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THE MILITARIZATION OF AMERICA'S YOUTH: THE ARMY AND THE CIVILIAN CONSERVATION CORPS

A thesis presented to the Faculty of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE

by

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B.S., University of the State of New York, Albany, New York, 1985

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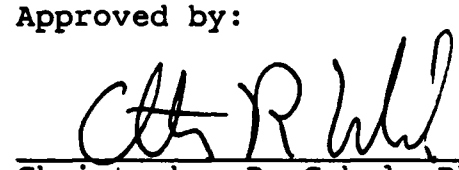

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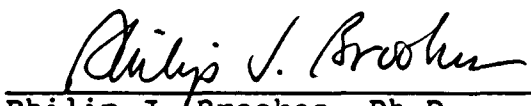

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ABSTRACT

THE MILITARIZATION OF AMERICA'S YOUTH: THE ARMY AND THE CIVILIAN CONSERVATION CORPS by Major Roger L. King, USA.

Much has been written about the Great Depression of the 1930's and Roosevelt's "New Deal." The Civilian Conservation Corps is often mentioned as one of the most successful of the "New Deal" programs.

Perhaps less well known, but still adequately reported, is the Army's involvement in administering the Civilian Conservation Corps. Little attention has been paid, however, to the impact of the Army on the young men of the CCC. The effects of the CCC experience on the Army have also been neglected.

Pacifist and anti-militarist groups were very vocal in their concerns about the Army being involved with the CCC. The Roosevelt administration went out of its way to convince the American people that the CCC enrollees were not being "militarized" by the Army. The Army also went to extrordinary lengths to avoid any taint of the charge of militarism.

Despite the intentions of all concerned, the enrollees were militarized by their association with the Army. This benefited the United States immeasurably, as 75 percent of the enrollees later served in the armed forces during World War II.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

President Franklin Delano Roosevelt established the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) as an emergency economic measure with three immediate goals: to put young Americans to work; to feed them, clothe them and give them hope; and to inject money into the economy. The conservation work that they were to do was valuable, but secondary. The president was interested in conservation, and work in that area would not compete with the shattered economy. The mission was to put 250,000 young men to work within 60 days. The big question was; who could do it?

The military seemed to be the obvious choice. One of the missions of the War Department was to mobilize the manhood of America to fight the nation's wars. But the world in 1933 was still mentally reeling from the shock of the Great War. Virtually an entire generation of men lay beneath the poppies of Flanders. It had only been 15 years since the killing stopped "Over There." The American military was not popular with, nor representative of the general populace.

The president, nevertheless, chose the Army to administer the new organization. American labor leaders

feared the regimentation of labor, and civilians as a whole worried about the militarization of America's youth.

Purpose

The central question of this thesis is; did the Army, by its administration of the Civilian Conservation Corps, militarize America's youtn? In order to answer this question a definition first has to be established for "militarize." "Militarize" is the verb formed from the noun "militarism." Scholars can and do debate whether militarism can be defined as the opposite of pacifism, or as the existence of a military state within the civil state, or whether it simply refers to the attitudes connected with the military.

The meaning of militarism, for the purpose of this thesis, owes something to each of these three definitions, but is completely true to none of them. Militarism is not the opposite of pacifism; pacifism abhors war and militarism does not necessarily connote a love of war. Americans have always recognized that some things are worth fighting for; we have rarely been accused of being a nation of pacifists. Yet, Americans are never overly enthusiastic about the trappings of war nor enamored with a professional military.

The existence of a professional military society within the American civil society has not been the problem it was for say, Prussia. The small professional military establishment of American tradition was of necessity a separate society, but it was never a threat to the civil

society. Healthy democratic fears of military dictatorship and despotism kept the army small. The nation has always relied heavily on citizen soldiers to fight the wars of the republic.

In this thesis the definition of militarism is closer to the third meaning mentioned; the attitudes connected with the military. However, this definition also leaves something to be desired. The celebration of Memorial Day and the marches for many years of the Grand Army of the Republic showed a love by the American people of the good things connected with the military. Patriotism and service had a place in society as long as the place wasn't too big.

For the purpose of this thesis, militarism is defined as the pursuit of things military for the military's sake. In the narrower sense of 1930s America, it was the seeming physical preparation for war, something that the nation as a whole found undesirable.

Background

President Franklin Delano Roosevelt created a civilian conservation corps in 1933 as part of his Emergency Conservation Work Act. It was the first of many "New Deal" acts to revive the country's economy. America had been in the grip of the great depression for three-and-one-half years and young people made up a large segment of the 13 million unemployed.

The marriage of a youth employment program with conservation work did not originate with President Roosevelt. As early as 1912 writers such as Harvard Professor William James called for the organization of a youth labor service to carry out conservation work. By 1933, nine different programs existed in Europe to employ youth in public works of one sort or another.

Roosevelt had been involved with conservation work in the past, starting with work on the family estate. He had implemented small scale programs while he served as the governor of New York, but nothing approaching the magnitude of the 1933 proposal. It is not known if the European experiments influenced him, but there had been some Congressional testimony on them prior to his introduction of the Civilian Conservation Corps legislation.

The Army had somewhat reconciled itself to playing some part in the economic recovery by the time Roosevelt took office. In January, 1933, the Couzens Bill was introduced to Congress. It proposed that the Army feed, cloth, and house the nation's unemployed youth. Although the Army vehemently and successfully opposed the bill, it prudently studied the feasibility of such a project. When the CCC became a reality in April, it was well on its way to having a viable plan of action.

Economically, the CCC provided a two-fold boon to the families of those involved. First, enrollment removed one mouth from the family nest; second , the enrollee was

required to send home $25 of his $30 monthly salary. The conservation work accomplished an important function also. The forests of America had been heavily depleted; by 1933, five times as much lumber was being cut each year as was being regrown. The combination of the depredations of the lumber industry and intensive farming was causing the loss of massive amounts of soil each year to wind and water erosion.

The conservation movement had been popular since the turn of the century, but it was beginning to assume a vital importance to the future of the nation. The massive storms of the "dust bowl" years showed that the CCC's conservation efforts came just in time. Conservation was an enormous problem and the pre-1933 federal government was not equipped to handle it.

Into this arena of both economic and ecological need, Roosevelt wanted to send what would become known as his "tree army." To do that he had to get the Civilian Conservation Corps from concept to reality.

Roosevelt sent his Emergency Conservation Work Act to Congress on March 21, 1933. Congress debated for ten days before passing it. The president signed it into law on April 5th. The wording of the act granted wide latitude to the president in the formation and administration of the corps.

Because labor union officials had misgivings about the organization, Roosevelt appointed Mr. Robert Fetchner, a union leader, as director of the Civilian Conservation Corps.

He was assisted by an advisory council composed of representatives of the War Department and the Departments of Labor, Agriculture and the Interior.

The Department of Labor would select the enrollees, the War Department would take care of them and the Departments of Agriculture and the Interior would assign and monitor their work. The enrollees were initially to be unmarried men between the ages of 18 and 25 years (this was later changed to 17 through 23). Allowances were later made to enroll World War I veterans and Native Americans. Enrollment in the program was not to be restricted by race, creed or color. The term of enrollment was six months.

The CCC was not officially designated as an independent agency until the Civilian Conservation Corps Act of 1937. Although this act made the CCC independent, the other departments of the government continued to support its existence. Two years later, the CCC was placed under the control of the Federal Security Agency where it remained until it was dissolved in 1942.

The CCC was never officially disbanded, Congress simply stopped appropriating money to run it. During its nine-year history, the CCC employed about three million men. The young men planted over half of the trees that had ever been planted in the United States. They built roads, bridges and dams. They created state parks and improved national parks. They literally changed the face of America.

Organization

An examination of the central question of whether or not the Army's involvement with the CCC militarized America's youth requires four subordinate questions to be answered. These four questions will provide the structure of the thesis.

The first question to be answered is: what were society's fears in having the Army responsible for administering the Civilian Conservation Corps? This question is central to the thesis. The only opposition to the formation of the CCC concerned itself with the involvement of the Army. Labor leaders were anxious that labor not be "regimented". The exploration of this question will also shed more light on contemporary views of what would constitute militarism.

The next question to be answered is: what exactly did the Army do in administering the CCC? President Roosevelt initially said that the Army would provide "trucks and things" to help get the CCC started. From this point the Army's role in the CCC grew until military drill was eventually instituted in the camps.

The third question is: what was the actual impact of the Army's involvement on the young men of the CCC? Interviews with participants will provide much of the data to answer this question. Society was concerned about what the Army would do to the youth of America, but how did the youth feel about the way they were treated? Did their exposure to

the Army have a lasting effect? How many CCC alumni ended up in the military?

The fourth question is: what impact did the CCC mission have on the Army? Did the performance of this program have an adverse or positive influence on the readiness of the Army to fight World War II? The mobilization for the CCC was the largest exercise of its type between World Wars I and II.

This thesis will argue that the Army did indeed militarize those young Americans who were enrolled. Some, but not all, of the changes wrought on these young men could have been caused by a similar experience in an organization not administered by the Army. It also argues that the exposure of the CCC enrollees to large numbers of men in uniform during peacetime made them more amenable to funding the large post-war army when they became the tax-paying middle class. This thesis will show that while it did not set out to do so, the Army, in the end, militarized the enrollees to use them as a manpower base for future military expansion. Because of this, the CCC was doubly beneficial to America; first as a conservation effort and secondly for providing a pool of partially trained men for the Army in World War II.

CHAPTER 2

SOCIETY'S FEARS OF MILITARISM

The roots of America's fears in placing the Army in charge of the CCC were deep. The Army itself traditionally held a precarious place in American society. The English traditions underlying American society ensured that a large standing army was virtually intolerable. The Army was a society in and of itself, and as such was not held in very high regard by the general populace. The Army's role in the CCC was opposed by several diverse groups, from Communist to pacifist, labor to anti-militarist. In this chapter, I will explore the Army's place in American society and the effect this had on the mission of administering the CCC.

The Army and the People

America's attitude toward the Army was not uniquely American. British tradition held that a large standing army was a threat to individual rights. If the King had a professional army to do his bidding, it could be turned on his own people. Isolated, as an island, and relatively safe from invasion, England came to depend on its fleet and the militia instead of a standing army. The English were distrustful of any army that was constituted for other than a purely defensive role.[1]

The British were not only averse to a standing army, they also found any organized military training repellant.

