

Disease and Civil-Military Relations: Senator George Chamberlain and Criticism of the War Department

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Senator George Chamberlain

- 1854-1928
- Governor of Oregon 1903-1909
- Senator 1909-1921
 - Committee on Military Affairs
 - Committee on Expenditures in the War Department
- Military Views
 - Staunch Uptonian
 - Repeatedly Tries to Expand Regular Army
 - Supports Increased Role for Specialist Officers



Chamberlain in Congress

- Strong Supporter of Large Active Duty Army
- Proposed Legislation
 - 1914: Increase Size of Officer Corps, Add 15,000 personnel, Create specialties: Combat Engineers
 - 1915: Double Size of the Army (250,000), Create Reserve System
- 1916 National Defense Act
 - Close Relationship with Secretary of War Garrison
- 1917 Selective Service Act

Summer 1917

- “I had rather be charged with following in the footsteps of the distinguished President of the United States in the conduct of this war, crawling, if you please, on my knees and licking the dust from his feet, as has been suggested here in the Senate, than to stand in opposition to him and to be consorting with and conspiring with and creating with the enemies of the President.”



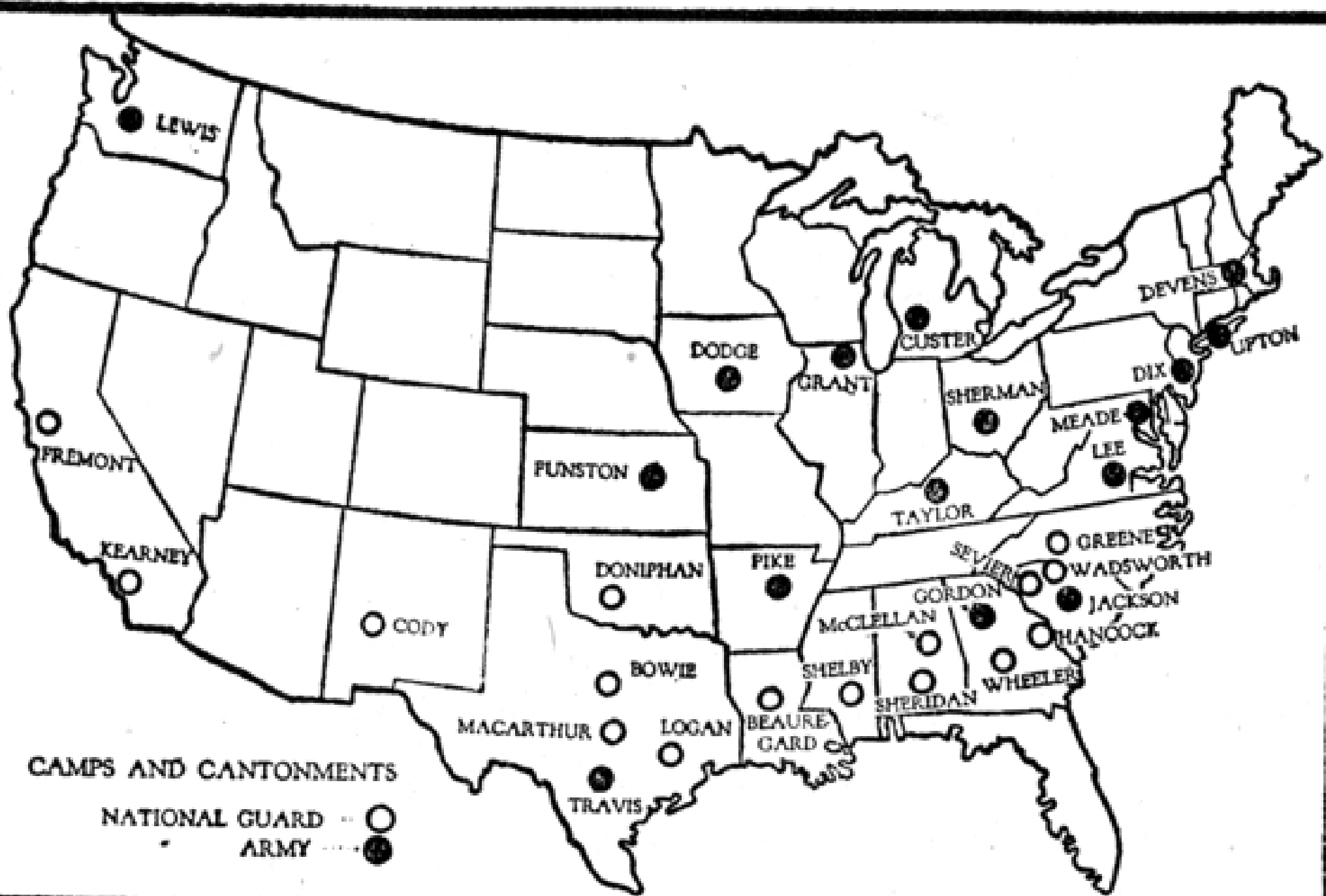
Mobilization Crisis



Secretary Baker

- Congressional Trust in Baker
 - Draft Limits: “as he may at any time deem necessary.”
 - Money: April \$5 billion Bond Issue Authorized, October-War Revenue Act
- Poor War Department Administration
 - High Turnover Rate Among Senior Officers
 - Limited Oversight of Bureaus and Departments
 - Poor Contracting
- Wilson and Baker
 - Lesson of Civil War: Non-Interference
- Chamberlain
 - “The military establishment has fallen down”
 - “Inefficiency kills men”





Health and Medical Issues

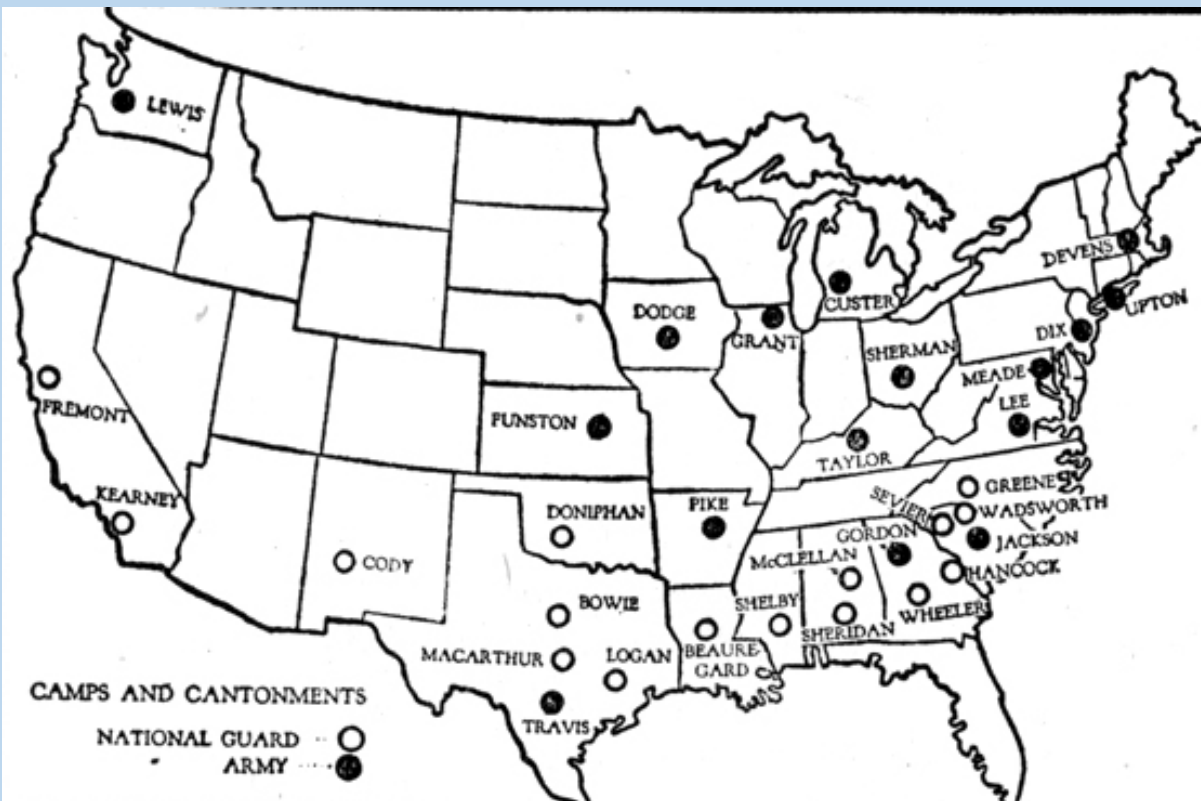
- Army Investigation by MG William C. Gorgas
 - Hospitals Last Buildings to be Completed
 - Lack of Heating, Sanitation in Barracks
 - Few Doctors, Orderly Personnel are Draftee Soldiers
 - Nurses Arrive December 1917/January 1918
- Deaths Due to Disease: September-January
 - Camp Pike (Arkansas): 314
 - Camp Wheeler (Georgia): 297
 - Camp Bowie (Texas): 252

