



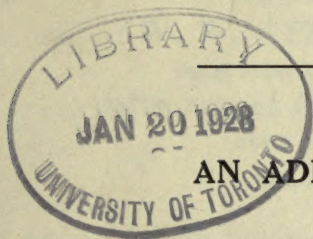
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OUR ARMY



AN ADDRESS

BY

W. W. ATTERBURY

Vice-President, The Pennsylvania Railroad Company

Late Brigadier-General, U. S. A., and Director General of
Transportation, American Expeditionary Forces

Delivered Before the Members of the

UNION LEAGUE OF PHILADELPHIA

June 25, 1919



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To an American business man thrown into the midst of it, either at home or abroad, what he has gone through in the last two years must have been a startling experience and dreadful evidence of the inefficiency of our Government, and particularly its relation to preparedness and to war.

The average American is proud of his efficiency, and the boast of the country is its ability to organize, but there was nothing we had done prior to our entry into the war for which we have any reason to be proud. It was a shameful exhibition of the lack of ordinary precautions to safeguard the country, which, in counterpart, if permitted in ordinary business would spell ruin.

Have we learned anything by the experience of the last two years? Are we going to "let it go at that" and settle back, going about our ordinary business lives with the same feeling of splendid isolation and safety that we once enjoyed?

The situation of the world today is so involved

that only a real optimist sees anything but turmoil for many years to come. Of all the great nations, only America has come through financially, economically and otherwise unimpaired; and to America today the world looks for salvation.

The events of the last five years are now in culmination—a great picture puzzle, its many parts almost inextricably mixed, thrown on the table to be again put together to form an harmonious whole. Is such a thing possible? No! A new picture must be made, and, in the making, force must be used, pieces must be broken, and no matter how great the sympathy or honesty of purpose of those now engaged in its reconstruction, the new composite will be one for which time alone can fill in the interstices.

BITTERNESS THE AFTERMATH OF WAR.

Whether we have a League of Nations or not; no matter what the decision in regard to Fiume, Silesia, Danzig or the Basin of the Saare, the aftermath is a train of bitterness, in comparison with which the Alsace-Lorraine question pales into insignificance. Whether we agree with England to safeguard France against Germany, or continue our traditional policy in relation to international affairs, the same situation confronts us. Nor will international recognition of the Monroe Doctrine relieve us of our sacred duty to its defense to the limit of our life and strength.

Continental, national and racial enmity and

hatred have not been eliminated. On the contrary, they have been intensified, and we, who prior to the war were at peace with the world, are now drawn into the maelstrom of world politics. It is a position that has been forced upon us—we did not seek it—we earnestly tried to avoid it.

AMERICA AND HER OPPORTUNITY.

Today we stand the one strong nation of the world—a country united as it has never been before—and united on the overwhelming sentiment that the peoples of the world have an equal right to enjoy life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, and that in their attainment we will do our part.

It is a great privilege that presents itself, and the nation has nobly arisen to the opportunity; but that privilege carries with it an obligation—and that obligation we must be prepared to meet.

The world's conflagration is for the moment under control, but underneath are still the same seething masses of fire liable to break into flame at any moment. A change of wind may at any time force the fire directly against us—and will we be prepared to meet it? Are we to resume, each his own business activity, and our eager chase for the business of the world, with no thought or care as against the fire that will inevitably break out? Can we not as business men devote some of our energy and our national genius

of organization toward the development of an efficient method of national defense?

As never before, the war touches every person and industry. National preparedness necessitates the co-ordination of Army, Navy and Industry. A limited co-ordination of Army and Navy now exists; but no machinery has been provided to reach the almost unlimited resources of material, supply and personnel of Industry.

A NATIONAL POLICY OF DEFENSE REQUIRED.

In order to insure the realization of all the above, in their correct proportion, and to prepare a successful defense, it seems to me essential that what might be called a National Defense Board be organized and a complete national policy decided upon, which will then permit each to proceed along its own lines.

The above to the business man would seem so axiomatic as to make it unnecessary to prove.

I am not competent to speak on the future of the Navy; and you who so loyally carried on at home are better able than I to speak on the future organization of Industry as it relates to national defense.

There are, however, certain factors in the development of the Army, elemental in character, nevertheless essential to its successful future.

It is on these elemental factors that I want to speak tonight. What I have to say are the

results of my observation following nearly two years of close contact with the American Army—for all of whom I have a great sympathy; for a very large proportion a high regard; and for many a deep affection—the suggestions of a business man to business men—and most fittingly in that keystone of national unity and safety—the Union League of Philadelphia.