> The English aversion to military service of an type, and to military interference with or control of the civil machinery of government, had been strengthened during the seventeenth century when war and civil strife absorbed much of the time and energy of the English people. Americans during the colonial period also lived in an environment of war and violence, and they were as little inclined as their English cousins to accept a military pattern of life or to spend overmuch of their time in training or preparation.[2]

Thus America's beginnings set the tone for the future place of the military in society. Americans lived on the edge of civilization. They possessed some military skills just to survive. The colonies were settled by civilians, not soldiers, and they saw themselves as up to any task that might confront them. The mother country had not sent the army to protect the fledgling colonies while they were being carved from the wilderness; the citizen-soldier had been enough.[3]

The colonists retained this strong feeling against a professional military right through the revolution. Several colonies refused to even raise militia for the prosecution of the French and Indian War. After the war, the English stationed a substantial force permanently in the colonies and this was one of the acts that led the colonies to rebel. Even fighting for freedom did not agree with many of the colonists. General Washington continually complained about the lack of support and inadequate manpower he had to work with.[4]

The feeling of the people and the Congress seemed to be that a professional military was one of the things which caused the rebellion and was thus to be avoided in fighting the rebellion.

> Americans could pride themselves on the fact that they had fought the Revolution and made good their independence without the sacrifice of the ideals and interests that had originally inspired them to break away from the mother country....Thus the colonial aversion to a vast military machine, which was an important part of the English heritage transmitted to America, was in turn strengthened by the revolt against the mother country.[5]

The citizen-soldier of the militia became the central defender of the new United States. The regular army was always small. It would swell with volunteer units in time of war and crisis, but shrink again when the crisis passed.

> The people took for granted their own capacity to arise and protect their freedom and their interests when dangers loomed. The Army was kept militarily inadequate for any real crisis. As events proved, this was a safe gamble, though the losses and inefficiencies in time of actual war could have been greatly reduced if the nation had been better prepared.
>
> We have been unable to distinguish between the need for military efficiency and the evils of war. Consequently to express disapproval of war, we have neglected our defenses. An ineffective army thus became a sign of grace.[6]

This was the pattern for America throughout the nineteenth century.

After the Spanish-American War there was a major reorganization of the Army. America became an imperialist power as a result of the war, necessitating a larger army to garrison America's new possessions. Even this new army was

small by the standards of other world powers. Many influential writers pushed for more preparedness and a more aggressive foreign policy, but the nation resisted until the entrance of the United States into World War I.[7]

After World War I the United States demobilized, but stopped short of the level of cuts common after previous wars in its history. "The chief of staff urged a standing army of over half a million men and was not dismayed by an annual military appropriation of a billion dollars."[8] While the chief of staff didn't get his half million men, the army embarked on a policy of increasing contacts with the civilian population to increase its ability to survive in the post-war world. Much of this contact with the civilian sector was accomplished by reserve officers.[9]

Liberal writers decried this increased contact as a blatant attempt at militarization.

> Our surplus officers are to be used in the general dissemination of the knowledge of military science among our people, especially our youth. They are to be used as instructors in hundreds of schools, colleges, and universities of the country. The last Army Act expressly so provides. It also expressly repeals every one of the previously existing inhibitions upon the employment of military officers on other than purely military duty. Officers of the army are now engaged in a variety of work which, out of deference to the doctrine against military control of civilian function, has been forbidden them throughout our history until now...Each of these Regular officers will be an active center of militarization; and in the 100,000 commissioned Reserve officers scattered throughout the civil life of the country, each owing his commission to the Chief of Staff and holding it only at his pleasure, that military official has a tremendous power for the popularization of his militaristic view.[10]

This was not an uncommon view between the wars expressed in journals such as The Nation and The World Tomorrow.

The soldier himself was not held in very high esteem by other members of the society. The dean of a southern college, who did not agree with compulsory military training, wondered how his students felt about soldiers and soldiering. Forty percent of the members of the student body were polled on how they ranked the occupation of soldier on the basis of his contribution to society. Of twenty-five choices, the soldier ranked twenty-second. On the basis of prestige the students felt the occupation of soldier ranked one spot lower, at twenty-third.

> If these 648 students are typical, one must conclude that soldiering does not have much prestige with American college men. It must be remembered, too, that this low rating is accorded by men who were reared in the South, where the occupation of the soldier is probably more highly thought of than in other parts of the country.[11]

Given the Army's traditional place in society and the feelings against the military generated by World War I, it is no wonder that some individuals and groups opposed the involvement of the military with the Civilian Conservation Corps.

Opposition to Army Involvement With the CCC

The bill authorizing the CCC was one of the first pieces of legislation put forward by President Roosevelt when he took office. The bill was broadly worded to allow the executive branch maximum flexibility in implementing it. The

Forest Service was initially proposed to administer the program, but it was soon apparent that only the Army was organized to handle a task of such magnitude. The program, and the Army's part in it, brought an immediate response.[12]

> The Roosevelt-Perkins plan for a 'peacetime army' is being criticized from four main sources. The deflationists believe that the depression should be allowed to run its course...Certain pacifists profess to believe that it is the beginning of compulsory military training, and that it may even form the nucleus of some sort of Fascist army. The American Federation of Labor objects to the proposed wage....The Communists consider the scheme to be 'forced labor.'[13]

One of the first people to oppose the CCC as a whole and the Army's involvement in it was William Green, president of the American Federation of Labor. He testified before a joint congressional committee that the labor movement thought the CCC would militarize labor and that it would mean wages reduced to subsistence levels. He said, "It smacks, as I see it, of fascism, of Hitlerism, of a form of sovietism."[14]

Although Green claimed it looked like sovietism, the communists didn't think it looked like anything their party could endorse. Herbert Benjamin, a communist witness before the congressional committee in March, 1933, said, "This bill undertakes to establish and legalize a system of forced labor."[15]

> ...the most organized and articulate early opposition to the CCC came from leftwing groups, primarily Socialists and Communists and their bedfellows. They had called the group 'fascist' and shrilled that it had a 'military management.' Later the Communists curtailed most of their criticism because the party leaders adopted a policy of supporting administration measures.[16]

The Communists did not curtail all of their opposition to the CCC, however. Only the party's opposition to the CCC's effect on labor was, for the most part, stopped.

> ...Communists and radicals would not let go of the issue of militarism in the CCC, and were able to unite with them thousands of non-Communists who supported the idea of the CCC but distrusted its military relationships.
>
> This common fear, held by a number of diverse groups, was one reason why the debated issue of possible military training for enrollees was always of central importance.[17]

All the other complaints against the CCC fell by the wayside in a short time, but the charge of militarism from the Army's involvement hung on. In late 1933, with the program only six months old, News-Week wrote, "Some uneasy prophets mutter that this youthful army...contains the seeds of fascism within itself."[18] This story also said that the enrollees "are comparatively free of military discipline, but there is a semblance of an army about them nonetheless."[19]

In January, 1934, Harry H. Woodring, an Assistant Secretary of War, wrote an article entitled "The Army Stands Ready" which said, "The C. C. C. mobilization is to us more than a great military achievement: it is a dress rehearsal of the army's ability to intervene, under constitutional authority, in combatting the depression."[20] The World Tomorrow, which reprinted the article in part, commented:

> The radicals who have been all along charging the Roosevelt Administration with setting up a militaristic organization in the name of the Civilian Conservation Corps will find in Mr. Woodring's words the complete justification for everything that they have said."[21]

Woodring's article angered and alarmed the public after they had begun to accept the administration's view that the Army was not militarizing the CCC enrollees. There were calls for Woodring's resignation. There were calls for the removal of the CCC from War Department administration. The White House denied that it shared those views and made Woodring apologize. But the anti-militarists were apprehensive now, and charges were made that enrollees had been issued guns and other military gear. That rumor was repeatedly denied, and the final effect was that even recreational shooting was banned from the CCC camps.[22]

It seemed that the mobilization of the youth of America for a peaceful purpose was just too good for some people to let alone. In early 1935, General Douglas MacArthur proposed to the House Appropriations Committee that the CCC enrollees be allowed to enlist for military training after their tour and then be integrated into the reserves. Representative J. J. McSwain introduced a bill that would add two months of service to the CCC enrollment for military training. The enrollees would then be enlisted in an auxiliary reserve force. There was an immediate and vehement public response and the bill never made it out of committee.[23]

There was yet another attempt at military training in January, 1937, as reported in The Literary Digest:

> Mindful of success in experimentation, the New Deal moved last week to consider two new steps:

1. Making the CCC permanent.
2. Subjecting recruits in it to military training.

With little of no opposition, the first measure seemed assured of Congressional enactment.

The second gave promise of one of the most bitter pacifist-militarist battles since the World War.

