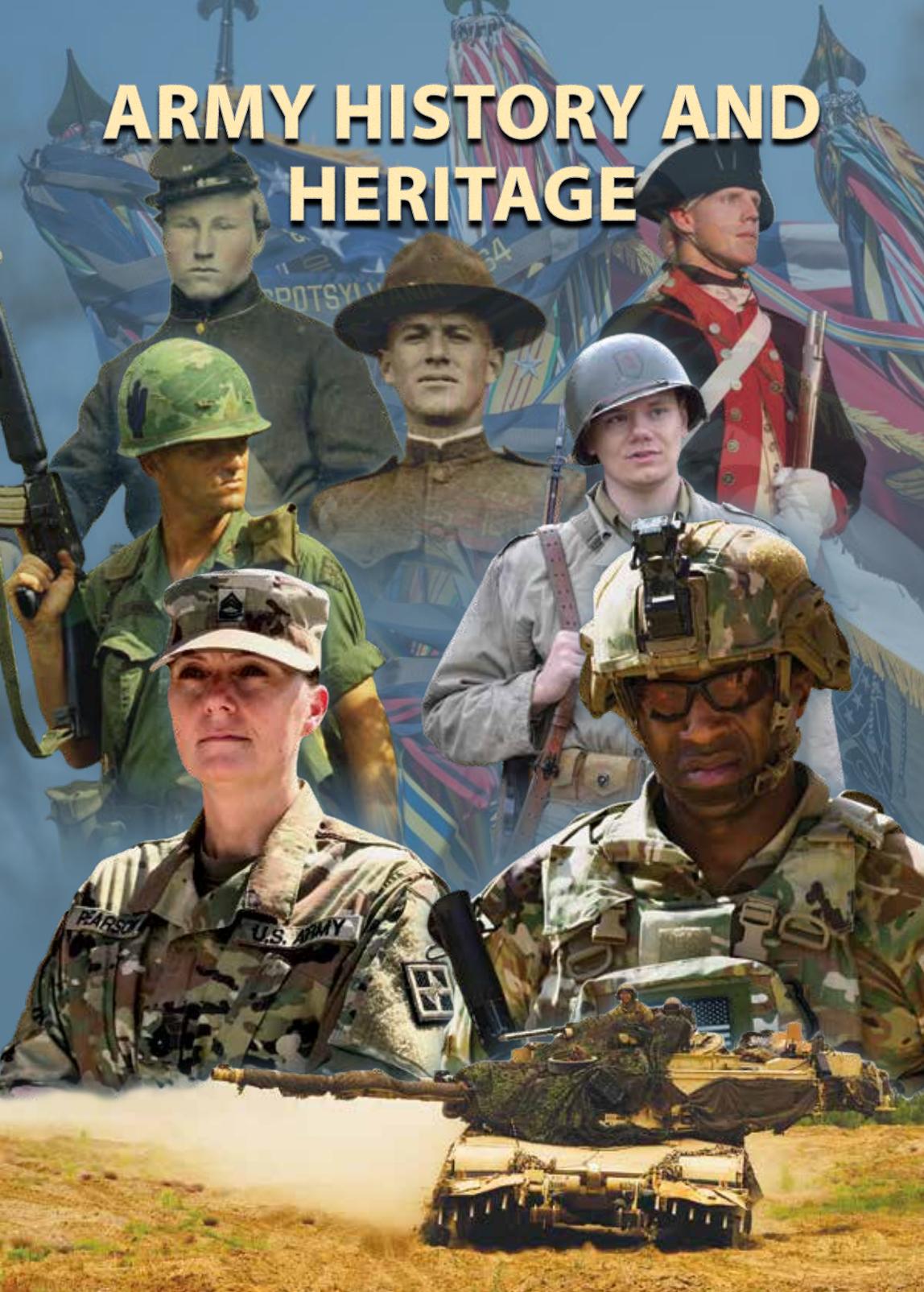


ARMY HISTORY AND HERITAGE



General Paul E. Funk II, United States Army

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Foreword by General Paul E. Funk II, United States Army



Center of Military History
United States Army
Washington, D.C. 2022

FOREWORD

This book is dedicated in honor and in memory of General William W. Hartzog, the ninth commanding general of the Training and Doctrine Command and a historian at heart. He wrote the initial version of this book, *American Military Heritage*, “to provide a reference that could help drill instructors and other Army leaders instill an appreciation for the lore and traditions that make up the Army’s rich heritage.”

The study and understanding of military history and appreciation of our proud and rich heritage are critical to personal and professional growth for soldiers. They are the foundation that allows us to expand our expertise within the profession of arms. They lay the cornerstone for our personal contribution to our Army, and give us the means to leave it in a better place than we found it.

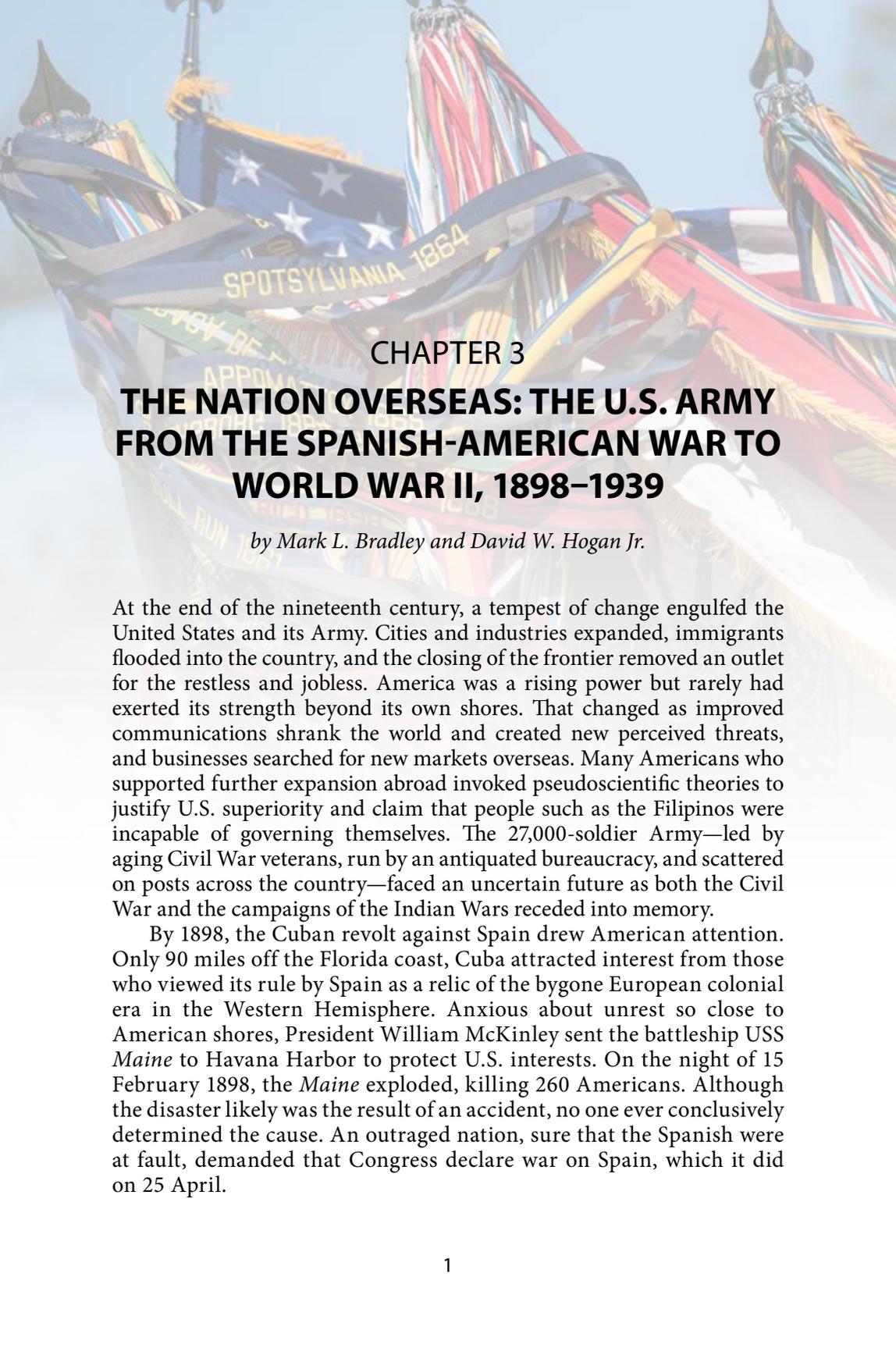
We stand on the shoulders of the exceptional men and women, who, for nearly 250 years, have made history and forged our shared heritage. Our history is our incredible legacy. It connects the current generation of soldiers to our departed but not forgotten brethren. It demonstrates that no matter how much time has passed, we continue to be the most lethal and powerful Army in the world. History reminds us that we serve for something far greater than ourselves and that we are willing to endure incredible sacrifices for the love of our great nation.