Our ultimate need will be the entire man-power of the nation; our primary need an organization sufficient to prevent an hostile landing, or to immediately carry war into an enemy country—such an organization being so elastic as will permit the gradual and efficient mobilization of our ultimate need.

In the past our Regular Army has been, unfortunately, so subject to political influence that, despite the earnest efforts of such able Secretaries of War as Root and Stimson, practically all good, remedial and constructive legislation has been emasculated by that bane of national legislation—the rider.

NECESSITY FOR A GENERAL STAFF.

The Departments and Corps have been so utilized as to strengthen one Department or advance individuals at the expense of the efficiency of the Army as a whole. The outbreak of the war found us with Department and Corps organizations, each working out its own salvation, with

but limited regard to the other. A General Staff had been provided, but so limited as to personnel and use as to have made it impossible to have met the situation with proper plans of organization, etc., to face what was the inevitable; nor to co-ordinate the work of existing Corps and Departments, even if the preparation of such necessary plans had been permitted by higher authority.

The great lesson that should be learned from this war is the necessity of the General Staff. Its authority should be absolute, and all Corps and Departments should function under it.

We in France struggled along, each Department striving to do its share—oftentimes unintentionally working against each other—while G. H. Q. gradually evolved a General Staff organization—a compromise between the French and the English, adapted as far as possible to our national characteristics and with as little violation of regulations as possible.

A DIFFICULT PROCESS OF EVOLUTION.

Much of the criticism of Brigade and Division Commanders is, I am satisfied, directly traceable to the effect following the separation from their commands of many of the young and able officers for General Staff work. The General Staff was the essential, but the Divisions and Brigades, particularly those that came over in the early period of the war, had to suffer. This was necessary and inevitable.

It was not until the General Staff functioned properly that the American Expeditionary Force as a whole did its best work. About the time the Armistice was signed the machine was working smoothly. Notwithstanding this fact there were changes in the organization under discussion, particularly that of the General Staff, as a result of the experience we had thus far obtained.

The various Corps and Departments have been so increased and their scope so expanded as to become, under existing conditions, almost impossible of being properly administered. Under the General Staff the number could be materially reduced and administration simplified.

WHOLE NATION MUST FUNCTION IN WAR.

Modern warfare is essentially applied science and intimately associated in all of its various phases with our industrial and commercial life. To be effective, all the energy of the nation must be so organized in time of peace as to function properly in time of war. This is essentially a function of the General Staff.

You at home were having your own difficulties, which largely could have been avoided if there had been available a General Staff of sufficient size and thoroughly trained. It would not have been necessary to resort to civilian organizations such as the Aircraft Board, the Shipping Board, the War Industries Board and many other improvised organizations, because a proper General Staff would have embraced such duties.

West Point should continue to be a school in which young men of special aptitude can be trained for the career of professional soldier. The course should be cut down to two years, the admission requirements increased, and the school itself should be used as a school purely for applied military science, with the thought that the graduates of the school be used for those phases of General Staff work in which military science is an essential, and for higher command as emergency may present itself.

The number of post-graduate schools for specialized training should be largely increased, and their courses strengthened, and along lines the necessity for which our experience of the last two years has developed.

Our colleges and training camps have shown us what it is possible to do in a short time, by intensive training, in the preparation of officers of the lower ranks. Nor is any long or very technical military education necessary for such officers for the General Staff who, in an emergency, are needed to direct the industrial, commercial and transportation needs.

General Staff work is a real science, and the officers assigned to it should be men trained with that end in view.

NEW PLAN OF ARMY PROMOTION NEEDED.

Serious consideration should be given to the question of promotion in the Army. Heretofore

from the grade of Lieutenant to that of Colonel it has been by seniority. Commissioned as a Second Lieutenant, a man rose in his turn to be a Colonel in his arm of the service if he lived long enough, took care of his health and did nothing that might by any possible chance get him in trouble. He might be the most mediocre man or the most brilliant; the least enterprising or one with great initiative; but with continued good health and an absence of disciplinary measures against him he rose in his turn to be a Colonel.

Further promotion was by selection, but limited by Congressional action to a choice from among Colonels of the line arriving at that grade. Military socialism.

There has been no encouragement to officers to stand out by excellence of their achievements, and promotions have been carefully guarded from being affected by individual effort. Punishment but no reward.

PICK THE BEST—ELIMINATE THE UNFIT.

There should be a combined system of selection, seniority and elimination—selection for such men as stand out above all others; seniority as between equally good men; elimination of the morally, intellectually and temperamentally unfit.

The question of rank was an ever-present and unending cause of friction, and this seemed to be true in all branches of the service.