Deaf to arguments of some War Department officials that the introduction of military training in CCC camps would triple regular Army strength, that in any case it would be no worse than the training in land-grant colleges, peace organizations, liberals of every complexion and church groups girded for a fight to a finish, threatening to lobby the bill right out of the District of Columbia.[24]

Administration Denial of Militarism

Throughout the first four years of the CCC's existence, the administration fought any semblance of militarism in the camps. The President was asked repeatedly about military training and militarization in the CCC and he always denied that there was any such purpose in the program. At the inception of the program he said, "...they all talk about military control and militarization, but that is just utter rubbish."[25]

Army officers who ran the camps reenforced the administation's position on militarization. In April of 1933, News-Week reported:

Army officers emphasize the fact that while in general routine, life in the camps will be much the same as that in an army barracks, no military training is to be given the labor recruits."[26]

As late as January, 1939, the President was still publicly firm that military training did not belong in the CCC. When asked about a Congressional suggestion to use the

CCC as a nucleus for training the reserve forces, the President said, "No. That was turned down a long time ago. The C. C. C., we want it just exactly the way it is, without military training in it."[27]

When Assistant Secretary of War Woodring made his unfortunate comments about the Army and the CCC, he was forced to apologize. He did this very energetically, claiming his arguments were misunderstood and that he believed wholly in the President's view that the CCC should not be militarized. Because of the controversy stirred up by Woodring's comments, Robert Fetchner, head of the CCC, also had opportunities to speak on militarization. When asked about the rumors that enrollees had been issued rifles and other military equipment, he said there was "not one scintilla of truth" to those accusations.[28]

These efforts by the President, the officers who ran the camps, and those in between were successful, for the most part. The Nation, which normally denounced militarism, published an article which said that, "At the beginning, the fact that the army was in it aroused alarm, for the camps looked like the nucleus of a fascist militia." But, "The military element has shown laudable restraint."[29]

Militarism Becomes Official

The times were changing, and with them public attitudes. As Europe armed and moved toward war, the attitudes of the American public shifted. Things that were

unthinkable in the mid-thirties became practical after the German invasion of Poland. As John Salmond phrased it in his book, The Civilian Conservation Corps, 1933-1942:

> It is probable that public opinion in 1936 still stood opposed to military training in the camps, and for the moment the issue became submerged in the larger one of the move for permanency. However, it was to be revived with a greater sense of urgency than before as world tensions increased and Europe moved inexorably toward war."[30]

By the end of 1937, even Mr. Fetchner was telling the public that the training which the CCC enrollees received helped prepare them for war. He said that the enrollees were "85 per cent prepared for military life" and could be "turned into first-class fighting men at almost an instant's notice."[31]

While there was some disagreement with Fetchner's words, it lacked the storm of controversy that had plagued previous speakers. He had added that this "military aspect" of the CCC life had not been intentional on the administration's part, but was a natural by-product of their outdoor life. The key difference between the way his remarks and earlier ones were taken was the change in public opinion. "A Gallup Poll taken in August, 1938, revealed that 75 per cent of those polled supported military training in the camps, a startling increase from 1936 when no clear preferences could be discerned."[32]

After the war in Europe began, the change was even more dramatic, with one poll showing 90 per cent support for military training in the camps. But the administration still

did not want military training for the CCC enrollees and Fetchner came out against it. His argument was that if the country wanted a bigger army, it should expand the existing one rather than convert a civilian organization to something quasi-military. The strongest argument against military training was provided by the Army chief of staff, General George C. Marshall. He denied that the Army wanted any such training, but he opened the door for use of the CCC in emergency, noncombatant defense work. Congress promptly amended the CCC appropriation bill to authorize military training for noncombatant-type jobs, such as cooks and engineers.[33]

The President addressed the subject in a press conference on May 30, 1940:

> Well, I will illustrate: One of the great needs is the need for cooks. Now, that sounds silly. we need 10 or 15 thousand cooks, military and naval camp cooks. We haven't got enough male cooks in the United States. We have got to train them; that is noncombatant work. We have got to train a lot more people to be radio mechanics and radio operators. We have not got near enough. That is noncombatant work.
>
> We have got to train automobile mechanics who would not be militarized, but we need more automobile mechanics....The CCC will be used for that."[34]

So, through compromise, some military training was at last integrated into the CCC. The noncombatant defense training continued until the CCC's demise in 1942. During the last year of the program, genuine military drill was instituted in the camps. This program earned praise from the

adjutant general of the Army because it allowed the Army to release soldiers from noncombatant duties.[35]

When the program started it was clearly not the intent of either the President or of Congress to militarize America's youth though the CCC. It took nine years and a world at war to finally result in the militarization that American society had feared in 1933.

CHAPTER 3

THE ARMY'S ROLE IN ADMINISTERING THE CCC

If a list was made in early 1933 of those organizations opposed to the Army being in charge of a large group of unemployed American youth, it would have included pacifists, communists, anti-militarists, labor unions, and the Army itself.

The Army was reluctantly facing the prospect that the government expected it to play a part in combating the depression. When Senator James Couzens of Michigan introduced his bill calling for the Army to house and feed 300,000 unemployed Americans, the Army estimated it only had space for 68,000. The Army also found that this space was in the South while those out of work and needing shelter were predominantly in the North. The bill was defeated, but the War Department found the initial planning it caused useful in the months to come.[1]

This chapter will detail the role of the Army in administering the CCC. Initially, I will examine the groundwork for the program and how the Army's role expanded. Then I will discuss the magnitude of the mobilization during the first 90 days of the program. Next I will relate the experiences of a variety of participants. The chapter will

conclude with a discussion of the transition from Regular Army officers to Reservists and the further change in status of these officers to civilian workers.

Initial Involvement is Slight

Immediately upon taking office, President Roosevelt set about making good on his campaign promises to ease the nation's unemployment problems. On March 15, the Secretaries of War, Interior, Agriculture, and Labor met to formulate strategies for public works projects. They recommended a large program combining public works with soil conservation and reforestation under a combined effort of their departments.[2]

At approximately the same time, according to Killigrew, the Deputy Chief of Staff of the Army, Brigadier General Hugh Drum presented a plan to Roosevelt outlining methods for the Army to aid the government in alleviating unemployment. Drum's plan called for the Army to induct and organize up to 500,000 men into units and turn the units over to other federal departments. This would end the Army's involvement. The work to be accomplished should already be identified, by Drum's reckoning, because an earlier law had specified that federal departments should maintain plans for construction projects six years in advance. The plan did consider the possibility of the Army administering the work camps, but strongly cautioned against it as detrimental to the Army's primary mission of national defense.[3]

By March 31, the President had pushed a bill through Congress which authorized emergency conservation work and, in effect, authorized the CCC. The President outlined his plan in an executive order on April 5th. The plan made the Department of Labor responsible for identifying recruits and the Army was to receive them and organize them into units. The Departments of the Interior and Agriculture were to be in charge of everything else including building and administering the camps and the work projects. To supervise this unprecedented cooperative effort, the President appointed a Director of Emergency Conservation Work.[4]

According to General Douglas MacArthur's portion of the 1933 War Department report to the president, the Army's mission was strictly limited and should have been quickly accomplished. The Army would receive the men and enroll them. They would be immunized and have records initiated. The enrollees would be issued clothing and equipment and be formed into 200-man companies. These companies would then be transported by the Army to the rail depot nearest to the project it had been assigned. Officials of the Departments of Agriculture or the Interior would then take over.

> This purpose met with the full approval of the War Department since it promised a minimum of interference with activities vital to proper discharge of the continuing responsibilities placed upon the Army by the National Defense Act.[5]

In a press conference on March 29, 1933, the President alluded to the limited role the Army would play, saying the Army would provide facilities and trucks. He said

the Army control would consist of medical examinations and supply issue. He wanted the new enrollees under Army control for even less time than the Army considered necessary, saying, "The Army, in talking in a preliminary way, says two weeks. I think that is much too long. I think we could keep them in camp a maximum of one week, which would be quite enough."[6]

It wasn't, quite.

The Army's Role Expands

With Executive Order No. 6101, dated April 5, 1933, the President launched the CCC. The order named Mr. Robert Fetchner as Director of Emergency Conservation Work and instructed the Secretaries of War, Agriculture, Labor, and the Interior to appoint representatives to constitute an advisory council to the director. As the President later noted, the council was appointed to obtain "...the continued cooperation of the four Government departments which have been used in the launching and subsequent operation of the program."[7]

The Army's representative to the council was Colonel Duncan Major of the G-3 section, Army General Staff. He argued against expanding the Army's mission in connection with the CCC after the chief of the Forestry Service realized his organization couldn't cope with a project of such a large scope. Major contended that forcing a continuous working relationship between several departments at various levels

would be highly inefficient. He also argued that morale would be hurt because the unemployed enrollees would be making more money than the enlisted men who were caring for them. Finally, he considered the mission so disruptive as to prevent the Army from doing its primary mission of defending the nation. According to Johnson, Major was successful in at least delaying Fetchner's bid to expand the Army's role until Secretary of War George Dern could confer with President Roosevelt. Secretary Dern was not able to convince the President. The Army would take charge.[8]

The President made the Army's new role official by Executive Order No. 6106-A, on April 10. The Army's Chief of Finance became the fiscal officer for the CCC; the Quartermaster General, the contracting and procurement officer; and the Surgeon General, the chief medical officer. According to the President, "...the War Department was given the job of paying, housing, clothing and feeding the men of the camps."[9]

General MacArthur, in the Annual Report for 1933, called the changes "radical". He said the Army had to assume "complete and permanent control of the Civilian Conservation Corps project." The only exceptions were recruit selection and supervision of the technical work the enrollees were to perform.[10]

The Army lost no time in starting the new mission. Johnson attributes the success of the endeavor to a policy of decentralized execution. The United States was already divided into nine Continental Army Corps Areas and these were

given control of the CCC project. The Corps Areas were made responsible for the command, housing, supply, feeding, administration, sanitation, medical care, and welfare of the CCC members. The Corps Area commanders were also authorized to call up some Reserve officers to help, but each company was to be commanded by a Regular officer. Four Regular enlisted men were also assigned to each company or camp to serve as First Sergeant, mess sergeant, supply sergeant and cook. In order to save money, the authorization to call up reserve officers was withdrawn until at least 50 per cent of the Corps Areas' Regular officers were serving with the CCC.[11]

The President's initial guidance called for the Army to keep the enrollees in conditioning camps for only one week prior to putting them to work, but the Army's initial guidance to the Corps area commanders allowed for four weeks.[12] Even as late as May 10, when the Army submitted updated plans to meet the July 1st mobilization goal, the Army allowed that to put an enrollee in the field by July 1, he must be enrolled by June 7.[13] Histories of the CCC companies of the Missouri-Kansas District reflect a variation of time spent in the enrollment/conditioning phase from one to four weeks.[14]

The Size of the Task

In the 1990s, the mobilization of over 250,000 men in less than 90 days to augment the roughly 400,000 currently

serving would be a daunting task. In the context of the 1933 army of less than 150,000, it was monumental. When the first influx of 250,000 had been processed, various officials looked back on the historical record to find an event that approximated the task just completed.

