include locations near the front lines, easily within shell range of the enemy.

The YMCA answered the calls of senior commanders for athletic services by establishing a comprehensive program that, at the very least, made athletic equipment

available to the troops. More often, the YMCA athletic directors organized games and tournaments. A report from 30 June 1918, showed that over twenty thousand games were played that month with nearly forty-five thousand items of athletic equipment being issued (see Table 1, Appendix F). Statistics provided for the months of August through September showed an increase in athletic participation by both players and spectators. However, as the level of player participation increased there was a corresponding decline in the rate of increase in spectator participation (see Table 2, Appendix F). According to Frederick Harris, in his account of the YMCA's work during the war, this was an indication of improvement. The effort to "get every man in the game" appeared to be working.

In October 1918, nearly two million American troops were in France. The athletic statistics show nearly that many men participating in athletics in one form or another. Even allowing for double counting men who were frequent players, the figures show that a sizable portion of the AEF engaged in some form of athletic participation. If the numbers of men who participated in unofficial pick-up games are added, the figures would become all the more impressive.

The YMCA started "non-equipment" sports with units at or near the front lines. YMCA men gave out baseballs and other small items that could be easily carried and used when the troops were able. Katherine Mayo, in *"That Damn Y,"* tells of an encounter between Elwood S. Brown, director of the YMCA's Athletic Department, and the men of an American artillery battery he encountered while driving the lines. The sergeant came over and asked Brown if he had any cigarettes. Cigarettes were sold through the canteens run by the YMCA. Not expecting that Brown was there for any other purpose, when Brown responded that he had no cigarettes the sergeant groused:

"'Yah! What's the damn Y for, anyway?' Only the form of the phrase was inquiring.  
'Got a baseball, though,' Brown placidly went on.  
'Wa jew say?'"

‘Got some baseballs.’

‘Baseball—base—ball—You mean you *got* a *baseball* in there? You do? Well, for the love of God, just lend us a look at her.’”

Brown gave the man an indoor baseball. In a moment the sergeant and his men had a game of one—old—cat going between the guns. The captain soon came over to find out what was happening, told the men to move the game away from the guns, and then suggested that he might play, too.<sup>56</sup>

Baseball was as popular overseas as it was in the States. The YMCA arranged for the use of drill fields, sometimes as many as thirty per division, so the troops could play ball in the late afternoons and evenings, and on weekends. Representative teams from neighboring units matched their skills and league games were scheduled against teams from different divisions. Players even had the chance to work on their French while playing ball. A photograph in *The Independent* shows Marines, in baseball uniforms, receiving a lesson in front of a blackboard on which has been written *A Bas L'Arbitre* (“Down with the umpire”) and *A La Maison* (roughly “to home”). The first needed no explanation, the second was used to cheer a home run.<sup>57</sup>

The number of athletic programs for troops in the AEF had reached monumental proportions by the summer of 1918. While it appears that the soldiers willingly participated in the athletic contests, the fact that the Fosdick Commission and senior military commanders were as much interested in the proscriptive value of athletics as they were the recreative value is also evident. The use athletics as an alternative to vice continued to grow as more and more men arrived in Europe. If Baker’s dictum to make them “better than they were before” was to be realized, even greater efforts would be required before the soldiers returned home.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### “...AND AFTER”<sup>1</sup>

Anticipating that troops waiting to return to the United States after the war would have to be kept occupied, the YMCA, in June 1918, suggested that an Inter-Allied championship be held once the peace was signed. As the offensives of September and October continued, the YMCA formalized its plan for a preliminary AEF championship and a subsequent Inter-Allied tournament. The YMCA presented the plan to General Pershing on 18 October, and offered to assume initial responsibility for coordinating its implementation. Elwood Brown's Athletic Department would lead the effort. Brown was not inexperienced at this type of challenge. Brown had started organizing athletics in the Philippines for the YMCA's International Committee in 1910. In 1913, he had organized the first of a series of Far Eastern Games held in Manila. The Games were so successful that a permanent coordinating body was established and subsequent Games were held at Shanghai in 1915 and Tokyo in 1917. Although Pershing did not give the YMCA immediate approval for its plan to hold a major military tournament in Europe, his staff gave a positive verbal intimation and the YMCA set the plan into motion.<sup>2</sup>

Following the Armistice there was a major shift in the emphasis on athletics. The need to use athletics as a training vehicle to develop and maintain fitness, team work and the “winning spirit” was no longer required for fighting the war. The emphasis on athletics turned more toward developing and maintaining morale as well as a continuation of the campaign against the twin vices. Two million men wanted to return home from France immediately. The men in the training camps were in no less a hurry to return to their families and homes. The cessation of hostilities seemed to eliminate the necessity for men to keep fit for combat at the same time it stimulated the need to maintain the moral

and physical fitness deemed necessary for productive, responsible citizenship. Recognizing the need to allay the discontent and disappointment felt by the soldiers in not being released immediately from service, the Fosdick Commission in the United States and Pershing in France instructed their athletic directors to modify their programs.