In the General Staff and for the higher command, rank should be *ex officio*. This would enable the best man to be used regardless of line rank.

For the Regular Army I favor the volunteer, and a short-term enlistment, with ample opportunity for trade and vocational education, and at a good wage.

For the Reserve, or second line defense, I am convinced that the existing militia system is inadequate. It is rather difficult for us, who are citizens of Pennsylvania, to appreciate this. The history of the Pennsylvania National Guard is so creditable that it is hard to realize how inadequate the National Guard system has been as a whole. Facts tell the real story.

INADEQUACY OF OLD MILITIA SYSTEM.

I quote from the published statement of an ex-Secretary of War, and in reference to the experience we had in the Summer of 1916:

“The President’s call issued on June 18 was for units at war strength. Take the situation on August 31st, when numbers were at their maximum and there had been nearly 2½ months in which to recruit. The war strength of the units called for should have been 252,000 men. As a matter of fact, we were able to raise only 138,500 men. We were 113,500 men short. This was in spite of the most zealous efforts at recruiting; it was on top of a year of unparalleled interest in

military affairs, when hundreds of thousands of citizens all over the United States were marching in parades and shouting themselves hoarse for Preparedness.

“Nor were these men whom we did raise, trained Guardsmen. Over 60% of them were wholly raw recruits who had come in since the call. Nearly 50% of the enlisted Guardsmen, whose names were originally on the rolls of the militia units included in the call, disappeared altogether after the call came. Over 23,000 of these were found physically unfit. Over 7000 wholly failed to answer the call; and over 16,000 (nearly enough to constitute an infantry division) disappeared between the time of the call and the muster in, nobody knows where.

“In the case of two States, such loose methods of medical examination had been employed by the State authorities that upon the call last Summer more than half of their Guardsmen were rejected by the Federal examiners as physically unfit for service. In the case of one company of infantry these rejections amounted to 77%.

RECRUITS FALL SHORT OF REQUIREMENTS.

“Again, how did the men finally obtained, measure up in the great essentials of discipline and marksmanship? The results of the field inspection of about 123,000 of the force thus mobilized give startling figures. Over 56,000 had never had range instruction with the military rifle be-

fore the call; only 19,000 had achieved a standard of marksmanship which the Chief of Staff of the United States Army calls 'barely tolerable;' 71,000 of these men had never attended a previous encampment or had any period of field training whatever; only 37% were men who had received before the call more than three months of our imperfect indoor militia training.

"In other words, when the test of service came to this force of the militia of the several States which Congress had planned to make our first line of citizen defense, practically half of it melted away into nothing at the call. When, after three months' strenuous effort at recruiting, we had gathered in all of the men we could lay our hands on, we had a force which was 113,000 or 45% short of the number called for and only 21% of whom could shoot 'barely tolerably,' and 63% of whom were virtually untrained."

VOLUNTEER PLAN FOR RESERVE OBSOLETE.

And history has merely repeated itself. The volunteer system has regularly broken down. During the Revolution, Massachusetts and Virginia were forced to resort to the Draft. The War of 1812 was a conspicuous example of inefficiency. During the Civil War both sides were forced to the Draft, and, as for the Spanish War, the full quota of volunteers called for by the President never was obtained.

The volunteer system for our Reserve is obsolete. The experience of the last two years has

demonstrated that in a great emergency modern warfare is on such gigantic lines that any system other than that of universal service means injustice to the individual. The one great national act of the war was that of the Draft. The sequence should be that of universal military service.

There is a steady trend on the part of nations toward popular government on the one hand and universal service on the other. The adoption of universal service has occurred in free republics like Switzerland, France, Argentina and Chile, in commonwealths like Australia, and in free constitutional monarchies like Norway and Sweden.

Again the conjunction of privilege and obligation.

SIX MONTHS MILITARY TRAINING FOR ALL.

Universal military service cannot be considered at variance with our ideals. On the contrary, it seems to me a most democratic distinction. Approximately 1,000,000 young men would annually be subject to the workings of any laws governing universal military service, of whom 50% at least are immediately available and physically fit. Roughly, this could be increased 75% by corrective measures applied at an earlier age.

A boy in his nineteenth year has not yet become an economic factor of great importance; nor has he taken upon himself such ties as would ordinarily exclude him from military service. Six

months in a training camp during their nineteenth year would throw into our Reserve each year from 500,000 to 750,000 trained men, at an age when impressions and knowledge are easily made and retained.