 - Camp Meade (Maryland): 11
 - Camp Dix (New Jersey): 18
 - Camp Devens (Massachusetts): 27



Camp Deaths

- September 1917-April 1918
- Total Deaths: 4,782



<u>Camp</u>	<u>Deaths</u>	<u>Camp</u>	<u>Deaths</u>
Green, NC	199	Devens, MA	77
Wadsworth, SC	60	Upton, NY	98
Sevier, SC	212	Dix, NJ	42
Hancock, GA	47	Meade, MD	103
Wheeler, GA	302	Lee, VA	22
McClellan, MS	40	Jackson, SC	185
Sheridan, MS	49	Gordon, GA	148
Shelby, AL	107	Pike, AR	512
Beauregard, LA	234	Custer, MI	96
MacArthur, TX	129	Sherman, OH	151
Doniphan, OK	183	Taylor, KY	167
Bowie, TX	308	Dodge, IA	196
Logan, TX	265	Funston, KS	183
Kearney, CA	86	Travis, TX	214
Fremont, CA	17	Lewis, WA	81
Cody, NM	193	Grant, IL	76
	2431		2351

Camp Pike



Camp Pike

- Seven miles from Little Rock
- First Troops Arrive September 1917
- Measles/Mumps Outbreaks
- 500 Bed Hospital
 - Often Over 1,000 Men Sick
- Poor Quality Staff
 - No Nurses
 - Limited training: Pharmacist is Drafted Bartender
- Emphasis on “Social Hygiene”
 - Use of Private Detectives
 - Inspections for VD/Alcohol



Camp Pike Deaths

- October: 8
 - November: 67
 - December: 126
 - January: 137
 - February: 42
 - March: 49
 - April: 41
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- Shipment of Remains is Serious Issue
 - Camp Pike report of 6 April 1918, “there is nothing more urgent than carrying out the war departments policy of giving the soldier an environment free from immorality and bootlegging



New York Times Headline 27 Jan. 1918

DEATHS AMONG
OUR SOLDIERS

In France, 317; in the United States,
2,918—Figures Compiled by Surgeon
General Up to Jan. 18, 1918.

Personal Correspondence

- Chamberlain to Wilson: “The testimony of witnesses in and out of the establishment clearly establishes the fact, Mr. President, that there are inefficiencies in the system that ought to be remedied for a proper prosecution of the war...I have felt it my duty to speak out, in the hope that defects in the military code may be cured, and inefficient later weeded out.”
- Wilson to Baker: “Senator Chamberlain’s statement as to the present inaction and ineffectiveness of the government is an astonishing and absolutely unjustified distortion of the truth...I am bound to infer that the statement sprang out of opposition to the administrations whole policy rather than out of any serious intention to reform its practice.”

Impact

- Gradual Improvements in War Department: March, Goethals
- New Camp Policies
 - Increased Laundry and Sanitation
 - Nurses Added to Staffs
 - Training Guidelines
 - No More “Fresh Air” Cures
- Breakdown of Relations between Administration, Military Affairs Committee
- Medical Department Official History: “Camps, hurriedly constructed, became crowded, and a series of epidemics of measles, mumps, and meningococcal meningitis passed through them. These were not too serious.”