A professional Army continuously strives for excellence and self-improvement. Learning from significant historical events can be painful, informative, and incredibly inspirational. Let us strive to learn from the lessons of those proud warriors who came before us, so that we never need to relive the trials of the past.

Victory Starts Here!

Fort Eustis, Virginia
7 January 2022

GENERAL PAUL E. FUNK II
17th Commanding General,
U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command



CHAPTER 3

**THE NATION OVERSEAS: THE U.S. ARMY
FROM THE SPANISH-AMERICAN WAR TO
WORLD WAR II, 1898–1939**

by Mark L. Bradley and David W. Hogan Jr.

At the end of the nineteenth century, a tempest of change engulfed the United States and its Army. Cities and industries expanded, immigrants flooded into the country, and the closing of the frontier removed an outlet for the restless and jobless. America was a rising power but rarely had exerted its strength beyond its own shores. That changed as improved communications shrank the world and created new perceived threats, and businesses searched for new markets overseas. Many Americans who supported further expansion abroad invoked pseudoscientific theories to justify U.S. superiority and claim that people such as the Filipinos were incapable of governing themselves. The 27,000-soldier Army—led by aging Civil War veterans, run by an antiquated bureaucracy, and scattered on posts across the country—faced an uncertain future as both the Civil War and the campaigns of the Indian Wars receded into memory.

By 1898, the Cuban revolt against Spain drew American attention. Only 90 miles off the Florida coast, Cuba attracted interest from those who viewed its rule by Spain as a relic of the bygone European colonial era in the Western Hemisphere. Anxious about unrest so close to American shores, President William McKinley sent the battleship USS *Maine* to Havana Harbor to protect U.S. interests. On the night of 15 February 1898, the *Maine* exploded, killing 260 Americans. Although the disaster likely was the result of an accident, no one ever conclusively determined the cause. An outraged nation, sure that the Spanish were at fault, demanded that Congress declare war on Spain, which it did on 25 April.



William R. Shafter
(New York Public Library Digital Collections)

For the United States, the War with Spain (commonly known as the Spanish-American War) was indeed, as Secretary of State John M. Hay later put it, “a splendid little war.” Responding to President McKinley’s call, over 200,000 volunteers jammed training camps and taxed the War Department’s ability to support them. At the small Port of Tampa, several miles west of Tampa, Florida, Maj. Gen. William R. Shafter embarked for Cuba with his V Corps of Regulars—including four regiments of Buffalo Soldiers—and some volunteer units, notably Lt. Col. Theodore Roosevelt’s 1st Volunteer Cavalry, the famed “Rough Riders.” After landing at the village of Daiquirí on 22 June, and with assistance of Cuban rebels, the expedition advanced to the port of Santiago, where a Spanish fleet had taken refuge from a U.S. naval squadron. On 1 July 1898, the V Corps launched a frontal assault that drove the Spanish from San Juan

Buffalo Soldiers of the 10th U.S. Cavalry
(Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division)



Heights, overlooking Santiago. Two days later, the Spanish fleet attempted to escape and American warships destroyed it. Without hope of relief, the enemy commander at Santiago surrendered his 23,500 troops on 16 July.

On the other side of the world, in the Spanish colony of the Philippines, Maj. Gen. Wesley Merritt and Commodore George Dewey led a joint Army-Navy force that occupied the capital city of Manila in August. This conquest, and Maj. Gen. Nelson A. Miles's earlier occupation of Puerto Rico, effectively ended hostilities. On 10 December 1898, the two sides signed the Treaty of Paris, which granted Cuba independence and ceded Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Philippines to the United States. With this treaty, and the annexation of Hawaii in August 1898, the United States expanded its colonial power in the Pacific and in the Caribbean.

If the Spanish-American War was an easy victory, the suppression of the Filipino independence movement was a brutal three-year counter-insurgency campaign with numerous atrocities from all involved. After tensions erupted into open warfare in February 1899, the American troops defeated the Filipino rebels and forced them to turn to guerrilla warfare. The U.S. military responded to ambushes and raids by hunting down insurgent bands and leaders, burning buildings and crops on which the rebels relied for support, and, on occasion, torturing prisoners. Even as the fighting continued, the Americans built roads and schools, improved sanitation, offered amnesty to guerrillas, formed and employed native units, and gradually transferred more political control to Filipinos. On 4 July 1902, the United States proclaimed an end to the war, although Moro rebels in the southern Philippines fought on for another decade.



Wesley Merritt (Illustrated Roster of California Volunteer Soldiers in the War with Spain, [Bonestell, 1898])



Map 2

From the Philippines to the Caribbean, the Army found itself in a new role as a colonial constabulary and overseas expeditionary force. American troops joined an international rescue expedition when groups of antiforeign and anti-Christian Chinese—known in the West as “Boxers”—besieged diplomats in Peking (Beijing) in 1900. Soldiers became governors in Cuba in 1899, departing with the establishment of self-government in 1902, only to return in 1906 for another three years to restore order after a rebellion. Army doctors identified the mosquito as the source of the much-feared yellow fever and used that knowledge to eradicate the disease in Cuba and Panama. The victory over yellow fever enabled Army engineers to finish the Panama Canal, a 51-mile construction project that linked the Atlantic and Pacific when it opened in 1914. When Francisco “Pancho” Villa’s Mexican

revolutionaries murdered American citizens in Columbus, New Mexico, in March 1916, Brig. Gen. John J. Pershing led a punitive expedition south of the border in pursuit, but he could not capture the elusive Villa.