If the training covers an unbroken period of six months, it can take place in the open in almost any part of our country. The effect upon the race as a whole because of this experience, not only from the point of discipline but also that of health, would be most beneficial. If no other purpose were served than the physical upbuilding of our youth, it would well be worth the entire cost.

The figures of our Draft are startling—not so bad as England, but sufficiently so to make us welcome a system which will produce a more rugged and virile race.

Discipline and training along military lines will teach our young men self control, respect for law and order, regard for constituted authority, consideration for the rights of their fellowmen—all essential to good citizenship—and, at the same time, give them initiative and teach them sanitation and hygiene.

THE DEMOCRACY OF UNIVERSAL SERVICE.

Social barriers will be broken down; class distinction disappear; each will learn the other's viewpoint and respect the other's ideas; and the relationship so established cannot fail in after years to produce a more sympathetic attitude.

No greater agency for instilling a truly democratic spirit into our youth could be established.

No one who has followed industrial conditions for the last generation but must realize that our present militia system has been a constant source of irritation to our industrial population. The mere fact that it was at hand has made it available for every petty riot, regardless of its character. Upon our citizen militia has been thrown a duty which is essentially that of a paid police. In every State it has been a serious source of discontent, and one of the most active causes of friction between our industrial population and society in general.

MILITIA NOT SUITED TO POLICE WORK.

Instead of using the militia for ordinary police duty, the other States in the Union can well follow the lead of the State of Pennsylvania in its magnificent State Constabulary.

In line with industrial reforms which are now so generally under discussion throughout our country, no one act could go farther toward restoring democratic relations between capital and labor, between rich and poor, than the elimination of the use of militia for police purposes.

Universal training and the Reserve—all under Federal control—would restore labor to its proper relation to patriotic duty.

However important a part universal service may play in a scheme of national defense, it is

even more important on moral, physical, political and economic grounds.

It is logical, and essentially democratic.

The six-month period in the nineteenth year should be followed by three weeks' service in the field during the summer months for the two succeeding years. All of this should be under Federal control, but so exercised that the full advantage should be taken of State and local pride and enthusiasm.

AMERICANS SHOULD KNOW THEIR ARMY.

May I ask your consideration for the moment also of another phase of the question: that is, the relationship between the Army and the civilian. My own case is, I think, fairly typical.

When I went abroad I had had no previous military experience, and no close, personal touch with the Army itself. I knew but few Regular Army officers, and none sufficiently intimately to call him by his first name. I knew there was an Army—Yes!—but of its aims, ambition and life I knew nothing.

I was eager to help, and they were anxious to have me, but for months it seemed as if every action taken and every move made was misconstrued—just as, often, in the dark hours, it seemed to me that my help was not wanted. All of this disappeared later as a result of association and of a mutual knowledge and of common aims.

As I look back on it, and in the ultimate analysis, the fault was my own, in common with that of practically all other citizens of our great country—and a national fault of taking no personal interest whatever in our Government nor its agencies—a national fault which must be corrected if we are to get the full benefit of our free institutions.

CIVILIANS AND SOLDIERS OUGHT TO MIX.

The Army's faults are those that we, ourselves, have permitted; its excellence a great tribute to the unselfish and patriotic work of a few officers who, in spite of national indifference—almost antipathy—maintained an "esprit de corps" and the high standard of organization which, after all, was our salvation in the hour of our trial.

The point I wish to make is: that this was accomplished in spite of, and not because of, any help or sympathy given to them by the nation at large.

I have no doubt that for a time the associations formed and friendships made will be maintained, but unless some active agency is established this will gradually die out, and the Army again become the same unimportant factor in our everyday life.

If we are to get their best effort—and, in turn, in an emergency they be enabled to best utilize the civilian population—a personal contact must be maintained. They must know us and we must know them.

It will be of mutual benefit, and, as for myself, it will be a great personal privilege. It is our Army. Can we not make it a part of our life?

TWO GREAT ARMY LEADERS OVERSEAS.

To two of its chief officers with whom I was associated overseas, may I pay a word of tribute?

To our Commander-in-Chief, General Pershing, upon whose broad shoulders were thrown the responsibility and burden of our Army abroad—a responsibility such as was borne by no other Commander-in-Chief—a personal responsibility so great that even with the lapse of time the wonder still is with me that he could carry it all.

Notwithstanding the overwhelming burden, never for a moment was he drawn from his one purpose; and its rich fulfilment is a great personal achievement as well as a lasting glory for our country.

And to General Harbord: who, having made a gallant record in the field, later and equally successfully served as Commanding General entirely responsible for the procurement, distribution and maintenance of supplies.