Pershing appointed Colonel Wait C. Johnson, an athlete himself, who also had a plan that called for a massive dose of sports. Pershing approved Johnson's plan and on 29 December 1918, issued General Order Number 241 in which he encouraged the development of athletics and "appropriate" entertainment "for the purpose of keeping up the morale, fostering and developing organization esprit de corps, and improving the physical fitness of the army."<sup>3</sup> Pershing wanted maximum participation in athletic events. He gave division athletic officers the authority to organize activities according to the needs of the individual units, but recommended games like volleyball, indoor baseball, tug of war, cross country running, relays. To ensure participation, Pershing authorized commanders to excuse men from military training in excess of four hours daily, provided they engaged in sports approved by unit or division athletic officers.<sup>4</sup>

The AEF held athletic competitions at all levels of unit organization beginning with individual companies. Points were awarded to companies as part of an all-AEF company championship tournament. Tournament sports included track and field, baseball, football, basketball, tennis, boxing and wrestling, with a trophy for the winning company and prizes for individuals representing the company. According to Harris, the YMCA recorded 31,500,000 participants took part in athletic contests during the first five months of 1919. Football players alone totaled 75,000 and crowds of spectators came to witness even the elimination matches.<sup>5</sup>

Boxing placed second in popularity only to baseball, just as it had in the training camps. An estimated 680,000 men fought in the AEF tournaments and 6,250,000 reportedly came to watch. The YMCA held weekly bouts at the Palais de Glace before crowds of 4,000. The Knights of Columbus coordinated the majority of the boxing

events. The Red Cross and Jewish Welfare Board also sponsored bouts, but to a much lesser extent. In the Third Army area alone, the Knights of Columbus staged 60 major bouts. Throughout the entire Army of Occupation, they staged 4,000 bouts for as many as 100,000 spectators at a time. The AEF championship was held at the Cirque de Paris, the same arena that had held great European championship fights before the war. There was room for 6,000 soldiers to be seated and standing room for 2,000 more. Admission was free and troops were often provided transportation by units to and from events. Pershing was pleased with the quality of the boxing and the sportsmanship. He stated that two million men were going to take home "a better notion of what clean sport should be."<sup>6</sup> He was correct. The American Legion, formed after the war by veterans, many of whom had been given opportunities to participate in boxing events, became one of the strongest lobbies to legalize professional boxing.

The Inter-Allied Games, held in Paris at the YMCA built Pershing Stadium, from 22 June through 6 July 1919, were the last hurrah of the World War I athletic programs. The Fosdick Commission had disbanded six months earlier. The Army and the Navy now controlled their own athletic programs. The Inter-Allied games marked the culmination of a remarkable effort by a nation to make men better for fighting its war and better citizens afterwards through the use of athletics.

## CONCLUSION

The Fosdick Commission took to the extreme American ideas of sport and recreation, and used them in conscious, calculated ways to achieve an ultimate, definable goal. Participation in athletics helped develop the aggressive spirit required for success in combat. Athletic skills were transferable to those military skills necessary for survival on the battlefield: fighting technique, timing, balance, and poise. Participation in sports and games contributed to physical fitness and fostered teamwork and discipline, both military virtues. Laughter compelling games and involvement in athletics, as players or spectators, drew men out of themselves and provided an emotional release from stress and anxiety. They served as diversions for the logistics and administration men who worked in the support camps in France, or as bracers for combat troops about to be committed to the trenches, and as restoratives for the survivors upon their return from the front lines.

While it is certain that the Fosdick Commission in the United States and the YMCA in Europe carried out a giant program that included millions of men and women during the war, the story is not complete. The story has been told essentially from the perspective of the white Anglo-Saxon Protestant, reform-minded Fosdick Commission and YMCA supporters. Other voices have yet to be heard. During the war, the Fosdick Commission and the YMCA had detractors. Small groups seeking more widespread reforms took exception to the policies of both agencies. Anti-tobacco lobbyists objected to the YMCA selling cigarettes in the canteens, an issue that the YMCA had already come to grips with philosophically. The anti-prizefighting lobby was adamantly opposed to teaching boxing and the encouragement of recreational boxing. It appears that compared to the magnitude of the work done by the Fosdick Commission and the YMCA, these dissenters made little headway.

A comprehensive study of the Fosdick Commission remains to be completed. This thesis contains the essence of the story told by the Fosdick Commission itself. A complete study requires that the voices of dissenters, like those named above, and others be heard. Some camp commanders have spoken, through letters to the Fosdick Commission, praising the efforts of their athletic directors. But what did the men for whom the programs were developed have to say? No doubt recreational programs were well received by the vast majority of the men. However, the proscriptive nature of the programs may have generated resentment on the part of some. It is possible that many men took the proscriptions in stride, as part of the total liberty restraining military system and, therefore, did not question them. First hand accounts of World War I soldiers and sailors could bring this story to life much more vividly than official reports or parochial news reports have.

Case studies of individual training camps could also contribute to the story. It is clear that athletic directors had some degree of autonomy to conduct their work as they deemed best according to their geographical locations and available resources. More research is required to understand how athletic directors worked with the military commanders to accomplish their missions. Part of these studies should include the work done in Navy and Marine camps. The Marines that fought with the AEF were covered by AEF programs. Their training camp programs fell under the auspices of the Fosdick Commission's Navy Department program. A comparison of Army, Navy and Marine training camps might be useful in understanding attitudes about recreation and athletics.

The success of recreational programs in France has not been conclusively demonstrated. The role of the YMCA was well documented, but reports of large groups of stragglers and unauthorized absences raise questions about the success of recreational programs. They also raise more serious questions about the discipline in the AEF and the way commanders accounted for their people. Review of AEF records and a

study of programs in specific camps may provide sufficient evidence to make a correlation between the availability of recreational programs and unauthorized absence rates.

Examination of the role of athletics in military preparedness during World War I has raised sociological questions that are also worthy of further study. Drafting four percent of the country's men necessarily cut across the demography of the country. On the surface the military appeared to be a great equalizer of men. Yet in truth that was not so. Americans living in the first decades of the twentieth century experienced the arrival of thousands of immigrants every year. Prejudice and discrimination were the order of the day. The Government had passed laws prohibiting any further immigration of Chinese and laws restricting Japanese soon followed. Jim Crow was alive and well in the South. Still, some, like Edwin Embree, Secretary of the Rockefeller Foundation, realized that all men have the same basic needs, regardless of race or ethnicity. To a large extent, needs were met universally. For example, men learned to fight from competent instructors. In other areas, such as community services, organizers were slow to recognize that racial barriers prevented equal treatment. The glowing reports of inter-racial goodwill through athletics, notwithstanding, the reality of daily life was much different. For black servicemen, when recreational services were provided, they were provided in segregated settings. Camps continued to be racially segregated long after the war ended.