Meanwhile, the Army itself was changing to meet the demands of its new overseas role. In 1899, the new Secretary of War, Elihu Root, initiated a series of reforms to bring the Army up to the standard of other major powers. He established the Army War College as the pinnacle of the service’s educational system and instituted a chief of staff supervising a true general staff that would plan for and conduct future conflicts. To ensure the rise of promising officers, he installed a new, more merit-based promotion system. The Militia Act of 1903 laid the foundation for improved cooperation between the Regular Army and a new National Guard, with raised standards for training and readiness. The Army also modernized its weaponry, but it was not until 1914 that it added an aviation section



George W. Goethals, chief engineer of the Panama Canal, pictured as a major general (*Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division*)





Ambulance Corps leaving Columbus, New Mexico, for Mexico in search of Pancho Villa. (*Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division*)



Soldiers take bayonet practice at Camp Bradley on the grounds of Bradley Polytechnic Institute in Peoria, Illinois, during World War I.
(Bradley University Special Collections)

to the Signal Corps to keep up with developments in the new world of military aircraft.

In August 1914, years of escalating competition between European alliances culminated in the outbreak of the First World War. After the French and their British allies repulsed an initial German offensive at the battle of the Marne, the two sides settled into a stalemate along a front line that extended from the North Sea to the Swiss border. Troops in vast networks of zigzag trenches, fronted by massive tangles of barbed wire, faced each other across a no-man's land, where machine guns and artillery fire inflicted heavy losses on attackers. Even technologies such as poison gas, airplanes, and tanks could not break the deadlock. Isolationist-minded Americans recoiled from the slaughter and wished to stay out of the war, but both sides infringed on what the United States considered its neutral rights on the high seas. Eventually, unrestricted German submarine warfare against American commerce, economic and sentimental ties with Britain and France, and disclosure of a German offer of an alliance with Mexico against the United States turned American sentiment. The United States declared war against Germany on 6 April 1917. Americans went to fight in a war they thought would end all wars and would make the world safe for democracy.

Seldom has the U.S. Army ever been so unprepared for war. Although the Army had updated its staff structure and much of its weaponry, it was understrength with only 127,500 soldiers. World War I would require millions of men and women, as well as vast stores of materiel. The Selective



Soldiers training with a Lewis machine gun
at Camp Mills, Long Island, New York
(Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division)

Service Act instituted the first mass conscription since the Civil War, bringing four million citizens to the colors. It took time, however, to train soldiers and ship them to France. Initially, American soldiers had to use British and French equipment as American industry struggled to meet the demands of mobilization.

Still, the arrival in France of the American Expeditionary Forces (AEF) under General Pershing made an impact on the war-weary Allies. The 1st Division came just in time to parade through Paris on 4 July 1917. One of Pershing's staff officers told an ecstatic crowd, "Lafayette, we are here!" When in June and July 1918 the Germans launched a final, desperate drive to win the war before the AEF arrived in force, the doughboys barred the way at the Marne River and Château-Thierry, just 50 miles from Paris. A French staff officer watched them pass in endless columns of trucks on their way to the front. Amid cheering crowds, they sang "their national songs at the top of their voices." In this sight of "magnificent youth from across the sea, these youngsters of twenty years with smooth faces, radiating strength and health in their new uniforms," the French officer perceived "the presence of gushing, untiring force that would overcome everything because of its strength."

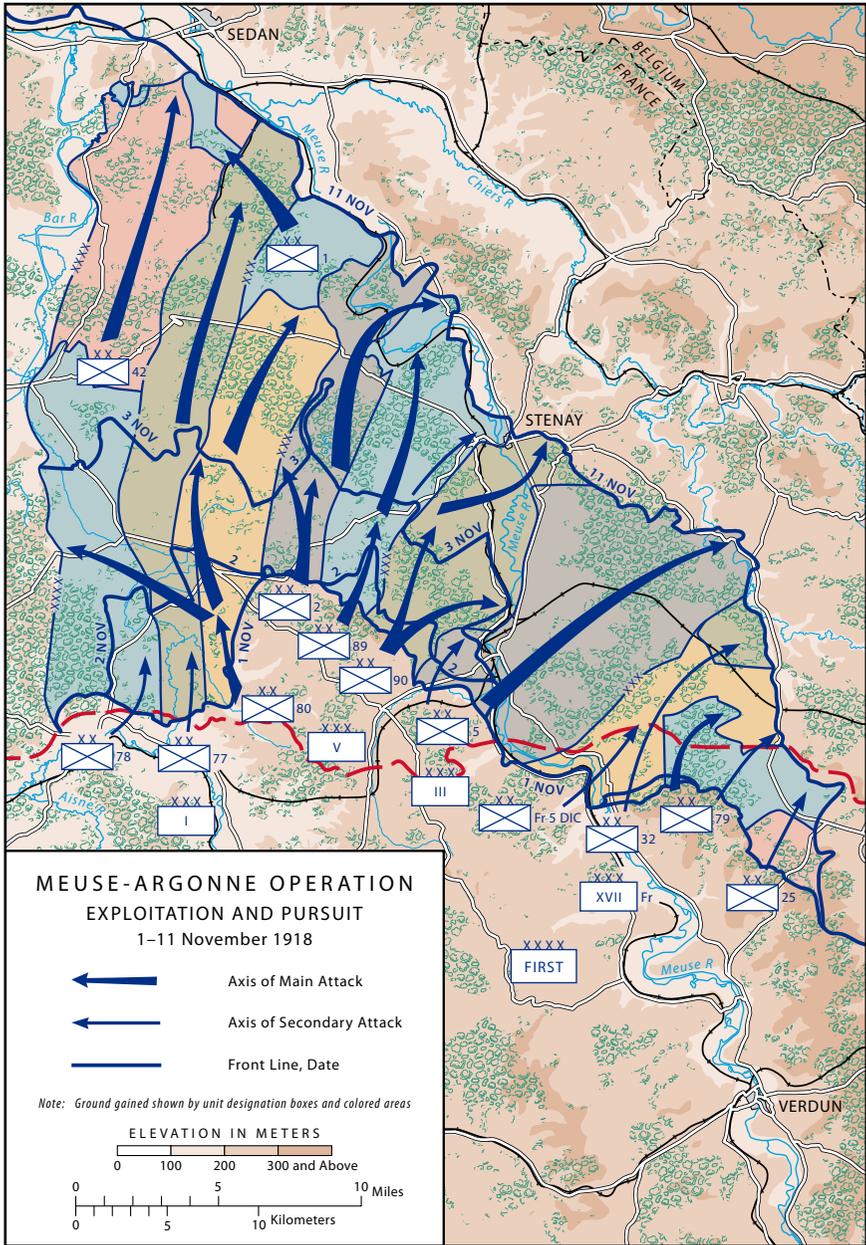
Although the AEF had not reached full strength, it still played a major role in the war's final months. On 12 September, Pershing's First U.S. Army launched its initial major offensive, a drive to eliminate the Saint-Mihiel salient. Having done so, it then shifted northwest to a new sector between the Meuse River on the east and the Argonne Forest to



American soldiers of the 166th Infantry (formerly 4th Regiment, Ohio National Guard) shooting at Germans on the outer edge of town, Villers-sur-Fère, France. (*National Archives*)

the west. The Meuse-Argonne Offensive, which began on 26 September, was perhaps the largest combat operation in American history. Over a million Americans fought through the rugged forests, ridges, and small towns of the region, frequently in frontal attacks against heavily fortified defenses, often in a driving rain. The AEF lost more than 117,000 soldiers, but it inflicted over 120,000 casualties on the Germans. To the north, the British cracked the German defensive bulwark known as the Hindenburg Line. With the enemy front collapsing, revolution broke out in Germany, and the new leaders sued for peace. At 1100 on 11 November 1918, the Armistice went into effect, and the guns of the Western Front finally fell silent after over four years of war.