General Douglas MacArthur, the chief of staff, recalled in his report to the Secretary of War that the Army mobilized more people for the CCC than had been mobilized during the Spanish-American War. He also alluded to the mobilization effort at the beginning of the United States' participation in the "Great War".[15]

Colonel Duncan Major, the War Department member of the advisory council on Emergency Conservation Work, covered the magnitude of the effort in great depth in his report to the Secretary of War which was printed in the Army Navy Journal. He also drew comparisons with the initial mobilization for the World War. Major wrote that the War Department mobilized approximately 180,000 men in the first 90 days of that conflict. The War Department had also managed to ship something less than 16,000 soldiers to France during that time, and most of them were Regulars that didn't require any mobilization. He pointed out that this was accomplished with the assets of the entire War Department (Regulars, Reserves, and National Guard) and with the advance warning of a war that had been going on for three years.[16]

Major them went on to enumerate the accomplishments of the Regular Army, acting alone, in 1933. In almost

exactly the same span of time, the Army had managed to mobilize a total of 275,000 men for the CCC. These men were organized into 1330 companies and placed in camps across what he called a "3,000 mile front" from ocean to ocean. As part of the effort, 55,000 of the enrollees had to be moved 2,200 miles (from the East coast to the Rockies) to reach their work sites.[17]

It was not a steady flow of personnel evenly spread over the 90 days. From April 7 through May 10, only 52,000 had been enrolled and the War Department projected that only 115,000 would be enrolled by July 1 at that rate. The Army appealed to the Director to increase the flow of new men and told him they needed to have all of the men enrolled by June 7 in order to meet the President's goal of 250,000 men in work camps by July 1. On May 16, 5,890 men enrolled; on May 17, 8,100; and on May 18, 10,500. Major wrote that at one time in May, over 150,000 men were in the conditioning camps and that the peak enrollment day was June 1, with 13,843 joining the CCC.[18]

Major also pointed out the magnitude of the Quartermaster Department's effort. Although the Army was authorized to use its war stocks to support the CCC, military uniforms had to be altered so as to not present a distinctive, military appearance. As Major said, military clothing would not be appropriate for a civilian organization. The Army's own Philadelphia Quartermaster Depot did the alterations. During that first 90 day period the Depot altered 200,000

wool coats, 225,000 overcoats, and 200,000 pairs of pants. The Depot also manufactured over 100,000 barracks bags and averaged 75 tents per day.[19]

The report also contained information on contracts that were awarded to produce goods needed for the effort, ranging from summer drawers to 3,000 trucks. It placed daily beef consumption at 330 steers and stated that the enrollees ate about 225,000 one pound loaves of bread each day.[20]

One of the largest aspects of the mobilization effort was the transportation of the enrollees. Trains were used almost exclusively for anything other than a local move. The decentralized execution plan could not cover the moves brought about by the need to relocate many of the CCC companies to the far West. The Corps Area commanders were responsible for all rail movements within their Corps, according to Major. The only exception to this seemed to be Texas, where the distances to be travelled necessitated sleeping cars. Travel between Corps, and overnight travel in Texas, was arranged by the Quartermaster General. According to the report, the Quartermaster General arranged for over 200 special trains which transported over 60,000 men.[21]

The Soldiers' View

If the mobilization for the CCC was a monumental task for the entire Army, it was no smaller task for the individual officers and men who were called upon to make the CCC a reality. Soldiers, from corporal to colonel, took up a

new and unique mission. It had little to do with protecting the nation in the traditional sense, but everything to do with preserving the Army from Depression-era cuts. As one reporter put it, "The New Deal has meant to the United States Army its smallest budget and its largest task since the World War."[22]

Some of the soldiers involved with the build-up shared their experiences through professional journals and others were used by reporters to humanize their reporting of the effort. Corporal George Chancellor of the 1st Cavalry (Mechanized) chronicled the Fort Knox CCC experience for The Cavalry Journal. While his general observations mirror the large scale views espoused at the Army level, he does personalize some of the challenges faced at the post level. Fort Knox had estimated it could house 8,000 enrollees in existing facilities, but demand soon outstripped supply. To meet the space demand, new areas known as Tent Camp No. 2 and No. 3 were erected. Fort Knox soldiers and a battalion of the 11th Infantry from Fort Benjamin Harrison had to lay sewer lines, pipe in water, and run electric power to the sites. Corporal Chancellor especially praised the effort on Camp No. 2 saying the site was ditched, drained, and prepared for tents in only one day.[23]

Chancellor detailed various aspects of the effort from the donation of 50 Model T Fords by the Chicago Post Office to the remarkably low AWOL rate of the enrollees (0.35 percent). He also went out of his way to reinforce the Army

position on not militarizing the enrollees; however, his example showed militarization was happening by sheer proximity:

> Contrary to public belief, the members of the Conservation Corps were given no military training beyond the marching in column to and from their work. However; seeing the demonstrations and drills of the First Cavalry (Mechanized) made them wish to learn military drills themselves. When left to their own devices, groups of young men could be seen performing military movements which were very creditable.[24]

Journalists used examples of individuals to illustrate their impression that the Army was doing a competent job of mobilizing the "forest army." A writer in The Literary Digest painted a picture of Regular army leadership in the person of one First Sergeant R. H. Nesbit at the inception of the first CCC camp near Luray, Virginia, in April, 1933. The writer said the new enrollees were desolate, standing in the rain waiting for their new home to be constructed. One sergeant issued them rubber boots and another got the field stove burning; the enrollees were not impressed. Then First Sergeant Nesbit...

> ...stuck a whistle between his teeth, and let out a resounding blast. "Listen, men!" he shouted in an experienced voice, when the din had died away. 'You've had plenty to eat, that stove is red hot, and your feet are dry. Quit crabbin'.'
>
> 'But what about the rain?' one of the civilians wanted to know.
>
> 'Even the Army can't stop that!' was the quick reply.[25]

According to the article, within three days Camp Roosevelt

was in existence with 40 floored squad tents dressed in neat rows.[26]

Harper's Monthly Magazine carried a long, extremely candid article written by "Captain X." The article presented a clear picture of the CCC from an officer's point of view and that picture was so candid, it is no wonder he didn't use his name. Captain X maintains the third person for most of the article, but gives the distinct impression of a first person account:

> Far indeed is the cry from handling well-settled Regular Army men to handling undisciplined, habitually unemployed youngsters. But this was the job thrown at our Regulars last spring. The Army, unenthusiastic but undismayed, grappled promptly with three times its own strength. Those were the orders, and the Army went at it.[27]

He describes the turmoil of an officer snatched from his regular duties and given command of a company of enrollees that has just been organized. He has an acting first sergeant, a good mess section, and an inexperienced corporal for a supply sergeant. He starts with an Army lieutenant as the executive officer; the lieutenant is reassigned and replaced by a Navy officer. Just as the Navy officer is learning Army administration, he is replaced by a Marine:

> Then the reality begins to dawn upon him. The authorities are going to put him on a train, dump him down in the middle of a four-acre lot with two hundred men and certain definite allowances of supplies and equipment, and expect him to get along and not bother Headquarters.[28]

Captain X then gives a graphic account of arriving with the company at the site of the camp-to-be at two in the afternoon. A storm is brewing and the camp area has not even been surveyed. There are only the four Regular Army soldiers who are experienced at setting up a camp, and they already have their hands full. "There wasn't anyone you could tell to take a crew over and dig a temporary latrine trench. You had to go over and mark out the ground and tell them everything."[29]

Duty with the CCC could carry hardships other than hard work, if one of the enrollees lost a piece of government property, the company commander bought it. Captain X explained that this strained the commander's pocket because there had just been a pay cut and the commander had to maintain his family at another location. Captain X solved the property accountability problem with a strict supply discipline program before it became expensive.[30]

The hardships were not all monetary. A letter to the editor of The Christian Century mentioned the salary cut that the Regular Army had just taken, but more to the point it contained a letter home from an officer on duty with the CCC. In the letter, the officer describes trying to ship CCC companies back east from Idaho before the winter sets in. Local politics caused eight of the camps to remain through the winter when it would be too cold for the enrollees to work. The officer complained of working seven days a week and having lost 20 pounds.[31]

One of the lessons that Captain X seemed to learn well from the CCC experience was the difference between civilian discipline and military discipline. The key difference was that in the military an officer had subordinates of proven loyalty and leadership ability. In the CCC, group psychology was used until the natural leaders came to light. As Captain X put it, "the interim period was the difficult one."[32]

Kermit Rosenberg served as both a company executive officer and company commander in Nebraska and Kansas from 1938 until 1942. He said:

> We ran the show. We were responsible for everything. The first sergeant, supply sergeant and mess sergeant were enrollees, I didn't see any Regulars. For food, sometimes the headquarters would let a contract and they'd bring it all in to us; of course we had to requisition nonperishables. But we had to do everything, to start a new camp, they'd just give you some money and ship you some pre-fab buildings and you just built the camp.[33]

Not all company commanders were as successful as Captain X and Rosenberg. The New Republic reported that there was a 20-percent turnover in company commanders indicating that one in five had been found to be unfit for the post and relieved.[34]

Company grade officers weren't the only Regular officers affected by the CCC mobilization. Lieutenant Colonel George C. Marshall, as commander of Fort Screven in Savannah, Georgia, was responsible for the organization of seventeen camps in the southeastern United States. To aid in establishing the morale of the enrollees, Marshall met them

at their barracks as they reported in. In his biography of Marshall, Frye states that bootleg whiskey was the worst problem Marshall had with the CCC camps. He solved it by going to community leaders and bankers and threatening to move the camps to other towns if the flow of liquor didn't stop. The problem with whiskey disappeared.[35]

Marshall appears to have thought the CCC experience was beneficial for the most part. In a letter to General John J. Pershing, he said:

> This CCC affair has been a major mobilization and a splendid experience for the War Department and the army. The former has got a lot to learn about decentralization and simplicity. The funds were usually so restricted that operations were hampered as to speed. Apparently all was decentralized, but usually a joker was tucked away somewhere in each lengthy instruction.[36]

Transitions in Command

While the Regular Army performed most of the initial CCC mobilization with little augmentation, the normal business of the Army ground to a halt. The Army was able to slowly replace most of the Regular officers by calling Reserves to active duty. This effort was hampered by President Roosevelt's desire to keep costs down. The Regular officers' salary had already been appropriated and the Reservists' had not. By the end of June, 1934, only 414 Regular officers remained on duty with the CCC.[37]

Recognizing the training benefit that camp leadership provided for the Reserve officers assigned to the CCC, the G-3 attempted to impose a rotation policy in order to train

as many Reserve officers as possible. Colonel Major, who had done most of the Army planning for the CCC, was opposed to the idea on the grounds that running the CCC efficiently was the first priority. Brigadier General Hughes, the new G-3, pressed his case, but Major finally convinced him not to implement the plan. One Corps Area commander did institute a six month rotation policy for his region.[38]

In 1937, the Army finally decided to implement a standard rotation policy. Reserve officers were to be rotated between 18 months to two years. Many officers, who had held their positions for up to four years by this time, protested vigorously. Under pressure from Congress, the Army slowed the implementation of the rotation order so as to minimize its impact. Before the rotation policy was fully implemented, Fetchner, the Director of the CCC, proposed that the camps be commanded by civilians.[39]

The proposal by Fetchner was adopted in 1939. The biggest selling point seemed to be that civilians would cost less. Reserve officers on active duty with the CCC were paid housing and subsitence allowances, the same as Regular Army officers. Civilians only received a base salary. In actuality, the Reserve officers performing the mission were simply dropped from active duty and hired as civilians. The positions were not permanent either; since the CCC was a temporary relief agency, the positions were temporary too.[40]

As Kermit Rosenberg explained it, "In September (1939) they civilianized it and there was no saluting and we had to change to that spruce green uniform. I was a second lieutenant and they made me a GS-9, but after the war I didn't get credit for it as civil service."[41]

The camps retained their civilian commanders until the CCC was disbanded in 1942.