Other sociological questions regarding the Fosdick Commission's use of athletics also deserve consideration. Did athletics offer a means of assimilation into mainstream American culture? Jane Addams, the founder of Hull House in Chicago, said that teamwork and cooperation learned on the ball field would serve immigrants well in the workplace.<sup>1</sup> It is reasonable to assume that Fosdick, having had settlement house experience himself, and others on the Commission, like Joseph Lee, whose work took him to immigrant communities, shared a similar belief. The social activism of the time that equated recreation with development of civic duty and patriotism found a parallel in the

military training camps of World War I. The camps in many ways were like huge settlement houses.

Americans recognized physical strength and athletic ability and tended to overlook other characteristics as a result. Peter Levine offers an insight to this in *Ellis Island to Ebbets Field: Sport and the American Jewish Experience*. He quotes from an article in the *Chicago Daily Jewish Courier*:

The Benny Leonards will never arouse any hatred or envy among their non-Jewish colleagues; they will receive honor and respect from their American admirers. American youth always respects the brave sons of their homeland; they will even respect Jews who are of foreign birth because their physical prowess is in conformity with one aspect of American culture and increases the prestige of the nation.<sup>2</sup>

Levine's point, that Jewish acceptance of physicality was a mark of being comfortable with being an American, may well have applied to new Americans fighting for the United States. It explains why Benny Leonard, for one, was so popular as an instructor for the Fosdick Commission. It may also help to explain why Americans, and the Fosdick Commission, were willing to look outside of the United States to find expertise on physical training and hand-to-hand fighting. However, it does not explain the prevalence of discrimination against black athletes. It would be interesting to see how many blacks, if any, participated in wartime athletic training as instructors. Only a few fighters, like Joe Gans, Joe Walcott and Jack Johnson, had achieved prominence. What was the experience of black servicemen with respect to athletics and recreation? What role did athletics play in their lives as Americans?

America's entry into the World War marked the turning point in the military's attitude toward the inclusion of athletics and recreation in its organizational structure. The American military realized the vital necessity of providing opportunities to servicemen for participation in athletics for training and for recreation. Summing up the needs of the

military and its men that were met by the Fosdick Commission, Secretary of the Navy Daniels said:

War had the lesson that any authority, taking charge of a man's whole life, from sunrise to sunrise, must provide all the essential requirements that go into that life—food, sleep, work, education, and play. There has never been in all history a more convincing demonstration of the value of play and recreation than has been achieved by the American army at home and abroad. The demonstration has been so clear and the influence so striking that there can never again be organized a military program in America or anyplace else in the modern world which will not contain provision for supervised, organized recreation, entertainment and play.<sup>3</sup>

The massive infusion of athletics into the training program set the stage for military athletic competition that continues today. The AEF tournament, in particular, aroused the competitive spirit within the different branches of the military and provided a tangible means for resolving, at least temporarily, inter-service rivalries. The years following the war saw the individual services fielding powerhouse football teams with the specific purpose of bringing athletic glory to their branch of the military. President Coolidge gave a President's Cup to the victors of championship games that were held annually in front of thousands of spectators. Men were recruited specifically to play on service athletic teams from the 1920s to the 1970s. Even today, although the big service teams no longer exist, men and women with special athletic ability are encouraged to represent their service branch in national and international competitions sponsored by organizations like the Amateur Athletic Union and the Olympics.

The Fosdick Commission set the example for reform in the military which ultimately led to the formation of institutional organizations within the services whose purpose is to deal with matters pertaining to morale, welfare and recreation. Today those organizations govern multi-million dollar accounts which they use to organize athletic leagues and tournaments and to provide athletic and recreational equipment to units stationed throughout the world. Special equipment boxes accompany units during



deployments and are even taken into combat zones just like the company boxes were during World War I. For example, during the recent Persian Gulf War, my own unit made a concerted effort to take as much recreational equipment with us as we could because we anticipated being embarked on ships for several months and ashore in the desert for an indefinite period. Working together with Navy officers from the ships and the Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) divisions of the ships' home ports (Long Beach and San Diego, California) and of our own base (Camp Pendleton, California), we augmented the typical five cubic foot mount-out boxes of balls, bats, and games with several fifty cubic foot boxes of equipment. Additionally, MWR provided two bicycle exercisers (Lifecycles) and a weightlifting bench with a complete set of Olympic weights. Ours was not an isolated example. Athletic and recreational gear are quite literally a part of most units' mount-out equipment. For those units that do not have the lift capability to carry all of their equipment, headquarters and service support organizations carry athletic gear for them.

The needs of servicemen have not changed since the Fosdick Commission began its work in 1917. Young men and women leave their homes and families and enter a different world where they give up many of the freedoms they had previously enjoyed. During their initial training, they are taught by the same methods used by the Fosdick Commission instructors. Upon completion of basic training, they are assigned to units where they continue to hone their skills in preparation for the defense of their country. The long hours and separations from families can be extremely stressful. Today's servicemen find an outlet in athletics just as the men who were called to service in 1917 did. Organized athletics still provide opportunities for rejuvenation and contribute to the maintenance of morale and efficiency.