After a hasty postwar demobilization, the Army lived, to a degree, in a state of suspended animation for the next twenty years. No threat existed on the horizon, except for the remote chance of a war with Japan or trouble on the Mexican border. The Regular Army maintained a skeleton force with the National Guard and Reserves as a basis for expansion in wartime. Units were too scattered to train on any scale, and lack of funds led to low pay, rotting barracks, and obsolete equipment, despite some experiments with motorization. Few Americans gave much thought to the Army. The economic troubles, isolationism, and pacifism of the 1930s, along with memories of the lives lost in the Great War (as World War I was known at the time) and the unrealized hopes from that conflict, left many disillusioned with warfare and military institutions.



Map 3



Civilian Conservation Corps Company 545 Camp at Fort Knox (*U.S. Army*)

The Army justified its continued existence and expense in a variety of ways. In Hawaii, the Philippines, and Tientsin (Tianjin), China, it guarded America's Pacific empire. Soldiers supplied disaster relief at home and abroad, Army engineers built dams and levees, and Army pilots thrilled the public with experiments in aviation. At the height of the Great Depression, in 1932, President Herbert C. Hoover ordered Army troops to evict the Bonus Marchers—a large protest group of jobless veterans and their families who demanded from Congress an early distribution of a promised bonus for their service—from their encampments in Washington, D.C. Soldiers also largely ran the Civilian Conservation Corps, President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal program that employed three million young adults to work on improving public lands.

New challenges lay on the horizon. Since 1898, the Army had changed greatly. It went from a frontier police force to an overseas colonial constabulary. It fought in a world war, experimented with new technology, and reformed its organization and educational structure. However, in many other ways, it had barely changed. Horse cavalry remained a primary element of the Army and its culture, and staff officers and soldiers trained to fight conflicts on foot, on horseback, and with artillery at a pace only slightly faster than the trench warfare of the Great War. That familiar world would change in May 1940 as the Nazi blitzkrieg of tanks, planes, and mobile infantry tore into Western Europe.

TIMELINE

Spanish-American War (1898)

- 25 April: United States declares war on Spain
- 1 May: Battle of Manila Bay
- 1 July: Battle of San Juan Heights
- 16 July: Spanish forces surrender at Santiago de Cuba
- 13 August: American forces occupy Manila, Philippines
- 10 December: Treaty of Paris signed, ending the war

Philippine War (1899–1902)

Root Reforms (1899–1917)

Boxer Rebellion (13 July–15 August 1900)

Maj. Walter Reed confirms that mosquitos transmit yellow fever (1901)

Construction of the Panama Canal (1907–1914)

Wright brothers test flights at Fort Myer, Virginia (1908–1909)

Joint U.S. force occuppies Veracruz, Mexico, to enforce arms embargo (1914)

Mexican Punitive Expedition (14 March 1916–7 February 1917)

World War I (1917–1918)

1917

- 6 April: United States declares war on Germany
- 26 June: 1st Division of the AEF lands in France

1918

- 28–30 May: Battle of Cantigny
- 15 July–6 August: 2nd Battle of the Marne
- 12–16 September: Battle of Saint-Mihiel
- 26 September: Start of the Meuse-Argonne Offensive
- 11 November: Armistice

Bonus March (1932)

- 28 July: President Herbert C. Hoover calls on Army to disperse Bonus Marchers in Washington

Civilian Conservation Corps established (1933)

World War II (1939)

- 1 September: Nazi Germany invades Poland, starting World War II



Theodore Roosevelt
(Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division)

PEOPLE, ARTIFACTS, AND EVENTS

Harvard graduate, legislator, rancher, police chief, and author, thirty-nine-year-old **Theodore Roosevelt** had already had a full life when, in April 1898, he resigned his post as assistant secretary of the Navy and volunteered for service. To “TR,” no other course was possible; he firmly believed that war developed character and he was anxious to have his chance. Together, he and Col. Leonard Wood formed the “**Rough Riders**,” a volunteer cavalry regiment that brought together Ivy League athletes and Western cowboys. At Tampa, he and his troops jostled to get a place on transports leaving for Cuba but had to leave behind their horses. When Wood rose to brigade command, Roosevelt succeeded him as the commander of the Rough Riders. On 1 July 1898, Roosevelt and the Rough Riders won lasting fame in their assault up Kettle Hill. The only American on horseback, Roosevelt led the advance under heavy fire, urging his troops forward. Alongside other units that included the Buffalo Soldiers of the 10th Cavalry and a Gatling gun detachment, the Rough Riders overran Kettle Hill. Roosevelt’s heroism propelled him in short order to the governorship of New York, the vice presidency, and after McKinley’s assassination, the presidency in 1901. One hundred years later, he received a posthumous Medal of Honor for his gallantry at San Juan Heights.

A native of New Hampshire but raised in Massachusetts, **Leonard Wood** received his medical degree from Harvard Medical School in 1884. Starting as an Army contract surgeon in Arizona, he received a lieutenant's commission in 1886 and served in the final campaign against Geronimo, receiving the Medal of Honor. When he was McKinley's personal physician, he met Roosevelt, and together they formed the Rough Riders. After the Spanish-American War, Wood was governor of Cuba from 1898 to 1902 and became a brigadier general. From 1903 to 1908, Wood was governor of Moro Province in the Philippines and commander of the Philippine Division, rising to major general. In 1910, he became the only medical officer to serve as Army chief of staff. During his four years in office, he strengthened the position of the General Staff in relation to the adjutant general and other bureau chiefs in the War Department hierarchy. In the years of American neutrality during World War I, he and Roosevelt supported preparing the United States for war, and Wood was instrumental in the creation of the Plattsburgh, New York, training camps, a forerunner of the Reserve Officers' Training Corps. Bypassed by President Woodrow Wilson for command of the AEF, he organized and trained the 10th and 89th Divisions at Camp Funston, Kansas. Retiring from the Army in 1921 after a failed presidential bid, he was governor general of the Philippines at the time of his death on 7 August 1927.



Leonard Wood, Maverick in the Making, 1882–1921, by John Singer Sargent, 1903
(National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution)



Calvin P. Titus grew up in an evangelical family in Iowa and Oklahoma. He signed up for the Spanish-American War as a volunteer but then enlisted as a regular in the 14th Infantry, where he served as a bugler and chaplain assistant in the Philippines. When the Boxer Rebellion erupted in China, the regiment joined an international force that deployed to rescue diplomats besieged by insurgents in the walled city of Peking (Beijing). On 14 August 1900, Titus and his comrades arrived near the Tung Pien (Dongbianmen) gate, where heavy fire from atop the wall pinned them

"I'll Try, Sir!" Corporal Titus Scaling the Walls of Peking
by H. Charles McBarron Jr., 1956 (Army Art Collection)