CHAPTER 4

THE IMPACT OF THE CCC ON THE ENROLLEES

The CCC as an experience had the potential for dramatic impact on the lives of the young men who served. They were of an impressionable age, removed from family and friends, and placed in an unfamiliar environment. All had known poverty, and many, hunger, which ended at the gates of the CCC camp. It was almost impossible for the CCC not to leave a lasting mark on its participants. This chapter will explain the intended impact of the program from the perspective of those who conceived it, framed it, and operated it. It will also explore the public view of what participation in the CCC was doing for and to America's young men. Lastly, it will show how those young men saw themselves being shaped both at the time, and now.

Intended Impact

The CCC was the brainchild of the President; part of a larger program to stimulate the economy. The basic idea was to put people back to work. The President told the press in March, 1933, that men would be put to work on government owned land doing jobs that would not otherwise be accomplished. There was no mention of the benefits, other than employment, he expected to accrue to the men involved.[1]

In his note to the Congress explaining what he wanted in regards to the CCC, President Roosevelt called to mind the practicality of the conservation work in adding to the national wealth. He pointed to several recent, at that time, natural disasters which could have been prevented or moderated by conservation work. He concluded his request by saying, "More important, however, than the material gains will be the moral and spiritual value of such work."[2] The president was attempting to restore the work ethic and a sense of purpose in the unemployed young men of America.

In later notes concerning his message to Congress, President Roosevelt said that hundreds of thousands of young men in 1933 were in the position of having been inculcated with the will and desire to work, with no jobs available. He noted that more than half of these men were from the crowded cities and had fully expected to help support their families. Roosevelt feared the lack of work would destroy their moral fabric and lead them to anti-social behavior. He said he saw the CCC as a method to "save a generation of upright and eager young men." He said he had made up his mind before taking office to take as many young men as possible off the street and put them in the forest. There, the healthy climate and work would benefit them, while their wages would benefit their families and the conservation would benefit the nation.[3]

The men of the CCC were to be aided by more than a job in a healthy environment; they would also benefit from

the CCC's education program. Education was a part of the CCC from its inception, but always in a subordinate role. The President wrote that as economic conditions changed, so did the place of education in the CCC. By 1941, the CCC was operating 176 special schools training such subjects as motor repair, cooking and baking, radio, and clerical work. The president wrote that these schools contributed to an "adequate defense."[4]

Just as the acceptable level of military involvement changed as time changed, the acceptable subjects for training changed over time. The President broadened his definition of "military" in a press conference in June, 1940. When talking about compulsory military service, he said he didn't want everyone to think of military service as carrying a gun. Military service also includes those behind the lines. It even includes workers who maintain or conserve the nation's resources so the nation can survive and recover from the war. In other words, the CCC.[5]

In this same press conference, the President pointed out one of the benefits to the CCC enrollees that had never been brought up before. This benefit the President called a "sane point of view." It seems a man had told the President after a visit to the Midwest that of all the young people he had talked to, the CCC enrollees had presented the most sound or realistic form of idealism. The gentleman attributed this to two things the enrollees had that other young people didn't; discipline, and the fact that living in the company

of 199 other men made the enrollee think of others instead of just himself.[6]

One of the areas of training that seemed most important for the CCC enrollees to learn was the art of cooking. With the expansion of the armed forces before World War II, there developed a shortage of male cooks. The President remarked on the shortage and the CCC's role in alleviating it in two separate press conferences in May, 1940. He said:

> One of the great needs is the need for cooks. Now, that sounds silly. We need 10 or 15 thousand cooks, military and naval camp cooks. We haven't got enough male cooks in the United States. We have got to train them...[7]

He looked to the CCC to provide that training.

Near the end of the CCC's nine years of existence, President Roosevelt wrote:

> No one will ever be able to estimate in dollars and cents the value to the men themselves and to the nation as a whole in morale, in occupational training, in health, and in adaptability to later competitive life.[8]

The President was very positive about the CCC in both its purpose and impact on the enrollees, but General MacArthur, the Army's chief of staff, was not. Initially, MacArthur's biggest concern was to get the CCC mobilized and the Army back to training. Later, he recognized the possibilities offered by providing military training to enrollees at the end of their tour. He proposed this to a congressional committee, and a bill was introduced, but the bill died in a firestorm of anti-militarist protest.[9]

If the present chief of staff was luke-warm on the idea of the CCC, a future chief of staff liked it very much. According to Pogue, Colonel George Marshall saw the CCC as more than duty to be performed. He enjoyed the transformation the enrollees went through as they gained weight and confidence. He made the administration of the camps in his area a top priority, visiting 15 camps twice in one month. He was so proud of the CCC effort that he showed off one of the camps to the crew of a visiting French cruiser.[10]

The picture of what CCC life could do for the enrollees was not much different for the CCC company commander than from the President. The National Association of CCC Alumni newsletter, NACCCA Journal, reprinted a letter from a CCC company commander to the mother of a new enrollee. The commander wrote that camp life would teach her son desirable traits "...such as respect for authority, decency in conduct and speech, industriousness, promptness, cheerfulness, rules of good conduct and behavior."[11]

It is interesting to note that even though the letter was written in mid-1941, the company commander goes out of his way to emphasize the nonmilitary nature of CCC service. He equates the formations held to the practices of public schools and says they serve to avoid confusion. He states specifically that CCC enrollees "...are not soldiers and that there is nothing military about the CCC."[12]

The CCC had a nation-wide newspaper known as Happy Days. The editor, Roy Hoyt, wrote a handbook for new enrollees and in it he described the new life enrollees would live. He also described the first thing an enrollee was expected to learn.

> ...you will find it different from living at home. You will find rules and regulations which you may not have known there. But this does not mean you are in the Army. It does mean, though, that you will have to submit to certain forms of discipline. For discipline is necessary when any large group of persons try to live together. Without discipline there could be no CCC.[13]

The Public View

Any project as large as the CCC can be counted on to attract the scrutiny of the press. Newspapers and magazines were thorough in their coverage, and the coverage was mostly favorable. Even those periodicals associated with the anti-militarists and pacifists were, at worst, even-handed. Regardless of their orientation, the members of the press saw, for the most part, the same three benefits being given to the enrollees: discipline, health, and self confidence.

Early in the life of the CCC, John H. H. Darling wrote an article for The Christian Century. The magazine was normally anti-military, and Darling left no doubt as to his feelings in the second paragraph where he describes the training of soldiers as men being "...deceived by clever propaganda into a frantic mania for murderous action."[14] He goes on to describe his visit to Camp Dix, New Jersey, to see

the CCC enrollees at the end of their first six month enrollment period. He noted their improved conditioning, strength, and "...a general atmosphere of verve in eye and voice, where before there had been a careless, almost impervious indifference."[15]

Darling claimed the CCC had two purposes--employment, and turning boys into men. He wrote that it succeeded at both. To illustrate the changes wrought on the enrollees, he quoted a letter from a forestry foreman to the President.

> They were vicious and illiterate. They have been changed from lazy, selfish, sullen, suspicious fellows into men who have curbed their obscenity and learned to like work. They have learned to assist one another in their endeavors and they are developing an appreciation of nature. It has been a privilege to teach these boys that they will receive a 'fair break.' It is making valuable citizens from a group that would otherwise constitute a great menace to our welfare.[16]

Darling pointed out that these young men came from city slums, perhaps to explain why they were "vicious."[17]

At the beginning of the CCC's second year, The Literary Journal carried a story on what the CCC had accomplished to that time. After listing the statistics of the program, the author states that something has been left off the list. He writes that the effect on the morale of American youth is not tangible, but profound. He says they "have learned the value of discipline, the rules of sanitation, and how to conduct themselves self-reliantly in natural surroundings."[18]

The same publication printed a follow-up story on the CCC in 1937. The article was focused on the recurring possibility of adding military training to the CCC, but also outlined the impacts of the CCC on enrollees. The story said the enrollees gained weight, improved their health (with the exception of plentiful common colds and venereal disease), increased their education level, and were paid for doing so. "Most of all, it meant a real job, self-respect, and a recommendation when they leave the camps to get a job outside."[19]

The Committee on Militarism in Education collected and generated a fairly substantial amount of correspondence concerning the CCC. The committee's purpose was to fight the possibility of military training in the CCC and other organizations and institutions. One of the papers collected by the committee was written by Kenneth Holland, a longtime educational advisor to the CCC. While Holland did not believe in military combatant training in the camps, he did comment on the training benefits provided by the CCC.

> The camps are already developing young men physically, improving their morale, giving them work experience and some training especially in mechanics and the care and maintenance of trucks, tractors, bulldozers and the like. These activities are fundamental to any program of national defense and are military training in the sense that in this day of total war carried on by mechanized troops the noncombatant jobs, if such exist, are just as important as the so-called combatant activities.[20]

When Holland wrote the paper, in mid-June, 1940, the CCC had not yet been incorporated into the National Defense Program.