The large number of married servicemen have special needs that the Fosdick Commission dealt with only peripherally. Now, in addition to caring for the requirements of servicemen, the military has an obligation to also address those of families who often

are left alone in strange cities while their loved ones are deployed. Just as the Fosdick Commission recognized the importance of family to the servicemen's well-being, the same is done today. Servicemen who are required to leave families alone when they deploy cannot be fully effective if their concerns for family overshadow their mission. The military uses its internal command structure and organizations, such as MWR, while working closely with external service agencies, like the American Red Cross and the Navy and Marine Corps, or Army Relief Societies to help service families.

In 1916, Secretary of War Baker saw a need for change in military attitudes about leisure. His appointment of the Fosdick Commission in 1917 was a step toward change. The Fosdick Commission used ideas that had been tried and proven on a small scale in communities around the country and applied them on a large scale to new military communities. Under the guidance of the Fosdick Commission, attitudes toward leisure and athletics in the military did change. We who serve today are the beneficiaries of the tremendous effort made by our grandfathers in the Great War.

## **APPENDICES**

## APPENDIX A

### CAMPS AND CANTONMENTS<sup>1</sup>

#### National Army Camps

Camp Lewis, Washington  
Camp Travis, Texas  
Camp Funston, Kansas  
Camp Pike, Arkansas  
Camp Dodge, Iowa  
Camp Grant, Illinois  
Camp Custer, Michigan  
Camp Sherman, Ohio  
Camp Taylor, Kentucky  
Camp Gordon, Alabama  
Camp Jackson, South Carolina  
Camp Lee, Virginia  
Camp Meade, Maryland  
Camp Dix, Delaware  
Camp Upton, New York  
Camp Devins, Massachusetts

#### National Guard Cantonments

Camp Fremont, California  
Camp Kearney, California  
Camp Cody, New Mexico  
Camp MacArthur, Texas  
Camp Bowie, Texas  
Camp Logan, Texas  
Camp Beauregard, Louisiana  
Camp Shelby, Mississippi  
Camp Sheridan, Alabama  
Camp McClellan, Alabama  
Camp Wheeler, Georgia  
Camp Hancock, Georgia  
Camp Sevier, South Carolina  
Camp Wadsworth, South Carolina  
Camp Greene, North Carolina  
Camp Doniphan, Oklahoma

## APPENDIX B

**CIVILIAN ATHLETIC DIRECTORS  
COMMISSIONED IN JANUARY, 1918<sup>2</sup>**

The following civilian athletic directors were the first athletic directors commissioned as captains in the National Army by order of the Secretary of War:

John N. Ashmore	Camp Cody, Deming, New Mexico
John R. Bender	Camp Sevier, Greenville, South Carolina
John Booth	American Expeditionary Force
Walter Camp, Junior	Camp Hancock, Augusta, Georgia
Trevanian G. Cook	Camp Lewis, American Lake, Washington
J.G. Driver	Camp Jackson, Columbia, South Carolina
John L. Griffeth	Camp Dodge, Des Moines, Iowa
Frank Glick	Camp Upton, Yaphank, Long Island
B.R. Murphy	Camp Lee, Petersburg, Virginia
R.F. Nelligan	Camp Devens, Ayer, Massachusetts
Benjamin V. Ogden	Camp McClellan, Anniston, Alabama
Lewis Omer	Camp Grant, Rockford, Illinois
N.H. Pearl	Camp MacArthur, Waco, Texas
Joseph C. Wright	Camp Logan, Houston, Texas
Captain Paul Withington, Medical Reserve Corps	Camp Funston, Kansas

## APPENDIX C

CONTENTS OF A STANDARDIZED COMPANY-SIZED ATHLETIC BOX<sup>3</sup>

Baseball Bats	4
Baseballs	12
Mask	1
Chest Protector	1
Catcher's Mitt	1
First Baseman's Mitt	1
Association Footballs	4
Association Football Bladders	2
Rawhide Laces	4
Pump	1
Footballs - Rugby	2
Football Bladder	1
Playground Balls	6
Indoor Bats	2
Medicine Ball - 6 lbs.	1
Patching Outfit	1
Sets Boxing Gloves	10
Volleyballs	2
Basketball	1
Box Container	1
Official Baseball Guide	1
Official Soccer Guide	1
Official Basketball Guide	1
Official Volleyball Guide	1

## APPENDIX D

ATHLETIC EQUIPMENT PROVIDED FOR THE  
AMERICAN EXPEDITIONARY FORCE<sup>4</sup>

Base Ball Bats	2672
Base Ball	16668
Chest Protectors	664
Catcher's Masks	664
Catcher's Mitts	664
First Baseman's Mitts	664
Playground Bats	1100
Playground Balls	15840
Association Footballs	4456
Rugby Footballs	1348
Basket Balls	1164
Volley Balls	2098
Medicine Balls	1854
Sets Boxing Gloves	2919
Rawhide Laces	2672
Inflators	664
Repair Kits	664
Soccer Bladders	1328
Rugby Bladders	664
Tennis Balls	7200
Cage Balls	7575
Cage Ball Nets	75
Track Suits	1500
Track Shoes	1500
Basket Ball Shoes	1000
Basket Ball Suits	1000
Base Ball Suits	1630
Base Ball Shoes	1630
Discuses	500
Guide Books	2656
Javelins	2000
Vaulting Poles	2500
Supporters	12100
Foot Ball Suits	1200
Foot Ball Shoes	1200

## APPENDIX E

FIELDS AND BUILDINGS<sup>5\*</sup>

Cement tennis courts	7
Grass tennis courts	7
Dirt tennis courts	245
Base ball fields	229
Total of all fields with stands	4
Seating capacity of all stands	1,098,000
Football fields	127
Play areas	322
Polo fields	25 †
Swimming pools - artificial	10
- natural	16
Outdoor basketball courts	505
Indoor basketball courts	177 ‡
Indoor gymnasiums	48
Golf courses	31 §
Outdoor gymnasiums	48
Volleyball courts	550
Cage ball fields	74
Hand ball courts	75
Running tracks	33
Tabbogan [sic] slides	10
Miscellaneous fields and equipment	82

\* - These are figures current as of May 19, 1919 based on facilities in camps at which there were still Commission representatives and which were in use by men then in the camps. Camps Benning and Gordon, Georgia; Camp Eustis, Virginia; and Camp Meade, Maryland are excluded as is equipment of camps that had already been abandoned by the Commission.