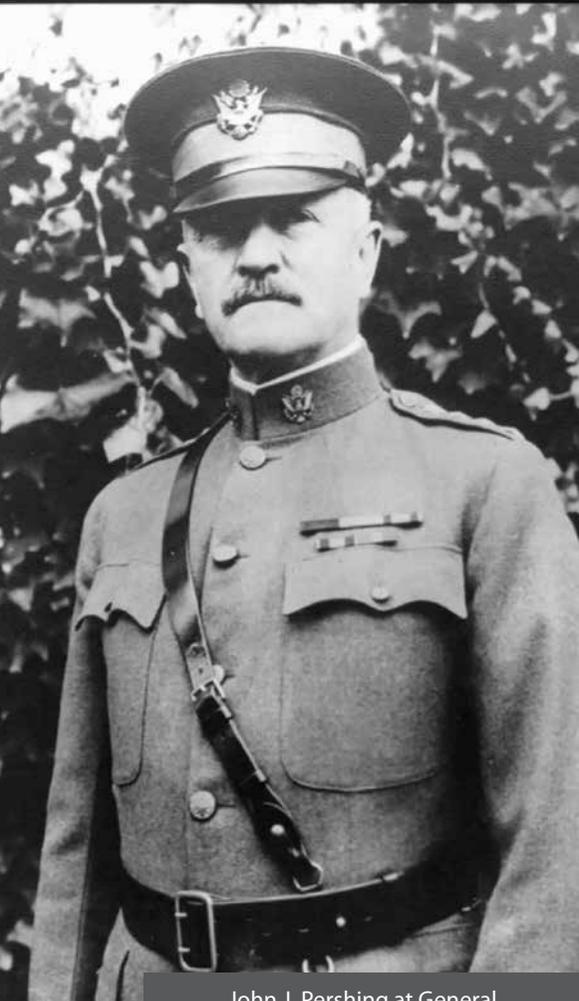


down. The unit commander called for volunteers to scale the 30-foot barrier. Titus stepped forward, saying, "I'll try, sir." Using jagged holes in the bricks, he made a treacherous ascent and found the section at the top unoccupied. The rest of his company followed and then hauled up their arms with slings. They laid down fire that helped the coalition forces break into the city. For his heroism, Titus received the Congressional Medal of Honor and an appointment to the U.S. Military Academy. His "I'll try, sir" became the rallying cry of the 14th Infantry.

Born into slavery in Kentucky in 1864, **Charles Young** grew up in Ripley, Ohio, and attended an integrated high school, where he excelled in academics, music, and foreign languages. His father, a U.S. Army veteran, encouraged him to attend West Point, where he became the ninth African American to enter the academy. Shunned by his fellow cadets because of his race, Young struggled academically at first, having to repeat his plebe year. Yet he persevered, and became only the third African American to graduate from West Point. Young served in the 9th U.S. Cavalry at various western posts and rose to the rank of captain. He later taught military science at Wilberforce University, served two tours in the Philippines, and became the first Black superintendent of a national park. He also served as a military attaché to Haiti, the Dominican Republic, and Liberia. During the Punitive Expedition in Mexico, he led a squadron of the 10th Cavalry and, at Agua Caliente, routed Pancho Villa's troops without losing a single soldier, a feat that won him promotion to lieutenant colonel. By the time the United States entered World War I, Young stood in good position for promotion to brigadier general, a rank no African American had ever reached. Instead, the War Department medically retired him at the rank of colonel. After Young rode 500 miles on horseback from Wilberforce, Ohio, to Washington to prove his fitness, the Army returned him to active duty, but he spent the rest of his career as an attaché in Liberia. Later, one of Young's protégés, Benjamin O. Davis Sr., became the first African American brigadier general.



Charles Young pictured as a major
(Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division)



John J. Pershing at General Headquarters in Chaumont, France, in October 1918 (*Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division*)

One of Young's fellow cavalrymen, **John J. Pershing** became the leading American soldier of his generation. An 1886 graduate of West Point, Pershing served on the western frontier with the 6th Cavalry and later as a military science professor at the University of Nebraska, where he also earned a law degree. After a stint with the 10th Cavalry, he returned as an instructor to West Point, where the cadets called him "Black Jack" for his time with the Buffalo Soldiers. During the Spanish-American War, he fought with the 10th Cavalry on Kettle Hill and San Juan Hill. After his service as an observer of the Russo-Japanese War, President Roosevelt promoted Captain Pershing directly to brigadier general over the heads of more than 800 officers senior to him. Tragedy struck in August 1915 when a fire at his family quarters in the Presidio of San Francisco killed his wife and three of his four children. Although grieving, Pershing immediately returned to duty, and in 1916 led the Mexican Punitive Expedition

to catch Pancho Villa. Having shown his ability to lead a large command on foreign soil without getting involved in party politics, Pershing was the obvious choice by President Wilson to lead the AEF to France. Pershing organized, trained, and supplied the AEF and ensured that it would serve as a distinct American army under American command. After leading the AEF to victory over Germany, he became the only American to hold the rank of General of the Armies of the United States during his lifetime. (George Washington later received the rank posthumously.) He then served as Army chief of staff from 1921 to 1924. Pershing lived long enough to see George C. Marshall, George S. Patton Jr., and other protégés emerge victorious in World War II.

One of the Missouri National Guard units that participated in the Meuse-Argonne Offensive was Battery D, 129th Field Artillery, commanded by **Harry S. Truman**. When Captain Truman took command of Battery D in Brittany, France, in July 1918, he struck some of the rough artillery soldiers as comical with his short stature and thick spectacles, but he soon showed them he meant business. When many of his soldiers fled from German shelling in the Vosges Mountains, Truman stuck to his ground and called them “every name I could think of,” inducing some to return and move the battery to safety. In the Meuse-Argonne, Truman acted without orders to shell an enemy battery before it could open fire on American infantry. In the process, he incurred the wrath of his commanding officer, but his unauthorized action went unpunished, perhaps because his decision had saved lives. Under his command, Battery D fired over 10,000 shells during the war without losing a single soldier in combat. Before the war, Truman had failed at several business ventures, but the conflict brought out his leadership qualities. He went home a hero, entered politics, became a U.S. senator, and in 1945, president of the United States.



Photograph of Harry S. Truman
taken in France in 1918
(National Archives)



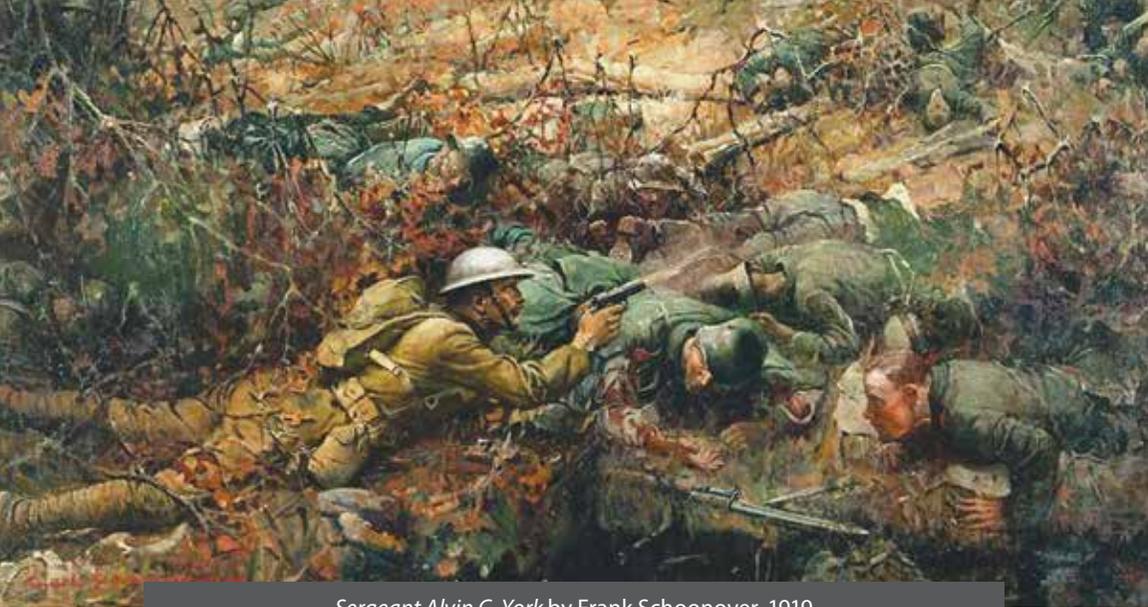
Samuel Woodfill pictured as a master sergeant
(U.S. Army)