Writers of the day were fairly positive about the CCC experience and the opportunities it brought the enrollees, but they were not averse to covering the bad news. A writer for The Nation reported that the camps were not uniformly successful in changing the enrollees into sterling characters. He warned that the camps were in danger of becoming the haven for young hoodlums. He recounted two stories by way of illustration. One group of boys from the city set up a camp gambling ring, complete with strong-arm tactics. Another group established a monopoly on transportation to the city and when competition threatened, the offending truck ended up at the bottom of a lake. The reporter's moral was, "Gangster 'civilization' is not to be rooted out by a few months of work in the woods."[21]

The generally rosy picture painted by the government and the press of the benefits of camp life were not always mirrored by the local inhabitants near the camps. One of the first camps was established near Luray, Virginia, in April, 1933. By August, The Christian Century received a letter from Mr. L. E. Tharpe of Luray explaining how things really were. Mr. Tharpe claimed the War Department quit working after the mobilization. This claim was based on the observation that no one seemed to be in control of the enrollees near Luray.

> At six p.m. the boys are turned loose, come to town, loaf, shoot pool, replenish the bootleggers, and frequent the homes of women of questionable character. They have been guilty of every conceivable depredation, both in the country and in

> town, and according to one reputable citizen of the community 'have raised hell in general.'[22]

Mr. Tharpe went on to assert that the enrollees only worked from three hours per day to three hours per week.[23]

The Enrollees' View

The views expressed by Mr. Tharpe and the writer in The Nation notwithstanding, the enrollees generally viewed their CCC experience as beneficial. The contemporary record of enrollee thoughts on the CCC is possibly skewed toward the positive. Some examples of their thoughts are contained in a book called This New America, which was edited by two men who served as chaplains with the CCC. There is no bad news in the book. No human venture being perfect, this makes the book suspect. The views expressed are similar, however, to those put forth by the CCC alumni I interviewed while researching this thesis.

Contemporary thoughts noted in This New America tended to focus on the moral and spiritual side of enrollee growth, but they were grounded in practical examples. Enrollee John Miller wrote, "The finest achievement of the Civilian Conservation Corps is the building of the character of America's youth."[24] He went on to describe how living in close quarters with 200 men creates self-respect. The cost of not doing a share of the work is paid in disrespect from peers. Bullies are broken by mass disapproval. Cooperation in fostered and everyone benefits.[25]

Another "soil soldier" named Victor Pesek wrote an inventory of his improved character traits as a thank you note to his government. He felt that two years in the CCC had helped him lay a solid foundation for his future. He numbered caring for himself physically first, and how to think second. Next he listed cooperation with others, patience, and a love of nature. Last he listed discipline. As he put it:

> Above all I have learned to obey orders of those in constituted authority, a lesson, if learned and practiced by all of us, would make us better citizens, true Americans and good husbands and fathers.[26]

Donald B. Miller, an enrollee in Co. 305, Richmond Furnace, Pennsylvania, wrote that it was easier for a person to solve the small problems of personal behavior in the camps. His reason was that the big problems, "starvation, want, and suffering," were solved by the camps themselves. This allowed the enrollees to "face the future with enthusiasm, feeling that we have proven ourselves men."[27]

Most of the former CCC members contacted during the preparation of this thesis related their CCC experience to their later life. Some related that the skills they learned in the CCC led to careers as cooks, electricians and heavy equipment operators. Almost all of the ex-CCC men related their lessons from the CCC to the second great defining episode in their life, World War II.

Wilbur I. Kuns wrote in November, 1992, that he was in the CCC for 31 months and World War II for 31 months and

the biggest difference was carrying a gun. He stated that both experiences taught self-discipline, self-respect, and respect for others. He said he worked in a soil conservation camp and learned to survey and draw maps. He practiced this trade throughout his life, and used the experience in the Army. He concluded by saying, "When asked if I went to college I answer no I got my experience in the CCC."[28]

Mearl Blake was an early entrant to the CCC, enrolling in May, 1933. He said the CCC gave him self-esteem and taught him how to get along in a military-controlled environment. This was important to him during World War II, as he served in Navy Construction Battalions. He attributes his success in life and that of his friends to their time in the CCC.[29]

Hugo Brehm, a retired school principal, credited the Army's involvement with the CCC for teaching him discipline and goal setting. He wrote that the discipline he learned in the CCC aided him when he was in the Army during World War II. He said many young men had a difficult time with the adjustment to Army life, but he had no problems.[30]

Charles E. Humberger claims that the Army played a significant role in training the CCC enrollees in both specific skills and leadership. He wrote:

> ...cadres of officers and enlisted men taught the enrollees to be self-sufficient in cooking, baking, and operating a mess. They were trained in the management of quartermaster supplies, camp sanitation, medical treatment, and the keeping of company records.

> The Company Leader and his associates (Non-coms) were taught the basics and necessity of organization and need to demand respect from their subordinates.[31]

Humberger also states that some of the Army officers who served as company commanders went out of their way to maintain good relations with the local community to secure volunteer teachers and classrooms for the education program. The officers themselves served as role models for appearance and bearing. "Enrollees were inculcated with the need to conduct themselves in a manner that would not be offensive or bring criticism from citizens in the neighborhood."[32]

Discipline, cooperation and self-respect are the recurring themes in the thoughts of those who initiated the CCC and those who participated in it. The statistics show that a great conservation work was done for the physical side of America, but the spiritual gains of the enrollees, while less tangible, are no less real.

CHAPTER 5

THE IMPACT OF THE CCC ON THE ARMY

The administration of the CCC had a broad and varied impact on the Army. Initially it was beneficial as a planning exercise and mobilization test, but at the same time it was devastating to Army readiness. After the Regular Army officers were replaced by Reserve officers, the benefits outweighed the costs, especially in light of America's entry into World War II in December, 1941. This chapter will examine both the benefits and the problems for the Army in the administering of the CCC. The chapter will be organized chronologically as much as possible.

Initial Mobilization

The Army mobilized the 250,000 initial enrollees for the CCC in just under ninety days. In the event of war, the then-current (1933) Mobilization Plan called for the mobilization of 900,000 Army volunteers in the first thirty days. As Kreidberg and Henry stated, it didn't take much work to realize this figure was inflated. Less than 100,000 had volunteered in the first thirty days of World War I and the mobilization of the CCC strained the Regular Army to its limits. They also supposed that pacifist trends would make recruiting 900,000 volunteers unlikely. The same pacifists

that would work against recruiting were fighting the Army's involvement with the CCC.[1]

The mobilization of the CCC didn't fit the military mobilization plan of 1933 with any exactness. Kreidberg and Henry relegated the usefulness of the CCC to limited testing of forms and mobilization procedures. However, this civilian mobilization did serve to point up the deficiencies of the military plans then in force.[2]

Colonel Major of the War Department gave it more credit, saying the CCC mobilization "...has been the most valuable experience the Army has had since the World War."[3] He said the War Department organization and the Army's Corps Area concept were both tested and validated by the CCC mobilization in conditions close to those at the start of a war. He noted that the results were better than those achieved at the onset of World War I. Major also contended that the General Staff had fully proven itself as a planning agency by anticipating the demands of the government and having an immediate response planned.[4]

While the General Staff as a whole deserves most of the credit given it by Major, the Chief of Staff played a key role in the admirable preparedness displayed by the War Department. James, in his The Years of MacArthur, contends that MacArthur's alertness and prodding was the reason the General Staff had a plan ready. Even though the initial wording of the plan for the CCC was vague, MacArthur

instructed the staff to do detailed planning. As a result, the Army was ready before the final bill was passed.[5]

MacArthur himself wrote of the value of the CCC mobilization in the 1933 Annual Report to the Secretary of War.

> To epitomize the military lessons of the 1933 mobilization, it has given renewed evidence of the value of systematic preparation for emergency, including the maintenance of trained personnel and suitable supplies and the development of plans and policies applicable to a mobilization. Particularly has it served to emphasize again the vital need for a strong corps of professional officers and for an efficient body of commissioned Reserves.[6]

He sent messages to the Corps Area commanders upon the successful completion of the mobilization congratulating them on a job well done. He compared their effort to that expected in a wartime emergency and said it was the largest peacetime job ever given the Army.[7]

Colonel George Marshall became both intimately involved and instantly enamored with the CCC project. He was commanding Fort Screven, Georgia, at the institution of the program and was soon requested by his Corps Area Commander, Major General Edward King, to provide many of his officers and soldiers to support the mobilization. Marshall reportedly said:

> Leave me my post surgeon, my commissary officer, my post exchange officer and my adjutant and I will run this command with the First Sergeants; and if worse comes to worst, you can have the adjutant, for the Post Sgt. Major can take over those duties in a pinch.[8]

Marshall did end up running the post with his First Sergeants.[9]

While he was immersed in the details of operating the post short-handed and administering the new camps in his area, Marshall received a letter from Colonel Laurence Halstead, the acting chief of infantry. In the letter, Halstead said he felt the CCC project was not a job for the military and that most of the Army did not want to do it, but that the job might be the one thing that saved the Army from the depression.

> In fact, it is my opinion that the Army is the only Governmental agency that was able to handle this proposition. I have noticed a cessation of talk of reducing the Army by four thousand officers since we started in on the conservation work.[10]

Omar Bradley, then a Major at Ft. Benning, also commented on the help the CCC mission gave the Army during this lean time. He noted that the Army had been in line for a 33 percent budget cut, but credited MacArthur's testimony emphasizing the outstanding CCC mobilization with reducing the cut to 11 percent. Bradley said the Army wasn't happy with the CCC mission, but did it well. He saw the mobilization training as beneficial, but the combination of budget cuts and the CCC pushed Army readiness "...to the lowest ebb in its modern history."[11]

Walker Buel, the Washington correspondent of the Cleveland Plain Dealer, wrote that the 1933 mobilization was more efficient than that for the World War. Buel also noted that it was the first test of the mobilization policy set out

in the National Defense Act of 1920. He pointed out that the policy established by that act relied on a citizen army organized around the skeleton of the Regular Army. The key to the entire system, according to Buel, was the proper number of professional officers. He said the CCC mobilization proved the theory to be correct.