† - Includes one private field.

‡ - Includes some YMCA and Knights of Columbus buildings.

§ - Includes four or five private golf courses.



## APPENDIX F

## AEF ATHLETICS

Table 1

Report of Equipment Distributed and Games Played, June 1918<sup>6</sup>

	Equipment Distributed	Games Played in June
Baseball	25,200 balls	6,000
Basketball	500 balls	4,000
Volleyball	14,400 balls	10,000
Track and Field meets		300
Boxing	1,506 sets	1,400
Soccer	2,980 balls	800

Table 2

AEF Athletic Participation, August, September and October, 1918

	August	September	October
Player participation	175,000	580,000	1,007,000
Spectator participation	720,000	1,614,000	1,973,000

## NOTES

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### INTRODUCTION

1. The mobilization of the National Guard was a response to incursions into New Mexico by Pancho Villa, the Mexican revolutionary.

### CHAPTER ONE: THE NEW CENTURY, pages 4-19

1. Donald J. Mrozek, "The Habit of Victory: the American Military and the Cult of Manliness," in *Manliness and Morality: Middle-class Masculinity in Britain and America, 1800-1940*, ed. J. A. Mangan and James Walvin (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 1987), 221-22.

2. Robert J. Higgs, "Yale and the Heroic Ideal, Götterdämmerung and Palingenesis, 1865-1914" in *Manliness and Morality*, 162-67. For a contrasting view, see Robert H. Doyle's comment on Frank Merriwell in *Sport—Mirror of American Life* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1963), 241-71.

3. Warren I. Susman, *Culture as History: The Transformation of American Society in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), 30.

4. *Ibid.*, xxiv, 88-89.

5. *Ibid.*, 92. Throughout this thesis I will use words like "scientific" and "efficiency" because those are the terms used by contemporary writers to describe the work of the Fosdick Commission. The literature on the Progressive movement is vast. What I present here is meant only to provide the context in which athletics and military preparedness became linked. This discussion, then, is necessarily broad in scope.

6. Peter Levine, *A.G. Spalding and the Rise of Baseball: The Promise of American Sport* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 97-98. Harvey Green, *Fit for America: Health, Fitness, Sport and American Society* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1986), 237.

7. Mrozek, *Sport and American Mentality 1880-1910*. (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1983), 19.

8. Fon W. Boardman, Jr., *America and the Progressive Era, 1900-1917* (New York: Henry Z. Walck, Inc., 1970), 125-28.

9. *Ibid.*, 108.

10. Levine, 98.

11. Gerald F. Roberts, "The Strenuous Life: The Cult of Manliness in the Era of Theodore Roosevelt" (Ph.D. diss., Michigan State University, 1970).

12. Green, 237. Peter N. Stearns, *Be A Man! Males In Modern Society* (New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers, Inc., 1979), 51, 102. Alfred E. Stearns, "Athletics and the School," *The Atlantic Monthly* 113 (Feb. 1914), 148. Lodge's speech cited in Mrozek, *Sport and American Mentality. 1880-1910*, 33. Mrozek offers an extensive analysis of social efficiency and the spirit of effect.

13. F.S. Beeson, "Physical Training in the Army," *Journal of the Military Service Institute* (hereafter *JMSI*) 55 (1914), 43.

14. Charles Richard, "Physical Training of Officers on the Active List of the Army," *JMSI* 44 (1909), 73-8.
15. William H. Monroe, "Military Efficiency," *JMSI* 33 (Jan.-Feb. 1910).
16. See also Lucian Howe, "Military Education," *JMSI* 52 (1915). Stephen M. Foote, "Military Service for College Men," *JMSI* 49 (1911). James S. Pettit, "The Proper Military Instruction for our Officers," *JMSI* 20 (1897), 11. A.B. Donworth, "Gymnasium Training in the Army," *JMSI* 21 (1897), 508-15. N.S. Jarvis, "Physical Preparedness and the Organized Guard," *JMSI* 36.
17. John A. LeJeune, *The Reminiscences of a Marine*, (Philadelphia: Dorrance and Company, 1930; Quantico, VA: The Marine Corps Association, 1979), 191-92.
18. Palmer E. Pierce, "Athletics in the Army," *Collier's Outdoor America* 46 (11 Mar. 1911), 16.
19. For more on General Wood see Hermann Hagedorn, *Leonard Wood* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1931) and Jack C. Lane, *Armed Progressive: General Leonard Wood* (San Rafael, Ca: Presidio Press, 1978).
20. John Garry Clifford, *The Citizen Soldiers: The Plattsburg Training Camp Movement, 1913-1920* (Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 1972).
21. Hagedorn, 130-33, 147-48.
22. Hagedorn, 152. See also Mark Sullivan, *Our Times, 1900-1925*, vol. 5, *Over Here, 1914-1918*, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1936).
23. Reports of attendance vary from 1250 to 1400.
24. *New York Times*, Oct. 20, 1915 cited in Lane, 193.
25. "The Business Men's Training Camp at Plattsburg: A Spontaneous Movement of United States Citizens for Self-Defense," *Scientific American* 113 (28 Aug. 1915).
26. Richard Harding Davis, "The Plattsburg Idea," *Collier's* 56 (9 Oct. 1915), 8.
27. Lane, 196-207.
28. Early in 1917, Baker interrupted Fosdick's survey to send him to Canada to study military training and training camps there. In April, Baker appointed him Chairman of the War Department's Commission on Training Camp Activities. Three months later, the Secretary of the Navy, Josephus Daniels, appointed him Chairman of the Navy's Commission on Training Camp Activities. After the Armistice, he was General Pershing's civilian aide and in this capacity spent much time with the troops in order to report to Pershing on the condition of morale. Following the war he was named undersecretary general to the League of Nations. In this capacity he helped organize the Secretariat and establish the League of Nations. Raymond Fosdick remained active in service to others and to the US Government throughout his life principally through his office as President of the Rockefeller Foundation. He died in 1972. He appears to have had all the proper credentials and the right motivation to be asked to head both the Mexican border survey and the Commission on Training Camp Activities although at the time he was still in his early 30s. These biographical notes are from *The National Cyclopædia of American Biography* 57 (Clifton, New Jersey: James T. White and Co., 1977), 341.