To Pershing, **Samuel Woodfill** was “the greatest American soldier of the World War.” Woodfill had honed his marksmanship in the woods near his family’s farm in Indiana. He was a Regular who had served in the Philippines, Alaska, and along the Mexican border. With the World War I mobilization, Sergeant Woodfill became a lieutenant with the 60th Infantry, 5th Division. On the morning of 12 October 1918 near Cunel, France, while on a reconnaissance, he saw muzzle flashes from a church tower about 300 yards away. Although he could not actually see the gunner, he fired where he thought the soldier’s head would be and killed him. He then repeated the process four times without missing as others tried to take over the now-silent machine gun. An enemy soldier charged Woodfill, but after a hand-to-hand fight, he killed the man with his pistol. Three more machine gun nests fell victim to his marksmanship as he continued forward. Approaching a fifth emplacement, Woodfill charged it, killing seven enemy soldiers, including two with a pickax when his rifle ran out of ammunition. For his exploits, Woodfill received the Medal of Honor from Pershing himself.



Henry Johnson
(U.S. Army)

William Henry Johnson, commonly known as **Henry Johnson**, was born in North Carolina. On 5 June 1917, he enlisted in the U.S. Army and became a private in the 15th New York (Colored) Infantry, an all-Black National Guard unit later redesignated the 369th Infantry and dubbed the “Harlem Hellfighters.” In December 1917, Johnson and the 369th deployed to France; many months later, AEF headquarters assigned the regiment to a French division owing to concerns that many White doughboys would refuse to serve alongside their African American counterparts. On 15 May 1918, while Johnson and Pvt. Needham Roberts were on sentry duty, a large German raiding party attacked them. Johnson fended off the enemy with grenades, his rifle butt, a bolo knife, and his fists, killing four Germans and wounding several others. Johnson and Roberts received severe wounds in the skirmish—Johnson sustained twenty-one injuries—but they stopped the enemy attack. Johnson’s feat earned him a promotion to sergeant and the nickname “Black Death” for his combat prowess. The French Army awarded him the Croix de Guerre, and on 2 June 2015, President Barack H. Obama posthumously presented Johnson with the Medal of Honor.



Sergeant Alvin C. York by Frank Schoonover, 1919
(82d Airborne Division War Memorial Museum)

When registering for the draft, **Alvin C. York** initially claimed conscientious objector status on religious grounds, but he came to believe that God meant for him to fight as a soldier. Having reconciled military service with his beliefs, he served with the 328th Infantry, 82d Division, and rose to corporal. On 8 October 1918, during the Meuse-Argonne Offensive, York's battalion attacked a German position and came under heavy machine-gun fire. A squad of seventeen soldiers, including York, infiltrated the enemy lines to knock out the machine guns and surprised a German headquarters, which surrendered. As York and his comrades rounded up the prisoners, German machine-gun fire raked the position, killing six Americans, wounding three others, and leaving York in charge of the rest. While the others guarded the prisoners, York advanced on the machine guns. His Tennessee marksmanship showed as he picked off one German after another, but he soon emptied his rifle. Six enemy troops charged him with fixed bayonets, but he shot each down in turn with his semiautomatic pistol before they could reach him. A German lieutenant offered to surrender his command if York agreed to cease firing. As York and his men escorted their prisoners back to American lines, they captured another German unit with the lieutenant's grudging cooperation. When York reported to his brigade commander, the general quipped, "Well York, I hear you have captured the whole German army." "No sir," York replied, "I only got 132." York received a promotion to sergeant and a Medal of Honor, personally presented by Pershing. He became perhaps the most popular American hero of the war. A movie of his life, *Sergeant York*, was the highest grossing film of 1941 and helped rally Americans for a new conflict.



The M1917 helmet worn by then-Cpl. Alvin C. York during his Medal of Honor action
(National Museum of the U.S. Army)

The **M1917 helmet** is an American-made version of the steel Brodie helmet, designed and patented in 1915 in Britain by Russian-born inventor John Leopold Brodie. In 1917, the United States purchased 400,000 of the British Army's version of the Brodie helmet for the AEF, whereas African Americans serving alongside French organizations wore the French Army's Adrian helmet. Before the year was out, the first M1917 helmets began arriving in France. Although it closely resembled the Brodie helmet, the M1917 was sturdier and offered better protection than the original. By the end of the war, U.S. factories had made 1.5 million M1917s. An improved version of the helmet, the M1917A1, went into production in 1941, and the Army used it in the early stages of World War II.



American telephone operators, members of the U.S. Army Signal Corps, at an exchange within range of German shell fire, as evidenced by the gas masks and helmets, 15 October 1918. (*National Archives*)

Grace D. Banker was working as a switchboard operator at American Telephone and Telegraph when she saw an Army newspaper advertisement, seeking women who could speak French and run switchboards, then a relatively new technology. Wishing to do her part, she joined the Signal Corps and became a chief operator and supervisor. After several months of training, her unit departed New York for AEF headquarters at Chaumont, France. Upon her arrival, Banker led thirty-three switchboard operators known as “Hello Girls.” Their workload was daunting, often reaching 150,000 calls per day. The coded language used by the Army changed daily and had to be memorized, resulting in nonsensical phrases that reminded Banker of *Alice in Wonderland*. Yet, their work was deadly serious, involving top secret English and French messages between command



Grace D. Banker
(U.S. Army Women's Museum)

headquarters, supply depots, and even the trenches. During the fighting at Saint-Mihiel, Banker and five of her operators followed the First Army headquarters forward to within range of German artillery. They could hear the enemy guns as they worked around the clock, connecting calls with helmets and gas masks slung over their chairs. After the war, Banker received the Distinguished Service Medal, but the Army saw her and the other Hello Girls as civilian contractors, ineligible for veterans' benefits. When President James E. "Jimmy" Carter Jr. granted veteran status to the Hello Girls in 1977, only eighteen were still alive. Banker, who died in 1960, had no regrets, stating in 1919: "If you were to ask every girl in my party about her hardships, I know she would answer that she had none worth mentioning, and that her work overseas helped her in every way."

Although an Army officer, **William L. “Billy” Mitchell** is widely regarded as the father of the U.S. Air Force. During World War I, he commanded all American air combat units in France as a brigadier general. After the war, he served as assistant chief of the Air Service. Mitchell became a staunch proponent of air power, arguing that it would soon dominate warfare, and he promoted a separate Air Force equal to the Army and Navy to achieve air power’s potential. In the 1920s, he conducted a series of well-publicized tests in which airplanes bombed stationary battleships, and he used the results to claim that “aircraft constitute a positive defense of our country against hostile invasion.” His outspoken advocacy antagonized many Army senior leaders, leading to

a reduction in rank for insubordination. In 1925, he faced a court-martial after accusing high-ranking Army and Navy officers of incompetence and “almost treasonable administration of the national defense.” The court-martial found Mitchell guilty, but his trial attracted national attention and public opinion supported him. Sentenced to five years’ suspension from duty without pay, Mitchell resigned on 1 February 1926. He devoted the remaining decade of his life to preaching the gospel of air power to all who would listen.