His loyalty to his Chief, his untiring devotion to duty, his patience and broad sympathy were a continual inspiration to all of us who had the privilege of serving under him.

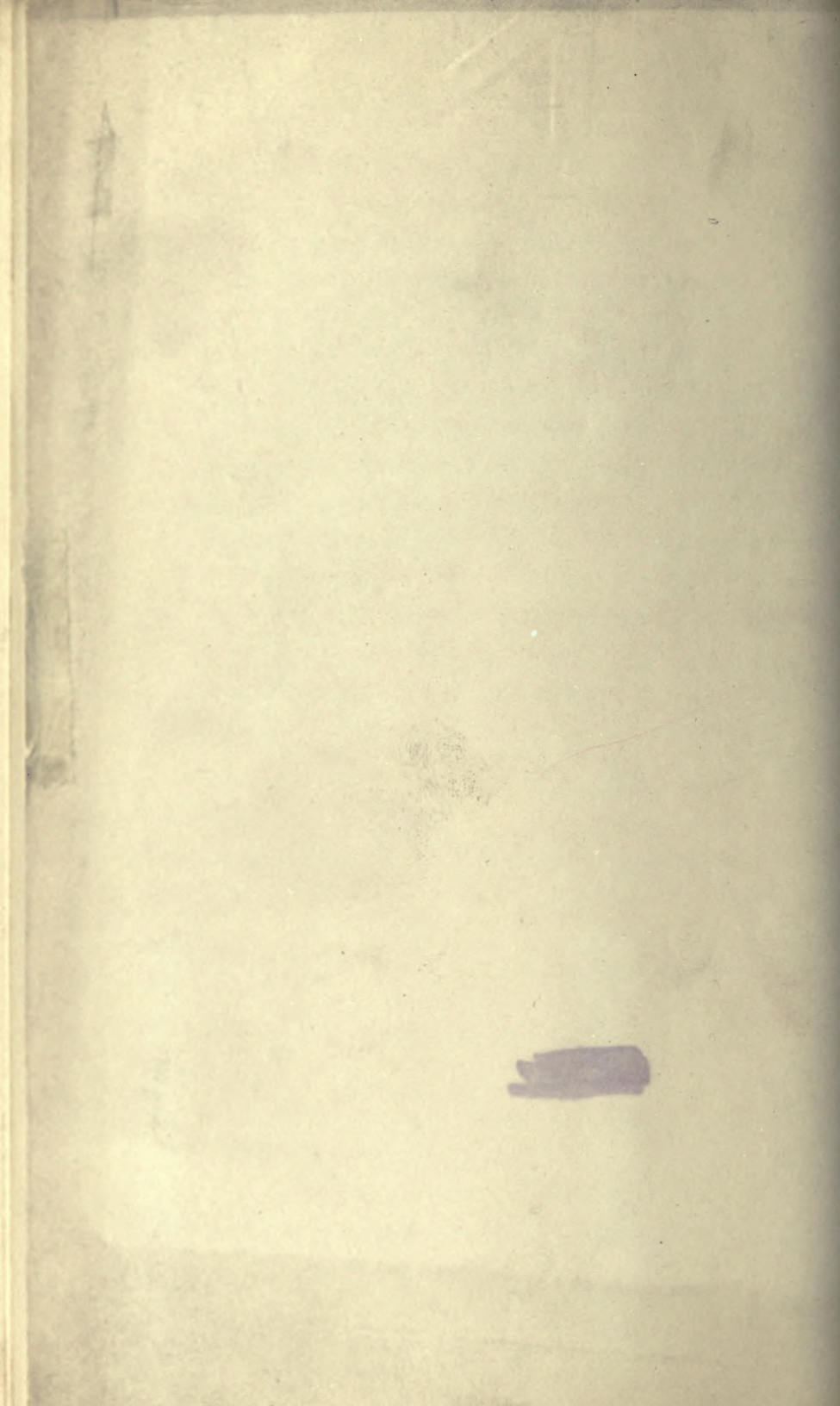
These two great men are largely responsible for the splendid success of the American Expeditionary Force in France.

WHAT AMERICA OWES TO GENERAL WOOD.

May I also correct a statement I have previously made—that there was nothing we had done prior to our entry into the war of which we might feel proud. There is one exception:

Thanks to the effort of one man, and despite opposition and prejudice, the country had been aroused; our men, young and old, had flocked to the training camps; our colleges had been turned into military schools, and all so successfully that later, when the actual need of officers arose, they were available.

Whatever measure of preparedness we had made prior to our entry into the war is attributable to no other person, and to him belongs great credit, and of him the nation may well be proud—General Leonard Wood.



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