29. Saloons and brothels already existed outside of the Army's permanent camps. These were expanded to accommodate the increased number of men living in camps. The cantonments, temporary tent encampments, erected in this case by the National Guard, provided new markets for the vice peddlers who rushed to capitalize on the opportunity. Cantonments were also erected as recruit training camps when the draft began in 1917. There simply were not enough permanent camps, or posts, to handle the large numbers of men requiring training. The AEF built cantonments for its troops who were not committed to the front line trenches. "Camp" and "cantonment" are used synonymously in this thesis unless emphasis indicates that both be used in a given context.

30. Richard Knapp and Charles E. Hartsoe, *Play for America: The National Recreation Association, 1906-1965*, (Arlington, VA: National Recreation and Park Association, 1979), 68. The subject of prostitution and venereal disease, referred to collectively as "hygiene," is worthy of study itself. The opinions of experts carried great weight during the decade and the conduct of numerous studies was the vehicle by which many established their expertise. The tremendous rise in the incidence rate of venereal diseases in Europe, that stemmed from the large numbers of men on active service in the war, prompted many hygiene studies. Fosdick was probably aware of those studies, having conducted his European police study only two years before. The European disease studies no doubt contributed to the alarm and concern generated by reports from the border.

31. Frederick W. Cozens and Florence Scovill Stumpf, *Sports in American Life*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1953), 197.

32. W.A. Philpott, Jr. an editor of the *San Antonio Express*, wrote an article depicting leisure time activities of service men in San Antonio. "Life at the Big Khaki Town," published in *The Independent* 70 (1911), 1307-12, takes a casual, almost non-judgmental view of the illicit activities that occurred in and around the camp. Interestingly, in contrast to the general attitude of the text is a picture, located above the title of the article, of a street of saloons entitled "The Effluvia of Civilization". The picture is probably more telling of the situation than is the gloss put on the text itself. The following description of the San Antonio camp is taken from this article.

33. *Ibid.*, 1311.

## CHAPTER TWO: THE FOSDICK COMMISSION, pages 20-39

1. George Creel, "A Message from the United States Government to the American People," *The Independent* 93 (Jan.-Mar. 1918), 234. George Creel was President Wilson's appointed Chairman of the Committee on Public Information. I have highlighted the word "permanent" because by definition a cantonment is a temporary camp. In this case buildings were erected to house troops rather than requiring large numbers of transient recruits to rotate through the camps for an indefinite period. The sixteen draftee cantonments were built in three months using a billion feet of lumber and at a cost of \$150 million (see Appendix A).

2. Sullivan, 304-6.

3. Harold J. VanderZwaag, "Nationalism in American Physical Education: 1880-1920," *A History of Physical Education and Sport in the United States and Canada*, Earle F. Zeigler, ed. (Champaign, ILL.: Stipes Publishing Company, 1975), 108.

4. F.L. Kleeberger, "Athletics and the War Game," *School and Society* 7 (11 May 1918). Edwin F. Bowers, M.D., "Fitting the Unfit," *Everybody's Magazine* 37 (Dec. 1917), 129-32. The *turnverein*, or

gymnastic society, was a German cultural tradition brought to the United States in the mid-nineteenth century. They helped alleviate the alienation felt by German immigrants in cities far from their homes. The *turnverein* were highly regarded by sportsmen for their promotion of gymnastics and fitness. They were described in the *American Journal of Education* in 1860 as "virtuous and accomplished, pure and active, chaste and bold, truthful and warlike." These were no doubt the attributes sought by Dr. Bowers, who either missed or ignored the irony. See Steven A. Riess *City Games*. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1991).

5. *American Physical Education Review* (Nov. 1917), 506.

6. Edward Frank Allen, *Keeping Our Fighters Fit: For War And After* (New York: The Century Co., 1918).

7. *Ibid.*, 11, 6.

8. *Ibid.*, 7.

9. It is unclear, based on the research completed so far, what Palmer's rank was at the outset of the war. Some records refer to him as a major when the Commission was formed, others refer to him as being a general during the war. A check of the Army's personnel files may resolve the issue. My references to his rank will be based on the sources used for each specific reference.

10. Knapp and Hartsoe, 59.

11. *Ibid.*, 66, 67.

12. For a very detailed account of the YMCA's activities during World War I see Frederick Harris, ed., *Service With Fighting Men: An Account of the Work of the Young Men's Christian Associations in the World War* (New York: Association Press, 1922) from which much of the preceding historical perspective is taken. Dr. John H. McCurdy, of the YMCA college in Springfield, Massachusetts, was chosen by the YMCA's International Committee to head the work in support of American forces in France. He was also designated as the Fosdick Commission's representative. In June 1918, Fosdick met with McCurdy in France. After a series of conferences, and with Pershing's assent, Fosdick decided not to send athletic directors to France, but to turn athletic supplies over to McCurdy for distribution to army units and athletic directors of the YMCA and Knights of Columbus. (Harris, vol. 2, 26-32).