William L. “Billy” Mitchell
(U.S. Air Force)



Liberty Truck
(National Archives)

Like the railroad in the nineteenth century, the internal combustion engine revolutionized military transportation in the twentieth century. The Army's first use of cargo trucks in a military operation was in the Mexican Punitive Expedition. At the start, the Army had just 105 trucks in service; when it ended, the expedition alone had around 250. Although much needed, the number of trucks presented Maj. John F. Madden, expedition quartermaster, with a maintenance headache because of the wide variety of vehicles. The experience convinced him and others that the Army should adopt a standardized truck for all of its needs. The Motor Transport Section of the Quartermaster Corps and the Society of Automotive Engineers collaborated to design such a vehicle, resulting in the development of the **Class B Standardized Military Truck** or "**Liberty Truck**" in 1917. Ten weeks after completing the design, the first models became available. Of the roughly 9,500 Liberty Trucks produced, 7,500 went overseas, starting in October 1918. The standard Liberty Truck had a gasoline-powered, fifty-two-horsepower engine with a top speed of 15 miles per hour.



Springfield M1903 rifle (*U.S. Army*)

Aware of serious deficiencies revealed by the Spanish-American War, the U.S. Army sought to modernize its firearms. In 1892, the service adopted the Krag-Jorgensen rifle, which proved obsolete when compared to the clip-loading, bolt-action, rapid-fire Mauser M1893 rifle that the Spanish used to lethal effect in 1898. Five years after the war, the Army began equipping its units with the improved, bolt-action, magazine-fed **Springfield M1903 rifle**. The War with Spain also showed that the standard rod bayonet was too flimsy, so starting in 1905, the Army replaced it with a sturdy knife bayonet. Finally, close quarters combat in the Philippine War against the Moro rebels showed the need for a less-cumbersome hand weapon with greater stopping power than the .38-caliber revolver. The Army found the answer in the **Colt M1911 pistol**, a .45-caliber, semi-automatic pistol, which it adopted in 1911. This pistol became a mainstay of the Army for most of the twentieth century.

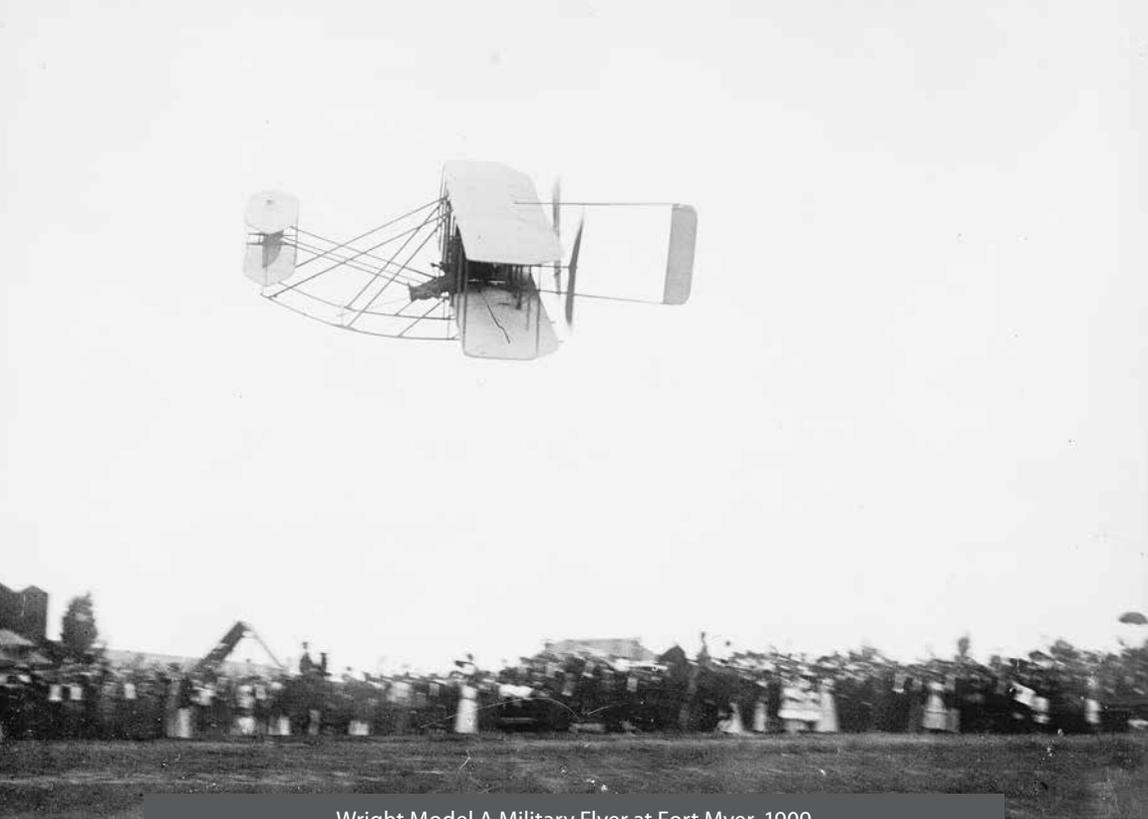


M1911 pistol
(*National Museum of the U.S. Army*)



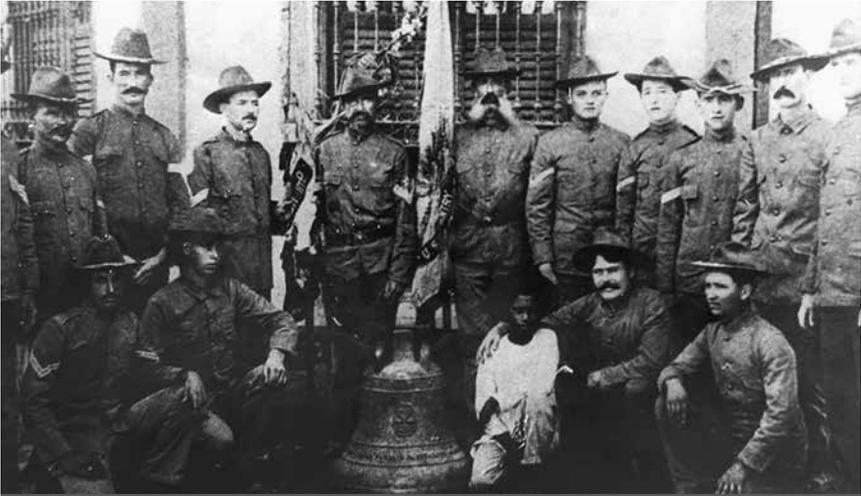
Army machine gun instructor 2d Lt. Valmore A. Browning—son of the inventor John Browning—test fires an M1917 at Thillombois, France, 5 October 1918. (U.S. Army Signal Corps)

Far more significant than the rifle, the bayonet, or the pistol in transforming the nature of twentieth-century warfare was the machine gun. American inventors, including John M. Browning (who designed the M1911 pistol), Isaac N. Lewis, and Hiram S. Maxim took a leading role in developing automatic weapons between the Civil War and World War I. The Army used several of them. Only in May 1917, after rigorous testing, did the Army at last settle on the **Browning M1917 machine gun** as the weapon that best suited its needs—a water-cooled, .30-caliber heavy machine gun capable of firing 450 rounds per minute. Up to that time, the French-made Hotchkiss M1914 had served as the standard heavy machine gun of the AEF. Because of production delays, however, only about 1,200 Browning M1917s saw combat during the final three months of the war. Subsequent versions of the M1917 went into action in World War II, the Korean War, and even the Vietnam War.