> This experience, valuable as a practical test of the nation's military policy and equally valuable as army training, may also be valuable to the Army in countering future Congressional suggestions of reduction of the officer corps.[12]

Buel also cut to the bottom line on the price that had to be paid for the mobilization. Nine thousand members of the Regular Army, and fully twenty-five percent of the officer corps, were employed with the CCC. When it was taken into account that most of the officers were company grade, the impact on readiness was devastating. Buel pointed out that many of the officers were taken from instructor duties with the civilian components. These were officers who normally trained the National Guard and Reserve forces that the strategy in the National Defense Act of 1920 depended upon.[13]

The Regular Army officer corps consisted of only twelve thousand officers in 1933. This in spite of the fact that the National Defense Act had set officer strength at eighteen thousand. Congress had never appropriated enough money to fund the authorized strength. It is no wonder that

Buel was able to observe, "Organizations at Army posts are reduced to one or two officers to a battalion."[14]

Another bill the Army paid for the mobilization of the CCC was the depletion of the War Reserve stocks. Colonel Major pointed out that most of the stocks were issued to the CCC during the first three months. He also noted that the Army would have been embarrassed if the CCC was much bigger, because the bottom of the issue barrel was almost reached. Major felt the exercise admirably demonstrated the need to maintain such stocks for national emergencies.[15]

The war stocks were depleted by the CCC mobilization, but they were repaid with interest when the CCC was terminated in 1942. Johnson states that the War Department contributed $14 million worth of supplies from the war stocks, most of it of World War vintage, to the 1933 mobilization. The CCC gave back to the Army over $130 million worth of property between June, 1942, and July, 1943, when the liquidation was complete. The CCC estimated that the War Department received 88 per cent of the goods the Corps had accumulated in nine years. The majority of the enrollee barracks were used by the Army, although most of them had to be dismantled and moved to Army posts.[16]

There was another aspect of the CCC mission which started as a potential problem and developed into a benefit. The government cut Army pay by 15 percent just as the CCC was implemented. This meant that the privates, who now received $17.85 per month of their normal $21, were operating

reception camps for the untrained CCC enrollees who had a salary of $30. The Army noticed an immediate drop in the enlistment and reenlistment rates and a desertion rate increase. One of the Corps Area commanders wrote that potential recruits had a greater interest in securing employment with the CCC at $30 than with the Army at less than $20. The Adjutant General testified to these problems before a House subcommittee, saying the contact with the enrollees had caused "an undercurrent of dissatisfaction."[17]

Colonel Major had perceived the pay disparity as a potential sore spot from the beginning. In April, when the Army was given its expanded mission to run all the camps, Major had argued unsuccessfully with Louis Howe, of Roosevelt's staff, against the new role for the War Department. One of his points was that service with the CCC would hurt Army morale, both by the nature of the duty, caring for unemployed men--and the fact that the enrollees would be better paid than the soldiers themselves.[18]

The first measure implemented to ease the pay disparity was to remove the lower paid enlisted men from duty with the CCC. This was done fairly soon; repeal of the pay cut took longer. The War Department and the Army Navy Journal lobbied hard for restoration of pay, and the relatively high pay of the enrollees provided a useful argument. The pay was eventually restored over the President's veto in July, 1935. So the $30 per month CCC

salary, which, coupled with the pay cut, had hurt morale in 1933, helped the Army regain full pay by 1935.[19]

Impact on the Officer Corps

If the soldiers and many of the senior leaders of the Army were not happy with the CCC mission, many of the junior officers were excited by the challenge. Johnson reports that the new environment tested their leadership ability in ways different from the Regular Army. Normally their authority was backed by imposing rules of the Articles of War. Not so with the CCC. The officers had very limited disciplinary powers over the enrollees and thus could not lead by threat of reprisal. As Johnson states, "they had to lead with understanding, sympathy, and the force of personality, and they found it an exciting and rewarding experience."[20]

The Christian Century, one of the more liberal periodicals of the time, stated that the Army was doing a great job with the CCC on the whole. It made a perceptive observation about the effect of the CCC mission on the officers involved, saying they had a harder time adjusting to camp life than the enrollees. Darling, the author, cited two reasons for the officers' problems: a new form of discipline; and being in charge of civilians not soldiers.[21]

The disciplinary system the officers were to enforce was described as a set of penalties similar to those a civilian industrial management team might follow. The CCC company commander was empowered to admonish, limit privileges

or work rights, withhold three days pay, and, as the last resort, dismiss an enrollee. Darling noted, "That does not sound very much like the 'guard house' or the punishments of commonly understood military discipline."[22]

The second aspect which could pose a problem for the officer was the fact that he was in charge of a group of civilians, not a unit of soldiers. Soldiers, the officer's normal subordinates, could be expected to behave in a fairly uniform manner; not so the enrollees. Darling points out that at the initiation of each company the officer was in charge of "a heterogeneous group of boys from the towns and cities and countryside, with no idea of what they were going to do or where they were going to do it."[23] This gave the officers the responsibility of not only providing for the enrollees, but also establishing them as a functioning community "self sufficient from the material, social and moral standpoint."[24]

The new form of discipline which the officers had to administer was seen by the Army's leadership as beneficial. Putnam writes that even the Secretary of War, George Dern, told a Cabinet meeting that the CCC was the best thing to ever happen to the Army for that very reason. Conventionally trained officers were forced by circumstance to lead by means other than military discipline. Putnam quotes Dern as saying: "They have had to learn to govern men by leadership, explanation, and diplomacy rather than discipline. That knowledge is priceless to the American Army."[25]

The Reserve officers who replaced the Regular Army personnel after the first year also benefitted from the experience. The depression had greatly curtailed reserve officer training owing to the War Department's tight budget. Most of the schools and summer programs the reserves depended on were not funded. MacArthur asserted that the training the reservists were receiving as camp officers went a long way toward replacing their normal training. The training wasn't military, but it was in administration and leadership, and as such, was very valuable. Colonel Major agreed with MacArthur, writing, "next to service in war, there can be no training so beneficial to the Reserve Officers as service in the CCC."[26]

The best idea of just what the officers in the camps were trained to do is given by Harper. He outlined all the positions related to CCC administration in his work on the subject written in 1937. In addition to the functions of mess, shelter, medical care and sanitation already detailed, Harper went into great detail on the different leadership styles displayed. It was Harper's opinion that the success or failure of the camps depended almost entirely on the type of officer in command. He also wrote that the officers in charge were exposed to unique duties such as arbitrating wage disputes relating to camp construction.[27]

The junior officer had myriad duties, many of them relating to administrative duties expected of officers on active service with the Army. Harper listed these duty areas

as finance, motor transport, quartermaster and welfare. As the finance officer the second in command made out the pay roll on War Department Form No. 366, the same one used for soldiers. Harper wrote that most of the duties associated with motor transport and quartermaster had to do with the transportation of enrollees either in and around the camp, or to and from their homes. The officer was responsible for the maintenance of assigned vehicles, and had to keep detailed records.[28]

The duties in the area of welfare were the most important in Harper's opinion, especially early in the life of the CCC program. In addition to the recreational activities normally associated with welfare (in the Army sense), the officer was responsible for the camp store and the education program. Until civilian education officers were appointed, the second in command established any education services provided. In this, he normally worked with the local technical service personnel to offer after-work vocational training and basic literacy classes.[29]

Reserve officers normally served with limited active duty time, training for the day in the future when they might be mobilized for war. An article in the Infantry Journal said that for over seven thousand reserve officers mobilization day had arrived by early 1936. The article said that the reserve officers called to active duty for the CCC weren't fighting a war, but it was of national importance none the less. One of the best things about CCC service for

the reserve officer was that the officer would "find many things, demanding your constant attention and your prompt decisions, which were not taught in your extension school courses--things which you can learn only in the hard school of experience."[30]

The main thrust of the article was helpful hints on being a success with the CCC, but the authors' main point was that officers serving with the CCC had to learn responsibility for everything in their purview. While the officer might not do everything, he had to check everything. This is a useful lesson and one that every officer must learn. As the authors put it: "If your supervision has been loose, your job, if not your commission, may be looser still. This is putting it bluntly; but reality is usually blunt."[31]

The article covered the many duties associated with running a camp, both as commander and subordinate officer. There were hints on performing all the jobs and some attempt made at establishing priorities for them. From the article it can be seen that CCC duty prepared an officer for virtually every normal administrative duty Army service would necessitate except developing training schedules and maintaining an arms room. The article closed with an admonition to work diligently because "CCC work is a serious business."[32]

One reserve officer wrote an article for the same magazine the previous year and said his CCC experience showed him a need to revamp the reserve officer system. His article

was a call for better reserve officers, reporting that, in his opinion, the current system was not providing an acceptable product. He stated that, while the reserves on the whole had performed well, they had to be trained to do the job after mobilization. According to the author, reserve officers averaged no more than sixty days of active service before attaining the rank of captain, and were almost wholly ignorant of Army administration. The specifics of his suggestions on changing the reserve system do not have a place in this thesis, but his basic premise does. CCC service had, by providing much needed training to the reserve officers who served, pointed out the need for increased training of those who had not. He quotes a general as saying, "We can get along with mediocre colonels and brigadiers, and a few downright rotten majors, but God help the army that doesn't have good lieutenants and captains."[33]

Impact on Physical Resources of the Army

Aside from the $130 million worth of assets the CCC contributed to the beleaguered Army with its dissolution in 1942, the CCC made many direct contributions to the physical resources of the Army. This was never a major undertaking of the CCC, and there are very few records of the work the CCC did for the War Department. It could be that the well-documented caution of the government toward linking the CCC work to things military limited both the amount of work

performed for the War Department and the recording of that work.