13. National Archives. "History of [sic] Athletic Division, War Department Commission On Training Camp Activities, April 1917-January 1919." Record Group 165, NM-84, 51963, pgs. 1-3.

14. Pierce, 16. The *JMSI* throughout the previous ten years had been the forum for a debate on the necessity or advisability of training cadets to be athletic officers.

15. "History of Athletic Division," 3.

16. *The National Cyclopædia of American Biography* 21, 293, 294. See also Sullivan, 477.

17. Raymond B. Fosdick and Edward F. Allen, "Athletics for the Army," *The Century Magazine* 96 (July, 1918), 367-74.

18. Walter Camp, "Uncle Sam's Athletic System," *The Outlook* 118 (Mar. 27, 1918), 482-3.

19. See Susman, 277, for more on personality and transformations.

20. "History of Athletic Division," 3, 4.
21. *Ibid.*, 2-6.
22. Fosdick and Allen, 369.
23. Amos Alonzo Stagg had been an athlete at Yale while studying for the ministry. He played football and baseball. In 1888 he pitched for Yale in the baseball team's victory over the Boston Braves. The next year, he was named to Walter Camp's first annual All-American Football Team. Following his graduation in 1890, Stagg attended Springfield (Massachusetts) College where he coached and played football. Two years later, Stagg became the football coach at the University of Chicago. Over a tenure of forty-one years, he molded Chicago's "Giants of the Midway" into one of the football powerhouses of the early twentieth century. Stagg, like his former coach, Walter Camp, was an innovator. He developed the huddle, the man in motion, and the end around play. Also like Camp, who was called the "father of modern football," Stagg, because of his innovations and longevity in the sport, was called the "grand old man of football." Stagg died in 1965 at the age of 102. These biographical notes are taken from *The National Cyclopædia of American Biography* 18 (New York: James T. White & Company, 1922), 199, 200.
24. *New York Times*, 31 Mar. 1918, Section E.
25. *New York Times*, 23 June 1918, II, 7:7.
26. *Ibid.*
27. The issue of commissions had been discussed and disapproved by Secretary Baker. However, the recommendations of the camp commanders were sufficient to cause Baker to reconsider, and in January 1918 he authorized the commissioning of fourteen athletic directors (see Appendix B). Others were commissioned during the year, following their successful completion of training at the Commission's new Physical and Bayonet Training School at Camp Gordon, Georgia.
28. "History of Athletic Division," 12.
29. *New York Times*, 26 Feb. 1918, Sports section. *New York Times*, 7 April 1918, Sports section. *New York Times*, 23 April 1918, Sports section. Herbert Reed, "Fort Niagara, the Happy Camp," *The Independent* 91 (28 Jul. 1917), 128. Cozens, 198. Fosdick and Allen, 368. *New York Times*, 3 Feb 1918, Sports section.
30. National Archives. "Working Manual" of the Sports Committee United War Work Campaign, Record Group 165, 41399. The date of the document is unknown although it is likely that it is sometime in the fall of 1917 as it refers to the ongoing football season. The author of the penciled note and the date of its addition is also unknown. I believe the note to be contemporary as newspaper articles from late 1917 and 1918 show that dog and flower shows were conducted as fund raising events.
31. "How Uncle Sam Has Created an Army of Athletes," *Scientific American* 120 (8 Feb. 1919), 115.
32. "History of Athletic Division."
33. *Ibid.*, 13, 14.

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CHAPTER THREE: "FIT FOR FIGHTING....": ATHLETICS IN THE TRAINING CAMPS, pages 40-69

1. Raymond B. Fosdick, "Fit For Fighting—And After," *Scribner's Magazine* 63 (April 1918), 415.
2. Fosdick and Allen, 369.
3. Myron A. Kesner, "Showing the Soldiers a Good Time," *Outing* (Jan. 1918), 182.
4. "How Uncle Sam Has Created an Army of Athletes," 114-5. Fosdick and Allen, 369.
5. Allen, 54.
6. *Ibid.*, 55.
7. *Ibid.*, 115.
8. Herbert Reed, "Plattsburg 'Sounding Off,'" *The Independent* (7 Jul. 1917), 28, 29.
9. Herbert Reed, "The Plattsburg Push," *The Independent* (16 June 1917), 496.
10. Nat Fleischer and Sam Andre. *A Pictorial History of Boxing*, rev. by Sam Andre and Nat Loubet (Secaucus, NJ: The Citadel Press, 1975), 208, 218, 219. Gene Tunney. *Arms for Living* (New York: Wilfred Funk, Inc., 1941), 98-102.
11. Fleischer, 292-295.
12. "History of Athletic Division." An interesting side note to this issue is the validity of the training value of jujitsu and its cost. In a note from the Commission to the Acting Quartermaster General, there is a request for reimbursement of travel expenses from Japan to Camp Upton, New York, for Mr. Allen Smith. The request is based on the value of Smith's work at Camp Upton and the favorable impression he made on the Acting Secretary of War. Further, the note requested that allowance be made for Smith's inability to produce any receipts for his trip. In light of the fact that military officers were normally required at that time to pay their own expenses between duty stations, this incident is remarkable and offers some indication of the lengths to which the Commission would go to use new and different means to train soldiers. National Archives. Record Group 165, 25203.
13. Joseph Raycroft to Major Elvid Hunt of the War College which had oversight of the Commission's educational programs, 25 June 1918. "History of Athletic Division."
14. *Ibid.*
15. Allen, 54.
16. Thomas Foster, "Why Our Soldiers Learn to Box," *Outing* (May 1918), 114, 116.
17. "History of Athletic Division," 24, 25.
18. Foster, 114.
19. *Ibid.*, 116.