Wright Model A Military Flyer at Fort Myer, 1909
(Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division)

From August 1908 to July 1909, brothers **Wilbur and Orville Wright** conducted a series of test flights at Fort Myer, Virginia, to develop an Army aircraft. On 17 September 1908, a split propeller caused their plane to crash, severely injuring Orville and killing his passenger, 1st Lt. Thomas E. Selfridge—the first powered airplane crash fatality. After the tragedy, the Wrights devoted nearly a year to improve their flyer. On 30 July 1909, with Orville as the pilot and 1st Lt. Benjamin D. Foulois, the future chief of the U.S. Army Air Corps, as the navigator, they carried out an evaluation test flight. The model met all of the Army's requirements, staying aloft for an hour, reaching an altitude of 400 feet, and, in a separate speed trial, maintaining an average of 40 miles per hour. Designated Signal Corps No. 1, the Army's first airplane also bore the name of the **Wright Model A Military Flyer**.



Soldiers of Company C, 9th U.S. Infantry, with a Bell of Balangiga
(Fred R. Brown, *History of the 9th U.S. Infantry*, R. R. Donnelley, 1909)

On the morning of 28 September 1901, seventy-four soldiers of Company C, 9th Infantry, assembled for breakfast in the coastal town of Balangiga on the island of Samar in the Philippines. Engaged in counterinsurgency operations against the Filipino guerrillas, the soldiers had placed 80 to 100 townsfolk in two tents designed to hold 16 people each and forced them to work without pay. They had also antagonized villagers with stealing, brutality, and at least one rape. Now as the soldiers sat down, the village police chief approached a sentry. Suddenly, he pulled out a bolo knife and cut down the sentry. At that signal, a mob wielding bolos ran out of the nearby church and surrounding tents, slashing at the surprised soldiers as one of the church bells rang. A handful of soldiers managed to escape in a dugout canoe, but forty-four soldiers died, twenty-two were wounded, and four missing. An alarmed Maj. Gen. Adna R. Chaffee, the American commanding general in the Philippines, sent Brig. Gen. Jacob H. “Howling Jake” Smith to Samar with orders to use whatever methods necessary to pacify the island. Joint Army-Navy patrols destroyed Balangiga and confiscated the three church bells, which they brought back to the United States as war trophies. During the last three months of 1901, American troops killed over 750 supposed insurrectos and 580 water buffalos, burned over 1,660 houses, and destroyed tons of rice. After they segregated the population into zones to better monitor their activity, the insurgency finally subsided. After repeated requests by the independent Philippines, the United States returned the three **Bells of Balangiga** in late 2018.



Recruits at an event sponsored by the Commission on Training Camp Activities (*Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division*)

World War I occurred during the heyday of the idealistic progressive reform movement in the United States. Concerned about the impact of Army life—especially drinking and prostitution—on the values of American male youth, the War Department created the **Commission on Training Camp Activities** (CTCA). The CTCA worked with civilian organizations like the Young Men’s Christian Association, Knights of Columbus, and the Salvation Army to offer a variety of leisure alternatives to doughboys, which included athletics, recreational centers, libraries, concerts, and theaters. They cracked down on saloons and bordellos near the camps and distributed educational materials on venereal diseases. When the Premier of France offered to establish houses of prostitution for American troops—a common practice in Europe—Secretary of War Newton D. Baker exclaimed to Raymond B. Fosdick of the CTCA, “For God’s sake, Raymond, don’t show this to the president or he’ll stop the war!”



"A Singing Army Is a Fighting Army" poster, 1917
(Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division)

Before the conflict, Fosdick had been impressed by the singing of German troops on the march, so when he had his opportunity in 1917, he tried to make the U.S. Army a **Singing Army** by appointing song leaders in Army units. All over the nation and in France, soldiers roared out, "Where Do We Go from Here?" "Over There," "There's a Long, Long Trail," and "We'll Hang Kaiser Bill to the Sour Apple Tree."



Charles W. Whittlesey receives the Medal of Honor from
General Clarence R. Edwards at Boston Common, 30 December 1918
(Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division)

On 2 October 1918, the 77th Division attacked north through the Argonne Forest as part of the AEF's Meuse-Argonne Offensive, but made little headway against fierce opposition. In one sector, however, six companies of the 308th Infantry and parts of two companies of the 308th Machine Gun Battalion advanced through a small valley uncovered by the enemy and, by nightfall, had reached the northern slope of a ravine a half-mile ahead of American units on their flanks. By morning, this force, joined by a company of the 307th Infantry, found that the Germans had cut off their line of retreat, and the saga of the **Lost Battalion** began. For four days, the doughboys fought off repeated assaults, endured machine gun and artillery fire from both sides, and rejected a call to surrender. Their food ran out on the second day, water was only available from the muddy creek at the foot of the ravine (which was exposed to enemy fire), and ammunition ran low, forcing the troops to salvage rifles and ammunition from German soldiers they had killed. At one point, American artillery was firing at their location and the battalion used its last carrier pigeon, Cher Ami, in an effort to halt the shelling. Despite wounds in its chest and leg, Cher Ami made it through the fire with its capsule message hanging from its leg, and the firing halted. Efforts by the Air Service to drop messages and supplies to the battalion failed, and the 77th Division's attempts to relieve the battalion were also unsuccessful. Finally, on 7 October, a flanking attack by the 82d Division to the east forced the Germans to withdraw. That evening, the 77th Division reached the 194 survivors of the battalion's original 600. Maj. Charles W. Whittlesey, the commander of the group, and two of his captains received the Congressional Medal of Honor for their heroism. From the French government, Cher Ami received the Croix de Guerre.



African American members of the Civilian Conservation Corps. About 250,000 Blacks served in the CCC. (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service)

The onset of the Great Depression of the 1930s—the worst economic crisis in American history—prompted an unprecedented federal response that included the Army. Just two days after his inauguration in March 1933, President Franklin D. Roosevelt called for the formation of the **Civilian Conservation Corps** (CCC) to provide work for jobless young men through the conservation and improvement of public lands. Rather than create a new bureaucracy, Roosevelt turned to existing government agencies, including the War Department. At first, the Army was only supposed to enroll and condition recruits provided by the Labor Department and turn them over to the Agriculture and Interior Departments, which would run the camps and supervise the work. However, the other agencies lacked the staff, equipment, and experience to administer the CCC program. Taking on the responsibility, the Army built the camps and provided food, fuel, vehicles, medical care, and supervision. Each camp housed a CCC company under a Regular officer, assisted by three reserve officers, a Regular first sergeant, and supply and mess enlisted soldiers. The youths worked on forest protection and improvements, fought fires, and built roads and trails, overnight shelters, and dams. During the hectic summer of 1933, the demands of the CCC forced virtual cancellation of reserve training and stripped Regular units of their officers. Enlisted soldiers did not like the fact that CCC enrollees received more pay than they did. Nonetheless, the CCC did much to improve the Army's image with the public, and it served as a training ground for officers and NCOs who would soon deal with conscripts in the national mobilization for World War II.