To avoid possible charges of militarism, no CCC companies were to be permanently placed on military reservations, at least initially. The only work the Army got from the CCC was the limited amount that could be performed by the enrollees while they were in the two week conditioning camps. Plenty of jobs had been identified by the Corps Area commanders in anticipation of CCC companies being assigned to duty on military installations.[34]

Very few CCC companies were assigned directly to military installations until 1935 when one of the Corps Area commanders reported problems placing black enrollee companies in his area. This seemingly broke the deadlock over assignment of CCC companies to the Army, and when the CCC expanded that year, the Army got seventy-seven companies approved for conservation work on Army installations.[35]

Corps Area and installation commanders had plenty of ideas as to what would be the best use of CCC companies placed under their control, but often this would not be in line with the civilian nature of the CCC. CCC companies were not allowed to work on fortifications, for obvious reasons, but neither were they allowed to do facilities repair on the posts, to avoid undue competition with local contractors. The normal conservation work done by the CCC could, when applied to a military reservation, be very helpful. Trails and firebreaks constructed for forest management could allow

better access to training areas. Projects included draining the swampy areas of Edgewood Arsenal and thinning trees to make training areas more useable. Other allowed projects were: clearing brush, flood control and landscaping.[36]

The number of CCC companies assigned to the Army was never high, and it went down from 1935. By 1938 the President had ordered all CCC work companies to be removed from Army control. This was done, in spite of the fact that the Army ran the companies much more cheaply than did the other government agencies. It is also interesting to note that most of the companies working on Army installations were made up of black enrollees, due to the difficulty of gaining acceptance from local communities to place them elsewhere.[37]

The buildup of the Army strained available facilities until CCC companies had to be brought back to military installations starting in 1940 to help with the mobilization. By the end of 1941 there were one hundred companies under military control. Enrollees of twenty companies were working in Army hospitals[38] and some were "protecting defense installations from sabotage, thus relieving soldiers of these duties."[39]

The President, writing in 1941, commented on the assignment of CCC companies to specific projects under the umbrella of national defense. These projects included construction of a landing stage in Alaska by two companies, and thirty other companies working on various construction and expansion projects.[40] Kenneth Holland wrote that, "By

the spring of 1941, 12,000 boys were clearing land, building roads, installing water and sewage systems, developing target ranges, and completing airplane landing fields for our expanding army."[41]

Some commanders tested the limits of authorized construction in their use of the CCC. Most government lists of CCC work include the construction of air strips or landing fields, but none mention rifle ranges. Vernard H. "Bud" Wilbur, a former CCC enrollee, recalls building both on a military installation in Nevada.[42] Marion L. Creal, who served in the CCC at Ft. Leavenworth, recalled the local enrollees building a rifle range on the post in an area now occupied by family housing.[43]

Impact of Enrollees on the Army

Probably the most significant effect of the CCC on the Army was the one caused by former CCC enrollees serving during World War II. No firm figures exist, but CCC historians estimate seventy-five percent of the over three million enrollees served in the military during the war.

A variety of things made the enrollees valuable to the military. Many enrollees went to special schools for trades that were of benefit to the military. The very experience of living in a camp environment with two hundred other men eased the transition to military life.

The President wrote in early 1941 that the CCC had expanded its training facilities. Over 170 schools had been

established training enrollees in motor and aviation repair, cooking and baking, clerical skills, radio operation, driving, photography and cartography. The president said the emphasis of the CCC was shifting from relief to training and that defense work would be foremost.[44]

As early as December, 1933, Colonel Major had remarked on the benefits the nation could accrue in time of war from the ranks of the CCC. After an inspection tour of the camps, he reported on his perception of the potential for service within the CCC. He wrote that the men of the CCC were a possible source of wartime strength that would take relatively little additional training to make efficient soldiers. Johnson feels Major was overstating the case, but that his argument bore more than a grain of truth.[45]

Oddly enough, Fetchner, who normally guarded the CCC jealously against claims of militarism, made a similar assertion in late 1937. The Army Navy Journal reported that Fetchner raised eyebrows in a press interview in Miami, where he was quoted as saying that CCC enrollee training "is such that they are about 85 percent prepared for military life."[46] Fetchner was also quoted as saying that the enrollees could become first class soldiers in a very short time. Fechner said this was an unintentional result of the program, but it provided a great backup to our standing forces.[47]

A number of people attest to the theory that former CCC enrollees made better soldiers during World War II than normal draftees. Humberger, an enrollee from 1933 to 1938

and a soldier during World War II, wrote:

> In World War II I noticed a marked difference between recruits who had served with the CCC and those who had not. Ex CCC members experienced little difficulty in adapting to the routine of Army life. It appeared that they quickly developed into better soldiers than many who lacked their experience. I know it made my life much easier while serving as an enlisted man and field commissioned officer.[48]

Another veteran of both the CCC and the military, James Wheeless, proposed that the CCC built the World War II Army. He said the CCC taught enrollees regimentation and how to live with others twenty-four hours a day. Wheeless joined the Army in 1939 and observed the buildup of the draftee Army. He asserts that the former CCC enrollees were easier to train and control than the other draftees. He noted they "were the steadying influence on the other draftees."[49]

Lee F. Sanders served four six-month enrollments in the CCC between 1935 and 1939. He later served as an enlisted man in the Regular Army from 1941 until 1945 when he earned a commission. He credited his success to the leader training he received in the CCC, saying it "pushed me ahead rapidly in the Army."[50]

One veteran of the CCC and World War II summed up the value of the training he received in what was probably the most relevant context of all--survival. Harold Borchert participated in the Citizen's Military Training Camps for three years before joining the CCC in 1938. He then joined the National Guard and was mobilized for World War II, serving overseas. He wrote:

Somehow, in the providence of God, all this came together in time to help many of us become toughened up in mind, body, and spirit to face whatever enemy our nation should call us to face and to SURVIVE!

I am a survivor, and I give much credit to my time in the CMTC [Civil Military Training Corps] and the CCC![51]

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

The mobilization of President Roosevelt's "Forest Army" was a peaceful mission, embarked on in a time of peace. It had all the trappings of a classic American liberal program: federal money, creating jobs, and aiding families on relief. The CCC also had an added enticement for the Congressional leaders who passed the bill creating it. The CCC brought a steady flow of much-needed money into their home districts.

The CCC program did all the things Roosevelt intended it to do. It put young men to work; it fed them, clothed them and gave them hope; and it injected money into the economy. It also accomplished a great deal of timely conservation work. The CCC was more than just the most successful New Deal program, it was the salvation of the U. S. Army and it militarized a generation of American youth.

The Army did not choose to administer the CCC; the President chose the Army. President Roosevelt knew the risk he ran with the American populace by putting the Army in charge. The people harbored a traditional, deep-seated distrust of things military. Anti-military and pacifist organizations were vocal and powerful. Labor organizations

were worried about what the CCC would do to its next generation of members.

The President attempted to counter all these fears and worries with a determined program of denial. There would be no militarism in the CCC. The Army took this as a command and endeavored to carry it out. There was no harsh, martial discipline. There were no commands of "Squads right" or "Squads left." There was no military drill or marksmanship training. Even recreational shooting was forbidden.

Militarism in the CCC was denied by the government until long past the time when the American people recognized the approaching danger of a world at war. Even as late as 1942, CCC company commanders were writing to the mothers of enrollees to reassure them that their boys were not undergoing military training. Those commanders were writing the truth, but not the whole truth.

If militarism is pursuit of things military for the military's sake, then the CCC was militarized. But this militarism was an inadvertent by-product of the Army running an organization the only way it knew how, the Army way. The enrollees of the CCC were taught the rudiments of being a soldier simply by living through the experience of six months in a CCC camp. Barracks life, self-discipline, and obedience were the traits the enrollees learned. These same traits made them better soldiers than their counterparts who never served in the "tree army."

The Army, in administering the CCC, was preparing to fight World War II. There was a practice mobilization in 1933, followed by an immediate deployment problem. After sending 250,000 men all over the United States came the sustainment training of administering the CCC through the nine Corps Area commands. Reserve officers were rotated through the camps to gain experience in Army administration, pay, mess, transportation, sanitation and most of all, leadership. Even after the Roosevelt administration went through the fiscal ploy of "civilianizing" the company commander and subaltern positions, Reserve officers did the job.

The leadership the junior officers of the Army learned from the CCC experience was exactly what they needed during World War II. Traditionally, Regular Army discipline does not work very well with America's citizen soldiers. Working with the enrollees, without the Articles of War to force them into line, taught the officers to lead by example and explanation, not by brute force.

Through the CCC, the Army collected a vast pool of resources other than manpower. The $130 million worth of trucks and tools and barracks that arrived with the demise of the CCC came at the peak of the World War II build-up. This influx of material eased the burden on the still mobilizing industries of the United States.

This is not to say that the Army intended to accrue all the profit from the CCC that it eventually did. On the

contrary, the Army struggled mightily to stay out of the CCC. Inevitably, however, when young men are surrounded by military example, some of it rubs off.

The Army also re-learned a lesson from its involvement with the CCC, the lesson of civil primacy. In the light of the world-wide military buildup of the 1930s, this was an important lesson for the general populace as well. The Army did not want to administer the CCC, but the civilian masters said to do it. It was done. Doing an unwanted job at the behest of the President was good for the Army, it re-established who was boss. Seeing the Army do a professional job at managing a much-needed, civil project was good for the American people, it let them see the Army in a new light.

If society was concerned about the Army militarizing America's youth, seemingly its fears were justified. At the same time, its fears were made moot by history. The greatest period of militarization the world has seen was already starting 1933. The United States, in the 1990s, is finally completing the demobilization from World War II. For fifty years America maintained a massive armed force to ensure the peace in Europe. The men who were militarized by the CCC and later fought World War II, paid the enormous tax burden to keep America's forces in the field.

The former CCC members who were contacted in the course of the preparation of this thesis were unanimous in the opinion that the CCC was a successful program, worthy of

re-creation. Many saw it as the pivotal point in their lives, eclipsing even World War II in importance to themselves and the nation.

In the end, this conclusion must be drawn; militarism is not a bad thing, in and of itself. As a basis for power, militarism is only as bad as the purpose to which it is put. By militarizing the CCC enrollees, whether inadvertently or not, the Army did itself and the nation a great service.

ENDNOTES

Chapter 2

[1]Arthur A. Ekirch, Jr., The Civilian and the Military (Colorado Springs, CO: Ralph Myles, Inc., 1972), pp. 3-4.

[2]Ibid., p. 5.

[3]Ibid., pp. 5-6.

[4]Ibid., pp. 6-17.

[5]Ibid., p. 17.

[6]Pendleton Herring, The Impact of War (New York: Farrar and Rinehart, Inc., 1941), p. 21.

[7]Ibid., pp. 42-45.

[8]Ibid. p. 185.

[9]Ibid., p. 52.

[10]Rome G. Brown, "Militarism in the United States and the Conference," The Nation, 9 November 1921, p. 527.

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