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20. *New York Times*, 31 March 1918, Section E, 8. The article does not give the size of these squads. Captain Edward Lyell Fox's article, "Is the Soldier Coddled?" that appeared in *The Forum* (Jan.-June, 1918), indicated that 190 men were billeted together in one building during their training. Army Tables of Organization for the time show a conscript training company at 200 men plus a 13-man regular staff. Companies had 12 squads and 4 companies formed a regiment. Using 200 as the approximate number of men in a training company, Rowe's plan could easily have accommodated the training of the entire company in one session.
  21. *New York Times*, 3 Feb. 1918, 8:2.
  22. Ibid.
  23. *New York Times*, 23 June 1918, II, 7:2.
  24. Raycroft to Hunt.
  25. Fosdick and Allen, 372. *New York Times*, 23 June 1918, Sports section. *New York Times*, 18 Feb. 1918, Sports section.
  26. Kesner, 183.
  27. *New York Times*, 3 Feb. 1918, 8:2.
  28. Walter Camp, "Uncle Sam's Athletic System," *The Outlook* (27 Mar. 1918), 483.
  29. *New York Times*, 21 April 1918, 6.
  30. *New York Times*, 5 May 1918, 20:8 and 23 June 1918, II, 7:2.
  31. National Archives, Record Group 165, NM 84, 25213.
  32. *New York Times*, 23 June 1918, II, 7:3.
  33. "Tobacco and Pugilism in the Army," *Literary Digest* (10 Aug. 1918), 32. Fosdick and Allen, 373.
  34. *New York Times*, 11 Mar. 1918, 8:1.
  35. *New York Times*, 24 and 28 Mar. 1918, Sports sections.
  36. *New York Times*, 24 Mar. and 3 Feb. 1918, Sports section.
  37. Fosdick and Allen, 370, 371.
  38. Jefferson Simpson, "Gathering of Stars," (from the Marine Corps historical files on football, Marine Corps Historical Branch, Washington, D.C.).
  39. Robin Baily, "The Marines Tell It Themselves," *Sunset, The Pacific Monthly* 40 (April 1918), 44, 45. Baily, "G-r-r-r-ah! the Grizzlies!" *Sunset, The Pacific Monthly* 40 (Jan. 1918), 24. For the Marines, the fielding of a Corps team at Mare Island in 1917 signified the beginning of a long history of powerhouse football. The Marine team, which was based at Quantico, Virginia starting in the 1920s, dominated Calvin Coolidge's President's Cup military competition and was a force to be reckoned with for colleges and universities through out the country until the team was disbanded in 1974. It would be interesting to

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look at the recruiting records of the service branches for this period to see exactly what effect football, or athletics exhibitions in general, had on enlistments.

40. Cageball was played with a spherical shaped ball 30 inches in diameter. The goals, or cages, were affixed to football goal uprights spaced 120 feet apart. Teams of unlimited numbers lined up 20 feet apart on the 100 foot wide field. The object of the game was to get the ball into the opponents cage by batting, punching or throwing the ball. Pushball was played on a field 120 by 50 yards with a large ball which may have been as much as five feet in diameter. The object was to push or carry the ball across the opposing team's goal or to push it over the seven foot high cross bar on the goal. George J. Fisher, YMCA, et.al., *Army and Navy Athletic Handbook* (New York: Association Press, 1919), 361-363, 354-357.

41. Fosdick and Allen, 371.

42. Lawrence Perry, "Sport Answers Reveille," *The New Country Life* 34 (Sept. 1918), 55-58. H.A. Buck, "American Sportsmen in the War," *Vanity Fair* (March 1918), 41.

43. H.A. Buck, "Polo Players and the Army," *Vanity Fair* (April 1918), 37.

44. Perry, 58-62. Kesner, 181-183.

45. Powell, 363. Kesner, 183.

46. *New York Times*, 31 Mar. 1918, Section E.

47. Kesner, 226.

48. "How Uncle Sam Has Created an Army of Athletes," 115.

49. *New York Times*, 31 Mar. 1918, Section E.

50. Allen, 61-63.

51. *Army and Navy Athletic Handbook*, 17.

52. *Ibid.*, 19.

53. *Ibid.*, 12.

54. *Ibid.*, 38, 39.

55. Memorandum from Director, Physical Training in Convalescent Centers, Commission on Training Camp Activities to Athletic Directors and Physical Training Officers, January 22, 1919. National Archives, Record Group 165, 46017.

56. Katherine Mayo, "That Damn Y," *A Record of Overseas Service* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1920), 238-40.

57. *The Independent* (13 April 1918), 70.

CHAPTER FOUR: "...AND AFTER.", pages 70-72

1. Fosdick, 415.
2. Harris, vol. 2, 39-41.
3. National Archives, Record Group 165.
4. Ibid. Harris, vol. 2, 42.
5. Harris, vol. 2, 45.
6. Ibid., 45-48.

**CONCLUSION, pages 73-79**

1. Peter Levine, *Ellis Island to Ebbets Field: Sport and the American Jewish Experience* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 14.
2. Ibid., 16.
3. From "War-Time Lessons Applied to Peace" presented at the North Carolina Conference for Social Science, Feb. 13, 1919, Raleigh, NC, and printed in *American Physical Education Review* 24 (Mar. 1919), 172-74.

**APPENDICES, pages 80-85**

1. Sullivan, 311.
2. Memorandum for the Adjutant General of the Army from the War Department, Office of the Chief of Staff, Washington, January 26, 1918. National Archives, Record Group 165.
3. "History of Athletic Division," 13.
4. Figures taken from "History of Athletic Division."
5. Figures taken from "History of Athletic Division."
6. Harris, vol. 2, 33-34, 37.



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